

Russians, who on this occasion recovered the greater part of the plunder which the French had taken from their cities.

Having repaired the bridges, the Russian armies advanced, and on the 12th of December prince Kutusoff established his head-quarters at Wilna. The retreat of the French from the Beresina to the Niemen was attended with horrors, to which no parallel can be found in the annals of the world. For weeks before they quitted Moscow, they had no regular supplies of food; they were now exhausted by long marches; harassed by an indefatigable foe, and exposed to the severity of a Russian winter, with scarcely a garment to protect their freezing limbs. Their route might not unfrequently be traced by the dead bodies, which appeared like the mounds in a church-yard when covered with snow. The scene of a night-watch often exhibited at dawn a circle of the dying and the dead, wrapped in rags, matting, old canvass, and even of raw hides stripped from the perished horses. The fugitives set fire to houses and villages: and many, when their joints were racked by the sudden transition from cold to heat, became frantic and fell into the flames. Numbers, with their feet frozen and half mortified, were left to perish in the snow. To pursue the detail of these complicated miseries would be tedious: the result may be calculated, when it is known, that of the three or four hundred thousand men who composed the invading army, not more than fifty thousand, including the Saxon auxiliaries, repassed the Russian frontiers. Their total losses by capture, up to the 26th of December, as stated in the accounts published at St. Petersburg, were forty-one generals, one thousand two hundred and ninety-eight officers, one hundred and sixty-seven thousand five hundred and ten non-commissioned officers and privates, and one thousand one hundred and thirty-one pieces of cannon.

Napoleon did not remain to witness the last scene of the tragedy. He reached Wilna on the 17th of December, and having transferred to Murat the chief command of the army, he took his departure for Warsaw, accompanied by Caulaincourt, from whence he made a rapid journey to Paris. He was the herald of his own discomfiture; and he proclaimed with circumstantial precision the results of a campaign, which did equal credit to his foresight as a politician, and to his skill as a general. He had lost an army, the most formidable, perhaps, that any nation ever brought into the field, if we take into consideration not only its numbers, but also its complete organization and equipment, the perfection of its military discipline, and the talents and experience of its generals. The wars of modern Europe had furnished no instance of so extensive and complete a destruction; and history records no similar event since the invasion of Greece by Xerxes. (1)

## LETTER XVII.

*Progress and Termination of the War, 1812—1814—Lord Wellington prosecutes his Successes in Spain—Fifth Campaign, 1813—Drives the Enemy before him, and enters the French Territory—Reaction in the internal State of France—Symptoms of a falling Empire—Glance at the Affairs of Sweden—Denmark—Norway—Prussia—and Austria—Defeat of the French Armies by the Russians, who now invade France—Discomfiture of Napoleon, who rejects Overtures of Peace from the Allies, and dissolves the Legislative Assembly, December the 31st, 1813—Campaign of the first three Months of 1814—Progress of the allied Arms—Surrender of Paris—Abdication of Napoleon, who retires to Elba—Reflections.*

THE conflagration of Moscow, and the destruction of the French army, were made known to the people of England while engaged in the ferment of a contested election. The sensations of astonishment and awe produced by these

(1) History of the Expedition to Russia, by General Count Philip de Segur.—Napoleon in Exile, or a Voice from St. Helena.

events gave place to a hope that the Russians, after making so tremendous a sacrifice, would follow up their victories, and extricate the nations of Europe from the galling yoke with which they had now been so long oppressed. Subsequent events soon heightened this hope into confidence; and the new parliament assembled on the 24th of November, 1812, under happier auspices than the most sanguine politician could have ventured to anticipate. One of its first measures was to vote the sum of one hundred thousand pounds to the duke of Wellington, as a reward for his military services; and two hundred thousand pounds for the relief of the sufferers in Russia.

