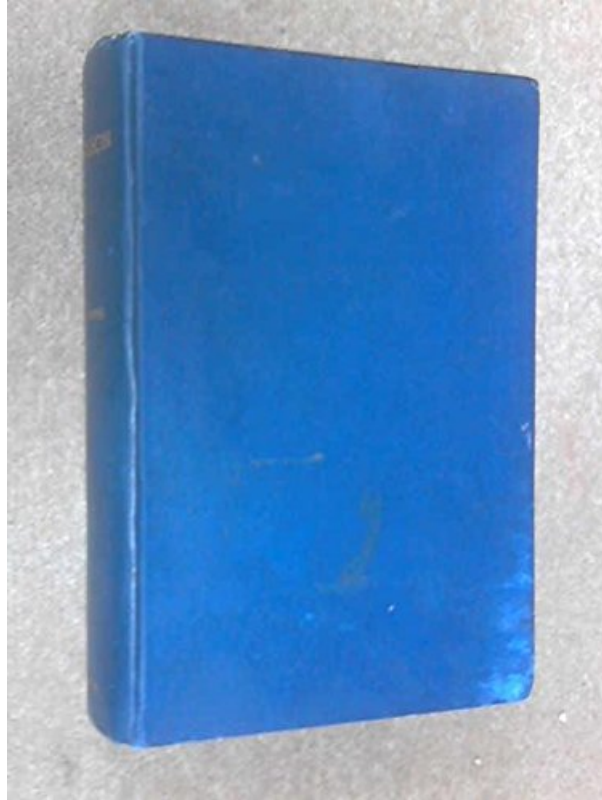
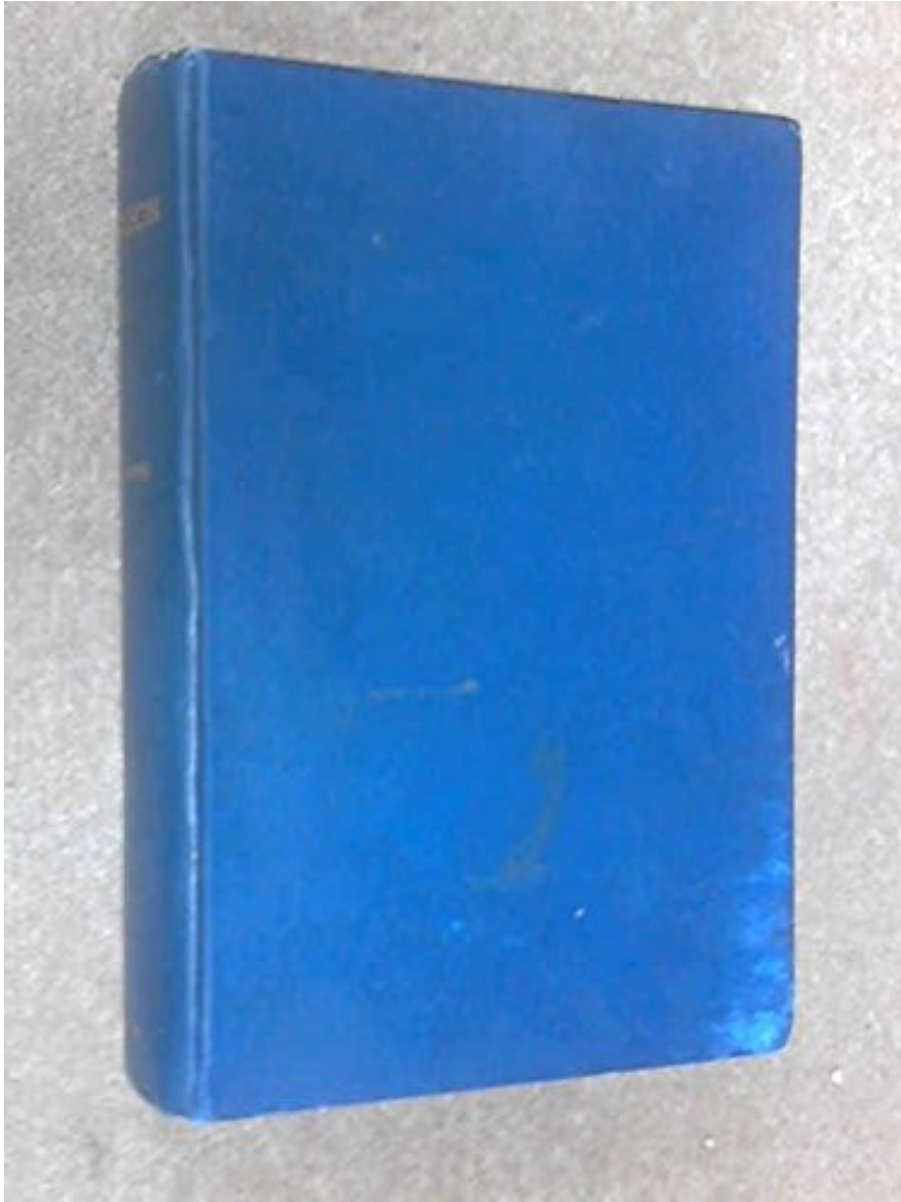


