

Aboukir and Trafalgar—the last dearly bought by the great sailor's death—saved Europe from the arch despot's domination. Nevertheless, an almost unbroken series of victories raised Napoleon's star of empire to its very zenith. The names of Marengo, Hohenlinden, Austerlitz, of Jena, Eylau, Friedland, Wagram, mark successive steps of his advance to almost complete supremacy in Europe. He blotted out ancient kingdoms and overturned historic dynasties. He partitioned some of the oldest thrones of Europe among his own family. He made his brothers, kings; his sisters, princesses; his marshals, grand dukes and sovereigns. But, as with many another usurper, his "vaulting ambition overleaped itself and fell on the other side."

His attempt to conquer the Spanish throne, with its historic memories of the Emperor Charles V., for his brother Joseph Bonaparte, was the beginning of the near approaching end. In the Peninsular War he first met his match in military genius, in fertility of resource, in dauntless audacity. In England's Iron Duke, Napoleon found himself face to face with his destiny. By the hard-won battles of Talavera, Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, of Fuentes de Onor, of Badajos and Salamanca, and finally by the glorious victories of Sebastian, Pampeluna and Vittoria, the power and prestige of Napoleon were broken and the name and fame of England's soldiers and generals were established forever.

Meanwhile, Napoleon when at the height of his power exhibited the baseness of his soul by his divorce from his faithful and devoted wife, Josephine. For thirteen years she had exerted an influence which no one else possessed "to soften his morose disposition, calm his asperity and moderate the movements of his perturbed spirit." The blow fell with crushing weight and inexorable force. She knew too well the relentless, unbending spirit of the man to attempt unavailing resistance. "Of course," says Dr. Ridpath, "he did what could be done to palliate the fall of her whom he had loved with a certain tyrannical fondness." In his relations with women, Napoleon uniformly showed himself the vulgar tyrant. He returned with upstart haughtiness and cruel insult the tears and supplications of the beautiful and unfortunate Queen Louisa of Prussia, mother of the late Kaiser Wilhelm. He insulted with insolent familiarity the ladies of honour of the palace.

He followed with unkingly and with even unmanly persecution the brilliant Madame de Staël, whom he hated with all