The campaign in Spain of the year 1813, commenced under favourable auspices. The enemy, not being able to obtain reinforcements from France, was reduced to the necessity of acting on the defensive; a plan always ruinous to an invading army. Suchet alone attempted operations on a bolder scale; and on the 13th of April, he made a general attack on the line of the allies, in which, however, he was repulsed with loss, and compelled to retire upon Villena. Towards the end of May, lord Wellington moved in great force by the route of Salamanca towards Madrid, on which the new king once more abandoned his capital, and retired to Burgos. On the approach of the British army, the French continued their march towards the Ebro, without making any effort to defend the city or even the citadel of Burgos, upon which immense sums had been expended. The allies, by a sudden movement to the left, having crossed the Ebro near to its source, in their pursuit, found the French encamped in front of the town of Vittoria, under the command of Joseph Buonaparte, assisted by mareschal Jourdan, Soult having been summoned to the aid of Napoleon in Germany. Lord Wellington instantly resolved upon attacking them; and on the 21st of June, the battle began by a severe contest for the heights of Arlanzon, on the left of the French position. These were ultimately carried by general Hill, who then passed a rivulet which ran through the valley, as did general Picton at the head of another division. About the same time, general Graham on the opposite wing forced his passage over two bridges thrown across the stream; on which, after a severe contest, the whole French army retreated in good order on Vittoria, from whence they continued their march towards Pampeluna. As Vittoria was the grand dépôt of the French, a great quantity of cannon, and stores of every description to a vast amount, fell into the hands of the allies. After the defeat which they had sustained, the retreat of the French became so rapid as not to permit them to carry off their artillery and baggage, the whole of which, amounting to a hundred and fifty pieces of cannon, with four hundred and fifty wagons of ammunition, fell into the hands of the allies, whose loss on this occasion was about seven hundred killed and four thousand wounded, the greater part of whom were British. Such was the battle of Vittoria, which added fresh laurels to the illustrious commander. The French retired by Pampeluna on the road of Roncesvallos; and, being driven by sir Thomas Graham, who had taken Tolosa, from all their strong posts, they at length crossed the Bidissoa by the bridge of Irun, and entered the French territory.

On the eastern coast of Spain, events of a different kind were in the mean time passing. On the 31st of May, sir John Murray embarked his force on board the English fleet which was cruising on that station; and on the 3d of June invested Tarragona. Having possessed himself of fort St. Philippa, on the Col de Balaguer, which blocks the direct road from Tortosa to Tarragona, and advancing his batteries against the besieged place, he received intelligence that mareschal Suchet was marching from Valencia for its relief, with a force superior in number and quality to his own. Without waiting for any certain tidings of the enemy's approach, or information of his actual strength, he determined to avoid all conflict by a timely retreat; and accordingly re-embarked his army, leaving his cannon in the batteries, though admiral Holloway gave it as his opinion that they might have been brought off had he remained till night. The expedition then sailed to Alicant, and Suchet did not fail to triumph in the result.

the 30th of October, 1813. The end of this campaign was almost as disadvantageous as that of the preceding. France was menaced within its own frontiers as in 1793, but it had no longer the same enthusiasm of independence; and the man who had despoiled it of its rights found it at this trying crisis incapable of supporting him and defending itself. Thus is expiated, sooner or later, the enslavement of nations.

Napoleon returned to Paris on the 9th of November, 1812, and having obtained from the senate a levy of three hundred thousand men, he made with the greatest ardour preparations for a new campaign. He convoked the legislative body in order to associate it in the common defence. He communicated to it the documents relative to the negotiation at Prague, and demanded from it a new and last effort, in order to ensure a glorious peace, which was the universal wish of the French people. But the legislative body, hitherto silent and obedient, chose this critical moment to resist the emperor's demands. The allied sovereigns had issued a declaration from Frankfurt, on the 1st of December, explanatory of their views and policy; and the laudable moderation which it displayed, considering that it was put forth in the height of their successes, had made a deep impression on the minds of the legislative body, and convinced them that it was the wisdom of France to negotiate a peace, and not grant Napoleon the desired levy. "Victory," they said, "had conducted them to the banks of the Rhine, and the first use which they made of it was to offer peace. They desired that France might be great and powerful, because in a state of greatness and strength she constituted one of the foundations of the social edifice of Europe. They wished that France might be happy, that her commerce might revive, and that the arts might again flourish, because a great people can only be tranquil in proportion as they are happy. They offered to confirm to the French empire an extent of territory which France, under kings, never knew, because a valiant nation does not fall from its rank by having in its turn experienced reverses in an obstinate and bloody contest, in which it had fought with its accustomed bravery. They desired a state of peace, which, by a wise partition of strength, by a just equilibrium, might preserve their people from the numberless calamities which had overwhelmed Europe for the last twenty years."

