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The notes that the 5th Earl Stanhope collected during his intimate friendship with the 1st Duke of Wellington, form an interesting and entertaining addition to the publications of the period and in particular the character and thoughts of the Duke himself. They are chronologically organised, in almost diarised format, and are clearly contemporaneous, Stanhope avoids adding much input of his own to the text, leaving the Duke words to be recorded verbatim. Although published after the Duke's death they are scrupulously cross-referenced with other publications such as the Croker Papers and the Greville memoirs which lends authenticity to the work. There is also a uniformity of character and phrase in the words that Wellington is quoted as saying, so as to lose none of their wit, verve, conservatism and in many cases severity of judgement. Stanhope, himself was no mean scholar, and a champion for the arts being a driving force behind the National Gallery in London. The text contains many insights into how Wellington viewed the world, his allies, and enemies, both political and on the field of battle. The anecdotes feature no less persons than the arch-schemer Prince Talleyrand, Prince Metternich, Field Marshal Blucher, Generals Gneisenau, Picton and Alava, the Royal families of Great Britain and France, Austria, Sir Robert Peel, Lord Castlereagh et al. Of particular interest are his views on the campaigns that made him famous and particularly of Napoleon; just to quote one example of the text 'I have heard, Sir, from military men that Napoleon's campaign to defend Paris was one of his most skilful?--"Excellent--quite excellent. The study of it has given me a greater idea of his genius than any other. Had he continued that system a little while longer, it is my opinion that he would have saved Paris. But he wanted patience--he did not see the necessity of adhering to defensive warfare.' Highly recommended

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