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### **About the Author**

Emil Ludwig (1881 1948) was a German writer internationally known for his many bestselling biographies, including works on Goethe and Napoleon. He was part of the new school of biographical writing, which emphasized the personality of the subject.

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1926. Translated by Eden and Cedar Paul. Ludwig studied law but chose writing as a career. At first he wrote plays and novella, but also worked as a journalist. In 1906 he moved to Switzerland but during World War I he worked as a foreign correspondent for the Berliner Tageblatt in Vienna and Istanbul. During the 1920s he achieved international fame for his popular biographies which combined historical fact and fiction with psychological analysis. Emil Ludwig's biography of Napoleon continues its remarkable presence as a classic of Napoleonic literature and has yet to be surpassed for its unique presentation. Writing in the present tense, Ludwig brings to life his subject's character better than any other biography of Napoleon. The book is divided into five books: One, The Island; Two, The Torrent; Three, The River; Four, The Sea; and Five, The Rock. See other titles by this author available from Kessinger Publishing.

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napoleon

By dhirender

NAPOLEON

BY EMIL LUDWIG

Reviewed by Dhirender K Singh

Emil Ludwig's biography of Napoleon continues its remarkable presence as a classic of Napoleonic literature and has yet to be surpassed for its unique presentation writing in the present tense. Ludwig brings to life his subjects character better than any other biography of Napoleon.

Ludwig (1881-1948) was 45 and living in Germany when he published "Napoleon" in 1926, and the work was translated and published in the following year, before he turned 30. Ludwig, wrote 12 plays, half of which were produced, and one of them featuring Napoleon. Following the publication of the Napoleon several other biographies by Ludwig were translated into English including Jesus, Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt and Beethoven.

The biography is divided into five books one, "The Island"(birth to marriage); two "The Torrent"(army of Italy to first counsel); Three, "The River"(Marengo to birth of Napoleon 11); four, "The Sea" (Russia to Waterloo); and Five, "The Rock" (St Helena) Each book begins with a quote from "Goethe". Although Ludwig does not include a bibliography, the concluding four pages, the "Envoy", he states, "In this book, all

the data are recorded facts, except the soliloquies." He had the "brilliant technique" and the ability to "analyze character so admirably. Infact he is the student of character

Ludwig`s admiration for Napoleon is mainly intellectual, though morally he is prepared to go farther in his support than many critics. He has tried to write the inner history of Napoleon and has put minor attention to the battles and campaigns .His self confidence confers on him a natural dignity that amazes and angers the legitimist world, which believes dignity to be consonant only with heredity and culture .His energy is concentrated on human beings. Very rarely does he come into conflict with natural forces; and whenever he does so, he is beaten. The imaginative power is also the source of his knowledge of men and his guide to the management of men . And finally the affect underlying his energy and his imagination are dominated by the clarity of his thoughts.

His work reads like a novel instead of like a history book. Ludwig has an extraordinary capacity for seeing and judging the "true inwardness "of people and events." Ludwig became a Swiss citizen in 1932 and at the time of his death in 1948 had several biographies in progress including Alexander, Karl William von Humboldt and King David .His Napoleon earned a solid place among Napoleonic biographies and continues to have an impact today.

In this book Emil Ludwig tried to write the inner story of Napoleon. He is one of the most illuminating figure in modern history .he was a man of extraordinary qualities and at the same time suffered from extraordinary failings .His ambition was power, his dream, a vast empire, and his passion, wars and victories. People loved him and presented him with power, gave him their sons to satisfy his passion for continuous warfare till he exhausted France of her manpower. Great Kingdoms collapsed before him and all Europe trembled at his name .He terrorized many Kings into subjugation till he was subjugated himself in a fateful battle and met his end in a tragic manner as the `Prisoner of Europe"

Here is the story of this dauntless man, the story of great French Revolution from which this brilliant commander emerged; the story of his striking military campaigns, his mighty war and conquests, his colorful love affairs and the woman who ruled him; and the story of intrigues that surrounded him and led to his downfall.

