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Nota di contenuto	Intro -- PREFACE. -- SUDBOURN. -- Power of the priests in Spain-King Ferdinand and the Juntas-Lord Peterborough-Battlefields-Marlborough's advance on Paris-Don Juan de Halen-Jovellanos-- Talleyrand-The Bristol Riots-Coining money for the army-Soult and St. Simon-The Allies at Paris-Napoleon's plan for the defence of Paris-Marmont-Napoleon's genius-French, English, and Spanish soldiers-Baylen-Palafox-Romana -Sylveira-Sir R. Donkin's message at Talavera-Sir John Moore's campaign-Lord Londonderry in Vienna-Napoleon's Parisian campai -- FROM DEAL CASTLE. -- Deal Castle.-Napoleon's march from Cannes to Paris-Marching in India-The Guards and the Line-Drunkenness in the English army-Military punishments-Promotion from the ranks. -- DINNER AT WALMER CASTLE. -- Dinner at Walmer Castle.-The Belgian troops-Napoleon at Waterloo-Soult-Massena, the ablest of Napoleon's Generals -Story of the French spy-The Duke's plans after Toulouse-Spanish troops-How the Duke won a battle for them-Baylen-Medina de Rio Seco-Romana-La Valette's Memoirs-Napoleon's memory. -- BUCK-HUNTING AT WALDERSHARE PARK. -- Size of soldiers-Good marchers-Napoleon's escape from Elba-The Congress of Vienna-St. Helena -- SAME DAY, DINNER AT WALMER CASTLE. -- Madness and Madmen-General * * * -Lord Castlereagh -- Dover and Walmer Castle.-Duke of Wellington and Marlborough -

Coincidences in their lives-Alava's horror of cold meat-George IV.'s memory-Lord Byron and Democracy-Lord Brougham-Lord J. Russell and the Reform Bill. -- DINNER AT WALMER CASTLE.
Dinner at Walmer Castle.-Contagion and infection-Marlborough's letters-His difficulties with the Allies-Marlborough and Napoleon-Waterloo and Malplaquet-Loss of confidence in Napoleon-Louis XVIII.-Charles X.-Louis XVIII.'s diseased state-The Reform Bill-English and French mobs-Letter to Mr. Foster on prospects of Ireland-Lord Mahon's contest at Hertford and journey abroad. -- WALK WITH THE DUKE AT WALMER. -- Walk with the Duke.-The early life of Louis Philippe-Egalite-Comparison of Louis XVIII. and Charles X.-Prospects of European peace-Louis Philippe's ability-His position-Affairs of Spain-George Villiers-Zea Bermudez-Sir S. Canning's instructions-The Congress in Bohemia-Reminiscences of Rolica and Vimiera-Don Bernardin Freire-Duc Mathieu de Montmorency. -- DINNER AT WALMER CASTLE TO MEET PRINCE GEORGE OF CAMBRIDGE. -- Dinner at Walmer Castle.-Disturbed times and able men-Education-Villele-Lord Castlereagh's readiness in debate-Compared with Canning-Wealth of the Dutch-Spanish affairs-Value of Corporations-The Catholic question-The Duke asked to go to Ireland-Catholic Emancipation in Ireland-The Union-Massena, the ablest of Napoleon's Generals-Anecdotes of Cuesta-Fighting against superior numbers in the Peninsula-Numbers killed at Waterloo-Duke of Orleans. -- AT STRATHFIELDSAYE, 1834. -- Strathfieldsaye.-Spanish affairs-Tendency to independence in provinces-Ferdinand VII.'s reversal of Salic law-Louis XVIII.'s flight-Excellence of the Duke's Indian despatches-The ford at Assaye-The statue near Seringapatam-Shooting at St. Germains and Versailles-Casper Hauser-Savages -A "Wild Irishman"-Andaman Islanders-Severe cold in Spain before Salamanca-Cost of travelling in Spain-O'Lawler's comments-The Cabildo-Prospects of union with Portugal-Don Carlos and the priests-The Spanish army-Nap -- LONDON.
London.-Charles . X. and James II.-The Duke's Indian Despatches-The Duke's long rides in India-Siege of Gameghur-Colonel Murray-In Guzerat and at Tarragona-Suchet and St. Cyr-Napier's History-Unfounded statements -Story of Mr. Canning and the Portuguese troops before Waterloo-Napoleon's army at Waterloo-His errors-The subsistence of troops-Criticism of Napoleon's generalship-The Advance on Paris in 1815-Correspondence about Indian Despatches-Marriage of Lord Stanhope-The Duke's "brief Dictatorsh -- DEAL. -- Deal.-The French Revolutionists-Pasquier and Robespierre-Philippe Egalite-Napoleon and Berthier-Grouchy's position at Waterloo-Soult and Napoleon-Escape from Elba-Memoirs of James II.-Charles I. and Charles II.-Clarendon's History-Treatment of Napoleon at St. Helena-Mr. Leith of Deal-Lady W. Bentinck and her doctors-Picton-Miranda's mention of him-His subsequent career-Miranda's plan for S. America-Dumouriez-The Duke's management of him-One of the Duke's maxims-Don Carlos and his generals- Frenc -- LONDON. -- London.-Attempt on the life of Louis Philippe-Assassinations -Attempts on the Duke's own life, in Paris, & c.-Lord Kinnaird-Publication of Vol. vi. of Despatches-The French at Santarem-Discovery of cyphers-General Imaz at Badajos -- DEAL. -- Deal.-Relative age-Madrid and the Cortes-Madrid compared to Canterbury-Maria Pepa and the Queen of Spain-Grandees -Character of Marlborough-Royal establishments in France and England-Colonel Woodford's excavations at Agincourt-The Duke's proceedings after Waterloo-Martello towers and coast defences-The war in La Vendee-The King of the Netherlands-Clerks in the English and French War Offices-Balloons in war-time-Balloons and

