The Life Of Napoleon Bonaparte. Vol. IV.

By

William Milligan Sloane

LIFE OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

CHAPTER I

THE LAST IMPERIAL VICTORY

Napoleon's Prospects — The Preparations and Plans of the Coalition — Cross-purposes of the Combatants — Condition of Napoleon's Mind — Strength and Weakness of the Allies — Renewal of Hostilities — The Feint in Silesia — Napoleon at Dresden — First Day's Fighting — The Victory Won on the Second Day.

In later years Napoleon confessed that during the interval between the first and second Saxon campaigns he had been outwitted. His antagonists had, in his own language, "changed for the better"; at least they secured the war they so earnestly desired under conditions vastly more favorable to themselves than to their opponent. Both parties had been arming with might and main during the prolonged truce, but each member of the dynastic coalition now had the backing of a growing national enthusiasm, while Napoleon had to deal with waning zeal and an exhausted people. Thus, then, at the opening of the second campaign in Saxony, the allies had four hundred and thirty-five thousand men, and Napoleon but three hundred and fifty thousand. With this inferiority, it behooved the Emperor to use all his strategic powers, and he did so with a brilliancy never surpassed by him. Choosing the Elbe as his natural defensive line, Hamburg stood almost impregnable at one end, flanked to the southward by Magdeburg, Wittenberg, and Torgau, three mighty fortresses. Dresden, which was necessarily the focal point, was intrenched and palisaded for the protection of the army which was to be its main bulwark. Davout and Oudinot, with seventy thousand men, were to threaten Berlin, and, thereby drawing off as many as possible of the enemy, liberate the garrisons of Stettin and Küstrin; they were then to beleaguer Spandau, push the foe across the Oder, and stand ready to fall on the flank of the coalition army. Napoleon himself, with the remaining two hundred and eighty thousand, was to await the onset of the combined Russian, Prussian, and Austrian forces.

The allies now had in their camp two mighty strategists—Jomini, the well-known Swiss adventurer and military historian, and Moreau, who had returned from the United States. The former, pleading that he had lost a merited promotion by Berthier's ill-will, and that as a foreigner he had the right of choice, had gone over to the enemies of his employer; the latter, yielding to the specious pleas of his silly and ambitious wife that he might fight Napoleon without fighting France, had taken service with the Czar. The arrow which penetrated Napoleon's vitals was indeed feathered from his own pinions, since these two, with another of Napoleon's pupils—Bernadotte, the Crown Prince of Sweden—were virtually the council of war. Two of them, the latter and Moreau, saw the specter of French sovereignty beckoning them on. They dreamed of the chief magistracy in some shape, imperial, monarchical, consular, or presidential, and were more devoted to their personal interests than to those of the coalition. In the service of their ambition was formed the plan by which not only was Napoleon overwhelmed, but the fields of France were drenched with blood. Under their advice, three great armies were arrayed: that of the North, in Brandenburg, was composed of Prussians, Swedes, and a few Russians, its generals being Bülow, Bernadotte, and Tchernicheff; that of the East was the Prusso-Russian army in Silesia, now under Blücher, that astounding young cavalryman of seventy, and Wittgenstein; finally, that of the South was the new Austrian force under Schwarzenberg, with an adjunct force of Russian troops under Barclay, and the Russian guard under the Grand Duke Constantine. Bülow was in and near Berlin with about a hundred and fifty-six thousand men; Blücher had ninety-five thousand, and, having violated the armistice, was on August fourteenth already within the neutral zone at Striegau, before Breslau; the Austro-Russian force of almost two hundred and fifty thousand was in northern Bohemia, near Melnik; Bennigsen was in Poland building up a strong reserve. Schwarzenberg, though commander of the main army, was reduced to virtual impotence by the presence at his headquarters of all the sovereigns and of Moreau. Divided counsels spring from diverse interests; there was at the outset a pitiful caution and inefficiency on the part of the allies, while at Napoleon's headquarters there was unity of design at least.

Both contestants were apparently under serious misapprehensions. The allies certainly were, because Francis believed that, as so often before, Napoleon's goal would be Vienna. The plan adopted by them was therefore very simple: each division of the allied army was to stand expectant; if assailed it was to yield, draw on the French columns, and expose their flank or rear to the attacks of the other two allied armies; then by superior force the invaders were to be surrounded. The allies divined, or believed they divined, that Napoleon would hold his guard in reserve, throw it behind any portion of his line opposite which they were vulnerable, break through, and defeat them in detachments. Their idea was keen, and displayed a thorough grasp both of the principles on which their opponent had hitherto acted and of his normal character. But nevertheless they were deceived. Napoleon discarded all his old principles, and behaved most abnormally. In his conduct there are evidences of a curious self-deception, and his decisions contradicted his language. Perpetually minimizing in conversation the disparity between the two forces, and sometimes even asserting his own superiority, he nevertheless almost for the first time assumed the defensive. This unheard-of course may have been due to misapprehension and exaggeration, but it produced for the moment a powerful moral effect on his generals, who, without exception, had hitherto been clamorous for peace, and likewise upon his new boy recruits; both classes began to have a realizing sense that they were now fighting, not for aggression, but for life. If the Emperor had any such confidence as he expressed, it must have been due to the fact that boys had fought like veterans at Lützen and Bautzen, and that at last there were cavalry and artillery in fair proportion. Possibly, likewise, he may have been desperate; fully aware that he was about to cast the dice for a last stake, he may have been at once braggart and timid. If he should win in a common defensive battle, he believed, as his subsequent conduct goes to show, that he was safe indefinitely; and if he lost—the vision must have been too dreadful, enough to distract the sanest mind: an exhausted treasury, an exhausted nation, an empty throne, vanished hopes, ruin!

Yet at the time no one remarked any trace of nervousness in Napoleon. Long afterward the traitorous Marmont, whose name, like that of Moreau,

was to be execrated by succeeding generations of honorable Frenchmen, recalled that the Emperor had contemptuously designated the enemy as a rabble, and that he had likewise overestimated the strategic value of Berlin. The malignant annalist asserted, too, that Napoleon's motive was personal spite against Prussia. It has also been studiously emphasized by others that the "children" of Napoleon's army were perishing like flowers under an untimely frost, forty thousand French and German boys being in the hospitals; that corruption was rife in every department of administration; and that the soldiers' pay was shamefully in arrears. An eye-witness saw Peyrusse, the paymaster, to whom Napoleon had just handed four thousand francs for a monument to Duroc, coolly pocket a quarter of the sum, with the remark that such was the custom. He would be rash indeed who dared to assert that there was no basis for this criticism. It is true that the instructions to Davout and Oudinot made light of Bülow's army, and that Berlin had vastly less strategic value than those instructions seemed to indicate. But, on the other hand, both generals and men were sadly in need of self-reliance, and to see their capitals occupied or endangered had still a tremendous moral effect upon dynastic sovereigns. As to the defects in his army, Napoleon could not have been blind; but in all these directions matters had been nearly, if not quite, as bad in 1809, and a victory had set them all in order.

What nervousness there was existed rather among the allies. Never before in her history, not even under the great Frederick, had Prussia possessed such an army; the Austrians were well drilled and well equipped; the Russians were of fair quality, numerous, and with the reserves from Poland would be a powerful army in themselves. Yet in spite of their strength, the allies were not really able. Austria was the head, but her commander, Schwarzenberg, was not even mediocre, and among her generals there was only one who was first-rate, namely, Radetzky. Frederick William and Alexander were of incongruous natures; their alliance was artificial, and in such plans as they evolved there was an indefiniteness which left to the generals in their respective forces a large margin for independence. The latter were quick to take advantage of the

chance, and this fact accounts for the generally lame and feeble beginning of hostilities.

For example, it was through Blücher's wilfulness that the moral advantage lay with Napoleon in the opening of the struggle. On July ninth Bernadotte, Frederick William, and the Czar had met at Trachenberg to lay out a plan of campaign. In this conference, which first opened Napoleon's eyes to the determination of the allies, Blücher had secured for himself an independent command. The accession of Austria rendered the agreement of Trachenberg null, but Blücher did not abandon his ambition. Impatient of orders or good faith, he broke into the neutral zone at Striegau on August fourteenth, apparently without any very definite plan. Napoleon, hearing that forty thousand Russians from this army were marching toward Bohemia, advanced from Dresden on August fifteenth, to be within reach of the passes of the Iser Mountains on the Upper Elbe, and halted at Zittau as a central point, where he could easily collect about a hundred and eighty thousand men, and whence, according to circumstances, he could either strike Blücher, cut off the Russians, or return to Dresden in case of need. That city was to be held by Saint-Cyr. On August twentieth Blücher reached the banks of the Bober at Bunzlau; owing to Napoleon's nice calculation, Ney, Marmont, Lauriston, and Macdonald were assembled on the other side to check the advance, he himself being at Lauban with the guard. Had Blücher stood, the Russo-Prussians would have been annihilated, for their inferiority was as two to one. But the headstrong general did not stand; on the contrary, retreating by preconcerted arrangement behind the Deichsel, he led his antagonist to the false conclusion that he lacked confidence in his army.

Napoleon was not generally over-credulous, but this mistake was probably engendered in his mind by the steady stream of uneasy reports he was receiving from his own generals. On the twenty-third he wrote to Maret that his division commanders seemed to have no self-reliance except in his presence; "the enemy's strength seems great to them wherever I am not." Marmont was the chief offender, having severely criticized a plan of operations which would require one or more of the marshals to act

independently in Brandenburg or Silesia or both, expressing the fear that on the day when the Emperor believed himself to have won a decisive battle he would discover that he had lost two. Seventeen years of campaigning had apparently turned the great generals of Napoleon's army into puppets, capable of acting only on their leader's impulse. Whatever the cause, Napoleon was set in his idea, and pressed on in pursuit. On the twenty-second Blücher was beyond the Katzbach, with the French van close behind, when word arrived at Napoleon's headquarters that the Austro-Russians had entered Saxony and were menacing Dresden. How alert and sane the Emperor was, how thoroughly he foresaw every contingency, appears from the minute directions he wrote for Macdonald, who was left to block the road for Blücher into Saxony, while Lauriston was to outflank and shut off the perfervid veteran from both Berlin and Zittau.

These instructions having been written, Napoleon at first contemplated crossing the Elbe above Dresden to take Schwarzenberg on the flank and rear in the passes of the Ore Mountains. This would not only cut off the Austrian general from the Saxon capital, but prevent his swerving to the left for an advance on Leipsic. But finding that his enemy was moving swiftly, the Emperor resolved to meet him before Dresden. It would never do to lose his ally's capital at the outset, or to suffer defeat at the very head of his defensive line. Giving orders, therefore, for the corps of Marmont, Vandamme, and Victor, together with Latour-Maubourg's cavalry and the guard, to wheel, he hastened back to reinforce Saint-Cyr at Dresden. On the twenty-fifth, as he passed Bautzen, he learned that Oudinot had been defeated at Luckau; but he gave no heed to the report, and next day reached Dresden at nine in the morning. An hour later the guard came up, having performed the almost incredible feat of marching seventy-six miles in three days. Vandamme, with forty thousand men, had arrived at Pirna, a few miles above, and Saint-Cyr was drawing in behind the temporary fortifications of the city itself.

The enemy, too, was at hand, but he had no plan. In a council of war held by him the same morning there was protracted debate, and finally

Moreau's advice to advance in six columns was taken. He refused "to fight against his country," but explained that the French could never be conquered in mass, and that if one assailing column were crushed, the rest could still push on. This long deliberation cost the allies their opportunity; for at four in the afternoon, when they attacked, the mass of the French army had crossed the Elbe and had thus completed the garrison of the city. For two hours the fighting was fierce and stubborn; from three different sides Russians, Austrians, and Prussians each made substantial gains; at six Napoleon determined to make a general sally and throw in his guard. With fine promptness. Mortier, at the head of two divisions of the young guard, attacked the Russians, and, fighting until midnight, drove them beyond the hamlet of Striefen. Saint-Cyr dislodged the Prussians, and pushed them to Strehla; while Ney, with two divisions of the young guard, threw a portion of the Austrians into Plauen, and Murat, with two divisions of infantry and Latour-Maubourg's cavalry, cleared the suburb Friedrichstadt of the rest. Napoleon, alert and ubiquitous, then made his usual round, and knew when he retired to rest in the royal palace that with seventy thousand men, or rather boys, he had repulsed a hundred and fifty thousand of his foe. His inspiriting personal work might be calculated as worth eighty thousand of his opponents' best men. That night both Marmont and Victor, with their corps, entered the city; and Vandamme in the early dawn began to bombard Pirna, thus threatening the allies' connection with Bohemia and drawing away forces from them to hold that outpost.

The second day's fighting was more disastrous to the allies than the first. The morning opened in a tempest, but at six both sides were arrayed. On the French right were Victor and Latour-Maubourg; then Marmont; then the old guard and Ney with two divisions of the young guard; next Saint-Cyr, with Mortier on the left. Opposite stood Russians, Prussians, and Austrians, in the same relative positions, on higher ground, encircling the French all the way westward and around by the south to Plauen; but between their center and left was reserved a gap for Klenau's Austrians, who were coming up from Tharandt in the blinding storm, and were overdue. At seven began the artillery fire of the young guard; but before long it ceased for an instant, since the gunners found the enemy's line too

high for the elevation of their guns. "Continue," came swiftly the Emperor's order; "we must occupy the attention of the enemy on that spot." The ruse succeeded, and the gap was left open; at ten Murat dashed through it, and turning westward, killed or captured all who composed the enemy's extreme left. The garrison of Pirna then retreated toward Peterswald. Elsewhere the French merely held their own. Napoleon lounged all day in a curious apathy before his camp-fire, his condition being apparently due to the incipient stages of a digestive disorder. Early in the afternoon Schwarzenberg heard of Murat's great charge, but he held firm until at five the flight from Pirna was announced, when he abandoned the conflict. By six Napoleon was aware that the battle was over, and, mounting his horse, he trotted listlessly to the palace, his old gray overcoat and hood streaming with rain.

CHAPTER II

POLITICS AND STRATEGY

Napoleon's Conduct after Dresden — Military Considerations Overruled by Political Schemes — Probable Explanation of Napoleon's Failure — Prussian Victories at Grossbeeren and on the Katzbach — Vandamme Overwhelmed at Kulm — Napoleon's Responsibility — Political Considerations again Ascendant — The System of "Hither and Thither" — The Battle of Dennewitz — Its Disastrous Consequences — Napoleon's Vacillation — Strategy Thwarted by Diplomacy.

Throughout the night after the victory at Dresden, Napoleon believed that the enemy would return again to battle on the morrow. This is conclusively shown by the notes which he made for Berthier during the evening. These were based on the stated hypothesis that the enemy was not really in retreat, but would on the morrow by a great battle strive to retrieve his failure. But the Emperor was altogether mistaken. To be sure, the council of the disheartened allies debated far into the small hours whether an advantageous stand could not still be made on the heights of Dippoldiswalde, but the decision was adverse because the coalition army was sadly shattered, having lost a third of its numbers. Crippled on its left and threatened on its rear, it began next morning to retreat in fair order toward the Ore Mountains, and so continued until it became known that Vandamme was directly in the path, when a large proportion of the troops literally took to the hills, and retreat became flight. Then first, at four in the afternoon, Napoleon began to realize what had actually occurred. And what did he do? Having ridden almost to Pirna before taking measures of any kind to reap the fruits of victory, he there issued orders for the single corps of Vandamme, slightly reinforced, to begin the pursuit! Thereupon, leaving directions for Mortier to hold Pirna, he entered a carriage and drove quietly back to Dresden!

These are the almost incredible facts: no terrific onslaught after the first night, no well-ordered pursuit after the second, a mere pretense of seizing the advantage on the third day! In fact, Napoleon, having set his plan in operation at the very beginning of the battle, sank, to all outward

appearances, into a state of lassitude, the only sign of alert interest he displayed throughout the conflict being shown when he was told that Moreau had been mortally wounded. The cause may have been physical or it may have been moral, but it was probably a political miscalculation. If we may believe Captain Coignet, the talk of the staff on the night of the twenty-seventh revealed a perfect knowledge of the enemy's rout; they knew that the retreat of their opponents had been precipitate, and they had credible information of disordered bands seen hurrying through byways or rushing headlong through mountain defiles. Yet for all this, they were thoroughly discontented, and the burden of their conversation was execration of the Emperor. "He's a ———— who will ruin us all," was the repeated malediction. If we may believe Napoleon himself, he had a violent attack of vomiting near Pirna, and was compelled to leave everything on that fateful day to others. This is possible, but unlikely; the day before, though listless, he was well enough to chat and take snuff as he stood in a redoubt observing the course of events through his field-glass; the day after he was perfectly well, and exercised unusual self-control when tidings of serious import were brought from the north. The sequel goes to show that neither his own sickness nor the bad temper of the army sufficiently accounts for Napoleon's unmilitary conduct on the twenty-eighth; it appears, on the contrary, as if he refrained of set purpose from annihilating the Austrian army in order to reknit the Austrian alliance and destroy the coalition. This he never was willing to admit; but no man likes to confess himself a dupe.

Had Oudinot and Macdonald succeeded in their offensive operations against Berlin, and had Napoleon himself done nothing more than hold Dresden, a place which we must remember he considered from the outset as a defensive point, it would have sufficed, in order to obtain the most favorable terms of peace, to throw back the main army of the coalition, humiliated and dispirited, through Bohemia to Prague. But, as we have repeatedly seen, long service under the Empire had destroyed all initiative in the French marshals: in Spain one mighty general after another had been brought low; those who were serving in Germany seemed stricken with the same palsy. It is true that in the days of their greatness they had

commanded choice troops, and that now the flower of the army was reserved for the Emperor; but it is likewise true that then they had fought for wealth, advancement, and power. Now they yearned to enjoy their gains, and were embittered because Napoleon had not accepted Austria's terms of mediation until it was too late. Moreover, Bernadotte, one of their opponents, had been trained in their own school, and was fighting for a crown. To Blücher, untamed and untrustworthy in temper, had been given in the person of Gneisenau an efficient check on all headlong impulses, and Bülow was a commander far above mediocrity. Such considerations go far to account for three disasters—those, namely, of Grossbeeren, Katzbach, and Kulm—which made it insufficient for Napoleon to hold Dresden and throw back the main army of the allies, and which thwarted all his strategy, military and political.

The first of these affairs was scarcely a defeat. Oudinot, advancing with seventy thousand men by way of Wittenberg to seize Berlin, found himself confronted by Bernadotte with eighty thousand. The latter, with his eye on the crown of France, naturally feared to defeat a French army; at first he thought of retreating across the Spree and abandoning the Prussian capital. But the Prussians were outraged at the possibility of such conduct, and the schemer was convinced that a show of resistance was imperative. On August twenty-second a few skirmishes occurred, and the next day Bülow, disobeying his orders, brought on a pitched battle at Grossbeeren, which was waged, with varying success, until nightfall left the village in French hands. Oudinot, however, discouraged alike by the superior force of the enemy, by the obstinate courage of the Prussians, and by the dismal weather, lost heart, and retreated to Wittenberg. The heavy rains prevented an effective pursuit, but the Prussians followed as far as Treuenbrietzen. On August twenty-first, Blücher, aware of the circumstances which kept Napoleon at Dresden, had finally determined to attack Macdonald. The French marshal, by a strange coincidence, almost simultaneously abandoned the defensive position he had been ordered to hold, and advanced to give battle. It was therefore a mere chance when on the twenty-fifth the two armies came together, amid rain and fog, at the Katzbach. After a bitter struggle the French were routed with frightful loss.

A terrific rain-storm set in, and the whole country was turned into a marsh. For five days Blücher continued the pursuit, until he reached Naumburg, on the right bank of the Queiss, where he halted, having captured eighteen thousand prisoners and a hundred and three guns.

To these misfortunes the affair at Kulm was a fitting climax. No worse leader for a delicate independent movement could have been selected than the reckless Vandamme. He was so rash, conceited, and brutish that Napoleon once exclaimed in sheer desperation: "If there were two Vandammes in my army, nothing could be done until one had killed the other." As might have been expected, the headlong general far outstripped the columns of Marmont, Saint-Cyr, and Murat, which had been tardily sent to support him. Descending without circumspection into the plain of Kulm, he found himself, on the twenty-ninth, confronted by the Russian guard; and next morning, when attacked by them in superior force, he was compelled to retreat through a mountain defile toward Peterswald, whence he had come. At the mouth of the gorge he was unexpectedly met by the Prussian corps of Kleist. Each side thought the other moving to cut it off. They therefore rushed one upon the other in despair, with no other hope than that of breaking through to rejoin their respective armies. The shock was terrible, and for a time the confusion seemed inextricable. But the Russians soon came up, and Vandamme, with seven thousand men, was captured, the loss in slain and wounded being about five thousand. Saint-Cyr, Marmont, and Murat halted and held the mountain passes.

This was the climax of disaster in Napoleon's great strategic plan. In no way responsible for Grossbeeren, nor for Macdonald's defeat on the Katzbach, he was culpable both for the selection of Vandamme and for failure to support him in the pursuit of Schwarzenberg. At St. Helena the Emperor strove in three ways to account for the crash under which he was buried after Dresden: by the sickness which made him unable to give attention to the situation, by the inundation which rendered Macdonald helpless at the crossing of the Bober, and by the arrival of a notification from the King of Bavaria that, after a certain date, he too would join the

coalition. This was not history, but an appeal to public sentiment, carefully calculated for untrained readers.

The fact was that at Dresden the gradual transformation of the strategist into the politician, which had long been going on, was complete. The latter misapprehended the moment for diplomatic negotiations, conceiving the former's victory to have been determinative, when in reality it was rendered partial and contingent by failure to follow it up. Great as Napoleon was in other respects, he was supremely great as a strategist; it is therefore his psychological development and decline in this respect which are essential to the determination of the moment in which he became bankrupt in ability. This instant was that of course in which his strategic failures became no longer intermittent, but regular; and after Dresden such was the case. As to conception and tactics there never was a failure—the year 1814 is the wonder-year of his theoretical genius; but after Dresden there is continuous failure in the practical combination of concept and means, in other words, of strategic mastery. This contention as to the clouding of Napoleon's vision by the interference of political and military considerations is proved by his next step. Hitherto his basal principle had been to mass all his force for a determinative blow, his combinations all turning about hostile armies and their annihilation, or at least about producing situations which would make annihilation possible. Now he was concerned, not with armies, but with capital cities. Claiming that to extend his line toward Prague would weaken it, in order to resume a strong defensive he chose the old plan of an advance to Berlin, and Ney was sent to supersede Oudinot, Schwarzenberg being left to recuperate unmolested. The inchoate idea of political victory which turned him back from Pirna was fully developed; by a blow at Berlin and a general northward movement he could not merely punish Prussia, but alarm Russia, separate the latter's army from that of the other allies, and then plead with Austria his consideration in not invading her territories. In spite of all that has been written to the contrary, there was some strength in this idea, unworthy as it was of the author's strategic ability. Ney was to advance immediately, while he himself pressed on to Hoyerswerda, where he hoped to establish connections for a common advance.

Such a concentration would have been possible if for a fortnight Macdonald had been able to hold Blücher, and Murat had succeeded in checking Schwarzenberg. But the news of Macdonald's plight compelled Napoleon to march first toward Bautzen, in order to prevent Blücher from annihilating the army in Silesia. Exasperated by this unexpected diversion, the Emperor started in a reckless, embittered temper. On September fifth it became evident that Blücher would not stand, and Napoleon prepared to wheel in the direction of Berlin; but the orders were almost immediately recalled, for news arrived that Schwarzenberg was marching to Dresden. At once Napoleon returned to the Saxon capital. By September tenth he had drawn in his forces, ready for a second defense of the city; but learning that sixty thousand Austrians had been sent over the Elbe to take on its flank any French army sent after Blücher, he ordered the young guard to Bautzen for the reinforcement of Macdonald. Thereupon Schwarzenberg, on the fourteenth, made a feint to advance. On the fifteenth Napoleon replied by a countermove on Pirna, where pontoons were thrown over the river to establish connection with Macdonald. On the sixteenth Napoleon reconnoitered, on the seventeenth there was a skirmish, and on the eighteenth there were again a push and counterpush. These movements convinced Napoleon that Schwarzenberg was really on the defensive, and he returned to Dresden, determined to let feint and counter-feint, the "system of hither and thither," as he called it, go on until the golden opportunity for a crushing blow should be offered. Blücher meantime had turned again on Macdonald, who was now on the heights of Fischbach with Poniatowski on his right. Mortier was again at Pirna; Victor, Saint-Cyr, and Lobau were guarding the mountain passes from Bohemia.

This was virtually the situation of a month previous to the battle. Schwarzenberg might feel that he had prevented the invasion of Austria; Napoleon, that he had regained his strong defensive. While the victory of Dresden had gone for nothing, yet this situation was nevertheless a double triumph for Napoleon. Ney, in obedience to orders, had advanced on the fifth. Bernadotte lay at Jüterbog, his right being westerly at Dennewitz, under Tauenzien. Bertrand was to make a demonstration on the sixth against the latter, so that behind this movement the rest of the army should

pass by unnoticed. But Ney started three hours late, so that the skirmish between Tauenzien and Bertrand lasted long enough to give the alarm to Bülow, who hurried in, attacked Reynier's division, and turned the affair into a general engagement. At first the advantage was with the Prussians; then Ney, at an opportune moment, began to throw in Oudinot's corps—a move which seemed likely to decide the struggle in favor of the French. But Borstell, who had been Bülow's lieutenant at Grossbeeren, brought up his men in disobedience to Bernadotte's orders, and threw them into the thickest of the conflict. Hitherto the Saxons had been fighting gallantly on the French side; soon they began to waver, and now, falling back, they took up many of Oudinot's men in their flight. The Prussians poured into the gap left by the Saxons, and when Bernadotte came up with his Swedes and Russians the battle was over. Ney was driven into Torgau, with a loss of fifteen thousand men, besides eighty guns and four hundred train-wagons. The Prussians lost about nine thousand killed and wounded.

This affair concentrated into one movement the moral effects of all the minor defeats, an influence which far outweighed the importance of Dresden. The French still fought superbly in Napoleon's presence, but only then, for they were heartily sick of the war. Nor was this all: the Bavarians and Saxons were coming to feel that their obligations to France had been fully discharged. They were infected with the same national spirit which made heroes of the Prussians. These, to be sure, were defending their homes and firesides; but seeing the great French generals successively defeated, and that largely by their own efforts, they were animated to fresh exertions by their victories; even the reserves and the home guard displayed the heroism of veterans. On September seventh Ney wrote to Napoleon: "Your left flank is exhausted—take heed; I think it is time to leave the Elbe and withdraw to the Saale"; and his opinion was that of all the division commanders. Throughout the country-side partizans were seizing the supply-trains; Davout had found his Dutch and Flemings to be mediocre soldiers, unfit at crucial moments to take the offensive; the army had shrunk to about two hundred and fifty thousand men all told; straggling was increasing, and the country was virtually devastated. To this last fact the plain people, sufferers as they were, remained in their

larger patriotism amazingly indifferent: the "hither-and-thither" system tickled their fancy, and they dubbed Napoleon the "Bautzen Messenger-boy." Uneasiness pervaded every French encampment; on the other side timidity was replaced by courage, dissension by unity.

This transformation of German society seemed further to entangle the political threads which had already debased the quality of Napoleon's strategy. Technically no fault can be found with his prompt changes of plan to meet emergencies, or with the details of movements which led to his prolonged inaction. Yet, largely considered, the result was disastrous. The great medical specialist refrains from the immediate treatment of a sickly organ until the general health is sufficiently recuperated to assure success; the medicaster makes a direct attack on evident disease. Napoleon conceived a great general plan for concentrating about Dresden to recuperate his forces; but when Blücher prepared to advance he grew impatient, saw only his immediate trouble, and ordered Macdonald to make a grand dash. Driving in the hostile outposts to Förstgen, he then spent a whole day hesitating whether to go on or to turn westward and disperse another detachment of his ubiquitous foe, which, as he heard from Ney, had bridged the Elbe at the mouth of the Black Elster. It was the twenty-third before he turned back to do neither, but to secure needed rest on the left bank of the Elbe. But if Napoleon's own definition of a truly great man be accurate,—namely, one who can command the situations he creates,—he was himself no longer great. The enemy not only had bridges over the Elbe at the mouth of the Elster, but at Acken and Rosslau. The left bank was as untenable for the French as the right, and it was of stern necessity that the various detachments of the army were called in to hold a line far westward, to the north of Leipsic. Oudinot, restored to partial favor, was left to keep the rear at Dresden with part of the young guard. On October first it was learned that Schwarzenberg was manœuvering on the left to surround the invaders if possible by the south, and that Blücher, with like aim, was moving to the north. It was evident that the allies had

formed a great resolution, and Napoleon confessed to Marmont that his "game of chess was becoming confused."

The fact was, the Emperor's diplomacy had far outstripped the general's strategy. It was blazoned abroad that on September twenty-seventh a hundred and sixty thousand new conscripts from the class of 1815, with a hundred and twenty thousand from the arrears of the seven previous classes, would be assembled at the military depots in France. Boys like these had won Lützen, Bautzen, and Dresden, and a large minority would be able-bodied men, late in maturing, perhaps, but strong. With this preliminary blare of trumpets, a letter for the Emperor Francis was sent to General Bubna. The bearer was instructed to say that Napoleon would make great sacrifices both for Austria and Prussia if only he could get a hearing. It was too late: already, on September ninth, the three powers had concluded an offensive and defensive alliance for the purpose of liberating the Rhenish princes, of making sovereign and independent the states of southern and western Germany, and of restoring both Prussia and Austria to their limits of 1805. This was the treaty which beguiled Bavaria from the French alliance, and made the German contingents in the French armies, the Saxons among the rest, wild for emancipation from a hated service. It explained the notification previously received from the King of Bavaria, who, in return for the recognition of his complete autonomy, formally joined the coalition on October eighth, with an army of thirty-six thousand men. How much of all this the French spies and emissaries made known to Napoleon does not appear. One thing only is certain, that Napoleon's flag of truce was sent back with his message undelivered. This ominous fact had to be considered in connection with the movements of the enemy. They had learned one of Napoleon's own secrets. In a bulletin of 1805 are the words: "It rains hard, but that does not stop the march of the grand army." In 1806 he boasted concerning Prussia: "While people are deliberating, the French army is marching." In 1813, while he himself was vacillating, his foes were stirring. On October third, Blücher, having accomplished a superb strategic march, drove Bertrand to Bitterfeld, and stood before Kemberg, west of the Elbe, with sixty-four thousand men; Bernadotte, with eighty thousand, was crossing at Acken and Rosslau; and

Schwarzenberg, with a hundred and seventy thousand, was already south of Leipsic; Bennigsen, with fifty thousand reserves, had reached Teplitz. The enemy would clearly concentrate at Leipsic and cut off Napoleon's base unless he retreated. But it was October fifth before the bitter resolution to do so was taken, and then the movement began under compulsion. Murat was sent, with three infantry corps and one of cavalry, to hold Schwarzenberg until the necessary manœuvers could be completed.

CHAPTER III

THE END OF THE GRAND ARMY

Plans for Conducting the Retreat — Napoleon's Health — Blücher's Brilliant Idea — Napoleon under Compulsion — His Skilful Concentration — The Battle-field around Leipsic — The Attack — Results of the First Day's Fighting — Attempt to Negotiate — Napoleon's Apathy — The Positions of the Third Day — The Grand Army Defeated — The Disaster at the Elster Bridge — Dissolution of the Grand Army.

But how should the retreat be conducted? Napoleon's habit of reducing his thoughts to writing for the sake of clearness remained strong upon him to the last, and in the painstaking notes which he made with regard to this important move he outlined two alternatives: to garrison Dresden with two corps, send three to reconnoiter about Chemnitz, and then march, with five and the guard, to attack Schwarzenberg; or else to strengthen Murat, place him between Schwarzenberg and Leipsic, and then advance to drive Bernadotte and Blücher behind the Elbe. But in winter the frozen Elbe with its flat shores would be no rampart. Both plans were abandoned, and on the seventh orders were issued for a retreat behind the Saale, the precipitous banks of which were a natural fortification. Behind this line of defense he could rest in safety during the winter, with his right at Erfurt and his left at Magdeburg. Dresden must, he concluded, be evacuated. This would deprive the allies of the easy refuge behind the Saxon and Bohemian mountains which they had sought at every onset, but it might leave them complete masters of Saxony. To avoid this he must take one of three courses: either halt behind the Mulde for one blow at the armies of the North and of Silesia, or join Murat for a decisive battle with the Austrian general, or else concentrate at Leipsic, and meet the onset of the united allies, now much stronger than he was.

The night of the seventh was spent in indecision as to any one or all of these ideas, but in active preparation for the actual movements of the retreat, however it should be conducted; any contingency might be met or a resolve taken when the necessity arose. During that night the Emperor took two warm baths. The habit of drinking strong coffee to prevent

drowsiness had induced attacks of nervousness, and these were not diminished by his load of care. To allay these and other ailments, he had had recourse for some time to frequent tepid baths. Much has been written about a mysterious malady which had been steadily increasing, but the burden of testimony from the Emperor's closest associates at this time indicates that in the main he had enjoyed excellent health throughout the second Saxon campaign. He was, on the whole, calm and self-reliant, exhibiting signs of profound emotion only in connection with important decisions. He was certainly capable of clear insight and of severe application in a crisis; he could still endure exhausting physical exertion, and rode without discomfort, sitting his horse in the same stiff, awkward manner as of old. There were certainly intervals of self-indulgence and of lassitude, of excessive emotion and depressing self-examination, which seemed to require the offset of a physical stimulus; but on the whole there do not appear to have been such sharp attacks of illness, or even of morbid depression, as amount to providential interference; natural causes, complex but not inexplicable, sufficiently account for the subsequent disasters.

For instance, considerations of personal friendship having in earlier days often led him to unwise decisions, a like cause may be said to have brought on his coming disaster. It was the affection of the Saxon king for his beautiful capital which at the very last instant, on October eighth, induced Napoleon to cast all his well-weighed scheme to the winds, and—fatal decision!—leave Saint-Cyr and Lobau, with three corps, in Dresden. A decisive battle was imminent; the commander was untrue to his maxim that every division should be under the colors. But with or without his full force, the master-strategist was outwitted: the expected meeting did not take place as he finally reckoned. On the tenth his headquarters were at Düben, and his divisions well forward on the Elbe, ready for Bernadotte and Blücher; but there was no foe. Both these generals had been disconcerted by the unexpected swiftness of the French movements; the former actually contemplated recrossing the river to avoid a pitched battle with those whom he hoped before long to secure as his subjects. But the enthusiastic old Prussian shamed his ally into action, persuading him at least to march south from Acken, effect a junction with the army of Silesia,

and cross the Saale to threaten Napoleon from the rear. This was a brilliant and daring plan, for if successful both armies might possibly unite with Schwarzenberg's; but even if unsuccessful in that, they would at least reproduce the situation in Silesia, and reduce the French to the "hither-and-thither" system, which, rendering a decisive battle impossible, had thwarted the Napoleonic strategy.

Napoleon spent a weary day of waiting in Düben, yawning and scribbling, but keeping his geographer and secretary in readiness. It was said at the time, and has since been repeated, that throughout this portion of the campaign Napoleon was not recognizable as himself: that he ruminated long when he should have been active; that he consulted when he should have given orders; that he was no longer ubiquitous as of old, but sluggish, and rooted to one spot. But it is hard to see what he left undone, his judgment being mistaken as it was. When rumors of Bernadotte's movements began to arrive, he dismissed the idea suggested by them as preposterous; when finally, on the twelfth, he heard that Blücher was actually advancing to Halle, and no possible doubt remained, he gave instant orders for a march on Leipsic. Critics have suggested that again delay had been his ruin; but this is not true. An advance over the Elbe toward Berlin in search of the enemy would merely have enabled Blücher and Bernadotte to join forces sooner, and have rendered their union with Schwarzenberg easier. No stricture is just but one: that Napoleon, knowing how impossible it was to obtain such exact information as he seemed determined to have, should have divined the enemy's plan, and acted sooner. The accurate information necessary for such foresight was not obtainable; in fact, it seldom is, and some allowance may be made if the general lingered before rushing into the "tube of a funnel," as Marmont expressed it. On the morning of the thirteenth, while the final arrangements for marching to Leipsic were making, came the news of Bavaria's defection. It spread throughout the army like wildfire, but its effect was less than might be imagined, and it served for the priming of a bulletin, issued on the fifteenth, announcing the approaching battle.

On the fifteenth, Murat, who had been steadily withdrawing before the allied army of the South, was overtaken at Wachau by Schwarzenberg's van. He fought all day with magnificent courage, and successfully, hurling the hostile cavalry skirmishers back on the main column. Within sound of his guns, Napoleon was reconnoitering his chosen battle-field in and about Leipsic; and when, after nightfall, the brothers-in-law met, the necessary arrangements were virtually complete. Those who were present at the council thought the Emperor inexplicably calm and composed—they said indifferent or stolid. But he had reasons to be confident rather than desperate, for by a touch of his old energy he had concentrated more swiftly than his foe, having a hundred and seventy thousand men in array. Reynier, with fourteen thousand more, was near; if Saint-Cyr and Lobau, with their thirty thousand, had been present instead of sitting idly in Dresden, the French would actually have outnumbered any army the coalition could have assembled for battle. The allies could hope at best to produce two hundred thousand men; Bernadotte was still near Merseburg; Blücher, though coming in from Halle, was not within striking distance. In spite of his vacillation and final failure to evacuate Dresden, Napoleon had an excellent fighting chance.

The city of Leipsic, engirdled by numerous villages, lies in a low plain watered by the Parthe, Pleisse, and Elster, the last of which to the westward has several arms, with swampy banks. Across these runs the highway to Frankfort, elevated on a dike, and spanning the deep, central stream of the Elster by a single bridge. Eastward by Connewitz the land is higher, there being considerable swells, and even hills, to the south and southeast. This rolling country was that chosen by Napoleon for the main battle against Schwarzenberg; Marmont was stationed north of the city, near Möckern, to observe Blücher; Bernadotte, the cautious, was still at Oppin with his Swedes. On the evening of the fifteenth, his dispositions being complete, Napoleon made the tour of all his posts. At dusk three white rockets were seen to rise in the southern sky; they were promptly answered by four red ones in the north. These were probably signals between Schwarzenberg and Blücher. Napoleon's watch-fire was kindled behind the old guard, between Reudnitz and Crottendorf.

The battle began early next morning. Napoleon waited until nine, and then advanced at the head of his guards to Liebertwolkwitz, near Wachau, on the right bank of the Pleisse, where the decisive struggle was sure to occur, since the mass of the enemy, under Barclay, with Wittgenstein as second in command, had attacked in four columns at that point. Between the Pleisse and the Elster, near Connewitz, stood Poniatowski, opposed to Schwarzenberg and Meerveldt; westward of the Elster, near Lindenau, stood Bertrand, covering the single line of retreat, the Frankfort highway, and his antagonist was Gyulay. Thus there were four divisions in the mighty conflict, which began by an onset of the allies along the entire front. The main engagement was stubborn and bloody, the allies attacking with little skill, but great bravery. Until near midday Napoleon more than held his own. Victor at Wachau, and Lauriston at Liebertwolkwitz, had each successfully resisted six desperate assaults; between them were massed the artillery, a hundred and fifty guns, under Drouot, and behind, all the cavalry except that of Sebastiani. The great artillery captain was about to give the last splendid exhibition of what his arm can do under favorable circumstances—that is, when strongly posted in the right position and powerfully supported by cavalry. He intended, with an awful shock and swift pursuit, to break through the enemy's center at Güldengossa and surround his right. So great was his genius for combinations that while the allies were that moment using three hundred and twenty-five thousand effective men all told to his two hundred and fourteen thousand, yet in the decisive spot he had actually concentrated a hundred and fifteen thousand to their hundred and fourteen thousand. This was because Schwarzenberg, having attempted to outflank the French, was floundering to no avail in the swampy meadows between the Pleisse and the Elster, and was no longer a factor in the contest.

When, at midday, all was in readiness and the order was given, the artillery fire was so rapid that the successive shots were heard, not separately, but in a long, sullen note. By two, Victor and Oudinot on the right, with Mortier and Macdonald on the left, were well forward of Güldengossa, but the place itself still held out. At three the cavalry, under Murat, Latour-Maubourg, and Kellermann, were sped direct upon it. With

awful effort they broke through, and the bells of Leipsic began to ring in triumph—prematurely. The Czar had peremptorily summoned from Schwarzenberg's command the Austro-Russian reserve, and at four these, with the Cossack guard, charged the French cavalry, hurling them back to Markkleeberg. Nightfall found Victor again at Wachau, and Macdonald holding Liebertwolkwitz. Simultaneously with the great charge of the allies Meerveldt had dashed out from Connewitz toward Dölitz, but his force was nearly annihilated, and he himself was captured. At Möckern, Marmont, after gallant work with inferior numbers, had been beaten on his left, and then compelled for safety to draw in his right. While he still held Gohlis and Eutritzsch, the mass of his army had been thrown back into Leipsic. Throughout the day Bertrand made a gallant and successful resistance to superior numbers, and drove that portion of the allied forces opposed to him away from Lindenau as far as Plagwitz. At nightfall three blank shots announced the cessation of hostilities all around.

In the face of superior numbers, the French had not lost a single important position, and whatever military science had been displayed was all theirs; Blücher made the solitary advance move of the allies, the seizure of Möckern by York's corps; Schwarzenberg had been literally mired in his attempt to outflank his enemy, and but for Alexander's peremptory recall of the reserves destined for the same task, the day would have been one of irretrievable disaster to the coalition. Yet Napoleon knew that he was lost unless he could retreat. Clearly he had expected a triumph, for in the city nothing was ready, and over the Elster was but one crossing, the solitary bridge on the Frankfort road. The seventeenth was the first day of the week; both sides were exhausted, and the Emperor of the French seems to have felt that at all hazards he must gain time. During the previous night long consultations had been held, and the French divisions to the south had been slightly compacted. In the morning Meerveldt, the captured Austrian general, the same man who after Austerlitz had solicited and obtained on the part of Francis an interview from Napoleon, was paroled, and sent into his own lines to ask an armistice, together with the intervention of Francis on the terms of Prague: renunciation of Poland and Illyria by Napoleon, the absolute independence of Holland, of the Hanse

towns, of Spain, and of a united Italy. When we remember that England was paymaster to the coalition, and was fighting for her influence in Holland, and that Austria's ambition was for predominance in a disunited Italy, we feel that apparently Napoleon wanted time rather than hoped for a successful plea to his father-in-law.

This would be the inevitable conclusion except for the fact that he withdrew quietly to his tent and there remained; the resourceful general was completely apathetic, being either over-confident in his diplomatic mission or stunned by calamity. The day passed without incident except a momentary attack on Marmont, and the arrival of Bernadotte, who had been spurred to movement by a hint from Gneisenau concerning the terms on which Great Britain was to pay her subsidies. It was asserted at the time that Napoleon gave orders early in the morning for building numerous bridges over the western streams. If so, they were not executed, only a single flimsy structure being built, and that on the road leading from the town, not on the lines westward from his positions in the suburbs. His subordinates should have acted in so serious a matter even without orders; but, like the drivers of trains which run at lightning speed, they had, after years of high-pressure service, lost their nerve. Marmont asserts that even Napoleon was nerveless. "We were occupied," he wrote, "in restoring order among our troops; we should either have commenced our retreat, or at least have prepared the means to commence it at nightfall. But a certain carelessness on the part of Napoleon, which it is impossible to explain and difficult to describe, filled the cup of our sorrows." Considering who wrote these words, they must be taken with allowance; but they indicate a truth, that in his decadence this hitherto many-sided man could not be both general and emperor. No answer from Francis was received; the allies agreed on this course, and determined, according to their agreement with England, not to cease fighting till the last French soldier was over the Rhine. It was midnight when Napoleon finally drew in his posts and gave preliminary orders to dispose his troops in readiness either to fight or to retreat.

When day dawned on October eighteenth the French army occupied an entirely new position: the right wing, under Murat, lying between Connewitz and Dölitz; the center at Probstheida in a salient angle; the left, under Ney, with front toward the north between Paunsdorf and Gohlis. Within this arc, and close about the city, stood all the well-tried corps, infantry, artillery, and cavalry, under their various leaders of renown—Poniatowski, Augereau, Victor, Drouot, Kellermann, Oudinot, Latour-Maubourg, Macdonald, Marmont, Reynier, and Souham; Napoleon was on a hillock at Thonberg, with the old guard in reserve. His chief concern was the line of retreat, which was still open when, at seven, the fighting began. Schwarzenberg, with the left, could get no farther than Connewitz. Bennigsen, with the right, started to feel Bernadotte and complete the investment. Neither was entirely successful, but Marmont withdrew from before Blücher, and Ney from before Bernadotte and Bennigsen, in order to avoid being surrounded; so that the two French armies were united before nightfall on the western outskirts of the town, where Bertrand had routed Gyulay, and had kept open the all-important line of retreat, over which, since noon, trains of wagons had been passing. But magnificent as was the work of all these doughty champions on both sides, it was far surpassed in the center, where during the entire day, under Napoleon's eye, advance and resistance had been desperate. Men fell like grass before the scythe, and surging lines of their comrades moved on from behind. Such were the numbers and such the carnage that men have compared the conflict to that of the nations at Armageddon.

At Victor's stand, near Probstheida, the fighting was fiercer than the fiercest. The allied troops charged with fixed bayonets, rank after rank, column following on column; cannon roared while grape-shot and shells sped to meet the assailants; men said the air was full of human limbs; ten times Russians and Prussians came on, only to be ten times driven back. The very soil on which the assailants trod was human flesh. Hour after hour the slaughter continued. Occasionally the French attempted a rally, but only to be thrown back by musket fire and cavalry charge. It was the same at Stötteritz, where no one seemed to pause for breath. Woe to him who fell in fatigue: he was soon but another corpse in the piles over which

new reinforcements came on to the assault or countercharge. At last there was scarcely a semblance of order; in hand-to-hand conflict men shouted, struggled, wrestled, thrust, advanced, and withdrew, and in neither combatants nor onlookers was there any sense of reality. By dusk the heated cannon were almost useless, the muskets entirely so, and, as darkness came down, the survivors fell asleep where they stood, riders in their saddles, horses in their tracks. Napoleon learned that thirty-five thousand Saxons on the left had gone over to the enemy, and some one of his staff handing him a wooden chair, he dropped into it and sank into a stupor almost as he touched it. For half an hour he sat in oblivion, while in the thickening darkness the marshals and generals gathered about the watch-fires, and stood with sullen mien to abide his awakening. The moon came slowly up, Napoleon awoke, orders were given to complete the dispositions for retreat already taken, and, there being nothing left to do, the Emperor, with inscrutable emotions, passed inside the walls of Leipsic to take shelter in an inn on the creaking sign-board of which were depicted the arms of Prussia!

Throughout the night French troops streamed over the stone bridge across the Elster; in the early morning the enemy began to advance, and ever-increasing numbers hurried away to gain the single avenue of retreat. Until midday Napoleon wandered aimlessly about the inner town, giving unimportant commands to stem the ever-growing confusion and disorder. Haggard, and with his clothing in disarray, he was not recognized by his own men, being sometimes rudely jostled. After an affecting farewell to the King of Saxony, in which his unhappy ally was instructed to make the best terms he could for himself, the Emperor finally fell into the throng and moved with it toward Lindenau. Halting near the Elster, a French general began to seek information from the roughly clad onlooker who, without a suite or even a single attendant, stood apparently indifferent, softly whistling, "Malbrook s'en va t'en guerre." Of course the officer started as he recognized the Emperor, but the conquered sovereign took no notice. Bystanders thought his heart was turned to stone. Still the rush of retreat went on, successfully also, in spite of some confusion, until at two some one blundered. By the incredible mistake of a French subaltern, as is now

proven, the permanent Elster bridge was blown up, and the temporary one had long since fallen. Almost simultaneously with this irreparable disaster the allies had stormed the city, and the French rear-guard came thundering on, hoping to find safety in flight. Plunging into the deep stream, many, like Poniatowski, were drowned; some, like the wounded Macdonald, swam safely across. The scene was heartrending as horses, riders, and footmen rolled senseless in the dark flood, while others scrambled over their writhing forms in mad despair. Reynier and Lauriston, with twenty thousand men, were captured, the King of Saxony was sent a prisoner to Berlin, and Stein prepared to govern his domains by commission from the allies. By ten in the evening Bertrand was in possession of Weissenfels; Oudinot wheeled at Lindenau, and held the unready pursuers in check.

Next morning, the twentieth, Napoleon was alert and active; retreat began again, but only in tolerable order. Although he could not control the great attendant rabble of camp-followers and stragglers, he had nevertheless about a hundred and twenty thousand men under his standards; as many more, and those his finest veterans, were besieged and held in the fortresses of the Elbe, Oder, and Vistula by local militia. These places, he knew, would no longer be tenable; in fact, they began to surrender almost immediately, and the survivors of Leipsic were soon in a desperate plight from hunger and fatigue. Yet the commander gave no sign of sensibility. "'T was thus he left Russia," said the surly men in the ranks. Hunger-typhus appeared, and spread with awful rapidity; the country swarmed with partizans; the columns of the allies were behind and on each flank; fifty-six thousand Bavarians were approaching from Ansbach, under Wrede; at Erfurt all the Saxons and Bavarians still remaining under the French eagles marched away. The only foreign troops who kept true were those who had no country and no refuge, the unhappy Poles, who, though disappointed in their hopes, were yet faithful to him whom they wrongly believed to have been their sincere friend. Though stricken by all his woes, the Emperor was undaunted; the retreat from Germany was indeed perilous, but it was marked by splendid courage and unsurpassed skill. At Kösen and at Eisenach the allies were outwitted, and at Hanau, on the twenty-ninth, the Bavarians were overwhelmed in a pitched fight by an exhibition of

personal pluck and calmness on Napoleon's part paralleled only by his similar conduct at Krasnoi in the previous year. At the head of less than six thousand men, he held in check nearly fifty thousand until the rest of his columns came up, when he fell with the old fire upon a hostile line posted with the river Kinzig in its rear, and not only disorganized it utterly, but inflicted on it a loss of ten thousand men, more than double the number which fell in his own ranks. But in spite of this brilliant success, the ravages of disease continued, and only seventy thousand men of the imperial army crossed the Rhine to Mainz. Soon the houses of that city were packed, and the streets were strewn with victims of the terrible hunger-typhus. They died by hundreds, and corpses lay for days unburied; before the plague was stayed thousands found an inglorious grave.

CHAPTER IV

THE FRANKFORT PROPOSALS

Importance of the Battle of Leipsic — Decline of Napoleon's Powers — His Gentler Side — Disintegration of Napoleon's Empire — The Coalition and the Sentiment of Nationality — Reasons for the Parley at Frankfort — Insincerity of the Proposal — Napoleon and France — The Revolution and the Empire — Hollow Diplomacy.

