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Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832) was a prolific Scottish poet and historical novelist who was one of the most popular romantic novelists of the nineteenth century. After studying law at Edinburgh University, Scott first started writing at the age of 25. Having made his name as a poet, he wrote the phenomenally successful novel *Waverley* in 1814 and was made a baronet in 1820. These volumes, first published in 1827, contain Scott's detailed biography of Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821). Including a detailed review of the French Revolution, Scott focuses on Napoleon's legacy to France and his military genius, purposefully remaining non-partisan and discussing Napoleon's life and achievements without bias. The result of extensive research and correspondence with Napoleon's surviving colleagues, these volumes were extremely successful and remain valuable for the study of Napoleon's life and changing public reaction. Volume 1 contains the review of the French Revolution, 1783–1792.

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# The Life of Napoleon Buonaparte, Emperor of the French

*With a Preliminary View  
of the French Revolution*

VOLUME 1

SIR WALTER SCOTT



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THE  
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———— Sed non in Cæsare tantum  
Nomen erat, nec fama ducis ; sed nescia virtus  
Stare loco : solusque pudor non vincere bello.  
Acer et indomitus ; quo spes quoque ira vocasset,  
Ferre manum, et nunquam temerando parcere ferro :  
Successus urgere suos : instare favori  
Numinis : impellens quicquid sibi summa petenti  
Obstaret : gaudensque viam fecisse ruina.

LUCANI *Pharsalia*, Lib. I.

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WITH A  
PRELIMINARY VIEW OF THE FRENCH  
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BY THE AUTHOR OF "WAVERLEY," &c.

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IN NINE VOLUMES.

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THE extent and purpose of this Work, have, in the course of its progress, gradually but essentially changed from what the Author originally proposed. It was at first intended merely as a brief and popular abstract of the life of the most wonderful man, and the most extraordinary events, of the last thirty years ; in short, to emulate the concise yet most interesting history of the great British Admiral, by the Poet-Laureate of Britain. The Author was partly induced to undertake the task, by having formerly drawn up for a periodical work, (*The Edinburgh Annual Register*,) the history of the two great campaigns of

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1814 and 1815; \* and three volumes were the compass assigned to the proposed work. An introductory volume, giving a general account of the Rise and Progress of the French Revolution, was thought necessary; and the single volume, on a theme of such extent, soon swelled into two.

As the Author composed under an anonymous title, he could neither seek nor expect information from those who had been actively engaged in the changeful scenes which he was attempting to record; nor was his object more ambitious than that of compressing and arranging such information as the ordinary authorities afforded. Circumstances, however, unconnected with the undertaking, induced him to lay aside an *incognito*, any farther attempt to preserve which must have been considered as affectation; and since his having

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\* Several extracts from these Annals have been blended with the present account of the same events.

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done so, he has been favoured with access to some valuable materials, most of which have now, for the first time, seen the light. For these he refers to the Appendix at the close of the Work, where the reader will find several articles of novelty and interest. Though not at liberty in every case to mention the quarter from which his information has been derived, the Author has been careful not to rely upon any which did not come from sufficient authority. He has neither grubbed for anecdotes in the libels and private scandal of the time, nor has he solicited information from individuals who could not be impartial witnesses in the facts to which they gave evidence. Yet the various public documents and private information which he has received, have much enlarged his stock of materials, and increased the whole work to more than twice the size originally intended.

On the execution of his task, it becomes the Author to be silent. He is aware it must

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exhibit many faults; but he claims credit for having brought to the undertaking a mind disposed to do his subject as impartial justice as his judgment could supply. He will be found no enemy to the person of Napoleon. The term of hostility is ended when the battle has been won, and the foe exists no longer. His splendid personal qualities—his great military actions and political services to France, will not, it is hoped, be found depreciated in the narrative. Unhappily, the Author's task involved a duty of another kind, the discharge of which is due to France, to Britain, to Europe, and to the world. If the general system of Napoleon has rested upon force or fraud, it is neither the greatness of his talents, nor the success of his undertakings, that ought to stifle the voice or dazzle the eyes of him who adventures to be his historian. The reasons, however, are carefully summed up where the Author has presumed to express a favourable or unfavourable opinion

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of the distinguished person of whom these volumes treat ; so that each reader may judge of their validity for himself.

The name, by an original error of the press, which proceeded too far before it was discovered, has been printed with a *u*,—Buonaparte instead of Bonaparte. Both spellings were indifferently adopted in the family ; but Napoleon always used the last, and had an unquestionable right to choose the orthography which he preferred.

EDINBURGH, *7th June*, 1827.

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