

## CHAPTER LXV.

## THE EMPIRE, FROM 1807 TO 1812.

**Feudatory Kingdoms.** — It has already been seen that the Emperor tried to obtain external support by surrounding the Empire with feudatory kingdoms. The kingdom of Naples, under Joseph, and that of Italy, under Eugène de Beauharnais as viceroy, the Helvetian Confederation, of which Napoleon was mediator, the Confederation of the Rhine, of which he was protector, the kingdom of Holland, under Louis Bonaparte, and that of Westphalia, under Jerome, covered the whole frontier of his Empire on the northeast, east, and southeast. To the south Napoleon had nothing upon which he could depend. A degenerate branch of the house of Bourbon reigned at Madrid under the protection of a favorite, Godoy, who pursued a double policy toward France. Napoleon, on his return from Tilsit, determined by some means or other to bind the peninsula to his policy.

**Conquest of Portugal** (November, 1807); **Naval Armaments.** — He resolved first to drive the English out of Portugal, and offered to divide that kingdom with the court of Madrid. An army, commanded by Junot, crossed Spain and entered Lisbon without striking a blow. At the same time the Russians conquered Finland, and England bombarded Copenhagen for the purpose of capturing the Danish fleet and destroying the Danish arsenal. This odious act caused Denmark to join in the continental blockade, as did Austria also; Portugal had already joined it. From the extremity of the Baltic to the Straits of Gibraltar all the ports of the continent were closed against the English. At the same time, in all the ports, immense marine armaments were being prepared; the flotilla of Boulogne was reorganized. This time the whole continent sided with France. England was saved only by a mistake of Napoleon, — his intervention in Spain.

**Rupture with the Pope** (April, 1808). — Contentions began with Pius VII. on the subject of the continental block-

ade. The Pope tried to escape from the measures imposed upon all the states of the continent, refused to recognize Joseph as king of Naples, and constantly opposed the policy of France in Italy. Finally, Napoleon occupied Rome in April, 1808. Later he abolished the temporal dominion of the Pope, organized Rome and the surrounding country into two French departments, and held the pontiff in an honorable captivity at Savona. But he was only weakened by these measures, for a formidable opposition was at once organized against him among the clergy and the French Catholics. The great services he had rendered the Church were forgotten; the author of the Concordat was looked upon only in the light of a persecutor of the sovereign pontiff.

**Invasion of Spain** (1808). — The intervention of the Emperor in Spain had still graver consequences. The court of Madrid was greatly divided. Godoy ruled the king and queen, but was odious to the Prince of the Asturias and to the whole nation. An illness of Charles IV. determined the queen and Godoy to seek for an opportunity to deprive the heir presumptive of the throne; the latter defended himself by counter-plots. Both parties invoked the aid of Napoleon. His first plan was to persuade them to fly to Spanish America, as the house of Braganza had fled to Brazil. But at this point a revolt forced Charles IV. to abdicate in favor of his son, Ferdinand VII. Murat was already with an army near Madrid; he entered the city and persuaded the old king to go and have an interview with Napoleon at Bayonne. Ferdinand also went thither. Completely in the power of Napoleon, they were intimidated or seduced into abdicating in favor of the Emperor. Joseph Bonaparte gave up his crown of Naples to Murat and was made king of Spain, and a new constitution for the kingdom was promulgated.

In all this affair Napoleon had played a part which was advantageous neither to his character, his power, nor his glory. He desired to cause it to be forgotten by reason of the great services which he hoped to render to Spain by regenerating her. But while official Spain hastened into the presence of the new king, the people rebelled. The insurrection burst forth everywhere at once, with patriotic fury. Religious passion united with political passion to stir up the fire. The monks preached the war as a crusade. The movement soon became formidable; all the provinces rose in revolt. French couriers, and even the sick and

wounded, were slain. Joseph with difficulty reached Madrid. At Saragossa and Valencia the French troops were repulsed, and in Andalusia Dupont was surrounded at Baylen and forced to capitulate (July 20th).