The battle of Leipsic is one of the most important in general history. Apparently it was only the offset to Austerlitz, as the Beresina had been to Friedland. In reality it was far more, because it gave the hegemony of continental Europe to Prussia. French imperialism in its death-throes wiped out the score of royal France against the Hapsburgs; Austria was not yet banished from central Europe to the lower courses of the Danube, but, what was much the same thing, Prussia was launched upon her career of military aggrandizement. Three dynasties seemed in that battle to have celebrated a joint triumph; as a matter of fact, the free national spirit of Germany, having narrowly escaped being smothered by Napoleonic imperialism, had chosen a national dynasty as its refuge. The conflict is well designated by German historians as "the battle of the nations," but the language has a different sense from that which is generally attributed to it. The seeds of Italian unity had been sown, but they were not yet to germinate. The battle of Leipsic seemed to check them, yet it was the process there begun under which they sprang up and bore fruit. France was destined to become for a time the sport of an antiquated dynastic system. The liberties which men of English blood had been painfully developing for a century she sought to seize in an instant; she was to see them still elude her grasp for sixty years, until her democratic life, having assumed consistency, should find expression in institutions essentially and peculiarly her own. Though the conquering monarchs believed that revolutionary liberalism had been quenched at Leipsic, its ultimate triumph was really assured, since it was consigned to its natural guardianship, that of national commonwealths. The imperial agglomeration of races and nationalities was altogether amorphous and

had been found impossible; that form of union was not again attempted after Leipsic, while another—that, namely, of constitutional organic nationalities—was made operative. The successive stages of advance are marked by 1813, 1848, and 1870.

The Saxon campaigns display the completion of the process in which the great strategist, stifled by political anxieties, became the creature of circumstances both as general and statesman. The Russian campaign was nicely calculated, but its proportions and aim were those of the Oriental theocrat, not of the prosaic European soldier. With the aid of the railroad and the electric telegraph, they might possibly have been wrought into a workable problem, but that does not excuse the errors of premature and misplaced ambition. The Saxon campaigns, again, are marked by a boldness of design and a skill in combination characteristic of the best strategy; but again the proportions are monstrous, and, what is worse, the execution is intermittent and feeble. As in Russia, the war organism was insufficient for the numbers and distances involved, while the subordinates of every grade, though supple instruments, seemed mercenary, self-seeking, and destitute of devotion. Bonaparte had ruled men's hearts by his use of a cause, securing devotion to it and to himself by rude bonhomie, by success, and by sufficient rewards; Napoleon, on the other hand, quenched devotion by a lavishness which sated the greediest, and lost the affections of his associates by the demands of his gigantic plans.

As the world-conqueror felt the foundations of his greatness quivering, he became less callous and more human. Early in 1813 he said: "I have a sympathetic heart, like another, but since earliest childhood I have accustomed myself to keep that string silent, and now it is altogether dumb." His judgment of himself was mistaken: throughout the entire season he was strangely and exceptionally moved by the horrors of war; his purse was ever open for the suffering; he released the King of Saxony from his entangling engagements; in spite of his hard-set expression on the retreat from Leipsic, he forbade his men to fire the suburbs of the city in order to retard the pursuit of their foes, and before he left Mainz for St.

Cloud he showed the deepest concern, and put forth the strongest effort, in behalf of the dying soldiery.

The immediate effects of Leipsic were the full display of that national spirit which had been refined, if not created, in the fires of Napoleon's imperious career. An Austrian army under Hiller drove Eugène over the Adige. The Italians, not unsusceptible to the power in the air, felt their humiliation, and, turning on their imperial King in bitter hate, determined, under the influence of feelings most powerfully expressed by Alfieri, that they would emulate northern Europe. But though they had for years been subject to the new influences, enjoying the equal administration of the Code Napoléon, and freed from the interference of petty local tyrants, they were neither united nor enlightened in sufficient degree. After an outburst of hatred to France, they were crushed by their old despots, and the land relapsed into the direst confusion. The Confederation of the Rhine was, however, resolved into its elements: the Mecklenburgs reasserted their independence; King Jerome fled to France; Würtemberg, Hesse-Darmstadt, and Baden followed Bavaria's example; Cassel, Brunswick, Hanover, and Oldenburg were craftily restored to their former rulers before Stein's bureau could establish an administration. Holland recalled the Prince of Orange, Spain rose to support Wellington, and Soult was not merely driven over the Pyrenees—he was defeated on French soil, and shut up in Bayonne.

Even the three monarchs, as they sedately moved across Germany with their exhausted and battered armies, were aware of nationality as a controlling force in the future. In a direct movement on Paris they could, as Ney said, "have marked out their days in advance," but they halted at Frankfort for a parley. There were several reasons why they should pause. They had seen France rise in her might; they did not care to assist at the spectacle again. Moreover, the coalition had accomplished its task and earned its pay; not a Frenchman, except real or virtual prisoners, was left east of the Rhine. From that point the interests of the three monarchs were divergent. As Gentz, the Austrian statesman, said, "The war for the emancipation of states bids fair to become one for the emancipation of the

people." Alexander, Frederick William, and Francis were each and all anxious for the future of absolutism, but otherwise there was mutual distrust. Austria was suspicious of Prussia, and desired immediate peace. In the restoration of Holland under English auspices, Russia saw the perpetuation of British maritime and commercial supremacy, to the disadvantage of her Oriental aspirations, and the old Russian party demanded peace. On the other hand, Alexander wished to avenge Napoleon's march to Moscow by an advance to Paris; and though Frederick William distrusted what he called the Czar's Jacobinism, his own soldiers, thirsting for further revenge, also desired to prosecute the war; even the most enlightened Prussian statesmen believed that nothing short of a complete cataclysm in France could shake Napoleon's hold on that people and destroy his power. Offsetting these conflicting tendencies against one another, Metternich was able to secure military inaction for a time, while the coalition formulated a series of proposals calculated to woo the French people, and thus to bring Napoleon at once to terms.

Ostensibly the Frankfort proposals, adopted on November ninth, were only a slight advance on the ultimatum of Prague: Austria was to have enough Italian territory to secure her preponderance in that peninsula; France was to keep Savoy, with Nice; the rest of Italy was to be independent. Holland and Spain liberated, France was to have her "natural" boundaries, the Alps, the Pyrenees, the ocean, and the Rhine. Napoleon was to retain a slight preponderance in Germany, and the hope was held out that in a congress to settle details for a general pacification, Great Britain, content with the "maritime rights" which had caused the war, would hand back the captured French colonies. The various ministers present at Frankfort assented to these proposals for Great Britain, Austria, Russia, and Prussia respectively; but Alexander and Frederick William were dissatisfied with them, and when Castlereagh heard them, he was as furious as his cold blood would permit at the thought of France retaining control of the Netherlands, Antwerp being the commercial key to central Europe.

Such a humor in three of the high contracting parties makes it doubtful whether the Frankfort proposals had any reality, and this doubt is further

increased by the circumstances of the so-called negotiation. St. Aignan, the French envoy to the Saxon duchies, had in violation of international law and courtesy been seized at Gotha and held as a prisoner. He was now set free and instructed to urge upon Napoleon the necessity of an immediate settlement. To his brother-in-law, the pacific Caulaincourt, who was soon to displace Maret as minister of foreign affairs, he was to hand a private and personal letter from Metternich. In the course of this epistle the writer expresses his conviction that any effort to conclude a peace would come to nothing. Not only, therefore, were the pretended negotiations entirely destitute of form, they were prejudged from the outset. Still further, the allies refused what Napoleon had granted after Bautzen, an armistice, and insisted that hostilities were to proceed during negotiation. All possible doubt as to the sincerity of the proposals is turned into assurance by Metternich's admission in his memoirs that they were intended to divorce Napoleon from the French nation, and in particular to work on the feelings of the army. He says that neither Alexander nor Frederick William would have assented to them had they not been convinced that Napoleon would "never in the world of his own accord" resolve to accept them. Yet the world has long believed that Napoleon, as he himself expressed it, lost his crown for Antwerp; that had he believed the honeyed words of the Austrian minister, and opened negotiations on an indefinite basis without delay, he might have kept France with its revolutionary boundaries intact for himself and his dynasty, and by the sacrifice of his imperial ambitions have retained for her, if not preponderance, at least importance in the councils of Europe.

Neither Napoleon nor the French nation was deceived; a peace made under such circumstances could result only in a dishonorable tutelage to the allied sovereigns. France abhorred the dynasties and all their works, believing that dynastic rule could never mean anything except absolutism and feudalism. The experiment of popular sovereignty wielded by a democracy had been a failure; but the liberal French, like men of the same intelligence throughout Europe, did not, for all that, lose faith in popular sovereignty; they knew there must be some channel for its exercise. Outside of France, as in it, the most enlightened opinion of the time

regarded Napoleon as the savior of society. The Queen of Saxony bitterly reproached Metternich for having deserted Napoleon's "sacred cause." This was because the Emperor of the French seemed to have used the people's power for the people's good. His giant arm alone could wield the popular majesty. It is said that the great mass of the French nation, on hearing of the Frankfort proposals, groaned and laughed by turns. Being profoundly, devotedly imperialist and therefore idealistic, they were outraged at the thought of Hapsburgs, Romanoffs, or Hohenzollerns, the very incarnations of German feudality, as leaders of the new Europe. It seemed the irony of fate that civil and political rights on the basis, not of privilege, but of manhood, the prize for which the world had been turned upside down, should be intrusted to such keepers. Welded into a homogeneous nationality themselves, the French could not understand that the inchoate nationalities in other states had as yet nothing but dynastic forms of expression, or foresee that during a century to come the old dynasties would find safety only in adapting royalty to national needs.

Napoleon seems to have been fully aware of French sentiment. In addition, he understood that not merely for this sufficient reason could he never be king of France in name or fact, but also that, having elsewhere harried and humiliated both peoples and dynasties in the name of revolutionary ideals, the masses had found him out, and were as much embittered as their rulers, believing him to be a charlatan using dazzling principles as a cloak for personal ambition. In May, 1813, the Emperor Francis, anxious to salve the lacerated pride of the Hapsburgs, produced a bundle of papers purporting to prove that the Bonapartes had once been ruling princes at Treviso. "My nobility," was Napoleon's stinging reply, "dates only from Marengo." He well knew that when the battle should be fought that would undo Marengo, his nobility would end. In other words, without solid French support he was nothing, and that support he was fully aware he could never have as king of France. If the influence of what France improperly believed to be solely the French Revolution were to be confined to her boundaries, revolutionary or otherwise, not only was Napoleon's prestige destroyed, but along with it would go French leadership in Europe. An imperial throne there must be, exerting French influence far

abroad. What happened at Paris, therefore, may be regarded as a counter-feint to Metternich's effort at securing an advantageous peace from the French nation when it should have renounced Napoleon. It was merely an attempt to collect the remaining national strength, not now for aggressive warfare, but for the expulsion of hated invaders.

Having received no formulated proposition for acceptance or rejection, and desiring to force one, the Emperor of the French virtually disregarded the letter of Metternich's communication, and sent a carefully considered message to the allies. Making no mention in this of the terms brought by St. Aignan, he suggested Caulaincourt as plenipotentiary to an international congress, which should meet somewhere on the Rhine, say at Mannheim. Further, he declared that his object had always been the independence of all the nations, "from the continental as well as from the maritime point of view." This communication reached Frankfort on November sixteenth, and, whether wilfully or not, was misinterpreted to mean that the writer would persist in questioning England's maritime rights. Thereupon Metternich replied by accepting Mannheim as the place for the proposed conference, and promised to communicate the language of Napoleon's letter to his co-allies. How far these co-allies were from a sincere desire for peace is proven by their next step, taken almost on the date of Metternich's reply. A proclamation was widely posted in the cities of France, which stated, in a cant borrowed from Napoleon's own practice, that the allies desired France "to be great, strong, and prosperous"; they were making war, it was asserted, not "on France, but on that preponderance which Napoleon had too long exercised, to the misfortune of Europe and of France herself, to which they guaranteed in advance an extent of territory such as she never had under her kings." Napoleon's riposte was to despatch a swarm of trusty emissaries throughout France in order to compose all quarrels of the people with the government, to strengthen popular devotion in every possible way—in short, to counteract the possible effects of this call. The messengers found public opinion thoroughly imperial, but profoundly embittered against Maret as the supposed instigator of disastrous wars. Maret was transferred to the department of state, and the pacific Caulaincourt was made minister of foreign affairs. On December second, at

the earliest possible moment, the new minister addressed a note to Metternich, accepting the terms of the "general and summary basis." This, said the despatch, would involve great sacrifices; but Napoleon would feel no regret if only by a similar abnegation England would provide the means for a general, honorable peace. Metternich replied that nothing now stood in the way of convening a congress, and that he would notify England to send a plenipotentiary. There, however, the matter ended, and Metternich's record of those Frankfort days scarcely notices the subject, so interested is he in the squabbles of the sovereigns over the opening of a new campaign. It was the end of the year when they reached an agreement.

CHAPTER V

THE INVASION OF FRANCE

Amazing Schemes of Napoleon for New Levies — Attitude of the People toward the Empire — The Disaffected Elements — Napoleon's Armament — Activity of the Imperialists — Release of Ferdinand and the Pope — Napoleon's Farewell to Paris — His Strategic Plan — France against Europe — The Conduct of Bernadotte — Murat's Defection — Conflicting Interests of the Allies — Positions of the Opponents at the Outbreak of Hostilities.

What happened in France between the first days of November, 1813, when Napoleon reached St. Cloud, and the close of the year, is so incredible that it scarcely seems to belong in the pages of sober history. Of five hundred and seventy-five thousand Frenchmen, strictly excluding Germans and Poles, who had been sent to war during 1812 and 1813, about three hundred thousand were prisoners or shut up in distant garrisons, and a hundred and seventy-five thousand were dead or missing; therefore a hundred thousand or thereabouts remained under arms and ready for active service. By various decrees of the Emperor and the senate, nine hundred and thirty-six thousand more were called to arms: a hundred and sixty thousand from the classes between 1804 and 1814, whether they had once served or not; a hundred and sixty thousand from the class of 1815; a hundred and seventy-six thousand five hundred were to be enrolled in the regular national guard, and a hundred and forty thousand in a home guard; finally, in a comprehensive sweep from all the classes between 1804 and 1814 inclusive, every possible man was to be drawn. This, it was estimated, would produce three hundred thousand more.

It is easy to exaggerate the significance of these enormous figures, for to the layman they would seem to mean that every male capable of bearing arms was to be taken. But this was far from being the case; contrary to the general impression, the population of France had been and was steadily increasing. In spite of all the butcheries of foreign and civil wars, the number of inhabitants was growing at the rate of half a million yearly, and the country could probably have furnished three times the number called out. Moreover, less than a third of the nine hundred and thirty-six

thousand were ever organized, and not more than an eighth of them fought. This disproportion between plan and fulfilment was due partly to official incapacity or worse, partly to a popular resistance which was not due to disaffection. It speaks volumes for the state of the country that even the hated flying columns, with their thorough procedure, could not find the men, especially the fathers, husbands, and only sons, who were the solitary supports of many families. The fields were tilled by the spades of women and children, for there were neither horses to draw nor men to hold the plows. Government pawn-shops were gorged, and the government storehouses were bursting with manufactured wares for which there was no market; government securities were worth less than half their face, the currency had disappeared, and usury was rampant. Yet it seems certain that four fifths of the people associated none of these miseries with Napoleonic empire. The generation which had grown to maturity under Napoleon saw only one side of his activities: the majestic public works he had inaugurated, the glories of France and the splendors of empire during the intervals of peace, the exhaustion and abasement of her foes in a long series of splendid campaigns—all this they associated with the imperial rule, and desired what they supposed was a simple thing, the Empire and peace.

The other fifth was, however, thoroughly aroused. When the legislature convened on December nineteenth, and the diplomatic correspondence was so cleverly arranged and presented as to make the allies appear implacable, an address to the throne was passed, amid thunderous applause and by a large majority, which virtually called for a return to constitutional government as the price of additional war supplies. In sober moments even the most ardent liberals were ashamed, feeling that this was not an opportune moment for disorganizing such administration as there was by calls for the reform of the constitution. Only one question was imperative, the awful responsibility they had for the national identity. The general public was so outraged by the spectacle that the deputies reconsidered their action, and by a vote of two hundred and fifty-four to two hundred and twenty-three struck out the obnoxious clause. But this did not appease Napoleon, who made no attempt to conceal his rage, and

prorogued the chamber in scorn. His support was ample in the almost universal conviction that at such a moment there was no time for parleying about abstract questions of political rights; but every cavilling deputy had some friends at home, and in a crisis where the very existence of France was jeopardized there were agitations by the reactionary radicals. The royalists kept silent then, and for months later, contenting themselves with biting innuendos or witty double meanings; drinking, for instance, to "the Emperor's last victory," when the newspapers announced "the last victory of the Emperor."

The first conscription from the classes of 1808-1814 was thoroughly successful, the second attempt to glean from them was an utter failure; the effort to forestall the draft of 1815 met with resistance, and was abandoned. It was impossible to organize the home guards and reserves, for they rebelled or escaped, and local danger had to be averted by local volunteers who were designated as "sedentary" because they could not be ordered away. By the end of January not more than twenty thousand men had been secured for general service from all classes other than the first—at least that was approximately the number in the various camps of instruction. In order to arm and equip the recruits, Napoleon had recourse to his private treasure, drawing fifty-five million francs from the vaults of the Tuileries for that purpose. The remaining ten were transferred at intervals to Blois. But all his treasure could not buy what did not exist. The best military stores were in the heart of Europe; the French arsenals could afford only antiquated and almost useless supplies. The recruits were armed, some with shot-guns and knives, some with old muskets, the use of which they did not know; they were for the most part without uniforms, and wore bonnets, blouses, and sabots. There were not half enough horses for the scanty artillery and cavalry. Worse than all, there was no time for instruction in the manual and tactics. On one occasion a boy conscript was found standing inactive under a fierce musketry fire; with artless intrepidity he remarked that he believed he could aim as well as anybody if he only knew how to load his gun!

The disaffected, though few, were powerful and active, suborning the prefects and civic authorities by every device, issuing proclamations which promised anything and everything, and procuring plans of fortified places for the allies. Talleyrand began to utter oracular innuendos about the vindictiveness of the allies, the desertion of Murat, the sack of Paris, and various half-truths more dangerous even than lies. The air was so full of rumors that, although there was no widespread revolutionary movement, there were now and then serious panics; the town of Chaumont surrendered to a solitary Würtemberg horseman. But when the populace of the country at large began to wonder who the coming Bourbon might be, and what he would take back from the present possessors of royal and ecclesiastical estates, they were staggered. People in the cities heard with some satisfaction the strains of the "Marseillaise," which by order of imperial agents were once again ground out around the streets by the hand-organs. Napoleon walked the avenues of Paris without escort, and was wildly cheered; the Empress and her little son were produced on public occasions with dramatic success, and popular wit dubbed the boy conscripts by the name of "Marie Louises." The little men showed a grim determination and eventually a sublime courage, but they never could acquire the veteran steadfastness which wins battles. Journals, theaters, music-halls, and public balls were all managed in the interest of imperial patriotism; imperial tyranny dealt ruthlessly with suspicious characters. Yet the imperialists had their doubts, and many, like Savary, threw an anchor to windward by storing treasure at distant points, and sending their families to safe retreats. On the whole, the balance of public opinion at the opening of 1814 was overwhelmingly imperialist both in the cities and in the country. Men ardently desired peace, but they wanted it with honor and under the Empire.

That the Empire desired peace seemed to be proved by steps for the release of its two most important prisoners, the King of Spain and the Pope. Wellington thought that if the former had been despatched directly into his kingdom on December eighth, the day on which the conditions between himself and the Emperor were signed, England would have found the further conduct of the war impossible. Talleyrand, already deep in royalist

plots, must have been of the same opinion, for he did not advise haste, but craftily suggested to his prisoner that the provisional government of Spain might refuse to accept him as king unless the treaty of release had been previously ratified by the Cortes. Accordingly it was referred to them, and, since the liberals desired the assent to their new constitution of a king not under duress, by their influence it was rejected. It was not until March, 1814, that Ferdinand was unconditionally released, and this delay proved fatal to Napoleon's interests in Spain. The liberals could no longer fight for free institutions, because it was then clear that the dynastic conservatism of Europe was to win a temporary victory. In about six months King Ferdinand undid the progressive work of six years, and Spain relapsed into absolutism and ecclesiasticism, with all their attendant evils. Nevertheless, France interpreted the conduct of the Emperor as indicating an earnest desire for peace, and this feeling had been strengthened by the absolutely unconditional release of the Pope on January twenty-second. This apparently gracious concession was effective among the masses, who did not know, as the Emperor did, that the allies were already on French soil.

The very next day Napoleon performed his last official act, which was one of great courage both physical and moral. The national guard in Paris had been reorganized, but its leaders had never been thoroughly loyal, many of them being royalists, some radical republicans, and the disaffection of both classes had been heightened by recent events. But the officers were nevertheless summoned to the Tuileries; the risk was doubled by the fact that they came armed. Drawn up in the vast chamber known as that of the marshals, they stood expectant; the great doors were thrown open, and there entered the Emperor, accompanied only by his consort and their child in the arms of his governess, Mme. de Montesquiou. Napoleon announced simply that he was about to put himself at the head of his army, hoping, by the aid of God and the valor of his troops, to drive the enemy beyond the frontiers. There was silence. Then, taking in one hand that of the Empress, and leading forward his child by the other, he continued, "I intrust the Empress and the King of Rome to the courage of the national guard." Still silence. After a moment, with suppressed emotion, he concluded, "My wife and my son." No generous-hearted Frenchman could withstand such an

appeal; breaking ranks by a spontaneous impulse, the listeners started forward in a mass, and shook the very walls with their cry, "Long live the Emperor!" Many shed tears, and felt, as they withdrew in respectful silence, a new sense of devotion welling up in their hearts. On the eve of his departure, the Emperor received a numerously signed address from the very men whose loyalty he had hitherto had just reason to suspect.

It was four in the morning of January twenty-fifth when Napoleon left for Châlons. From that moment he was no longer Emperor. During the long winter nights just past he had wrought with an intensity and a feverish activity which he had never surpassed, sparing neither himself nor others, displaying no consideration for prejudice or honest opposition, calling on every Frenchman to sacrifice everything for France, to which, as he vehemently asserted, he himself was more necessary than she to him. If he had come honestly to believe what millions of others believed, it was little wonder; he had thenceforth but one aim—to prove that he was, as of yore, the first general of France, the only one able to save the country in an hour when all her glories were falling in wreck about her. His strategic plans, immense and intricate as was his task, were complete and excellent. The first was intended to prevent invasion by way of Liège, the most direct line and that which Prussia preferred. The second, which was partly defensive, was the one eventually used against the clumsy form of advance actually chosen by the invaders. Of the two, the former was the more brilliant, but the second was almost as clever. By it the Rhine bank was divided into three parts for purposes of defense. Macdonald was stationed at Cologne to protect the lower course; Marmont was to guard the central stretch, and they two divided between them the remnants of the army which had been swept out of Germany; Victor was stationed on the upper course to command the garrisons of the great frontier fortifications and strengthen himself by the new levies; Bertrand remained as a sort of rear post on the right bank of the river at Kastel, opposite Mainz. All told, these generals had at first only fifty thousand men.

The allies no sooner obtained possession of central Europe than they outdid its recent master in every species of exaction. The countries which

had formed the Confederacy of the Rhine were compelled almost to double the number of the contingents they had raised for France, and to organize every fencible man into either the first or second line of reserves, called by the old feudal terms of ban and arrière-ban. At the same time the allies demanded and obtained new subsidies both of money and arms from Great Britain. In the three armies of Austria, Prussia, and Russia, as they stood on the Rhine, there were ready by January first about two hundred and eighty-five thousand men. By the end of February the army-lists of France, excluding the national guards, displayed a total of six hundred and fifty thousand men; the coalition, including England, had registered nearly a million. Deducting forty per cent. as ample to cover all shortcomings, we may say that France, with three hundred and ninety thousand in the ranks, men and boys, faced Europe with six hundred thousand full-grown men. These figures include the French armies of Catalonia, of the Pyrenees, of Italy, and of the Netherlands, together with the garrisons in all the strong places then held by France on both sides of the Rhine; they also include the Russian, Austrian, and Prussian reserves, with the national armies of Holland, Spain, and Italy.

Aside from the centrifugal forces inherent in the coalition, there was one which threatened its disintegration: the erratic character of the great Gascon who represented Sweden. Bernadotte's first care, after the battle of Leipsic, was to move north and secure the long-coveted prize of Norway. Ever mindful of the hint about a French crown, which Alexander had thrown out as still another bait at Abo, he gave as his parting admonition the transparent advice that the coming campaign should be confined to a frontier invasion of France, and at Hamburg he actually offered Davout, as the price of surrender, a safe return for himself and his army to their native land! This was too much; Alexander was furious, and the schemer was peremptorily ordered to leave a sufficient investing force before the city and return with the rest of his army to the lower Rhine. There he was suffered to remain in idleness, the task assigned to him being that of watching the Netherlands; two of his best corps were withdrawn from him and assigned to Blücher.

Nor was Napoleon free from his thorn in the flesh. In a bulletin published by him after the retreat from Moscow was a passage which implied some censure of Murat for his lack of stability. This both the King of Naples and his spouse bitterly resented, the latter roundly abusing her brother in their correspondence. This was an excellent pretext for desertion when the general crash appeared imminent, and at Erfurt the dashing and gallant, but weak and testy, monarch decamped. Hastening south, he entered at once into alliance with Austria, and then, putting himself at the head of eighty thousand Neapolitans, set out for Rome, waging a terrific warfare of proclamations. Eugène, too,—and this was an elemental disaster,—was virtually checkmated by the defection of his father-in-law, the King of Bavaria, which opened the Tyrol to the allies. All Italy was consequently lost. Augereau, whose feeble loyalty to Napoleon was already at the vanishing-point, had been appointed to take forty thousand conscripts, collect any straggling soldiers he could find in southeastern France, and keep open the door out of Italy for some or all of Eugène's veterans, with whose assistance it was hoped the marshal could form an army for the defense of the Vosges Mountains. But Eugène, having fought the indecisive battle of Roverbello, and finding himself in a sorry plight from both the military and political points of view, could send no reinforcements until April, when finally he concluded an armistice releasing his army. Augereau therefore found himself opposite Bubna at Geneva with an ineffective force, and with very little heart to wield what he had. This ended Napoleon's grand scheme for uniting the forces of Italy, Naples, Switzerland, and France.

Prussia was now the ablest as well as the bitterest of Napoleon's foes, Stein, Blücher, Gneisenau, and their friends aiming at nothing short of annihilating the Napoleonic power. This was, no doubt, due in part to a thirst for revenge; but in the main it was due to the longing for such a leadership in Germany as would spread abroad the new doctrines of liberal and constitutional monarchy, in order to restrain Austria's ever-increasing influence. The councils of the allies presented an amusing spectacle. The Prussians urged an immediate advance by the best line for invasion, that, namely, from Liège and Brussels; but the Austrians, except Radetzky, drew

back, fearing Prussia almost equally with France. The Czar held the balance, but his scales were very sensitive, inclining often toward Prussia, but settling in the end to a compromise suggested by Schwarzenberg and Metternich. Having imitated Napoleon in his practice of war requisitions, the allies now determined to imitate him in contempt for international law, and to violate Swiss neutrality. The plan which they adopted was to throw their main army into France by way of Basel, and thus turn the line of frowning fortresses behind the Rhine, as well as the Vosges Mountains. Blücher was to cross the middle Rhine, and Bülow, with thirty thousand men, was to coöperate with the English troops under Graham in the Netherlands. The whole scheme was unmilitary, but it exactly suited Metternich, who, having on January thirteenth first learned of Bernadotte's understanding with the Czar about the crown of France, was very uneasy. Both he and Schwarzenberg desired to end the war on the frontier, if possible; Prussia's power and Alexander's ambitions for European preponderance were far more dangerous to Austria than a Napoleonic empire confined to France.

Blücher, leaving twenty-eight thousand men before Mainz, crossed the Saar on January ninth with forty-seven thousand; Schwarzenberg, with the main army arrayed in four columns, two hundred and nine thousand strong, crossed the Rhine at or near Basel and moved toward Langres. The thin, straggling French columns began to retreat concentrically toward Châlons on the Marne. At the opening of the second stage in the campaign Blücher had invested the Mosel fortresses, and was advancing, with less than thirty thousand men, toward Arcis on the Aube; Schwarzenberg was in and about Langres; and the French were concentrated on a line from Vitry-le-François to St. Dizier. Napoleon reached Châlons on the twenty-sixth, having left Joseph to represent him in Paris. The wily strategist, feeble as was his strength, had momentarily secured the advantage over his unwieldy foe, having wedged himself between the invading armies, and being quite strong enough, with the forty thousand soldiers in his ranks, to cope with Blücher.

CHAPTER VI

NAPOLEON'S SUPREME EFFORT

The Fertility of Genius — The Battles of Brienne and La Rothière — The French Retreat — Victory at Champaubert — Victory at Montmirail — Victory at Vauchamps — Success Engenders Delusion — Insincerity of the Allies — Their Clashing Interests — The Congress of Châtillon — Napoleon's Procrastination — French Victory and French Diplomacy.

The year 1814 is the most astonishing of Napoleon's military life. He first conceived a plan for combining the resources of Italy, Switzerland, Naples, and France. This failed by Augereau's sloth and Murat's ingratitude. Nothing daunted, the fertile brain then outlined schemes for meeting the quick advance of the allies through the Netherlands, for defending the Rhine frontier, and for a levy en masse of the French people to hurl back invasion under the walls of Paris. After taking the field, the daring of his conceptions, the rapidity of his movements, the surprises he prepared for his enemy, the support he wrung from an exhausted land, the devotion he received from a panting, ill-clothed army at bay—all are so remarkable that by contrast the allies appear to be a lumbering, stupid mass. With another antagonist they would have appeared in a very different light; Gneisenau's clear head, Blücher's daring, Radetzky's good sense and courage, together with the valor of the forces at their back, would have won the goal far more easily with an ordinary, or even an extraordinary, combatant in Napoleon's plight. The Emperor of the French had not merely a prestige worth a hundred thousand men, as he was fond of reckoning: he had an activity of mind and body, a reservoir of resources, which made his single blade cover the whole circumference of defense like the whirling spokes of a fiery wheel.

After a skirmish for the possession of St. Dizier, the campaign opened at Brienne, where Blücher, hurrying to gain touch with the main army of the allies, was caught on January twenty-ninth. The conflict probably did not recall to Napoleon his mock conflicts when a schoolboy near the same spot. The terrific struggle began late in the afternoon, and lasted in full fury until midnight, when the Prussian general, narrowly escaping capture,

abandoned the town and hurried toward Trannes. Thoroughly beaten, he needed not touch alone, but actual union with the Austrians, and this he gained near Bar on the Aube, whence Schwarzenberg was passing on toward Auxerre. Ignorant of this success, Napoleon now drew up his line with its center at La Rothière, hoping in the first place to hold the bridge over the Aube at Lesmont, and thus secure the moral effect of his victory at Brienne, and in the second to bring on another engagement with Blücher, whom he believed to be still isolated. Marmont was at Montierender, Mortier was summoned from before Troyes. This stand of Napoleon's was a desperate attempt to overawe the allied sovereigns, for strategically it was fatal, since in the case of either victory or defeat the French army was in danger of being outflanked by Schwarzenberg's advance, and thus cut off from Paris. On February first, Blücher, reinforced by twelve thousand of the Russian guard, attacked. The battle lasted, with fluctuating success for the allies, during two days, and at its close Napoleon safely retreated over the Aube to make another stand at Troyes. The various conflicts were terrific; in the end Blücher lost six thousand dead and wounded, the French about four thousand. The odds against the latter were never less than two to one, sometimes more. Had the allies first thrown their full strength into the contest, and had they then followed up their victory by a well-organized pursuit, the campaign would have ended there. As it was, they paused, permitted a disorganized, feeble enemy to escape, and gained nothing from the bloody conflict except an ill-founded self-confidence. Blücher wrote on the evening of the battle that they would be in Paris within eight days. To General Reynier, who was to be liberated by an exchange of prisoners, the Czar said: "We shall be in Paris before you." A council of war was called which decided for an advance on the French capital in two columns; to Blücher, as the conqueror of La Rothière, was assigned the shortest line, that down the Marne.

For several days the allied lines moved onward, slowly, widely scattered, and carelessly. Napoleon was as calm and undaunted as if he had been the victor. Retreating on the defensive with careful deliberation, he strengthened his forces by well-chosen periods of rest, and by hurrying in reinforcements from the various depots about and beyond Paris. On the

afternoon of February ninth, when leaving Nogent for Sézanne, he wrote to his brother Joseph, whom he had left to represent his interests at Paris, that he could now reckon, all told, on between sixty and seventy thousand men, including engineers and artillery; that he estimated the Silesian army under Blücher at forty-five thousand, and the main army under Schwarzenberg at a hundred and fifty thousand, including Bubna and the Cossacks. "If I gain a victory over the Silesian army, and put it out of account for some days, I can turn against Schwarzenberg, reckoning on the reinforcements you will send, with from seventy to eighty thousand men, and I think he cannot oppose me at once with more than from a hundred and ten to a hundred and twenty thousand. If I find myself too weak to attack, I shall be at least strong enough to hold him in check for a fortnight or three weeks, and this would give me the opportunity for new combinations." To hold Schwarzenberg temporarily, Oudinot with twenty-five thousand men was stationed on the line from Provins to Sens, and Victor with fourteen thousand was sent to Nogent. The Emperor himself, with the old guard, about eight thousand strong, with Ney and Marmont each commanding six thousand infantry, and with ten thousand cavalry under Nansouty and Doumerc, set out from Sézanne to try his fortunes with Blücher.

This was the last of Napoleon's great strategic schemes which was destined to be crowned with success. It had but a single drawback. While Napoleon was still the boldest man in war that ever lived, as at St. Helena he declared himself to be, his marshals were uneasy and depressed; Marmont, in this moment of infinite chance, as it seemed to him, fell into a panic. The marshal's fears were not justified, for his Emperor's daring was not foolhardy. It was calculated on the myriad chances of his enemy's opportunity and his enemy's ability, and in this case it was perfectly calculated. Blücher, in spite of Gneisenau's continuous warnings, was over-confident. Having dispersed his detachments more than ever, he had for two days been moving swiftly in the hope of cutting off Macdonald by a dashing feat of arms. In his haste he had not taken up two Russian corps which had been separated from his main line, but on the contrary he had left them so far out that they were beyond support. By a blunder of the Czar's, reinforcements which had been promised were still a long distance

in the rear. Schwarzenberg's movements were marked by an over-confident deliberation as characteristic of him as overhaste was of Blücher. Accordingly when on the tenth Marmont advanced from Sézanne, he found the corps of Olsusieff, about forty-five hundred strong, virtually isolated at Champaubert. His own numbers were slightly superior, and with a swift rush he annihilated the unready Russians. Napoleon was beside himself with joy, and began to talk of the Vistula once more; but he stopped when he saw how sour the visages of Marmont and the other marshals grew at the very mention of such an idea. Nevertheless, if the process begun at Champaubert could be continued, victory and ultimate recovery of something more than French empire were assured. He therefore hurried Nansouty and Macdonald on toward Montmirail for a second stroke of the same kind.

The affair at Montmirail was more of a battle than that at Champaubert, for Blücher had been able to gather in the divisions of Sacken, York, Kleist, and Kapzewitch. The battle opened about an hour before noon on the eleventh by a fierce artillery fire from the French, behind which Napoleon manœuvered so as to concentrate his own force against the Russians, and separate them from York with his Prussians. At two o'clock Napoleon attacked the Russians, Mortier engaging the Prussians separately. The plan succeeded, and by nightfall the enemy was in full retreat for Château-Thierry, where was the nearest bridge over the Marne. Napoleon had hoped that Macdonald would arrive from La Ferté-sous-Jouarre in time to seize the bridge, cut off the retreat, and make the victory decisive. But in spite of heroic exertion, that marshal could not or did not move with sufficient rapidity over the heavy dirt roads. The flying allies sacked the town with awful cruelty, and destroyed the bridge without any molestation except from the inhabitants, who wreaked their vengeance on numerous stragglers. On the thirteenth the French occupied the place, repaired the bridge, and crossed to the right bank. Next morning Marmont started in pursuit of Blücher.

Somewhat flushed by such success, Napoleon deliberated whether he should not now turn and attack Schwarzenberg. The Emperor thought

these victories might give pause to a mediocre Austrian, ever mindful of the terrific blows his country had received once and again from France. He was mistaken; Schwarzenberg had moved, though slowly, yet steadily forward. On the twelfth Victor abandoned the bridge at Nogent, and Napoleon sent Macdonald with twelve thousand men to join Victor at Montereau. Early on the fourteenth came news that Blücher had driven Marmont back to Fromentières. By noon Napoleon had effected a junction with this marshal near Étoges, making a famous and successful flank march over a marshy country, a manœuver which is justly considered worthy of his great genius. Advancing then to the neighborhood of Vauchamps, his infantry attacked in front, while the cavalry, under Grouchy, outflanked the enemy's line and fell on the rear. Blücher was apparently doomed, for he had only three regiments of cavalry, and while facing one powerful enemy he would be forced to break the ranks of another in order to open a line of retreat. He solved the problem, but at enormous cost. Forming his troops into a line of solid squares, one stood to support the artillery and receive the onset in front, while the others dashed at Grouchy's horsemen, each square standing and retreating behind the next alternately as the bloody retreat went on. At last the butchery ceased, and Blücher fled to Bergères. The French pursued only as far as Étoges. Napoleon had hoped to follow all the way to Châlons, annihilate what was left of Blücher's army, and then to return and throw himself on Schwarzenberg. He was arrested by the news that the Seine valley, as far as Montereau, was in the hands of the Austro-Russians; that Oudinot and Victor had been driven back to Nangis; in short, that Paris was seriously menaced.

It was long asserted that in the three actions just recorded the French far outnumbered their opponents, and that Napoleon's generalship was consequently inferior to his high average. The sufficient answer to this is in the facts now universally accepted. At Champaubert there were four thousand eight hundred and fifty French against four thousand seven hundred Russians; at Montmirail there were twenty-two thousand seven hundred Russians and Prussians against twelve thousand eight hundred French; and in the third engagement, near Étoges, Blücher had twenty-one

thousand five hundred to ten thousand three hundred. It is therefore natural to compare these three victories with those at Montenotte, Millesimo, and Dego. But they were far greater. At forty-four Napoleon displayed exactly the same boldness, steadfastness, and skill which he had displayed in youth; but in addition he overcame the stolid enmity of winter, of variable weather, of roads almost impassable, of swampy fields that were almost impassable by reason of overflowing ditches and half-frozen morasses. He overcame, too, the resisting power created by his own example; for here were the choicest soldiers of the Continent, commanded by men inured for eighteen years to the hardships, the shifts, the rapidity of warfare as he himself had taught the art. Momentarily Napoleon seems to have wondered whether allied and co-allied Europe had learned nothing in half a generation, and whether an army twice and a half larger than his own, under veteran generals, was to withdraw again behind the Rhine, the Elbe, the Oder, perhaps the Vistula. It is hard to believe that he dreamed such dreams as we read the prosaic, scientific, hard common sense of his military correspondence between January twenty-sixth and February fourteenth. Yet there is certainly an appearance of self-deception and vacillation in his political and diplomatic plans, due apparently to the intoxication of success, as when he spoke of the Vistula to Marmont after Champaubert.

The innermost thoughts of Metternich, and of the diplomats associated with him, are very hard to fathom. For two generations the world believed that after Leipsic, Napoleon, in his sanguine conceit, rejected offer after offer from the allies, and finally perished utterly because of a folly which made him believe he could recover his predominance. There is now every reason to believe the contrary, and to suppose that Napoleon clearly understood the situation. The war was one of extermination on the part of the allies; in the interest of their dynasties they intended not only to destroy Napoleon, but also thereby to root out the ideas for which he was supposed to stand. By the light of recent memoirs, especially those of Metternich himself, we seem forced to the conclusion that in all the offers after Leipsic there was, if anything, far less of reality and sincerity than in those between the armistice of Poischwitz and the battle. When Castlereagh

arrived at the allied headquarters early in January, 1814, he found them established in Basel. Schwarzenberg had found no difficulty in crossing Switzerland. Geneva surrendered its keys without a struggle, and generally the Swiss seemed indifferent to the violation of their neutrality. As the advance continued, it appeared that the French were equally apathetic. Bubna was driven from before Lyons by Augereau, but Dijon surrendered to a squad of cavalrymen which, at the request of the conscientious mayor, made a show of force to oblige him. It was not difficult under such circumstances for the sovereigns and their ministers to convince themselves that any peace with Napoleon would be nothing but a "ridiculous armistice," and that the Emperor of the French must, in any case, be utterly overthrown.

In response to the Frankfort proposals, the pacific Caulaincourt had promptly arrived to conduct negotiations. The invaders had almost at once suggested that they must abandon the Frankfort proposals, and confine France to her royal limits; that is, refuse her Belgium with the great port of Antwerp. So far they were agreed, but there the unanimity ceased. The Czar desired first to conquer France, and then leave her to choose her own government; he intended to take the whole of Poland, and give Alsace to Francis in return for Galicia, thus checking Austria by both Prussia and France, so that he could work his will in the Orient. Metternich wished the old balance of power, and had determined on the restoration of the Bourbons. Francis was writing to his daughter that he would never separate her cause and that of her son from France. The Prussian king and ministers desired only such an arrangement as would secure to their country what she had regained. Stein and his associates wished the utter humiliation of their foe. Castlereagh spoke with the authority of a paymaster; he was determined to keep the Netherlands from falling under French influence, to restore the Bourbons, and to establish so nice an equilibrium in Europe that Great Britain would be unhampered elsewhere in the world. There was to be no mention of colonial restitution or neutral rights. Being a second-rate statesman, he was much influenced by Metternich, and the two sought to form an impossible alliance between constitutional liberty and feudal absolutism.

A so-called congress was opened at Châtillon on February fifth. It must be remembered that the treaty of Reichenbach was still a secret. That agreement was the reality behind the congress of Prague, the Frankfort proposals, and the meeting at Mannheim. None of those gatherings consequently was serious; that at Châtillon was even less so. The memoirs of Metternich explain all the facts: Swiss neutrality was violated by Austrian influence in order to restore the aristocratic constitution of Bern and the ascendancy of that canton; Alexander, posing still as a liberal, was angry at this violation of international law, and forbade the restoration of Vaud to its old master. Schwarzenberg's deliberate movements were due primarily to timidity, but they stood in good stead Metternich's desire to restore the Bourbons. It has been asserted, and there is much probability in the conjecture, that not only the plan adopted for invading France, but the slowness of the Austrians in advancing toward Langres, toward Troyes, across into the Seine valley, together with the spurious activity they displayed before Montereau, Sens, and Fontainebleau, was part of a scheme to wear out but not to exhaust France, and then compel her to take back her dynastic rulers. Blücher, who wanted glory and revenge, and the Prussian liberals, who desired so to crush France that Prussia might be free to slough off her militarism and build up a constitutional government, were alike furious at being chained to the frontier. All these cross-purposes and bitterness were mirrored in the ostentatious proceedings of the congress of Châtillon. Napoleon, either divining the facts, or, more probably, informed by spies, seemed indifferent, and refused at first to give full powers to Caulaincourt; finally the marshals, terrified at the prospect of indefinite war opened by the unlucky mention of the Vistula, made their influence so felt that the Emperor yielded.

Maret's name was long held up to detestation as the instigator of Napoleon's procrastinating policy at Dresden, the line of conduct which seemed to have made it possible for Austria to join the coalition. Among the papers of that minister is an account of his relations with Napoleon during the congress at Châtillon, which displays the evident motive of an attempt to prove how pacific his nature really was. He declares that after the defeat at La Rothière, Caulaincourt wrote a panic-stricken letter

demanding full authority to treat. Maret handed it to the Emperor, beseeching him to yield. Napoleon seemed scarcely to heed, but indicated a passage in Montesquieu's "Grandeur and Fall of the Romans," which he happened to be reading: "I know nothing more magnanimous than the resolution taken by a monarch who ruled in our time, to bury himself under the ruins of the throne rather than to accept proposals which a king may not entertain. He had a soul too lofty to descend lower than his misfortunes had hurled him." "But I, sire," rejoined the secretary—"I know something more magnanimous—to cast aside your glory in order to close the abyss into which France would fall along with you." "Well, then, gentlemen, make your peace," came the reply. "Let Caulaincourt make it; let him sign everything necessary to obtain it. I can support the disgrace, but do not expect me todictate my own humiliation." Maret informed Caulaincourt, but the latter recoiled before the responsibility, and asked for particular instructions. The Emperor persistently refused, but wrote giving the minister "carte blanche" to take any measure which would save the capital. Again Caulaincourt begged for details, and again Napoleon refused, persisting until Bertrand joined his supplications to those of Maret, whereupon he consented to abandon Belgium, and even the left bank of the Rhine.

The formal despatch containing these concessions was to be signed next morning, on February eighth, but in the interval came news of Blücher's movements. Maret found the Emperor buried in the study of his map. "I have an entirely different matter in hand," was the greeting; "I am at present occupied in dealing Blücher a blow in the eye." The signature was indefinitely postponed. On the tenth Alexander suspended the congress on the plea of Caulaincourt's refusal to state his own or accept the offered terms. Then followed the three victories, and Napoleon, on the night of the twelfth, wrote to Châtillon demanding the Frankfort proposals. Caulaincourt urgently besought the allies for an armistice, and begged Napoleon to be less exacting. Prussia and Austria were eager for the armistice, but Alexander obstinately refused to reopen the congress until the eighteenth, when everything seemed changed, and all the allies really desired peace. Caulaincourt, warned by Napoleon's letter of the twelfth,

refused to treat without full instructions, and as he had none he began to procrastinate. In the end he bore the blame for not having used the carte blanche when he had it in order to save his country, for subsequently he had no opportunity.

CHAPTER VII

THE GREAT CAPTAIN AT BAY

Victor's Failure at Montereau — Schwarzenberg's Ruse — The French Advance and the Austrian Retreat — Napoleon's Effort to Divide the Coalition — Vain Negotiations — The Treaty of Chaumont — Blücher's Narrow Escape — The Prussians Defeated at Craonne — Napoleon's Determination to Fight — His Misfortunes at Laon — Dissensions at Blücher's Headquarters — Napoleon at Soissons — Rheims Recaptured — Another Phase in Napoleon's Eclipse.

The eagerness of the Prussians and the Austrians to grant an armistice was at first due to the belief that Caulaincourt's request was a confession of exhaustion; the Czar's assent to reopening the congress on the eighteenth was wrung from him by the military operations between the fourteenth and that date. Convinced that Paris was menaced, Napoleon left Marmont to hold Blücher, and starting for La Ferté-sous-Jouarre on the fifteenth, covered fifty miles with his army in a marvelous march of thirty-six hours, arriving on the evening of the sixteenth with his men comparatively fresh. Next morning the French began to advance, and the Austrians to withdraw toward the Seine. Victor was to seize Montereau that same day and hold the bridge. Compelled to drive an Austrian corps out of Valjouan, the marshal did not reach his goal until six or seven in the evening, and finding it beset by the Crown Prince of Würtemberg with fourteen thousand Germans, he merely drove in the outposts and then halted for the night. His ardor was far from intense, and though, like Macdonald at Château-Thierry, he might feel that he had done all that could be demanded, yet he lost the opportunity of annihilating a considerable portion of the enemy's force. Simultaneously Macdonald had now advanced until he stood before Bray, while Oudinot on the left was before Provins. Thus far Napoleon's advance had been a front movement to cover Paris, but that same day, the seventeenth, he drove Wittgenstein from Nangis, and then expected by a rush over the bridge at Montereau to prevent Schwarzenberg from extending his flank to Fontainebleau, a move which would surround the French right. As a matter of fact, strange riders speaking curious

outlandish tongues, Cossack scouts in other words, had appeared for the first time that very day in Nemours and Fontainebleau, terrifying the inhabitants. It seems highly probable that if Napoleon's force could have made a quick push from Montereau early on the eighteenth, it would have cut off a considerable portion of Schwarzenberg's left. In any case the Emperor was deeply incensed by what he considered Victor's slackness, and degraded him. The humbled marshal confessed his fault, displaying profound contrition, and was speedily restored to partial favor, being intrusted with the command, under Ney, of a portion of the young guard.

This was the third of the marshals—Augereau, Macdonald, Victor, each in turn—who since the opening of the campaign had shown a physical and moral exhaustion disabling them from rising to the heights of Napoleon's expectation. "We must pull on the boots and the resolution of '93," wrote the Emperor to Augereau; he was quite right: nothing short of the unsapped revolutionary vigor of France could have saved his cause. On the eighteenth, after a six hours' struggle, the French under Gérard and Pajol seized Montereau. Napoleon had halted at Nangis, and there Berthier received by a flag of truce a letter from Schwarzenberg, declaring that he had ceased his offensive march in consequence of news that preliminaries of peace had been signed the day previous at Châtillon. This was probably as base a ruse as any ever practised by Napoleon's generals. It is likely that all the Austrian marches and countermarches for ten days past had been but a bustling semblance calculated for diplomatic effect. Be that as it may, before Napoleon's advance the Austrian commander had quailed, and, with the French at Montereau, his columns were already moving back to Troyes, where they were drawn up in battle array. Napoleon wrote indignantly to Joseph that the ruse was probably preliminary to a request for an armistice, and that he would now accept nothing short of the Frankfort proposals. "At the first check the wretched creatures fall on their knees." Meanwhile he led his army over the river to Nogent, and prepared to attack Schwarzenberg.

But Blücher had not been idle; by superhuman exertions he had collected and strengthened his army at Châlons, and on the twenty-first he appeared

at Méry on the Seine, threatening Napoleon's left flank in case of an advance toward Troyes. By this time the flames of French patriotism were rekindled in town and country, and, the soldiers being flushed with victory, it was clearly the hour to strike at any hazard. Oudinot was despatched with ten thousand men to hold Blücher, and this task he actually accomplished, capturing that portion of Méry which lay on the left bank of the river, and fortifying the bridge-head against all comers. Marmont being at Sézanne with eight thousand men to cover Paris, and Mortier at Soissons with ten thousand to prevent the advance of York and Sacken, Napoleon marched on Troyes. It was late in the evening when his main army was drawn up, and in order to leave time for his rear to come in, he postponed operations until the morning. Schwarzenberg had seventy thousand in line, but at four in the early dawn of the twenty-second, leaving in place a front formation sufficient to mask his movements, he decamped with his main force and withdrew behind the Aube.

Arrived at Bar, the Austrian commander wrote on the twenty-sixth an admirable letter of justification for the course he had taken. Defeat would have meant a retreat, not behind the Aube, but the Rhine. "To offer a decisive battle to an army fighting with all the confidence gained in small affairs, manœuvering on its own territory, with provisions and munitions within reach, and with the aid of a peasantry in arms, would be an undertaking to which nothing but extreme necessity could drive me." This retreat put a new aspect on the diplomacy of Châtillon. On the nineteenth Caulaincourt received a despatch from Napoleon revoking the carte blanche entirely; the same day Napoleon received an ultimatum from the congress, written several days before, to the effect that he was to renounce all the acquisitions of France since 1792, and take no share in the arrangements subsequent to the peace. This last clause being a covert suggestion of abdication, the recipient flew into a passion; when finally he was soothed by the pleadings of Berthier and Maret, he gave such a meaningless reply as would enable negotiations to proceed, but his counter-project he addressed directly to the Emperor Francis. It was a refusal to give up Antwerp and Belgium, and an emphatic recurrence to the Frankfort proposals. "If we are not to lay down our arms except on the

offensive conditions proposed at the congress, the genius of France and Providence will be on our side."