This was, indeed, language so different from what had been previously expected; it was so just and reasonable, so equitable and generous, that it diffused a spirit of unanimity unknown since the commencement of the war. The conduct of Napoleon, on the other hand, was such as to cause universal indignation and astonishment. He seemed to be incapable of forming an estimate of his own perilous situation. The treaty of Luneville was the basis, modified according to circumstances, to which the allied sovereigns were disposed to revert; but the words and actions of the French emperor breathed nothing but war. Alarmed at the dangers impending over the country, the legislative body ventured to suggest, through the medium of a committee of deputation, who waited on him on the 28th of December, "that the declaration of the allies should be met by a counter-manifesto on his part, distinctly avowing the sacrifices which he was willing to make for the repose of Europe." To this counsel, enforced by the urgent remonstrances of Talleyrand, he returned a haughty answer, accusing them of "drawing a line of distinction between the interests of the sovereign and the people," and forbade the printing of the report. To the council of state he complained in angry terms of this application of the legislative body. "They stun me," said he, "with their clamorous demands for peace. Instead of assisting me with all their efforts, they seek to obstruct mine." On the 31st of December, 1813, he suddenly dissolved the assembly. This beginning of resistance was the harbinger of internal defection. After having extended itself from Russia over the whole of Germany, it was now going to pass from Germany to Italy and France. In the latter country, Napoleon, without being aware of it, was now under the influence of the royalist party, which had been secretly conspiring since the decline of the empire, and had once more revived its hopes. But now all depended on the fate of the war, which even

the winter had not suspended. Napoleon derived all his hopes from this source, and set out from Paris on the 25th of January, 1814, for this immortal campaign.

In the mean time, the allies were invading the empire at all points. The Austrians were advancing into Italy, while the British troops, who had made themselves masters of the entire peninsula during the last two years, had, as already mentioned, passed the Bidassoa under the victorious Wellington, and had crossed the Pyrenees. Three large armies were hanging on France to the east and the north. The grand allied army, of a hundred and fifty thousand men, under the command of prince Schwartzberg, was entering on France by way of Switzerland; that of Silesia under Blucher, consisting of a hundred and thirty thousand men, was entering by Frankfurt; and that of the north, of a hundred thousand men, under Bernadotte, the crown-prince of Sweden, had invaded Holland and penetrated into Belgium. Disregarding in their turn the fortified places, and instructed by Napoleon in the principles of carrying on war upon a grand scale, the allies determined to march upon the capital. At the moment when the emperor was quitting Paris to put his troops in motion, the two armies of Schwartzberg and Blucher were upon the point of effecting their junction in Champagne. Deprived of the support of the people, who were now mere spectators of the last act of the drama, Napoleon stood alone against the world, with a handful of veteran soldiers, aided by his genius, which had lost nothing of its audacity and its vigour. It certainly is an interesting spectacle to contemplate him at this moment, no longer an oppressor, no longer a conqueror, defending, foot by foot, the soil of his country, his empire, and his renown.

