

FOREIGN REMINISCENCES

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Foreign Reminiscences by Henry Richard Vassall-Fox

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HENRY RICHARD VASSALL-FOX

**FOREIGN
REMINISCENCES**

349

FOREIGN
REMINISCENCES,

BY

Holland HENRY RICHARD Foy-Tussac, 36

37. LORD HOLLAND.

EDITED BY HIS SON,

HENRY EDWARD LORD HOLLAND.



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NEW YORK:
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1851. W

TO

JEROME BUONAPARTE,

MARSHAL OF FRANCE,

GOVERNOR OF THE "INVALIDES;"

THE ONLY SURVIVING BROTHER OF THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON;

This Work

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

BY HIS GRATEFUL AND OBLIGED SERVANT,

HOLLAND.

Holland House, May 5, 1850.

P R E F A C E.

THE recent events on the Continent have induced the Editor to publish the following pages on foreign politics. The times of which this volume treats have already acquired the interest of a long past age; and the public will read with pleasure, and perhaps with profit, the observations on passing events of a contemporary who, if not wholly impartial, is acknowledged by all who knew him to have been as candid as he was benevolent.

The Editor has scrupulously abstained from making the slightest verbal alteration in the text or notes. The omission of four insignificant sentences is all that he has deemed necessary for the immediate publication of what was probably written with the intention of not seeing the light so soon.

PARIS, *Sept.* 10, 1850.



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A short account, however desultory, of such persons, anecdotes, or political intrigues in foreign countries, as have fallen within my observation or knowledge, may not be uninteresting. But as a foreigner, however favorable his opportunities or sound his judgment, seldom relates any English event, or describes any English character, without committing some gross blunder, I check myself with the reflection that I also must be liable to be misled by false information, or to form an erroneous estimate of manners, opinions, and transactions out of my own country. I can only vouch for the anecdotes I record, by assuring my readers that I believe them; I repeat them as they were received and understood by me, from what appeared sufficient authority; and I delineate the characters either as the result of my own impressions, or of the opinions conveyed to me by those who were most capable of drawing them correctly.

In my first short journey abroad in 1791, I was a mere boy, and too little acquainted with the habits and language of the people among whom I was traveling to observe much, yet many interesting events were passing around

me. I arrived at Paris not long after the death of Mirabeau, and soon after the acceptance of the constitution by Louis XVI. The designs of Mirabeau to coalesce with the court party, or at least to check the revolutionary spirit, were more than suspected before his death. He was in a constant state of intrigue with all parties, and particularly with Monsieur (Comte de Provence, and afterward Louis XVIII.) in the business of Favras. The Duke of Levi was the channel of communication between him and Monsieur in that mysterious and disgraceful affair. Yet the solicitude of the people during his illness was unabated, and stories almost incredible of the attention of the populace, in preventing the slightest disturbance in the street where he was lying ill, were related in all societies with that delight and admiration which dramatic displays of sentiment never fail to excite in Paris. The shops and quays were crowded with his portraits and busts. A stranger could discern in his physiognomy nothing but visible marks of debauch, vanity, presumption, and artifice, which were strong ingredients in his composition; but the Parisians, yet, stunned by his eloquence, and dazzled by his splendid talents, seemed to dwell on the representation of his large features, pock-fretted face, and frizzed hair, with fond complacency mingled with regret. He was certainly an extraordinary man. That his powers would have been equal, as has often been suggested, either to check or to guide the subsequent course of the French Revolution, may nevertheless be very questionable. He was thought to be, and probably was, very corrupt; but an exemption from that vice was the solitary virtue which gave individuals, and Robespierre in particular, any as-