Napoleon's missive suggested to his father-in-law, as was its intention, that a continental peace on the Frankfort basis would leave France free to recuperate her sea power and continue the war with England alone. This was the wedge which for some time past the writer had been proposing to drive into the coalition so as to separate Austria from Russia. Castlereagh was very uneasy as to the possible effect of the message, and there was much anxiety among all the diplomats. Their first step was to send a pacific reply and renew their request for an armistice. Napoleon consented, but stipulated that hostilities should proceed during the preliminary pourparlers, and that in the protocol a clause should be inserted declaring that the plenipotentiaries were reassembled at Châtillon to discuss a peace on the basis proposed at Frankfort. A commission to arrange the terms of the armistice met on the twenty-fourth. That they were not in earnest is shown by Frederick William's despatch of the twenty-sixth to Blücher, saying, "The suspension of arms will not take place." That very day, also, in a council of war held by the allied generals, it was determined to form an invading army of the south. Blücher was authorized to make a diversion in favor of the main army—a move which he had really begun the day before by a march to the right. Napoleon, leaving Macdonald and Oudinot, with forty thousand men, to follow Schwarzenberg, hurried after Blücher with his remaining force. On the twenty-eighth the commission adjourned its sessions with a formal reiteration of the ultimatum already made by the allied powers.

The reason was that by that time its members believed Napoleon to be elsewhere engaged. Schwarzenberg's army had checked Oudinot, and as his troops recuperated their strength the leader recovered partial confidence. Blücher being off for Paris, with Napoleon on his heels, the main army of the allies had then turned on the forces of Macdonald and Oudinot, and had driven them westward until in the pursuit it reached Troyes, where it halted, ready, in case of Blücher's defeat, to recross the Rhine. The congress of Châtillon was formally reopened on March first,

and continued its useless sessions until the nineteenth, when it closed. During this second period none of the important dignitaries, except Schwarzenberg and the King of Prussia, attended; the rest withdrew to Chaumont, where, on March ninth, the three powers signed a treaty with England, dated back to March first, binding themselves, in return for an annual subsidy of five million pounds sterling equally divided, that each would keep a hundred and fifty thousand men in the field, for twenty years if necessary, provided Napoleon would not accept the boundaries of royal France—a futile stipulation. This treaty was the precursor of that iniquitous triple alliance between Russia, Austria, and Prussia which was destined not merely to hamper England herself so seriously in the subsequent period of history, but to stop for some time the progress of liberal ideas throughout Europe.

Blücher crossed the Marne on February twenty-seventh with half his force, and then attempted to cross the Ourcq in order to attack Meaux from the north. But he was checked by Marmont and Mortier, with the sixteen thousand men they already had, and then, after six thousand new recruits came in from Paris, he was forced to retreat. Should Napoleon arrive in time he would be annihilated. Accordingly he hastened up the valley of the Ourcq with his entire force. Napoleon arrived on the Marne too late to attack Blücher's rear, and after some hesitation as to whether he should not return to complete his work with Schwarzenberg, he finally determined that, inasmuch as the fortress of Soissons was secure, and Blücher must therefore retreat to the eastward, he could himself deliver an easy but staggering blow on the Prussian flank when they should cross the Aisne at Fismes. Accordingly, on March third the worn-out columns of the French passed over the Marne. Unfortunately, Soissons had been left by Marmont in charge of an inexperienced commander, who had surrendered almost without resistance when, on March second, Bülow and Wintzengerode, having come in from the Netherlands, suddenly appeared before the place. This stroke of good fortune enabled Blücher not merely to find a city of refuge for his exhausted and disorganized force, but to recruit it by the two victorious and elated corps which thenceforth served him as an invaluable rear-guard. Napoleon, thwarted again, gave no outward sign of the despair

he must have felt, but crossed the Aisne on March fifth, and occupied Rheims, in order at least to cut Blücher off from any connection with Schwarzenberg. He then turned to join Marmont and Mortier in order to drive Blücher still farther north, so that, as he wrote to Joseph, he might gain time sufficient to return by Châlons and attack Schwarzenberg.

In spite of all his discouragements, Blücher had no intention of retreating without a blow. There was constant friction between the Prussian commander and his subordinates, so that dissension prevented prompt action. Nevertheless, after much delay the army was got in motion to resume the offensive, the general plan being to move eastward instead of withdrawing due north, to cross the plateau of Craonne, and, descending into the plain north of Berry, to attack the French in force as they advanced to Laon. Napoleon had expected to meet his foe under the walls of that city; his quick advance was as much of a surprise to Blücher as Blücher's was to him. The first shock of battle, therefore, occurred at Craonne on the sixth, when neither army was in readiness. But Blücher secured the advantage of position. Though he had only a portion of his force, the troops he did have were on a commanding plateau above the enemy when the action began. The skirmishes of the first day, however, were indecisive. Napoleon's knowledge of the district being defective, he sought to secure the best possible information from the inhabitants. Some one mentioning incidentally that the mayor of a neighboring town was named de Bussy, Napoleon recalled, with his astounding memory, that in the regiment of La Fère he had had a comrade so named. The mayor turned out to be the sometime lieutenant, and, with superserviceable zeal, the former friend poured out worthless information which led the Emperor to believe that on the morrow there would be only Blücher's rear-guard to disperse. But it was not so. Blücher struggled with his utmost might to gather in his cavalry and artillery, while Sacken, with the Russians, stood like a wall, repelling the successive surges of Ney and Victor the whole day through. At nightfall the Prussian commander, finding it impossible to assemble guns or horsemen over the icy fields, gave orders for retreat, and his army passed on to Laon.

Though Craonne was a victory, the losses of the French were proportionately greater than those of the enemy, and the pursuit, though spirited, gained no advantage. "The young guard melts like snow; the old guard stands; my mounted guards likewise are much reduced," were the words of Napoleon's private letter. Yet he pressed on. The night of the seventh he spent in a roadside inn under the sign of "The Guardian Angel." There Caulaincourt's last messenger from Châtillon found him. The congress was still sitting, but the warrior knew the fact meant and could mean nothing to him; though the allies had increased their demands in proportion to their victories, they had not lessened them in proportion to their defeats. Whatever terms he might accept, and whatever Metternich might say, this war he felt sure was one for his extermination. As he said then and there, it was a bottomless chasm, and he added, "I am determined to be the last it shall swallow up." So he made no answer, and spent the night completing his plans for battle at Laon.

That place stands on a terraced hill rising somewhat abruptly from the plain, and throughout the eighth Blücher arrayed his army in and on both sides of the city, which itself was of course the key. Napoleon, being a firm believer in such movements when on friendly soil, made a long night march. He reached the enemy's fore-posts early on the ninth, and drove them in. At seven Ney and Mortier began the battle under cover of a mist, and captured two hamlets at the foot of the hill. Marmont was on the right, and had already been cut off from the center by a body of Cossacks; but he attacked the village of Athies. After a long day's hard fighting, he succeeded in capturing a portion of it. Further exertion being impossible, his men bivouacked, while he himself withdrew to the comforts of Eppes, a château three miles distant. It was noon when Napoleon learned that Marmont had been severed from the line; at once he renewed his attack on Laon, but though he gained Clacy on his left, he lost Ardon, and was thus more completely cut off from Marmont. That night York fell upon Marmont's men unawares, and routed them utterly.

Napoleon heard of this disaster shortly after midnight. He was, of course, deeply agitated—did he dare risk being infolded on both sides, or should

he brave his fate in order to mislead the enemy? He chose the desperate course, and when day broke stood apparently undismayed. Even when two fugitive dragoons arrived and confirmed in all its details the terrible news from Athies, he issued orders as bold as if his army were still entire. This was a desperate ruse, but it succeeded, for the pursuit of Marmont's men was stayed. At four the main French army began its retreat, and the next morning saw it at Soissons; six thousand had been killed and wounded. Again Napoleon's name had stiffened the allies into inactive horror, for they did not pursue. York was so disgusted with the dissensions at Blücher's headquarters that he threw up his command and left for Brussels. Blücher was literally at the end of his powers. "For heaven's sake," said Langeron, a French refugee in the Russian service, on whom the command would have devolved, "whatever happens, let us take the corpse along." "The corpse," with dimmed eyes and trembling hands, traced in great rude letters an epistle beseeching York to return, and this, indorsed by another from the Prince Royal of Prussia, brought back the able but testy refugee.

Meantime Rheims, intrusted to a feeble garrison, had been taken by Langeron's rear-guard under St. Priest, another French emigrant in the service of the allies. By this disaster communication between Schwarzenberg and Blücher had been reëstablished. In the short day Napoleon could spend at Soissons, he took up twenty-five hundred new cavalrymen, a new line regiment of infantry, a veteran regiment of the same, and some artillery detachments. It is not easy to conceive of recuperative power more remarkable than that which was thus exhibited both by France and her Emperor. These men had been sent forward from Paris in spite of the profound gloom now prevalent there. The truth was at last known in the capital; Joseph was hopeless; the Empress and her court were preparing for extremities. News had come that in the south Soult had been thrown back on Toulouse; that in the southwest royalist plots were thickening; that in the southeast Augereau had been forced back to Lyons; Macdonald was ready to abandon Provins at the first sign of advance by Schwarzenberg; and the sorry tale of Laon was early unfolded. Yet the administrative machinery was still running, and soldiers were being

manufactured from the available materials. Those who had been sent to Soissons had been hastily gathered, equipped, and drilled almost without hope, but they were precious since they enabled Napoleon to refit his shattered battalions.

Marmont had unwisely abandoned Berry-au-Bac, and that in disregard of orders. But otherwise he had done his best to make good a temporary lapse, and had got together about eight thousand men at Fismes. His narratives give a graphic picture of the situation—of disorder, confusion, chaos among his troops, of artillery served by inexperienced sailors, of undrilled companies whose members had neither hats, clothes, nor shoes. There were plenty of captured uniforms and head-coverings, but they were so infested with vermin that the French, sorry as was their plight, refused to wear them, and clung to their old tatters. Marmont's men were heroes, he himself was not yet a traitor. Though overborne by a sense of Napoleon's recklessness, and therefore unfit for the desperate self-sacrifice which would have made him a fit coadjutor for his chief, he was prepared to atone for his disgrace at Athies. Early in the morning of the thirteenth the main French army moved from Soissons; at four in the afternoon Marmont opened the attack on Rheims. Napoleon himself had arrived, but his troops were slow in coming up, and there was no heavy artillery wherewith to batter in the gates. The struggle went on with desperate courage and gallantry on both sides. St. Priest was killed by the same gunner whose aim had been fatal to Moreau. "We may well say, O Providence! O Providence!" wrote Napoleon to his brother. At ten the beleaguered garrison began to sally and flee. Napoleon rose from the bearskin on which he had been resting before a bivouac fire, and storming with rage lest his prey should escape, hurried in the guns, which were finally within reach. Amid awful tumult and carnage the place fell; three thousand of the enemy were slain, and about the same number were captured. The burghers were frenzied with delight as the Emperor marched in, and the whole city burst into an illumination.

Next morning Napoleon and Marmont met. The culprit was loaded with reproaches for the affair at Athies, and treated as a stern father might treat

a careless child. No better evidence of the Emperor's low state is needed. Marmont was now the hero of the hour; his peccadillos might well have been forgotten for the sake of securing his continued faithfulness. With Napoleon at his best, this would surely have been the case; but aware that at most the war could be a matter of only a few weeks, the desperate man overdid his rôle of self-confidence, being too rash, too severe, too haughty. Not that he was without some hope. Although for two years the shadow had been declining on the dial of Napoleon's fortunes, and although under adverse conditions one brilliant combination after another had crumbled, yet his ideas were as great as ever, the adjustment of plans to changing conditions was never more admirable. The trouble was that effort and result did not correspond, and this being so, what would have been trifling misdemeanors in prosperity seemed to him in adversity to be dangerous faults. The great officers of state and army, imitating their master's ambitions, had acquired his weaknesses, but had failed in securing either his strength or his adroitness. With him they had lost that fire of youth which had carried them and him always just over the line of human expectation, and so his nice adjustments failed in exasperating ways at the very turn of necessity. Hard words and stinging reproofs are soon forgotten in generous youth; they rankle in middle life; and even the invigorating address or inspiring word, when heard too often for twenty years, fails of effect. The beginning of the end was the loss of Soissons at the critical instant. Napoleon was uncertain and touchy; his marshals were honeycombed with disaffection; the populations, though flashing like powder at his touch, had nowhere risen en masse. Thereafter the great captain was no longer waging a well-ordered warfare. Like an exhausted swordsman, he lunged here and there in the grand style; but his brain was troubled, his blade broken. Some untapped reservoirs of strength were yet to be opened, some untried expedients were to be essayed, but the end was inevitable. The movement on Rheims was the spasmodic stroke of the dying gladiator.

CHAPTER VIII

THE STRUGGLES OF EXHAUSTION

The Allies Demoralized — Napoleon's Desperate Choice — The Battle at Arcis — The Correspondence of Caulaincourt and Napoleon — Panic at Schwarzenberg's Headquarters — Cross-purposes of the Allies — Napoleon's Determination Confirmed — His Over-confidence — The Resolution to Abandon Paris — The French Brought to a Stand — Their Masked Retreat — Inefficiency of Marmont and Augereau — Napoleon's March toward St. Dizier — His Terrible Disenchantment — How the Allies had Discovered Napoleon's Plans — Their Determination to Pursue — The Czar's Resolution to March on Paris — Successful Return of the Invaders.

Though unscientific as a military move and futile as to the ultimate result of the war, the capture of Rheims was, nevertheless, a telling thrust. On receipt of the news from Laon, Schwarzenberg had immediately set his army in motion against Macdonald, and Blücher, after waiting two days to restore order among his worried troops and insubordinate lieutenants, had advanced and laid siege to Compiègne. The capture of Rheims checked the movements of both Austrians and Prussians; dismay prevailed in both camps, and both armies began to draw back. The French halted at Nangis in their retreat before Schwarzenberg, and the people of Compiègne were released from the terrors of a siege. "This terrible Napoleon," wrote Langeron in his memoirs—"they thought they saw him everywhere. He had beaten us all, one after the other; we were always frightened by the daring of his enterprises, the swiftness of his movements, and his clever combinations. Scarcely had we formed a plan when it was disconcerted by him." Besides this, in obedience to Napoleon's call, the peasantry began an organized guerrilla warfare, avenging the pillage, incendiarism, and military executions of the allies by a brutal retaliation in kind which made the marauding invaders quake. Finally the momentary consternation of the latter verged on panic when the report reached headquarters that Bernadotte, lying inactive at Liège with twenty-three thousand Swedes, had permitted a flag of truce from Joseph to enter his presence. Could it be

that the sly schemer, for the furtherance of his ambition to govern France, was about to turn traitor and betray the coalition?

But the consternation of the allies was the least important effect of the capture of Rheims by Napoleon. It initiated certain ideas and purposes in his own mind about which there has been endless discussion. Many see in them the immediate cause of his ruin, a few consider them the most splendid offspring of his mind. Reinforcements from Paris, slender as they were, flowed steadily into his camp; and when he learned that both Schwarzenberg and Blücher had virtually retreated, he believed himself able to cope once more with the former. Accordingly he dictated to his secretary an outline of three possible movements: to Arcis on the Aube, by way of Sézanne to Provins, and to Meaux for the defense of Paris. The first was the most daring; the second would cut the enemy off from the right bank of the Seine, but it had the disadvantage of keeping the troops on miry cross-roads; the third was the safest. Of course he chose the way of desperation—all or nothing. Leaving Marmont with seven thousand men at Berry-au-Bac, and Mortier with ten thousand at Rheims and Soissons, he enjoined them both to hold the line toward Paris against Blücher at all hazards, and himself set out, on March seventeenth, for Arcis on the Aube. This he did, instead of marching direct to Meaux for the defense of Paris, because it would, in his own words, "give the enemy a great shock, and result in unforeseen circumstances."

Schwarzenberg's movements during the next three days awakened in Napoleon the suspicion, which he was only too glad to accept as a certainty, that the Austro-Russian army was on the point of retreating into the Vosges or beyond; and on the twentieth he announced his decision of marching farther eastward, past Troyes, toward the frontier forts still in French hands. This idea of a final stand on the confines of France and Germany haunted him to the end, and was the "will-o'-the-wisp" which intermittently tempted him to folly. But for the present its execution was necessarily postponed. That very day news was received within the lines he had established about Arcis that the enemy, far from retreating, was advancing. Soon the French cavalry skirmishers appeared galloping in

flight, and were brought to a halt only when the Emperor, with drawn sword, threw himself across their path. A short, sharp struggle ensued—sixteen thousand French with twenty-four thousand five hundred of their foe. It was irregular and indecisive, but Napoleon held his own. The neighboring hamlet of Torcy had also been attacked by the allies, and before their onset the French had at first yielded. But the defenders were rallied, and at nightfall the position was recaptured. This sudden exhibition by Schwarzenberg of what looked like courage puzzled Napoleon; after long deliberation he concluded that the hostile troops were in all probability only a rear-guard covering the enemy's retreat. He was not very far wrong, but far enough to make all the difference to him. The circumstances require a full explanation.

Thanks to Caulaincourt's sturdy persistence, the congress at Châtillon was still sitting, and on the thirteenth the French delegate wrote a last despairing appeal to the Emperor. His messenger was delayed three days by the military operations; but when he arrived, on the sixteenth, Maret wrung from Napoleon concessions which included Antwerp, Mainz, and even Alessandria. In the despatch announcing this, and written on the seventeenth to Caulaincourt, Maret made no reservation except one: that Napoleon intended, after signing the treaty, to secure for himself whatever the military situation at the close of the war might entitle him to retain. The return of the messenger was likewise delayed for three days, and it was the twenty-first before he reached the outskirts of Châtillon. He arrived to find Caulaincourt departing; the second "carte blanche" had arrived too late. With all his skill, the persistent and adroit minister had been unable to protract negotiations longer than the eighteenth. His appeal having brought no immediate response, he had, several days earlier, despatched a faithful warning, and this reached Napoleon at Fère-Champenoise simultaneously with the departure of the messenger for Châtillon. The day previous the Emperor had received bad news from southern France: that Bordeaux had opened its gates to a small detachment of English under Hill, and that the Duke of Angoulême had been cheered by the people as he publicly proclaimed Louis XVIII King of France. Apparently neither this information nor Caulaincourt's warning profoundly impressed Napoleon;

he knew his Gascons well, his "carte blanche" he must have believed to be in Châtillon, and it had been in high spirits that he hastened on to Arcis, determined to make the most of the time intervening until the close of negotiations.

When news of Napoleon's advance reached Schwarzenberg's headquarters in Troyes, there had at first been nothing short of panic; the commander himself was on a sick-bed, having entirely succumbed to the hardships of winter warfare. No sooner had he ordered the first backward step than his army had displayed a feverish anxiety for farther retreat. As things were going, it appeared as if the different corps would, for lack of judicious leadership, be permitted to withdraw still farther in such a way as to separate the various divisions ever more widely, and expose them successively to annihilating blows from Napoleon, like those which had overwhelmed the scattered segments of the Silesian army. The Czar and many others immediately perceived the danger. With faculties unnerved by fear, the officers foreboded a repetition with the Bohemian army of Montmirail, Champaubert, and Vauchamps. Rumors filled the air: the peasantry of the Vosges were rising, the Swiss were ready to follow their example; the army must withdraw before it was utterly surrounded and cut off. There was even a report—and so firmly was it believed that it long passed for history—of Alexander's having expressed a desire to reopen the congress.

Schwarzenberg's strange hesitancy in the initial stages of the invasion has been explained. Beyond his natural timidity, it was almost certainly due to Metternich's politics, which displayed a desire to ruin Napoleon's imperial power, but to save France either for the Bourbons or possibly for his Emperor's son-in-law. If the Austrian minister could accomplish this, he could thereby checkmate Prussian ambitions for leadership in Germany. But during the movements of February and March the actions of the Austrian general appear to have been due almost exclusively to cowardice. The papers of Castlereagh, of Metternich, and of Schwarzenberg himself aim to give the impression that during all the events which had occurred since the congress of Prague, everything had been straightforward, and

that Austria had no thought of sparing Napoleon or acting otherwise than she did in the end. Yet the indications of the time are quite the other way: the Russians in Schwarzenberg's army were furious, and, as one of them wrote, suspicious "of what we are doing and what we are not doing." Alexander, in this crisis, was deeply concerned, not for peace, but for an orderly, concentrated retreat. With stubborn fatalism, he never doubted the final outcome; and during his stay in Châtillon he had spent his leisure hours in excogitating a careful plan for the grand entry into Paris, whereby the honors were to be his own.

Consequently, when on the nineteenth he hastened to Schwarzenberg's bedside, it was with the object of persuading the Austrian commander to make a stand long enough to secure concentration in retreat. This idea originated with the Russian general Toll, and the place he suggested for concentration was the line between Troyes and Pougy. But the council was terror-stricken, and though willing to heed Alexander's urgent warning, they at first selected a position farther in the rear, on the heights of Trannes. With this the Czar was content, but on second thought such a course appeared to the more daring among the Austrian staff as if it smacked of pusillanimity. Schwarzenberg felt the force of this opinion, and by the influence of some one, probably Radetzky, it was determined, without consulting the Czar, to concentrate near Arcis on the left bank of the Aube, in order to assume the offensive at Plancy. This independent resolution of Schwarzenberg's staff explains the presence of allied troops near Arcis and at Torcy. Alexander was much incensed by the news of the meeting, and declared that Napoleon's real purpose was to hold them while cutting off their connections on the extreme right at Bar and Chaumont. This was in fact a close conjecture. Napoleon, though surprised into action, was naturally confirmed in his surmise that the hostile troops were a retreating rear-guard; and in consequence he had definitely adopted the most desperate scheme of his life—the plan of hurrying toward the Vosges, of summoning the peasantry to rise en masse, and of calling out the garrison troops from the frontier fortresses to reinforce his army and enable him to strike the invaders from behind.

By his retreat to Troyes on February twenty-second, Schwarzenberg had avoided a decisive conflict, saving his own army, and leaving Napoleon to exhaust himself against the army of Silesia; by his decision of March nineteenth he had confirmed Napoleon in the conviction that the allies were overawed, and had thus led his desperate foe into the greatest blunder conceivable—this chimerical scheme of concentrating his slender, scattered force on the confines of France, and leaving open a way for the great army of invaders to march direct on Paris. Of such stuff are contemporary reputations sometimes constructed. But this was not enough: a third time the Austrian general was to stumble on greatness. Napoleon's movements of concentration had thus far met with no resistance, in spite of their temerity; and throughout the nineteenth the enemy's outposts, wherever found, fled incontinently. It appeared a certainty that the allies were abandoning the line of the Seine in order to avoid a blow on their flank. That evening Napoleon began to vacillate, gradually abandoning his notion of an offensive move near Troyes, and deliberating how best to reach Vitry for a further advance toward his eastern fortresses. To avoid any appearance of retreat, he rejected the safer route by way of Fère-Champenoise to Sommesous, and determined to follow the course of the Aube for a while before turning northward to Sommepuis. He might run across the enemy's rear-guard, but he counted on their pusillanimity for the probable retreat of the very last man to Troyes. When Ney and Sebastiani began on the twentieth to push up the south bank of the Aube, they expected no opposition. That very morning Napoleon had announced to his minister of war, "I shall neglect Troyes, and betake myself in all haste to my fortresses."

So far the Emperor had made no exhibition of the temerity about which so much was later to be said. But he had deceived himself and had taken a wild resolution. Moreover, it is amazing that he should have felt a baseless confidence in Blücher's remaining inert. This hallucination is, however, clearly expressed in a despatch to Marmont of the very same date. Yet, nevertheless, the alternative is not left out of consideration, for he ordered that marshal, in case Blücher should resume the offensive, to abandon Paris and hasten to Châlons. This fatal decision was not taken suddenly: the

contingency had been mentioned in a letter of February eighth to Joseph, and again from Rheims emphatic injunctions to keep the Empress and the King of Rome from falling into Austrian hands were issued to the same correspondent. "Do not abandon my son," the Emperor pleaded; "and remember that I would rather see him in the Seine than in the hands of the enemies of France. The fate of Astyanax, prisoner to the Greeks, has always seemed to me the unhappiest in history." The messenger had been gone but a few hours when word was brought that Blücher had resumed the offensive, and a swift courier was despatched summoning Marmont to Châlons. In this ultimate decision Napoleon showed how cosmopolitan he had grown: he had forgotten, if he had ever understood, the extreme centralization of France; he should have known that, Paris lost, the head of the country was gone, and that the dwarfed limbs could develop little or no national vitality.

This bitter lesson he was soon to learn. On the momentous afternoon of the twentieth, as has been related, about sixteen thousand French confronted nearly twenty-five thousand of the allies in the sharp but indecisive skirmishes before Arcis; the loss of the former was eighteen hundred, that of the allies twenty-seven hundred. In spite of the dimensions which these conflicts had assumed, Napoleon remained firm in the belief that he had to do with his retreating enemy's rear-guard; Schwarzenberg, on the other hand, was convinced that the French had a strength far beyond the reality. During the night both armies were strongly reinforced, and in the early morning Napoleon had twenty-seven thousand five hundred men—quite enough, he believed, to demoralize the retreating Austrians. It was ten o'clock when he ordered the attack, Ney and Sebastiani being directed to the plateau behind the town. What was their surprise and dismay to find Schwarzenberg's entire army, which numbered not less than a hundred thousand, drawn up in battle array on the plain to the eastward, the infantry in three dense columns, cavalry to right and left, with three hundred and seventy pieces of artillery on the central front! The spectacle would have been dazzling to any but a soldier: the bright array of gay accoutrements, the glittering bayonets, the waving banners, and the serried ranks. As it was, the audacious French skirmishers instinctively felt the

incapacity of a general who could thus assemble an army as if on purpose to display its numbers and expose it to destruction. Without a thought they began a sort of challenging rencounter with horse-artillery and cavalry.

But the Emperor's hopes were dashed when he learned the truth; with equal numbers he would have been exultant; a battle with odds of four to one he dared not risk. Sebastiani was kept on the heights to mask the retreat which was instantly determined upon, and at half-past one it began. This ruse was so successful, by reason of the alarms and crossings incident to the withdrawal of the French, that the allies were again terror-stricken; even the Czar rejected every suggestion of attack; again force was demoralized by genius. At last, however, scouts brought word that columns of French soldiers were debouching beyond the Aube, and the facts were plain. Even then the paralyzed invaders feared to attack, and it was not until two thirds of Napoleon's force was behind the stream that, after fierce fighting, the French rear was driven from the town. Oudinot's corps was the last to cross the river, and, standing until sappers had destroyed the bridge, it hurried away to follow the main column toward Vitry. The divisions of Gérard and Macdonald joined the march, and there were then forty-five thousand men in line.

While Napoleon was thus neutralizing the efforts of armies and generals by the renown of his name, two of his marshals were finally discredited. Enfeebled as Blücher appeared to be, he was no sooner freed from the awe of Napoleon's proximity than he began to move. On the eighteenth he passed the Aisne, and Marmont, disobeying the explicit instructions of Napoleon to keep open a line of retreat toward Châlons, began to withdraw toward Fismes, where he effected a junction with Mortier. His intention was to keep Blücher from Paris by false manœuvers. Rheims and Épernay at once fell into hostile hands; there was no way left open toward Châlons except the long detour by Château-Thierry and Étoges; and Blücher, it was found, was hurrying to effect a connection with Schwarzenberg. This was an assured checkmate. Meantime Augereau had displayed a similar incapacity. On the eighth he had begun a number of feeble, futile movements intended to prevent the allies from forming their

Army of the South. But after a few aimless marches he returned to Lyons, and stood there in idleness until his opponents had completed their organization. On the twentieth the place was assaulted. The French general had twenty-one thousand five hundred men under his immediate command, six thousand eight hundred Catalonian veterans were on their way from Perpignan, and at Chambèry were seven thousand more from the armies of Tuscany and Piedmont. The assailants had thirty-two thousand, mostly raw troops. With a stout heart in its commander, Lyons could have been held until the reinforcements arrived, when the army of the allies would probably have been annihilated. But there was no stout heart in any of the authorities; not a spade had been used to throw up fortifications; the siege-guns ready at Avignon had not been brought up. Augereau, at the very height of the battle, summoned the civil authorities to a consultation, and the unwarlike burghers assented without a murmur to his suggestion of evacuation. The great capital of eastern France was delivered as a prize to those who had not earned it. Had Suchet been substituted for Augereau some weeks earlier, the course of history might have been diverted. But although Napoleon had contemplated such a change, he shrank from disgracing an old servant, and again, as before Leipsic, displayed a kindly spirit destructive to his cause.

The night after his retreat from Arcis, Napoleon sent out a reconnaissance to Vitry, and finding it garrisoned by Prussians, swerved toward St. Dizier, which, after a smart combat, he entered on the twenty-third. This placed him midway between the lines of his enemy's communication both from Strasburg and from Basel; which of the two, he asked himself, would Schwarzenberg return to defend? Thinking only how best to bait his foe, he set his army in motion northward; the anxious Austrian would certainly struggle to retain the line in greatest danger. This illusion continued, French cavalry scoured the country, some of the Châtillon diplomats were captured, and the Emperor of Austria had a narrow escape at Bar. It seemed strange that the country-side as far as Langres was deserted, but the fact was apparently explained when the news came that the enemy were in force at Vitry; probably they had abandoned Troyes and had disregarded Brienne in order to divert him from his purpose.

Alas for the self-deception of a ruined man! The enemy at Vitry were a body of eight thousand Russian cavalry from the Silesian army, sent, under Wintzengerode, to dog Napoleon's heels and deceive him, just as they actually did. Having left Vitry on the twenty-eighth, they were moving toward St. Dizier when Napoleon, believing that they formed the head of a powerful hostile column, fell upon them with needless fury, and all too easily put them to flight; two thousand were captured and five hundred killed. Thanks to Marmont's disobedience and bad judgment, Blücher had opened communications with Schwarzenberg, and both were marching as swiftly as possible direct to Paris. Of this Napoleon remained ignorant until the twenty-eighth. From his prisoners the Emperor first gained a hint of the appalling truth. It was impossible to believe such reports. Orders were issued for an immediate return to Vitry in order to secure reliable information. Arrived before the place, Napoleon called a council of war to decide whether an attempt to storm it should be made. In the moment of deliberation news began to arrive in abundance: captured despatches and bulletins of the enemy, confirmed by definite information from the inhabitants of the surrounding country. There could no longer be any doubt: the enemy, with an advantage of three days' march, was on his way to Paris. The futility of his eastward movement appears to have struck Napoleon like a thunderbolt. Paris abandoned in theory was one thing; France virtually decapitated by the actual loss of its capital was quite another. The thought was unendurable. Mounting his horse, the unhappy man spurred back to St. Dizier, and closeted himself in silent communing with his maps.

The allies had not at first divined Napoleon's purpose. Indeed, their movements in passing the Aube and on the day following were little better than random efforts to fathom it. But on the morning of the twenty-third two important messengers were captured—one a courier from Berthier to Macdonald with despatches stating exactly where Napoleon was; the other a rider with a short note from Napoleon to his Empress, containing a statement of its writer's plans. This famous paper was lost, for Blücher, after having read it, let the rider go. But the extant German translation is doubtless accurate. It runs: "My friend, I have been all day in the saddle.

On the twentieth I took Arcis on the Aube. The enemy attacked at eight in the evening. I beat him, killed four thousand men, and captured four cannon. On the twenty-first the enemy engaged in order to protect the march of his columns toward Brienne and Bar on the Aube. I have resolved to betake myself to the Marne in order to draw off the enemy from Paris and to approach my fortifications. I shall be this evening in St. Dizier. Adieu, my friend; kiss my boy." Savary declares that there was a final phrase: "This movement makes or mars me."

The menace to their lines of communication at first produced consternation in the council of the allies. The first proposition laid before them was that they should return on parallel lines and recover their old bases. Had this scheme been adopted, Napoleon's strategy would have been justified completely instead of partially as it was; nothing but a miracle could have prevented the evacuation of France by the invaders. But a second, calmer thought determined the invaders to abandon both the old lines, and, opening a new one by way of Châlons into the Netherlands, to make the necessary detour and fall on Napoleon's rear. Francis, for the sake of keeping close touch with his own domains, was to join the Army of the South at Lyons. Although there is no proof to support the conjecture, it seems as if the Czar and the King of Prussia had suggested this so that both Francis and Metternich might be removed from the military councils of the allies in order that the more warlike party might in their absence take decisive measures. That night a package of letters to Napoleon from the imperial dignitaries at Paris fell into the hands of the invaders. The writers, each and all, expressed a profound despondency, Savary in particular asserting that everything was to be feared should the enemy approach the capital. Next morning, the twenty-fourth, the junction between Blücher and Schwarzenberg was completed. Francis and Metternich being absent, Schwarzenberg, listening to warlike advice, determined to start immediately in pursuit of Napoleon and seek a battle. The march was begun, and it seemed as if Napoleon's wild scheme was to be completely justified. He had certainly displayed profound insight.

Alexander, however, had been steadily hardening his purpose to annihilate Napoleon. For a week past Vitrolles, the well-known royalist agent, had been at his headquarters; the accounts of a steady growth in royalist strength, the efforts of Napoleon's lifelong foe, Pozzo di Borgo, and the budget of despondent letters from the Paris officials, combined to temper the Czar's mystical humor into a determination of steel. Accordingly, on the same day he summoned his personal military advisers, Barclay, Wolkonsky, Diebitsch, and Toll; then, pointing out on a map the various positions of the troops engaged in the campaign, he asked, significantly and impressively, whether it were best to pursue Napoleon or march on Paris. Barclay supported the former alternative; Diebitsch advised dividing the army and doing both; but Toll, with powerful emphasis, declared himself for the second course. The Czar listened enthusiastically to what was near his own heart, and expressed himself strongly as favoring it; the others yielded with the eagerness of courtiers, and Alexander, mounting his horse, spurred after Frederick William and Schwarzenberg. The new plan was unfolded; the Prussian king supported it; Schwarzenberg hesitated, but yielded. That night orders were issued for an about-face, a long explanatory despatch was sent to Blücher, and on the twenty-fifth the combined armies of Bohemia and Silesia were hurrying with measured tramp toward Paris. For the first time there was general enthusiasm in their ranks. Blücher, who from his unremitted ardor had won the name of "Marshal Forward," was transported with joy.

The two armies marched on parallel lines, and met with no resistance of any importance, except as the various skirmishes enabled the irregular French soldiers to display a desperate courage, not only the untried "Marie Louises" coming out from Paris, but various bodies of the national guard convoying provision-trains. It was the twenty-fifth before Marmont and Mortier effected their junction, and then, although about sixteen thousand strong, they were steadily forced back through Fère-Champenoise and Allemant toward Charenton, which was under the very walls of Paris. Marmont displayed neither energy nor common sense on the retreat: his outlying companies were cut off, and strategic points which might have been held were utterly neglected. The army with which he reached Paris on

the twenty-ninth should have formed an invaluable nucleus for the formation and incorporation of the numerous volunteers and irregular companies which were available; but, like its leader, it was entirely demoralized. Ledru des Essarts, commander of Meaux, was obliged on the twenty-seventh to abandon his charge, a military depot full of ammunition and supplies, which was essential to the safety of Paris. The garrison consisted of six thousand men, but among them were not more than eight hundred veterans, hastily collected from Marmont's stragglers, and the new conscripts were ill-conditioned and badly commanded. Although the generals drew up their men with a bold front to defend the passage of the Marne, the undisciplined columns were overwhelmed with terror at the sight of Blücher's army, and, standing only long enough to blow up the magazines, fled. They fought gallantly, however, on their retreat throughout the twenty-eighth, but to no avail; one position after another was lost, and they too bivouacked on the evening of the twenty-ninth before the gates of the capital. It is a weak curiosity, possibly, but we must wonder what would have occurred had Marmont, instead of retreating to Fismes on the eighteenth, withdrawn to Rheims, where he and Mortier could at least have checked Blücher's unauthorized advance, and perhaps have held the army of Silesia for a time, when the moral effect would probably have been to justify Schwarzenberg and confirm his project for the pursuit of Napoleon. In that case, moreover, the precious information of Napoleon's letter to his consort would not have fallen into his enemies' hands. Would destiny have paused in its career?

CHAPTER IX

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

Napoleon's Problem — The Military Situation — A Council of War and State — The Return to Paris — Prostrating News — The Empress-Regent and her Advisers — Traitors Within — Talleyrand — The Defenders of the Capital — The Flight of the Court — The Allies before the City.

The pallid, silent Emperor at St. Dizier was closeted with considerations like these. He knew of the defeat which forced Marmont and Mortier back on Paris; the loss of the capital was imminent; parties were in a dangerous state; his marshals were growing more and more slack; he had failed in transferring the seat of war to Lorraine; the information he had so far received was almost certainly colored by the medium of scheming followers through which it came. What single mind could grapple with such affairs? It was not because the thwarted man had lost his nerve, but because he was calm and clear-minded, that he felt the need of frank, dispassionate advice on all these matters. On the other hand, there stood forth in the clearest light a single fact about which there could be no doubt, and it alone might counterbalance all the rest: the peoples of northern and eastern France were at last aroused in behalf of his cause. For years all Europe had rung with outcries against the outrages of Napoleon's soldiery; the allied armies no sooner became invaders in their turn than they began to outstrip their foe in every deed of shame; in particular, the savage bands from Russian Asia indulged their inhuman passions to the full, while the French peasantry, rigid with horror, looked on for the moment in paralysis. Now they had begun to rise in mass, and from the twenty-fifth to the twenty-eighth their volunteer companies brought in a thousand prisoners. The depots, trains, and impedimenta of every sort which the allies abandoned on turning westward fell into the hands of a peasant soldiery, many of whom were armed with shot-guns. The rising for Napoleon was comparable only to that which earlier years had seen in the Vendée on behalf of the Bourbons.

Besides, all the chief cities of the district were now in the hands of more or less regular troops; Dunette was marching from Metz with four thousand

men; Broussier, from Strasburg with five thousand; Verdun could furnish two thousand, and several other fortresses a like number. Souham was at Nogent with his division, Allix at Auxerre with his; the army at the Emperor's disposal could easily be reckoned at seventy thousand. Assisted by the partizan bands which now hung in a passion of hatred on the skirts of the invaders, and by the national uprising now fairly under way, could not the Emperor-general hope for another successful stand? He well knew that the fear of what had happened was the specter of his enemy's council-board; they would, he reckoned, be rendered over-cautious, and give him at least a fortnight in which to manœuver before the fall of Paris could be expected. Counting the men about Vitry and the garrison reinforcements at only sixty thousand, the combined armies of Suchet, Soult, and Augereau at the same number, that of Marmont at fourteen thousand, and the men in the various depots at sixteen thousand, he would have a total of a hundred and fifty thousand, from which he could easily spare fifty thousand to cut off every line of retreat from his foe, and still have left a hundred thousand wherewith to meet their concentrated force on a basis of something like equality. From the purely strategic point of view, the march of the allies to Paris was sheer madness unless they could count on the exhaustion of the population right, left, and behind. If the national uprising could be organized, they would be cut off from all reinforcement and entrapped. Already their numbers had been reduced to a hundred and ten thousand men. Napoleon with a hundred thousand, and the nation to support him, had a fair chance of annihilating them.

It was, therefore, not a mere hallucination which led him to hope that once again the tangled web of affairs might be severed by a sweep of the soldier's saber. But of course in the crisis of his great decision he could not stand alone; he must be sure of his lieutenants. Accordingly, after a few hours of secret communing, he summoned a council, and laid before it his considerations substantially as enumerated. Those present were Berthier, Ney, Lefebvre, Caulaincourt, and Maret; Oudinot and Macdonald, at Bar on the Ornain and Perthes respectively, were too distant to arrive in time, but he believed that he knew their opinion, which was that the war should be continued either in Lorraine or from a center of operations to be

established at Sens. From this conclusion Macdonald did not once waver; Oudinot had begun to hedge; their absence, therefore, was unimportant. Berthier was verging on desperation, and so was Caulaincourt, who, since leaving Châtillon, had been vainly struggling to reopen negotiations for peace on any terms; Ney, though physically brave, was not the stuff from which martyrs are made, and Lefebvre, naturally weak, was laboring under a momentary attack of senility. The council was imperative for peace at any price; the Emperor, having foreseen its temper, had little difficulty in taking the military steps for carrying out its behests.

Early in the morning of March twenty-eighth the army was set in motion toward Paris. The line of march was to be through Bar on the Aube, Troyes, and Fontainebleau, a somewhat circuitous route, chosen apparently for three reasons: because the region to be traversed would still afford sustenance to the men, because the Seine would protect its right flank, and because the dangerous point of Meaux was thus avoided. Such a conclusion is significant of the clearest judgment and the nicest calculation. Pages have been written about Napoleon's hallucinations at the close of his career; neither here nor in any of the courses he adopted is there aught to sustain the charge. At breakfast-time a squad of jubilant peasants brought in a prisoner whom they believed to be no less a person than the Comte d'Artois. In reality it was Weissenberg, an Austrian ambassador on his way to London. He was promptly liberated on parole and despatched with letters to Francis and Metternich. By a curious adventure, Vitrolles was in the minister's suite disguised as a serving-man, but he was not detected.

Map of the field of operations in 1814.

At Doulevant Napoleon received cipher despatches from La Valette, the postmaster-general in Paris, a trusted friend. These were the first communications since the twenty-second; the writer said not a moment must be wasted, the Emperor must come quickly or all would be lost. His decision once taken, Napoleon had grown more feverish with every hour; this message gave wings to his impatience. With some regard for such measures as would preclude his capture by wandering bands of Cossacks, he began almost to fly. New couriers were met at Doulaincourt with

despatches which contained a full history of the past few days; in consequence the troops were spurred to fresh exertions, their marches were doubled, and at nightfall of the twenty-ninth Troyes was reached. Snatching a few brief hours of sleep, Napoleon at dawn next morning threw discretion to the winds, and started with an insufficient escort, determined to reach Villeneuve on the Vanne before night. The task was performed, but no sooner had he arrived than at once he flung himself into a post-chaise, and, with Caulaincourt at his side, sped toward Paris; a second vehicle, with three adjutants, followed as best it might; and a third, containing Gourgaud and Lefebvre, brought up the rear. It will be remembered that Gourgaud was an able artillerist; Lefebvre, it was hoped, could rouse the suburban populations for the defense of Paris. At Sens Napoleon heard that the enemy was ready to attack; at Fontainebleau that the Empress had fled toward the Loire; at Essonnes he was told that the decisive battle was raging; and about ten miles from the capital, at the wretched posting-station of La Cour de France, deep in the night, fell the fatal blow. Paris had surrendered. The terrible certainty was assured by the bearer of the tidings, Belliard, a cavalry officer despatched with his troop by Mortier to prepare quarters for his own and Marmont's men.

Maria Louisa had played her rôle of Empress-regent as well as might be expected from a woman of twenty-three with slender abilities; only once in his letters did the Emperor chide her, and that was for a fault at that time venial in European royalty: receiving a high official, in this case the arch-chancellor, in her bedchamber. On the whole, she had been dignified and conciliatory; once she rose to a considerable height, pronouncing before the senate with great effect a stirring speech composed by her husband and forwarded from his headquarters. About her were grouped a motley council: Joseph, gentle but efficient; Savary, underhanded and unwarlike; Clarke, working in the war ministry like a machine; Talleyrand, secretly plotting against Napoleon, whose title of vice-grand elector he wore with outward suavity; Cambacérès, wise but unready; Montalivet, adroit but cautious. Yet, while there was no one combining ability, enthusiasm, and energy, the equipment of troops had gone on with great regularity, and each day regiments of half-drilled, half-equipped recruits had departed for

the seat of war. The national guards who garrisoned the city, some twelve thousand in all, had forgotten their imperialism, having grown very sensitive to the shafts of royalist wit; yet they held their peace and had performed the round of their duties. Everything had outwardly been so quiet and regular that Napoleon actually contemplated a new levy, but the emptiness of the arsenals compelled him to dismiss the idea. Theoretically a fortified military depot, Paris was really an antiquated fortress with arsenals of useless weapons. Spasmodic efforts had been made to throw up redoubts before the walls, but they had failed from lack of energy in the military administration.

A close examination of what lay beneath the surface of Parisian society revealed much that was dangerous. Talleyrand's house was a nest of intrigue. Imperial prefects like Pasquier and Chabrol were calm but perfunctory. The Talleyrand circle grew larger and bolder every day. Moreover, it had influential members—de Pradt, Louis, Vitrolles, Royer-Collard, Lambrecht, Grégoire, and Garat, together with other high functionaries in all departments. Bourrienne developed great activity as an extortioner and briber; the great royalist irreconcilables, Montmorency, Noailles, Denfort, Fitz-James, and Montesquiou, were less and less careful to conceal their activity. Jaucourt, one of Joseph's chamberlains, was a spy carrying the latest news from headquarters to the plotters. "If the Emperor were killed," he wrote on March seventeenth, "we should then have the King of Rome and the regency of his mother.... The Emperor dead, we could appoint a council which would satisfy all opinions. Burn this letter." The program is clear when we recall that the little King of Rome was not three years old. Napoleon was well aware of the increasing chaos, and smartly reproved Savary from Rheims.

But Talleyrand was undaunted. At first he appears to have desired a violent death for Napoleon, in the hope of furthering his own schemes during a long imperial regency. At all events, he ardently opposed the departure of the Empress and the King of Rome from Paris. Nevertheless it was he who despatched Vitrolles, the passionate royalist, to Nesselrode with a letter in invisible ink which, when deciphered, turned out to be an

inscrutable riddle capable of two interpretations. "The bearer of this deserves all confidence. Hear him and know me. It is time to be plain. You are walking on crutches; use your legs and will to do what you can." Lannes had long before stigmatized the unfrocked bishop as a mess of filth in a silk stocking; Murat said he could take a kick from behind without showing it in his face; in the last meeting of the council of state before the renewal of hostilities, Napoleon fixed his eyes on the sphinx-like cripple and said: "I know I am leaving in Paris other enemies than those I am going to fight." His fellow-conspirators were scarcely less bitter in their dislike than his avowed enemies. "You don't know the monkey," said Dalberg to Vitrolles; "he would not risk burning the tip of his paw even if all the chestnuts were for himself." Yet, master of intrigue, he pursued the even tenor of his course, scattering innuendos, distributing showers of anonymous pamphlets, smuggling English newspapers into the city, in fact working every wire of conspiracy. Surprised by the minister of police in an equivocal meeting with de Pradt, he burst out into hollow laughter, his companion joined in the peal, and even Savary himself found the merriment infectious.

Toward the close of March the populace displayed a perilous sensitiveness to all these influences. The London "Times" of March fifteenth, which was read by many in the capital, asked what pity Blücher and the Cossacks would show to Paris on the day of their vengeance, the editor suggesting that possibly as he wrote the famous town was already in ashes. Such suggestions created something very like a panic, and a week later the climax was reached. When the fugitive peasants from the surrounding country began to take refuge in the capital they found business at a standstill, the shops closed, the streets deserted, the householders preparing for flight. From the twenty-third to the twenty-eighth there was no news from Napoleon; the Empress and council heard only of Marmont's defeat. They felt that a decision must be taken, and finally on the twenty-eighth the imperial officials held a council. The facts were plainly stated by Clarke; he had but forty-three thousand men, all told, wherewith to defend the capital, and in consequence it was determined to send the Empress and her son to Rambouillet on the very next day. This fatal decision was taken

partly through fear, but largely in deference to Napoleon's letter containing the classical allusion to Astyanax. The very men who took it believed that the Parisian masses would have died for the young Napoleon, and deplored the decision they had reached. "Behold what a fall in history!" said Talleyrand to Savary on parting. "To attach one's name to a few adventures instead of affixing it to an age.... But it is not for everybody to be engulfed in the ruins of this edifice." From that hour the restoration of the Bourbons was a certainty.

It was a mournful procession of imperial carriages which next morning filed slowly through the city, attracting slight attention from a few silent onlookers, and passed on toward Rambouillet. The baby king had shrieked and clutched at the doors as he was torn away from his apartments in the Tuileries, and would not be appeased; his mother and attendants were in consternation at the omen, and all thoughtful persons who considered the situation were convinced that the dissolution of the Empire was at hand. A deputation from the national guard had sought in vain to dissuade the Empress from her course; their failure and the distant booming of cannon produced widespread depression throughout the city, which was not removed by a spirited proclamation from Joseph declaring that his brother was on the heels of the invaders. All the public functionaries seemed inert, and everybody knew that, even though the populace should rise, there was no adequate means of resistance either in men or in arms or in proper fortifications.

Clarke alone began to display energy; with Joseph's assistance, what preparations were possible at so late an hour were made: six companies were formed from the recruits at hand, the national guard was put under arms, the students of the polytechnic school were called out for service, communication with Marmont was secured, and by late afternoon Montmartre, Belleville, and St. Denis were feebly fortified. The allies had been well aware that what was to be done must be done before the dreaded Emperor should arrive, and on that same morning their vanguard had summoned the town; but during the parley their generals began to feel the need of greater strength, and further asked an armistice of four hours. This

was granted on the usual condition that within its duration no troops should be moved; but the implied promise was perfidiously broken, and at nightfall both Alexander and Frederick William, accompanied by their forces, were in sight of the far-famed city. Dangers, hardships, bygone insults and humiliations, all were forgotten in a general tumult of joy, wrote Danilevsky, a Russian officer. Alexander alone was pensive, well knowing that, should the city hold out two days, reinforcements from the west might make its capture impossible until Napoleon should arrive. Accordingly he took virtual command, and issued stringent orders preparatory for the assault early next morning.

CHAPTER X

THE FALL OF PARIS

The Battle before Paris — The Armistice — The Position of Marmont — Legitimacy and the Bourbons — The Provisional Government — Napoleon's Fury — Suggestions of Abdication — Napoleon's New Policy Foreshadowed — His Troops and Officers — The Treason of Marmont — The Marshals at Fontainebleau — Napoleon's Despair.

From early dawn until midday on March thirtieth the fighting before Paris was almost continuous, the assailants displaying an assurance of victory, the defenders showing the courage of despair. Marmont and Mortier kept their ranks in order, and the soldiers fought gallantly; elsewhere the militia and the boys emulated each other and the regulars in steadfastness. But when, shortly after noon, it became evident that Paris was doomed to fall before superior force, Joseph, as deputy emperor, issued to Marmont full powers to treat, and followed the Empress, whom he overtook at Chartres, far beyond Rambouillet, where she had expected to halt. She had determined, for greater safety, to cross the Loire. At four in the afternoon the Prussians captured Montmartre, and prepared to bombard from that height; at the same moment the last ranks of the allied armies came up.

Marmont felt further resistance to be useless; his line of retreat was endangered, and he had special directions not to expose the city to a sack. There was still abundant courage in the citizens, who stood behind the barricades within the gates clamorous for arms and ammunition. A messenger came galloping in with the news that Napoleon was but half a day distant. The lookouts now and then espied some general riding a white horse, and called, "'Tis he!" But for all the enthusiasm, the expected "he" did not appear. Further carnage seemed useless, since French honor had been vindicated, and when the war-worn Marmont withdrew into the town he was received as one who had done what man could do. Negotiations once fairly begun, the allies abandoned the hard conditions with which they opened the parley, and displayed a sense of great relief. Their chief representative, Count Orloff, behaved with much consideration. Recognizing the force of the French plea that their army was quite strong

enough, if not to defend the city another twenty-four hours, at least to contest it street by street until, arrived at last on the left bank of the Seine, they could regain Fontainebleau in safety, Orloff assented to what were virtually the stipulations of Marmont and Mortier. The terms adopted made provision for an armistice, assured kind treatment to the city, and permitted the withdrawal of the troops.

