

# **Maxims of Napoleon**

Napoleon



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# Maxims of Napoleon

## Napoleon

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Age, habits of business and experience have modified many characters.

Friendship is but a name.

Many a one commits a reprehensible action, who is at bottom an honourable man, because man seldom acts upon natural impulse, but from some secret passion of the moment which lies hidden and concealed within the narrowest folds of his heart.

It is a truth that man is difficult to know, and that, if we may not deceive ourselves, we must judge him by his actions of the moment, and for the moment only.

Every tree bears its fruit; we reap only that which we have sown.

The only victory over love is flight.

Love, like all things which belong to nature has its course, and different degrees of increase.

Agriculture is the soul and chief support of empires; industry produces riches and the happiness of the people; exportation represents the superabundance, and good use of both.

The moment which separates us from the object of our affections is terrible, it severs us from all the earth.

It is by experience and comparison that agriculture, like all other sciences, improves itself.

Great ambition is the passion of a great character. He who is endowed with it, may perform either very great actions, or very bad ones; all depends upon the principles which direct him.

It is too late to relieve a man when the drop has fallen.

What is the most beautiful manouvre compared to the motion of the planets.

Love does more harm than good.

Love for one's children, and one's wife are those sweet affections which subdue the soul by the heart, and the feelings by tenderness.

We must not take up arms for vain prospects of grandeur, nor the allurements of conquest.

There are those who deserve to be the hope of the afflicted, because they understand the poignancy of mental sufferings.

It is in the workshops of the country that the most successful war is waged against an enemy, at least it does not cost a drop of its people's blood.

The heart may be broken, and the soul remain unshaken.

We only feel how much we love when we meet again, or during absence.

When the authority of the master is disowned, all is lost.

The mind improves by change of aliment. A diversity of reading pleases the imagination, as much as the diversity of sounds pleases the ear.

A King should sacrifice the best affections of his heart for the good of his country; no sacrifice should be above his determination.

The purse of the Queen should always be open to women and their children.

To abandon oneself to despair without a struggle, to commit suicide as a relief, is like leaving the field of battle before we have vanquished the enemy.

A great reserve and severity of manners are necessary for the command of those who are older than ourselves.

I am never angry when contradicted, I seek to be enlightened.

The progress of a physical conspiracy is arrested when the hand which holds the poignard is secured; but a moral conspiracy cannot be put down, sooner or later it will explode like a train of gunpowder.

Some men have sufficient strength of mind to change their disposition, or at least to yield to imperative

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circumstances.

Flatterers and men of learning do not accord well with each other.

It is a great misfortune for a courtier not to know how to put himself forward.

In government, as in war, mind is necessary to success.

The guilt of many men may be traced to over-affection for their wives.

There is glory and true greatness in raising oneself by the heart.

The heart of a minister should be nowhere but in his head.

Things never prosper unless at the proper time.

The true character of man ever displays itself in great events.

We must not obstinately contend against circumstances, but rather let us obey them. We have many projects in life but little determination.

Passionate people invariably deny their anger, and cowards often boast their ignorance of fear.

There are calumnies against which even innocence loses courage.

The only victories which leave no regret are those which are gained over ignorance.

When He who measures the duration of life, has pronounced his secret, all the sciences of humanity are but useless essays.

He who is unmoved by tears has no heart.

Everything in religion should be gratuitous, and for the people; care must be taken not to deprive the poor, because they are poor, of the only thing which consoles them for their poverty.

We must take things as we find them, and not as we would wish them to be.

Calumny, envy, and all revengeful passions appear almost exclusively to direct the actions of men.

The spectacle of a field of battle after the combat, is sufficient to inspire Princes with the love of peace, and the horror of war.

Much shedding of blood, many great actions, and triumphs, toil and perseverance are the end of all things human.

To extraordinary circumstances we must apply extraordinary remedies.

We must never confound the Heavenly affairs, which are immutable, with those of the earth, which change according to policy and the force of circumstances.

It is the cause, and not the death, that makes the martyr.

A great European federative system alone can be favourable to the development of civilisation.

A contract, founded in fraud or error, is of no effect.

When a criminal has been deprived of his property, separated from his friends and customary habits and associations, justice and public vengeance should be satisfied.

A crown dishonoured is a detestable burthen.

In these days the invention of printing, and the diffusion of knowledge, render historical calumnies a little less dangerous: truth will always prevail in the long run, but how slow its progress!

Military bravery has no affinity to civil courage.

Collectively an army can dissemble any description of worship; but it must obey the orders of a General-in-Chief, who is as much the organ of his country, as the colours are its symbol; yet it would be odious for the soldiers individually to abjure their belief and the faith of their fathers, to serve their own interests.

Every one must have his proportion of celebrity; and, thank God; there will be room for all at the festal of immortality.

The conscience is the inviolable asylum of the liberty of man.

A man is not dependent upon his fellow creature, when he does not fear death.

Speeches pass away, but acts remain.

The Drama is the tragedy of women.

The desert is an ocean upon which we can walk, it is the image of immensity.

Everything in this world proclaims the existence of God.

Divorce is a law conformable to the interests of married people.

Grief has its bounds, they must not be exceeded.

Nothing renders a nation so despicable as religious despotism.

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Destiny marks the fall of nations.

A dynasty created for the maintenance of the rights and properties, can alone be naturally legitimate, and acquire confidence and power.

Thrones emanate from God: the greatest crime in his eyes, because it causes the greatest evil to man, is to shake the love and respect due to Sovereigns.

All predictions are impostures, the result of fraud, folly, or fanaticism.

When children grow up, they become independent.

It is according to justice, that he who fails is ever in the wrong.

Experience is the true wisdom of nations.

Equality should be the chief basis of the education of youth.

Existence is a curse, rather than a blessing.

Impartiality surpasses all other qualifications in a writer, who should possess probity, a clear conscience and elegance of style. The only author who deserves to be read is he who never attempts to direct the opinion of the reader.

We should always go before our enemies with confidence, otherwise our apparent uneasiness inspires them with greater boldness.

Greatness is nothing unless it be lasting.

The man who devotes himself to instruction must not marry until he has surmounted the first degrees of his career.

I like not your free thinkers, fools only defy mystery.

Ecclesiastics should confine themselves entirely to spiritual government.