Under these circumstances he marched into Champagne against the two grand armies. General Maison was instructed to stop the career of Bernadotte in Belgium; Augereau the Austrians at Lyons; Soult the English upon the Spanish frontiers; prince Eugene was to defend Italy; and the empire, although assailed at its centre, still extended its vast arms to the heart of Germany by its garrisons beyond the Rhine. Napoleon did not despair of hurling back, by means of a powerful military reaction, this multitude of enemies out of France, and of again raising his banners upon the soil of the enemy. He dexterously placed himself between Blucher, who was descending the Marne, and Schwartzberg, who was descending the Seine: he flew from one army to another, and beat them both in succession. Blucher was defeated at Champaubert, at Montmirail, at Chateau-Tierry, and at Vau-champs; and, when his army was destroyed, Napoleon returned upon the Seine, overthrew the Austrians at Montereau, and drove them before him. His combinations were so powerful, his activity so great, and his manœuvres so certain, that he appeared on the point of entirely disorganizing these formidable armies, and by the annihilation of them to put an end to the coalition.

But if he conquered wherever he was present himself, the enemy gained ground wherever he was absent. Lord Wellington had entered Bourdeaux, where the white flag, the standard of the Bourbons, was erected. The Austrians occupied the city of Lyons. The army of Belgium was united to that of Blucher, and presented itself upon the rear of Napoleon. The spirit of defection entered into his own family, and Murat imitated in Italy the conduct of Bernadotte, and joined the coalition. The great officers of the empire still served him, but their support was feeble; and he did not find in them that zeal and unshaken fidelity of the inferior generals and his indefatigable soldiers. Napoleon had to march anew upon Blucher, who escaped him three times upon the left of the Marne, by a sudden frost which hardened the mud, in the midst of which the Prussians were set fast, and on the point of perishing; again, upon the Aisne by the defection of Soissons, which opened a passage to them at the moment when there seemed no chance of escape; and thirdly, at Caronne, by the fault of the duke of Ragusa, who prevented a decisive battle by allowing himself to be taken by surprise in the night. After all these fatalities, which disconcerted his plans, Napoleon, badly supported by his generals, and surrounded by the allied armies, conceived the

bold design of marching upon St. Dizier, in order to close the outlet of the enemy from France. This bold and finely conceived march alarmed for a moment the generals who commanded the confederated armies, to whom it shut out the chance of retreat; but stimulated by secret encouragement, without permitting themselves to be disturbed by manœuvres in their rear, they boldly advanced upon Paris.

This great city, the only one of the capitals of the continent which had not been invaded during this horrible war, now beheld the troops of all Europe entering upon its plains, and was on the point of undergoing the common humiliation. It was abandoned to itself. The empress Maria Louisa, who had some months before been nominated regent, quitted it and took up her residence at Blois. Napoleon was at a distance. There was no longer that desperation and enthusiastic ardour for liberty and the glory of "the great nation," which stimulates the people to resistance. The war was no longer between nations, but governments; and the emperor had taken upon himself alone all public interest, and placed all means of defence upon mechanical troops. There was a great and general exhaustion: a sentiment of pride alone inspired their grief at the approach of the enemy, and naturally wounded the heart of every Frenchman at witnessing the national soil trampled upon by armies which had been so frequently vanquished: but this sentiment was not sufficiently powerful to rouse the mass of the people against the enemy; and the intrigues of the royalist party, at the head of which was the celebrated Talleyrand, prince of Benevento, summoned the allied forces to the capital. On the 30th of March, they were under the walls of Paris, posted with their right towards Montmartre, and their left towards the wood of Vincennes. Prince Schwartzberg now addressed a proclamation to the people of Paris, in which, acquainting them with the presence of the army of the allies before their city, their object being a sincere and lasting reconciliation with France, he added, that "the attempts hitherto made to put an end to so many calamities have proved fruitless, because there exists in the very power of the government which oppresses you an insurmountable obstacle to peace." He farther hinted the expectation which was entertained by the allied powers that the people of Paris would declare in favour of "a salutary authority," and alluded to the conduct of the inhabitants of Bourdeaux; concluding with an assurance of paying every attention to the preservation and tranquillity of the city.

