

empire which now stretched from the kingdom of Naples to the shores of the Baltic. It was as though an evil genius was driving him to destruction. When his reduced and starving army entered Moscow, the old capital of Russia, he found the city had been fired before his arrival. Driven to return, the backward march was marked by the bodies of men and horses which lined the route. The cold was intense, the country a desert, and the constant attacks of the Cossack troops upon the army were impossible to withstand. Never was a failure more complete, and his enemies were not slow to use their advantage against him.

Russia, Prussia, and Austria rose in alliance, and near Leipsic, at the "Battle of the Nations," the new army which the emperor had collected was totally defeated. Instantly the other subject kingdoms threw off his yoke, and in an incredibly short time the Empire of Napoleon had vanished. It is small wonder that he failed to realize this, and obstinately refused terms of peace on the condition that he would henceforth confine himself to the borders of France. But this obstinacy led immediately to his downfall, for he was forced, in April 1814, to abdicate the French throne, and to retire in captivity to his tiny island kingdom of Elba. There was still one more scene to be played in the drama of this ambitious, brilliant man, who for the last ten years had held Europe in his hand,