

London

TH/11/15

Tuesday 8th June 1802

It is so long since I received a letter from you, that I begin to think my last misdirected or that it was suppressed, as containing an account of the conspiracy against Bonaparte - for the Government here are very anxious to make us believe that there was no foundation for the several rumours which have been afloat - the secrecy in political affairs, & the consequent ignorance of the Parisians at large is amazing to an Englishman - but you may depend upon the account I give you (if you have received it) being true both respect to the circumstances - as for the designs of the conspirators, it is impossible for me to contradict the French Government - if they say Bonaparte's life was ^{not} threatened, it is not in my power to prove the contrary - but I do not pin my belief on Manifestoes I saw the First Consul last Friday, ^{at the parade} He looked very unwell & worn out - He is incessantly occupied in his Vocation, is a govern efficient Governor of half Europe. You hear that B. is to be voted Consul for life. 'Tis over I suppose by this time, but I know almost nothing about it - no conversation upon the subject ever obtrudes itself upon me - & it would take incredible trouble, I believe, to learn what have been the sentiments of the Parisians on this occasion. If you ask a Frenchman a question, it never comes into his head to say "I don't know Sir" - Hell

give you all the necessary details upon the subject
with the utmost confidence — sometimes he invents, I
suppose, & other times he repeats what he has heard
others invent — his inventions follow the bias of
his disposition — he believes that what he says is
true, for he does not see how it can be otherwise
For example if I ask an anti-Consulist whether
his section pressed much to vote, & whether any
persons in it voted against Bonaparte, I know
before hand that He will answer no to the
first question & yes to the second — He takes no
interest in politics, & therefore he is sure his parish
does not — if he did take an interest (& had no pre-
judicial motives to the contrary) he should have
voted against B. & therefore &c. — I do not insist
upon your believing this to be a true picture of a
Parisian, if any facts that come to your knowledge,
contradict it, but I insist upon your believing
that to my belief. — I know but of one
man's voting against B. who is my friend Carnot,
& he was afterwards persuaded to rescind his
name & give no vote at all — He is I think
a very disinterested man, he is much looked up to
here, I ^{have} visited him once since I wrote to you,
& found him very pleasant. — I shall send this
letter by Mr Taylor, who goes on Thursday
& whom I shall much miss. He is a pleasant man,
of considerable talents, & a very cultivated mind.
He has been very friendly to me — he introduced
me to Dr Hager, the Conservator of the Oriental

manuscripts at the National Library, who
is about to publish a Chinese Dictionary, under the
auspices of the French Government. The Duke
I shall probably become intimate, as I am learning
~~the Chinese~~ tongue; & so cautious a language is
a greater bond of union among men, than even
Free-Masonry.

I recommend you not to trust to any
general observations on French politics you may
see in the English papers. Who are there
correspondents here, I know not; but they are misse-
rably misinformed. I speak now particularly of the
Morning Chronicle, from which the Spectator, I know,
usually copies its articles; nothing is to be depended
upon but what they give as extracts from the
French papers.

I have been a good deal occupied lately in
finishing a little mathematical work which
I intend to send to Bernoulli in Manuscript. I
have also been employed in other & analy-
tical investigations, the results of which will pro-
bably one day come to light. So that I have
been but little out. Yet I have made two or
three excursions into the neighbourhood of
Paris, & have found the Country very beautiful.
I have been very much pleased with Versailles,
& am decidedly against the English opinion of
its being absurdly formed. As a prejudice that
enters into the English education, it has done ever since

the days of Pope & Macon. The English Judge
of a garden by theory, & not by the pleasure they really
receive from the view of it. Natural scenery is
a beauty of one kind; artificial Gardening of another
& I cannot see where the line is of appropriating
extensive grounds partly to one kind & partly to
another, keeping them separate. Why may I not
build myself a green living yew tree obelisk, if I please?

The Revd Wm Manning
D. D. Norfolk.



I don't pretend to call it a tree, with respect to its effect.
We have had most bitter cold weather here
frost in May & it snowed one morning I believe.
The Climate here is very variable - much the
same as in England - tho upon the whole I suppose the
Thermometer is rather higher here than in London
at least in summer & the air is dryer. Pray write very soon
all I am anxious to hear how you are getting on at Dis. I hope to
& Edward. Did he receive the letter? - T.M.