Throughout the afternoon and evening Marmont's house was the rendezvous of the negotiators and of the few political personages left in the city. There was the freest talk: "Bonaparte" was conquered; the Bourbons would be restored; what a splendid man was this Marmont! Some weeks earlier the marshal had been significantly informed by his brother-in-law Perregaux, a chamberlain of Napoleon's, that in case of a restoration he and Macdonald would be spared, whatever happened to the other great imperial leaders. Talleyrand had ostensibly taken flight with his colleagues, but by an interesting coincidence his coachman had sought the wrong exit from the city, and had been turned back. That night he appeared in Marmont's presence with direct overtures from the Bourbons. His interview was short, and he seemed to have gained nothing; but he had an air of victory as he withdrew. He saw that Marmont was consumed with vanity, feeling that the destinies of France, of Napoleon, of all Europe, perhaps, were in his hands alone. This was much. Passing through the corridors, the sly diplomatist respectfully greeted Prince Orloff, and begged to lay his profound respects at the feet of the Czar. "I shall not forget to lay this blank check before his majesty," was the stinging retort. Talleyrand smiled almost imperceptibly with his lips, and went his way. But Alexander said on hearing the facts: "As yet this is but anecdote; it may become history."

The triumphal entry of the allies into Paris began next morning, March thirty-first, 1814, at seven o'clock. It was headed by Alexander and Frederick William, now universally regarded as the Czar's satellite king. Francis was in Dijon; he was represented by Schwarzenberg. The three leaders, with their respective staff officers, were solemnly received by a deputation of the municipal authorities. Their soldiers were orderly, and

there was no pillage or license. Crowds of royalists thronged the streets acclaiming the conquerors and shouting for Louis XVIII. Throughout the afternoon Talleyrand and Nesselrode were closeted in the former's palace; and when, toward evening, they were joined by the Czar and the King, both of whom had devoted the day to ceremony, the diplomats had already agreed that France must have the Bourbons. The sovereigns had actually been deceived by the noisy royalist manifestations into believing that France welcomed her invaders, and they assented to the conclusion of the ministers. A formal meeting was instantly arranged; there were present, besides the monarchs and their ministers, Schwarzenberg, Lichtenstein, Dalberg, and Pozzo di Borgo. Alexander assumed the presidency, but Talleyrand, with consummate skill, monopolized the deliberations. The Czar suggested, as various bases for peace, Napoleon under all guaranties, Maria Louisa as regent for the King of Rome, the Bourbons, and, it is believed, hinted at Bernadotte or the republic as possibilities. Of all these courses there was but one which represented the notion of legitimacy with which Alexander had in the coalition identified himself, and by which alone he, with his shady title, could hope to assert authority in western Europe. This was expounded and emphasized by the wily Talleyrand with tremendous effect. The idea of the republic was of course relegated to oblivion; of Bernadotte there could not well be a serious question. If France wanted a mere soldier, she already had the foremost in the world. Napoleon still alive, the regency would be only another name for his continued rule; the Bourbons, and they alone, represented a principle. There was little difficulty, therefore, in reaching the decision not to treat with Napoleon Bonaparte or with any member of his family.

This was the great schemer's first stroke; his second was equally brilliant: the servile senate was appointed to create a provisional government and to construct a new constitution, to be guaranteed by the allies. That body, however obsequious, was still French; even the extreme radicals, as represented by Lainé of Bordeaux, had to acknowledge this. The new and subservient administration was at work within twenty-four hours; Talleyrand, with his two creatures, Dalberg and Jaucourt; Montesquiou, the royalist; and Beurnonville, a recalcitrant imperialist, constituting the

executive commission. Two days later the legislature was summoned, and seventy-nine deputies responded. After considerable debate they pronounced Napoleon overthrown for having violated the constitution. The municipal council and the great imperial offices, with their magistrates, gave their assent. The heart of the city appeared to have been transformed: on the street, at the theater, everywhere the white Bourbon cockades and ribbons burst forth like blossoms in a premature spring. But outside the focus of agitation, and in the suburbs, the populace murmured, and sometimes exhibited open discontent. In proportion to the distance west and south, the country was correspondingly imperial, obeying the imperial regency now established at Blois, which was summoning recruits, issuing stirring proclamations, and keeping up a brave show. In a way, therefore, France for the moment had three governments, that of the allies, that of the regency, and that of Napoleon himself.

When, in the latest hours of March thirtieth, Napoleon met Belliard, and heard the disastrous report of what had happened, he gave full vent to a frightful outburst of wrath. As he said himself in calmer moments, such was his anger at that time, that he never seemed to have known anger before. Forgetful of all his own shortcomings, he raged against others with a fury bordering on insanity, and could find no language vile or blasphemous enough wherewith to stigmatize Joseph and Clarke. In utter self-abandonment, he demanded a carriage. There were noise and bustle in the stable. With a choked, hoarse voice the seeming maniac called peremptorily for haste. No vehicle appeared. Probably Caulaincourt had dared to cross his Emperor's command for the sake of his Emperor's safety. Finally Napoleon strode forth into the darkness toward Paris. Questioning and storming as he walked, he denounced his two marshals for their haste in surrendering. His attendants reasoned in vain until, a mile beyond La Cour de France, Mortier's vanguard was met marching away under the terms of the convention, and Napoleon knew that he was face to face with doom; to advance farther would mean imprisonment or worse. General Flahaut was therefore sent to seek Marmont's advice, and Caulaincourt hurried away to secure an audience with the Czar. There were still wild hopes which would not die. Perhaps the capitulation was not yet signed,

perhaps Caulaincourt could gain time if nothing else, perhaps by sounding the tocsin and illuminating the town the populace and national guard would be led to rise and aid the army. The reply from Marmont came as swiftly as only discouraging news can come; the situation, he said, was hopeless, the public depressed by the flight of the court, the national guard worthless; he was coming in with the twenty thousand troops still left to himself and Mortier. Napoleon, now calm and collected, issued careful orders for the two marshals to take position between the Essonne and the Seine, their left on the former stream, their right on the latter, the whole position protected by these rivers on the flanks, and by the Yonne in the rear. It was clear there was to be a great battle under the walls of Paris. Macdonald was the only general who advised it; Berthier, Drouot, Belliard, Flahaut, and Gourgaud all wished to return into Lorraine; but the divisions were coming in swiftly, and in the short midnight hour before returning to Fontainebleau, Napoleon's decision was taken.

On the afternoon of April first the Emperor rode from Fontainebleau to Marmont's headquarters. While he was in the very act of congratulating Marmont on his gallantry, the commissioners who had signed the capitulation arrived and opened their budget of news. They told of the formal entry by the allies, of their resolution not to treat with Napoleon, and declared that the white cockade of the Bourbons was everywhere visible. Napoleon grew pensive and somber as he listened, and then, almost without speaking, rode sadly back to Fontainebleau. Next morning he was cheerful again, and as he stepped into the White Horse court of the palace at the hour of guard-mounting two battalions cheered him enthusiastically. His step was elastic, his countenance lighted with the old fire; the onlookers said, "It is the Napoleon of Potsdam and Schönbrunn." But in the afternoon Caulaincourt returned, and the sky seemed darkened; the Czar had listened to the envoy's eloquence only so far as to take into consideration once again the question of peace with the Empire under a regency; as a condition antecedent, Napoleon must abdicate.

The stricken man could not hear his faithful servant's report with equanimity. He restrained his violent impulses, but used harsh words.

Soon it seemed as if ideas of a strange and awful form were mastering him, the gloomy interview was ended, and the Emperor dismissed his minister. For such a disease as his there was no remedy but action; next morning two divisions, one each of the old and young guard, arrived, and they were drawn up for review. Napoleon, in splendid garb and with a brilliant suite, in which were two marshals, Ney and Moncey, went through the ceremony. At its close he gathered the officers present into a group, and explained the situation in his old incisive phrase and vibrating tones, closing with the words: "In a few days I am going to attack Paris; can I count on you?" There was dead silence. "Am I right?" rang out, in a final exhausting effort, the moving call of the great actor. Then at last came the hearty, ringing response so breathlessly expected. "They were silent," said General Petit in gentle tones, "because it seemed needless to reply." Napoleon continued: "We will show them if the French nation be master in their own house, that if we have long been masters in the dwellings of others we will always be so in our own." As the officers scattered to their posts and repeated the "little corporal's" words, the old "growlers," as men had come to call the veterans of the Empire, gave another cheer. The bands played the two great hymns of victory, the "Marseillaise" and the "Chant du Départ," as the ranks moved away.

Napoleon must now have certain clear conceptions. Except Mortier, Drouot, and Gérard, his great officers were disaffected; but the ambitious minor generals were still his devoted slaves. The army was thoroughly imperialist, partly because they represented the nation as a whole, partly because they were under the Emperor's spell. Of such troops he appeared to have at hand sixty thousand, distributed as follows: Marmont, twelve thousand five hundred; Mortier, six thousand; Macdonald, two thousand seven hundred; Oudinot, five thousand five hundred; Gérard, three thousand; Ney, two thousand three hundred; Drouot, nine thousand; and about eleven thousand six hundred guard and other cavalry. Besides these, there were sixteen hundred Poles, two thousand two hundred and fifty recruits, and fifteen hundred men in the garrisons of Fontainebleau and Mélun. Farther away were considerable forces in Sens, Tours, Blois, and Orléans, eight thousand in all; and still farther the armies of Soult, Suchet,

Augereau, and Maison. Although the allies had lost nine thousand men before Paris, they had quickly called up reinforcements, and had about a hundred and forty thousand men in readiness to fight. This situation may not have been entirely discouraging to the devotee of a dark destiny, to which as a hapless worshiper he had lately commenced to give the name of Providence. Be that as it may, when Macdonald arrived on the morning of the fourth the dispositions for battle had been carefully studied and arranged; every corps was ordered to its station. As usual, Napoleon appeared about noon for the ceremony of guard-mounting, and the troops acclaimed him as usual. But a few paces distant from him stood the marshals and higher generals in a little knot, their heads close bunched, their tongues running, their glances averted. From out of this group rang the thunderous voice of Ney: "Nothing but the abdication can draw us out of this." Napoleon started, regained his self-control, pretended not to hear the crushing menace, and withdrew to his work-room.

Concurrent with the resolve of the marshals at Fontainebleau ran the actual treason of one who alone was more important to Napoleon's cause than all of them. "I am ready to leave, with my troops, the army of the Emperor Napoleon on the following conditions, of which I demand from you a written guaranty," are the startling words from a letter of Marmont to the Czar, dated the previous day. On April first agents of the provisional government had made arrangements with a discredited nobleman named Maubreuil for the assassination of Napoleon; the next day Schwarzenberg introduced into the French lines newspapers and copies of a proclamation explaining that the action of the senate and of all France had released the soldiers from their oaths. Marmont forwarded the documents he received to Berthier, and while most of the officers flung their copies away in contemptuous scorn, some read and pondered. On April third an emissary from Schwarzenberg appeared at Marmont's headquarters, and what he said was spoken to willing ears. Still under the influence of the homage he had received in Paris, the vain marshal saw himself repeating the rôle of Monk; he beheld France at peace, prosperity restored, social order reëstablished, and himself extolled as a true patriot—all this if only he pursued the easy line of self-interest, whereby he would not merely retain

his duchy, but also secure the new honors and emoluments which would be showered on him. So he yielded on condition that his troops should withdraw honorably into Normandy, and that Napoleon should be allowed to enjoy life and liberty within circumscribed limits fixed by the allied powers and France. Next morning, the fourth, came Schwarzenberg's assent, and Marmont at once set about suborning his officers; at four in the afternoon arrived an embassy from Fontainebleau on its way to Paris. The officers composing it desired to see Marmont.

The informal meeting held in the courtyard at Fontainebleau was a historical event. Its members chatted about the course taken by the senate, about Caulaincourt's mission, and discussed in particular the suggestion of abdication. The marshals and great generals, long since disgusted with campaigning, wounded in their dignity by the Emperor's rebukes, and attributing their recent failures to the wretched quality of the troops assigned to them, were eager for peace, and yearned to enjoy their hard-earned fortunes. They caught at the seductive idea presented by Caulaincourt. The abdication of Napoleon would mean the perpetuation of the Empire. The Empire would be not merely peace, but peace with what war had gained; to wit, the imperial court and society, the preservation and enjoyment of estates, the continuity of processes which had done so much to regenerate France and make her a modern nation. The prospect was irresistible, and Ney only expressed the grim determination of his colleagues when he gave the watchword so unexpectedly at the mounting of the guard. When Napoleon entered his cabinet he found there Berthier, Maret, Caulaincourt, and Bertrand. Concealing his agitation, he began the routine of such familiar labors as impend on the eve of battle. Almost instantly hurrying footsteps were heard in the corridor, the door was burst open, and on the threshold stood Ney, Lefebvre, Oudinot, and Macdonald. The leader of the company quailed an instant under the Emperor's gaze, and then gruffly demanded if there were news from Paris. No, was the reply—a deliberate falsehood, since the decree of the senate had arrived the night before. "Well, then, I have some," roared Ney, and told the familiar facts.

At Nogent, six weeks earlier, Ney and Oudinot had endeavored to bully Napoleon in a similar way; then they were easily cowed. But now Napoleon's manner was conciliatory and his speech argumentative. Long and eloquently he set forth his situation. Enumerating all the forces immediately and remotely at his disposal, describing minutely the plan of attack which Macdonald had stamped with his approval, explaining the folly of the course pursued by the allies, contrasting the perils of their situation with the advantages of his own, he sought to justify his assurance of victory. The eloquence of a Napoleon, calm, collected, clear, but pleading for the power which was dearer to him than life, can only be imagined. But his arguments fell on deaf ears; not one of his audience gave any sign of emotion. Macdonald was the only one present not openly committed, and he too was sullen; during the last twenty-four hours he had received, through Marmont, a letter from Beurnonville, the contents of which, though read to Napoleon then and there, have not been transmitted to posterity. What happened or what was said thereafter is far from certain, so conflicting and so biased are the accounts of those present. Contemporaries thought that in this crisis, when Ney declared the army would obey its officers and would not march to Paris in obedience to the Emperor, there were menacing gestures which betrayed a more or less complete purpose of assassination on the part of some. If so, Napoleon was never greater; for, commanding a calm by his dignified self-restraint, he dismissed the faithless officers one and all. They went, and he was left alone with Caulaincourt to draw up the form of his abdication.

CHAPTER XI

NAPOLEON'S FIRST ABDICATION

The Meaning of Napoleon's Abdication — The Paper and its Bearers — Progress of Marmont's Conspiracy — Alexander Influenced by Napoleon's Embassy — Marmont's Soldiers Betrayed — Marmont's Reputation and Fate — Napoleon's Scheme for a Last Stroke — Revolt of the Marshals — Napoleon's First Attempt at Suicide — Unconditional Abdication — Restoration of the Bourbons — Napoleon's New Realm — Flight of the Napoleons — Good-by to France, but not Farewell.

There is no doubt that Napoleon sincerely and dearly loved his "growlers"; there is no doubt that with grim humor he constantly circumvented and used them for his own ends; even in his agony he contemplated a course which, leaving them convinced of their success, would yet render their action of no effect. After a short conference with his minister he took a pen and wrote: "The allied powers having declared the Emperor Napoleon to be the sole obstacle to the establishment of peace in Europe, and since the Emperor cannot assuredly, without violating his oath, surrender any one of the departments which were united with France when he ascended the throne, the Emperor Napoleon declares himself ready to abdicate and leave France, even to lay down his life for the welfare of his country and for the preservation of the rights of his son the King, of the Empress-regent, and of the laws and institutions, which shall be subject to no change until the definite conclusion of peace and while foreign armies stand upon our soil."

But these words carried too plainly a meaning which was not intended to be conspicuous, and the paper, as finally written and executed, runs as follows: "The allied powers having declared the Emperor Napoleon to be the sole obstacle to the reëstablishment of peace in Europe, the Emperor Napoleon, faithful to his oath, declares that he is ready to descend from the throne, to leave France, and even to lay down his life for the good of the country, [which is] inseparable from the rights of his son, from those of the Empress's regency, and from the laws of the Empire." Who should constitute the embassy to present the document to the Czar? Caulaincourt, of course, would necessarily be one; Ney, dangerous if thwarted, must be

the second; and the third? Marmont certainly, was Napoleon's first thought, and he ordered full powers to be made out for him. But on second thought he felt that his aide-de-camp in Egypt, his trusted friend from then onward, his confidential adviser, "brought up in his tent," as he said, might injure the cause as being too certainly influenced by personal considerations. Macdonald, therefore, was named in his stead. The embassy should, however, pass by Essonnes, and if Marmont desired to go he might send back for his credentials.

This was the company which, arriving about four in the afternoon at Marmont's headquarters, presented Napoleon's message. The busy conspirator was stunned, but he had already won at least five of his generals—Souham, Merlin, Digeon, Ledru des Essarts, and Megnadier, his chief of staff; the tide of treason was in full flow, and could not be stemmed. Should the Czar assent to the regency, where would Marmont be? Or, on the other hand, should Napoleon learn the truth, there was no question but that a few hours might see the emulator of Monk a corpse. In quick decision, the traitorous marshal confessed the steps already taken, and then at the loud cry of reprobation with which his statement was met, he falsely asserted that he was not yet committed, and demanded to join the embassy. The others, willing to remove their colleague from further temptation, assented; and Souham was left in command, with strict injunctions to inform the troops of Napoleon's abdication, but to take no further steps. At Schwarzenberg's headquarters Marmont found means to betray the situation to that general. The Austrian, by Marmont's own account, absolved his fellow-intriguer from all engagements so far made; but somehow that very evening about nine Talleyrand knew the whole story, and hastening, pale with terror, to Alexander's presence, poured out a bitter remonstrance against the regency. The Czar listened, but contemptuously dismissed the petitioner with the non-committal remark that no one would repent having trusted him.

It was almost midnight when Alexander gave audience to the embassy. Marmont was not of the number, having slunk away in guilty uneasiness to await the event at Ney's house. To Caulaincourt, as the spokesman of the

Empire, the Czar listened attentively and sympathetically. He now felt himself to have taken a false step when, five days earlier, he had virtually assented to the restoration of the Bourbons. In the interval their cause had steadily grown more and more unpopular; neither people nor soldiers, not even the national guard, would give any declaration of adherence to the acts of the provisional government; the imperial army, on the other hand, stood firm. His own and Russia's honor having been redeemed, the earlier instincts of hatred for absolutism had returned; the feeling that the Empire was better for his purposes than any dynasty welled up as he listened to Caulaincourt's powerful argument that France as a nation, and her undivided army, alike desired the regency. In fact, the listener wavered so much that, two days later, Ney and Macdonald asserted their belief that at a certain instant their cause had been won.

But at two in the morning an aide-de-camp entered and spoke a few words in Russian. The Czar gave a startled attention, and the officer repeated his words. "Gentlemen," said the monarch, "you base your claim on the unshaken attachment of the army to the imperial government. The vanguard of Napoleon's army has just deserted. It is at this moment within our lines." The news was true. The announcement of Napoleon's abdication had spread consternation among Marmont's men, and they were seriously demoralized. When a routine message came from Fontainebleau requiring Souham's presence there, his guilty conscience made him tremble; and when Gourgaud requested an interview the uneasy general foresaw his own arrest and was terror-stricken. Summoning the others who, like himself, were partly committed, he told his fears, and the soldiers were ordered under arms. Toward midnight the march began. Ignorant at first of whither they were going, the men were silent; but finding themselves before long between two Austrian lines, they hooted their officers. Thereupon they were told that they were to fight beside these same Austrians in defense of the Empire, and, believing the lie, were reconciled.

Arriving finally at Versailles, and learning the truth, they mutinied; but Marmont soon appeared, and partly cowed them, partly persuaded them to bend before necessity. After learning of Souham's deed he had hurried

to the Czar's antechamber. In an adjoining room were assembled the members of the provisional government. Like Marmont, they had learned the result of Souham's efforts and had regained their equanimity. After grasping the appalling fact that twelve thousand men, the whole sixth corps, with arms and baggage, were prisoners within the Austrian lines, of course there had been nothing left for Caulaincourt and the marshals but to withdraw. With much embarrassment the Czar promised an answer to their request on the following afternoon. All knew that the knell of the Empire had struck. To the waiting royalists it seemed a fit moment for pleasantry as the members of the embassy came filing out with stony gaze. The thwarted imperialists sternly repulsed their tormentors. Marmont breathed hard as his colleagues passed without a glimpse of recognition, and murmured: "I would give an arm if this had not happened." "An arm? Sir, say your head," rejoined Macdonald, bitterly. For some time after the first Restoration Marmont was a hero, but soon his vanity and true character combined to bring out his conduct into clear view, and from his title of Ragusa was coined the word "ragusade" as a synonym for treason. During the "Hundred Days" his name was of course stricken from the list of marshals. Loaded with honors in the second Restoration, he proved a second time faithless, and in 1830 betrayed his trust to the republicans. The people called him "Judas," and he died in exile, honored by nobody.

There can be little doubt of Napoleon's conviction that his offer to abdicate would be rejected by Alexander. No sooner was it signed than, with his characteristic astuteness, he set about preparing an alternative course. At once he despatched a messenger requesting the Empress to send Champagny immediately to Dijon as an ambassador to intercede with her father. Then, on April fourth, he summoned a conclave of his officers to secure their assent to the battle which he believed inevitable. It was the call to this meeting which had stampeded Souham and his colleagues in desertion. The greater officers being absent from Fontainebleau, the minor ones were unanimous and hearty in their support of Napoleon's plans. But at the very close of the session came the news of what had happened at Essonnes. When finally assured of every detail, Napoleon took measures at once to repair as best he could the breaches in his defense, saying of

Marmont quietly and without a sign of panic: "Unhappy man, he will be more unhappy than I." Only a few days before he had declared to Caulaincourt: "There are no longer any who play fair except my poor soldiers and their officers that are neither princes nor dukes nor counts. It is an awful thing to say, but it is true. Do you know what I ought to do? Send all these noble lords of yesterday to sleep in their beds of down, to strut about in their castles. I ought to rid myself of these frondeurs, and begin the war once more with men of youthful, unsullied courage." He was partly prepared, therefore, even for the defection of Marmont. Next morning, on the fifth, was issued the ablest proclamation ever penned by him; at noon the veterans from Spain were reviewed, and in the afternoon began the movements necessary to array beyond the Loire what remained of the army and rally it about the seat of imperial government. But at nine the embassy returned from Paris with its news—the Czar had refused to accept the abdication; the senate was about to proclaim Louis XVIII; Napoleon was to reign thereafter over the little isle of Elba. To this the undaunted Emperor calmly rejoined that war henceforth offered nothing worse than peace, and began at once to explain his plans.

But he was interrupted—exactly how we cannot tell; for, though the embassy returned as it left, in a body, the memoirs of each member strive to convey the impression that it was he alone who said and did everything. If only the narrative attributed to Caulaincourt were of undoubted authenticity, cumulative evidence might create certitude; but it is not. The sorry tale of what probably occurred makes clear that all three were now royalists more or less ardent, for in passing they had concluded a truce with Schwarzenberg on that basis. Macdonald asserts that his was the short and brutal response to Napoleon's exhibition of his plans; to wit, that they must have an abdication without conditions. Ney was quite as savage, declaring that the confidence of the army was gone. Napoleon at first denounced such mutiny, but then, with seeming resignation, promised an answer next day. He did not yet know that in secret convention the generals were resolving not to obey the orders issued for the morrow; but as the door closed behind the marshals the mind so far clear seemed suddenly eclipsed, and murmuring, "These men have neither heart nor

bowels; I am conquered less by fortune than by the egotism and ingratitude of my companions in arms," the great, homeless citizen of the world sank into utter dejection.

It appears to have been a fixed purpose with Napoleon never to fall alive into his enemy's hands. Although they acted under legal forms, yet some European monarchs of the eighteenth century were no more trustworthy in dealing with foes than their great prototype Julius Cæsar in his faithlessness to a certain canton of the Helvetians. They did not display sufficient surprise when enemies were assassinated. Since 1808 the European colossus had worn about his neck as a kind of amulet a little bag which was said to contain a deadly poison, one of the salts of prussic acid. During the night, when the terrors of a shaken reason overpowered him, he swallowed the drug. Whether it had lost its efficacy, or whether the agitated victim of melancholy did not take the entire dose, in either case the effects were imperfect. Instead of oblivion came agony, and his valet, rushing to his master's bedside at the sound of a bitter cry, claimed to catch the words: "Marmont has struck me the final blow! Unhappy man, I loved him! Berthier's desertion has broken my heart! My old friends, my comrades in arms!" Ivan, the Emperor's body physician, was summoned, and administered an antidote; the spasm was allayed, and after a short sleep reason resumed her seat. It is related in the memoirs of Caulaincourt, and probably with a sort of Homeric truth, that when the minister was admitted in the early morning, Napoleon's "wan and sunken eyes seemed struggling to recall the objects round about; a universe of torture was revealed in the vaguely desolate look." Napoleon is reported as saying: "God did not will it. I could not die. Why did they not let me die? It is not the loss of the throne that makes existence unendurable; my military career suffices for the glory of a single man. Do you know what is more difficult to bear than the reverses of fortune? It is the baseness, the horrible ingratitude, of men. Before such acts of cowardice, before the shamelessness of their egotism, I have turned away my head in disgust and have come to regard my life with horror.... Death is rest.... Rest at last.... What I have suffered for twenty days no one can understand."

What throws some shadow on this account is the fact that on the following morning Napoleon appeared outwardly well and perfectly calm when he assembled his marshals and made a final appeal. It is certain, from the testimony of his secretary and his physician, that he had been violently ill, but the sobriety of the remaining chronicle is to be doubted. Possibly, too, the empty sachet had contained a preparation of opium intended to relieve sharp attacks like that at Pirna; but in view of the second attempt at suicide made after Waterloo, this is not likely. Yet the circumstances may easily have been exaggerated; for the evident motive of what has been called the imperial legend is to heighten all the effects in the Napoleonic picture. Whatever was the truth as to that gloomy night, Napoleon's appeal next morning, though eloquent, was in vain; the marshals were unshaken in their determination, though less bitter and violent in their language. "You deserve repose," were the Emperor's last words to them; "well, then, take it." Thereupon the act of unconditional abdication was written in these words: "The allied powers having declared the Emperor Napoleon to be the sole obstacle to the reëstablishment of peace in Europe, the Emperor Napoleon, faithful to his oath, declares that for himself and his heirs he renounces the thrones of France and of Italy, because there is no personal sacrifice which he is not ready to make for the welfare of the nation." These last words were, after some consideration, erased, and the phrase "in the interest of France" was substituted for them. Some think, and it may well be true, that this change of form, taken in connection with Napoleon's calmness, was another proof of his deep purpose. Unable to thwart his "growlers," he may have recollected that once before he had crossed the Mediterranean to give a feeble government full scope for its own destruction. France might easily recall her favorite son in her own interest. He was scarcely more than forty-four, a young man still, and this he probably recalled as he made ready to play a new rôle.

Armed with the document necessary to secure his pardon, Ney hurried back to the capital. The elderly, well-meaning, but obtuse Louis XVIII was immediately proclaimed king by the senate. Having "learned nothing, and forgotten nothing," he accepted the throne, making certain concessions to the new France, sufficient, as he hoped, to secure at least the momentary

support of the people. The haste to join the white standard made by men on whom Napoleon's adventurous career had heaped honor and wealth is unparalleled in history. Jourdan, Augereau, Maison, Lagrange, Nansouty, Oudinot, Kellermann, Lefebvre, Hulin, Milhaud, Latour-Maubourg, Ségur, Berthier, Belliard—such were the earliest names. Among the soldiers near by some bowed to the new order, but among the garrisons there was such widespread mutiny that royalist hate was kindled again and fanned to white heat by the scoffs and jeers of the outraged men. Their behavior was the outward sign of a temper not universal, of course, but very common among the people. At Paris both the King and the King's brother were cheered on their formal entry, but many discriminating onlookers prophesied that the Bourbons could not remain long.

Fully aware that Napoleon was yet a power in France, and challenged by the marshals to display a chivalric spirit in providing for the welfare of their former monarch, Alexander gave full play to his generous impulses. His first suggestion was that his fallen foe should accept a home and complete establishment in Russia; but this would have been to ignore the other members of the coalition. It was determined finally to provide the semblance of an empire, the forms of state, and an imperial income, and to make the former Emperor the guest of all Europe. The idea was quixotic, but Napoleon was not a prisoner; he had done nothing worthy of degradation, and throughout the civilized world he was still regarded by vast numbers as the savior of European society, who had fallen into the hands of cruel oppressors. The paper which was finally drawn up was a treaty between Napoleon, for the time and purposes of the instrument a private citizen, as one party, and the four sovereign states of Austria, Prussia, Russia, and England as the other. It had, therefore, no sanction except the public opinion of France and the good faith of those who executed it, the former being bound by her allies to a contract made by them. It was France which was to pay Napoleon two millions of francs a year, and leave him to reign undisturbed over Elba; the allies granted Parma, Placentia, and Guastalla as a realm in perpetuity to Maria Louisa and her heirs, through the King of Rome, as her successors. The agreement was unique, but so were the circumstances which brought it to pass. There

was but one important protest, and that was made by Castlereagh in regard to the word Napoleon and the imperial style! His protest was vain, but to this day many among the greatest of his countrymen persistently employ "Bonaparte" in speaking of the greater, and "Napoleon" in designating the lesser, of the two men who have ruled France as emperors.

Four commissioners, one from each of the powers, proceeded to Fontainebleau. They were careful to treat Napoleon with the consideration due to an emperor. To all he was courteous, except to the representative of Prussia, Count Truchsess-Waldburg, whose presence he declared unnecessary, since there were to be no Prussian troops on the southern road toward Elba. With Colonel Campbell, the British commissioner, he was most friendly, conversing enthusiastically with the Scotch officer about the Scotch poet known as Ossian. What was particularly admired in his remarkable outpourings was their warlike tone. As the preparations for departure went forward, it became clear that of all the imperial dignitaries only Bertrand and Drouot would accompany the exile. The others he dismissed with characteristic and appropriate farewells: to Caulaincourt he assigned a gift of five hundred thousand francs from the treasure at Blois; Constant, the valet, and Rustan, the Mameluke, were dismissed at their own desire, but not empty-handed. For his line of travel, and for a hundred baggage-wagons loaded with books, furniture, and objects of art, Napoleon stipulated with the utmost nicety and persistence. With every hour he showed greater and greater anxiety for his personal safety. Indifferent to life but a few short days before, he was now timid and over-anxious. If he had been playing a part and pondering what in a few years, perhaps months, his life and person might again be worth in European politics, he could not have been more painstaking as to measures for his personal safety. The stoic could have recourse to the bowl, the eighteenth-century enthusiast must live and hope to the last. Napoleon seems to have struggled for the union of both characters. "They blame me that I can outlive my fall," he remarked. "Wrongfully.... It is much more courageous to survive unmerited bad fortune." Only once he seemed overpowered, being observed, as he sat at table, to strike his forehead and murmur: "God, is it possible?" Sometimes, too, he appeared to be lost in reverie, and when

addressed started like one awakened from a dream. All was ready on the twentieth; but the Empress, who by the terms of the "treaty" was to accompany her consort as far as the harbor of St. Tropez, did not appear. Napoleon declared that she had been kidnapped, and refused to stir, threatening to withdraw his abdication. Koller, the Austrian commissioner, assured him of the truth, that she had resolved of her free will not to be present. In the certainty that all was over, the Empress had determined to take refuge with her father, and the imperial government at Blois had dispersed, Joseph and Jerome flying to Switzerland.

The announcement staggered Napoleon, but he replied with words destined to have great significance: "Very well; I shall remain faithful to my promise; but if I have new reasons to complain, I shall consider myself absolved." Further, he touched on various topics as if seeking to talk against time, remarking that Francis had impiously sought the dissolution of his daughter's marriage; that Russia and Prussia had made Austria's position dangerous; that the Czar and Frederick William had shown little delicacy in visiting Maria Louisa at Rambouillet; that he himself was no usurper; and that he had been wrong not to make peace at Prague or Dresden. Then, suddenly changing tone and topic, he asked with interest what would occur if Elba refused to accept him. Koller thought he might still take refuge in England. Napoleon rejoined that he had thought of that; but, having always sought to do England harm, would the English make him welcome? Koller replied that, as all the projects against her welfare had come to naught, England would feel no bitterness. Finally, about noon Napoleon descended into the courtyard, where the few grenadiers of the old guard were drawn up. The officers, commissioned and non-commissioned, were called forward, and in a few touching words their former leader thanked all who had remained true for their loyalty. With their aid he could have continued the war beyond the Loire, but he had preferred to sacrifice his personal interests to those of France. "Continue to serve France," runs the Napoleonic text of this fine address: but the commissioners thought they heard "to serve the sovereign which the nation has chosen." He could have ended his life, he went on to say, but he wished to live and record for posterity the great deeds of his warriors. Then he

embraced Petit, the commanding officer, and, snatching to his breast the imperial eagle, his standard in so many glorious battles, he pressed it to his lips, and entered the waiting carriage. A swelling sob burst from the ranks, and tears bedewed the weather-beaten cheeks of men who had not wept for years.

CHAPTER XII

THE EMPEROR OF ELBA

Napoleon and the Popular Frenzy — Serious Dangers Incurred — The Exile under the British Flag — The Voyage to Elba — The Napoleonic Court at Porto Ferrajo — Mysterious Visitors — Estrangement of Maria Louisa — Napoleon's "Isle of Repose" — The Congress of Vienna — Its Violation of Treaty Agreement — Discontent in France — Revival of Imperialism — Bitterness of the Army — Intrigues against the Bourbons — Napoleon's Behavior — His Fears of Assassination.

Napoleon's journey to Elba was a series of disenchantments. As has been said, he had stipulated in his "treaty" that the Empress should accompany him to St. Tropez, where he was to embark. Her absence, he persisted in declaring, was explicable only by forced detention; and he again talked of withdrawing his abdication at this breach of the engagements made by the allies. But he grew more composed, and the journey was sufficiently comfortable as far as Lyons. Occasionally during that portion of it there were outbursts of good feeling from those who stopped to see his train pass by. But in descending the Rhone there was a marked change. As the Provençals had been the radicals of the Revolution, so now they were the devotees of the Restoration. The flood of disreputable calumny had broken loose: men said the Emperor's mother was a loose woman, his father a butcher, he himself but a bastard, his true name Nicholas. "Down with Bonaparte! down with Nicholas!" was too often the derisive shout as he traversed the villages. Maubreuil, the hired assassin, was hurrying from Paris with a desperate band, ostensibly to recover crown jewels or government funds which might be among Napoleon's effects. Recalling Alexander's boast that his best servants had been found among the assassins of his father, and recollecting that Francis sighed to Metternich for Napoleon's exile to a far-distant land, Elba being too near to France and to Europe, it is conceivable that Talleyrand might reckon on the moral support of the dynasties in conniving at Napoleon's assassination. Had he forgotten the murder of Enghien? Probably not; but his conscience was not over-tender. Near Valence, on April twenty-fourth, the imperial procession

met Augereau's carriage. The arch-republican of Napoleon's earlier career had given his adhesion to the new government, and had been retained in office. He alighted, the ex-Emperor likewise: the latter exhibited all the ordinary forms of politeness, the former studiously disdained them. Napoleon, with nice irony, asked if the general were on his way to court. The thrust went home, but in a gruff retort Augereau, using the insulting "thou," declared with considerable embarrassment that he cared no more for the Bourbons than for Napoleon; that he had no motive for his conduct except love for his country.

Partly by good fortune, partly by good management, the cortège avoided the infuriated bands who, in various places, had sworn to take the fallen Emperor's life. At Avignon his escape was almost miraculous. Near Orgon a mob of royalists beset the carriage, and Napoleon shrank in pallid terror behind Bertrand, cowering there until the immediate danger was removed by his Russian escort. A few miles out he donned a postilion's uniform and rode post through the town. At Saint-Cannat he would not touch a morsel of food for fear of poison. Rumors of the bitter feeling prevalent at Aix led him for further protection to clothe one of his aides in his own too familiar garb. In that town he was violently ill, somewhat as he had been at Fontainebleau. The attack yielded easily to remedies, and the Prussian commissioner asserted that it was due to a loathsome disease. Thereafter the hounded fugitive wore an Austrian uniform, and sat in the Austrian commissioner's carriage; thus disguised, the Emperor of Elba seemed to feel secure. From Luc onward the company was protected by Austrian hussars; but in spite of these military jailers, mob violence became stronger from day to day in each successive town. Napoleon grew morbid, and the line of travel was changed from the direction of St. Tropez to that of Fréjus in order to avoid the ever-increasing danger. The only alleviation in the long line of ills was a visit from his light and giddy but affectionate sister Pauline, the Princess Borghese, who comforted him and promised to share his exile. At length Fréjus was reached, and Napoleon resumed his composure as he saw an English frigate and a French brig lying in the harbor. Perhaps the beautiful view recalled to an outcast monarch the return, in 1799, of one General Bonaparte, who had landed on the same

shore to overthrow the Directory. If not, it must have been due to unwonted dejection or dark despair.

Again Napoleon remarked a breach of his treaty. He was to have sailed from St. Tropez in a corvette; here was only a brig. Accordingly, as if to mark an intentional slight, in reality for his safety and comfort, he asked and obtained permission to embark on the English frigate, the Undaunted, as the guest of her captain. The promised corvette was at St. Tropez awaiting its passenger, but the hasty change of plan had made it impossible to bring her around in time. Possibly for this reason, too, the baggage of Napoleon had been much diminished in quantity; and of this he complained also, as being a breach of his treaty. His farewell to the Russian and Prussian commissioners was brief and dignified; the Austrian hussars paid full military honors to the party; and as the Emperor, accompanied by the English and Austrian commissioners, embarked, a salvo of twenty-four guns rang out from the Undaunted. Already he had begun to eulogize England and her civilization, and to behave as if throwing himself on the good faith of an English gentleman, exactly as a defeated knight would throw himself on the chivalric courtesy of his conqueror. This appearance of distinguished treatment heightened his self-satisfaction. His attendants said that once again he was "all emperor."

It was a serious blow when, on passing aboard ship, he discovered that the salutes had been in recognition of the commissioners, and that the polite but decided Captain Ussher was determined to treat his illustrious guest with the courtesy due to a private gentleman, and with that alone. Although chafing at times during the voyage against the restrictions of naval discipline, Napoleon submitted gracefully, and wore a subdued air. This was his first contact with English customs: sometimes they interested him; frequently, as in the matter of after-dinner amusements and Sunday observance, they irritated him, and then with a contemptuous petulance he withdrew to his cabin. In conversation with Koller, the Austrian commissioner, he once referred to his conduct in disguising himself on the road to Fréjus as pusillanimous, and admitted in vulgar language that he had made an indecent display of himself. He was convinced that all the

dreadful scenes through which he had passed were the work of Bourbon emissaries. In general his talk was a running commentary on the past, a well-calculated prattle in which, with apparent spontaneity and ingenuousness, interpretations were placed on his conduct which were thoroughly novel. This was the beginning of a series of historical commentaries lasting, with interruptions, to the end of his life. There is throughout a unity of purpose in the explication and embellishment of history which will be considered later. On May fourth the Undaunted cast anchor in the harbor of Porto Ferrajo.

Elba was an island divided against itself, there being both imperialists and royalists among its inhabitants, and a considerable party which desired independence. By representing that Napoleon had brought with him fabulous sums, the Austrian and English commissioners easily won the Elbans to a fervor of loyalty for their new emperor. Before nightfall of the fourth the court was established, and the new administration began its labors. After mastering the resources and needs of his pygmy realm, the Emperor began at once to deploy all his powers, mending the highways, fortifying the strategic points, and creating about the nucleus of four hundred guards which were sent from Fontainebleau an efficient little army of sixteen hundred men. His expenses were regulated to the minutest detail, the salt-works and iron-mines, which were the bulwarks of Elban prosperity, began at once to increase their output, and taxation was regulated with scrupulous nicety. By that supereminent virtue of the French burgher, good management, the island was made almost independent of the remnants of the Tuileries treasure, the sum of about five million francs, which Napoleon had brought from France. The same powers which had swayed a world operated with equal success in a sphere almost microscopic by comparison. To many this appeared a sorry commentary on human grandeur, but the great exile did not intend to sink into a contemptible lethargy. If the future had aught in store for him, his capacities must have exercise and their bearings be kept smooth by use. The Princess Borghese had been separated from her second husband soon after the marriage, and since 1810 she had lived an exile from Paris, having been banished for impertinent conduct to the Empress. But she cherished

no malice, and before long, according to promise, she arrived and took up her abode as her brother's companion. Madame Mère, though distant in prosperity, came likewise to soothe her son in adversity. The intercepted letters of the former prove her to have been at least as loose in her life at Elba as ever before, but they do not afford a sufficient basis for the scandals concerning her relations with Napoleon which were founded upon them and industriously circulated at the court of Louis XVIII. The shameful charge, though recently revived and ingeniously supported, appears to have no adequate foundation.

Napoleon's economies were rendered not merely expedient, but imperative, by the fact that none of the moneys from France were forthcoming which had been promised in his treaty with the powers. After a short stay Koller frankly stated that in his opinion they never would be paid, and departed. The island swarmed with Bourbon spies, and the only conversation in which Napoleon could indulge himself unguardedly was with Sir Neil Campbell, the English representative, or with the titled English gentlemen who gratified their curiosity by visiting him. During the summer heat, when the court was encamped on the heights at Marciana for refreshment, there appeared a mysterious lady with her child. Both were well received and kindly treated, but they withdrew themselves entirely from the public gaze. Common rumor said it was the Empress, but this was not true; it was the Countess Walewska, with one of the two sons she bore her host, whom she still adored. They remained but a few days, and departed as mysteriously as they had come. Base females thronged the precincts of the imperial residence, openly struggling for Napoleon's favor as they had so far never dared to do; success too frequently attended their efforts.

But the one woman who should have been at his side was absent. It is certain that she made an honest effort to come, and apartments were prepared for her reception in the little palace at Porto Ferrajo. Her father, however, thwarted her at every turn, and finally she was a virtual prisoner at Schönbrunn. So manifest was the restraint that her grandmother Caroline, Queen of the Two Sicilies, cried out in indignation: "If I were in

the place of Maria Louisa, I would tie the sheets of my bed to the window-frame and flee." Committed to the charge of the elegant and subtle Neipperg, a favorite chamberlain whom she had first seen at Dresden, she was plied with such insidious wiles that at last her slender moral fibre was entirely broken down, and she fell a victim to his charms. As late as August, Napoleon received impassioned letters from her; then she grew formal and cold; at last, under Metternich's urgency, she ceased to write at all. Her French attendant, Méneval, managed to convey the whole sad story to her husband; but the Emperor was incredulous, and hoped against hope until December. Then only he ceased from his incessant and urgent appeals.

The number of visitors to Elba was sometimes as high as three hundred in a single day. Among these were a few English, fewer French, but many Italians. As time passed the heaviness of the Austrian yoke had begun to gall the people of Napoleon's former kingdom, and considerable numbers from among them, remembering the mild Eugène with longing, joined in an extensive though feeble conspiracy to restore Napoleon to the throne of Italy. Lucien returned to Rome in order to foster the movement, and Murat, observing with unease the general faithlessness of the great powers in small matters, began to tremble for the security of his own seat. With them and others Napoleon appears to have corresponded regularly. He felt himself entirely freed from the obligations he had taken at Fontainebleau, for he was sure the people of southern France had been instigated to take his life by royalist agents, and while one term after another passed, not a cent was paid of the promised pension; his own fortune, therefore, was steadily melting away. For months he behaved as if really determined to make Elba his "isle of repose," as he designated it just before landing; but under such provocations his temper changed. The corner-stone of his treaty was his complete sovereignty; otherwise the paper was merely a promise without any sanction, not even that of international law. This perfect sovereignty had been recognized by the withdrawal of all the commissioners as such, Campbell insisting that he remained merely as an ambassador.

In a treaty concluded on May thirtieth between Louis XVIII and the powers of the coalition, the boundaries of France were fixed substantially as they had been in 1792, and the destiny of the lands brought under her sway by the Revolution and by Napoleon was to be determined by a European congress. This body met on November first, 1814, at Vienna. It was soon evident that the four powers of the coalition were to outdo Napoleon's extreme endeavors in their reckless disposition of European territories. Before the close of the month, however, Talleyrand, by his adroit manipulations and his conjurings with the sacrosanct word "legitimacy," had made himself the moving spirit of the congress, and had so inflamed the temper of both Metternich and Castlereagh against the dictatorial attitude of Russia and Prussia as to induce Austria and Great Britain to sign, on January third, 1815, a secret treaty with France whereby the parties of the first part bound themselves to resist the aggressiveness of the Northern powers, and that by force if necessary. This restored France to the position of a great power. By the middle of February the Northern allies were brought to terms, and in return for their concessions it was agreed that Murat was to be deposed. This spirit of compromise menaced, or rather finally destroyed, the sovereignty of Napoleon, petty as it was. On the charge of conspiring with Murat, he could easily be removed from Elba, and deported to some more remote spot from which he could exert no influence on European politics.

From the opening sessions of the congress there had been a general consensus of opinion as to this course. As to the place opinions varied. Castlereagh favored the Azores, but others the Cape Verde islands; St. Helena, then well known as a place of call on the long voyage to the Cape, had been suggested much earlier, even before Elba was chosen, but when or by whom is not known. It is quite possible that Wellington, who succeeded Castlereagh as English plenipotentiary in February, may have mentioned the name; he had been there, and knew it as almost the remotest spot of land in the world. The formal proposition to that effect appears to have been made by the Prussian cabinet. The congress took no definite action in the matter, but the understanding was so clear and general that a proclamation to the national guard was printed in the "Moniteur" of March

eighth, 1815, stating that measures had been taken at the Congress of Vienna to remove Napoleon farther away. It was easy for everybody, including the captive himself, to believe that, all the other articles of the agreement at Fontainebleau having been violated, that which guaranteed the sovereignty of Elba was equally worthless.

It cannot be doubted that Napoleon was fully aware of whatever was proposed at Vienna, and it is absolutely certain that he was thoroughly informed as to the changed state of public opinion in France. Having promised a fairly liberal constitution as the price of his throne, Louis XVIII, with colossal stupidity, undertook to ignore the past and promulgated the charter as his own gracious act, done in the nineteenth year of his reign! The upper chamber, or House of Peers, was his creature, since he could create members at will. Feeble in mind and body, he was unable to check the reactionary assumptions of his family, who, having deserted their country, had returned to it by the aid of invaders despised and feared by the nation. These and the returning emigrants were provided with rich sinecures, and began to talk of restoring estates to their rightful owners; in some cases the possessors, on their death-beds, were intimidated into making such restitution. The extreme clerical party began even to hamper the ministry in its efforts to grant the freedom of worship guaranteed by the constitution. Secular business was forbidden on certain holy days, and funeral masses were celebrated for Pichegru, Moreau, and Cadoudal, that for the latter at the King's expense. When, finally, Christian burial was refused to an actress, there were riots in Paris.

But the government continued its suicidal course; even the Vendée grew disaffected, and, the suffrage having been greatly restricted, there were murmurings about oligarchies and tyrants. At Nîmes the Protestants feared another St. Bartholomew, and said so. Even moderate royalists grew troubled, and could not retort when they heard the new order stigmatized by the fitting name of "paternal anarchy." Both veterans and conscripts deserted in great numbers from the army as they saw their officers discharged by the score to make places for the young aristocracy, or their comrades retired, nominally on half-pay, in reality to eke out a subsistence

as best they could. It was not long before men showed each other pocket-pieces bearing Napoleon's effigy, whispering as watchwords, "Courage and hope," or "He has been and will be," or "Frenchmen, awake; the Emperor is waking." As early as July, 1814, rumors of his return were rife in country districts, and by autumn the longing for it was outspoken and general. In Paris there was greater caution, but as Marmont was called "Judas" for having betrayed his master, so Berthier was known as "Peter" in that he had denied him, and it was a common joke to tie a white cockade to the tail of a dog. Before the Chamber met the various factions openly avowed themselves as either royalists, Bonapartists, liberals, or Jacobins. The money estimates presented made it clear that a king was more expensive than an emperor, and when the peers not only voted to indemnify the emigrants for the lands held by their families, but likewise passed a bill establishing the censorship of the press, it was common talk that the present state of things could not last.

The number of French prisoners of war and of soldiers released from the besieged fortresses in central Europe was about three hundred thousand, of whom a third were veterans of the Empire. To these must be added the army which Soult, ignorant of Napoleon's abdication, had led to defeat at Toulouse, and the soldiers who had served in Italy. These men, long accustomed to much consideration, found themselves on their return to be persons of no consequence. They learned that the great officers of the Empire were everywhere treated with scant courtesy, and that the great ladies of the imperial court were now virtually driven from the Tuileries by the significant questions and loud asides of the royal personages who had supplanted them. It was told in all public resorts how Ney had resented the rude affronts put on his wife by the Duchess of Angoulême. The well-trained subordinate officers of these contingents were turned adrift by thousands on the same terms as those of Napoleon's own army, half-pay if they showed themselves good Catholics, otherwise nothing. For the most part, again, this promise was empty; young royalists were put in their places, the pay of the old guard was reduced, a new noble guard was organized, promotion was refused to those who had received commissions during the operations of war, and the asylums established for the orphans

of those who had belonged to the Legion of Honor were abolished. So bitter was the outcry that the King felt compelled to dismiss his minister of war, and, not daring to substitute Marmont, who demanded the place, appointed Soult. He too was speedily discredited for harshness to Exelmans, a subordinate who was discovered to have been in correspondence with Napoleon; and by the middle of February, 1815, nearly all the soldiers were at heart Bonapartists, their friends for the most part abetting them.

In less than two months after Louis XVIII took his seat, Talleyrand and Fouché were deep in their element of plot and intrigue. They thought of the son of Philippe Égalité as a possible constitutional ruler; they talked of reëstablishing the imperial regency; with Napoleon placed beyond the possibility of returning, the latter course would be safe. During the succeeding months they continued to juggle with this double intrigue, and around their plots clustered minor ones in mass. Lord Liverpool actually called Wellington to London for fear the duke should be seized, and Marmont put the Paris garrison under arms. On January twenty-first, 1815, the death of Louis XVI was commemorated by the royalists with the wildest talk; and such was the general fury over Exelmans's treatment that Fouché at last stepped forward to give his conspiracy some form. Carnot and Davout were both expected to coöperate; but although they refused, enough officers of influence were secured to make a plan for an extended insurrection entirely feasible. For this all parties were willing to unite; no one knew or cared what was to supplant the existing government—anything was better than "paternal anarchy."

How accurate the information was which reached Napoleon at Elba we cannot ascertain, for his feelings were masked and his conduct was non-committal. He had entirely recovered his health, and though old in experience, he was only forty-five years of age, and still appeared like one in the prime of life. He was apparently vigorous, being short, thick-necked, and inclined to corpulence. His cheeks were somewhat heavy and sensuous, his hair receded far back on the temples, his limbs were powerful, his hands and feet were delicately formed and noticeably small.

His movements were nervous and well controlled, his eye was clear and bright, his passions were strong, his self-control was apparent, and the coördination of his powers was easy. To the Elban peasant he was gracious; with his subordinates he was dignified; among his many visitors he moved with good humor and tact; his kindness to his mother and sister made both of them devoted and happy.

