NAPOLEON IN HIS OWN WORDS

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Napoleon in his own words by Jules Bertaut

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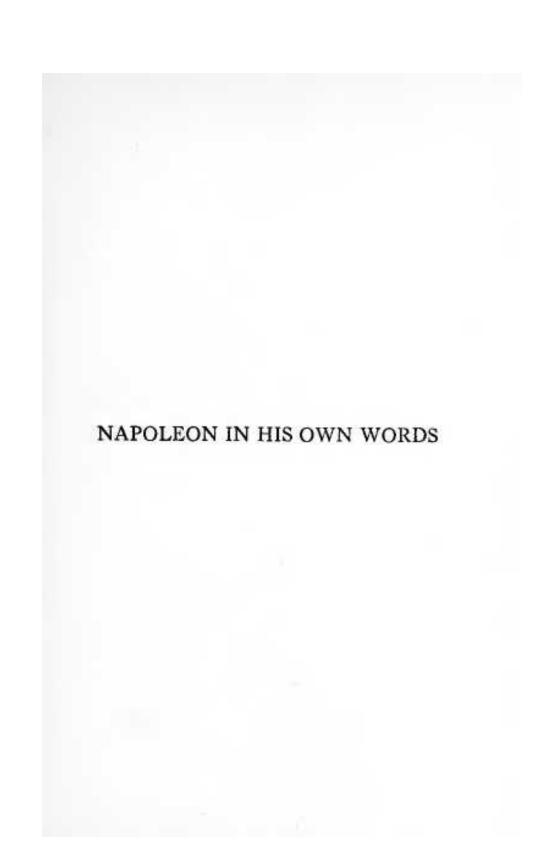
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JULES BERTAUT

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In His Own Words

JULES BERTAUT

Translated by Herbert Edward Law and Charles Lincoln Rhodes

Authorized Edition

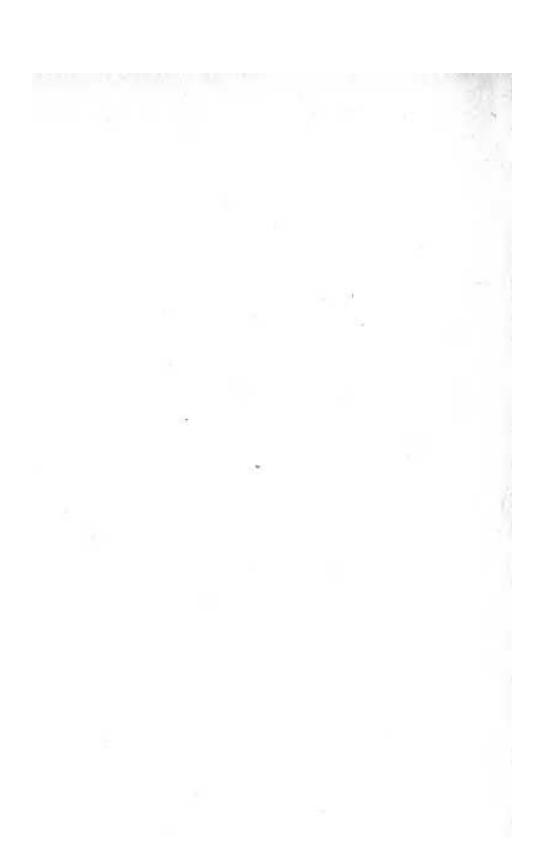


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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THIS collection of Napoleonic aphorisms is not the first attempt of the kind that has been made. The genius of Napoleon has always challenged the attention of historians, as it has that of the unpretending curious and lovers of strong and beautiful maxims; and following the Restoration, as after the rebirth of Imperialism under Napoleon III, there were those who diligently collected these odds and ends of the Emperor's thoughts. However, if this attempt to popularize these reflections of genius is not entirely new, I do not think any other has been undertaken with the same care and candor.

We are now sufficiently distant from Napoleon to judge him with the dispassionateness of an age appreciative, but careful to do justice. And just because there is little concerning this great man which is not now known, we are able to classify in a systematic way the products of his mind. Without attempting a too rigid classification, therefore, I have attempted to present the diverse aspects of the Napoleonic mentality, and to view him successively in his character of professor of psychology and morals, of politics and administration; as an authority on love and marriage; as a patron of the arts; as a soldier and as a sociologist.

The first thing that strikes one in reading these thoughts, these sentiments, these maxims, is the constant concern for sovereign authority which they reveal.

Napoleon, in imagination, was constantly concerned with the good of his subjects. Whether in his literary works, properly so called, or in his immense correspondence or in his conversation or in his public speeches or in his St. Helena confidences, he has taken occasion to express himself on a multitude of problems touching religion, science, morals, art, politics and sociology. And always he does it as a sovereign, as a master conscious of his authority, obsessed with the weight of his extraordinary responsibility and of the duty that devolved upon him.

Only rarely is his attention swerved from