But the fate of the French emperor was not to be decided without another struggle. On the memorable 30th of March, a French army, under the command of Joseph Buonaparte, the ex-king of Spain, assisted by mareschals Marmont and Mortier, took a position on the heights near Paris, the centre of which was protected by several redoubts, and along which upwards of a hundred and fifty pieces of cannon were planted. An attack was immediately determined on by the allies, and it was commenced by the two princes of Wurtemberg. After an obstinate resistance, the opposite heights were carried. The success of the day, however, was for some time retarded by an accident which delayed the advance of Blucher's army. Ultimately, the positions gained by the allies, and the loss which the French had sustained, induced the latter to send a flag of truce, proposing the cessation of hostilities, on condition of yielding all the ground without the barrier of Paris. The terms were accepted, and in the evening count Nesselrode, the Russian minister, entered Paris. This was followed by a capitulation, and on the morning of the 31st of March, the troops of Marmont and Mortier marched out, carrying with them all their military appurtenances. The national guard, and their municipal gen-d'armerie, was entirely separated from the troops of the line; the arsenals and magazines were left in their existing state. On the same day the allied sovereigns entered Paris, attended by their guards, the greatest order being every where preserved.

The emperor of Russia now issued a declaration, expressive of the intentions of himself and the other allied sovereigns. It affirmed that they would no more treat with Napoleon Buonaparte nor with any of his family; that

they respected the integrity of France as it existed under its legitimate kings, and they would recognise and guarantee the constitution which France should adopt. On the 1st of April, the senate assembled pursuant to an extraordinary convocation. Talleyrand was appointed president, and its first act was to nominate a provisional government, consisting of five persons, the president himself being at the head. It then passed a decree, declaring that "Napoleon had forfeited the throne, that the right of inheritance was abolished in his family, and that the French people and army were absolved from their oath of fidelity to him." It proclaimed that man a tyrant, whose despotism it had so long facilitated by its adulation.

While these extraordinary proceedings were transacting in Paris, Napoleon, urged by the advice of others, had abandoned his march upon St. Dizier, and at the head of fifty thousand men marched upon Paris, in the hope of still preventing the entrance of the enemy. On his arrival, on the 1st of April, he learned that Paris had capitulated, and he took up a position at Fontainebleau, where he was informed of the defection of the senate and of his forfeiture of the crown. It was then, when he saw every thing shrinking from him, under his adverse fortune, the people, and the senate, and the generals, and the countries, that he resolved to abdicate in favour of his son. He sent the duke of Vicenza, the prince of Moskowa, and the duke of Tarentum, as plenipotentiaries to the allied sovereigns, and they were to take with them, on their road, the duke of Ragusa, who covered Fontainebleau with a division of his army. Napoleon, with fifty thousand men and his strong military position, might possibly have still imposed the sovereignty of his son upon the coalesced powers; but the duke of Ragusa abandoned his post, treated with the enemy, and left Fontainebleau exposed. He was then compelled to submit to the conditions of the allies, whose pretensions expanded with their power. At Prague, they were disposed to cede to him the empire within the Alps and the Rhone. After the invasion of France, they offered him at Châtillon the possession only of the ancient monarchy. Subsequently, they refused to treat with him for himself, but only in favour of his son. But now, resolved to exterminate the last remains of the revolution in Europe, his conquests, and his dynasty, they compelled him to an unconditional abdication. On the 11th of April, 1814, he renounced for himself and his children the thrones of France and Italy; and in exchange for his vast sovereignty, the limits of which had recently extended from Cadiz to the Baltic sea, he received the small isle of Elba, in the Mediterranean, opposite the grand-duchy of Tuscany. On the 20th of the same month, after an affecting farewell to his veteran companions in arms, he set out for his new principality.