The only anxiety he displayed was in regard to assassination and kidnapping: the former he said he could meet like a soldier; of the latter he spoke with anxious foreboding. He had reason to fear both. Every week either in France or Italy or both, there was a plot among fanatical royalists and priests to kill him; and though the Barbary pirates were eager to seize him and win a great ransom, they were excelled in their zeal both by Mariotte, Talleyrand's agent in Leghorn, and by Bruslart, a bitter and ancient enemy, who had been appointed governor of Corsica for the purpose. For these reasons, probably, the Emperor of Elba lived as far as possible in seclusion. As time passed he grew less intimate with Campbell, but the Scotch gentleman did not attribute the fact to discontent. Before leaving Elba, on February sixteenth, to reside for a time in Florence and perform the duties of English envoy in that place, he gave it as his opinion that if Napoleon received the pension stipulated for in the treaty he would remain tranquilly where he was.

CHAPTER XIII

NAPOLEON THE LIBERATOR

Napoleon Ready to Reappear — Reasons for his Determination — The Return to France — The Northward March — Grenoble Opens its Gates — The Lyons Proclamations — The Emperor in the Tuileries — The Emperor of the French — The Additional Act — Effects of the Return in France and Elsewhere — The Congress of Vienna Denounces Napoleon.

It has lately been recalled that as early as July, 1814, the Emperor of Elba remarked to an English visitor that Louis XVIII, being surrounded by those who had betrayed the Empire, would in turn probably be himself betrayed by them. For the ensuing four months, however, the exile gave no sign of any deep purpose; to those who wished to leave him, he gave a hearty good-by. In December, however, he remarked to one of his old soldiers, pointedly, as the man thought: "Well, grenadier, you are bored; ... take the weather as it comes." Slipping a gold piece into the veteran's hand, he then turned away, humming to a simple air the words, "This will not last forever." Thereafter he dissuaded all who sought to depart, saying: "Be patient. We'll pass these few winter days as best we may; then we'll try to spend the spring in another fashion." This vague language may possibly have referred to the Italian scheme, but on February tenth he received a clear account of what had happened at Vienna, and on the evening of the twelfth Fleury de Chaboulon, a confidential friend of Maret, arrived in the disguise of a sailor, and revealed in the fullest and most authentic way the state of France. When he heard of the plan to reëstablish the regency, Napoleon burst out hotly: "A regency! What for? Am I, then, dead?" Two days later, after long conferences, the emissary was despatched to do what he could at Naples, and the Emperor began his preparations.

This was soon known on the mainland, and three days later a personage whose identity has never been revealed arrived in the guise of a Marseilles merchant, declaring that, except the rich and the emigrants, every human being in France longed for the Emperor's return. If he would but set up his hat on the shores of Provence, it would draw all men toward it. When Napoleon turned pseudo-historian he declared in one place that the

breaches of the Fontainebleau treaty and his fears of deportation had nothing to do with his return from Elba; in another he states the reverse. Since the legend he was then studiously constructing required the unbroken devotion of the French to the standard-bearer of the Revolution for the sake of consistency, he probably recalled only the feelings awakened by Fleury's report that opportunity was ripe, and that, too, earlier than had been expected. But there were other motives at the time, for Peyrusse, keeper of Napoleon's purse during the Elban sojourn, heard his master asseverate that it would be more dangerous to remain in Porto Ferrajo than to return to France. In any case, so far as France and the world at large were concerned, the contemptuous indifference of Louis and his ministers to their obligations under the treaty powerfully justified Napoleon's course. Even Alexander and Castlereagh had early made an indignant protest to Talleyrand; but the latter, already deep in conspiracy, turned them off with a flippant rejoinder.

With great adroitness and secrecy Napoleon collected and fitted out his little flotilla, which consisted of the Inconstant, a stout brig assigned to him at Fontainebleau, and seven smaller craft. During the preparations the French and English war-vessels patrolling the neighboring waters came and went, but their captains suspected nothing. Campbell's departure created a false rumor among the islanders that England was favoring some expedition on which the Emperor was about to embark, thus allaying all suspicion. When, on the twenty-sixth, a little army of eleven hundred men found itself afloat, with eighty horses and a number of cannon, no one seemed to realize what had happened; except Drouot, who pleaded against Napoleon's rashness, all were enthusiastic. To avoid suspicion, each captain steered his own course, and the various craft dotting the sea at irregular intervals looked no way unlike the other boats which plied those waters. Several men-of-war were sighted, but they kept their course. As one danger after another was averted, the great adventurer's spirits rose until he was exuberant with joy, and talked of Austerlitz. It was March first when land was finally sighted from the Inconstant; as if by magic, the other vessels hove in sight immediately, and by four the men were all ashore on the strand of the Gulf of Jouan. Cambronne, a colonel of the imperial

guards, was sent to requisition horses at Cannes, with the strict injunction that not a drop of blood be shed. As the great actor had theatrically said on board his brig, he was "about to produce a great novelty," and he counted upon dazzling the beholders into an enthusiasm they had ceased to feel for the old plays. Among others brought to Napoleon's bivouac that night was the Prince of Monaco, who had been found by Cambronne at St. Pierre traveling in a four-horse carriage, and had been taken as a prisoner into Napoleon's presence. "Where are you going?" was, according to tradition, the greeting of Napoleon. "I am returning to my domains," came the reply. "Indeed! and I too," was the merry retort.

Recalling the mortal agony he had endured on the highway through Aix but a short year before, and its causes, and having been informed how bitter was the anti-royalist feeling in the Dauphiné, Napoleon set his little army in march direct toward Grenoble. At Cannes there was general indifference; at Grasse it was found that the division general in command had fled, and there were a few timid shouts of "Long live the Emperor!" Thence to Digne on the Grenoble highway was a mountain track over a ridge twelve thousand feet above the sea. In twenty hours the slender column marched thirty-five miles. The "growlers" joked about the "little corporal" who trudged at their side, the Alpine hamlets provided abundant rations, and the government officials furnished blank passports which enabled Napoleon to send emissaries both to Grenoble and to Marseilles, where Masséna was in command. The little garrison of Digne was Bonapartist in feeling, but it was not yet ready to join Napoleon, and withdrew; that at Sisteron was kept from meddling by a body of troops which had been despatched as a corps of observation from Marseilles, while the populace shouted heartily for the Emperor. At Gap the officials strove to organize resistance, but they desisted before the menaces of the people. By this time the peasantry were coming in by hundreds. So far Napoleon's enterprise had received but four recruits: two soldiers from Antibes, a tanner from Grasse, and a gendarme. Now he was so confident that he dismissed the peasantry, assuring them that the soldiers in front would join his standards.

On March seventh the head of the column of imperial adventurers reached La Mure, a short day's march from Grenoble. They were received with enthusiasm, and a bucket of the poor native wine was brought for the refreshment of the men. When all had been served Napoleon reached out for the cheap little glass, and swallowed his ration like the rest. There was wild delight among both his men and the onlookers as the "army" set out for Laffray, the next hamlet, where was a small detachment sent from Grenoble to destroy a bridge over the Drac. With inscrutable faces they stood across the highway, lances set and muskets charged, under orders to fire on Napoleon the moment he should appear. At length the critical moment arrived. "There he is! Fire!" cried a royalist officer. The soldiers clutched their arms, their faces blanched, their knees shook, and they—disobeyed! Napoleon, walking slowly, advanced within pistol-shot. He wore the old familiar gray surtout, the well-known cocked hat, and a tricolor cockade. "Soldiers of the Fifth," he said in a strong, calm voice, "behold me!" Then advancing a few paces farther, he threw open his coat and displaying the familiar uniform, he called: "If there be one soldier among you who wishes to kill his Emperor, he can. I come to offer myself to your assaults." In an instant the opposing ranks melted into a mob of sobbing, cheering men, kissing Napoleon's shoes, struggling to touch the skirts of his shabby garments. The surrounding throng crowded near in sympathy. "Soldiers," cried the magician, "I come with a handful of brave men because I count on you and the people. The throne of the Bourbons is illegitimate because it was not erected by the nation. Your fathers are threatened by a restoration of titles, of privilege, and of feudal rights; is it not so?" "Yes, yes," shouted the multitude. At that instant appeared a rider arrayed in the uniform of the national guard, but wearing a huge tricolor cockade. Alighting at Napoleon's feet, he said: "Sire, I am Jean Dumoulin the glove-maker; I bring to your majesty a hundred thousand francs and my arm." At that instant likewise an imperial proclamation denouncing traitors, and promising that under the old standards victory would return like the storm-wind, was passing from hand to hand in the garrison of Grenoble. Labédoyère, the colonel, of the Seventh of the line, first announced his purpose to support his Emperor, and the royalist officers

saw the imperialist feeling spread with dismay. They arranged to evacuate the place next morning. At seven in the evening Napoleon summoned the town; the commandant, unable to resist the pressure of both soldiers and populace, fled with a few adherents, and at ten the gates were opened. The reception of the returning exile was hearty and impressive. It was with an army of seven thousand men that, after a rest of thirty-six hours, he started for Lyons.

"As far as Grenoble I was an adventurer; at Grenoble I was a prince," wrote Napoleon at St. Helena. If this were true, at Lyons he was an Emperor in fact as well as in name, that great city receiving him with plaudits as energetic as were the execrations with which they dismissed Artois and Macdonald. Recalling the lessons of his youth, some learned in Corsica, some in the Rhone valley, the returning Emperor carefully felt the pulse of public opinion as he journeyed. He found the longing for peace to be universal, and even before entering Lyons he began to promise peace with honor. But this he quickly found was not enough: it must be peace with liberty as well. The sole task before him, therefore, he declared to be that of protecting the interests and principles of the Revolution against the returning emigrants. France, restored to her glory, was to live in harmony with other European powers as long as they minded their own affairs. Napoleon, the liberator of France! To terrify foreign invaders and intestine foes a great united nation was to speak in trumpet notes. From Lyons, therefore, second city of the Empire, was summoned a popular assembly to revise the constitution. To convey the impression that Austria was in secret accord with the Emperor's course, three delegates from the eastern capital were summoned to assist at a significant ceremony which was to occur almost immediately, the coronation of the Empress and the King of Rome. Still further, a decree was issued which banished the returned emigrants and swept away the pretensions of the arrogant nobles. Talleyrand, Marmont, Augereau, and Dalberg were attainted, and the noble guard of the King was abolished. Under these influences Bonapartist feeling grew so intense and spread so widely that the army of Soult, which had been assembled in the southeast to oppose Murat, turned imperialist almost to a man. Masséna, who seems to have followed the lead of Fouché, waited to

see what was coming, and remained neutral. Ney fell in with the general movement, and joined Napoleon at Auxerre. "Embrace me, my dear general," were the Emperor's words of greeting. "I am glad to see you; and I want neither explanations nor justifications."

All resistance disappeared before Napoleon's advance as he passed Autun and descended the Yonne valley toward Paris. Everywhere there were dissensions among the populace, but the enthusiasm of the soldiers and their sympathizers triumphed. The troops despatched by the King's government to overpower the "usurper" sooner or later went over to the "usurper's" standards. One morning a placard was found on the railing around the Vendôme column: "Napoleon to Louis XVIII. My good brother, it is useless to send me any more troops; I have enough." Paris was in a storm of suppressed excitement. The measures of resistance were half-hearted; the King made lavish concessions and the chambers passed excellent laws without attracting any attention or sympathy; volunteers were raised, but there was no energy in their organization. When Napoleon reached Fontainebleau on the eighteenth, the reserves stationed in and near Paris on the south came over to him in a body. On the nineteenth Louis issued a despairing address to the army, and fled to Lille; on the morning of the twentieth the capital found itself without any vestige of government. The streets were thronged with people, but there was no disorder until a band of royalists attacked a half-pay officer wearing the imperial cockade. At once the city guard formed and intervened to quell the disturbance. Thereupon the imperialists endeavored to seize the Tuileries; they, too, were checked, and a double force, royalist and imperial, was set to defend that important spot. Over other public buildings the imperial colors waved alone and undisturbed. During the afternoon the crowds dispersed and the imperial officials quietly resumed their places. At nine in the evening a post-chaise rolled up to the Tuileries gate, Napoleon alighted, and the observers thought his smile was like that of one walking in a dream. At once he was caught in the brawny arms of his admirers, and handed upward from step to step, from landing to landing. So fierce was the affection of his friends that his life seemed to be in danger from their embraces, and it was with relief that he entered his cabinet and closed the

door, to find himself among a few of his old stanch and tried servants, with Caulaincourt at their head. This reception had been in sharp contrast to the apathy displayed on the streets, where the people were few in number, unenthusiastic, and indifferent. "They let me come," said Napoleon to Mollien, "as they let the other go." Finding himself unable to endure the loneliness of the Tuileries, and depressed by the associations of the familiar scenes, he withdrew in a few days to the comparative seclusion of the Élysée, then a suburban mansion dubbed by courtesy a palace.

Some portion of Napoleon's leisure in Elba had been devoted, as was mentioned in another connection, to sketching the outline of a treatise intended to prove that his dynasty was quite as legitimate as any other which had ruled over France. His illusions of European empire were dismissed either permanently or temporarily, and for the moment he was the apostle of nationality and popular sovereignty in France. Before laying his head on his pillow in the Tuileries he displayed this fact to the world in the constitution of his cabinet, which would in our day be designated as a cabinet of concentration, representative of various shades of opinion. Maret, Davout, Cambacérès, Gaudin, Mollien, Decrès, Caulaincourt, Fouché, and Carnot accepted the various portfolios; most surprising of all, Benjamin Constant, the constitutional republican, became president of a reconstructed council of state. In connection with the announcement of these names, the nation was informed that the constitution was to be revised, and that the censorship of the press was abolished. In reference to the latter, Napoleon remarked that, since everything possible had been said about him during the past year, he could himself be no worse off than he was, but the editors could still find much to say about his enemies. To Constant he frankly explained what he meant by revision. The common people had welcomed his return because he was one of themselves, and at a signal he could have the nobles murdered. But he wanted no peasants' war, and, as the taste had returned for unrestricted discussion, public trials, emancipated elections, responsible ministers, and all the paraphernalia of constitutional government, the public must be gratified. For all this he was ready, and with it for peace. But peace he could win only by victory, for, although in his conduct, in the Lyons decrees, and in casual talk, he hinted

at negotiations with foreign powers, those negotiations were purely imaginary.

With a clear comprehension of the situation, the ministers went to work. On April twenty-third was promulgated the Additional Act, whereby the franchise was extended, the state church abolished, liberty of worship guaranteed, and every wretched remnant of privilege or divine right expunged. The two chambers were retained, many imperial dignitaries being assigned to the House of Peers, the Bonaparte brothers, Lucien, Joseph, and Jerome, among the number. It was, as Chateaubriand sarcastically said, a revised and improved edition of Louis's constitution. The preamble, however, was new; it set forth that Napoleon, having been long engaged in constructing a great European federal system suited to the spirit of the time and favorable to the spirit of civilization, had now abandoned it, and would henceforth devote himself to a single aim, the perfect security of public liberty. This specious representation, half true and half false, awakened no enthusiasm in France; it was accepted, along with the Additional Act, by a plebiscite, but by only a million three hundred thousand votes—less than half the number cast for the Consulate and the Empire. This was largely due to a curious apathy, induced by a still more curious but firm conviction that at last France had secured peace with honor. Reference has been made to a military conspiracy fomented by Fouché in the North; before the hostile public feeling thus engendered in that quarter Louis fled to Ghent within five days after Napoleon reached Paris, and, though the royal princes were able to carry on civil war in the South a little longer, it was generally felt that the nation now had a ruler of its own choosing, and that if they attended strictly to their own affairs they would be left in peace. For considerable time there was little news from abroad, and so swift was the rush of internal affairs that no heed was given to what there was.

This was suddenly changed in April, when it was brought home to the nation that the specter of war had again been raised, and that the dynasties were finally a unit in their determination to extirpate the Napoleonic régime as a measure of self-defense. Every man with any means saw

himself beggared, and every mother felt her son slipping from her arms to swim once more that sea of blood in which for a generation the hope of the nation had been submerged. The depression was general and terrible, for the prospect was appalling. England, entangled with dynastic alliances in order to preserve her prosperity and dignity, had lost most of her serious and trusted leaders, and the few who survived were so panic-stricken as to have little perspicacity. The King's illness having at last removed him from public life, he had been succeeded by the most profligate and frivolous of all the line of English kings, the Prince Regent, who was later George IV. Percival and Liverpool were not merely conservative from principle; they were negative from the love of negatives. Already they had laid the basis, in their mismanagement of domestic affairs, for the social turbulence which within a short time was to compel the most sweeping reforms. Castlereagh had not even an inkling of what the treaty of Chaumont might mean to Great Britain in the end. To destroy Napoleon he was perfectly content that his own free country should support a system of dynastic politics destructive of every principle of liberty.

The Congress of Vienna represented, not a confederation of states, but a league of dynasties posing as nations and banded for mutual self-preservation. To them the permanent restoration of Napoleon could mean only one thing, the recognition of a nation's right to choose its own rulers, and that would be the end of absolutism in Europe. To Great Britain it would mean the destruction of her prosperity, or at least a serious diminution of both power and prestige. The late coalition, therefore, was re-cemented without difficulty, but on a basis entirely new. The account of Napoleon's escape reached Vienna on March sixth. Within the week Maria Louisa, now entirely under Neipperg's influence, wrote declaring herself a stranger to all Napoleon's schemes, and a few days later the French attendants of the little King of Rome were dismissed; the child's last words to Méneval were a message of affection to his father. At that time negotiations among the powers were progressing famously, each having secured its main object; on March thirteenth the Congress, under Castlereagh's instigation, publicly denounced Napoleon as the "enemy and disturber of the world's peace," and proclaimed him an outlaw. The Whigs

stigmatized the paper in parliament as provocative of assassination and a disgrace to the English character, but, of all the important journals, the "Morning Chronicle" alone was courageous enough to sustain them, asserting that it was a matter of complete indifference to England whether a Bourbon or a Bonaparte reigned in France. These manly protests were unheeded, and by the twenty-fifth all Europe, except Naples, was united against France alone.

CHAPTER XIV

THE DYNASTIES IMPLACABLE

The Vienna Coalition — Its Purpose — Napoleon as a Liberal — The Fiasco — France on the Defensive — Napoleon's Health — War Preparations of the Combatants — Their Respective Forces — Qualities and Achievements of the French — The Armies of Blücher and Wellington — The French Strategy — Napoleon's First Misfortune.

The supreme effort of the dynasties to outlaw Napoleon, and restore France to the Bourbons, was made by what was nominally an alliance of eight members—Austria, Great Britain, Prussia, Russia, France, Spain, Portugal, and Sweden. The last was, however, absorbed in her struggle with Norway, and, though Spain and Portugal were signatories, the real strength of the coalition arranged at Vienna lay in a virtual renewal of the treaty of Chaumont: Austria, Prussia, and Russia were each to put a hundred and eighty thousand men in the field, and Great Britain was to continue her subsidies.

On April fourth, the sovereigns of Europe were notified that the Empire meant peace; they retorted by the mobilization of their forces, and by denouncing in a joint protocol the treaty of Paris. In his extremity Napoleon appealed to Talleyrand, but that minister knew too well the temper of the Congress at Vienna, and refused to coöperate. The versatile Fouché thereupon initiated a new plot, this time against Napoleon, and sounded Metternich; but Metternich was dumb. The other diplomats asseverated that they did not wish to interfere with the domestic affairs of France; but they prevaricated, intending nothing less than the complete restoration of the Bourbons.

Under the shadow of this storm-cloud Napoleon regulated his domestic affairs of state with intrepid calmness. He had no easy task. It was the revived hatred of the masses for priests and nobles to which he had appealed on his progress from Grenoble, and, observing the wild outbursts of the populace at Lyons, he had whispered, "This is madness." It was with studied deliberation, therefore, that in Paris he cast himself completely upon the moderate liberals. This alienated the Jacobin elements throughout

the country, and they, in turn, stirred up the royalists. When it became clear that neither Maria Louisa nor the King of Rome was to be crowned, and that there was no help in Austria, even the imperialists displayed a dangerous temper. Such was the general uneasiness about war that the first measures of army reorganization were taken almost stealthily. It was easy enough to establish the skeleton of formation, and not very difficult to find trustworthy officers, commissioned and non-commissioned; but to summon recruits was to announce the coming war. Of the three hundred thousand veterans now returned home, less than one fifth responded to the call for volunteers; the Emperor had reckoned on four fifths at least. The National Guard was so surly that many felt it would be bravado for Napoleon to review them. But he was determined to do so, and on April sixteenth the hazardous ceremony took place. Until at least half the companies had been reviewed not a cheer was heard; then there were a few scattering shouts here and there in the ranks; finally there was some genuine enthusiasm.

By the middle of May the national deputies summoned at Lyons began to arrive. They were to meet, after the fashion of Charles the Great's assemblies, in the open field. Their task was to be the making of a new constitution. It was not reassuring news that they brought from their various homes, and their accounts disturbed public opinion in Paris sadly. Before long it was known that civil war had again broken out in Vendée; the consequences would have been most disastrous had not La Rochejacquelein, the insurgent leader, been killed on June fourth. As it was, the ignoble slaughter of one of their order intensified the bitterness of the nobles. Worse still, it had been found that of the six hundred and twenty-nine deputies five hundred were ardent constitutionalists indifferent to Napoleon, and that only fifty were his devoted personal friends; there were even between thirty and forty who were Jacobins, and at Fouché's command. Under these circumstances the Emperor dared not hold the promised national congress. What could be substituted for it? The great dramatic artist was not long at a loss. He determined to summon the electoral deputies to a gorgeous open-air ceremony on June first, and have them stamp with their approval the Additional Act. A truly impressive

spectacle would pass muster for the promised "field of May," and profoundly affect the minds of all present. But, unfortunately, though Ségur made the plan, and though every detail was carefully studied by Napoleon, the affair was not impressive. About eighteen thousand persons assembled on the benches, and there was a vast crowd in the field. The cannon roared their welcome, and the people cheered the imperial carriage, the marshals, the body-guard, and the procession. But when Napoleon and his brothers stepped forth, clad like actors in theatrical costumes of white velvet, wearing Spanish cloaks embroidered with the imperial device of golden bees, and with great plumed hats on their heads, there was a hush of disappointment. The populace had expected a soldier in a soldier's uniform; many had felt sure "he" would wear that of the National Guard.

There was, however, no sign of disrespect while the ministers and the reconstituted corps of marshals filed to their places. Among the latter were familiar faces—Ney, Moncey, Kellermann, Sérurier, Lefebvre, Grouchy, Oudinot, Jourdan, Soult, and Masséna. A committee of the deputies then stood forth, and their chairman read an address declaring that France desired a ruler of her own selection, and promising loyalty in the coming war. Napoleon arose, and in spite of his absurd clothes commanded attention while he set forth his reasons for offering a ready-made constitution instead of risking interminable debate. Although he declared that what was offered could, of course, be amended, there was no applause, except from a few soldiers. When the chambers met, a week later, Lanjuinais, one of Napoleon's lifelong opponents, was chosen president of the House of Deputies. The speech from the throne was clever and conciliatory, and in spite of evident distrust both houses promised all the strength of France for defense—but for defense only. The peers declared that under her new institutions France could never be swept away by the temptations of victory; the deputies asserted that nothing could carry the nation beyond the bounds of its own defense, not even the will of a victorious prince.

The anxieties and exertions of two months were manifest in Napoleon's appearance. His features, though impressive, were drawn, and his long jaw

grew prominent. He lost flesh everywhere except around the waist, so that his belly, hitherto inconspicuous, looked almost pendulous. When standing, he folded his hands sometimes in front, sometimes behind, but separated them frequently to take snuff or rub his nose. Sometimes he heaved a mechanical sigh, swallowing as if to calm inward agitation. Often he scowled, and looked out through half-closed lids as if growing far-sighted; the twitching of his eye and ear on the left side grew more frequent. With thickening difficulties and increasing annoyance, serious urinary and stomach troubles set in; there was also a persistent hacking cough. Recourse was again had to protracted warm baths in order to alleviate the accompanying nervousness; but as the ailments were refractory, a mystery soon attached to the malady, and his enemies said it was a loathsome disease. In spite of the statements both of the Prussian commissioner at Fontainebleau, Count Truchsess-Waldburg, and of Sir Hudson Lowe, it is highly improbable that Napoleon's health was undermined by sexual infection. He was surrounded all his life by malignant attendants, and among the sweepings of their minds, which in recent years have been scattered before the public, there would be some proof of the fact. In the utter absence of any reliable information, some have guessed that the trouble was the preliminary stage in the disease of which he died; and others, again, in view of his quick changes of mood, his depressions, exaltations, sharpened sensibilities, and abrupt rudeness, have explained all his peculiarities in disease and health by attributing them to a recondite form of epilepsy. Exhausted and nervous, the sufferer might well, as was the case, be found in tears before the portrait of his son; he might well lift up his voice, as he was heard to do, against the destiny which had played him false. But he was quite shrewd enough to see that during his absence no regency could be trusted, and he arranged to conduct affairs by special messengers. Joseph was to preside and give the casting-vote in the council of state; to Lucien was given a seat in the same body; but the supreme power rested in Napoleon.

When Wellington replaced Castlereagh at the Congress of Vienna, it was quickly apparent that he was greater in the field than at the council-board. Both he and Blücher desired to assume the offensive quickly; but inasmuch

as Alexander was determined to retain his ascendancy in the coalition, and as each power insisted on its due share in the struggle, it was arranged to begin hostilities on June twenty-seventh, the earliest date at which the Russian troops could reach the confines of France. There were to be three armies. Schwarzenberg, with two hundred and fifty thousand men, comprising the Austrian, Russian, and Bavarian contingents, was to attack across the upper Rhine; Blücher, with one hundred and fifty thousand Prussians, was to advance across the lower Rhine; and Wellington in the Netherlands was to collect an army of one hundred and fifty thousand, compounded of Dutch, Belgians, Hanoverians, and some thirty-eight thousand British, who could be there assembled. The two latter armies were in existence by the first of June, but Wellington was dissatisfied with the quality of his motley force; even the English contingent was not the best possible, for his Peninsular veterans had been sent to find their match in Jackson's riflemen at the battle of New Orleans.

On the eve of hostilities Napoleon had one hundred and twenty-four thousand effective men, and three thousand five hundred more in his camp train; Wellington had one hundred and six thousand, but of these four thousand Hanoverians were left in garrison; Blücher had about one hundred and seventeen thousand. Neither of the two allied generals dreamed that Napoleon would choose the daring form of attack upon which he decided—that of a wedge driven into the broken line nearly a hundred miles in length upon which his enemy lay—for to do so he must pass the Ardennes. But he did choose it, and selected for the purpose the valleys of the Sambre and the Meuse. Allowing for the differences in topography, the idea was identical with that which, nineteen years before, he had executed splendidly in Piedmont and repeated in Germany. The twin enemy seemed unaware that its long and straggling line must, in case of activity, either be broken to maintain the respective bases or else abandon one base for concentration and be cut off from supplies. Wellington's base was westward at Antwerp, Blücher's eastward through Liège toward the Rhine. Vacillation would ensue, Napoleon felt, on a central attack, and in that vacillation he intended to repeat with Blücher what he had done with Brunswick at Jena.

The opening of the campaign was sufficiently auspicious. By a superb march during the night of June thirteenth, Napoleon's army had gained a most advantageous position. The first corps under d'Erlon was at Solre on the Sambre, the second under Reille was at Leers. The guard, the sixth corps under Lobau, the line cavalry and the third corps under Vandamme, stood in that order on a line northeasterly from Beaumont, and due east of that place were four cavalry corps; the fourth corps under the young and dashing Gérard had marched from Metz and were at Philippeville; to the south lay the guard cavalry and the reserve artillery under Grouchy. In front was Charleroi, whence a broad turnpike led almost direct to Brussels, thirty-four miles due north; another turned eastward toward Liège. Thirteen miles distant on this was Sombreffe; somewhat farther on that, Quatre Bras, both on the highway running east and west between Namur and Nivelles. To have accomplished such marches as it did, the French army must have been fine; to have secured such a brilliant strategic position its general must have been almost inspired. He commanded the operating lines of both Wellington and Blücher, while they were far distant from each other, separated by serious obstacles, both alike instinct with centrifugal rather than centripetal tendency. The same high qualities which shone in their general distinguished the subordinate French commanders. Though many of the famous names are absent from the list,—Mortier, for instance, having fallen ill on the frontier,—yet Soult was present as chief of staff, and Ney was coming up to take command of the left wing. Reille, d'Erlon, and Foy were veterans of the Peninsular war; what twenty-two years of service had done for the "wild Hun," Vandamme, is known. Kellermann was made famous by Marengo, Lobau was noted for daring, Gérard had earned distinction in Russia, and though Grouchy's merit has been the theme of much discussion, yet he had been famous under Jourdan and Moreau, and nothing had occurred in the long interval to tarnish his reputation.

Nearly half of Blücher's troops were irregular reserves, and many of the regulars were recruits, but all were thoroughly drilled and well equipped. The passion of hatred which animated them was comparable only to the "French fury" with which Napoleon's army would fight for national

existence. Such was the reverence for routine among the Prussian officers, and so bitter were the jealousies of the petty aristocracy from which they sprang, that the King dared not promote on any basis except that of seniority. In order to make Gneisenau second in command, York, Kleist, and Tauenzien were stationed elsewhere, and Bülow was put in command of a reserve to hold Belgium when Blücher should advance to Paris. The aged but fiery marshal had not mended his health by the self-indulgence of a year; the three division generals, Ziethen, Pirch, and Thielemann were capable men of local renown. Gneisenau and Bülow were the only first-rate men among the Prussian commanders, but for rousing enthusiasm Blücher's name was a word to conjure with. Wellington was felt by his officers and soldiers to be a man of real power; his British recruits were well drilled, and his veterans were good. His associate generals were no more famous than those of Gneisenau, but they were, for the most part, English gentlemen with a high sense of duty and much executive ability. One of his corps was commanded by the Prince of Orange, a respectable soldier, whose name, however, was more valuable than the experience he had gained in the Peninsula as aide-de-camp; the other corps was under Lord Hill, an admirable subordinate and an excellent commander. The only English general whose name is a familiar one abroad was Picton, who died on the field. As to the quality of the respective armies, it has become the fashion of each nation to decry that of its own and overrate that of the other two. Thus they condone their own blunders, and yet heighten the renown of victory. Napoleon was superior in organization, in cavalry, and in artillery to either Wellington or Blücher, but he was inferior to both in infantry. He was in wretched health, and he had a desperate cause. Taking fully into account his consummate ability and personal prestige, it yet remains true that the odds against him were high, certainly eight to five.

Ziethen's posts before Charleroi saw the French camp-fires in the early hours of June fourteenth; that evening they began to withdraw toward Fleurus, whither the remainder of the Prussian army was gradually set in motion. It seems incredible that this should have been the first move of the allies toward concentrating their widely scattered forces, for neither Wellington nor Blücher was completely surprised. Both commanders had

for two days been aware, in a general way, of Napoleon's movements, but they were awaiting developments. It was Wellington's opinion, carefully set forth in his old age, that it would have been better strategy for the French to advance so as to turn his right, seize his munitions, and cut off his base; but as this would have rolled up the entire allied force, ready to deliver battle with odds of two to one, the statement may perhaps be accepted as an explanation, but certainly not as a justification.

In the dawn of the fifteenth a ringing, rousing proclamation, like those of the olden time, and written the day before on the anniversary of Marengo, was read to the French soldiers. It was in high spirits that the army, in three columns, began to march. The left, under Reille, dislodged the Prussian outposts from Thuin, and, forcing them back through Marchiennes, seized the bridge at that place, and crossed to the left bank of the Sambre. The movement was complete by ten in the morning. The center under Napoleon comprised the mass of the army: Pajol, Vandamme, Lobau, the Guard, Exelmans, Kellermann, and Milhaud. Soult despatched his orders by a solitary aide, who broke his leg by a fall from his horse, and failed to deliver them. Though at equally critical moments before both Eylau and Wagram, Berthier had done as Soult did, with identical results, yet the latter was justly and severely blamed. Had Vandamme been found, the movements of the center would have been greatly accelerated, the speedy capture of Charleroi would have enabled the third corps to reach Fleurus in time to intercept Ziethen, and thus the whole course of events would have been changed. The marshal's ill success was, therefore, as Napoleon called it, a "deplorable mischance," and it was high noon before Pajol, with the van, reached Charleroi and, after a smart engagement, drove out the Prussians. The right wing, under Gérard, was in motion at five in the morning, but it also was detained by a serious disaster. Shortly after starting it was found that Bourmont, the commander of its best division, a man who had been Chouan, imperialist, and royalist by turns, had deserted with his chief of staff and eight soldiers. Having been at the council of war, he had the latest information of Napoleon's secret plans, and his treason demoralized the troops he so basely abandoned. It was long before confidence could be restored; the crossing at Charleroi had

been delayed too long, and it was nightfall when Gérard at last reached Châtelet, four miles below, secured the bridge, and crossed with only half his men. The campaign opened, if not in disaster, at least with only partial success.

CHAPTER XV

LIGNY AND QUATRE BRAS

Napoleon's Orders — Ney's Failure to Seize Quatre Bras — Wellington Surprised — Napoleon's Fine Strategy — The Meeting at Ligny — Blücher's Defeat — The Hostile Forces at Quatre Bras — Wellington Withdraws — Napoleon's Over-confidence — His Instructions to Grouchy — His Advance from Quatre Bras.

For four hours after his arrival at Charleroi, Napoleon, uneasy as to the whereabouts of his detachments, stood in idleness waiting for news. During this interval the first Prussian corps under Ziethen, retreating from Charleroi, reached Fleurus unmolested, all except a small body, which gathered at Gosselies, on the Brussels road, but was easily dispersed by Reille. It seemed as if the road to Quatre Bras was open, and when, at half-past four, Ney appeared, he was put in command of the left, with verbal instructions, as Napoleon asserted some years later, to seize that strategic point. Within these limits he was to act independently. If Quatre Bras were surprised and held, the second move could be attempted: the seizure of Sombreffe. Since the highway between the two was the only line by which the allied armies could quickly unite, the possibility of attacking them separately would be assured even if the successive attacks should follow each other so closely as to be substantially one battle. Either Ney misunderstood, or Napoleon recorded what he intended to say, not what he actually said. Colonel Heymès, Ney's chief of staff, declared that the Emperor's final words were, "Go, and drive back the enemy"; the Emperor asserted that his orders to go and hold Quatre Bras were positive.

It is also a matter of dispute whether or not Napoleon had hoped, after seizing the bridges and crossing the Sambre, to complete his movement by surprising both Quatre Bras and Sombreffe on that same day, the fifteenth. Had he done so, Blücher might possibly have withdrawn to effect a junction with Wellington for the decisive conflict, and thus have thwarted Napoleon's strategy; but it is not likely, for that move, as finally executed, was the work not of Blücher but of Gneisenau; at this stage of the campaign the Prussians would probably have retreated toward Namur. Whatever

may have been Napoleon's intention, Ney hurried to Gosselies, stationed Reille to hold the place, and then, despatching one division to pursue the Prussians, and another, with Piré's cavalry, toward Quatre Bras, put himself at the head of the cavalry of the guard to help in seizing this latter important point. But at seven his force, to their astonishment, was confronted by a strong body of Nassauers from Wellington's army, who, having passed Quatre Bras, had seized Frasnes, a village two and a half miles in advance. These made no stand, but Ney, instead of proceeding immediately to attack Quatre Bras itself, left his men to hold the position at Frasnes, and hurried away to consult his superior. For this he had excellent reasons: his staff was not yet organized, and d'Erlon's corps was not within call; he was therefore too weak for the movement contemplated by his orders. At the same moment Napoleon, who had been in the saddle since three in the morning, and who had become convinced that the retreating Prussians would not halt at Fleurus, but would rejoin their main army, turned back to Charleroi, and, on reaching his quarters an hour later, flung himself in utter exhaustion upon his couch. In fact, he was in exquisite torture from the complication of urinary, hemorrhoidal, and other troubles which his long day's ride had aggravated, and, as he declared at St. Helena,—probably the truth,—he had lost his assurance of final success. The day had been fairly successful, but at what a cost of energy! No one, he least of all, could feel that there had been any buoyancy in the movements or favoring fate in the combinations of his armies.

Throughout the day Blücher had displayed a fiery zeal. Since early in May he had had no serious consultation with Wellington, and in a general conversation held at that time there had been merely a vague understanding as to a union at some point south of Sombreffe. That town was accordingly selected by him for concentration, and in general his orders had been well executed. Why the bridges of Marchiennes and Châtelet were not undermined and blown up by the Prussians has never been explained. Moreover, the language of Gneisenau's orders to Bülow being vague, the latter misinterpreted it, and his much-needed force was not brought in, as expected. Wellington's conduct is a riddle. He displayed little anxiety and found time for social enjoyment as well as for the

activities of military command in a supreme crisis. About the middle of the afternoon he was informed, through the Prince of Orange, as to his enemy's movements. With perfect calm, he commanded that his troops should be ready in their cantonments; at five he issued orders for the divisions to march with a view to concentration at Nivelles, the easternmost point which he intended to occupy; at ten, just as he was setting out for the noted ball which the Duchess of Richmond was giving on the eve of decision, he gave definite instructions for the concentration to begin. These were his very first steps toward concentration, although twenty-seven years later he made the assertion, supported only by his despatch to Bathurst of the nineteenth, that he had ordered the Anglo-allied army to concentrate to the left, as Blücher had ordered the Prussians to concentrate to the right. As a matter of fact, he was twenty-four hours behind Blücher in ordering his first defensive movements. This is not excused by the fact that his movement of concentration was completed somewhat earlier than Blücher's. About twenty minutes after the Prince of Orange had reached the ball-room, Wellington sent him away quietly, and then, summoning the Duke of Richmond, who, it is doubtfully said, was to have command of the reserve when completely formed, he asked for a map. The two withdrew to an adjoining room. Wellington closed the door, and said, with an oath, "Napoleon has humbugged me." He then explained that he had ordered his army to concentrate at Quatre Bras, adding, "But we shall not stop him there; and if so, I must fight him here," marking Waterloo with his thumb-nail on the map as he spoke. It was not until the next morning that he left for the front. Though Napoleon, on the evening of the fifteenth, had neither Quatre Bras nor Sombreffe, he held all the debatable ground; and if, next morning, he could seize the two towns simultaneously, the first move in his great game would be won. It seems as if he must risk everything to that end.

What passed between Napoleon and Ney from midnight until two in the morning is unknown. There is no evidence that the Emperor expressed serious dissatisfaction, although he may have been exasperated. He was not exactly in a position to give vent to his feelings. Whatever was the nature of their conversation, Ney was again at his post long before dawn,

and not a soldier moved from Charleroi until nearly noon! It seems that Napoleon, or Ney, or both, must have been stubbornly convinced that Wellington could not concentrate within twenty-four hours. That Napoleon was not incapacitated by prostration is proved by his acts: about five he sent a preliminary order to Ney; very early, also, he took measures to complete Gérard's crossing at Châtelet; and then, having considered at length the alternatives of pushing straight on to Brussels or of taking the course he did, he had reached a decision as early as seven o'clock. It seems almost certain that he delayed chiefly to get his troops well in hand, partly to give them a much-needed rest. They had been seventeen hours afoot the previous day. Toward nine, believing that more of Ney's command was assembled than was yet the case, he sent a fretful order commanding the marshal to seize Quatre Bras, and stating that a semi-independent command, under Grouchy, would stand at Sombreffe, while he himself would hold Gembloux. This done, he settled into apparent lethargy. To Grouchy he wrote that he intended to attack the enemy at Sombreffe, and "even at Gembloux," and then to operate immediately with Ney "against the English." His scheme was able, for if at either salient angle, Quatre Bras or Sombreffe, his presence should be necessary, he could, at need, quickly join either Ney or Grouchy; but his senses must have been dulled. When informed that the enemy was at Fleurus in force, he hesitated long before resolving to move, being crippled by the inability of his left to move on Quatre Bras and behaving as if sure that the soldiers before him were only a single corps of Blücher's army, which he could sweep away at his convenience. Meanwhile Vandamme had advanced. The Prussians withdrew from Fleurus, and deployed at the foot of the hillock on which the village of Ligny stands. When, about midday, Napoleon arrived at Fleurus, he had to experience the unpleasant surprise of finding a strong force ready to oppose him. Eighty-seven thousand men, all Blücher's army, except Bülow's corps and a portion of Ziethen's which had been dispersed by the right wing and cavalry of the French near Gilly, were drawn up in battle array to oppose him. This was a loss to the foe of possibly two thousand men, a serious weakening at a fateful moment. But the Emperor was not yet ready to meet them, much as he had desired just such a

contingency. He was not aware of the full strength of his enemy, but he was not sure of annihilating even those he believed to be in presence, for he had left ten thousand men at Charleroi, under Lobau, as a reserve, and the troops most available for strengthening his line were moving toward Quatre Bras.

By the independent action of their own generals a substantial force of several thousand Dutch-Belgians, virtually the whole of Perponcher's division, was concentrated at Quatre Bras early that same morning. To be sure, Wellington had simultaneously determined on the same step, but it was taken long before his orders arrived. Indeed, he seems to have reached Quatre Bras before his orderly. Scarcely halting, he rapidly surveyed the situation and, leaving the troops in command of the Prince of Orange, rode away to visit Blücher. The two commanders met at about one o'clock in the windmill of Bry. They parted in the firm conviction that the mass of the French army was at Ligny, and with the verbal understanding that Wellington, if not himself attacked, would come to Blücher's support. On leaving, the English commander sharply criticized the tactical disposition of his ally's army; but Blücher, with the fixed idea that, in any case, the duke was coming to his aid, determined to stand as he was. With similar obstinacy, Napoleon, still certain that what he had before him, although a great force, was only a screen for the retreat of the main army of the allies, now despatched an order (the second) for Ney to combine Reille, d'Erlon, and Kellermann in order to destroy whatever force was in opposition at Quatre Bras. This was at two. The French attack was opened at half-past two by Gérard and Vandamme; the resistance was such as to leave no doubt of the real Prussian strength. This being clear, Napoleon immediately wrote two despatches of the same tenor—one he sent to Ney by an aide, and one to d'Erlon by a subofficer of the guard. The former (the third for the same destination) urged Ney to come for the sake of France; the other summoned d'Erlon from Ney's command to the Emperor's own immediate assistance: "You will save France, and cover yourself with glory," were its closing words. This last order, the original of which has but lately been revealed, came nigh to ruining the whole day's work. Before Wellington could return to Quatre Bras, Ney's force was engaged with the

Prince of Orange, and before three o'clock a fierce conflict was raging at that place. D'Erlon appears to have been in a frightful quandary as to his duty. He marched away toward St. Amand and in his dilemma detached his best division, that of Durutte, toward Bry. Neither superior nor subordinate did anything to the purpose. Ney was without the support of an entire corps and did not therefore literally obey his orders. Napoleon was unassisted by the wandering force and even confused by their unexpected appearance at a critical moment. They were mistaken at Ligny for enemies; d'Erlon's vacillation had so detained them.

Blücher, who was determined to fight, come what would, had held in as long as his impatient temper permitted; but when no reinforcement from Wellington appeared, he first fumed, and then about six gave his fatal orders to prepare for the offensive. The nature of the ground was such as necessarily to weaken his center by the initial movements. Napoleon marked this at once, and summoned his guard in order to break through. For a moment the Emperor hesitated; a mysterious force had appeared on the left; perhaps they were foes. But when once assured that they were d'Erlon's men, he waited not an instant longer; at eight the crash came, and the Prussian line was shattered. Retreat was turned into a momentary rout so quickly that Blücher could not even exchange his wounded horse for another, and in the first mad rush he was so stunned and overwhelmed that his staff gave him up for lost. The few moments before he was found were the most precious for the allies of the whole campaign, since Gneisenau directed the flight northward on the line to Wavre, a route parallel with that on which Wellington, whatever his success, must now necessarily withdraw. This move, which abandoned the line to Namur, is Gneisenau's title to fame. The lines were quickly formed to carry it out, and the rest of the retrograde march went on with great steadiness. Napoleon did not wait until d'Erlon arrived and thereupon order an immediate, annihilating pursuit, but came to the conclusion that the Prussians were sufficiently disorganized, and would seek to reorganize on the old line to the eastward. They were thus, he thought, completely and finally cut off from Wellington. It was not until early next morning that he despatched Pajol, with his single cavalry corps, to follow the foe, for he was confirmed

in his fatal conjecture by the false report of five thousand Prussians having been seen on the Namur road, and exerting themselves to hold it. The Prussians seen were merely a horde of stragglers. The truth was not known until next day.

Almost simultaneously with the battle of Ligny was fought that of Quatre Bras. At eleven Ney received orders outlining a general plan for the day; about half an hour later came the specific command to unite the forces of d'Erlon, Reille, and Kellermann, and carry Quatre Bras; at five arrived in hot haste the messenger with the third order. At two o'clock there were not quite seven thousand Anglo-Belgians in Quatre Bras, but, successive bodies arriving in swift succession, by half-past six o'clock there were over thirty thousand. At two Ney had seventeen thousand men, and though he sought to recall d'Erlon, yet, owing to the withdrawal of Durutte, and to d'Erlon's indecision, he had at half-past six not more than twenty thousand. Not one of d'Erlon's men had reached him: Girard's division of Reille's corps was with Vandamme before St. Amand. Gérard's corps had been kept at Ligny. Had he advanced on the position the previous evening, or had he attacked between eleven and two on the sixteenth, the event of the campaign might have been different from what it was. But if he really believed, as Heymès afterward asseverated was the case, that his orders were merely to push and hold the enemy, then his conduct throughout was gallant and correct. The weight of evidence favors the claim of Napoleon that the marshal was perverse in his refusal to take Quatre Bras according to verbal orders. Whatever the truth, the behavior of Ney's men was admirable when they did advance, but they were forced back to Frasnes before superior numbers.

Next morning Wellington was conversing with Colonel Bowles when a staff officer drew up, his horse flecked with foam, and whispered the news of Ligny. Without a change of countenance, the commander said to his companion: "Old Blücher has had a —— good licking, and gone back to Wavre, eighteen miles. As he has gone back, we must go, too. I suppose in England they will say we have been licked. I can't help it; as they have gone back, we must go, too." Accordingly, he issued his orders, and his

army began to march at ten. On the whole, therefore, the events of June sixteenth seemed favorable to Napoleon, since, fighting at two points with inferior numbers, he had been victorious at one, and had thereby secured the other also. We, of course, know that by Gneisenau's move this apparent success was rendered nugatory. It is useless to surmise what would have happened had Bülow been with Blücher, and d'Erlon and Lobau with Napoleon, or if either of these possibilities had happened without the other; as it was, Napoleon's strategy gained both Quatre Bras and Sombreffe.

The Prussians had lost twenty thousand men, missing, wounded, and dead, and it required vigorous treatment to restore Blücher. But all night the army marched, and in the morning Bülow, having found his direction, was near Beauderet and Sauvinières, within easy reach at Gembloux. The retreat continued throughout the seventeenth. It was a move of the greatest daring, since the line was over a broken country almost destitute of roads, and, the old base of supplies having been abandoned, the men had to starve until Gneisenau could secure another by way of Louvain. The army bore its hardships well; there was no straggling or demoralization, and the splendor of success makes doubly brilliant the move which confounded Napoleon's plans. Never dreaming at first that his foe had withdrawn elsewhere than along his natural line of supply toward Liège, the Emperor considered the separation of the two allies as complete, and after carefully deliberating throughout the long interval he allowed for collecting his troops and giving them a thorough rest, he determined to wheel, join Ney, and attack Wellington, wherever found. It was serious and inexplicable slackness which he showed in not taking effective measures to determine immediately where his defeated enemy was. Being, nevertheless, well aware of the Prussian resources and character, he made up his mind to detail Grouchy, with thirty-three thousand men, for the purpose of scouring the country toward Liège at least as far as Namur. Then, to provide for what he considered a possible contingency,—namely, that which had actually occurred,—this adjunct army was to turn north, and hasten to Gembloux, in order to assure absolutely the isolation of

Wellington; in any and every case the general was to keep his communications with Napoleon open.

It was eight in the morning of the seventeenth when Napoleon issued from his quarters at Fleurus. Flahaut was waiting for the reply to an inquiry which he had just brought from Ney concerning the details of Ligny. The Emperor at once dictated a despatch, the most famous in the controversial literature of Waterloo, in which his own achievements were told and Ney was blamed for the disconnected action of his subordinates the previous day; in particular the marshal was instructed to take position at Quatre Bras, "as you were ordered," and d'Erlon was criticized for his failure to move on St. Amand. The wording of the hastily scribbled order to the latter he had probably forgotten; it was: "Portez-vous ... à la hauteur de Ligny, et fondez sur St. Amand—ou vice versa; c'est ce que je ne sais bien." ("Betake yourself ... to the heights of Ligny, pounce on St. Amand—or the reverse; I am not quite sure which.") Further, the Emperor now declared that, had Ney kept d'Erlon and Reille together, not an Englishman would have escaped, and that, had d'Erlon obeyed his orders, the Prussian army would have been destroyed. In case it were still impossible to seize Quatre Bras with the force at hand, Napoleon would himself move thither. Then, entering a carriage, he drove to Ligny; Lobau was ordered at once to Marbais, on the road to Quatre Bras. After haranguing the troops and prisoners, Napoleon was informed, about noon, that Wellington was still in position. At once a second order was sent, commanding Ney to attack; the Emperor, it ran, was already under way to Marbais. This was not quite true, for while he was giving detailed instructions to Grouchy before parting, that general had seemed uneasy, and had finally pleaded that it would be impossible further to disorganize the Prussians, since they had so long a start. These scruples were peremptorily put down, and the chief parted amicably from his subordinate, but with a sense of uneasiness, lest he had left nice and difficult work in unwilling hands. Scouts soon overtook him, and expressed doubt as to the Prussians having gone to Namur. In case they had not, Grouchy must act cautiously. Accordingly, positive instructions were then dictated to Bertrand, and sent to Grouchy, whose movements were now doubly important. The latter general was to

reconnoiter toward Namur, but march direct to Gembloux; his chief task was to discover whether Blücher was seeking to join Wellington or not. For the rest, he was free to act on his own discretion.

Napoleon then entered his carriage, and drove to Quatre Bras. Mounting his horse, he led the pursuit of the English rear. Indignant that Ney had lost the opportunity to overwhelm at least a portion of Wellington's force, he exclaimed to d'Erlon, "They have ruined France!" But he said nothing to Ney himself. So active and energetic was the Emperor that he actually exposed himself to the artillery fire with which the English gunners sought to retard the pursuit. It was not an easy matter for Grouchy to carry out his instructions; at two o'clock began a steady downpour, which lasted well into the next morning; the roads to Gembloux were lanes, and the rain turned them into sticky mud. Not until that night was Grouchy's command assembled at Gembloux; it was ten o'clock before the leader gained an inkling of where the Prussians were, and then, though uncertain as to their exact movements, he immediately despatched a letter, received by Napoleon at two in the morning. The marshal explained that he would pursue as far as Wavre, so as to cut off Blücher from Brussels, and to separate him from Wellington. Some hours later, about seven in the morning, when finally convinced that the Prussians were retiring on Wavre, Grouchy set his columns in motion in a straight line toward that place by Sart-à-Walhain, choosing, with very poor judgment, to advance by the right bank of the Dyle, and thus jeopardizing the precious connections he had been repeatedly and urgently instructed to keep open.