boats-The Duke's computations of his soldiers killed in Spain-Lady Salis -- STRATHFIELDSAYE.

Strathfieldsaye.-French reverse at Constantine-Deterioration of French soldiers since the time of Napoleon-The cause D'Argenton-Charles X.-Anecdote of Comte d'Artois and Prince de Conde-The latter at Waterloo. -- LONDON. -- London.-Correspondence about diplomatic relations between England and Rome-Don Sebastian's expedition-Difficulty of moving troops in Spain-Characteristics and peculiarities of Napoleon-Marmont's travels-Prince Polignac-Ducs de Berri and d'Angouleme . -- WALMER. -- Walmer and Deal.-Mots of Talleyrand about Chateaubriand-and Duc d'Orleans-French officers and their glasses-Anecdote about Bradshaw-Lockhart's "Life of Scott"-Charles V. and Francis I.-Sir Walter Scott-The Duke's memoir on Napoleon's Russian campaign-The Duke's criticisms on the retreat from Moscow-Napoleon's impatience-"We starved him out in Spain"-Queen Hortense-Napoleon not a personality but a principle-Anecdote of Talleyrand-The Duke's good health-Louis XVIII.-The despatches, vols. viii.-ix. -- STRATHFIELDSAYE. -- Strathfieldsaye.-The Reform Bill-Affairs of Portugal-Marshal Wrede's information about Napoleon's campaign of 1809-Samuel Rogers-The monastery of San Juste-Anecdote of Mr. Pitt and the volunteers-Rogers' pun-First news of Waterloo-Croker and the Duchesse d'Angouleme-The Escurial-Lord Byron's speech-Increase of population in England-Birth of Lord Stanhope's eldest son . -- WALMER.

Walmer.-Importance of roads from a military point of view-Roads in Portugal-Lord Brougham burnt in Effigy-The Duke rescued from a similar fate-Sir F. Chantrey on models -Lady Dillon's mot-Reminiscences of Mr. Pitt-His ascendancy over Erskine-General Gneisenau-Strategy and tactics-The Prussians in France-The Pont de Jena affair-Blucher's madness-a strange hallucination-The French in Algiers-Lord Brougham as a mimic-The Prince of the Peace-Alava -His reminiscences of Waterloo-Was present at Waterl -- OAKLEY PARK, SUFFOLK. -- Oakley Park, Suffolk.-Correspondence about proposed College of Agriculture in Kent. -- LONDON. -- London.-The history of "the Portfolio"-Prince Lieven-Backhouse and Urquhart-Lord Douro's marriage-The Duke's speech on Lord Ebrington's appointment-His political difficulties-Contrast between the Duke and the Marquess Wellesley-Christening of Lord Mahon's son-The Jamaica Bill, and consequent ministerial crisis-The Duke's coolness in a crisis-Compared with Lord Althorp-Joseph Hume and his constituents-Debate in House of Lords-Lord Melbourne and the Duke's speeches-The Duke of Cumberland's prejudi -- WALMER CASTLE. -- Walmer Castle.-The Duke's letter written during his retreat to Torres Vedras-Talleyrand's description of E. Ellice-Lord Macaulay's criticism of his own speech-Duke's estimate of English and French cavalry-Ouvrard's reminiscences-Duke's return from Windsor-Anecdotes of Sheridan-Talleyrand and his creditors-Revolutionary movements and great men-Talleyrand and Don Carlos' escape-The Duke's experiences of Don Carlos-Society in France and England-The Marquess Wellesley-Marlborough and Sunderland -- and -- LONDON.

London 1840.-Privilege-The precedence of Prince Albert-Renewed illness-The Duke's anxiety about public affairs-L'exactitude est la politesse des rois-Pay of soldiers in India-Shroffs-The theatre in Paris-Les Anglaises pour rire-Le tyran de Cambray-Madame de Staél-Richness of the Old French Court-Lord Dudley and the Duke of Sussex-The Duke's exposure of himself to danger in battle-The Duke of Richmond at Waterloo-The British troops at Hougoumont and at La Haye Sainte-Lord Fitzroy Somerset's wound.

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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