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## THE NAPOLEON COTERIE.

There was a large attendance at the gathering held under the auspices of the Napoleon Coterie at the R.B.N.A. Club on Friday, May 5th, the anniversary of Napoleon's death.

Mr. REGINALD WILSON, Hon. Secretary of the British Empire Union, first gave a short account of the work and objects of that body, one of which is to foster friendly relations with the French nation. It had gratified him to be asked to speak that afternoon as he had the greatest admiration for Napoleon and could well remember his first visit to Paris when he looked down on the wonderful tomb at Les Invalides. People, said Mr. Wilson, were so inclined to look upon Napoleon as only a man of battles, a man of great military successes. Napoleon was a great man in every respect, and we might learn many lessons from a study of his character. We heard talk of Bolshevism, of Communism, people were heard to say helplessly "What can I do?" "Get up and fight"; that, said Mr. Wilson, is the thing to do. Napoleon metaphorically got up immediately and hit his enemies in the jaw when they tried to take away privileges he had won for France. Napoleon knew too that the finest form of defence is attack. Napoleon never admitted defeat.

MAJOR RIGG gave an account of the Napoleon Coterie and its objects. It was doing all that it could to disseminate knowledge about Napoleon and to educate the present generation to his wonderful qualities as a statesman. Napoleon was the child of the Revolution, and the democratic principles which he stood for have now become established for all time. His was the task of restoring good government to France, the task of recreating morality there, of establishing security of life and property, of restoring religion and law, and the amount of work he accomplished in a short time is unequalled in the history of the world. The Palace at Malmaison is a sanctuary of human effort. When he assumed power, France was in a state of anarchy, torn asunder by rival factions. There were no police, there was no morality. Men and women walked naked in the streets of Paris, and the provinces were given over to brigandage. Napoleon had the difficult task of setting right the whole system of government, and he set up one admirably

suited for the time. Consuls and the Council of State met daily, and the rooms in which they met were close together, so that the First Consul could pass quickly from one to the other, and monumental was the work he achieved. The Code Napoleon will survive for all time, and is extraordinarily far reaching in its provisions; it enforces equality and makes for stability.

Some idea of Napoleon's energy is shown by the following events and the dates on which they took place. On October 4th, 1801, Napoleon signed the decree that gave back the churches to the Church. Two days later he received at the Tuileries Cardinal Caprara as Legate of the Holy See. On January 8th, 1802, in the Council of State, he recalled a great number of emigrants from exile. On the 26th of the same month, he accepted the Presidency of the Italian Republic, the dearest object of his life being the unity of the country from which he sprang. On April 16th, 1802, the Bishops and Archbishops who were to be at the head of the French Church were nominated; on the 17th of that month, treaties, concluded at Amiens with England, Spain and the Batavian Republic were ratified; on the following day the Concordat was solemnly promulgated. What greater service could a sovereign render to his country than to restore to her the peace which nine years before had been broken by anarchy and the religion too, which, for ten years, had been mercilessly trodden under foot? On May 4th, 1802, Napoleon was made Consul for Life, an important recognition of the benefits which his country had received at his hands. Often Napoleon has been spoken of as a Man of War; very frequently he was a passionate Apostle of Peace. That Pitt the younger might have given this peace there is not the slightest doubt. Had Charles James Fox lived a little longer peace would have been achieved. Napoleon always regarded his death as the greatest catastrophe of his own life. Napoleon was made Emperor of Elba, and there he might have remained if the French King had not neglected to carry out his undertaking. He did neglect to and Napoleon set out on a campaign worthy of his genius. Britain had said she would accept the choice of the French nation, and Napoleon determined to convince both Liverpool and Castle-reagh of what the will of the people was. He landed with only a thousand men and no horses,

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)