The government of the Church is not arbitrary; it has canons and rules which the Pope must follow.

The best cure for the body is to quiet the mind.

Slavery occasions first of all delirium, then superstition, and finally credulity.

Wealth has always been the first title to consideration.

Girls cannot be better brought up than by their mother: a public education does not suit them.

Women should employ themselves with their knitting needles.

There is no greater misfortune for a man than to be governed by his wife: in such case he is neither himself nor his wife, he is a perfect nonentity.

Woman is made for her husband, the husband for his country, his children, and Glory.

In great crisis, it is the lot of women to soften our misfortunes.

Fatalism is not a doctrine which can be sustained, it is merely a word: either it admits free-will, or it rejects it: if it admits it, what sort of a result can that be which should have been previously determined upon?—and that might be altered, nevertheless, by the most trifling circumstance? If free-will be rejected, it is worse still; for then all that is necessary in coming into the world would be to throw oneself into one's cradle, and there abandoned; for if it be irrevocably fixed that we should live, there can be no necessity to feed us, we must live.

The constitution of society is not derived from any natural rights; it depends upon the manners and customs and the religion of each people.

Fanaticism must be first lulled, in order that it may be eradicated.

Nothing is done while yet anything remains to be done.

Fortune is fickle—how many men whom she has loaded with her favours have live too long by some years!

The woman we love is ever the handsomest of her sex.

Princes, even during life, are a prey to the fury of libellers; and however great their actions, and even their virtues, they come before the eyes of posterity only in the train of tyrants. It is a misfortune attached to Sovereign power, and no Monarch can escape from it.

To seduce a wife from her husband, or a son from his father, are odious acts, unworthy of civilised nations.

Women only think of dress and pleasure.

We must not talk Latin to women.

Female virtue has been held in suspicion from the beginning of the world, and ever will be.

When firmness is sufficient, rashness is unnecessary.

Something must be left for the accomplishment of fortune.

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In choosing a wife, a man does not renounce his mother, and still less is he justified in breaking her heart.  
War is cruel to the people, and terrible to the conquered.  
Great men are those who can subdue both good luck and fortune.  
He who fears being conquered is certain of defeat.  
The love of glory resembles the bridge which Satan threw over chaos to pass from the shades below to paradise; glory joins the past to the future from which it is separated by a profound abyss.  
The greater the man, the less is he opinionative, he depends upon events and circumstances.  
Better not to have been born than to live without glory.  
When we fight, no matter in what country, it is a civil war we make.  
Affairs of war, like the destiny of battles as well as of Empires, hang upon a spider's thread.  
Every hour of time lost, creates a chance of evil for the future.  
All men are equal before God: wisdom, talents, and virtue are the only difference between them.  
It is never wise to inflame bad passions, or to render oneself odious.  
Nothing in history resembles the end of the 18th century, nothing at the end of the 18th century resembles the present moment.  
A man, worthy of the name, hates no one.  
A nation recruits men more easily than it can retrieve its honour.  
Everything has a limit, even the human passions.  
We are miserable beings! error and weakness should be our motto.  
Man is too powerless to ensure the future, the institutions of nations can alone determine their destinies.  
It is in times of difficulty that great men and great nations exhibit all the energy of their character, and become objects of admiration to posterity.  
We must laugh at man, to avoid crying for him.  
Wherever flowers cannot be reared, there man cannot live.  
Chance plays a considerable part in our various resolutions.  
Man is ever the same.  
What is the poor human machine! not one fold resembles another, not one interior that does not differ from another, and it is in the denial of this truth that so many faults are committed.  
How many men of superior understanding are children more than once a day?  
A just appreciation of man is very difficult.  
We should learn to get the better of our tempers.  
Men are not so ungrateful as they are said to be: if they are often complained of, it generally happens that the benefactor exacts more than he has given.  
Men have their virtues, their vices, their heroism, their perverseness, they possess and exercise all that is good, and all that is bad in this world.  
Man is so slanderous and ill disposed that we cannot be too much upon our guard in everything.  
Man is no more secure upon the point of a rock than under the roof of a palace; he is the same everywhere, man—ever man.  
Men, in general, are but children of a larger growth.  
Men of letters are useful, and should ever be cherished, as they do honour to their country.  
Disdain hatreds—hear all, but never pronounce judgment, until reason has had time to resume her sway.  
Men have withdrawn themselves from nature—they have become vile and crawling creatures.  
Man, as soon as he arrived at the years of discretion, felt the want of the society of his fellow—creatures, and of a companion. He withdrew himself into a cavern, which ought to have been his warehouse, the centre of his operations, his refuge in the tempest, and during the night.  
Great men are like meteors, which shine and consume themselves to enlighten the earth.  
There are men who have no blood in their veins.  
Man often appears more cold and selfish than he really is.  
There are rattles for all ages.  
It is more easy for ordinary historians to build upon suppositions, and to stitch hypotheses together, than to relate simply, and march onwards with the facts in their possession, but man, and above all the historian, is full of



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vanity; he must give a fine scope to his imagination, he must interest the reader, even at the expense of truth: reputation hangs on this.

It is rendering a vast service to history to disembarass it of its conventional forms, which tend to charge its facts and darken its events.

To write history one must be more than a man, since the author who holds the pen of this great justiciary should be free from all human passions, and from all pre-occupation of interest, or of vanity.

Posterity learns the history of great reigns elsewhere than from pictures and statues, of which they are only the mythological portion. The indestructible pages of great reigns are the battles, and the gigantic works, it is there where historians must find their materials.

The policy of a monarch, the interests and wants of his people, which should always guide the actions of Sovereigns, will that after him he should leave his children as heirs of his love for his people.

Historians are like the sheep of Panurgus, they copy that which their predecessors have written, unless their opinions or their interest are opposed to it, without troubling themselves to inquire into reason, or even probabilities.

Instruction, from the beginning, has ever been combined with religious ideas.

Real industry is not proved by the employment of known and established means. Art and genius consist in accomplishing your wishes in spite of difficulties, and in finding little or nothing impossible.

A father should always rise above his misfortunes.

We should always sleep upon the quarrel of the over-night.

Indecision and anarchy, in the leaders, engender weakness and anarchy in the results.

It is both noble and courageous to rise above misfortune.

