Now that we have had before our eyes all the diplomatic documents concerning the negotiations vainly begun by the various cabinets of Europe, with the aim of avoiding the war in Russia, we believe it necessary, to complete this *appendix*, to return to the text of the note inserted at the bottom of page 255 of chapter IV of our book, in which we said that Fouché had shown himself very much opposed to the Russian campaign, and that he had, on this subject, composed a memorandum intended to be placed before the eyes of the Emperor. Now, it is of this famous memorandum, and even more of the manner in which Napoleon came to know of it before it was presented to him by its author, that we are going to speak.

Indeed, the Duke of Otranto, in a long work entitled: *Expedition of Russia; memorandum to consult*, had coordinated all his ideas on the dangers that there would be for the emperor and the stability of his government to engage in this distant expedition, "*which,*" he said with reason, "*could not resemble any other.*" The Duke of Otranto, we say, had only to put this report in order.

It was divided into three parts: the first dealt with the inopportunity of the war in Russia, and Fouché drew his main arguments from the risks that there would be in undertaking it at the very moment when the war in Spain, instead of sputtering out, ignited even more. Fouché established, by examples, that it was a combination completely contrary to the rules of the policy consecrated even by the conquering nations. In the second part, he treated of the difficulties of this war in itself and deduced his reasoning from the nature of the country, and from the spirit of its inhabitants, under the double point of view of the lords and the people. Nor had he forgotten the character of the Emperor Alexander, whom he was justified in believing ill-judged or misunderstood. Finally, in the third and last part, he made open the probable consequences of this war, in the two hypotheses of a complete success or a great setback. In the first case, Fouché established that claiming to arrive at universal monarchy by the conquest of Russia, backed by China, was only a brilliant chimera; that, from Moscow, the victor would incontestably want to fall back on Constantinople first, then from Constantinople on the Ganges, as a result of this irresistible dash which had formerly impelled Alexander the Great, and a genius far superior to that of the Macedonian, the Roman Julius Caesar, who, on the eve of undertaking the Parthian War (the Russians of that time), had nurtured the wild hope of making, with his victorious legions, the famous world tour.

We can well imagine that with such a text, the Duke of Otranto could not remain below his subject, from the point of view of general considerations. So he said to the Emperor, in this memo: "*Sire, Your Majesty is in possession of the most beautiful monarchy on earth; will you constantly want to extend its limits, to leave to less strong arms than his legacy of interminable war? The lessons of history reject the thought of a universal monarchy. Sire, take care that too much confidence in your military genius does not cause you to cross the limits of nature and collide with all the precepts of Wisdom. It is time to stop. You have reached, Sire, that point in your career where all you have acquired becomes more desirable than what further efforts could yet bring to Your Majesty. Any further extension of your dominion, Sire, is bound up with an obvious danger, not only for France, already overwhelmed under the weight of her own conquests, but also for the well-understood interest of your glory and your safety. All that the domination of Your Majesty would gain in extent,*
it would lose it in solidity. Stop, Sire, it is time; finally enjoy a destiny which is the most brilliant of all those which, in our modern times, the order of civilization has allowed a genius as powerful as yours to desire and possess."

Fouché said again, in conclusion:

"Whatever your successes, Sire, the Russians will dispute with you step by step these difficult countries where you will find nothing that feeds the war. You will have to pull everything from three hundred leagues. While you will have to fight thirty battles, perhaps half of your army will be employed in covering communications that are too weak, interrupted, threatened and cut off by clouds of Cosaques. Sire, I conjure you, in the name of your glory, in the name of your safety. and that of your Empire, put the sword back in its sheath; think of Charles XII. This prince, it is true, could not dispose, like your Majesty, of two thirds of Europe and an army of six hundred thousand men; but, on his side, the Czar Peter did not have three hundred thousand men and fifty thousand Baskirs. He had, you will say, a soul of iron, and nature has bestowed the mildest character on him. Emperor Alexander; but make no mistake, gentleness does not exclude firmness of soul, on everything when it comes to such powerful interests. Besides, will you not have against you a fanatical people, hardened soldiers, and the intrigues of the cabinet of Saint-James? Already, if Sweden has escaped you, it is solely through the influence of its gold. Fear that these irreconcilable islanders will shake the loyalty of your allies;" etc.

This memorandum transcribed, Fouché asked the Emperor for an audience, which Napoleon granted him on the spot. Introduced into the Imperial Cabinet:

"Here you are, Monsieur Duke," said the Emperor immediately, "I know what brings you here: you have come to present your memo to me."

"Sire, how can your Majesty know?..."

“I know; but no matter, give it to me, I'll read it. I already knew that the war in Russia was no more to your taste than that in Spain.”

“Sire, I do not think, it is true, that the war in Spain is so successful, that one can fight at the same time and without danger beyond the Pyrenees and beyond the Niemen. The desire and the need to see your Majesty's power strengthened forever, gave me the courage to submit to you some observations on the present crisis.”

At these words, Napoleon protested and said to Fouché, with his curt words and a certain vehemence:

"There is no crisis; this is a purely political war; you cannot judge my position, nor the whole of Europe. Since my marriage, it was believed that the lion slumbered. Well, we'll see. Spain will fall as soon as I have annihilated English influence in St. Petersburg. I needed six hundred thousand men, and I have them; I'm towing all of Europe in my wake. Didn't you tell me in the past that you make genius consist in finding nothing impossible? rule according to the opinion of the army and of the people, more than by yours, gentlemen, who are too rich and who only tremble for me because you fear a debacle. Be without anxiety; look at the war in Russia. like that of common sense, of true interests, of rest and of everyone's security. Besides, I want to finish what I have only sketched out. We need a co European, the same
currency, the same weights and measures; I must make all the peoples of Europe the same people, and Paris the capital of the world. That, Monsieur Duke, is the bottom line that suits me. Today you are not serving me well, because you imagined that everything was going to be called into question; but before a year, you will serve me with the same zeal and the same ardor as in the times of Marengo and Austerlitz. You'll see even better than all that, I'm telling you. Farewell, Duke. Do not be disgraced or rebellious, and in the future have a little more confidence in me."

