called to the bar at the age of 23. He had, however, little taste for law and much for literature ; and he obtained (it is said by an ingenious trick, and in spite of unfair and prejudiced attempts to deprive him of it) an academic prize at Aix—for a discourse on Vauvenargues. In the early autumn of 1821 Thiers went to Paris, and was quickly introduced as a contributor to the *Constitutionnel,* at first on literary and then on general and especially political subjects, as well as art and the drama. In each of the years immediately following his arrival in Paris he collected and published a volume of his *Constitutionnel* articles, the first on the salon of 1822, the second on a tour in the Pyrenees. He was put out of all need of money by the singular benefaction of Cotta, the well- known Stuttgart publisher, who was part-proprietor of the *Constitutionnel,* and made over to Thiers his dividends, or part of them. Meanwhile he became very well known in Liberal society, especially in the house of Laffitte, and he had begun and was rapidly compiling (at first with the assistance of M. Felix Bodin and afterwards alone) the celebrated *Histoire de la Revolution Française,* which founded his literary and helped his political fame. The first two volumes appeared in 1823, the last two (of ten) in 1827. The book brought him little profit at first, but became immensely popular. The well-known sentence of Carlyle, that it is “as far as possible from meriting its high reputation,” is in strictness justified, not merely in regard to this, but in regard to all Thiers’s historical work, which is only too frequently marked by extreme inaccu­racy, by prejudice which passes the limits of accidental unfairness and sometimes seems to approach those of positive dishonesty, and by an almost complete indifference to the merits as compared with the successes of his heroes. But Carlyle himself admits that Thiers is “ a brisk man in his way, and will tell you much if you know nothing.” In other words, the *Histoire de la Révolution* (again like its author’s other work) possesses in a very high degree the gifts of clearness, liveliness, and intelligible handling which so often distinguish French writing. Coming as it did just when the reaction against the Revolution was about to turn into another reaction in its favour, it was assured of success.

For a moment it seemed as if the author had definitely chosen the lot of a literary man, even of a literary hack. He planned an *Histoire Générale,* and was about to survey mankind from China to Peru on the deck of a French man-of-war as a preliminary process. But the accession to power of the Polignac ministry in August 1829 changed his projects, and at the beginning of the next year Thiers, with Armand Carrel, Mignet, and others, started the *National,* a new opposition newspaper, which openly attacked the older Bourbon line and was foremost in pro­voking the famous and fatal Ordonnances of July. Thiers himself was the soul (or at least one of the souls) of the actual revolution. What share he had in the process sometimes attributed to him of “ overcoming the scruples of Louis Philippe ” is no doubt a debateable question, with the problem *in limine* of the debate whether Louis Philippe had any scruples to overcome. At any rate Thiers had his reward. He ranked, if not at once, yet very soon, as one of the radical though not republican supporters of the new dynasty, in opposition to the party of which his rival Guizot was the chief literary man, and Guizot’s patron the duke of Broglie the main pillar among the nobility, and which might be called by comparison Conservative. At first Thiers, though elected deputy for Aix, obtained only subordinate places in the ministry of finance. After the overthrow of his patron Laffitte, he seemed to change his politics and became much less radical, and, after the troubles of June 1832, this tend­ency was strengthened or rewarded by his appointment to the ministry of the interior. He repeatedly changed his portfolio, but remained in office for four years, became president of the council and in effect prime minister, and began the series of quarrels and jealousies with Guizot which make one of the chief and not the most creditable features of the politics of the reign. At the time of his resignation in 1836 he was foreign minister, and, as usual, wished for a spirited policy in Spain, which he could not carry out. He travelled in Italy for some time, and it was not till 1838 that he began a regular campaign of parliamentary opposition, which in March 1840 made him president of the council and foreign minister for the second time. But he held the position barely six months, and, being unable to force on the king an anti-English and anti-Turkish policy, resigned on October 29, after having, as was generally thought, with the direct purpose of stir­ring up Anglophobia, begged the body of Napoleon from England. This was made the occasion of the ceremony immortally ridiculed by Thackeray, and, it is said, con­demned by Thiers himself as unworthy of the occasion. He now had little to do with politics for some years, and spent his time on the preparation, on a much larger scale than his first work, of his *Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire,* the first volume of which appeared in 1845, and which continued to occupy him for more than twenty years of composition and nearly twenty of publication. During the interval, though he was still a member of the chamber, he spoke rarely, but after the beginning of 1846 his appearances were more frequent, and he was evidently bidding once more for power on the liberal and reforming side. Immediately before the revolution of February he went to all but the greatest lengths, and when it broke out he and Odillon Barrot were summoned by the king, but it was too late. Thiers was unable to govern the forces he had helped to gather, and he resigned.

Under the republic he took up the position of conserva­tive republican, which he ever afterwards maintained (his acceptance of the republic being not much more heartfelt than his subsequent acceptance, after an interval, of the empire), and he never took office. But the consistency of his conduct, especially in voting for Prince Louis Napoleon as president, was often and sharply criticized, one of the criticisms leading to a duel with a fellow deputy, Bixio. On the whole, his conduct during these years, and still more during the last years of Louis Philippe, may be said to have been not wholly creditable. He was arrested at the *coup d'état* (when some malicious and apparently false stories were spread as to his cowardice), was sent to Mazas, and then escorted out of France. But in the following summer he was allowed to return. For the next decade his history was almost a blank, his time being occupied for the most part on *The Consulate and the Empire.* It was not till 1863 that he re-entered political life, being elected by a Parisian constituency in opposition to the Government candidate. For the seven years follow­ing he was the chief speaker among the small band of anti-Imperialists in the French chamber, and was regarded generally as the most formidable enemy of the empire,— all the more formidable because he never gave occasion for taking any violent steps against him. It has been pointed out that, while nominally protesting against the foreign enterprises of the empire, he perpetually harped on French loss of prestige, and so contributed more than any one else to stir up the fatal spirit which brought on the war of 1870, and that, while constantly criticizing and weakening the Government of his country, he gave it no help nor even offered any. Even when the Liberal- Imperialist Ollivier ministry was formed, he maintained at first an anything but benevolent neutrality, and then