Independence and honour are like a rocky island without a beach.

All earthly institutions have two faces—a republic and a monarchy may be equally sustained or attached; in theory it may be proved that both are equally good, but in practice it is not so easy.

The inviolability of territory was never imagined as a screen for the guilty, but solely for the independence of the people and the dignity of the Sovereign.

Who knows to what extent the delirium of ambition may lead us?

Princes, magistrates, soldiers and citizens—we have but one only aim in our career, — the interest of the Country.

Uncertainty is painful for all people, and for all men.

Ideology, property speaking, consists only in theories without application; and by the simple fact of its ignorance, finds itself a thousand leagues distant from the practical truths of government.

Ideology, so long as it meddles with speculative facts, is good, even useful; for the soul, the passions, these intangible parts of man, are naturally within his province; but when ideology repudiates its tendencies to dive into politics and the government, then it commits every folly. Another thing is to understand perfectly the attributes of the mind, and to know the government of mankind.

Nothing exalts the courage and energy of a great people, more than the dangers they affront in preserving the sacred independence of their country.

Man should not swear to all, above all in that which concerns his last moments.

When we have emptied the cup of enjoyment, all we want is rest.

To judge mankind correctly, we must take them where events have placed them; penetrate deeply into their actions, whether good or bad, under the circumstances, and assure ourselves whether it was not impossible for them to do otherwise than they did.

It is much wiser to despise the judgments of certain men, than to seek to demonstrate their insignificance and versatility.

Judgment, in extreme cases should be guided by precedent.

We cannot escape from the arbitrariness of the judge, unless we place ourselves under the despotism of the law.

To have a right estimate of a man's character, we must see him in misfortune.

A nation cannot be estimated by the population of its coasts, or its extreme boundaries; it must be searched to the heart, its cities visited, and its different provinces overrun.

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If enlightenment could ever be injurious to the multitude, it could only arise when the Government, in hostility with the interests of the people, pressed them into a forced position, and reduced the lower orders to destitution; in that case the instruction of the people would give them greater power of resistance to the Government, and make them criminal.

All the art of legislation consists in the development of the human mind and faculties.

Liberty and equality are magical words.

Contempt for the laws, and the disturbance of social order, are the results of weakness and wavering in Princes.

Laws which are beautifully clear in theory, often become but a perfect chaos in practice. Everything is deteriorated by man and the passion.

The only encouragement for literature, is to give the poet a prominent situation in the State.

Wherever the names of law and liberty are pronounced, the citizens become associated—equal interests.

The secret of a legislator should be to take advantage of the errors of those whom he pretends to govern.

The praises of an enemy are suspicious—they cannot flatter a man of honour at least until after the cessation of hostilities.

We all stand by the law—he who would command, and usurp the functions which the law does not accord him, is not the friend of his country.

We should wash our dirty linen at home.

There are but two ways of bequeathing the likeness of great men to posterity—by marble or by bronze.

We are strong, when we have made up our minds to die.

We walk faster when we walk alone.

Should one—ought we to commit suicide? Yes, say they, when there is no hope; but who—when and how can we be without hope in this miserable scene, where the natural or sudden death of a single individual changes, in an instant, the whole aspect of affairs?

Marriage is a state of moral perfection.

Death may expiate faults, but cannot repair them.

Man is ever ready to disregard the wonders which surround him, for the wonders which others point out to him, for everything about him is wonderful.

We are all destined to die—can a few days of life equal the happiness of dying for one's country?

When a man knows his own moral failings, he should take the same care of his soul, as he would of a wounded arm or leg.

Misfortunes have their heroism and their glory.

The manners of the people are improved, and we may predict their gradual amelioration throughout the world.

There is nothing terrible in death.

The mass of the people are not wicked.

Marriage has always been the conclusion of love.

Timid and cowardly soldiers cause the loss of a nation's independence; but pusillanimous magistrates destroy the empire of the laws, the rights of the throne, and even social order itself.

The noblest death is that of a soldier who perished on the field of honour, unless the death of a magistrate falling in defense of his Sovereign, the throne and the laws, be not still more noble.

In our own times, as well as in history, we may find lessons but never models.

Death overtakes the coward, but never the brave until his hour has come.

Death alone can dissolve an union which was formed in sympathy, sentiment and affection.

It is not prudent that a magistrate should be, at the same time, the judge of the law and the fact.

Those to whom the law has not yet accorded the power of making ordinary contracts, must not be permitted to enter into the solemn pact of marriage; it is not consistent with nature.

In marriage there is something beyond the mere union of names and chattels.

As the basis of our decision for marrying a woman, we should take her moral qualities, such as gentleness, economy, and capacity for the management of a family. These qualities are the fundamental principle of matrimony.

In marriage the beauties of the Venus de Medicis are only secondary qualities.

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Of all social institutions, marriage is the most imposing.

Nothing that is noble and simple is futile; and that which is durable should alone be employed in the construction of a monument destined for posterity.

The arts, in all ages, have had falsehood for their patrimony. It is upon this basis that they flourish, and illustrate themselves.

A philosopher has assumed that man is born wicked; it would be a great thing to discover whether he had spoken truly; that which is certain, is that the mass of society is not wicked; for if the great majority disowned human laws, who could have the power to arrest or restrain them?

Happy moments are rare in the life of those who are called to the government of man.

In the marriage state, a man must be endowed with great firmness of character to be master of his family.

Marriage is good for nothing in the military profession.

The happiness and existence of a nation, depend upon the King, and a liberal constitution favourable to the people, and offering only the passions and egotism of the great.

The minister may fall, but the nation will remain.

Ambition and the enjoyment of high offices, do not constitute the happiness and satisfaction of a great man; he seeks the good opinion of the world and the esteem of posterity.

Pride never listens to the voice of reason, nature, or religion.

The most honourable as well as the most useful occupation for all nations, is to contribute to the extension of human knowledge.

Nothing is more arrogant than the weakness which feels itself supported by power.

Public opinion is a mysterious and invisible power, to which everything must yield. There is nothing more fickle, more vague, or more powerful; yet capricious as it is, it is nevertheless much more often true, reasonable, and just, than we imagine.

When patriots are oppressed, public liberty is equally threatened.

To attach no importance to public opinion, is a proof that you do not merit its suffrage.