Thus fell this extraordinary man, whose name for twice seven years had filled the world with wonder and amazement. His enterprising and organizing genius, his restless desires, his unbounded ambition, his dauntless energy, his love of glory, and the immense disposable force which the revolution had put into his hands, had rendered him the most gigantic being of modern times. That which would have rendered the destiny of another man extraordinary, was scarcely observed in his. Sprung from obscurity, elevated to the supreme power, from a simple officer in the artillery become the leader of the greatest of empires, he had dared to conceive the idea of universal monarchy, and, for a moment, he may be said to have realized it. Having obtained the empire by his victories, he set out himself to subdue Europe by means of France, and to reduce England by means of Europe. This design succeeded for several years, and from Lisbon to Moscow he subjected the people and their potentates to his general orders, and to the vast sequestration which he had prescribed. In exercising for his own advantage the power which he had received, in attacking the liberties of the people by his despotic institutions, the independence of states by war, he dissatisfied both the opinions and the interests of mankind, he excited universal hostility, and the nation withdrew itself from him. After having been long victorious, having planted his standard upon the walls of every capital, after having for ten years augmented his power, and gained a realm at every



The centre of the French retreating army having still maintained itself on the Spanish side of the frontier, general Hill made an attack upon it with a combined force of British and Portuguese, and obliged it to retire into France. Soult, who had now returned to the peninsula, and been constituted commander-in-chief of the French troops in Spain, and the southern provinces of France, rejoined the army on the 13th of July. On the 24th, he collected his right and left wings, and a part of his centre, at St. Jean Pied de Port, amounting in the whole to thirty or forty thousand men, with which he made an attack on an English post at Roncevallos, in which he succeeded; and other posts were consequently withdrawn. Various operations of attack and defence were now carried on during some successive days, and after considerable loss on both sides, the allied army, on the 1st of August, was nearly in its first position. The siege of St. Sebastian had, in the mean time, been advancing under the conduct of sir Thomas Graham; and an unsuccessful attempt to storm had been made on the 25th of July, which occasioned a severe loss. On the 31st of August, another attempt was undertaken by order of lord Wellington, which, though attended by peculiar and unseen difficulties, succeeded, at the expense of two thousand three hundred men in killed and wounded. The importance of the place was proved by a vigorous effort that was made to relieve it, but which was repelled by the Spanish troops alone. The strong castle of St. Sebastian was taken on the 18th of September, in the operations against which the British navy rendered efficient aid.

On the 7th of October, lord Wellington entered France, by crossing the Bidassoa, which was performed at different fords, by a series of spirited actions against the enemy's defences. The strong fortress of Pampeluna, which had been in a state of blockade from the time of the battle of Vittoria, was induced to accept of a capitulation on the 31st of October, the garrison remaining prisoners of war. This event having disengaged the right wing of the allied army from the service of covering the blockade, lord Wellington put in execution a plan which he had projected against the enemy, the object of which was, to force their centre and establish the allied army in the rear of their right. The attack was made by different columns on the 10th of November; and after various actions, which occupied the whole day, the purpose was attained at night. The French during the night quitted all their works and posts in front of St. Jean de Leon, and crossed the Nivelle: and being pursued on the following day, they retired to an entrenched camp in front of Bayonne. The result of this operation was, the expulsion of the French from positions which they had been fortifying with great labour for three months, and taking from them fifty pieces of cannon, and fourteen hundred prisoners. On the 9th of December the river Neve was crossed by a part of the allied army: and on the four following days several desperate attacks were made by the French during the completion of this passage; but they were finally repulsed, and the enemy, after great loss, withdrew to his intrenchments. The British and Portuguese, during these few days, lost between four and five thousand men in killed, wounded, and missing. Thus the year 1813 closed with lord Wellington's obtaining a firm footing on the French territory.