CHAPTER XVI

THE EVE OF WATERLOO

Wellington's Choice of Position — State of the Two Armies — The Orders of Napoleon to Grouchy — Grouchy's Interpretation of Them — Napoleon Surprised by the Prussian Movements — His Inactivity — The Battle-field — Wellington's Position — Napoleon's Battle Array — His Personal Health — His Plan.

On the night of June seventeenth Wellington's army reached the heights at Mont St. Jean, on the northern edge of what was destined to be the most talked of battle-field in modern times. His retreat, masked by a strong body of cavalry, with some horse-artillery and a single infantry division, had been slow and regular, being retarded somewhat by the heavy rain. Ney had held his position at Frasnes, well aware that what was before him was far more than a rear-guard—in fact, owing to the arrival of strong reinforcements during the night, it was the larger portion of the Anglo-Belgian army. But the instant the French marshal was informed of his enemy's retrograde movements he threw forward a strong force of cavalry to coöperate with Napoleon. When reunited, the French army numbered seventy-one thousand five hundred men, with two hundred and forty guns, excluding of course, the whole of Gérard's corps, which had been left at Ligny to coöperate with Grouchy. That Wellington was far on his way to the defensive position chosen by himself was probably in accord with Napoleon's calculations; his only fear was lest his foe should have withdrawn behind the forest of Soignes, where free communication with Blücher and the junction of the two allied armies would be assured, as would not be the case at Mont St. Jean.

This anxiety was set at rest by a cavalry reconnaissance, and at dusk the French van bivouacked at Belle Alliance, separated by a broad, shallow vale from their foe. The rest of the army followed with great difficulty, some by the road; some through plowed or swampy fields, wading the swollen tributaries of the Dyle, and floundering through the meadows on their banks. The army of Wellington had seized, in passing, what provisions and forage they found, and they had camp-fires to comfort them

in the steady rain. The French had scanty or no rations, and lay throughout the night in the grain-fields, without fire or shelter. All told, Wellington had sixty-eight thousand men; ten miles on his right, at Hal, lay eighteen thousand more; ten miles on his left, twelve from his headquarters at Waterloo, was Blücher. Wellington, who had informed the Prussian commander that unless support reached him he would fall back to Brussels, at two o'clock in the morning had assurance of Blücher's coöperation. There is an unsupported statement of Napoleon's that he twice sent to Grouchy on the night of the seventeenth, by two separate officers, a definite order to detach seven thousand men from his camp at Wavre (where the Emperor affected to believe that Grouchy was), and make connection by St. Lambert with the right of the main army. This would entirely cut off Blücher from Wellington. The motive of this statement is transparent—with the allies separated, they were outmanœuvered; with the possibility of their union, and an understanding between them to that effect, he was himself outmanœuvered.

Grouchy denied having received this order; neither of the officers intrusted with it ever revealed himself; the original of it has never been found; and in subsequent orders issued next day there is no mention of, or reference to, any such message. Either the declaration, twice made at St. Helena, was due to forgetfulness, being an account of intentions not carried out, or else it was put forward to explain the result of the campaign as due to his lieutenant's inefficiency. Grouchy must have had an uneasy conscience, since for thirty years he suppressed the text of the Bertrand order, which was not on the order-book because it had not been dictated to Soult; and when, after falsely claiming for the duration of an entire generation that he had acted under verbal instructions, he did publish it, he gave, at the same time, a mutilated version of his own report from Gembloux, sent on the night of the seventeenth, changing his original language so as to show that he had never looked upon the separation of the allies as his chief task, but that what was uppermost in his mind was an attack on the Prussians.

It was two in the morning of the eighteenth when the letter of Grouchy, written about four hours earlier, arrived at Napoleon's headquarters. Both

the Emperor and Soult knew by that time that the whole of Blücher's army was moving to Wavre; yet they did not give this information, nor any minute directions, to the returning messenger. Grouchy, therefore, was left to act on his own discretion, his superior doubtless believing that the inferior would by that time himself be fully informed, and would hasten to throw himself, like an impenetrable wall, between the Prussians and the Anglo-Belgian army. By the defenders of Napoleon Grouchy is severely criticized for not having marched early in the morning of the eighteenth to Moustier, where, if energetic, he could have carried over his army to the left bank of the river by eleven o'clock, thus placing his force within the sphere of Napoleon's operations. Perhaps he would have been able to prevent the union of the opposing armies, or, if not that, to strengthen Napoleon in his struggle. It is proved by Marbot's memoirs that this is what Napoleon expected. On the other hand, excellent critics present other very important considerations: the line to Moustier was over a country so rough and miry that after a torrential rain the artillery would have been seriously delayed, and Prussian scouts might well have brought down a strong Prussian column in time to oppose the crossing there or elsewhere. Grouchy, moreover, could not know that Wellington would offer battle in front of the forest of Soignes—a resolution which, in the opinion of Napoleon and many lesser experts, was a serious blunder. He appears to have been positive that the two armies were aiming to combine for the defense of Brussels; finally, when from Walhain the sound of the firing at Waterloo was distinctly heard, and Gérard fiercely urged an immediate march toward the field of battle, Grouchy was acting strictly within the limits of the Bertrand order, and according to what he then held to be explicit instructions, when he pressed on to concentrate at Wavre, and thus, if Napoleon had already defeated Wellington, to prevent any union between Wellington and the Prussian army. It is almost certain that Grouchy would in no way have changed the event by marching direct to Mont St. Jean, for the cross-roads were soaked, his troops were already exhausted, and the distance was approximately fourteen and a half miles as the crow flies: the previous day he had been able to make somewhat less than half that distance in nine hours.

Napoleon himself did not apparently expect the Prussians to rally as they did. He spent the hours from dawn, when the rain ceased, in careful reconnoitering. The mud was so thick in places that he required help to draw his feet out of his own tracks. At breakfast, according to a contemporary anecdote, he expressed himself as having never been more favored by fortune; and when reminded that Blücher might effect a union with the English, he replied that the Prussians would need three days to form again. This opinion is in accord with his exaggerated but reiterated estimates of the disaster produced in Blücher's ranks after Ligny, and taken in connection with the difficulty of moving artillery, which is not a sufficient explanation in itself, affords the only conceivable reason for his delay in attacking on the eighteenth. It also explains his remissness in leaving Grouchy to exercise full discretion as to his movements. At eight the plan of battle was sketched; at nine the orders for the day were despatched throughout the lines; about ten the weary but self-confident Emperor threw himself down and slept for an hour; at eleven he mounted, and rode by the Brussels highway to the farm of Belle Alliance. It was probably during the Emperor's nap that Soult forwarded to Grouchy a despatch, marked ten in the morning, instructing that general to manœuver toward the main army by way of Wavre. Although, according to Marbot, Napoleon expected Grouchy in the afternoon by way of Moustier, at one o'clock a second despatch, of which the Emperor certainly had cognizance, was forwarded to Grouchy, expressing approval of his intention to move on Wavre by Sart-à-Walhain, but instructing him "always to manœuver in our direction." The postscript of this second order enjoins haste, since it was thought Bülow was already on the heights of St. Lambert.

The one central idea of Napoleon and Soult was clearly to leave a wide discretion for Grouchy, provided always that he kept his communications with the main army open, and that his general direction was one which would insure easy connection, in order either to cut off or check the Prussians. But, however this may be, the hours of Napoleon's inactivity were precious to his enemies; by twelve Bülow was at St. Lambert, and at the same hour two other Prussian corps were leaving Wavre. These movements were apparently tardy, but Gneisenau, feeling that Wellington

had been a poor reliance at Ligny, and very much doubting whether he really intended to stand at Waterloo, was unwilling that Blücher should despatch his troops until it was certain that the Prussian army would not again be left in the lurch. Should the Anglo-Dutch retreat to Brussels, the Prussians must either retreat by Louvain, or be again defeated. Anxiety was not dispelled until the roar of cannon was heard between eleven and twelve. Then the Prussians first exerted themselves to the utmost; it was about four when they were within striking distance, ready to take Napoleon's army on its flank. When Grouchy reached Wavre, at the same hour, he found there but one of Blücher's corps, the rear under Thielemann.

Campaign of 1815.

June 15th to 19th.

From Belle Alliance Napoleon returned, and took his station on the height of Rossomme. In front was a vale something less than a mile in width. The highway stretched before him in a straight line until it skirted the large farmstead of La Haye Sainte on the opposite side; then, ascending by a slant to the first crest, it passed the hamlet of Mont St. Jean, only to ascend still higher to the top of the ridge before falling again into a second depression. At Mont St. Jean was Wellington's center. The road from Nivelles to Brussels crosses the valley about a quarter of a mile westward, and on it, midway between the two slopes, lay another farm-house, with its barns, that of Hougomont. More than half a mile eastward, in the direction from which the Prussians were expected, lay scattered the farm buildings of Papelotte, La Haye, Smohain, and Frischermont. The valley was covered with rich crops. Unobstructed by ditches or hedges, it was cut longitudinally about the middle by a cruciform ridge, with spurs reaching toward Belle Alliance on one side, and past Hougomont on the other; the road passed by a cut through the longitudinal arm. Hougomont was almost a fortress, having strong brick walls and a moat; it stood in a large orchard, which was surrounded by a thick hedge. The house at La Haye Sainte was brick also, and formed one side of a quadrangle, inclosed further by two brick barns and a strong wall of the same material; though

not as large or solid as Hougomont, it was a strong advance redoubt for Mont St. Jean.

The right and center of Wellington were thus well protected, the left was admirably screened by the places already enumerated. His army was deployed in three lines, the front plainly visible to the French, the second partly concealed by the crest of the hill, and the third entirely so. His headquarters were two miles north, at Waterloo; his lines of retreat, though broken by the forest of Soignes, were open either toward Wavre or toward the sea. The latter line was well protected by the troops at Hal. Uneasy about the character of his Dutch-Belgian troops, the duke had carefully disposed them among the reliable English and Germans, in order to preclude the possibility of a panic.

In the foreground of Napoleon's position was the French army, also deployed in three lines. The front, extending from the mansion of Frischermont to the Nivelles road, consisted of two infantry corps, one on each side of Belle Alliance, and of two corps of cavalry, one on the extreme right wing, one on the left; of this line Ney had command. The second was shorter, its wings being cavalry, and its center in two divisions, of cavalry and infantry respectively. The third, or reserve, was the guard. Each of the lines had its due proportion of artillery, stationed in all three along the road. This disposition gave the French array, as seen from beyond, a fan-like appearance, the sticks, or columns, converging toward the rear. The array was brilliant; every man and horse was in sight; the number was superior by about four thousand to that of the enemy; the ground was, by eleven, almost dry enough to secure the fullest advantage from superiority in artillery; deserters from the foe came in from time to time. Surely the moral effect of such a scene upon the somewhat motley throng across the valley must be very powerful. Yet the road to Charleroi was the single available line of retreat, and it passed through a deep cut; the soldiers were tired and not really first-rate, fifty per cent. of the line being recruits, and nearly a quarter of the guard untrained men; the tried officers had all been promoted, and those who replaced them needed such careful watching that deep formations had been adopted, and these must not merely diminish

the volume of fire, but present vulnerable targets; the cavalry had been hastily gathered, and was far from being as efficient as the British veterans of the German legion.

For some moments after reaching his position Napoleon stood impassive. He was clad in his familiar costume of cocked hat and gray surtout. Throughout his lines he had been received with enthusiasm, and his presence was clearly magnetic, as of old. The direction of affairs in this momentous crisis was his, and he dreamed of two implacable enemies routed, of appeasing the two who were less directly interested, of glory won, of empire regained. Reason must have told him how empty was such a vision; for, since the armistice of Poischwitz, Austria and Russia had been quite as bitter, and more tortuous, than the other powers. His expression mirrored pain, both physical and intellectual; his over-confidence and consequent delay were signs of degenerate power; his exertions for three days past had been beyond any human strength, especially when the faculties of body and mind had previously been harassed for more than two months, as his had been.

It was the first day of the week, but there was a calm more profound than that of the Sabbath; the sky was dull, the misty air was heavy with summer heat; but there was the expectant silence of a great host, the deep determination of two grim and obstinate armies. Wellington, with his western lines protected, would be safe when the Prussian army should appear where he knew its van already was, and he must manœuver eastward to keep in touch. Napoleon must crush the British center and left, and roll up the line to its right, in order to separate the parts of his dual foe. To this end he had determined to make a feint against Hougomont; should Wellington throw in his reserves at that point on his right, one strong push might create confusion among the rest, and hurl the whole force westward, away from Brussels. It was a simple plan, great in its simplicity, as had been every strategic conception of Napoleon from the opening of the campaign. But its execution was like that of every other movement attempted since the first great march of concentration—tardy, slack, and feeble. Personal bravery was abundant among the French, but the orderly

coöperation of regiment, division, and corps in all the arms, the courage of self-restraint, and the self-sacrifice of individuals in organized movement, with the invigorating ubiquity of a master mind—these were lacking from the first.

CHAPTER XVII

WATERLOO

Hougomont — La Haye Sainte — d'Erlon Repulsed — Ney's Cavalry Attack — Napoleon's One Chance Lost — Plancenoit — Union of Wellington and Blücher — Napoleon's Convulsive Effort — Charge of the Guard — The Rout — Napoleon's Flight.

Napoleon's salute to Wellington was a cannonade from a hundred and twenty guns. The fire was directed toward the enemy's center and left, but it was ineffectual, except as the smoke partially masked the first French movement, which was the attack on Hougomont by their left, the corps of Reille. This was in three divisions, commanded respectively by Bachelu, Foy, and the Emperor's brother Jerome, whose director was Guillemenot. Preceded by skirmishers, the column of Jerome gained partial shelter in a wood to the southwest of their goal, but the resistance to their advance was vigorous; on the skirts of the grove were Nassauers, Hanoverians, and a detachment of the English guards, all picked men, and behind, on higher ground, was an English battery. The two other divisions pressed on behind, and for a time their gains were apparently substantial. But, checked in front by artillery fire, and by a murderous fusillade from loopholes cut in the walls of Hougomont, the besiegers hesitated. Their fiery energy was not scientifically directed; but such was their zeal, and so great were their numbers, that one brigade doubled on the rear of the fortalice, drove back the English guards from before the entrance to the courtyard on the north, and charged for the opening. Some of the French actually forced a passage, and the success of Napoleon's first move was in sight when five gallant Englishmen, by sheer physical strength, shut the stout gate in the face of the assailants. A fearless French grenadier scaled the wall, but he and his comrades within were killed. A second assault on the same spot failed; so, too, a third from the west, and still another from the east, all of which were repelled by the English guards, who moved down from above, and drove the French into the wood, where they held their own. These close and bloody encounters were contrary to Reille's

orders, but in the thick of combat his various detachments could not be restrained.

The second division of the battle was the main attack on Wellington's left by d'Erlon's corps. Between twelve and one a Prussian hussar was captured with a message from Blücher to Wellington announcing the Prussian advance. At once the postscript was added to the second despatch to Grouchy, already mentioned, and Napoleon made ready for his great effort. Unable to sit his horse, he had dismounted, and, seated at the table on which his map was spread, had been frequently seen to nod and doze. Ney and d'Erlon, left to their own judgment, had evolved a scheme of formation so complex that when tried, as it now was, it proved unworkable. The confusion was veiled by a terrific, continuous, and destructive artillery fire. After some delay, and a readjustment involving preparations against the possible flank attack of the Prussians, d'Erlon's corps advanced in four columns, under Donzelot, Allix, Marcognet, and Durutte respectively. Opposed was Picton's decimated corps, with Bylandt's Dutch-Belgian brigade, which had been all along a target for the strongest French battery, one of seventy-eight guns, and was now to bear the first onset of the French troops. Bylandt's men had stood firm under the awful artillery fire, but their uniforms were like those of the French, and in a mêlée this fact might draw upon them the fire of their own associates, as later in the day at Hougomont it actually did, and they grew very uneasy. Durutte, on the extreme right, seized Papelotte, but lost it almost immediately. The conflict then focused about La Haye Sainte, where the garden and orchard were seized by an overwhelming force. The buildings had been inadequately fortified, but Major Baring, with his garrison, displayed prodigies of valor, and held them.

The assailants, supported hitherto by batteries firing over their heads, now charged up the hill; as they reached the crest, their own guns were silenced, but their yells of defiance rent the air. The Dutch-Belgians of the first rank harkened an instant, and, followed by the jeers and menaces of the British grenadiers and Royal Scots, fled incontinently until they reached a place of safety, when they reformed and stood. Picton was thus left unsupported,

but at that decisive moment Donzelot tried the new tactics again, and his ranks fell into momentary confusion. Picton charged, the British artillery opened, and though the English general fell, mortally wounded, his men hurled back the French. This first success enabled Wellington to bring in more of his infantry, with the Scots Greys, and to throw in his cavalry, the First Royal Dragoons and the Enniskillens, for action against a body of French riders, under Roussel, which, having swept the fields around La Haye Sainte, was now coming on. His order was for Somerset and Ponsonby to charge. The shock was terrific, the French cavalry yielded, and the whole of d'Erlon's line rolled back in disorder. Efforts were made by the daring Englishmen to create complete confusion, but they were not entirely successful, for Durutte's column maintained its formation, while the French lancers and dragoons wrought fearful havoc among the British infantry somewhat disorganized by victory. Ponsonby fell among his men, and it was due to Vandeleur's horse that the French advance was checked. This ended the effort upon which Napoleon had based his hope of success; there was still desultory fighting at Hougomont, and the Prussians, though not visible, were forming behind the forest of Paris.

There was a long and ominous pause before the next renewal of conflict. Wellington used it to repair his shattered left and brought in Lambert's Peninsular veterans, twenty-two hundred strong. Napoleon quickly formed a corps, under Lobau, intended to repel the flank attack of the Prussians. Ney was determined to redeem his repulse by a second front attack, and Napoleon, either by word or silence, gave consent. While the batteries kept up their fire, the marshal gathered in the center the largest mass of horsemen which had ever charged on a European battle-field—twelve thousand men, light and heavy cavalry. His aim was to supplement Reille, still engaged at Hougomont, and dash in upon the allied right center. Donzelot's column, now reformed, was hurled directly against La Haye Sainte, and the mass of the cavalry surged up the hill. The gunners of Wellington's artillery, unprotected even by breastworks, stood to their pieces until the attacking line was within forty yards; then they delivered their final salvo, and fled. Wavering for an instant, the French advanced with a cheer. Before them stood the enemy in hollow squares, four ranks

deep, the front kneeling, the second at the charge, the two others ready to fire. The horsemen dared not rush on those bristling lines. In and out among the serried ranks they flowed and foamed, discharging their pistols and slashing with their sabers, until, discouraged by losses and exhausted by useless exertion, their efforts grew feeble. Dubois's brigade, according to a doubtful tradition, dashed in ignorance over the brow of a certain shallow ravine, men and horses rolling in horrid confusion into the unsuspected pit. The hollow was undoubtedly there at the time, although it has since been filled up, and, it is believed, was likewise the grave of the fifteen hundred men and two thousand horses that were eventually collected from round about. The British reserve cavalry, supported by the infantry fire and a few hastily collected batteries, completed the defeat of Ney's first charge. A second was repulsed in the same way. The undaunted marshal then waited for reinforcements. No fewer than thirty-seven squadrons came in, Napoleon sending Kellermann's heavy dragoons as a last resort. Guyot's division of the heavy cavalry of the guard was also there—some say they had been summoned by Ney, others that they came of their own accord; the question arises because, in the next stage of the battle, their absence from the station assigned to them was a serious matter. Another time, and still another, this mighty force moved against the foe. Pouring in and out, backward and forward, among the squares, they lost cohesion and force until, in the very moment of Wellington's extremity, they withdrew, as before, exhausted and spent.

The energy and zeal of the English commander had been in strange contrast to Napoleon's growing apathy; Wellington had further strengthened his line by two Brunswick regiments and Mercer's battery, and at the last by Adam's brigade with the King's Germans under Dupont. This done, his stand had been superb to the last. Yet he was now at the end of his resources. It was six, and to his repeated messages calling for Blücher's aid there had been no response. Although a portion of Bülow's men had been fighting for more than an hour, yet the Prussian army was not yet fully engaged and he himself, having no reinforcement nor relief, seemed face to face with defeat. Baring had held La Haye Sainte with unsurpassed gallantry; his calls for men had been answered, but his

requisitions for ammunition were strangely neglected. Ney, seeing how vain his cavalry charges were, withdrew before the last one took place, arrayed Bachelu's division, collected a number of field-pieces, and fell furiously, with cannonade and bayonet charge, upon the farm-house. His success was complete; the garrison fled, his pursuit was hot, and, leading in person, he broke through the opposing line at its very heart. Had he been supported by a strong reserve, the battle would have been won. Müffling, Wellington's Prussian aide, dashed away to the Prussian lines, and, as he drew near the head of Ziethen's division, shouted: "The battle is lost if the corps do not press on and at once support the English army." Ney's adjutant, demanding infantry to complete the breach he had made, was received by Napoleon with petulance. One brigade from Bülow's corps had attacked at about half-past four; repulsed at first, their onset was growing fiercer, for two other brigades had come in. Soult had opposed Ney's waste of cavalry. But the latter was desperate, and with the other generals was displaying a wilfulness bordering on insubordination. A portion of the guard had just been detached for Lobau's support. To Ney's demand for infantry the Emperor replied: "Where do you expect me to get them from? Am I to make them?" In truth, his mind and energies were now more concerned with Blücher than with Wellington, and he was already fighting the advance of Bülow in his plans. But had the old Bonaparte spirit moved the chieftain to put himself at the head of what remained of the guard infantry, and to make a desperate dash for Ney's support, a temporary advantage would almost certainly have been won; then, with a remnant flushed by victory, he could have turned to Lobau's assistance before the main Prussian army came in. Thus was lost Napoleon's one chance to deal Wellington a decisive blow.

It was to prevent a dangerous flank movement of the enemy—the advance, namely, of Bülow, with the cavalry corps of Prince William, upon Plancenoit—that Napoleon had detached the young guard, under Duhesme, a third of his precious reserve, for the support of Lobau's right; Durutte being in the rear of his left, that portion was already as strong as it could be made. Nevertheless the Prussians seized Plancenoit; at once the French rallied, and drove them out; Blücher threw in eight fresh battalions,

and these, with the six already engaged, dashed for the ravine leading to the village. The passage was lined with French, and for a time it was like the valley of Hinnom; but the Prussians pressed on, and the young guard reeled. Napoleon sent in two battalions of the old guard, under Morand and Pelet; their firmness restored that of their comrades, and the place was cleared, two thousand dead remaining as the victims of that furious charge and countercharge. At seven Bülow was back again in his first position, awaiting the arrival of Pirch's corps to restore his riddled ranks. Napoleon had now left only twelve of the twenty-three battalions of the guard reserve, less than six thousand men. Wellington had repaired the breach made by Ney, and, though still hard pressed on his right, Ziethen had made good the strength of his left, whence some of his cavalry, the brigades of Vivian and Vandeleur, had been detached to repair other weak spots in the line. At this moment Ziethen conceived that Bülow was further giving way, and hesitated in his advance. The brief interval was noted by Durutte, and with a last desperate effort he carried Papelotte, La Haye, and Smohain, hoping to prevent the fatal juncture. It was half an hour before Ziethen retrieved his loss, and thus probably saved Wellington's left. By that time Pirch had come up, and with this reinforcement Bülow, behind the heavy fire of his powerful batteries, charged Lobau, and advanced on the guard at Plancenoit. Lobau, the hero of Aspern, stood like a rock until Durutte's men and the remnants of d'Erlon's corps, flying past his flank, induced a panic in his ranks. Thereupon the whole French right fell into confusion: all except the guard, who stood in the churchyard of Plancenoit until surrounded and reduced in number to about two hundred and fifty men; then, under Pelet's command, they formed a square, placed their eagle in the midst, drove off the cavalry which blocked their path, and reached the main line of retreat with scarcely enough men to keep their formation. The name of Ziethen must stand in equal renown with that of Colborne among the annals of Waterloo. The rout of the French left was the beginning of Napoleon's calamity, as that of his right under Colborne was its consummation.

Before the combined armies of Wellington and Blücher the French could not stand; but, in spite of inferior numbers and the manifest signs of defeat,

General Bonaparte might have conducted an orderly retreat. The case was different with Napoleon the Emperor, even though he were now a liberator; to retreat would have been merely a postponement of the day of reckoning. Accordingly, the great adventurer, facing his destiny on the height at Rossomme, determined, in a last desperate effort, to retrieve the day, and stake all on a last cast of the dice. For an instant he appears to have contemplated a change of front, wheeling for that purpose by Hougomont, where his resistance was still strong; but he finally decided to crush the Anglo-Belgian right, if possible; roll up both armies into a confused mass, so that, perchance, they might weaken rather than strengthen each other; and then, with Grouchy's aid, strike for victory. Though indifferent to Ney's demands, he had set in array against Bülow the very choicest troops of his army; surely they might stand firm while his blow elsewhere was delivered. But he did not reckon in this with Wellington's reserve power; though the dramatic stories of the duke's mortal anxiety rest on slight foundation, there is no doubt that he felt a great relief when the Prussians entered the combat, for immediately he turned his attention, not to rest, but to the reforming of his line. Officers and men, English or German, knew nothing of Bülow's or Blücher's whereabouts when Napoleon took his resolution; but, sensible of having been strengthened, they displayed at half-past seven that evening the same grim determination they had shown at eleven in the morning. Though Wellington's task of standing firm until Blücher's arrival was accomplished, and though, perhaps, his soldiers heard the distant firing of the Prussian guns, yet nothing could be seen across the long interval, the noise attracted little attention, and neither he nor they could know what was yet before them. It was, therefore, splendid courage in general and army which kept them ever ready for any exertion, however desperate.

Against this army, in this temper, Napoleon despatched what was left of that force which was the peculiar product of his life and genius, the old and middle guard. Most of its members were the children of peasants, and had been born in ante-Revolution days. Neither intelligent in appearance nor graceful in bearing, they nevertheless had the look of perfect fighting-machines. Their huge bearskin caps and long mustaches did not diminish

the fierceness of their aspect. They had been selected for size, docility, and strength; they had been well paid, well fed, and well drilled; they had, therefore, no ties but those to their Emperor, no homes but their barracks, and no enthusiasm but their passion for imperial France. They would have followed no leader unless he were distinguished in their system of life; accordingly, Ney was selected for that honor; and as they came in proud confidence up the Charleroi road, their Emperor passed them in review. Like every other division, they had been told that the distant roar was from Grouchy's guns; when informed that all was ready for the finishing-stroke, that there was to be a general advance along the whole line, and that no man was to be denied his share in certain victory, even the sick, it is said, rose up, and hurried into the ranks. The air seemed rent with their hoarse cheers as their columns swung in measured tread diagonally across the northern spur of the cruciform elevation which divided the surface of the valley.

Wellington, informed of the French movement, as it is thought by a deserter, issued hurried orders to the center, ordered Maitland's brigade to where the charge must be met, and posted himself, with Napier's battery, somewhat to its right. While yet his words of warning were scarcely uttered, the head of the French column appeared. The English batteries belched forth a welcome; but although Ney's horse, the fifth that day, was shot, the men he led suffered little, and with him on foot at their side they came steadily onward. The British guards were lying behind the hill-crest, and the French could discern no foe—only a few mounted officers, of whom Wellington was one. Astonished and incredulous, the assailants pressed steadily on until within twenty yards of the English line. "Up, guards! make ready!" rang out the duke's well-known call. The British jumped up and fired; about three hundred of Ney's gallant soldiers fell. But there was no confusion; on both sides volley succeeded volley, and this lasted until the British charged. Then, and then only, the French withdrew. Simultaneously Donzelot had fallen upon Alten's division; but he was leading a forlorn hope, and making no impression.

As Ney fell back, a body of French cuirassiers advanced upon the English batteries. Their success was partial, and behind them a second column of the guard was formed. Again the assault was renewed; but the second attempt fared worse than the first. To the right of Maitland, Adam's brigade, with the Fifty-second regiment, had taken stand; wheeling now, these drove a deadly flank fire into the advancing French, while the others poured in a devastating hail of bullets from the front. The front ranks of the French replied with spirit, but when the British had completed their manœuver, Colborne gave the order, his men cheered in response, and the countercharge began. "Vive l'Empereur!" came the responsive cheer from the thinning ranks of the assailants, and still they came on. But in the awful crash they reeled, confusion followed, and almost in the twinkling of an eye the rout began. A division of the old guard, the two battalions under Cambronne, retreated in fair order to the center of the valley, where they made their last gallant stand against the overwhelming numbers of Hugh Halkett's German brigade. They fought until but a hundred and fifty survived. From far away the despairing cry of "Sauve qui peut!" seemed to ring on their ears. To the first summons of surrender the leader had replied with dogged defiance; the second was made soon after, about three in the afternoon, and to this he yielded. He and his men filed to the English rear without a murmur, but in deep dejection. This occurrence has passed into tradition as an epic event; what Cambronne might well have said, "The guard dies, but never surrenders," was not uttered by him, but it epitomizes their character, and in the phrase which seems to have been shouted by the men themselves in their last desperate struggle, they and their leader have found immortality.

The last charge of what remained of the guard took place almost at the moment when Durutte was finally routed. Wellington then sent in the fresh cavalry brigades of Vivian and Vandeleur against the column of Donzelot and the remnants of the French cavalry. These swept all before them, and then the duke gave the order for a general advance. The French left fell into panic, and fled toward Belle Alliance. Before La Haye Sainte stood two squares of French soldiers, the favored legion chosen to protect the imperial headquarters. In the fatal hour it splendidly vindicated the

choice, and amid the chaos stood in perfect order. Throughout the famous charge of his devoted men Napoleon rode hither and thither, from Rossomme to Belle Alliance. His looks grew dark, but at the very last he called hoarsely to the masses of disorganized troops that came whirling by, bidding them to stand fast. All in vain; and as the last square came on he pressed inside its serried wall. It was not too soon, for the Prussians had now joined the forward movement, and in the supreme disorder consequent the other square dissolved. Napoleon's convoy withstood the shock of a charge from the Twelfth British light dragoons, and again of a Prussian charge at Rossomme, where Gneisenau took up the fierce pursuit. Though assaulted, and hard beset by musketry, the square moved silently on. There were no words except an occasional remark addressed by Napoleon to his brother Jerome, or to one of the officers. At eleven Genappe was reached; there, such was the activity of the pursuers, all hope of an orderly retreat vanished, and the square melted away. Napoleon had become an object of pity—his eyes set, his frame collapsed, his great head rolling in a drowsy stupor. Monthyon and Bertrand set him as best they could upon a horse, and, one on each side, supported him as they rode. They had an escort of forty men. At Quatre Bras they despatched a messenger to summon Grouchy, bidding him to retire on Namur. The Prussians were only one hour behind. At daybreak the hunted Emperor reached Charleroi, but his attendants dared not delay; two rickety carriages were secured, and it was not until the wretched caravan reached Philippeville that the fugitives obtained a few hours' repose.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SURRENDER

Nature of Napoleon's Defeat — Its Political Consequences — Napoleon's Fatal Resolution — The State of Paris — Napoleon at the Élysée — His Departure for Rochefort — Thoughts of Return — Procrastination — Wild Schemes of Flight — A Refuge in England — His Only Resource — The White Terror and the Allies.

The battle of Waterloo is so called because Wellington's despatch to England was dated from his headquarters at that place. The world-wide celebrity of the fight was due to the failure of a tremendous cause and the extinction of a tremendous genius. That genius had been so colossal as to confuse human judgment. Even yet mankind forgets that its possessor was a finite being and attributes his fall to any cause except the true one. Western Europe had paid dearly for the education, but it had been educated, learning his novel and original methods in both war and diplomacy. We have followed the gradual decline of the master's ability, physical, mental, and moral; we have noted the rise of the forces opposed to him, military, diplomatic, and national. Waterloo is a name of the highest import because it marks the final collapse of personal genius, the beginning of reaction toward an order old in name but new in spirit. Waterloo was not great by reason of the numbers engaged, for on the side of the allies were about a hundred and thirty thousand men, on the other seventy-two thousand approximately; nor was there any special brilliancy in its conduct. Wellington defended a strong position well and carefully selected. But he wilfully left himself with inferior numbers; he did not heartily coöperate with Blücher; both were unready; Gneisenau was suspicious; and the battle of Ligny was a Prussian blunder. Napoleon committed, between dawn and dusk of June eighteenth, a series of petty mistakes, each of which can be explained, but not excused. He began too late; he did not follow up his assaults; he did not retreat when beaten; he could attend to only one thing at a time; he failed in control of his subordinates; he was neither calm nor alert. His return from Elba had made him the idol of the majority in France, but his conduct throughout the

Hundred Days was that of a broken man. His genius seemed bright at the opening of his last campaign, but every day saw the day's task delayed. His great lieutenants grew uneasy and untrustworthy, though, like his patient, enduring, and gallant men, they displayed prodigies of personal valor. Ney and Grouchy used their discretion, but it was the discretion of caution most unlike that of Desaix at Marengo, or of Ney himself at Eylau. Their ignorance cannot be condoned; Grouchy's decision at Walhain, though justified in a measure by Soult's later order, was possibly the immediate cause of final disaster. But such considerations do not excuse Napoleon's failure to give explicit orders, nor his nervous interference with Ney's formation before Quatre Bras, nor his deliberate iterations during his captivity that he had expected Grouchy throughout the battle. Moreover, the interest of Waterloo is connected with its immediate and dramatic consequences rather than with its decisive character. If Napoleon had won on that day, the allies would have been far from annihilation; both Wellington and Blücher had kept open their respective lines of retreat. The national uprising of Europe would have been more determined than ever; 1815 would have been but a repetition of 1814. Finally, the losses, though terrible, were not unparalleled. Grouchy won at Wavre, and, hearing of the disaster at Mont St. Jean, first contemplated falling on the Prussian rear as they swept onward in pursuit. But he quickly abandoned this chimerical idea, and on receipt of Napoleon's order from Quatre Bras, withdrew to Namur, and thence, by a masterly retreat, conducted his army back into France. Including those who fell at Wavre, the allies lost about twenty-two thousand five hundred men, of whom seven thousand were British and a like number Prussians. The records at Paris are very imperfect, but they indicate that the French losses were about thirty-one thousand.

The booty captured after Waterloo was unimportant; but the political spoils were immense, and they belonged to the Prussians. Their high expectation of seizing Napoleon's person was disappointed; but the one great result—the realization, namely, of all the tyrannical plans formed at Vienna for the humiliation of liberal France—that they secured by their instant, hot pursuit. It is hard to discern the facts in the dust of controversy. Prussia, Austria, Russia, and Great Britain have each the national

conviction of having laid the Corsican specter; France has long been busy explaining the facts of her defeat, but seems to have at last completed the task; the most conspicuous monument on the battle-field is that to the Dutch-Belgians!

Napoleon was fully aware that at Waterloo he had made the last cast of the dice and that he had lost. It cannot be proven, but the charge is made, that far earlier he had ceased to reckon with facts and had begun to juggle with unrealities. The return from Elba has all the elements of romance, but events proved that it was based on a sound judgment. Had the allied powers been willing to give France the privilege of choosing her own government, which in spite of all that had occurred was hers by every principle known to international law, Europe would have enjoyed some years of repose, at any rate; considering Napoleon's shattered health and premature old age, France might for a long period have ceased to be a disturber of the public peace, working out then as now, perhaps in equal tribulation, the enduring principles of the Revolution; forty years of turmoil might have been spared to the Continent and the gory floods poured on the ground at Quatre Bras, Ligny, and Waterloo might have coursed unmolested in the veins of the innocent men from which they welled out. The responsibility for all the blood which was shed after the first treaty of Paris must be shared with Napoleon by dynastic Europe, in particular by the diplomatists who represented the hate of Russia, Austria, and Prussia and suffered it to find an outlet in a war of revenge; a portion too belongs to the factious bitterness which reigned supreme in the various French parties, awakening civil strife and endangering French nationality. From first to last there had been little consistency or continuity in Napoleon's character—it is by no means certain that he might not well have played, and perhaps magisterially, the rôle of a national ruler; it is of course also possible that he might have remained the same untamed, cosmopolitan adventurer to the end. In view of the political history of France during the Hundred Days, the former is more probable. But after Waterloo he was clearly aware that he could no longer be either the one or the other. It was not to be expected that every instinct would disappear at once, that he would resign himself to obscurity without an effort.

After a short rest at Philippeville, Napoleon composed the customary bulletins concerning his campaign, and despatched them to the capital, together with a letter counseling Joseph to stand firm and keep the legislature in hand. If Grouchy had escaped, he wrote, he could already array fifty thousand men on the spot; with the means at hand, he could soon organize a hundred and fifty thousand; the troops in regimental depots, together with the national guard, would raise the number to three hundred thousand. These representations were based on a habit of mind, and not on genuine conviction. He believed Grouchy's force to have been annihilated, and though he paused at Laon as if to reorganize an army, he went through the form of consulting such officers as he could collect, and then, under their advice, pressed on to Paris. The officers urged that the army and the majority of the people were loyal, but that the aristocracy, the royalists, and the liberal deputies were utterly untrustworthy. "My real place is here," was the response. "I shall go to Paris, but you drive me to a foolish course." This was the voice of reason, but he obeyed the behest of inclination. Yet he halted at the threshold, and, entering the city on the night of June twenty-first, made no public announcement of his presence. On the contrary, he almost slunk into the silent halls of the Élysée, where a sleepy attendant or two received the unexpected guest without realizing what had happened. He must have felt that the moral effect of Waterloo had been his undoing; unlike any other of his defeats, it had not ruined him as general alone, nor as ruler alone: his prestige as both monarch and soldier was gone.

The news of Ligny had been received in the city with jubilations; at the instant of Napoleon's arrival the truth about Mont St. Jean was passing all too swiftlyon the thousand tongues of rumor from quarter to quarter throughout the town, creating consternation everywhere. Early in the morning, Davout, fully aware of public sentiment, and true to his instincts, advised the shrinking Emperor to prorogue the chambers, and throw himself on the army; Carnot believed the public safety required a dictatorship, and urged it; Lucien was strongly of the same opinion. But the old Napoleon was no more; vacillating almost as if in partial catalepsy, murmuring empty phrases in quick, indistinct utterance, he refused to

decide. Members of the council began to gain admittance, and, waxing bolder as Napoleon grew more silent, the word "abdication" was soon on every tongue. At last a decision was taken, and such a one! Lucien was sent to parley with the chambers, and Fouché was summoned. The latter, with insidious eloquence, argued that in the legislature alone could Napoleon find a support to his throne. The talk was reported, as if by magic, in the assembly halls, and Lafayette, supported by Constant, put through a motion that any attempt to dissolve the chambers would be considered treason. Lucien pleaded in vain for a commission to treat with the invaders in his brother's name; the deputies appointed a committee of public safety, and adjourned.

Broken in spirit, Napoleon spent the evening in moody speculation, weighing and balancing, but never deciding. Should he appear at dawn before the Tuileries, summon the troops already in Paris, and prorogue the hated chambers, or should he not? The notion remained a dream. Early in June the court apothecary, Cadet de Gassicourt, had been ordered by the Emperor to prepare an infallible poison. This was done, and during this night of terrible vacillation the dose was swallowed by the desperate fugitive. But, as before at Fontainebleau, the theory of the philosopher was weaker than his instincts. In dreadful physical and mental agony, the would-be suicide summoned his pharmacist, and was furnished with the necessary antidotes. But the morning brought no courage, and when the chambers met at their accustomed hour, on the motion of an obscure member they demanded the Emperor's abdication. The message was borne by the military commander of the Palais Bourbon, where the legislature, which had now usurped the supreme power, was sitting, and he asserted of his own motion that, if compliance were refused, the chambers would declare Napoleon outlawed. The Emperor at first made a show of fierce wrath, but in the afternoon he dictated his final abdication to Lucien. No sooner was this paper received than the wild excitement of the deputies and peers subsided, and at once a new Directory, consisting of Carnot, Fouché, Caulaincourt, and Quinette, took up the reins of government. The city acquiesced, and hour after hour nothing interrupted the deep seclusion

of the Élysée, except occasional shouts from passing groups of working-men, calling for Napoleon as dictator.

But there was a change as the stragglers from Waterloo began to arrive, vowing that they still had an arm for the Emperor, and denouncing those whom they believed to have betrayed him. The notion of sustaining Napoleon by force began to spread, and when the soldiers who were coming in, after suppressing the insurrection in Vendée, added their voices to those of their comrades from Waterloo, the new authorities feared Napoleon's presence as a menace to their power. Davout had been the first to suggest an appeal to force, but when Napoleon recurred at last to the idea, the marshal opposed it. On June twenty-fifth, therefore, the fallen man withdrew to Malmaison; where, in the society of Queen Hortense and a few faithful friends, during three days he abandoned himself for long intervals to the sad memories of the place. But he also wrote a farewell address to the army, and, in constant communication with a committee of the government, completed a plan for escaping to the United States, "there to fulfil his destiny," as he himself said. For this purpose two frigates were put at the disposal of "him who had lately been Emperor." All was ready on the twenty-ninth. That day a passing regiment shouted, "Long life to the Emperor," and, in a last despairing effort, Napoleon sent an offer of his services, as a simple general, to save Paris, and defeat the allies, who, though approaching the capital, were now separated. Fouché returned an insulting answer to the effect that the government could no longer be responsible for the petitioner's safety. Then, at last, Napoleon knew that all was over in that quarter. Clad in civilian's clothing, and accompanied by Bertrand, Savary, and Gourgaud, he immediately set out for Rochefort. General Becker led the party as commissioner for the provisional government.

It was the exile's intention to hurry onward, but at Rambouillet he halted, and spent the evening composing two requests, one for a supply of furniture from Paris, the other for the library in the Petit Trianon, together with copies of Visconti's "Greek Iconography" and the great work on Egypt compiled from materials gathered during his ill-starred sojourn in that

country. Next morning a courier arrived from Paris with news. "It is all up with France," he exclaimed, and set out once more. Crowds lined the highways; sometimes they cheered, and they were always respectful. Such was the enthusiasm of two cavalry regiments at Niort that Becker was induced to send a despatch to the government, pleading that an army, rallied in Napoleon's name, might still exert an important influence in public affairs. Just as the general was closing the document there arrived the news of the cannonade heard before the capital on the thirtieth. Napoleon dictated a postscript: "We hope the enemy will give you time to cover Paris and bring your negotiations to an issue. If, in that case, an English cruiser stops the Emperor's departure, you can dispose of him as a common soldier."

By a strange coincidence, English cruisers had, as a matter of fact, appeared within a few days in the offing before Rochefort. Whatever the relation between this circumstance and his suggestion, Napoleon studied every possible means of delaying his journey, and actually opened a correspondence with the commanders in Bordeaux and the Vendée, with a view to overthrowing the "traitorous" government. It was July third when he finally reached Rochefort. Again for five days he procrastinated. But the allies were entering Paris; Wellington was bringing Louis XVIII back to his throne; in forty-eight hours the monarchs of the coalition would arrive. Blücher had commissioned a Prussian detachment to seize and shoot his hated opponent, wherever found. On the eighth, therefore, the outcast Emperor embarked; but for two days the frigates were detained by unfavorable winds. On the tenth, English cruisers hove in sight, and on the eleventh Las Cases, who had been appointed Napoleon's private secretary, was sent to interview Captain Maitland, of the Bellerophon, concerning his instructions from the British government. The envoy returned, and stated that the English commander would always be ready to receive Napoleon, and conduct him to England, but he could not guarantee that the ex-Emperor could settle there, or be free to betake himself to America.

This language was almost fatal to the notion of a final refuge in England, which Napoleon had begun to discuss and consider during the days spent

in Rochefort; so Las Cases sought a second interview. According to his account, Maitland then changed his tone, remarking that in England the monarch and his ministers had no arbitrary power; that the generosity of the English people, and their liberal views, were superior to those entertained by sovereigns. To the speaker this was a platitude; to the listeners it was a weighty remark. A prey to uncertainty, Napoleon entertained various schemes. He bought two small, half-decked fishing-boats, with a view to boarding a Danish ship that lay outside, but the project was quickly dropped. Two young officers of the French frigate suggested sailing all the way to New York in the little craft. Napoleon seriously considered the possibility, but recalling that such vessels must get their final supplies on the coasts of Spain or Portugal, rejected the plan, for he dared not risk falling into the hands of embittered foes. Word was brought that an American ship lay near by, in the Gironde. General Lallemand galloped in hot haste to see whether an asylum for the outlawed party could be secured under her flag. He returned with a reply that the captain would be "proud and happy to grant it."

But in the interim Napoleon had determined to throw himself on the "generosity of England." On the thirteenth Gourgaud was sent to London, with a request to the Prince Regent that the Emperor should be permitted to live unknown in some provincial English place, under the name of General Duroc. On the fifteenth Napoleon embarked on the Bellerophon, where he was received with all honors; next day the vessel sailed, and on the twenty-fourth she cast anchor in Torbay. During the voyage the passenger was often somnolent, and seemed exhausted; but he was affable in his intercourse with the officers, and to Maitland, who unwisely yielded the expected precedence. To his kindly keeper, in a sort of beseeching confidence, the prisoner showed portraits of his wife and child, lamenting with tender sensibility his enforced separation from them. The scenes in Torbay were curious. Crowds from far and near lined the shores, and boats of all descriptions thronged the waters; the sight-seers dared everything to catch a glimpse of the awful monster under the terrors of whose power a generation had reached manhood. If, perchance, they succeeded, the air was rent with cheers. After two days the ship was ordered round into

Plymouth Sound, but the reckless sensation-seekers gathered there in still greater numbers.

Many have wondered at Napoleon's surrender of his person to the English. There was no other course open which seemed feasible to a broken-spirited man in his position. His admirers are correct in thinking that it was more noble for him to have survived his greatness than to have taken his own life. To have entered on a series of romantic adventures such as were suggested—concealment on the Danish vessel, flight in open boats, concealment in a water-cask on an American merchantman, and the like—would have been merely the addition of ignominy to his capture; for his presence under the American flag would have been reported by spies, and at that day the standard of the United States would have afforded him little immunity. It is possible that on the morrow of Waterloo Napoleon might, with Grouchy's army, the other survivors, and the men from Vendée, have reassembled an army in Paris, but it is doubtful. Nothing in Revolutionary annals can surpass the horror of royalist frenzy, known as the White Terror, which broke out in Provence and southern France on receipt of the news from Waterloo. The ghastly distemper spread swiftly, and when Napoleon embarked the tricolor was floating only at Rochefort, Nantes, and Bordeaux; his family was proscribed, Ney and Labédoyère were imprisoned and doomed to execution. To have surrendered either to Wellington or Blücher would have been seeking instant death; to have collected such desperate soldiers as could be got together would have been an attempt at guerrilla warfare. To take refuge with the officers of England's navy was the only dignified course with any element of safety in it, since Great Britain was the only land in Europe which afforded the privileges of asylum to certain classes of political offenders. Naturally, the negotiators did not proclaim their extremity. Considering the date of Gourgaud's embassy, it is clear they were in no position to demand formal terms, and Maitland's character forbids the conclusion that he made them. It is unfortunate that he did not commit to writing all his transactions with Lallemand, Savary, and Las Cases; perhaps he was injudiciously polite, but it is certain that, contrary to their representations, he made no promise,

even by implication, that under England's flag Napoleon should find a refuge, and not a prison.

CHAPTER XIX

ST. HELENA

Embarrassment of the English Ministry — A Strange Embassy — Napoleon's Attitude — The Transportation — The Prison and its Governor — Occupations of the Prisoner — Napoleon's Historical Writings — Failing Health and Preparations for Death — His Last Will and Testament — The End — Imprisoned Genius — The St. Helena Period — The Insatiate Curiosity of Europe — First Communications from the Island — Napoleon's Appeal — Gourgaud in Europe — His Undeserved Notoriety — Futile Efforts of Las Cases — O'Meara's Activities — Confusion During the Last Years — Documentary Evidence — The Legend as a Historical Force.

The ministry of Lord Liverpool, though ultra-Tory, was nevertheless embarrassed by the course of affairs. On June twentieth the premier wrote to Castlereagh that he wished Napoleon had been captured by Louis XVIII, and executed as a rebel. This amazing suggestion was the result of the progress made within a year by the doctrine of legitimacy. Although Talleyrand had observed the Hundred Days from the safe seclusion of Carlsbad, and was coldly received by his "legitimate" sovereign when he returned to Paris under Wellington's ægis, yet there was no one equally able to restore a "legitimate" government, and, with the aid of Wellington, who assumed without question the chief place in reconstructing France, he was soon in full activity. In strict logic, the allies reasoned that Napoleon was their common prisoner, and, as the chief malefactor, he should meet the fate which was to be Ney's, and later that of Murat. By long familiarity with such notions, the Czar had finally been converted to the once abhorrent idea of legitimacy, and was hatching the scheme of the Holy Alliance; even he would have made no objection. But English opinion, however irritated, would not tolerate the idea of death as a penalty for political offenses. Whatever ministers felt or said, they dared consider no alternative in dealing with Napoleon except that of imprisonment. Accordingly, St. Helena, the spot suggested at Vienna as being the most remote in the habitable world, was designated and the island was

borrowed from the East India Company. Acts of Parliament were passed which established a special government for it, and cut it off from all outside communication, "for the better detaining in custody Napoleon Bonaparte." The Continental allies, therefore, on August second, declared the sometime Emperor to be their common prisoner. To England they yielded the right to determine his place of detention, but to each of themselves—Austria, Russia, and Prussia—was reserved the right of sending thither a commissioner who should determine the fact of actual imprisonment.

It was in Torbay that the newspapers brought on board the Bellerophon first announced what was under consideration. On July thirty-first, with inconsistent ceremony, the determination was formally announced by an embassy consisting of Lord Keith, the admiral; Sir Henry Bunbury, an under-secretary of state; and Mr. Meike, secretary to the admiral. To whom did this highest official authority address itself? To General Bonaparte, a private citizen! Their message was read in French, and Napoleon displayed perfect self-control. Asked if he had anything to say, the ex-Emperor, without temper or bitterness, appealed against the judgment of governments both to posterity and to the British people. He was, he said, a voluntary guest; he wished to be received as such under the law of nations, and to be domiciled as an English citizen (sic). During the interval before naturalization he would dwell under superintendence anywhere in England, thirty leagues from any seaport. He could not live in St. Helena; he was accustomed to ride twenty miles a day; what could he do on that little rock at the end of the world? He could have gone to his father-in-law, or to the Czar, but while the tricolor was still flying he had confided in British hospitality. Though defeated, he was still a sovereign, and deserved to be treated as such. With emphasis he declared that he preferred death to St. Helena.

The embassy withdrew in silence from the moving scene. Lord Keith had previously expressed gratitude to Napoleon for personal attentions to a young relative who had been captured at Waterloo. Him, therefore, the imperial prisoner now recalled, and asked if there were any tribunal to which appeal might be made. The answer was a polite negative, with the

assurance that the British government would mitigate the situation as far as prudence would permit. "How so?" said Napoleon. "Surely St. Helena is preferable to a smaller space in England," answered Keith, "or being sent to France, or perhaps to Russia." "Russia!" exclaimed Napoleon, taken off his guard. "God preserve me from it!" This was the only moment of excitement; the witnesses of the long and trying scene have left on record the profound impression made on them by Napoleon's dignity and admirable conduct throughout. Subsequently the prisoner composed a written protest appealing to history. An enemy who for twenty years had waged war against the English people had come voluntarily to seek an asylum under English laws; how did England respond to such magnanimity? In his own mind, at least, he instituted and therefore wrote a comparison between-himself and Themistocles, who took refuge with the Persians, and was kindly treated. The parallel broke down in that the great Greek had never forced his enemy into entangling alliances, as Napoleon had forced England into successive coalitions for self-preservation. Moreover, his surrender was not voluntary: his life would not have been worth a moment's purchase either in France or elsewhere on the Continent, to have fled by sea would have been to invite capture. "Wherever," as he himself repeatedly said—"wherever there was water to float a ship, there was to be found a British standard." Still there were many in England who took his view; much sympathy was aroused, and some futile efforts for his release were made.