There are no greater patriots than those who have been mutilated in the service of their country.

As peace is the first of necessities, so it is the first of glories.

A priest should never throw off his cassock, he should never for one moment hide his real character.

Priests should confine themselves entirely to the government of spiritual affairs.

The terrors of the other world were imagined as a supplement to the insufficient attractions which are presented to us.

The problems of Providence are insoluble.

Greediness and love of place are the greatest checks upon the morality of the people.

We should learn to forgive, and not encourage that hostile attitude which wounds one's neighbour as well as ourselves—we must acknowledge human weakness, and bend it to, rather than combat it.

When a man is determined to hold a place under Government, he is already sold to the Government.

We must plant for the future.

People—well do you deserve your chains and ignominy!

The care and education of young priests must not be abandoned to ignorance or fanaticism; for it may be said of priests as of the tongue of man, that it is either the worst or best of things.

Paradise is a central spot, where the souls of all men arrive by different roads. Each sect has its own path.

Wisdom requires forethought.

Chance is the providence of adventurers.

The fear of danger, the desire to escape it, disorganises those weak minds, to whom physical sensations are everything; in taking advantage of their terrors we obtain that which we could not have gained from their probity.

To be a good magistrate, we must subdue every passion.

When one's country is lost, a good citizen should die.

Priests should guide the conscience, but should not exercise any external or corporeal jurisdiction over the citizens.

Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.

Whatever may be the position in life of a parent, it is his duty to share his crust with his children.

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Popes have committed too many absurdities to create a belief in their infallibility.

The ignorance of priests is the greatest plague ever inflicted upon the world.

When a Prince is surrounded by men of great merit, he should not suffer his affairs to be conducted by fools and intriguers.

The institutions, the benefits, the victories of a Prince are his true titles to glory.

It is unjust, odious, and impolitic to punish a son for the faults of the father, and to deprive him of his inheritance.

The councils of the Church ordained that Priests should not marry, in order that the care of a family should not turn them aside from the duties of the spiritual offices to which they should be exclusively devoted.

The decline of Italy dates from the moment when the Priests took upon themselves the government of the finances, the police, and the army.

Psychology is no more within the province of the generals of the army than the chiefs of a squadron; they have only to deal with the human frame—all that is under the skin belongs to philosophers.

When once we find ourselves carrier within the dominion of probabilities, it is scarcely possible to arrest the imagination.

A just and beautiful thought, expressed in good verse, makes a more certain impression on the mind, than the most chaste and brilliant prose.

Poetry, painting, and sculpture must lie, but it must be done with grandeur, charm, and splendour.

It is the province of honest men to enlighten the government.

Perversity is always individual, scarcely ever collective. Joseph's brothers could not agree to take his life; Judas, coldly and hypocritically, with a dastardly calculation, delivered his Master unto death.

The passions are morbid, or nearly so, at fifty, the desires are blunted, the deceptions have been numerous; the tenderness of a chaste and indulgent wife is a refuge, it is a port after the storm, the rainbow after the tempest.

The men to whom a moral and political responsibility attaches, are not those to whom the details of office should be confided.

Reprisals are but a sad resource.

Certain moral combinations produce revolutions in Empires, in the same manner as certain chemical combinations produce volcanic eruptions.

Rules themselves oblige us to reflect, in order that we may know whether we have exceeded them.

The ratifications of a treaty of peace should be pure and simple without any modification.

There is a similarity of position as regards Religion and Kings — each may be dethroned.

There are a thousand things which are condemned by men who cannot judge their results.

Better live a King, than a Prince.

In religion I see the mystery of social order.

Modern regeneration will bring itself about sooner or later.

A great reputation is like a great noise, the louder it is proclaimed the further it is heard. The laws, constitutions, monuments, actions — all have their limit, but glory spreads itself through many generations.

Reason, logic, but above all the result, should be the constant aim of all mankind.

All religions are the children of men, they are the only true source of morality, principle and manners.

To tell whence I come, what I am, or where I go, is beyond my powers of reflection—nevertheless all is. Religious sentiments are so consoling that to possess them is a gift of heaven.

The reward of great men is in the conscience, and in the opinion of posterity.

A change of religion, inexcusable for private interests, may perhaps be understood by the importance of its political results.

The true greatness of a republic should not permit the existence of a new idea which is not added to the national intelligence.

He who is full of courage and self-possession before an enemy's batter in the midst of bullets, trembles sometimes, and loses his head before a petticoat or a peruke.

Religion is not freemasonry.

Religion is not made for philosophers, they neither believe in princes or priests—with regard to those who have faith they cannot have too many wonders. If I had to make a religion for philosophers it should be altogether

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opposed to that of the faithful.

A revolution is a vigorous lashing to a nation.

A religion which relates to this life alone, without teaching man his origin and destination, cannot be sustained.

Every one should continue in the religion in which he was born.

There is a great difference between a remuneration awarded by the heads of a nation,—that is, the most intelligent party,—and the real popularity which associates itself with the reminiscences and traditions of the cross roads and public places.

True wisdom, in general, consists in energetic determination.

It is only by wisdom and moderation, that the lasting happiness of a country can be ensured.

Are there not spots upon the sun?

The pretention of blood, is an absurd and offensive idea.

There is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous.

Sovereignty is not in the title, nor the throne in its drapery.

There is scarcely a subject, however insignificant, from which great talent may not derive some resource.

Idleness and luxury are the indispensable bases of society.

Almost all sentiments are traditions, we receive them as precedents.

Statistics are the budget of things.

It is as necessary for the heart to feel as for the body to be fed.

To feel is to attach oneself to one's fellow-creatures, to live; man must have known pity, friendship and love; then, follow gratitude, veneration and respect.

Feeling and reason are as inherent to man, as conscience and virtue.

The lot of Astyanax prisoner to the Greeks, has ever appeared to me the most unfortunate in history.

Men soon get tired of shedding their blood for the advantage of a few individuals, who think they amply reward the soldiers' perils with the treasures they amass. It is not the same with an army that fights 'pro aris et focis.'

When kings have the misfortune to neglect or ruffle the susceptibilities of historians, it costs them dear.

Surprises, like conspiracies, should burst upon us as the thunder.

The sympathies of a tottering nation can add no strength to an army.

