

him. They knew his strength. They feared him and offered to compromise if he would abandon his dream of world-conquest. Even after the disaster in Russia it was possible for him to have retained in the north the left bank of the Rhine and in the south Nice and Savoy; but he blindly refused such terms. He would have all or nothing, and in the end his enemies saw that their only safety lay in crushing him completely. His final failure after the return from Elba was due to the universal conviction that he could not be trusted. He had so outraged and violated Europe that Europe would not tolerate even a Napoleonic dynasty. The dream of a Bourbon world power ended with the death of Louis XIV in 1715. That of a Napoleonic supremacy over the world ended at Waterloo in 1815. It is quite possible that the year 1915 will see decisions even more momentous than those of these earlier dates. It seems as if the finger of God has written in large letters at regular intervals across the pages of history the fate which attends the ambition for world-mastery.

Napoleon arrived in Elba on May 3, 1814, and left it on February 26, 1815. By the treaty signed at Paris on April 11, 1814, Elba, which had been under French rule for a time, became a separate and independent state with Napoleon as its despotic sovereign. After a momentary hesitation Elba went into transports at the arrival of its new ruler. The islanders had been given no notice of their destiny. Many of them believed that, in the new settlement of Europe, Elba would go to Great Britain as Malta had gone at an earlier period, and some bold spirits had talked of making a declaration of independence and of building up Elba as a nation. The arrival of Napoleon satisfied, however, the highest aspirations of the Elbans. Not only would the island now be an independent state; the fact that the conqueror of the world had come to rule the Elbans was staggering in its appeal to their pride. The civic officials welcomed Napoleon with florid eloquence. Island poets burst into song. The representative of the Church praised God for this crowning mercy; it would, he said, inundate the island with riches. The people of Elba were only too ready to believe that now for them a new era was dawning. They were to bask in the sunshine of endless prosperity. There should be no more taxes. All injustices should be righted, all grievances remedied. It was said that the Elbans could not have been more enthusiastic if a god had come to dwell among them. The joy was without discrimination, and later, when Napoleon insisted on the payment of taxes, his popularity suffered an eclipse with many of the islanders. But it was a happy multitude which crowded the strand at Porto Ferraio when Napoleon landed. He issued a proclamation saying that he