For the journey to St. Helena, Napoleon was transferred to Admiral Cockburn's ship, the Northumberland. The suite numbered thirty, and was chosen by Napoleon himself. Its members were Bertrand, Montholon, and Las Cases, with their families, together with Gourgaud and, following in a later ship, a Pole of doubtful duty and dubious personality, the self-styled Colonel Piontkowski. There were sixteen servants, of whom twelve were Napoleon's. The voyage was tedious and uneventful. The admiral adhered to English customs, and discarded the etiquette observed toward crowned heads; but he remained on the best of terms with his illustrious prisoner. There were occasional misunderstandings, and sometimes ill-natured gossip, in which the admiral was denounced behind his back as a "shark";

but such little gusts of temper passed without permanent consequences. Napoleon had secured the excellent library he desired, and every day read or wrote during most of the morning; the evenings he devoted to games of hazard for low stakes, or to chess, which he played very badly. He was careful as to his diet, took abundant regular exercise, and, since his health was excellent, he appeared in the main cheerful and resigned.

The island of St. Helena is the craggy summit of an ancient volcano, rising two thousand seven hundred feet above the sea, and contains forty-five square miles. Its shores are precipitous, but it has an excellent harbor, that of Jamestown, which was then a port of call on the voyage from England, by the Cape of Good Hope, to India. It lies four thousand miles from London, one thousand one hundred and forty from the coast of Africa, one thousand one hundred and eighty from the nearest point in South America. There were a few thousand inhabitants of mixed race, and the tropical climate, though moist and enervating, is fairly salubrious. Under the act passed by Parliament, England increased the territorial waters around the island to a ring three times the usual size, and policed them by "hovering" vessels, which made the approach of suspicious craft virtually impossible. This, with numerous other precautionary measures of minor importance, made St. Helena an impenetrable jail. It was October sixteenth, 1815, when Napoleon landed on its shores.

The residence provided for the imperial captive was a rather ordinary farm-house in the center of the island, on a plateau two thousand feet high. The grounds were level, and bounded by natural limits, so that they were easy to guard, and could be observed in all their extent by sentries; eventually a circuit of twelve miles was marked out, and within this the prisoner might move at will; if he wished to pass the line, he must be attended by an English officer. Considering the conceptions of state and chivalry then prevalent, the place was mean; long after, when enlarged and repaired, the house was thought not unsuitable for the entertainment of an imprisoned Zulu chieftain. Longwood, for this is the familiar name, might at a pinch have sufficed for the lodging of General Bonaparte; it was certainly better than a dungeon; but its modest comfort was far from the

luxurious elegance which had become a second nature to the Emperor Napoleon. Such as it was to be, however, it was still uninhabitable in October, and its destined occupant was, until December ninth, the guest of a hospitable merchant, Mr. Balcombe, at his villa known as The Briars. The sentinels and patrols remained six hundred paces from the door during the day; at night the cordon of guards was drawn close around the house; twice in twenty-four hours the orderly must assure himself of the prisoner's actual presence, and human ingenuity could devise no precaution which was not taken by land and sea to make impossible any secret communication, inward or outward. Cockburn's serene good-nature rendered it out of the question for the captive to do more than declare his policy of protest and exasperation, until April, 1816, when the admiral departed, and was replaced by Sir Hudson Lowe. The latter was a vulnerable foe. A creature of routine, and fresh from a two years' residence as English commissioner in Blücher's camp, he had thoroughly absorbed the temper both of the Tory ministry and of the Continental reactionaries. Neither irascible, severe, nor ill-natured, he was yet punctilious, and in no sense a match for the brilliant genius of his antagonist. With the arrival of this unfortunate official properly begins the St. Helena period of Napoleon's life—a period considered by many to be instructive; but, as regards the talk and futile calculations in which he indulged, comparable only to that of his ineffectual agitations in Corsica.

Napoleon, the prisoner, had a double object—release and self-justification. The former he hoped to gain by working on the feelings of the English Liberals; the latter by writing an autobiography which, in order to win back the lost confidence of France, should emphasize the democratic, progressive, and beneficent side of his career, and consign to oblivion his tyrannies and inordinate personal ambitions. The dreary chronicle of the quarrel between a disarmed giant and a potent pygmy is uninteresting in detail, but very illuminating in its large outlines. The routine of a court was instituted and for a time was rigidly observed at Longwood. The powerless monarch so successfully simulated the wisdom and judgment of a chastened soul that the accounts which reached the distant world awakened a great pity among the disinterested. As on shipboard and at

The Briars, he gave his mornings to literature, clad in a studied, picturesque dishabille. The afternoon he devoted to amusement and exercise; but a distaste for more physical exertion than was actually essential to health grew steadily, until he became sluggish and corpulent. At table he was always abstemious; his sleep was irregular and disturbed. The evenings he spent with favorite authors, Voltaire, Corneille, and Ossian; frequently, also, in reading the Bible. The opinions he expressed were in the main those of his pseudoscientific days; among other questions discussed was that of polygamy, which he upheld as an excellent institution theoretically. Much time was spent by the household in abusing Longwood, and so effectually that a wooden house was constructed in England, and erected near by; but the prisoner made difficulties about every particular, and never occupied it. There were continuous schemings for direct intercourse with friends in France, and partial success ended in the dismissal of Las Cases. Gourgaud, too, departed, ostensibly because of a quarrel with Montholon, really, as he represented, to agitate with Alexander, Francis, and Maria Louisa for Napoleon's release. The exile confessed, in an unguarded moment, that no man alive could have satisfied him in the relation of governor of St. Helena, but yet he was adroit and indefatigable in his efforts to discredit Lowe. The "Letters from the Cape of Good Hope," published in England anonymously, but now incorporated in the official edition of Napoleon's works as the thirty-first volume, abuse the climate of St. Helena, depict the injustice of the imprisonment, and heap scorn on the governor. The book was widely read, and furnished the Whigs in Parliament with many shafts of criticism. This success emboldened the author, and further compositions by his hand were mysteriously published in Europe.

For three years Napoleon's self-appointed task as a historian was unremittingly pursued, and the results, while he had the assistance of Las Cases and Gourgaud, were voluminous; thereafter the output was a slender rill. Most of the volumes which record his observations and opinions bear the names of the respective memorialists, Montholon, Las Cases, Gourgaud, O'Meara, and Antommarchi, the two latter his attendant physicians. The period he took pains to elucidate most fully in these

writings was that between Toulon and Marengo. Over his own name appeared monographs on Elba, the Hundred Days, and Waterloo. His professional ability is shown by short studies on the "Art and History of War," on "Army Organization," and on "Fortification"; likewise by his full analyses of the wars waged by Cæsar, Turenne, and Frederick the Great. These are not unworthy of the author's reputation; his versatility is displayed in a few commonplace notes—some on Voltaire's "Mahomet," some on suicide, and others on the second book of the Æneid. A widely circulated treatise, the "Manuscript from St. Helena," was long attributed to him, but was a clever forgery. As will be explained, its effect on history was important.

For nearly four years Napoleon's health was fair. O'Meara, the physician appointed to attend him, was assiduous and skilful, but when he became his patient's devoted slave he was dismissed by Lowe. Thereupon certain disquieting symptoms, which had been noted from time to time, became more pronounced, and the prisoner began to brood and mope in seclusion. In the autumn of 1819, Dr. Antommarchi, a Corsican physician chosen by Fesch, was installed at Longwood. For a time, as he claimed, he had some success in ameliorating the ex-Emperor's condition, and to what the writer records as their confidential talks we owe our knowledge of Napoleon's infancy. But from month to month the patient's strength diminished, and the ravages of his mysterious disease at length became very apparent. The obstinacy of Lowe in carrying out the letter of his instructions, by intruding on the sufferer to secure material for a daily report, seriously aggravated Napoleon's miseries. Two priests accompanied Antommarchi: one only remained for some time, and after his arrival mass was celebrated almost every morning in the chapel adjoining the sick-room. "Not every man is an atheist who would like to be," was a remark Napoleon dropped to Montholon. Yet, though preparing for death, he was making ready simultaneously to speed his Parthian arrow.

His testament displays his qualities in their entirety. The language sounds simple and sincere; there is a hidden meaning in almost every line. His religion had been outwardly that of a deist; he now professed a piety which

he always felt but rarely practised. During his life France had been caressed and used as a skilful artificer caresses and uses his tools; the last words of his will suggest a passionate devotion. To his son he recommended the "love of right, which alone can incite to the performance of great deeds"; for his faithless wife he expressed the tenderest sentiments, and probably felt them. It was his hope that the English people would avenge itself on the English oligarchy, and that France would forgive the traitors who betrayed her—Marmont, Augereau, Talleyrand, and Lafayette—as he forgave them. Louis he pardoned in the same spirit for the "libel published in 1820; it is full of falsehoods and falsified documents." The blame for Enghien's murder he took to himself. The second portion of the document is a series of munificent-sounding bequests to a list of legatees which includes every one who had done the testator any important service since his earliest childhood. France under the Bourbons confiscated the imperial domain of about a hundred and eighty millions, which Napoleon had estimated at over two hundred and twenty. When the nation passed again under the Bonapartes it appropriated eight millions toward the unpaid legacies. In the end his executors collected three and a half millions of francs wherewith to pay bequests amounting on their face to over nine and a half. In a codicil he remembers a certain Cautillon, who had undergone trial for an alleged attempt to assassinate Wellington. "Cautillon had as much right to assassinate that oligarch as he [Wellington] to send me to the rock of St. Helena to perish there." Such was the nature and substance of an appeal to a generous, forgiving nation, and to posterity, by one who wrote in the same document that he wished to die in the bosom of the Christian church, whose central doctrine is love, and whose ethic is forgiveness of enemies.

"I closed the abyss of anarchy and brought order out of chaos. I cleansed the Revolution, ennobled the people, and made the kings strong. I have awakened all ambitions, rewarded all merit, and enlarged the borders of glory." These were the words of Napoleon in 1816; he Lived in this hallucination to the end. In the autumn of 1820 he realized his condition, and throughout the winter he was feeble and depressed. In February, 1821, he began to fail rapidly, and the symptoms of his disease, cancer in the stomach, multiplied; but, in spite of feebleness, he faced death with

courage. On May third two English physicians, recently arrived, came in for consultation; they could only recommend palliatives, and under the influence of that treatment the imperial patient kept an uncertain hold on his faculties. Two days later a violent storm of wind and rain set in. A spreading willow, under which Napoleon had spent many hours, was overturned; the trees planted by his hands were uprooted; and a whirlwind devastated the garden in which he had worked for exercise. The death of the sufferer was coincident, and scarcely less violent. The last words uttered were caught by listening ears as the sun rose; they were "Tête ... armée." Mme. Bertrand and her children were present; at the sight of their friend's suffering the boy fainted and the little girls broke into loud lamentation. At eleven in the morning the supreme agonies began; a little before six in the evening the heart put forth its last convulsive effort, and ceased to beat. The mournful band of watchers within bowed their heads. Without the door another watch was set—that of the orderly. During the first outburst of grief among those at the bedside two officers entered silently, felt the cold limbs, marked the absence of life, and left without a word. England's prisoner had escaped.

It requires a complex environment to develop a man of any sort; for the exhibition of his personality and identity he must live in family, church, and state, and beyond all these surroundings even the meanest of mankind is subject to some cosmopolitan influence. How much more true is this of a historical and political personage, who is and can be himself only under the conditions which permit the play of his powers. Removed from these, his soul and spirit sicken, his character becomes morbid, his capacities are crippled, his identity is distorted. Nothing could be more fatuous and simple than the effort to read the true character of Napoleon Bonaparte from his talk and behavior when an exile; a prisoner of time and space, as world communications then were; an exhausted body; a crippled, outraged spirit, reduced for attack and defense to the weapons of the pen and the tongue wielded on and over an immensity of apartness. Yet exactly this has been the self-imposed task of many investigators and writers. The literature of his prison-house has grown to vast dimensions, and readers feel cheated when the bald outline of all that may even be considered

history is offered for their consideration. The narrative of the St. Helena epoch in his life just given is probably accurate, and there are portions of it that rest on historical evidence both objective and internal, as trustworthy as most of what passes for history.

But when this is said the statement must be carefully guarded, for the reason that substantially all our evidence is virtually such as would be given about himself by a convict behind the bars, his sympathizing accomplices, his jailer, and his prosecutors. The simile is not strained. The surgeon of theNorthumberland, ignorant of French, gathered from those of Napoleon's attendants who spoke English such scraps regarding the prisoner as he could, published them, and lost his government employment. The book was widely read and proved a very lucrative enterprise. Outside its pages there was profound silence and complete ignorance in Europe regarding the now mysterious convict, buried to the world. Craving for information was universal and insatiate; if only Napoleon himself would speak! It appeared as if the longing were satisfied in a published "Manuscript arrived from St. Helena by unknown means." The volume was difficult to procure, although edition followed edition in swift succession; many a precious copy was used in reading circles and there are still in existence a considerable number of the very numerous reproductions made at the time with pen and ink. One of these was actually sold not long ago to an unsuspecting editor in the United States and published in his magazine as a rarity. It fell flat because so many knew the truth: that it was apocryphal, the merry jest of a Genevese gentleman, Lullin de Châteauvieux, who lived to see his sport a dangerous element in the falsification of history. It was not only Napoleonic in style, but too Napoleonic; and, considered as an imperialist pamphlet, an anti-royalist pronunciamento, brought into being the embryo of a legend such as men crave and which the loyal efforts of many historians have utterly failed to destroy. Its contents, of course, are utterly worthless except as a comedy, a mask of literature which influenced public opinion.

The first known opportunity of the Napoleon court for communication with the outside world was afforded by the British government. The

guarding and maintenance of Napoleon proved a source of great expenditure. The garrison and military staff, the hovering vessels of the navy, the entertainment of the continental commissioners, and especially the allowance for the establishment of Longwood, miserable as it was—the total cost appeared to the London authorities exorbitant. Prices of supplies at St. Helena were enormous because of its remoteness. So the subordinates of the ministry, with the assent of their superiors, determined upon reductions, and they began with the household of the Emperor, issuing orders that four of its members should be dismissed. These were, first, the Polish adventurer Piontkowski, part gentleman, part domestic, and wholly emissary and spy, who had been sent out by the English government in a vessel which followed the Northumberland, for reasons best known to themselves. He appears to have accepted a charge from Napoleon; that, namely, of laying before the Czar a formal protest against the treaties which made Napoleon the joint prisoner of the allies, entrusted to the charge of Great Britain. The next to leave were Archambaud and Rousseau, one a huntsman, one a chief butler; they were to visit Joseph Bonaparte in the United States and give him the fullest information. The fourth was the chamberlain Santini, a Corsican, and, though a soldier, utterly illiterate. To him was confided a protest for use either in London or in Italy, as the event should determine. A copy was made in Chinese ink on white satin ribbon for concealment about his person, but the chief reliance was, that "verbally and literally" he was drilled in its repetition until he could neither forget nor mistake in its recital. The faithful servants reached Joseph's home in America, the Pole on arrival in England styled himself Count and Colonel, became the hero of a social season in London, and vanished from history as mysteriously as he entered it. But Santini with Italian adroitness gained not only the presence of Lord Holland but his attentive ear; his recital was translated into English and published, the matter was brought before Parliament by interpellation of the great Whig statesman and caused great excitement throughout the world.

Napoleon's "Appeal to the English Nation," as printed from Santini's copy, recited the stupidity of his jailer, the unhealthiness of the climate, the expense and difficulty of living. His statements were not merely confirmed,

the conditions of life on St. Helena were monstrously exaggerated by Montchenu, the French commissioner, in a private letter which was published soon after the arrival of Santini in London. This, too, was circulated all abroad. Public opinion was further agitated. The allied dynasties were made to feel ashamed by their subjects, and in Great Britain there was a fierce surge of reprobation, the resonance of which has not yet died away. The exile was chained to a horrid rock, in a climate Europeans could not endure, his miserable existence in hovels overrun with vermin must be eked out by loans from friends and the sale of his silver tableware, he was put to needless shame by the stupid regulations of a stupid government, stupidly enforced by a stupid governor, he was sick of body and heart, very sick and might die. Whose was the responsibility for this disgrace to civilization? Somewhat in this way men talked and questioned; soon his faults were forgotten in the pitiful recital of his woes; the legend was further advanced, once more the glory of Napoleon's epoch became a powerful force in Europe.

On the fourteenth of March, 1818, there arrived in England a member of the St. Helena court, whose name and fame bid fair to rival if not to obliterate those of all his companions in exile, though most undeservedly. This was General Gourgaud, styled Master of Ordinance. He was thirty-five years old and had been a soldier for sixteen, winning promotion for intelligence and intrepidity, securing Napoleon's affection by personal charm and by services which once at least, and probably twice, directly saved the Emperor's life, until at last he was a baron, a general at Waterloo, and a companion in St. Helena. This all seems passing strange because he was a high officer of Louis XVIII before Napoleon's return from Elba; made obeisance to established authority as soon as he returned from captivity, and during the successive governments of France to his death in 1852 found favor with each in turn. Whatever he was before and after, his life in St. Helena was that of a sentimental, jealous, sensitive child, scarcely a male at that. Every word and every act of every one gave him such pangs of wounded vanity that at last his presence was intolerable and by the influence of the Montholons it was arranged that he should leave. No sooner was the dust of Longwood shaken from his feet than within sight of

its doors he accepted the kindly attentions of his former jailers with eagerness, and no sooner were those feet ashore in England than he began to woo the ministry, to make advances to the Bourbons, and to fawn on the Holy Alliance itself. It was not until he experienced certain chills and got his groping finger on the pulse of public opinion that he found himself utterly mistaken and in danger of mortal error. He then wrote, and gave to the public prints, a curious letter, addressed to Marie Louise, asserting that Napoleon was dying in the torments of a frightful agony. This amounted to a recantation. In consequence he was banished from England under the Alien Bill. At once he hurried away to Prince Eugène (Napoleon's treasurer) and from him reclaimed and received, for four years certainly, his arrears of imperial pay and pension. In 1822 he was permitted to return to France.

The notoriety of his name is due to two sets of circumstances. Sir Walter Scott told the truth about his conduct, just when the noble general was beginning to swim in the refulgence of the Napoleonic legend. There ensued a wordy warfare. The weapons on one side were official papers; on the other denials, insinuations, and finally the assertion of some vague commission or another given by the great captive, impossible of fulfilment in any way other than by the mysterious course of the plenipotentiary. This mystery is still unsolved and the commission undiscovered, but in France at least the conflict still rages. As late as 1908 a caustic critic was challenged to a duel by the testy and furious family head of the Gourgauds. The other set of circumstances is equally curious. Gourgaud left behind him a journal of his St. Helena life. Its contents are certainly authentic evidence of the writer's character, and as there is no means of checking the authenticity of what is recorded about Napoleon and his Longwood household, the record may possibly be and probably is accurate. The sore spirit of the writer required a confidant, and since there was no congenial soul to receive his outpourings he relieved himself as other sentimental egoists have done in the pages of a journal. From these the most conscientious efforts have been made to construct a psychology of the Emperor. The result is a morbid psychology of a caged falcon, the revival of bitter controversy as to the treatment of the great prisoner by a Tory ministry, and generally of a rather

abstracted but intense interest in the Napoleonic legend. Hence the prolonged vogue of a celebrity which should have been ephemeral. The general is in no proper sense a historical factor except as the influence of his behavior in Europe served to quicken the existing lively interest in Napoleon. As far as his earliest testimony went, and many inclined to heed it, the master he had served was in excellent health, was kindly treated, and in general was better off than could have been expected. This of course lashed the imperialists to fury; their information was to the diametrically opposite effect.

Antecedent to Gourgaud's departure was that of Las Cases, but his journey was so impeded, his health so shaken, and his devotion so discounted, that whatever he accomplished in molding public opinion was logically subsequent to the work of the general. Spanish by origin, French by six centuries of devotion, his family was of the higher nobility. He himself had been an emigrant, but had returned to become a member of the Council of State. As a great civil official he had learned to love Napoleon and deliberately chose exile with him rather than honors and service under the restored Bourbons. In 1816 he wrote, and endeavored to forward secretly, letters containing his views as to the disgraceful treatment of Napoleon. These were intercepted and the writer was condemned in Lowe's first fury to depart. On second thought the governor begged him to remain under certain restrictions; these Las Cases would not accept, possibly because he saw himself of greater use in Europe than in St. Helena. He reached the Cape of Good Hope in January, 1817, was there detained eight months, was then forwarded to England, where he was forbidden to land, thence to Belgium, and finally, in December, a physical derelict, he found shelter in Frankfort-on-the-Main, where he lived for a time under the strictest surveillance. His faculties were soon restored to a certain rather impaired activity, and in 1818 he laid a powerful protest against the treatment of Napoleon before the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle. No less a person than the Emperor's mother was his agent and intermediary. A meeting of reactionary sovereigns and their ministers, terrified by the throes of a revolutionary spirit more and more personified in Bonaparte, could in no case be receptive to such a remonstrance, and was utterly cold and scornful

in the face of Gourgaud's evidence to the well-being and kind treatment of Napoleon, already published. Even with the most enlightened and liberal public of Europe, that of Great Britain, Las Cases' controversial publications fell rather flat. Readers were weary of the theme, since O'Meara was now and had been for some time past in possession of the Napoleonic field.

Dr. O'Meara, the Emperor's body-physician, was a warm-hearted Irishman, faithful, able, and devoted. That he received substantial gratuities from his patient is no longer questioned, and these transfers of money have been called by a harsh name; yet it is easy for a loyal but illogical devotee to confuse salary, gifts, fees, bribes, each with each, and one with the other; the crime was not quite so heinous with a man of his character as it would have been in persons of severer quality and mold. It seems equally certain that the stern pedant acting as governor would gladly have employed the same inducements to secure him as a spy. At least he did not qualify as the channel of a double espionage, and for that reason fell under the grave suspicion of authority. The diagnosis of Napoleon's malady as very grave, which he had made, was confirmed in January, 1819, by Stokoe, the ship's surgeon of the Conqueror, the British flag vessel then in the harbor. But from O'Meara it was not accepted; he was dismissed from service and on July twenty-fifth, 1818, sailed homeward. On August seventeenth the London "Morning Post" began to print communications sent from St. Helena by him, and shortly after he landed, in October, there appeared a pamphlet by him attacking Sir Hudson Lowe. His voluminous "Voice from St. Helena" was not published until after Napoleon's death. Like the rest of the contemporary memoirs and memorials, the value of his writings lies in their effect on the liberal sentiment of the world. The Metternich system of repression and intervention, which worked its will in dynastic government for a generation after Napoleon, engendered a newer liberalism which forgot the tyranny of Napoleonic imperialism and remembered the Consulate as expressing a well-organized form of government, adapted superbly for crushing systems, dynastic or aristocratic or plutocratic, which oppressed mankind by denying the only possible equality, equality of opportunity, the Napoleonic "carrière ouverte aux talents." By all

sympathetic nationalists, constitutionalists, and radicals these books were literally devoured, and in France particularly their effect was lasting. There could never have been a second Napoleon except as he was thought likely to reproduce the Consulate; when his rule had proved to be imperialistic the country was disenchanted. Liberty with order is so ardently desired! but too often the devices to secure it beget license with chaos. The literal correctness of O'Meara's reporting, like that of the rest, cannot be controverted by any rebutting testimony, but the nature portrayed is the same morbid, sensational, notoriety-seeking, unwholesome, and pathological specimen as that furnished by the others.

Dr. Stokoe was speedily disgraced because it was now certain that any bulletin of serious illness was evidence of conspiracy by the Emperor and his friends for his escape. It is still affirmed that this second physician yielded to the Emperor's blandishments and disobeyed Lowe's orders. His successor, Dr. Verling, was Lowe's man, and, finding his position intolerable, resigned with the insinuation that he could not accept bribes. The party strife demanded either that Napoleon must be entirely well and well treated, or else utterly moribund and abominably used. Neither was the case, but a mortal disease had declared itself, his grand marshal was seriously alarmed, and the members of the Bonaparte family in Europe were dreaming of Napoleon's escape or planning the renewal of his household by fresh blood. The Bertrands and the Montholons, though faithful and devoted, were simply worn out. A Corsican physician, Dr. Antommarchi, and an Italian priest, Buonavita, were added to the household in September, 1819. Mme. Montholon with her child was already at home seeking substitutes, having departed from St. Helena in July. Neither event had any special consequences. Mme. Montholon found a possible successor to the grand marshal in the person of Planat, an officer of the Hundred Days. Negotiations for his sailing were protracted; such was Napoleon's condition before they were concluded that Montholon would not consider deserting his post, though Bertrand was quite willing to see Planat supplant himself. Buonavita was ill and returned to Europe. Antommarchi was detested by his patient, a new priest and a new doctor were found, and the faithful Pauline desired to join her exiled brother. By

this time the year 1820 had passed and the fateful spring of 1821 was well advanced. All preparations for relieving the household and the guard at St. Helena were now, of course, futile. Three years of suffering had culminated in the death of the exile.

The documentary material for the St. Helena epoch is very scanty. The "Mémorial" of Las Cases and the "Voice" of O'Meara are both valuable as works but not as transcripts. Of Gourgaud's "Journal" the value is greater, but the medium of transmission most abnormal. The volumes of Mrs. Abell and Lady Malcolm furnish very slight material; the papers of the outsiders like Montchenu, Balmain, and Sturmer, like even Lowe himself, furnish side-lights only; the souvenirs of Mme. Montholon are trifling and cannot bear critical examination. The recitals of Montholon were thought of importance until careful scrutiny showed how he had drawn on Las Cases and O'Meara, how scanty, scrappy, and confused his own notes were, and finally, when his letters to his wife were printed, how completely these unfalsified documents contradicted the other publications in the few interesting points on which they touch, both in the English edition of Colburn and the carefully edited and reedited French edition. The more the slight authentic material is examined the more certain it appears that it is hopeless to read from it Napoleon's character, even in the unnatural environment of St. Helena, least of all for the years of real life. Conduct is the only test of belief, not the invalid lamentations or cynical banter of dreary, hopeless imprisonment. And when all this talk of a man in anguish is dubiously reported, distorted by the medium of a heart-sick listener, or by the transcription of men bored to extinction, its value is obviously still further diminished. The story has been briefly narrated of how the legend was engendered, of how it was planted and watered on the continent of Europe, and its influence on subsequent generations has been indicated. This is the sum total of what history finds as its material during the closing years of Napoleon's life. The souvenirs of Bertrand and Marchand are as yet inaccessible, if indeed they exist. Some day their possible publication may shed a few rays of new light on minor points: they cannot greatly enlarge or substantively reconstruct the slight historical material we have been able to discover. For valuable generalizations we must fall back on the

many abundant facts of Napoleon's long career, on the very few facts of his conduct when mewed and exasperated at St. Helena, on the effects which these in sum have produced in history. The world at large marvels at the general, the statesman, the conqueror, the emperor; it is apt to pass unnoticed the judge and tamer of two epochs, the mediator between a ruined past, a chaotic present, and a future, orderly at least, though streaked with the stains of tyranny.

CHAPTER XX

SOLDIER, STATESMAN, DESPOT

Questionings — The Industrious Burgher — The Industrious Sovereign — End of the Marvelous — Public Virtue and Private Weakness — The Man and The Age — Latin and German — First Struggles — Usurpation of Power — Political Theories — The Napoleonic System — Its Foundation — Stimulus to Despotism — The Surrender of France — The Master Soldier.

The tomb of Erasmus in Basel is marked by a stone slab on which are an epitaph, an effigy, and then the pathetic word "Terminus." Should these fateful syllables be written over the mortal remains of Napoleon Bonaparte? No. Beyond his death there was more, far more than the work he wrought during his life. Men ever love a seeming mystery, and while they do, a favorite theme of speculation will be the career of the great Corsican in its historical aspect. Before our long study can be brought to a close, two questions must be considered, or rather two sides of one question must be viewed. Why did he rise, and what did he accomplish? The answers will be as various as the investigators who give them. But the man as seen in the preceding pages certainly displays these recognizable characteristics: he was a man of the people, he had a transcendent military genius, he was indefatigable, and he had unsurpassed energy.

No mere man, even the most remarkable, can climb without supports of some kind, however unstable they may be. Napoleon Bonaparte did not soar, he rose on the ladder of power by stages easily traceable: first by the protection of the Robespierres; then by the necessities and velleities of Barras and the Directory; afterward by the encouragement of all France, which was sick of the inefficient Directory; and still later by the army, which adored a leader who frankly repaid devotion in the hard cash of booty, and bravery in the splendid rewards of that glory which was a national passion. With such opportunities, Bonaparte unfolded what was certainly his supereminent quality—the quality which endeared him to the French masses as did no other, the quality which above all others distinguished him from the hated tyrants under whom they had so long suffered, the quality which even the meanest intellect could mark as

distinctively middle-class, in opposition to its negation in the upper class—the quality, namely, of untiring industry; laborious, self-initiated, self-guided, self-improving industry. This burgher quality Napoleon possessed as no burgher ever did. It was no exaggeration, but the simple truth, when he said to Roederer: "I am always working. I think much. If I appear always ready to meet every emergency, to confront every problem, it is because, before undertaking any enterprise, I have long considered it, and have thus foreseen what could possibly occur. It is no genius which suddenly and secretly reveals to me what I have to say or do in some circumstance unforeseen by others: it is my own meditation and reflection. I am always working—when dining, when at the theater; I waken at night in order to work." How profoundly this was impressed upon those intimately associated with Napoleon can be traced in their memoirs on many a page. It was Soult who said, most sapiently: "What we call an inspiration is nothing but a calculation made with rapidity."

Generally there is no mystery in the power of domination: he rules who is indispensable. The Jacobins needed a man, they found him in the unscrupulous Bonaparte; the Directory needed a man, they found him in the expert artillerist; France needed a man, she found him in the conqueror of Italy. And having risen, he did not intermit his industry for a moment. Rehearsing his coronation by means of puppets, or studying with painful care the complicated accounts of his fiscal officers, or absorbing himself in whatever else it might be, he was always the man who knew more about everything than any one else. Throughout his reign he was the fountainhead of every governmental activity: the council of state sharpened not their own, but his thoughts; his secretaries were his pocket note-book; his ministers were the executors of his personal designs; pensions and presents were given by him to his friends, and not to those who served the state as they themselves thought best; every French community received his personal attention, and every Frenchman who came to his general receptions was treated with rude jocularity. In all this he was perfectly natural. At times, however, he felt compelled to attitudinize; perhaps, in the theatrical poses which he assumed for self-protection or for the sake of representing a personified, unapproachable

imperial majesty, he copied Talma, with whom he cultivated a sort of intimacy. Possibly, too, his violent sallies were considered dramatic by himself. "Otherwise," he once said, "they would have slapped me on the shoulder every day." "It is sad," remarked Roederer, apropos of a certain event. "Yes, like greatness," was Napoleon's rejoinder.

Napoleon's preëminence lasted just as long as this effective personal supremacy continued. When his faculties refused to perform their continuous, unceasing task, he began to decline; when the material of his calculations transcended all human power, even his own, the descent grew swifter; and the crash came when his abilities worked either intermittently or not at all. Ruin was the consequence of feebleness; the imagination of the world had clothed him with demoniac qualities, but it ceased so to do just in proportion as his superiority to others in plan and execution began to diminish. "There is no empire not founded on the marvelous, and here the marvelous is the truth." These were the words of Talleyrand, addressed to the First Consul on June twenty-first, 1800, just after the news of Marengo had reached Paris. The marvel of the absolute monarchy was the divine right of kings: when men ceased to hold the doctrine, the days of absolutism were numbered. The marvel of Napoleon was his unquestioned human supremacy: when that declined his empire fell.

In the truest sense of that word so dear to modern times, Napoleon was a self-made man. By his extraordinary energy he made a deficient education do double duty; and those of his natural gifts which in a sluggish man would have been mediocre, he paraded so often, and in such swift succession, that they appeared miraculous. This fiery energy, it cannot too often be repeated, was the man's most distinctive characteristic; when it failed he was undone. Was consistency, as generally understood, to be expected in this personage; is it, indeed, found in most great men? Nowhere does the theory of evolution writhe to sustain itself more than in psychology; nowhere does it discover a greater complexity—a complexity which makes doubtful its sufficiency. Admitting that Napoleon was selfish; that he was lustful; that once, at least, he was criminal; that at various times—yes, even frequently—he was unpopular, and dared not in

extremity call for a national uprising to sustain his cause; that he had pitiful limitations in dealing with religion, politics, and finance; supposing him to have displayed on occasion the qualities of a resurrected medieval free-lance, or of the Borgias, or of other historical monsters; confessing that he was launched upon the fiery lake of revolution by the madness of extreme Jacobinism; sustaining the awful indictment in each detail—was there no reverse to the medal, no light to the shadow, no general result except negations? Was the work of Alexander the Great worthless because of his debaucheries? Was Catharine II of Russia a mere damned soul because of her harlotries? Did Talleyrand's duplicity and meanness render less valuable or permanent the work he did in thwarting the coalition at Vienna? The answer of history is plain: what the great of the earth have wrought for others or against them is to be recorded and judged with impartiality; how they sinned against themselves is to be told as an awful warning, and then to be left for the decision of the Great Tribunal. Modern philosophy requires such complicated and yet such minute knowledge in every department of science that the specialist has supplanted the general scholar and the system-maker; the man who aspires to create a plan displaying the unity of either the objective or the subjective world, or any harmony of one with the other, is generally regarded as either an antiquated imbecile or a charlatan. Yet in the examination of historical characters a symmetrical consistency capable of being grasped by the meanest intellect is imperiously demanded by all readers and critics. This is natural, but not altogether reasonable: symmetry cannot be found in the commonest human being on our globe, much less in those who rise supereminent. The greater the man, the more impossible to connect in a mathematical diagram the different phases of his conduct. The search for mediocre consistency in the character of Napoleon is like the Cynic philosopher's quest for a man.

This personage strove, and with considerable success, to think and act for an entire nation—ay, more, for western Europe. In order to render this conceivable, he first took command of his own body—sleeping at will, and never more than six hours; eating when and what he would, but always with extreme moderation; waking from profound slumber and rousing his

mind instantaneously to the highest pitch, so that he then composed as incisively as in the midst of active ratiocination. He was able to train his secretaries and servants into instruments destitute of personal volition—even his great generals, who were taught to act for themselves within certain limits, never transcended the fixed boundary, and grew inefficient when deprived of his impulse. He never failed to reward merit or to gratify ambition for the sake of securing an able lieutenant, and nascent devotion he quickened into passion by the display of suitable familiarity. A thoughtful, self-contained, self-sufficient worker, he was sometimes a trifle uneasy in social intercourse, perhaps always so beneath his mask of good breeding, when he wore one; but he played his various rôles in public with consummate skill, except that he made nervous movements with his eyes, hands, and ears. His little tricks of rolling his right shoulder, tugging at his cuffs, and the like; his inability to write, and his generally clumsy movements when irritated, were due to deficient training in early childhood. Forbidding in his intercourse with ambitious women and other self-seekers, he was considerate with the suffering, and found it difficult, if not impossible, to refuse the petitions of the needy. Loving rough and ready ways in those busied about his person,—as, for instance, when his valet rubbed him down in the morning with a coarse towel,—he was yet so sensitive that he had to have his hats worn by others before he could set them on his own head. It is useless to seek even homely physical consistency in a man thus constituted.

It is equally useless to ask whether Napoleon could have been as great a man in another epoch as he was in his own. In any epoch of warfare he would have been great; it is likely that in any epoch of peace he would have reached eminence as a legislator and administrator. The real historical question is this: How did he, being what he was, and his age, being what it was, interact one upon the other; and what was the resultant? There was as little consistency in his age as in himself; the sinuosities of each fitted strangely into those of the other, and the result was a period of twenty years on which common consent fixes the name of the Napoleonic age. Does his personality throw any light on the antecedent period—does his career influence the succeeding years?

The age of the Revolution has such intimate connection with the movements of French society that it is very generally called in other countries the French Revolution. But while the movement developed itself more easily and took more radical forms in France than elsewhere, it was due to the condition of civilization the world around. France has been in a peculiar sense the teacher of Europe; for in language, literature, laws, and institutions she is the heir of Rome. In spite of Roman Catholicism, or perhaps in consequence of the Roman hierarchy, her inheritance has been pagan rather than Christian; her ethics have been Hellenic, her literature Augustan, her laws imperial, her temperament a combination of the Stoic and Epicurean which is essentially Latin, her language elegant, elliptical, and precise like that of Livy or Tacitus. The Teuton in general, the Anglo-Saxon in particular, may give his days and nights to classical studies: he is never so imbued with their spirit as the Gaul. "It is with his Bible in one pocket and his Shakspere in another," said an eminent Frenchman not long since, "that the Anglo-Saxon goes forth to reduce the world in the interests of his commerce, his civilization, and his religion. The most enlightened has neither the cold worldliness of Horace nor the calculating zeal of Cæsar, but he has the persistency of faith in himself and his nation which, whatever may be his personal belief, is a constituent element in his blood, or, better still, the controlling member of that complex organism to which he belongs." I venture to believe, on the other hand, that the Frenchman espouses his cause from an unselfish impulse begotten of pure reason, an ethereal ichor percolating through society by channels of sympathy, which diminishes the historic pressure for continuous national consistency and natural unity, but emphasizes the great uplifting movements of society. The French armies of the Revolution went forth to scour Europe for its deliverance from feudalism, absolutism, and ecclesiasticism, because the French people had renewed their youthful and pristine vigor in their enthusiasm for pure principle without regard to experience or expediency. Napoleon Bonaparte had all their doctrine, with something more: a consuming ardor unconscious of any physical limitations to the nervous strength of himself or others, and a readiness for any fate which would transmute his dull, unsuccessful, commonplace existence into excitement.

When he found his opportunity to heap Pelion upon Ossa, to supplement himself by the splendors of French devotion, he did indeed come near to transcending even the Olympians and storming the seat of Kronos.

It was a long, discouraging, heartbreaking struggle by which he gained his first vantage-ground. This was no exceptional experience; for every adventurer knows that it is more troublesome to make the start than to continue the advance. It is harder to save the first small capital than to conduct a prosperous business. It is more difficult, apparently, in human life to overcome the inertia of immobility than that of motion; at least psychological laws seem in this respect to contravene those of physics. It is not true that the armies of the Republic were those of the Bourbons: the transition may have been gradual, but it was radical. It is also untrue that the armies of Napoleon were those of the Revolution: they differed as the zenith from the nadir, being recruited on a new principle, animated by new motives, and led by an entirely different class of men. A supreme command having been attained by means curiously compounded of chivalric romance and base scheming, the man of action did not hesitate a moment to put every power in motion. Throwing off all superior control, he set himself to every task in the revolution of Italy—conquest, political and religious; constructive politics and administration; social and financial transformation. Winning the devotion of his troops by intoxicating successes, as a leveler he was permanently successful; but this typical burgher had no permanent success in building up a democratic-imperial society out of the royal, princely, and aristocratic elements which had so long monopolized the ability of the peninsula; what he wrought outlasted his time, but the country had to undergo another revolution before its middle classes were ready for the heavy burden of independence and self-government. Yet the struggle for what was accomplished appears to have created a climacteric in the doer. Before the days of Italy his ambitions were petty enough: employment in the service of Russia or England, supremacy in Corsica or military promotion in France; but afterward they enlarged by leaps andbounds: Italian principalities, Austrian dukedoms, Lombard confederations, the primacy of France in some form, Oriental dominion—one such concept took form in the morning, to be swept away at night and

replaced by ever more luxurious growths of fantasy. The realization of these dreams was still more amazing than their misty formation. The Revolutionary doctrines of the passing age had stimulated France to over-exertion; her leaders were discredited, her people exhausted. The same agitation had stupefied the Italians; but whatever their political disintegration may have been, the Roman chair and throne retained its moral influence as the bond and mainspring of society throughout the whole peninsula; and now the successor of St. Peter was humbled to the dust, willing to escape with the mere semblance of either secular or ecclesiastical independence. It was an exceptional moment, a vacillating, retrogressive hour in the history of Austria, of France, and of Italy. The exceptional man, the vigorous citizen of a new political epoch, the inspired strategist of a new military epoch, the unscrupulous doubter of a new religious epoch—this typical personage was at hand to take advantage of the situation; and he did so, hastening the disintegrating processes already at work, seizing every advantage revealed by the crumbling of old systems, and reaping the harvest of French heedlessness. The opportunity gave the man his chance, but the chance once seized, the man enlarged his sphere with each successive year.

This he did by means which were as remarkable as the personage who devised them—and remarkable, too, not for their negative, but for their constructive quality. Broadly stated, the Revolution utterly expunged all the governmental and social guarantees of the preceding monarchy, destroying not merely the absolute power of one man with its sanction of divine right, but all the checks upon it to be found either in the ancient traditions of the people or in their ancient institution of parliaments. It will be clear to the careful student of the Revolutionary governments that while there was a gradual clarifying of opinion antecedent to the Consulate, and a vague longing for guarantees of individual rights higher than the acts of any assembly, however representative it claimed to be, nevertheless great ideas, great conceptions, great outlines, had all remained in their inchoate state, and that of the several succeeding constitutions each had been more worthless than the one before. Almost any kind of a constitution will serve an enlightened nation which has confirmed political habits, if it chooses to

support a fundamental law not hostile to them; and none, however ingenious, can stand before recalcitrant populations. The Revolutionary constitutions of France, excepting perhaps that of 1791, were alike feeble; and in the stress applied to the one democratic land of Europe by her dynastic enemies all around, they were not worth the paper and ink used to record them. Under each had developed a pure despotism of one kind or another, on the plea that in war there must be a single head, either an executive committee or an executive man. These persons or person had, on pleas of necessity or expediency, gradually arrogated to the executive all the powers of government, befooling the people more or less completely by the specious formalities of various kinds through which the popular will was supposed to find expression. No one understood this fact better than Napoleon Bonaparte; and since it seemed that the supreme power had to be in the hands of some one man or clique, he was easily tempted to grasp it for himself when it became clear that the profligate and dishonest Directory had run its course. He did not make the situation, but he used it. History does not record that the French nation was shocked or discouraged by the events of the eighteenth of Brumaire; on the contrary, the occurrences in Paris and at St. Cloud seemed commonplace to a storm-tossed people, and the results were welcomed by the majority in every class.

The reasons for this general satisfaction varied, of course; for the conservative and progressive royalists, the conservative and radical republicans of every stripe, had widely different expectations as to the next act in the drama. But the chief actor was concerned only for himself and the nation; partizans he neither honored nor feared, except as he was anxious not to be identified with them. To him, as a man of the people, it seemed that in the Revolution the third estate had asserted itself; that the third estate must be pacified; that the third estate must be prosperous; that the third estate, for all these purposes, needed only to be confirmed in their simple theory of government, which was that the power could be delegated by them to any one fit to wield it, and this once done, the delegate might without harm to the state be left undisturbed to manage the public business, while the people should give their undivided attention to

their private affairs. How successful the Consulate was in this respect is universally known and admitted. With consummate cleverness the First Consul summoned to his assistance all the giants of his time, whether they were scholars with their theories and knowledge, administrators with their tact and experience, political managers with their easy consciences and oiled feathers, or skilful demagogues with their greedy followers and insatiate self-interest. These he either enticed or bullied into his service, according as he read their characters; a few—a very few—like Barère, he found obdurate, and drove into provincial exile. At no time did he make a finer display of his astounding capacity for molding strong men by his still stronger will than during the early days of the Consulate; and the manifest reason for his success was that he had a fine instinct for character and for putting the right man in the right place.

What he thus accomplished has been told. The foundations he then laid rest solid to-day; the now antiquated edifice he erected on them, though altered and repaired, still retains its identity. The Revolution had overthrown the old régime completely, and the ruins of society were without form and void. From this chaos Napoleon painfully gathered the substantial materials of a new structure, and out of these reconstructed the family, the state, and the church. He revived the domestic spirit, made marriage a solid institution, and reëstablished parental authority while destroying parental despotism. In civil society he restored the right of property and fixed the sanctity of contract, thus assuring respect for the individual and the ascendancy of the law. The finances he reformed by an equitable system of taxation, and by the establishment of an ingenious treasury system comparable to that devised by Alexander Hamilton for the United States. In the Concordat he went as far, probably, as France could then go in emancipating religion and the church; Protestantism has prospered under the regulations he laid down, and by his treatment of the Jews they have been changed from despised and down-trodden social freebooters into prosperous and patriotic citizens. Upon every class of men then living he imposed by an iron will a system of his own. The leading survivors of Jacobinism, extreme royalists, moderate republicans, proscribers and proscribed, men of the bourgeoisie—all bowed to his sway

and accepted his rewards. It is said that they yielded to the superior force of his police and his pretorians. Be it so. The fivefold police system he established was a system of checks and counter-checks within itself, within the administration, and even within the army—a body without which, as he firmly believed, the beginnings of social transformation could not be made. He professed, and no doubt honestly, that he would divest himself of this police service as opportunity served, and deluded both himself and his followers into the belief that the process was almost complete before the close of his era. Through the perspective of a century we can see the faults of Napoleon's plan. The Gallic Church is still Roman, in spite of his intention that the Roman Church should become French; the extreme centralization of his administrative system still throttles local free government and makes both oligarchic rule and political revolution easier in France than in any other free land; the educational scheme which he formed, although more fully changed than any other of his institutions, and but recently embarked, let us hope, on a course for ultimate independence, nevertheless suffers in its present complete dependence on state support, and in the consequent absence of private personal enthusiasm which might make its separate universities and schools rich in opportunities and strong in the loyalty of their sons. But we must remember that the Consulate was a hundred years since, and that for its day it wrought so beneficently that Bonaparte, First Consul, remains one of the foremost among all lawgivers and statesmen. And that, too, precisely for the reasons which some cite as condemning him. He took the revolutionary ideas of political, civil, and religious emancipation: with these he commingled both his own sound sense and the experience of advisers from every class, realizing as much of civil liberty and good order as appears to have been practical at the moment.

But in one respect he failed miserably, and that failure vitiated much of the substantial gain which seemed to have been made. He failed in curbing his own ambition. The majestic ridge of his achievement was the verge of the precipice over which he fell. In the first place, his signal success as a lawgiver was due entirely to the dazzling splendors of his victories. Marengo was the climax to a series of such achievements as had not so far

been wrought on the tented field within the bounds of French history. It is easy to assert that the French were intoxicated because they were French: there is not the slightest reason to suppose that any other nation under similar circumstances would have behaved differently. The Seven Years' War turned the heads of the English people completely, and they lost their American colonies in consequence; Rome lost her political liberty when she became mistress not only of the Latin, but of the Greek and Oriental shores of the Mediterranean; the distant military expeditions of Alexander the Great prepared the fall of his ill-assorted empire. In each case the careful student will admit that social exaltation was the forerunner of division and of subsequent despotism in some form. Even in the little states of Greece and southern Italy the tyrants always arose from the disintegration of legal government, and by the assertion of some form of power—mind, money, or military force.

It was, therefore, as a military despot that the First Consul promulgated beneficent codes, founded an enduring jurisprudence, created an efficient magistracy, and established social order. In this process he completed the work of the Revolution by exalting the third estate to ascendancy in the nation. The whole work, therefore, was not only recognized as his in the house of every French burgher: he was considered at every fireside to be the consummator of the Revolution for which France had so long suffered in an agony of bloody sweat. Was it therefore any wonder that not only he himself, but even the most enlightened leaders of European thought, considered the safety and renovation of European society to depend upon the extension of his work? It is hard for us to appreciate this, because in France Napoleon's institutions have remained almost as he left them, and well-nigh stationary, while for a century the processes of ruthless reform have been continuously working in other European lands, and some neighboring peoples have outstripped the French in the matter of a national unity consistent with local freedom. The First Consul felt that in order to become great he had been forced to become strong; we can understand that he could easily deceive himself into concluding that in order to be greater he must become stronger. It was in these days that he exclaimed, in the intimacy of familiar intercourse: "I feel the infinite in me."

Thereafter democracy in any form, even the mildest, was offensive. Such men as Roederer were sent to Naples, Berg—anywhere out of France. The times were not far removed from those of the beneficent despots, except that this one ruled, not by hereditary divine right, but by military force. Bonaparte's imperfect training in politics and history made it possible for such visions as those which now arose to haunt his brain. The beneficence he had displayed already; for despotism he had had the finest conceivable training, first among the sluggish populations of the Italian states which he had reorganized, then in the myth of Egyptian conquest which he had created and felt bound to maintain, and lastly in the national disorders of a France shuddering at the possibility of a return either to the hideous excesses of the Terror or to the intolerable abuses of ecclesiasticism and absolute monarchy.

Among other dreadful curses incident to revolution and civil war is the stimulation of fanaticism. In his seizure of the supreme power the purpose of the First Consul was justified to himself, and his procedure was rendered tolerable to the nation at large by the scandalous intrigues and complots which were hatched like cockatrices' eggs in every foul cranny of the land. The conspirators stopped at nothing: bad faith, subornation, murder of every variety, from the dagger to the bowl. This gave the First Consul his chance to become himself the arch-intriguer, and as such he overmatched all his opponents, ultramontanes, radicals, and royalists. Finally only a few unreconstructed reactionaries were left from each of these classes, who, though exhausted and panting, still had the strength to be noisy, and occasionally to make a feint of activity. But in the various localities and classes of France each of the factions had numerous silent and inactive sympathizers who had surrendered only as they felt unable to keep up the uneven conflict. The flames of the volcano were quenched, and the gulf of the crater was bridged by a crust, but the lava of sedition boiled and seethed below. It is a well-known nostrum for civil dissension to stir up foreign conflict, and then to call upon the patriotism of men from all parties. To this the First Consul dared not openly resort. In fact, the indications are that if his enemies in France and his foes abroad had consented peaceably to the fulfilment of his now manifest ambitions, he

would himself have been glad enough to secure without further fighting what he had gained by war, and to extend the influence of a Bonapartist France by steady encroachments rather than by exhausting hostilities. The word of every man has exactly the value which his character gives it, and treaties are worth the good faith of those who make them, not a tittle more. Neither of the parties to the general peace was exhausted, neither was really earnest. It was a bellicose age: war was then in the air, as peace is now. The rupture of the treaty made at Amiens was quite as much the work of George III as it was of Bonaparte the First Consul, and the two nations over which they ruled were easily led to renew the struggle. Nothing goes to prove that there was long premeditation on the part of either; but at the time and since, were it not for the widespread distrust in Bonaparte's character, popular opinion would have put the blame of renewed war more upon his opponent than on him. Thus far the angel and the devil which struggle for possession of every man had waged a fairly even conflict, and the blame and praise of what is stigmatized as Bonaparte's conduct must be meted out to his foes in even measure. He and his times had interacted one upon the other to a remarkably even degree. But once launched on the career of personal aggrandizement, every hindrance to consuming ambition was ruthlessly cast aside. Until 1812 the responsibility for inordinate bloodshed is all his own.