The trade of a fortune seller, is as profitable now as in the days of antiquity. It is a commerce requiring very little talent, which induced Molière to say, 'that it was more easy to deceive than to amuse mankind.' Effrontery, tongue, much firmness, and that sort of perspicuity which enables you to judge at first sight those who come to consult you, these are the stock in trade of a true necromancer.

Scepticism is a virtue in history and philosophy.

Straightforwardness, frankness and simplicity on the part of a Sovereign give content to the people, and happiness to the Prince.

The first thought of Princes should be to yield to the wants and wishes of all the people, and seek in peace, a remedy for the evils, which press so heavily in times of war upon all nations.

Sovereigns are not angels, they are men, and sometimes more than others subject to error and passion.

Sovereignty is only hereditary, because the interests of the people require it. Beyond these principles there is no legitimacy.

We are almost certain to become the victims of the civil disorders and political commotions which we are obstinately bent upon exciting.

It is with water and not oil that we must quench theological volcanoes.

Labour, ensures at the same time the repose of society and the happiness of the individual.

Tragedy excites the soul, and elevates the heart, it ought to and should create heroes.

Deep tragedy is the school of great men.

There is no circumstance in life which can justify suicide.

Labour is also the scythe of time.

Military despotism represses generous sentiments, priestly tyranny stifles them.

Theologians of all religions are the same; they share neither ink nor words to enforce, according to their

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passions, their authority, or their caprice, a certain elasticity to the law of Moses, to that of Jesus Christ, or of Mahomet.

Theology gives certain rules for spiritual government, but not for the government of armies or the administration.

Men must not be judged by physiognomy, they must be tried to be known.

It is all the worse for those who believe not in virtue.

In every country, the violator is a monster.

Courage and virtue preserve states, as vices ruin them.

The life of a citizen is the property of his country.

There are vices and virtues of circumstances.

Truth pierces the clouds, it shines as the sun, and, like it, is imperishable.

Life is strewn with so many obstacles, and may be the source of so many evils, that death is not the greatest of all.

A glutton will defend his dinner like a hero.

We often succeed better by the influence of the servant, than in any other manner.

To live, is to suffer; and the honest man is always fighting to be master of his own mind.

The life of man is a reflector in which we may read, and fruitfully instruct ourselves.

There is nothing grand in committing suicide, as in the case of a man who has lost his all at play. There is much more courage in surviving unmerited misfortune.

A father who has lost his children, has no relish for the chances of victory.

Victories and disasters establish indestructible union between armies and their commanders.

A dull and monotonous life inspires in the minds of certain men, ideas which in a state of liberty, had never entered their imagination.

The patrimony of history should be nothing but truth. It is by that quality that it is rendered respectable and worthy to serve as a perpetual instruction to man.

A government requires intermediate support, without which it has no hold upon the nation, no means of speaking to the people, or of knowing its wishes.

Was is the government? nothing, unless supported by opinion.

If a government of overpowering strength be subject to obstacles, a feeble one must suffer them to a greater extent. Each day it is compelled to violate positive laws, without which it would be impossible to maintain its position.

Every institution under a weak government, may become an instrument of danger.

A treaty concluded by two governments, must not be submitted to the discussion of a legislative assembly.

As a principle of government, nothing is more fatal to the happiness of the people than the instability of their institutions.

A constitution should be framed so as not to impede the action of government, nor force the government to its violation.

It is better that there be a bad organisation of the people, than none at all.

The people must not be counted upon; they cry indifferently: "Long live the King!" and "Long live the Conspirators!" a proper direction must be given to them, and proper instruments employed to effect it.

Hereditary succession to the magistracy is absurd, as it tends to make a property of it; it is incompatible with the sovereignty of the people.

Orders and decorations are necessary in order to dazzle the people.

Power is founded upon opinion.

Sometimes a great example is necessary to all the public functionaries of the state.

Policy requires that a Sovereign should be consistent.

There exists not in the world one constitution which is followed to the letter.

Social pre-eminence belongs really to the civilian rather than the military.

True civil liberty consists in the security of property.

Where there are no Patricians, there ought not to be a tribune. At Rome it was another matter; still, the Tribunes did more harm than good.

## Maxims of Napoleon

There is a great difference between a discussion in an old established country, and the opposition in one not yet organized.

Men are led by trifles.

Free trade favors all classes, excites all imaginations, and rouses the whole population; it is identical with equality, and tends naturally to independence.

In a great nation, the majority are incapable of judging wisely of things.

The sovereignty of the people is inalienable.

Military honour and glory have constantly declined since the abolition of the feudal system, which had ensured military pre-eminence.

Men have entrails, but the laws have none.

If pride would humble his enemy, charity, the characteristic virtue of the religion of Jesus Christ, would reconcile him.

A sentiment of humanity has always influence upon the imagination.

The idea of dedicating monuments to those who have rendered themselves useful to the people, is honourable to all nations: but it should be left to after ages to construct them, when the good opinion conceived of the heroes is confirmed.

Public instruction should be the first object of government.

We must never despair of a child so long as he has not reached the age of puberty; it is then only that his faculties are developed, and that we can judge his character.

Everything in the life of man is subject to calculation; the good and evil must be equally balanced.

Public esteem is the recompense of honest men.

There is no power without justice.

The union of blood between Sovereigns offers no check to political interests. These alliances but too often lead to immorality and scandal in the eyes of the people.

Better to have an open enemy, than hidden friends.

We must either strike or be stricken.

Supreme authority is indivisible.

The clemency of Kings is like putting in a lottery, the chances are all against their gaining by it.

The aristocracy has the advantage of concentrating the power of Government into less dangerous and more capable hands than those of the ignorant multitude.

Amongst the masses,—even in revolutions, Aristocracy must ever exist; destroy it in the Nobility, and it becomes centered in the rich and powerful houses of the Commons. Pull them down, and it still survives in the master and foreman of the workshop.

A Prince gains nothing by pulling down the Aristocracy; on the contrary he restores order by leaving it in its natural state, or reconstructing it ancient houses upon new principles.

The Aristocracy is the true, the only true support of the Monarchy—its mediator, its lever, its point of resistance. The state without an Aristocracy is like a vessel without a rudder, or a balloon at the mercy of the winds.

The surest way to influence the determination of Princes is to wound their pride.

