

and in the extraordinary excesses and successes which attended and followed that outbreak. This period covered the time till Napoleon became Consul and Emperor, till his final overthrow, and for a couple of decades beyond that event. Practically during the earlier half of this period, Great Britain and Ireland were at war with the might of France, a might wielded, during a great part of the time, by the ablest adventurer of whom history tells. Not only that, but from time to time, Napoleon was able to force the other powers of Europe to unite with him and join their forces to his. The great Corsican, with the intuition of genius, well knew where his greatest and most to be dreaded foe was to be found, and for years put forth the most determined efforts, happily without success, to humble the British pride.

A favorite subject in the old debating societies of my boyhood was "Which was the greater general, Napoleon or Wellington?" Judging from newspaper reports, the same old question is still a favorite. It is well that it should be. I have heard and read discussions on this subject many times, but do not remember hearing or seeing it thoroughly debated, except incidentally, on the basis, after all the fair one, of the relative opportunities of the two men. To form a just opinion on that question, which is but an academic one, it should be borne in mind that Napoleon had absolute, uncontrolled command of all the resources of his Empire, no one to interfere with him in their disposal; while his rival, seldom properly supported by the authorities at home, was almost always short of men and hampered by a scarcity of supplies.

This looks like, and is, a digression from the subject I had in view when outlining this article. The reason for the digression is to call attention briefly to the circumstances which prevailed in the closing years of the last century and the early part of this, as well as to the two foremost figures of that era. Everyone can fill in the sketch.

In the opening years of the 19th century Great Britain and Ireland, sometimes with allies and sometimes almost without, carried on a desperate struggle. Omitting a few brief interludes, more in the nature of truces than of peace, this struggle was carried on without intermission till Waterloo. It was not a mere