This was the first reverse which Napoleon had sustained. The English immediately hastened to appear, and General Wellesley gained over Junot the battle of Vimeiro, which lost Portugal to the French. By September, 1808, they possessed in the whole peninsula only the provinces north of the Ebro. After an interview with Alexander at Erfurt, at which, by giving Russia Moldavia and Wallachia, he apparently secured the tranquillity of Central Europe, Napoleon was free to hasten to Spain. He already had one hundred thousand men there; he took from the grand army one hundred and fifty thousand of his valiant soldiers, and with them crossed the mountains. Nothing could withstand him; the enemy's centre was broken up, and the army entered Madrid, where Napoleon decreed the suppression of the Inquisition, of two-thirds of the convents, of feudal rights, and of internal custom-houses. On the left wing, Saint Cyr carried on a brilliant campaign in Catalonia. On the right, Soult drove thirty thousand English as far as Coruña, and compelled them to take refuge on board their ships.

**Abensberg and Eckmühl** (April, 1809). — But Napoleon was now called elsewhere, and the danger of this new enterprise became apparent. Austria, seeing him occupied in a terrible war in the Iberian peninsula, thought that the moment had come to avenge her disasters. England offered her 100,000,000 fr.; the Czar Alexander's enthusiasm for Napoleon seemed to grow cold; Germany, heavily taxed and stirred up by secret societies, became hostile, and the grand army, diminished by one hundred and fifty thousand men, was scattered from Hamburg to Naples. A bold offensive promised success, and success promised a general revolt. One hundred and seventy-five thousand Austrians, under the Archduke Charles, advanced slowly upon Bavaria. Napoleon, warned in forty-eight hours by means of the semaphore, left Paris on the 13th of April, and arrived on the 17th upon the scene of action. Already the archduke was manœuvring to throw his forces into the open space between Masséna and Davout. Napoleon promptly seized the central position himself, and summoned the two marshals to join him at once. Then, with his forces concentrated, he

charged the enemy's centre, cut it in two by the battle of Abensberg on the 20th, and by the capture of Landshut on the 21st; on the following day he fell upon the right of the Austrians, overcame them at Eckmühl, drove them back upon the Danube, and nearly captured their whole body. In five days of fighting Napoleon had taken sixty thousand men, one hundred pieces of cannon, cut the Austrian army in two, thrown the right wing into Bohemia, the left on the Inn, and conquered the route to Vienna. On the 10th of May, one month after the commencement of hostilities, he was before that capital, which, after a brief bombardment, opened its gates to him.

**Aspern, or Essling** (May 21 and 22, 1809). — Austria had still two armies: that of Italy, under the Archduke John, which had, upon learning of the victories of Napoleon, fallen back into Hungary; and that of the Archduke Charles, who found himself still at the head of one hundred thousand men in front of Vienna, but on the other side of the Danube. Napoleon turned against the latter. The passage of a great river in the face of a powerful army is a difficult operation. In this case the difficulties were increased by a sudden rise in the river, which carried away the French bridges when only a part of the army had crossed. For thirty hours the archduke made vain efforts to throw the French into the Danube: the gardens and houses of Aspern were captured and recaptured fourteen times. The archduke stopped first, and the French soldiers retired to the island of Lobau in the river. There were neither conquerors nor conquered. But more than forty thousand men, of whom twenty-seven thousand were Austrians, had been killed or wounded. Napoleon's battles were becoming more and more sanguinary.

**Wagram** (July 6, 1809). — The Emperor fortified himself in the island of Lobau. There was danger that the Archduke John might rejoin the Archduke Charles, and that the two might then surround him. The whole of the Tyrol was in revolt; the German nationality, which had been long trampled upon, began to arise. Only one reverse was necessary to cause an explosion. But Napoleon, on the 5th of July, crossed over successfully from the island of Lobau, with one hundred and fifty thousand men and five hundred and fifty pieces of cannon. At the break of day the French army found itself established on the enemy's left. The Austrians fell back upon the heights of Wagram. Next day