There is a wide distinction between the acts of a Sovereign in the government of a community, and those of a private individual in the exercise of his unprejudiced judgment. Policy admits, and even commands the one to do that which would be inexcusable on the part of the other.

To conduct public affairs, both civil and military, deep thought, profound analysis, and the faculty of unwearied attention are necessary.

You cannot treat with all the world at once.

Anarchy is the result of having several chiefs in a government.

It is not in the power of every man to appreciate honours only, but a little money is never thrown away.

Better to have a known enemy than a forced ally.

Success depends upon unity of action.

Deliberative assemblies are invariably composed of intriguers, or people more or less clever and enlightened,—the latter, almost always dupes, become the instruments and accomplices of the former.

## Maxims of Napoleon

Neither yield to, nor treat with agitators.  
The allies we gain by victory, will turn against us upon the bare whisper of our defeat.  
The heart may be lacerated and the mind remain unshaken.  
Humanity must not be exercised to the injury of the people.  
If I had burnt Vienna!  
Cruelty can only be justified by necessity.  
The people never rub themselves against naked bayonets.  
True social happiness consists in the harmony and peaceful enjoyment of that position which nature has assigned to each.  
When bayonets deliberate, power escapes from the hands of the government.  
The greatest benefit for nations is their independence, their existence.  
What a sad retrospect it is to make the people fight for the sake of fighting.  
Courage and virtue are the conservators of states. Cowardice and crime are their destruction.  
During a political tempest, the constitution of the people is their polar star.  
The conscription is an institution eminently national, when it becomes a point of honour of which each is jealous, then the nation is great, glorious and powerful. Its existence may defy misfortunes, invasions, and the rust of ages.  
The most trifling circumstances produce the greatest results.  
A political club can have no durable leader, there must be one for each passion.  
In war, as in love, we must come in contact, ere we triumph.  
A king is sometimes obliged to commit crimes; but they are the crimes of his position.  
The conscription is the vitality of a nation, the purification of its morality and the real foundation of all its habits.  
To have his heart in his head is the real wisdom of a politician.  
If political errors were crimes in the eyes of God, no Sovereign would meet with pardon.  
The rabble are only worthy of contempt; necessity alone can justify an attack upon them.  
Things which are only half done, are badly done. Either we must be blind, or if we see, we must act accordingly.  
When a small state accustoms itself to condemn without trial, to applaud a speech because it is impassioned; when virtue is called exaggeration; and crime, moderation and equity, this state is on the brink of destruction.  
No fixed political state can have existence unless it have a body teaching fixed political principles.  
The success of a coup-de-main, depends more upon chance than judgment.  
At the head of his army nothing is more becoming than simplicity; in a great city or a palace the chief of a government must attract attention by every means in his power, but it must be done prudently.  
The power of concentration and union are facts which must strike the commonest mind.  
For the welfare of a nation the legislative body cannot be rendered too supple, for if it were strong enough to rule the country, it would either destroy the government, or be destroyed by it.  
A Sovereign opens a noble path to his people by protecting the good, and punishing those who trespass to the right or the left.  
The suffrages of a senate authorise the chief of a state; the wishes of the people command him.  
Merely to speak of the rights of the people under a despotic Sovereign, is blasphemous and criminal.  
The Democracy elevates the sovereignty, the Aristocracy alone preserves it.  
When the balance of power is broken, public rights have no existence.  
The Democracy may be furious, but it has some compassion.  
There is no absolute despotism, it is only relative.  
A restored dynasty never pardons its dethroners.  
In order to take we must learn to give.  
The extreme frontier of individual government is despotism, the best (government) would be a just medium (between despotism, and a limited sovereignty) if it were in the power of human wisdom to adhere to it.  
The rights of nations who rule maritime warfare alone remain in a state of barbarism.  
It is easier for the people to make a Despot of a tyrant, than to bear the yoke of all Nations united.



## Maxims of Napoleon

Every step towards a Foreign Sovereign, by an hereditary Prince, is criminal.

In Diplomacy the letter kills the spirit. Tact and good bearing are more successful than trickery. The wheels common to diplomatists of old, are worn out, all their finesse is stale and unprofitable, and in truth, when a man can speak openly, why should he practise deception?

Enemies likely to be dangerous, have too much sense to expose themselves to danger.

There are no small events for Nations, or Sovereigns; they are ever those which decide their destiny.

Great men seldom fail in their most perilous enterprises.

There is neither subordination, nor fear in empty bellies.

When you have an enemy in your power, deprive him of the means of ever injuring you.

There have never been any great Empires or revolutions except in the East, where there is a population of six hundred millions. Europe in comparison is but a mole-hill.

The Government should so organise the system of education, that it could always have a watch upon the moral and political opinions of the Colleges.

For the stability of the Government, the people should have a considerable voice in the elections.

A minister of State should never permit a woman to approach his Cabinet.

In a revolutionary State there are two classes; the suspected and the patriots.

The title of Emperor never loses itself.

The public spirit is in the hands of the man who knows how to make use of it.

The name of Emperor is a word like another; but he who bears it, must have a better title to render him worth of posterity.

Fortune is like a woman—if you miss her to-day, think not to find her to-morrow.

A Prince should invest all his wealth in the fortune of his Country, so as to identify himself as much as possible with her destinies.

Capital invested in good agriculture, is never thrown away.

To be firm, a man must have a firm heart, otherwise he must never meddle with war, or politics.

Two powers like France and England, with a good understanding between them, might govern the world.

When a Prince makes up his mind to strike a blow, he must strike boldly at all he desires; everything goes better afterwards. He punishes less, and gains more, without doing great injury.

The stronger never retreat, they dictate the terms which the weak obey.

The crowd which follows me with admiration, would run with the same eagerness were I marching to the Guillotine.

We must not display severity and weakness at the same time.

Force is only justifiable in extremes, when we have the upper hand, justice is preferable.

Frenchmen know not how to conspire.

The power of pardon, the finest and most noble attribute of Sovereignty, should never be exercised, except when the Royal clemency in no way interferes with the rights of justice.

The wars of the present day have no influence except on Governments.

To govern by a party is, sooner or later, to put oneself in its power.

To seize a Government by a ready coup-de-main, is contrary to the rights of Nations.

The kitchen is no insignificant accessory to government.