It is needless to dwell upon the period of the Empire in order to study Napoleon's character. It shines forth effulgent, but noxious. He remained personally what he had always been—imperious, laborious, unprincipled; but, on the other hand, kindly, generous, sensitive to the popular movements. His thirst for power became predominant; his lavish contempt for men and money displayed the recklessness of a desperate parvenu; his passion for war burst all its bounds. Personal ambition eclipsed principle, expediency, shrewdness—in short, every quality which makes for self-preservation. The reason was not conscious despair, but unconscious desperation. Politically he had fought and won an easy but a decisive battle. Imperialism was firmly seated. The behavior of the French people was natural enough, but they lent themselves to his purposes with complete surrender. In this the world learned a lesson which should never

be forgotten: that democracy is an excellent workhorse, but a poor charger; a good hack, but an untrustworthy racer. The interest of the plain man is in his daily life, his family, his business, his advancement. He cannot be an expert in foreign or domestic politics, in public law, or in warfare; expertness requires the exclusive devotion of a lifetime. Make the common person a theorist, and he is an ardent democrat, but a poor administrator. Hence the necessity in transition epochs for a wise constitution. It was not difficult to convince the French burgher that, all other forms of democratic administration having had a chance and having failed in times of war, the only one so far untried—that of delegating power to a single superior man—should have a fair trial, the more as the excellent man was at hand. Even in times of peace the hard-worked citizen either neglects his political duties altogether, or, performing them in a thoughtless routine, longs for some one he can trust to do his thinking and acting: in war, as far as we have had the opportunity to observe in ancient and modern times, his imperialism is avowed, and he demands a dictator. We have no reason to suppose that there is any democracy which could outlast twenty years of a herculean struggle for national life or death, and such the Franco-English wars which introduced the last century seemed to the Frenchman of that time to be.

From the soldier's point of view, Napoleon had likewise such an easy triumph as has fallen to the lot of few commanders. His opponents were so conservative that their ideas were antiquated, his own strategy was so new and revolutionary that it dumfounded them. A favorite method of detraction is illustrated by the familiar story of Columbus's egg. What is once done, anybody can do. The strategic reputation of Frederick the Great is in our day first attacked by the so-called comparative method—that is, by comparing it with the achievements and system, not of his contemporaries, but of Napoleon, his successor; and then the strategic reputation of Napoleon is diminished by sneering at that of Frederick, with whose antiquated method the new one came into comparison and contact, to the complete disaster of the former. This vicious circle may be dismissed with contempt. Napoleon's strategic genius was, unlike any other talent he possessed, constructive and original. No doubt he studied Cæsar; no doubt

he studied Maillebois; no doubt he studied the work of Turenne and of the great Frederick; no doubt he was a pupil of the giant soldiers who inaugurated and carried on the wars of the Revolution; but while others had pursued the same studies, it remained for him to devise and put into operation a strategy based upon past experience, but subversive of accepted dogmas, new, adapted to its ends, and founded on theories which, though modified in practice by the discoveries of an intervening century, have, when properly understood, never, not even to-day, been shaken in principle. His triumphs as a soldier, therefore, are his own; and it was not until all Europe had learned the lessons which he taught her generals by a series of object demonstrations lasting twenty years, that the teacher began to diminish in success and splendor. The persistent critics of Frederick have been asking and reiterating questions such as these: Why did not the king begin early in July, 1756? Why did he not storm the camp of Pirna? Why did he not continue the war in October? Why did he not renew hostilities the following year until forced to it? And so on, and so on. By this method they have shrunk the horizon to their own dimensions, and have imprisoned their victim within the pale of his faults; but a wider view and the historic background display his strategy in large outline, as illuminated by the light of his age; and thus the defeats of Kolin and Kunersdorf, as well as the victories of Leuthen, Rossbach, Zorndorf, and Torgau, exhibit the Prussian general as the great genius which he was. It was not until Napoleon had taught his rivals what fighting ought to be that men could also pick and nag at him by asking why Waterloo did not begin four hours earlier, why more explicit directions were not given to Grouchy, why in 1814 the desperate man chose to cut off the line of his enemies' communications rather than withdraw into Paris and call the nation to arms; and so on to infinity. Judged either historically or theoretically, the strategy of Napoleon is original, unique, and unexcelled. It is his greatest achievement, because his most creative.

CHAPTER XXI

NAPOLEON AND THE UNITED STATES

A Decisive Epoch — Britain Dominates the Sea — Napoleon's Policy — Trade and Western Empire — To the West Indies — Needs of the Empire — Great Britain's Sea Rival — The Imperial Policy Revealed — Tempestuous Times in the United States — Party Government — Livingston's Efforts — Louisiana Purchased — Effect on American Life — Change in Constitutional Attitude — The Kaleidoscope of Party Politics — Preponderance of the South and West — The Louisiana Purchase and the Nation.

A decisive epoch was that of the eighteenth-century revolutions, a crisis reached after long, slow preparation, precipitated by social and religious bigotry, dizzy in its consummation, wild and headlong in its flight, precipitous in its crash. Of this important time the results have been so permanent that they are the commonplaces of contemporary history; in what Carlyle called the revolutionary loom the warp and woof were spun from the past, and the fabric is that from which our working-clothes are cut. Within those years appeared the great dominating soul of modern humanity, who displayed first and last every weakness and every sordid meanness of mankind, but in such giant dimensions that even his depravity inspires awe. His virtues were equally portentous because they worked on the grand scale, with materials that had been threshed and winnowed in the theory and experience of five generations of mankind. It was well within this stupendous age and by the act of this representative man that Louisiana was redeemed from Spanish misrule and incorporated with the territories of the United States. Nor was this all. A careful examination of the general political situation at that time will exhibit the elemental and almost ultimate fact that the sale of Louisiana was coincident with the turn of the age.

The substance of the treaty of Amiens was that Great Britain ostensibly abandoned all concern with the continent of Europe, and that France, ostensibly too, should strictly mind her own affairs in her colonies and the remoter quarters of the globe. George III removed from his escutcheon the

fleur-de-lis, and from his ceremonial title the style of king of France. Events narrated in another connection proved the whole negotiation to have been on both sides purely diplomatic, an exchange of public and hollow courtesies in order to gain time for the realities in the struggle for supremacy between the world powers of the period, a struggle begun with modern history, renewed in 1688, and destined to last until the exhaustion of one of the contestants in 1815. Neither party to the treaty had the slightest intention of observing either its spirit or its letter. While the paper was in process of negotiation Bonaparte was consolidating French empire on the Continent, and after its signature he did not pause for a single instant to show even a formal respect for his obligations. The reorganization of Holland in preparation for its incorporation into the French system, the annexation of Piedmont and the defiance to Russia in the matter of her Italian protégés, the Act of Moderation in Switzerland, and finally, the contemptuous rearrangement of Germany, were successive steps which reduced England to despair for her continental trade. To her it seemed as if there could be no question about two things: first, that the old order must be restored, in order to safeguard her commerce; and second, that her colonial policy must be more aggressive than ever.

It was Samuel Adams who first sneered at his fatherland as a people of shopkeepers. The winged word soon became a commonplace to all outsiders, but as it flew every nation that used the gibe girded itself to enter the struggle for the same goal. France above all was determined to be a nation of shopkeepers, and the First Consul of what was still a shaky experiment in government knew well that rather than abandon that ambition, he must sacrifice every other. After all, a colonial empire has value only as the home nation has accessible ports, manufactories for colonial products, and wares to exchange with the producers. France had neither factories nor manufactures, and was destitute of nearly the whole machinery of exchange. Her merchant vessels sailed only by grace of the British fleet. Her home market was dependent on British traders even in times of war. Bonaparte's foremost thought, therefore, was for concentration of energy. The sea-power of the world was Britain's, and her tyranny of the seas without a real check; even the United States could only

spit out defiant and revengeful threats when her merchantmen were treated with contempt on the high seas by British men-of-war. Therefore with swift and comprehensive grasp he framed and announced a new policy. The French envoy in London was informed that France was now forced to the conquest of Europe—this of course for the stimulating of French industries—and to the restoration of her Occidental empire. This was most adroit. The embers of French patriotism could be fanned into a white heat by these well-worn but never exhausted expedients—a blast against perfidious Albion and a sentimental passion for the New France beyond the Atlantic. The motions were a feint against England by the formation of a second camp at Boulogne, where a force really destined for Austria was assembled, and the wresting of Louisiana from the weak Spanish hands which held it. As an incident of the agitation it seemed best that the French democracy should have an imperial rather than a republican title, and the style of emperor and empire was exhumed from the garbage heap of the Terror for use in the pageantry of a court.

In Europe thus, as in the neighboring continents, the rearrangement of politics, territorial boundaries, social, economic, and diplomatic relations, a change which has made possible the modern system, was really dependent on the events which led to the adoption of the policy just described. But this policy involved a reversal of every sound historical principle in Bonaparte's plans. For twelve years longer he was to commit blunder upon blunder; to trample on national pride; to elevate a false system of political economy into a fetish; to conduct, as in the Moscow campaign, great migrations to the eastward in defiance of nature's laws; to launch his plain, not to say vulgar and weak, family on an enterprise of monarchical alliances for which they had no capacity; to undo, in short, as far as in him lay, every beneficent and well-conceived piece of statesmanship with which he had so far been concerned. It has been well said that had he died in midsummer, 1802, his glory would have been immaculate and there would have been no spots on his sun. The Napoleonic work in Europe was destined to have its far-reaching and permanent results, but the man was ere long almost entirely eliminated from control over them. The very last of his great constructions was the sale of Louisiana. He needed the purchase-

money, he selected his purchaser and forced it on him, with a view to upbuilding a giant rival to the gigantic power of Great Britain.

When we turn therefore to America, we shall at once observe on how slender a thread a great event may depend, how great a fire may be kindled by a spark adroitly placed. While yet other matters were hanging in the balance, he selected his own brother-in-law, General Leclerc, such was his deep concern, to conduct an expedition to the West Indies. There were embarked 35,000 men, and these the very flower of the republican armies, superb fighters, but a possible thorn in the side of a budding emperor at home. Their goal was San Domingo, where a wonderful negro, Toussaint Louverture, noting the attractive example of the benevolent despots in Europe, had, under republican forms, not only abolished slavery, but had made himself a beneficent dictator. The fine but delicate structure of his negro state was easily crushed to the earth, but the fighting was fierce and prolonged, the climate and the pest were enabled to inaugurate and complete a work of slaughter more baleful than that of war, and two-thirds of the French invaders, including the commander and fifteen of his generals, fell victims to the yellow fever. The French were utterly routed, the sorry remnant sailed away, and the blacks fell into the hands of the worthless tyrant Dessalines, whose misrule killed the germs of order planted by Toussaint. One of our historians thinks this check of France by black soldiers to have been a determinative factor in American history, for thereafter there could be no question of a Gulf and Caribbean empire for France. Louisiana, he indicates, became at once a superfluous dependency, costly and annoying. This is a far-fetched contention: great as have been the services of the negro to the United States since he first fought on the battle-field of Monmouth under Washington, the failure of France in San Domingo was not through the sword of the blacks, but was an act of God through pestilence.

The circumstances that forced Louisiana upon the United States, then a petty power with revenues and expenditures less than those of many among the single states which now compose the federation, arose from Napoleon's European necessities. The cession from Spain included all that

Spain had received from France, the whole Gulf coast from St. Mary's to the Rio Grande, and the French pretensions not only northwestward to the Rockies but even to the Pacific. The return made to Spain was the insignificant kingdom of Etruria and a solemn pledge that, should the First Consul fail in his promise, Louisiana in its fullest extent was to be restored to Spain. France therefore might not otherwise alienate it to any power whatever. The exacting and suspicious spirit shown both by Charles IV and his contemptible minister Godoy, Prince of the Peace, had exasperated Bonaparte beyond endurance. The Spanish Bourbons were doomed by him to the fate of their kinsfolk in France; a pledge to a vanishing phantom of royalty was of small account. It was during the delay created by the punctilio of Godoy that the failure of the San Domingo expedition extinguished all hope of making Louisiana the sole entrepôt and staple of supplies for the West Indies. And simultaneously it grew evident that the truce negotiated at Amiens as a treaty could not last much longer, that either France must endure the humiliation of seeing her profits therefrom utterly withheld, or herself declare war, or goad Great Britain into a renewal of hostilities. This last, as is well known, was the alternative chosen by Napoleon.

Our government had been in despair. The establishment of French empire in the West Indies would have destroyed our lucrative trade with the islands. It was trying enough that a feeble power like Spain should command the outlet of the Mississippi basin, but intolerable that such a mastery of the continent should fall into the hands of a strong and magisterial power like France. We were in dismay, even after the departure of the French from San Domingo. Bonaparte, however, was scarcely less disturbed; for Jefferson, despite his avowed Gallicism, spiritedly declared both to the First Consul and to Livingston, our minister to Paris, that the occupation of Louisiana by the great French force organized to that end could only result in an alliance of the two English-speaking nations which would utterly banish the French flag from the high seas. Bonaparte preserved an outward calm for those about him and went his way apparently unperturbed. But inwardly his mind seethed, and without long delay he took his choice between the courses open to him. It was the first

exhibition to himself and his family of the imperial despot soon to be known as Napoleon I, Emperor of the French. If Britain was the tyrant of the seas, he would be despot of the land. To French empire he would reduce Germany, Italy, and Spain in subjection, and with all the maritime resources of the Continent at his back he would first shut every important port to English commerce, and then with allied and dependent fleets at his disposal try conclusions with the British Behemoth for liberty of the seas and a new colonial empire. By the second camp at Boulogne and the occupation of Hanover, Napoleon threw England into panic, while simultaneously he began the creation of his grand imperial army and thereby menaced Austria, the greatest German power, in her coalition with Russia, Sweden, Naples, and Great Britain. The latter, he was well aware, could face a hostile demonstration on her front with courage, if not with equanimity; and he determined to add a double stroke—to gain a harvest of gold and on her rear to strengthen her exasperated transatlantic sea rival by selling Louisiana to the United States.

That determination was the turning-point in his career, just as the sudden wheel and about-face of the splendid force at Boulogne, when he hurled it across Europe at Vienna, displayed at last the turning-point in his policy. His brother Lucien had been an influential negotiator with Spain and plumed himself on the acquisition of the great domain which had been for long the brightest jewel in the crown of France. His brother Joseph had negotiated the treaty of Amiens as a step preparatory to regaining a magnificent colonial empire for his country, an empire of which an old and splendid French possession was to be the corner-stone. Both were stunned and then infuriated when they learned their brother's resolution, sensations which were intensified to fury when they heard him announce that he would work his will in spite of all constitutional checks and balances. There is no historic scene more grotesque than that depicted by Lucien in his memoirs when he and Joseph undertook to oppose Napoleon. The latter was luxuriating in his morning bath on April seventh, 1803, in the Tuileries when the brothers were admitted. After a long and intimate talk on general politics the fateful subject was finally broached by Napoleon, as he turned from side to side and wallowed in the perfumed water. Neither

of the brothers could control his feelings, and the controversy grew hot and furious from minute to minute until Joseph, leaning over the tub, roared threats of opposition and words of denunciation. Brother Napoleon, lifting himself half-way to the top, suddenly fell back and clenched his arguments by splashing a full flood in the face and over the body of Joseph, drenching him to the skin. A valet was summoned, entered, and, paralyzed by the fury of the scene, fell in a dead faint. New aid was called and, the fires of passion being quenched for the time, the conflict ended until Napoleon and Joseph were decently clothed, when it was renewed in the office of the secretary Bourrienne. Ere long hot words were again spoken, violent language was succeeded by violent gestures, until at last Napoleon in a theatrical rage dashed his snuff-box on the floor, and the contestants separated. Disjointed and fierce as was the stormy argument, it revealed the whole of the imperial policy.

Meanwhile events in America, if not so picturesque and majestic, were equally tempestuous. The peace policy of Jefferson was rapidly going to pieces in the face of a westward menace, the Federalists were jubilant, and in the Senate James Ross, of Pennsylvania, called for war. When the intendant of Spain at New Orleans denied Americans the storage rights they had enjoyed in that city since 1795, the French politics of the President fell into general disrepute and contempt, for men reasoned a fortiori, if such things be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry? It mattered not that Spain's highest official, the governor, disavowed the act, the fire was in the stubble. The intendant was stubborn and the fighting temper waxed hot. Both the governor and the Spanish envoy at Washington disavowed the act again and rebuked the subordinate. Congress was soothed, but not so the people of the West and South. They were fully aware, as have been all our frontiersmen and pioneers from the beginning, that the Mississippi and all the lands it waters are the organic structure of unity and successful settlement on this continent. The Pacific and Atlantic coast strips, even the great but bleak valley of the St. Lawrence, are mere incidents of territorial unity and political control when compared with the great alluvion of the Mississippi. This was unknown, utterly unknown, and worse yet, entirely indifferent to our statesmen.

Madison certainly, and possibly Jefferson, believed that western immigration would pause and end on the east bank of the Father of Waters.

Yet party government was a necessity under the American system, and Jefferson's ladder, the Republican party, would be knocked into its component parts should the West and South, noisy, exacting, and turbulent, desert and go over to the expiring faction of the Federalists; nay, worse, it might be forced into almost complete negation of its own existence by a forced adoption of the Federalist policy, alliance with Great Britain—monarchic and aristocratic—rather than with radical and democratic France. What could a distracted partizan do? Jefferson was adroit and inventive. He sent James Monroe to negotiate with Bonaparte for the purchase of New Orleans and both Floridas at the price of two millions, or upward to ten, for all or part, whatever he could get; he was not even to disdain the deposit or storage right, if nothing else could be had, and if he could get nothing, he was to await instructions. With such credentials he sailed on March eighth, 1803. A peace-lover must sometimes speak low and small, even as cowards sometimes do. Three weeks later appeared in New Orleans Laussat, the advance agent of French occupation; Victor and his troops were to follow. It is not possible to conceive that a foreign policy could be more perplexing, confused, or uncertain than that of the philosophic theorist who is the hero of the strict-constructionist party in these United States.

Robert R. Livingston, the regular American envoy at Paris, had, under his instructions from home, worked with skill and zeal on the spoliation claims and incidentally on the question of the Mississippi and the Floridas. While the colonization schemes of Bonaparte seemed feasible, Livingston made no headway whatever, except to extort an admission that the spoliation claims were just. Neither Talleyrand nor Livingston was much concerned about the great Northwest. The American was clear that the importance of any control lay in the possession of New Orleans, and on April eleventh, 1803, he said so to the French minister, vigorously and squarely declaring further that a persistent refusal of our request would unite us with Great

Britain to the serious discomfiture of France in her colonial aspirations. This was said with some asperity, for Livingston had been aware that the First Consul wanted all negotiation transferred to Washington under the guidance of a special envoy, the wilful Bernadotte, sent for the purpose; and now, worse yet, he himself was to be superseded by Monroe. He had been a diligent and even importunate negotiator; it was a ray of comfort in later days to recall that the first suggestion for the sale of all Louisiana was made to him in that momentous interview.

What had occurred Livingston could not know. It was this. On the morning of that very day there reached the Tuileries despatches giving in full detail an account of the tremendous preparations making in England for the renewal of war both by land and sea. Bonaparte's impatience knew no bounds. Hitherto he had concealed his true policy of sale behind a scheme to spend the purchase-money on internal improvements in France, and he had on his work-table map-outlines for five great canals. Now, at daybreak, he summoned Barbé-Marbois, sometime French consul-general in the United States, an official of state with a thorough knowledge of our affairs, and ordered that a negotiation for the sale, not of the Floridas and New Orleans, but of all Louisiana, should immediately be opened with Livingston. He fixed the price at fifty million francs. The envoy could of course do nothing, but he thought thirty millions enough. Next day Monroe arrived at Havre, and reaching Paris on the thirteenth, that very same day Barbé-Marbois and our two great statesmen began to treat. Upon Monroe and Livingston devolved a momentous responsibility. To Monroe by a most indefinite implication was left a certain liberty, for under no circumstances whatsoever was he to end a negotiation if once it was begun. And here, instead of minimizing terms, was, so to speak, a great universe of land tender. But we had not so easily thrown off the bright and glistening garment of righteousness as had Napoleon Bonaparte, and in the minds of both Americans was the question, non-existent for the First Consul, as he himself squarely said, of whether the inhabitants of the district, men and women, human souls, could be dealt in as chattels are.

Livingston had already seen darkly as in a glass what possession of the west might do for the United States. Bonaparte's contributions to the discussion were terse and trenchant. If he did not transfer the title right speedily, a British fleet would take possession almost in a twinkling; the transfer, he said, might in three centuries make America the rival of Europe; why not? it was a long way ahead; but, on the other hand, there never had been an enduring confederation, and this one in America was unlikely to begin the series; finally, he wanted the cash, as the United States wanted the land. Let there be no delay. And there was none. The terms of the sale and the facts of the transfer do not concern us here. In Bonaparte the United States had no friend; but what the ancient régime began in helping to establish American independence, the First Consul completed; for, thanks to him, the war of 1812 was fought for commercial liberty, while the exploitation of Louisiana has made the nation what it is to-day. The great territory, with all its responsibilities and possibilities, made the United States a world power; a puny enough power at first, but it has grown. Jefferson and his agents were primarily statesmen for the purpose of existing conditions, and in Monroe's mission desired a remedy solely and entirely for party evils. They had, however, the courage to accept the fortune forced upon them, even though in their case, as in that of Bonaparte, it entailed, we repeat, a complete reversal of all the political and party principles of the platform on which they had hitherto stood.

The change wrought by the Louisiana purchase in American life and culture was simply revolutionary. Hitherto in our weakness we had faced backward, varying between two ideas of European alliance. We virtually had British and French parties. Jefferson, who represented the latter, thought of no other alternative in his trouble than to strike hands with England. With Louisiana on our hands, we turned our faces to our own front door. The Louisiana we bought had no Pacific outlet in reality, but the Lewis and Clark expedition gave it one, and that we have broadened by war and by purchase until we control the western shore of the continent. Under such engrossing cares we ceased to think of either French or British ties, except as exasperating, and became not merely Americans, but, realizing Washington's aspirations, turned into real continentals, with a

scorn of all entanglements whatever. In the occupation and settlement of Louisiana the slavery question became acute, and the struggle to expand that system over Louisiana soil precipitated the Civil War.

But if the change in national outlook was radical, that in constitutional attitude was even more so. The constitutions of our original states were the expression of political habits in a community, the Federal Constitution was in the main a transcript of those elements which were common in some degree to all the British colonies. It was an age of written constitutions, because the flux of institutions was so rapid that men needed a mooring for the substantial gains they had made. The past was so recent that statesmen were timid, and they wanted their metes and bounds to be fixed by a monument. Nothing was more natural than to pause and fall back on the record thus made permanent, and strict construction was and long continued to be a political fetish. The Louisiana purchase was a circumstance of the first importance in party struggle. Yet neither Federalist nor Republican dared, after mature deliberation, to urge the question of constitutional amendment as essential to meet the crisis thus precipitated. The enormous price entailed what was felt to be an intolerable burden of taxation, and in the uproar of spoken and printed debate played no small part. But the vital question was whether the adjustment of new relations was constitutional.

Never did the kaleidoscope of politics display a more surprising reversal of effect. The loose-construction party lost its wits entirely, while the strict constructionists suddenly became the apostles not of verbal but of logical construction. Jefferson violated his principles in signing the treaty, but he was easily persuaded that amendment was not necessary, that on the contrary the treaty-making power covered the case completely. This was not conquest, which would have been covered by the war power, but purchase, which is covered by the treaty power, surrendered, like the other, by the states to the federal government. The Federalists were represented in the House by Gaylord Griswold; in the Senate by Ross and Pickering. Their resistance was identical in both factious to the highest degree. They contended that the executive had usurped the powers of

Congress by regulating commerce with foreign powers and by incorporating foreign soil and foreign people with the United States, this last being a power which it was doubtful whether Congress possessed. Supposing, however, that New Orleans became American, how could a treaty be valid which gave preferential treatment to that single port in admitting French and Spanish ships on equal terms with those owned by Americans? The treaty, they asseverated, was therefore unconstitutional and, even worse, impolitic, because we were unfitted and did not desire to incorporate into our delicately balanced system peoples different in speech, faith, and customs from ourselves. They were, however, only mildly opposed to expansion; they were determined and captious in the interpretation of the Constitution. The party in power were avowedly expansionist; their retort was equally dialectic and vapid. The whole discussion would have been empty except for Pickering's contention that there existed no power to incorporate foreign territory into the United States, as was stipulated by the treaty. The House had resolved, ninety to twenty-five, to provide the money and had appointed a committee on provisional government; the Senate ratified the treaty, twenty-six to five.

What made the debates and action of Congress epochal was the Federalist contention that Thomas Jefferson as provisional and interim governor was nothing more or less than an American despot in succession to a Spanish tyrant. Where was the Constitution now; where would it be when in appointing the necessary officials—executive, judicial, and legislative—he would usurp not merely Spanish despotism but the powers of both the other branches of the federal government? The Republicans quibbled, too; to appoint these three classes of officials was not to exercise their powers. But they confirmed in unanswerable logic a distinction thus far only mooted in our political history—that between states and territories. Already presidential appointees were exercising all three powers in Mississippi and Indiana. This clenched the contentions of the Republicans, and the bill for provisional government passed by an overwhelming vote on October thirty-first. Both parties throughout the struggle had tacitly abandoned the position that Congress possessed merely delegated powers and nothing further except the ability to carry them into effect. Both

therefore admitted the possible interpretation of the Constitution under stress of necessity, and the Federalists in their quibbling contentions lost hold everywhere except in New England. That section saw its influence eclipsed by the preponderance of Southern and Western power and ere long was ripe for secession.

Volumes have been written and more will be on the romance of the Louisiana purchase; Josiah Quincy threatened the dismemberment of the Union when the present state of Louisiana was admitted in 1812; but for Jefferson's wisdom in exploration it might have remained a wilderness long after settlement began; Great Britain coveted it in 1815 when Jackson saved it; Aaron Burr probably coveted an empire within it; Napoleon III had dreams of its return to the new France he was to found in Mexico. Excluding the Floridas, which Spain would not concede as a part of it, and the Oregon country, the territory thus acquired was greater than that of Great Britain, Germany, France, Spain, Portugal, and Italy combined. Its agricultural and mineral resources were, humanly speaking, inexhaustible. No wonder it excited the cupidity as it stirred the imagination of mankind; no wonder if men avid to retain their power were dismayed at the preponderance it was sure to exert eventually in a federal union of states. At the present moment fourteen of our commonwealths, with a population of about sixteen millions and a taxable wealth of seven billions, occupy its soil. By the time we are fifty years older, at the present rate of settlement, these will contain about a third of the power in the Union as determined by numbers and prosperity. All of them, however, were from the first administrative districts, never states, and by the retroactive influence of this fact state sovereignty has thus been made an empty phrase.

And this leads us to remember that, if the Louisiana purchase revolutionized our national outlook, our constitutional attitude, and our sectional control, it quite as radically changed our national texture. From that hour to this we have called to the masses of Europe for help to develop the wilderness, and they have come by millions, until now the men and women of Revolutionary stock probably number less than fifteen millions in the entire country. These later Americans have, like the migrations of the

Norsemen in central and southern Europe, proved so conservative in their Americanism that they outrun their predecessors in loyalty to its essentials. They made the Union as it now is, in a very high sense, and there is no question that in the throes of civil war it was their blood which flowed at least as freely as ours in its defense. It is they who have kept us from developing on colonial lines and have made us a nation separate and apart. This it is which has prevented the powerful influence of Great Britain from inundating us, while simultaneously two English-speaking peoples have reacted one upon the other in their radical differences to keep aflame the zeal for exploration, beneficent occupation, and general exploitation of the globe in the interests of a high civilization. The localities of the Union have been stimulated into such activities that manufactures and agriculture have run a mighty race; commerce alone lags, and no wonder, for Louisiana gave us a land world of our own, a home market more valuable than both the Indies or the continental mass of the Far East.

CHAPTER XXII

NAPOLEON'S PLACE IN HISTORY

Exhaustion — The Change in Napoleon's Views — Intermitting Powers — Their Extinction — Common Sense and Idealism — The Man and the World — The Philosophy of Expediency — A Mediating Work — French Institutions — Transformation of France — Napoleon and English Policy — His Work in Germany — French Influence in Italy and Eastern Europe — Napoleon and the Western World.

If Napoleon's qualities as usurper, statesman, and warrior be as remarkable as they appear, why was his time so short, what were the causes of his decline, and what is his place in history? The causes of his decline may be summed up in a single word—exhaustion. There exists no record of human activity more complete than is that of Napoleon Bonaparte's life. In its beginnings we can see this worshiper of power stimulating his immature abilities in vain until, with reckless desperation, he closed the period of training and made his scandalous bargain with Barras; then, grown suddenly, inexplicably rich, becoming with better clothing, food, and lodging physically more vigorous, he seems mercilessly to drive the rowels into his own flanks until initiative, ingenuity, and ruthlessness are displayed with apparently superhuman dimensions. The period of achievement is short, but glorious in politics; the age of domination is long and exciting. Throughout both there is the same wanton physical excess and intellectual dissipation. Then comes the turn. Every human age has in it the germs of the next; we begin to die at birth, and the characteristic qualities and powers of one period diminish as those of the next increase. So it was with Napoleon. He compressed so much, both as regards the number and importance of events, into so short a space that his times are like those wrinkled Japanese pictures which are made by shriveling a large print into a small compass—intense and deep, but unreal. To change the metaphor, he found the ship of state dashing onward, with her helm lashed and no one daring to take the task of the steersman in hand. He cut the lashings and laid hold. His unassisted efforts as a pilot gave the vessel a new course; but he had no steam or other mechanical power, no deus ex

machinâ, to aid him; and, as the storm increased, exhaustion followed; he seemed to be steering when, in reality, his actions were under the compulsion of events he was not controlling; and this continued until the wreck.

But the inertia of his powers resembled their rise so perfectly as to represent continuous growth, and thus to deceive observers: in a few years he had ordered the Revolutionary chaos of western Europe to his liking, and the resultant organization worked by the principles he had infused into it. As he saw his imperfect and shallow theories of society successively confounded, he had no vigor left to reconstruct them and adapt himself to new situations. His efforts at the rôle of liberator throughout the Hundred Days deserve careful study. He simply could not yield or adapt himself, except in non-essentials. The shifts to which he had resort would have been ridiculous had they not been pathetic. The governmental forms attempted by the Revolution had been successively destroyed by the furious energy of Jacobinism: the Directory was but a compromise, and when it took refuge for safety in the army its performances seemed to the masses sure to bring back the Terror; the Consulate was only a disguised monarchy founded on military force; and as royalism was impossible, there seemed to vast numbers no other alternative than the Empire. That there was no other alternative was due to Napoleon's imperious character, now developed to its utmost extent. He was selfish, hardened, and, though active like his symbolic bee, without capacity for further development. His mother knew that he could not hold out; she said it, and saved money for a rainy day. He himself had haunting premonitions of this truth. His passion to perpetuate himself by founding a dynasty was the real basis for his warlike ardor. Profoundly moved, in fact awe-stricken, by the imperishable hatred of the older dynasties, and yet reveling in his military genius, he waged war ruthlessly and with zest, enjoying the discomfiture of his foes, and delighting in the exercise of his powers. But, after all, war was but a means. He frequently dwelt on the advantages of hereditary succession; he lingered with suspicious frequency over the satisfaction a dynastic ruler must feel in the devotion or, if not that, in the submissiveness of his people; he was hypersensitive to the slightest popular disturbance; and he must

have foreboded his own fall, since he was accustomed to wear poison in an amulet around his neck, so that when the great crisis should arrive he might take his own life. "Ah! why am I not my grandson?" he longingly ejaculated.

This single cause of Napoleon's fall can be better seen in the record of his second captivity than in any other portion of his life. There is no such thing as absolute exhaustion short of death. But intermittent and flickering exertion is symptomatic of failing powers in a jaded horse; it forebodes the end in a worn-out man. Cheerful and busy at first, because recruited by a long and favorable sea-voyage, he set out in St. Helena at a racing gait to write history and mold the public opinion of Europe. Playful and energetic, he caught together the scanty remnants of his momentary grandeur, and emulated the masters of ceremony at the Tuileries in organizing a court and issuing edicts for the conduct of its little affairs. His life was to be that of a caged lion—caged, but yet a lion. The plan would not work. In the affairs of Longwood there were, as everywhere, hitches and irregularities. To Napoleon these soon became not the incidents, but the substance of life. With the departure of his secretaries the business of biographical composition became first irksome, then impossible, and the poor muse of history was finally turned out of doors. To regular exercise succeeded spasmodic over-exertion; complaint became the subject-matter for the exercise of both mind and tongue; daily association with kindly but second-rate persons checked the flow of great ideas; the combinations of Austerlitz and Wagram gave place to the small moves in a game of spite with a bureaucratic British governor. From the days of his boyhood until his alliance with Barras the exile had been a dreamy, vague, indefinite, unsuccessful fellow; his powers were not quickly developed. While he had France and Europe to work upon, he showed the extraordinary qualities repeatedly outlined, mind and hand, thought and deed, working together. Already jaded, his stupendous capacity became intermittent after the fatal armistice of Poischwitz; but it worked, for it still had the raw material of grand strategy and great politics to work on. This continued until after Waterloo. That battle, not a great one in itself, was nevertheless epic, both in its effects upon the world and in its ruin of the brains which had swayed

the destinies of Europe for twenty years. Between the flight to Charleroi and the escape to the Bellerophon, Napoleon shows no pluck and no brains.

In actual captivity his mind was without a sufficient task and under no pressure from necessity. It consequently, though somewhat invigorated at first, intermitted more and more toward the close, working, when it did work, awkwardly and with friction, until the physical collapse came, and the end was reached. The attempts to remodel history, the efforts to delineate his own and others' motives, the specious summaries of his career and its epochs, the fragmentary expositions of his philosophy in ethics, politics, and psychology—all the stately volumes which bear his name, his literary remains, in fact, present a pitiful sight when closely examined. They are but the scoriæ of a burnt-out mind, but dust and ashes; a splendid mass, but an extinct volcano. It was only natural that his successors and admirers should seek to erect a more enduring foundation for his fame by collecting and carefully editing what he had written when at his best, when acting according to his momentary, normal impulse, and when, therefore, he had the least pose and the greatest sincerity. But it is a proof of their shrewdness that they selected and published less and less after Erfurt, and that out of the voluminous pen-product of St. Helena they chose a hundred and fifty pages which the "Correspondence," intended to be the most splendid monument to the Emperor's glory, could present as authentic biographical material.

If, then, Napoleon was after all but a plain man, how did he become a personage? Simply because he was the typical man of his day, less the personal mediocrity; the typical burgher in personal character, the typical soldier in war, the typical despot in peace, and the typical idealist in politics; capable in all these qualities of analysis; capable, consequently, of being understood; capable of exhaustion and of being overwhelmed by combinations. In other words, he was really great because he was the shrewd common-sense personage of his age, considering the ideal social structure as a level of comfort in money, in shelter, in food, in clothes, in religion, in morality, in decency, in domestic good-nature, in the

commonplace good things fairly divided as far as they would go round. This was the side of his nature which in a period of social exhaustion planted him four-square as a social force, presented him to France as the rock against which the "red fool-fury" of Jacobinism had dashed itself to pieces, and gave him for a time command of all hearts. Thus established, he at once fell heir to French tradition—that is, to the continuous policy of the nation in foreign and domestic affairs; which was that France should be the Jupiter in the Olympus of European nations by reason of her excellence both in beauty and in strength. Here was a temptation not to be resisted, the superlative temptation like that of the serpent and the woman, the chance to transcend by knowledge, the opportunity to "hitch his wagon to a star," to commingle the glory of France with his own until the elements were no longer separable. Into this snare, great as he was in his representative plainness, he fell, and in the ensuing confusion he not only destroyed himself, but brought the proud and splendid nation which had cherished him to the very verge of destruction. He could not sway one emancipated people without swaying an emancipated Europe, and this after Austerlitz he determined to do. Then he lost his head: his wisdom turned out to be nothing but adoration of mere expediency; his strength proved weakness when, with his imperial idealism, he braved in Spain the idealism of a true nation; his vaunted physical endurance disappeared with self-indulgence, the golden head and brazen loins fell in a crash as the feet of clay disintegrated before the storm of national uprisings.

This being true, we have in his career every element of epic greatness: a colossal man, a chaotic age, the triumph of principle, the reëstablishment of historical equilibrium by means of a giant cast away when no longer needed. And this epic quality, which is not in the man alone nor in the age alone, appears when the two are combined, and then only. Looking at him in our cold light, he has every attribute of the commonplace adventurer; looking at the France of 1786 with our perspective, the people and the times appear almost mad in their frantic efforts to accomplish the work of ages in the moments of a single lifetime. Yet combine the two, and behold the man of the third estate rising, advancing, reflecting, and then planting himself in the foreground as the most dramatic figure of public life, and

you have a scene, a stage, and actors which cannot be surpassed in the range of history. To the end of the Consulate the action is powerful, because it represents reality: a nation unified, a people restored to wholesome influences, peace inaugurated, constitutional government established. There is so far no tawdry decoration, no fine clothes, no posing, no ranting. But with the next scene, that of the Empire, the spectator becomes aware of all these annoyances, and more. The leading actor grows self-conscious, identifies himself with the public interest for personal ends and to the detriment of the nation, displays no moral or artistic self-restraint, and soon arranges every element so as to make his studied personal ambitions appear like the resultants of ominous forces which act from without, and against which he is donning the armor of despotism for the public good. The play becomes a human tragicomedy, and, verging to its close, ends, like the tragedies of the Greeks, with a people betrayed and the force of the age chained to a torrid rock as the sport of the elements.

Was this the end, and did Napoleon have no place in history, as many historians have lately been contending? Far from it. From his couch of porphyry beneath the gilded dome on the banks of the Seine, the Emperor, though "dead and turned to clay," still exercises a powerful sway. The actual Napoleonic Empire had, as we have before remarked, a striking resemblance to those of Alexander and Charlemagne. Based, as were these, upon conquest, and continued for a little life by the idealism of a single person, it seemed like a brilliant bubble on the stream of time. But Alexander hellenized the civilization of his day, and prepared the world for Christianity; Charlemagne plowed, harrowed, and sowed the soil of barbaric Europe, making it receptive for the most superb of all secular ideals, that of nationality; Napoleon tore up the system of absolutism by the roots, propagated in the most distant lands of Europe the modern conception of individual rights, overthrew the rotten structure of the German-Roman empire, and in spite of himself regenerated the long-abused ideas of nationality and fatherland. It must be confessed that his own shallow political science, the second-hand Rousseauism he had learned from his desultory reading, had little to do with this, except

negatively. One by one he saw his faiths made ridiculous by the violent phases of Jacobinism after it took control of the Revolutionary movement. His heart, his conscience, his intellect, all undisciplined, then revolted against the metaphysic which had misled him, and "ideologist" became his most contemptuous epithet. Controlled by instinct and ambition, he nevertheless remained throughout his period the one thorough idealist among the men of action, Goethe being the superlative, transcendent genius of idealism among the thinkers. Each successive day saw his scorn of physical limitations increase, his impatience of language, customs, laws, of local attachment, personal fidelity, and national patriotism grow. The result was a fixed conviction that for humanity at large all these were naught. At last he planted himself upon the burgher philosophy of utility and expediency, putting his faith in the loyalty of his family, in homely dependence upon matrimonial alliance, in the passion of humanity for physical ease and earthly well-being. This was the concert by which he sought to create a federation of beneficent kingdoms that would win all men to the prime mover. Space and time rebelled; the lofty ideals of humanity and philosophy would not down; selfishness proved impotent as a support; the dreamer recognized that again he had been deceived. Haggard and exhausted, he finally turned, in the rôle of Napoleon Liberator, to the notion of nationality and of government swayed by popular will in all its phases. But it was too late. Instead of being the leader of a van, he had forgotten, in his own phrase, to keep pace with the march of ideas, and was a straggler in the rear, without a moral status or a devoted following.

All this is true; but it is equally true that much of his work endured both in France and in the civilized world. In France, indeed, the work he did has been in some details only too enduring. History is there to tell us that the test of high civilization is not necessarily in great dimensions. Those histories of the ancient world in which humanity seems strange and distasteful, of Egypt, Phenicia, Babylon, and Assyria, were wide in extent and long in duration: those of Greece and Rome, whose poets, statesmen, legislators, and warriors are our despair, were small in proportion and comparatively short in duration, while they were normal and healthy; the

world-empires of both were neither natural nor admirable. It will not do, therefore, to judge Napoleon by the length of his career, nor by the standards of other times and different circumstances. The centralization of administration in the commonwealth which he rescued from the clutches of anarchy was probably essential to the rescue; the expediency which he deliberately cultivated in the Concordat, in the laws of the family and inheritance, and in the fatal Continental System, was possibly a statesman's palliative for momentary political disease. His artificial aristocracy, his system of great fiefs, his financial shifts—who dares to say that these institutions did not meet a temporary want? Moreover, it is worth considering whether a direct reaction to moderate, sane republicanism from extreme and furious Jacobinism was possible at all, and whether a reaction from Napoleon's imperial democracy was not easier and the results more permanent. In other words, is it likely that the third French republic could have been the direct successor of the first? The question is certainly debatable. No pen can so delineate the sufferings of France under Napoleonic institutions as that of Taine has so ably and scathingly done; his wonderful etching powerfully exhibits painful truths. But who is to blame if a nation is hampered by its administration, by a centralization it no longer needs, by social regulations which it has outgrown, by political habits which do not suit the age? Not alone the man who inaugurated them, for ends partly selfish but also partly statesmanlike; the people who timidly endure are responsible for the doom which will certainly overtake any nation living in a social and political structure antiquated and unsuitable.

One thing at least the new France has done with magisterial style: she has introduced into her political machinery respect for political habit. The French government of to-day is distinctly an outgrowth of conditions, and not of theories. Its constitution has none of the fatal marks of completeness which her other republican constitutions have borne; on the contrary, there never was a period in modern times when to the outsider French institutions seemed as crescive as they do to-day. And they have abundant material on which to work. There are signs that the system of nations as armed camps, for which Napoleon set the example, is breaking by its own

weight; modern armies are mostly national schools controlled by scientific inquisitiveness and permeated by a civic spirit; the pacific federal system of the great European powers sometimes seems feeble and rickety, but it is in existence. Alliances are now federations for peace; the Triple Alliance continues to be a federation for peace; so too the Sextuple Alliance, so energetic and persistent in its support of Turkey, has been a federation for peace. Perhaps the day is nearer than we think when the Hague tribunal shall develop a vigorous, practical working system of international understandings, without appeal to war. Then certainly, but long before, let us hope, France may anchor her liberties in a bill of rights, destroy judicial inquisition, begin to slacken the bonds of her prefectoral system, emancipate her universities and academies, regenerate public feeling as to the increase of population by modifying her laws of the family, and go on not only to populate her own fertile fields, but to make the magnificent colonies which she has acquired the future homes of countless children, a field for exerting her superfluous energy—in short, when she may slough off her now superfluous Napoleonic institutions.

It would be utterly unjust, however, to plead a justification of Napoleon solely by such a monumental fact as that he was in all likelihood the forerunner of modern France. Even when the country adopted him, his positive, direct influence for good was great. The Concordat whatever its faults, partly secured a free church and a free state, separating thus what God had never joined together in holy wedlock; his splendid codes—for no matter who pondered and shaped them, they were his in execution—have guaranteed the perpetuity of civil equality not only in France, but, as the sequel has shown, throughout great expanses of Europe; the questions of a nation's right to its chosen ruler and government, agitated in a new form during the Hundred Days, were those with which succeeding generations were concerned until they were answered in the affirmative. The difference between the France of 1802 and that of 1815 is on one side painful, but on another side it is remarkably significant. The former was transitional and chaotic; the latter had that amazing but completed social union, stronger than any ever known in history, which has saved the country in succeeding storm-periods. In it there was respect for persons, for contract, for

property; the administration was unitary, homogeneous, and active; the finances, though not regulated, were restored to vigor; and the processes were inaugurated by which the great cities of France have become healthful and beautiful, while at the same time the internal improvements of the country have been systematized and rendered splendid in their efficiency. Revolutionary concepts were so modified and assimilated that the efforts of the dynasties, when put to the test of public opinion, failed because they were felt to be absurd by the masses. It was one of Napoleon's aphorisms that "to have the right of using nations, you must begin by serving them well." Like a good burgher, he made his servants comfortable and happy. His example, moreover, was reflected abroad throughout Europe; and to the millions of plain and not very shrewd inhabitants of other lands, the Revolution, as Napoleon had shaped it, lost many of the horrors with which Jacobinism, to the everlasting damnation of both the thing and its name, had clothed it. It is a question whether there was in existence a strong liberal France, such as idealists depict, that could pacifically have done this wonderful work. Examining and duly weighing the desperation of dynastic absolutism, it looks as if nothing but the counter-poison of Napoleon's militarism could have prevented its annihilating French liberalism. Without Napoleon the conservative liberalism of to-day would have been impossible.

Turning to the field of general history, there are certain facts, admittedly Napoleon's doing, which quite as certainly are among the most important factors of contemporary politics. Of themselves these would suffice to give him a high place in constructive history. In the first place, he deprived England of the monopoly in what had long been essentially and peculiarly her political ideal. What was the basis of the long conflict between England and France to which Napoleon fell heir? Was the struggle of these two glorious and enlightened sister nations a struggle for territorial ascendancy in Europe? Not entirely. Was it a life-and-death struggle for ascendancy in the western world? No. The Seven Years' War had decided that question against France, and the American war for independence had in a sense evened the score in its decision against England; for the prize had been awarded to a new people. No; the conflict did not rage over this. What,

then, was the cause? Nothing less than a passion for the ascendancy of one of these highest forms of civilization throughout the globe, including both Europe and America. This Anglo-Saxon political, commercial, religious, and social conception was, after the Napoleonic wars, no longer confined to Great Britain. Thence onward the great powers of Europe have been chiefly concerned, aside from their care for self-preservation, in partitioning Africa and Asia among themselves; and this process is no sooner complete than they begin to murmur about the Monroe doctrine and to cast longing eyes toward Central and South America. The state system which was once European has become coextensive with the sphere on which we live, and this notion of world-domination, so denounced when held by Napoleon, has become the motive-power of every great modern civilization.

If we consider the national politics of Europe beyond the boundaries of France, history again becomes a record of influences started by Napoleon's works, either of commission or of omission. Russia's grandeur as a European power appears to be largely due to the temporary extinction of Poland's hope for national resurrection. Had Napoleon, instead of playing his doubtful game with the grand duchy of Warsaw, turned into an autonomous permanency the scarcely known provisional government of Poland, which he actually inaugurated and which worked for a considerable time, and had he restored to its sway both the Prussian and Austrian shares in the shameless partition, we might have seen quite another result to the military migration of 1812. We can scarcely doubt, moreover, that Poland, restored under French protection, would have been a buffer state between Russia, Prussia, and Austria, rendering the crushing coalition an impossibility in 1813, while in 1814 the allies could probably never have crossed the French frontier, if indeed they had dared to go even so far in their march across Europe. But his positive achievement was quite as important. The Germany of to-day is a great federal state guided, but not dominated, by Prussia. What are its other important members? Bavaria, Würtemberg, and Baden—all three in their present extent and influence the creations of Napoleon; the nice balance of powers in the German Empire is due to his arrangement of the map. There is even a sense in which all

Germany, as we know it, sprang full armed from his head. He not merely taught the peoples of central Europe their strategy, tactics, and military organization: it was he who carried the standard of enlightenment (in his own interest, of course, but still he carried it) through the length and breadth of their territories, and made its significance clear to the meanest intellect of their teeming millions. Thereafter the longings for German unity, for German fatherland, for the organization of German strength into one movement, could never be checked. The swarm of petty tyrants who had modeled their life and conduct on the example of Louis XIV, and who in struggling to vie with his villainies had debauched themselves and their peoples, was swept away by Napoleon's ruthlessness, to give place to the larger, more wholesome nationality of the nineteenth century, which was destined in the end to inspire the surrounding nations with the new concept of respect, not alone for one's own nationality, but for that of others.

What French influence effected in Italy is a topic so recondite as to require separate discussion; for the results were not so immediate or so dramatic as they were in Germany. But the destruction of petty governments was as ruthless as in the north; the ideas which marched in Bonaparte's ranks found at least a large minority of intelligent admirers among the invaded; and Italian unity, though won by a family he feared and abused, is in no doubtful sense indebted for its existence, not merely to Napoleon's age, but to the ideas he disseminated and to the efforts at a practical beginning which he made. As to Austria-Hungary, the new historical epoch which makes her essentially the empire of the lower Danube takes its rise from Napoleon's time and influence. The relaxation of her grasp on Italy has thrown her across the Adriatic for the territorial expansion essential to her position as a great power. It has been her mission to rescue by moral influence some of the fairest lands in the Balkan peninsula from waste and anarchy. Mere proximity is a powerful factor; the turbulence of Austrian local patriotism has been the seed of wholesome discontent among the Christian populations of Turkey, whose first awakening was largely due to the emissaries sent by Napoleon to fire the hearts of the oppressed and suffering subjects of that distracted land. Servia is one example of this; and

in a sense the national awakening of Greece began with the hopes similarly aroused.

The astounding magic of his name in the United States is partly due to a quality of the American mind which makes its possessor the passionate and indiscriminating adorer of greatness in every form. The Americans are more French than the French in their admiration of power. But, after all, this is not the main reason for their interest in Napoleon. They are, dimly at least, aware of certain facts which have determined their history and made them an independent nation; though already stated and discussed, we may be pardoned for recapitulating them in this connection. Their first war for independence left them tributary to the mother-country both industrially and commercially. It was Napoleon who pitilessly, though slyly and indirectly, launched them into the second war with Great Britain, from which they emerged with some glory and some sense of defeat, but, after all, with the tremendous and permanent gain of absolute commercial independence. In the second place, their purchase of Louisiana, though understood by only a few at the moment, revolutionized their national system both inside and outside. That momentous step destroyed the literal interpretation of the constitution, hitherto enslaving a congeries of jarring little commonwealths in the bondage of verbalism, because, though manifestly beneficent and necessary, it could be justified before the law only by an appeal to the spirit and not to the letter. Thenceforward Americans have steadily been enlarging their constitutional law by interpretation, and the apparent timidity of amendment which they display is simply due to the absence of necessity for revision as long as expansion by interpretation continues. But certainly quite as important as this was also the displacement, by the acquisition of that vast territory, of what may be called the national center of gravity. Until then the aspirations of Americans had been toward Europe; the public opinion of the country had, until then, demanded the largest possible intercourse with that continent compatible with freedom from political entanglement. Thereafter there was a change in their spirit: a continent of their own was open to their energies. For two generations their history has been concerned with exploration, with mechanical invention, and with solving the great problem of how to

prevent an extension of slavery corresponding to the extension of territory. But nevertheless, steadily and vigorously two correlated concepts were propagating themselves: neglect of Europe, in order to expand and assimilate their recent acquisition; industrial exclusiveness, for the sake of this great home market which immigration, settlement, and the formation of new commonwealths were creating, not at the front door, but in the rear of the states stretching along the Atlantic. This resulted in a temporary "about-face" of the nation; and it is only now, when the prize of material greatness and of territorial unity has been secured, that the people turn once more toward the rising sun, in order to get from older lands everything germane to its own civilization, and to assimilate these acquisitions, if possible, in realizing its own ideals of moral grandeur.