

Thus fell this man, who alone, for fourteen years, had filled the world. His enterprising and organising genius, his power of life and will, his love of glory, and the immense disposable force which the revolution placed in his hands, have made him the most gigantic being of modern times. That which would have rendered the destiny of another extraordinary, scarcely counts in his. Rising from an obscure to the highest rank; from a simple artillery officer becoming the chief of the greatest of nations, he dared to conceive the idea of universal monarchy, and for a moment realized it. After having obtained the empire by his victories, he wished to subdue Europe by means of France, and reduce England by means of Europe, and he established the military system against the continent, the blockade against Great Britain. This design succeeded for some years; from Lisbon to Moscow he subjected people and potentates to his word of command as general, and to the vast sequestration which he prescribed. But in this way he failed in discharging his restorative mission of the 18th Brumaire. By exercising on his own account the power he had received, by attacking the liberty of the people by despotic institutions, the independence of states by war, he excited against himself the opinions and interests of the human race; he provoked universal hostility. The nation forsook him, and after having been long victorious, after having planted his standard in every capital, after having during ten years augmented his power, and gained a kingdom with every battle, a single reverse combined the world against him, proving by his fall how impossible in our days is despotism.

Yet Napoleon, amidst all the disastrous results of his system, gave a prodigious impulse to the continent; his armies carried with them the ideas and customs of the more advanced civilization of France. European societies were shaken on their old foundations; nations were mingled by frequent intercourse; bridges thrown across boundary rivers; high roads made over the Alps, Apennines, and Pyrenees, brought territories nearer to each other; and Napoleon effected for the material condition of states what the revolution had done for the minds of men. The blockade completed the impulse of conquest; it improved continental industry, enabling it to take the place of that of England, and replaced colonial commerce by the produce of manufactures. Thus Napoleon, by agitating nations, contributed to their civilization. His despotism rendered him counter-revolutionary with respect to France; but his spirit of conquest