Where the Government is weak, military sway prevails.

A new Government should employ in its service, those whose fortunes are already made.

In the institution of a Government, one must not bind himself by laws specially detailed. Constitutions are the work of time, and too large a space cannot be left for ameliorations.

There is no Government so tyrannical as that which pretends to be paternal.

A Government protected by foreigners will never be accepted by a free people.

Great men, for good, or for bad, resemble each other. Thus it were no sophistry to say: that the soul of Cartouche had something of the Great Condé in it. The revolution produced all sorts of ambitious characters.

A new-born Government must shine and astonish—the moment it loses its éclat it falls.

The being whom events and the decrees of Providence call to the Government of Nations is, without contradiction, the man who least of all belongs to himself.

## Maxims of Napoleon

A great Nation should have a fixed Government, so that the death of one man should not overturn it.

When a Nation is in war, the presence of a deliberative body is injurious and often fatal. The turbulent, the ambitious greedy of distinction, of popularity, of power, erect themselves by their own authority into advocates of the people, defending those who are not attacked, as advisers of the Prince, they will know all, rule all, direct all, they become successively censors, factious and rebels.

The world must be governed without regard to the actions of individuals.

A military Government is favourable to Royal authority.

The sciences which honour the human understanding, the arts which embellish life, and transmit great actions to posterity, ought to be specially patronised by an independent Government.

He who governs should possess energy without fanaticism, principles without demagogy, severity without cruelty; he must neither be weak nor vacillating, nor, so to express it, must he be ashamed to do his duty.

The government, the Ministers, and the first agents of the Republic must listen only to the voice of posterity.

The form of Government, whether republican, aristocratical or monarchical is the imprescriptible right of the people. It is their internal law.

In Government, the highest degree of political liberty and individual security must be combined with the force and centralisation necessary to produce respect for the independence of the people, and the dignity of the Crown.

Men are rare!

He who hazards nothing, gains nothing.

The man born for office and authority, see nobody, he sees only things, their weight and their consequence.

A handful of great men suffice to make the renown of a Nation.

The honour of a Sovereign ought never to be in opposition to the happiness of his Country.

Immorality is the most pernicious quality which can be found in a Sovereign, it becomes the fashion, it is honoured to please him, it encourages every vice, it makes an inroad upon virtue, it is in fact a Nation's scourge.

It is only those who would deceive the people, and govern for their own advantage who could desire to retain them in ignorance; for, the more the people are enlightened, the more sensible they become of the necessity of laws.

A Prince has a thousand ways of imprinting upon his institutions the character he most desires to give them.

A great people may be killed, but they cannot be intimidated.

In taking away the prerogatives of Royalty, it is deprived of all its moral force.

A peace based upon the independence of all Nations, is one of those Utopian ideas, to which experience does justice.

The glory and happiness of the citizen must be silent, when the interest of the State and the public good require it.

Without justice there are but litigants, the oppressors and the victims.

As there is but one God, so a state should have but one justice.

He who makes war for National independence must be enabled to count upon the union of all resources, all the wishes, and the concurrence of all the National authorities.

It never was asserted with truth at any period of history, in any Nation, even in the East, that the people existed for Kings: it is universally admitted that Kings exist only for the people.

Legislation is the buckler which the Government should carry wherever the public prosperity is attacked.

We are nothing but by the law.

A Prince casts liberty aside, when it throws impediments in his path.

Civil liberty depends upon the security of property.

A portion of the multitude must ever be coerced.

The men who have changed the universe, have never achieved their object by gaining the governors, but always by exciting the populace. The first method springs from intrigue, and produces but secondary results, the second is the march of genius, and changes the face of the world.

The ideas of a Minister should be quicker than his hand' he has only time to emit sparks; he must put words in his letters, and phrases in his words.

Moderation imprints an August character upon Governments, as well as Nations, it is always the companion of strength, and a guarantee for the duration of social institutions.

## Maxims of Napoleon

The sea is the property of all Nations, it spreads over three-fourths of Europe, and establishes a tie between people of different countries.

Of all professions, the navy is that which offers the most frequent opportunity to subalterns to act upon their own judgment.

A Monarch ennobles plebeian merit, the Aristocracy repulses it.

In a Monarchy, the throne and the person of the King are inseparable.

It is better to run the risk of having one master than to have a thousand.

Half measures are always dangerous, and will not reclaim an enemy.

When Monarchs abuse the rights with which they have been invested by the confidence of the people, and bring down upon their heads the calamity of war, the people have the right to withdraw their allegiance.

A monument which attaches to politics, should be erected on the instant.

There is no Nation however small which had the right to set itself free, that has not rescued itself from the dishonour of obeying the Prince imposed by an enemy in the hour of victory.

The consequences of political negotiations placed under the influence of military events can never be foreseen.

Old and corrupted Nations do not govern like the virtuous people of antiquity—for one who at this day would sacrifice himself for the public good, there are millions upon millions who look to nothing beyond their interests and the gratification of their pleasures and their vanity.

Experience proves that armies are not always sufficient to save a nation; while a Nation defended by its people is ever invincible.

I command, or I hold my tongue.

Public opinion is ever on the side of the strongest, and the profits belong to the victor.

We must be faithful to our opinions as to glory, otherwise there is nothing for us but shame and confusion.

The blood of the people should never be shed without the order of the Sovereign.

A Prince's ambition should be the ambition of his country; no other sentiment, no other Majesty than that of his country.

He who fights against his country, is a child who would kill his own mother.

When the passions and caprices of Kings are once subdued, the people march onwards without impediment in their legitimate course.

No solid establishment can endure without a body of clergy and civil order.

A Government can only exist upon its own principles.

In politics, that which is bad, even though in strict accordance with law, is inexcusable unless absolutely necessary, all that goes beyond it is criminal.

The greatest misfortune which can happen to a Prince, is to curb the liberal opinions, and outrage the feelings of his subjects.

Grant a general pardon to all who have only been led astray.

The first duty of a Prince is, without doubt, to study the wishes of his people, but the people scarcely know what they desire. Their will and their wants should be in the heart, more than in the mouth of a Prince.

It is not easy to check the people when once excited.

A Prince should not be swayed by prejudice.

Policy must be patient, carried out in the spirit of the times, and the circumstances of the moment.