Fouché, after making a deep bow, retired dumbfounded, stupefied: but, somewhat recovered from the sort of bewilderment which this singular reception had caused him, he reflected on the means which had been employed to ensure that the Emperor was so exactly informed of the object of his approach. Conceiving nothing of it, he ran to the Counselor of State Malouet, his friend, thinking that perhaps some involuntary indiscretion on his part had put one of the Emperor's secret correspondents on the path. Fouché explained it to him; but soon convinced by Malouet's protestations that nothing of this kind had escaped him, he found the incident all the more bizarre, as his suspicions could not be directed to a third party. "How could the Emperor," said the ex-minister to himself, "have known that I had to present a memorandum to him? So I was spied on inside!" Suddenly there came to him a flash of light: he remembered that one day a man had entered his house, without giving his valet time to announce him, and that he had helped himself of a specious pretext to maintain it. Fouché immediately inferred from this insignificant circumstance, and after having rallied several clues, that this individual was none other than an emissary. Summing up everything that had happened, his suspicions took shape. He went to the investigations, and learned that this emissary, named B ***, was a former emigrant who had bought, near his castle, a modest estate which he had not even finished paying for, and that, although he was mayor of his commune, he was, moreover, only an intriguer. Fouché procured his handwriting, and recognized it to be that of one of his former agents, charged in London with spying on the Bourbons and the chiefs of the Chouans. He found his correspondence number, and this data was enough for him to get his hands on this man's reports in the offices. A dedicated employee took charge of clearing everything up; he succeeded, and this is what happened:

Savary, having received from Napoleon the injunction to report to him on what the Duke of Otranto was doing in his castle of Ferrières, warned the Emperor that the investigation was of a delicate nature, the ex-minister being invisible to all foreigners, no one, even people from the past, having access to him. However, after some research, Savary cast his eyes on the Monsieur B ***, summoned this man, who was of a gracious manner, of an insinuating character and never discouraged, and said to him:

"Monsieur, you are mayor of your commune; you know the Duke of Otranto, or at least you have been in touch with him? So you must have formed an idea of his character and his habits: you must tell me of what he is doing at Ferrières; it is absolutely necessary, the Emperor wants to know." "Monseigneur," replied B***, "you are giving me a commission which is difficult to fulfill, I even regard it as impossible. You know the personage; he is distrustful, suspicious and always on his guard; he is, moreover, inaccessible: how and under what pretext could I enter his house?" To this the minister replied, "this mission, to which the Emperor attaches great importance. Go, and do not return without result; I give you eight days."

B***, very embarrassed, came to Ferrières, got information, and learned, indirectly, that one of Fouché's farmers was being prosecuted by the latter's businessman, for complication of
arrears of rent. He went to see the poor devil, circumvented him, and, feigning great interest, obtained some documents from him. Provided with these papers, he presented himself, with neat attire, at the gate of the chateau of the ex-minister, announcing himself as being the mayor of a neighboring commune, who took to heart the unfortunate position of a family unfairly prosecuted. Stopping first at the gate, he cajoled the concierge, who let him enter as far as the steps. There, Fouché's valet prevented him from entering the apartment. Without being discouraged, B *** prayed, became urgent, and obtained to be announced; but at the moment when the zealous servant opened the door of his master's study, he pushed him aside and presented himself. The Duke d'Otrante was seated, pen in hand, in front of his desk.

The sudden arrival of this stranger surprised him; he asked him what he wanted from him: "Monseigneur," said B *** to him, "I come to ask you for a pardon, a very urgent act of justice and humanity; I beg Your Excellency to save from a ruin total an unfortunate father of a family." And here, B *** used all his rhetoric to touch the Duke in favor of his client, by explaining the whole affair to him very well. After a moment's hesitation, the latter got up to fetch the papers relating to his rents from a box; but while, his back turned, he was looking for these documents, B ***, without ceasing to speak, managed, although reading backwards, to decipher a few lines of writing in a notebook, and what struck him above all, it was these words written in large letters: Expedition of Russia, as well as the initials H. I. M. and K., which stood out; he necessarily drew the inference from it that the Duke of Otranto was busy with a memo intended to be presented to the Emperor. Returning to his office a few minutes later, and seduced by the fine words of this man, Fouché settled the matter with him, to the satisfaction of his client, and dismissed him, testifying to the pleasure he felt that he had been treated, provided an opportunity to do a commendable deed.

B *** went out and ran to tell Savary what he had seen; the latter hastened to inform the Emperor.

As for Fouché, he has since confessed in his Memorandum that when the details of this mystification became well known to him, he was stung to the quick. "I had difficulty in forgiving myself," he said, "for having been thus played by a rogue from whom, for a long time, I had received secret reports from London, and for whose benefit I ordered each year one like twelve thousand francs."

This famous memo of Fouché, of which we have given an extract above, was printed and published in 1814, after the Restoration. It had a great impact and contributed not a little to attracting in its author the confidence which Louis XVIII subsequently showed him, and which the Duke of Otrante was able to recognize in his own way, the following year, on his return of Napoleon from the island of Elba.