

of sacrifice, re-equipped in a short time, with his wonderful activity, a new army, and took the field again on the 15th of April, 1813.

But since the retreat of Moscow, Napoleon had entered on a new series of events. It was in 1812 that the decline of the empire manifested itself. The weariness of his domination became general. All those by whose consent he had risen, took part against him. The priests had conspired in secret since his rupture with the pope. Eight state prisons had been created in an official manner against the dissentients of his party. The national masses were as tired of conquest as they had formerly been of factions. They had expected from him consideration for private interests, the promotion of commerce, respect for men; and they were oppressed by conscriptions, taxes, the blockade, provost courts, and duties which were the inevitable consequences of this conquering system. He had no longer for adversaries the few who remained faithful to the political object of the revolution, and whom he styled *idéologues*, but all who, without definite ideas, wished for the material advantages of better civilization. Without, whole nations groaned beneath the military yoke, and the fallen dynasties aspired to rise again. The whole world was ill at ease; and one check served to bring about a general rising. "I triumphed," says Napoleon himself, speaking of the preceding campaigns, "in the midst of constantly reviving perils. I constantly required as much address as voice. Had I not conquered at Austerlitz, all Prussia would have been upon me; had I not triumphed at Jena, Austria and Spain would have attacked my rear; had I not fought at Wagram, which action was not a decided victory, I had reason to fear that Russia would forsake, Prussia rise against me, and the English were before Antwerp."¹ Such was his condition; the further he advanced in his career, the greater need he had to conquer more and more decisively. Accordingly, as soon as he was defeated, the kings he had subdued, the kings he had made, the allies he had aggrandized, the states he had incorporated with the empire, the senators who had so flattered him, and even his comrades in arms, successively forsook him. The field of battle extended to Moscow in 1812, drew back to Dresden in 1813, and to Paris in 1814; so rapid was the reverse of fortune.

The cabinet of Berlin began the defections. On the 1st of March, 1813, it joined Russia and England, which were forming

¹ *Mémorial de Saint Hélène*, tome ii. p. 221.