Policy is happily joined by morality in opposing pillage.

It is not from day to day that a Prince must occupy himself for his people, he must look to futurity.

There is not a more pitiable state, than that of a people who become the subjects of another Nation.

A Prince should weigh himself on his throne.

In war, policy rises with feelings.

All is easy of accomplishment under the influence of power, when it governs with justice, honour, and magnanimity.

Kings and people are irreconcilable enemies.

Peace is the foremost of necessities, as it is the first of glories.

Policy must be superior to incidental events, and not permit itself to be governed by them.

## Maxims of Napoleon

The people excited by ambitious demagogues, sooner or later return into the hands of the Aristocracy.

In politics, there is a wide difference between promises and performance.

We must not deceive ourselves with respect to the resources of power. A Prince, be he ever so great, has only human means.

The weakness of the Sovereign, is the greatest calamity for the people.

Right and equity are the groundworks of all policy.

Kings must submit to the voice of the people, when they have not sufficient wisdom to govern for their happiness.

In politics, family considerations are absurd.

The existence of the throne, the lustre and power by which Sovereigns are surrounded, the perpetuity of power and hereditary rights are institutions made for the benefit and regulation of the people.

(In revolutions,) the people willingly revenge themselves for the homage they render to Princes.

Princes are the first citizens of states.

Where the public desire and the public interests govern, the people are happy.

Absolute power has no necessity to lie, it may be silent—while responsible governments obliged to speak, not only disguise the truth, but lie with effrontery.

A Prince must speak to the eyes, it does well with the people.

The police invents more than it detects.

Patriotism is a word which represents a noble idea.

A King should desire death, rather than to become an object of pity.

The best qualities in political finesse, are honesty and truth.

Policy does not consist in sentiment.

Firmness, and above all, celerity are indispensable in matters of policy.

A Prince is not truly great but at the head of his army.

No peace should be concluded without guarantees, otherwise policy is cheated by generosity.

People accustomed to great victories, know not how to support a day of reverse.

In political affairs, it is only fools who are discovered by the police or the post office.

The best policy, is simplicity and truth.

When the conduct of a Prince evinces confidence, it inspires confidence.

Princes are the first citizens of the state, their authority is more or less extensive, according to the interest of the Nations they govern.

Respect the people you deliver.

State policy is superior to every other.

A King should employ those only who are capable of serving him.

A Queen should always be mistress of her passions, and have the talent to love.

To think to regenerate a people in an instant, is an act of madness.

A Revolution is one of the greatest evils which can afflict the Earth, it enriches the poor, without satisfying them; it impoverishes the rich who will never forget it; it upsets all; it brings adversity upon all; and happiness to none.

There are no naked Kings—Kings are all robed—Kings are not in nature, they result from civilisation.

Revolutions, the most justifiable, destroy all things upon the instant, and replace them only in futurity.

The period of indolent Sovereigns is passed.

Revolutions are like the most noxious dung—heaps, they bring into life the noblest vegetables.

None but indolent Monarchs grow fat in their palaces.

At a period of Revolution no man should have more than three million francs.

In all countries, religion is useful to the Government; it should be used to control the minds of the people.

As far as policy is concerned, the religion of the state should be entirely in the hands of the Sovereign.

Revolutionary periods are full of crime and genius, each of which finds opportunities for distinguishing itself.

The Kings of the present day require more security than the people.

In Revolutions the two extremes never touch.

There are very few Kings who have not deserved being dethroned.

## Maxims of Napoleon

Revolutions are good times for soldiers of talent and courage.

Without a treasury, without certain means of recruiting his army, and without a fleet, there is no King.

Upon the termination of revolutions a Nation acquires new interests, new institutions, new glory, which can only be guaranteed by a dynasty, born under these new circumstances.

A Prince who would reign over a Nation by force of Foreign armies who have ravaged his territory, will see in vain to support the principles of feudal rights; he could only insure the honour and rights of a few individuals.

A minister should ever be responsible for the acts of his Government.

Royalty is no longer the feeling of the age.

An Emperor confides in national soldiers, not in mercenaries.

A Sovereign is always wrong, who speaks in anger.

Every system may without doubt sanction itself—that of kindness as well as of severity—everything here below finds its level.

We must serve the people worthily, and not occupy ourselves in trying to please them. The best way, to gain their affections is to do them good.

A Sovereign must bend his policy to the nature of events, and not events to his system of policy.

One Nation when repelling the attacks of another never wants men, but too often soldiers.

Nothing goes well in a political system, in which words are in contradiction to facts.

The violation of the secrecy of letters may cause a Prince the loss of his best friends.

It is dangerous for Kings to shed blood, and do justice to themselves.

When a subject eulogises a Sovereign who does not merit it, he renders him very bad service.

At a period of revolution, with courage and perseverance, a soldier may attain the highest station.

A Sovereign should open a high road to his people, by protecting the straightforward, and punishing those who trespass to the right or the left.

The confidence with which a Sovereign is invested, is solid only when it is sanctioned by the suffrages of the people, who clothed him with the supreme magistracy.

Legitimate Sovereigns can never be found in the midst of Foreign armies.

The fate of a Nation may sometimes depend upon the position of a fortress.

Severity anticipates more faults than it represses.

The Prince who is the choice of a whole Nation, will ever be the legitimate Sovereign in the eyes of the people.

When the Sovereign discovers those who seek his destruction, he must save himself, by destroying them.

A weak Sovereign is a calamity for his people: if he suffer criminals and traitors to believe in their impunity, there is an end to all security, for the state as well as the Sovereign.

Treaties are sacred acts, the execution of which is the highest guarantee of a Nation's honour.

The throne is a bit of wood covered with velvet.

Evil be to them who keep not faith in treaties.

It is not by words alone that a throne is overturned.

It is a great irregularity to have two texts to the same treaty, it cannot be called an exchange of ratifications.

A treaty not ratified within the prescribed time, has not positive existence.

In a treaty, the parties should express themselves clearly, and without evasion. Nobody has the right to modify, or interpret the different articles of a treaty according to his own interest.

It is easier to brave and threaten, than to conquer an enemy.

Sovereigns often require to press themselves with a victory, in order to undertake new enterprises.

The will of Princes is often annulled; it depends upon events and awaits their issue.