the archduke tried to turn the left wing of the French line, but was repulsed by Masséna. After a tremendous cannonade upon the enemy's centre, Macdonald was hurled upon it, attacked it, and forced it to fall back. At the same time Davout and Oudinot, on the right, carried the heights of Wagram. The Archduke Charles sounded a retreat. He had lost twenty-four thousand killed and wounded, twelve thousand prisoners, and twenty pieces of cannon. The French had seven thousand killed and eleven thousand wounded. This was not an overwhelming victory like those of Ulm, Austerlitz, and Jena; but Napoleon had no longer the same troops. A great many young soldiers and many foreigners had filled up the vacancies left in the grand army by the corps which had been sent into Spain, and with these inexperienced troops bold strokes would have involved too great risks. The Austrian army nevertheless fled, conquered and unable to rally or hold its ground. An armistice was signed first, at Znaïm, on the 11th of July; the treaty of Vienna, on the 14th of October. Austria lost, by this treaty, 3,400,000 souls, whom Napoleon and his allies divided among themselves, France acquiring in Illyria the largest share.

**Events in Spain; Flushing (1809).**—Meanwhile the war had continued in Spain, spreading itself through all the provinces. There were three hundred thousand Frenchmen in Spain; but Napoleon was not there: the jealousies of his marshals hindered all concert of action. The most celebrated affair was the memorable and desperate defence of Saragossa. Yet little advantage was taken of this victory. An expedition of Soult into Portugal failed completely, Ney evacuated Galicia; and though Wellesley was defeated at Talavera, the campaign was still a failure.

The English seized upon Flushing in August, 1809, and threatened the great arsenal of Antwerp. The national guards of the neighboring departments threw themselves into the town; fever decimated the forty-five thousand Englishmen who had landed in the island of Walcheren. Flushing had to be abandoned, and the greatest maritime armament of the century resulted in utter failure.

**Effect of these Last Events.**—Up to the treaty of Tilsit Napoleon had constantly advanced in glory and power. But a desire had then begun to be felt that the glorious flight of the imperial eagles should be arrested. The spolia-

tion of the Bourbons of Spain, the captivity of the Holy Father, caused the first disquietudes; the war with Spain and that with Austria increased them. Behind the regular armies and old governments which France had hitherto fought the people now arose. In Spain insurrection had paralyzed the efforts of immense forces; in Germany it had broken out in twenty different places; and at Schönbrunn, in the midst of his army, Napoleon had narrowly escaped being assassinated by a member of the Tugendbund. The battle of Essling caused alarm to many. These symptoms doubtless did not escape the penetrating eye of Napoleon. But, accustomed to success, he no longer took account of difficulties, and believed that nothing could withstand his power.

**Marriage of Napoleon with Maria Louisa (April 1, 1810).**—The marriage of Napoleon with Josephine had been without issue. The Emperor earnestly desired to have an heir of his own blood. He therefore resolved to contract another marriage. The glorious parvenu of the Revolution, the elected chief of a great people, demanded entrance into the family of kings. He believed that he could bind Austria to his cause by a marriage, and asked of the proud Hapsburgs the hand of one of their daughters, the Archduchess Maria Louisa. An unfortunate union; for in France the new empress was never popular, while among her own people she was regarded as a victim sacrificed for the house of Austria. In the eyes of many persons the divorce of Napoleon from Josephine Beauharnais, the gracious and devoted companion of his earlier years, was a divorce from good fortune.

**Birth of the King of Rome.**—The year 1810 passed without any war except that with Spain. On the 20th of March, 1811, a son was born to the Emperor, and was immediately proclaimed king of Rome. Many now believed that the powers would no longer oppose the Empire, since a descendant of the house of Hapsburg would be heir to it. It was said that Napoleon, having reached mature age and having to watch over the heritage of his son, would now occupy himself with smoothing the way for him, and would govern as a father instead of governing by strokes of genius. But there was no lack of people who in the midst of this grandeur saw the causes of ruin ferment and increase. Among them was Wellington (Wellesley). The year 1811, indeed, had not passed, before Napoleon began preparations for the rashest of his enterprises, — the expedition into Russia.