But the die was now cast; the tide of events was now turned. Since his retreat from Moscow, Napoleon had entered upon a new series of events. The decline of his empire was now manifest; all Europe had become weary of his domination; and all those by whose concurrence he had been raised, took part against him. At home the priests had secretly conspired since his rupture with the pope: eight state-prisons had been officially erected for the disaffected of this party. The mass of the nation also showed itself as weary of his conquests as it had been formerly of factions. It had expected from him attention to private interests, the increase of commerce, respect for the interests of humanity; and it found itself oppressed by conscriptions, by imposts, by the blockade, and by the "consolidated taxes," the inevitable result of his conquering system. He had no longer for adversaries merely the small number of men who had remained faithful to the revolution, and whom

he called *ideologists*, but all those who, without any precise opinions, wished to realize the tangible benefits of a better state of civilization. Abroad the people groaned under a military yoke, and the humiliated dynasties aspired to restore themselves. The whole continent of Europe was ill at ease, and a check naturally led to a universal insurrection. "I triumphed," said Napoleon himself, when speaking of the preceding campaigns, "in the midst of perils always springing up again. As much address was necessary as of force. If I had not conquered at Austerlitz, I should have had all Prussia in arms. If I had not triumphed at Jena, Austria and Spain would have declared themselves upon my rear. If I had not fought at Wagram, which was not so decisive, I should have feared that Russia would have abandoned me; that Prussia would have risen up against me, and the English were before Antwerp."<sup>(1)</sup> Such was his actual condition; the more he advanced in his career, the more necessary did it become for him to conquer, and that decisively. Thus, when defeat and disaster overtook him, the kings whom he had subdued, and the kings whom he had created, the allies whom he had aggrandized, the states which he had incorporated with the empire, the senators who had flattered him so lavishly, and even his companions in arms, abandoned him.

The field of battle, which in 1812 Napoleon had conveyed to Moscow, was transferred to Dresden in 1813, and was around Paris in 1814—so rapid was the reverse of fortune. The cabinet of Berlin began the defection. On the 1st of March, 1813, Prussia reunited its arms with those of Russia and England, which formed the sixth coalition, and Sweden shortly after was added to the confederacy. The emperor, whom the allies considered to be crushed, opened the campaign with new successes. The battle of Lutzen, gained on the 2d of May, with raw conscripts; the occupation of Dresden; the victory of Bautzen; and the war carried to the banks of the Elbe astonished the coalition. Austria, which was placed in 1810 on the footing of peace, was again about to take up arms: it already meditated a change of alliance, and proposed itself as mediator between Napoleon and the confederates. Its mediation was accepted; an armistice was concluded at Plesswitz on the 4th of June, and a congress assembled at Prague to negotiate the peace. The views of the parties, however, were soon found to be strangely at variance with each other. Napoleon would on no account consent to a diminution of his power, and Europe would no longer remain subject to him. The confederated powers, in concurrence with Austria, demanded that the empire of France should be bounded by the Rhine, the Alps, and the Meuse; which was disdainfully rejected, and the negotiators separated without coming to any conclusion. War alone could terminate this grand debate. But the power of France was now become greatly diminished. Napoleon had only two hundred and eighty thousand men against five hundred and twenty thousand. He wished to drive the allies beyond the Elbe, and dissolve as usual this new coalition by the promptitude and vigour of his measures; and for a short time victory still clung to his standard. He beat the united allies at Dresden; but the defeats of his lieutenants deranged his plans. Macdonald was vanquished in Silesia; Ney near Berlin; Vandamme at Kulm. Finding himself unable to make head against the enemy, which was now ready to burst upon him from every quarter, Napoleon began to think of retreating. The princes of the confederation of the Rhine chose this moment to desert the French empire. A sanguinary engagement took place between the two armies at Leipsic, and the Saxons and the Wurttembergers passed over to the enemy on the field of battle. This defection and the augmented force of the allies, whom experience had now taught to make war more compactly and skilfully, compelled Napoleon to retreat after a struggle of three days. His army marched in the greatest confusion towards the Rhine, of which the Bavarians, who had also revolted, wished to prevent the passage; but the French crushed them at Hanau, and re-entered upon the territory of the empire, on

(1) Memorial of St. Helena, tom. iii. p. 251