Napoleon was a great artilleryist with an inherited versatility and vigorous imagination he had a very strong family feelings .his rational reasoning, clannishness, cosmopolitan nature, intrigues plans demean our and venture work always inspired his men. His ability and affection of soldiers enabled him to usurp the command. His confidence level was very high and he thus refused to work under General Killerman (considered the best general at that time) He said, "One bad general is better to two good Generals.

The book also portrays him as a great lover and an immaculate politician. His love for Josephine was so deep that the last word s he spoke prior to dying was Josephine. He created and structured his constituency in a very effective manner. He promulgated strict canons and was very harsh upon the culprits. His decisions were adamant, but dealt leniently with two German women, who appealed straight to his heart.

The book also says that he slanders as well as the tough talented who led one of the greatest armies in military history. Men, who marched the length and breadth of Europe, entered every capitol of continental Europe as conquerors. He was the great soldier, he had enemies all round. There were three attempts on his life but he escaped all the times .His attempts to step out of Europe were thwarted by intrinsic chaos.

This book has an enormous temporal of Napoleon's experiences and makes interesting reading .The momentum of the novel slows down after Napoleon's marriage .The great battles won are written very systematically with great expounding, but the ploys adopted are not mentioned .The book has nicely brought out the complete biography of Napoleon in an exemplary manner .It has been felt that Napoleon would have achieved much more, had France supported him in his ploys.

11 of 12 people found the following review helpful.

A moving and masterful portrait of Bonaparte

By Dimitrios

Emil Ludwig's work remains classic despite its age. It is true that the book does not have the maps which

would help the reader to locate the geographical dimension of Napoleon's career and actions, and the author does not include dates inside his text, but if someone wants a pure operational history of the French armies can look to the appropriate atlases like that of V. Esposito and J. Elting, or the magnificent "The Campaigns of Napoleon" by David Chandler. The main merit of Ludwig's book is its immediacy, the clarity of Napoleon's thoughts and decision making and of course the excellent writing which has an astonishing freshness no matter how many times one reads the book. By setting himself free from the grip of time and place Ludwig can build his story like a fairy tale, which I found truly remarkable and unusual. There are many studies regarding Napoleon as a man and a general, but this one is definitely one of the best.

8 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

An odd book, a strange focus, and uneven result

By David W. Nicholas

This book has a strange history with me. Many years ago, perhaps as long as 30, my mother told me that when she was young she had read a long, detailed biography of Napoleon. I thought nothing of this, beyond noting that she was precocious. Apparently this was when she was in her early teens. Some years later (say 15 years ago, or so) a friend of mine saw this biography of Napoleon in a used bookstore and bought it for me. The edition he bought was large, had a black cover, and had been published in the early 20s. I put the book away, intending to get to it, but never did. A few years later, my mother bought me a copy of this same biography out of a catalog, in a different edition from a few years later. The edition she bought me this time had a dust jacket, yellow in color, with a picture of Napoleon scowling off to one side, hand thrust in his jacket. A few years later, forgetting she'd already gotten me the book, she bought it for me again, and this time she got me the edition that my friend had bought me years before. This was when I discovered that I had three copies of the book. I decided I should probably read one of them, at least.

I can find out nothing about the author. His name, and writing style, sound European, perhaps German, perhaps something similar like Swiss. He apparently wrote a slew of biographies in the 30s and 40s. This is, to judge by the responses to his various books, the one people have read the most.

First thing to get out of the way when discussing the book is the usual qualification of what this book is, and what it isn't. Ludwig included a 4 page section at the end where he explains why he did what he did, and one of the things he says is that he finds the courses of the Emperor's various battles to be "irrelevant". He's fascinated by Napoleon's personal life, and even more interested in his view of the world and his vision for France and Europe. As a result, he spends almost no space in the book on the various campaigns of one of history's great captains: he tells you that any number of Napoleon's generals fought battles also, but what makes the Emperor unique was what he did between those battles: the Code Napoleon, the restructuring of Germany and Italy, that sort of thing.

This is true, and if that were the limit of this book I expect I would be giving it a higher rating. There are, however, two things which make the book strange to say the least. One is the author's use of the present tense for all of the events he recounts. I've run across this before (Jonathan D. Spence does it a lot), but it seemed strange and forced here. Perhaps it had something to do with the passage of more than 80 years since this book was written. The second strange thing is that the author feels the need to add what he calls soliloquies to the text, monologues that he imagines Napoleon might have given in a particular instance if he were so inclined. The afterword makes it clear that Ludwig invented these, and defends his decision by arguing that his flights of imagination are needed to fill in the gaps in Bonaparte's personality that aren't readily filled.

The result is a strange mix of biography and novel, with a lot more dialog than in a typical biography. It's an interesting book, but the reader must be aware that if you're looking for a study of Napoleon the general, this isn't the place to go.

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