HISTORY

OF THE

CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

OF

FRANCE UNDER NAPOLEON.

FORMING A SEQUEL TO

"THE HISTORY OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION."

BY

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&c. &c. &c

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BOOK XLIV.

MOSCOW.

The Niemen was crossed on the 24th of June, without any opposition on the part of the Russians, and every circumstance proclaimed that the same motives which had prevented them from offering any resistance in the environs of Kowno, had also had a similar effect with regard to the other portions of their frontier. Having no doubt but that Marshal Macdonald on his left, directed to effect the passage of the Niemen near Tilsit, and that Prince Eugene on his right, directed to cross it in the neighbourhood of Preun, had met with the same facility in the execution of their orders; Napoleon was only anxious to advance upon Wilna, in order to seize the capital of Lithuania, and to place himself between the two hostile armies in such a manner as to prevent their future union. However, before quitting Kowno, he was anxious, whilst his corps should march upon

Wilna, to devote his attention to various points which his rare forethought never neglected. To secure his line of communication when he should advance, had always been one of his first cares, and it was a subject of more than ordinary importance when such immense and difficult tracts of country had to be traversed, through the midst of a hostile cavalry the most perfectly suited to harass the march of an invading army.

With this view he had the materials of the bridges which had been thrown across the river above Kowno, replaced on the waggons, and consigned to the train of Marshal Davoust; and directed the indefatigable General Eblé to construct at Kowno itself, a bridge upon piles, so as to secure an uninterrupted passage across the Niemen. At the same time he ordered him to construct a similar one across the Wilia, in order to render the communications of the army in every way secure. The country afforded an abundant supply of wood for the construction of these works, and the engineer corps was well provided with all the other necessary materials, such as iron-work, cordage, and tools. In the next place, Napoleon took care to surround Kowno with defensive works, that the vast mass of material there collected might be secured from the enemy's attack. When these objects had received sufficient attention, he bestowed a care equally zealous on the construction of hospitals, bakeries, magazines for all sorts of stores, and of boats suitable for the navigation of the Wilia, as far as Wilna; and gave orders with the object of arranging that by a single transit, the convoys which had come from Dantzic by the Vistula, the Frische-haff, the Pregel, the Deime, the canal de Frederic, and the Niemen, should ascend from Kowno as far as Wilna. Unfortunately, the Wilia, much shallower than the Niemen, and having a much more sinuous course, afforded a means of transport scarcely less difficult than that by land. It was estimated that not less than twenty days would be occupied in effecting the passage of the Wilia from Kowno to Wilna, and this was almost the time occupied in the journey from Dantzic to Kowno.

Whilst bestowing his usual zealous attention upon these various objects, Napoleon set his troops in motion. The reports received respecting the enemy's position, (reports which would have been unintelligible to any one but Napoleon,) represented the army of Barclay de Tolly as forming a species of semicircle around Wilna, and connected by a chain of Cossacks with that of Bagration, which was much lower on our right in the environs of Grodno. According to these reports the army of Barclay de Tolly, which

was more particularly opposed to the main body of our troops, was distributed around us in the following manner. Between Tilsit and Kowno, towards Rossiena; and consequently on our left, was said to be stationed the Wittgenstein corps, supposed to number some twenty and odd thousand men, whilst the Bagowouth corps, which, including the Ouvaroff corps of cavalry, amounted to nineteen thousand men, was at Wilkomir; and at Wilna itself, was encamped the Imperial guard, with the reserves, amounting altogether, inclusive of the heavy cavalry, under General Korff, to twenty-four thousand men. Moreover, in front of us, on the Wilna route, but somewhat to our right, were spread other troops, of which the number was unknown, but which could not be inferior to that of the detachments already enumerated. These were Touczkoff's corps, encamped at Nowoi-Troki, numbering about nineteen thousand troops, that of Schouvaloff encamped at Olkeniki, and numbering about fourteen thousand, and finally, on the extreme right, that of Doctoroff, containing about twenty thousand troops, posted at Lida, and connected by eight thousand Cossacks, with the army of Prince Bagration. This distribution of the 130,000 troops under Barclay de Tolly was but imperfectly known, but the fact of its distribution in a semicircle around Wilna, in masses somewhat stronger on our left and front than on our right, and connected by Cossacks with the troops under Bagration, was sufficiently certain to enable Napoleon to order the march of his army upon Wilna with sufficient knowledge of the state of existing circumstances.

Marshal Macdonald on our extreme left, succeeded in crossing without difficulty the Niemen at Tilsit. He had under his command 11,000 Poles, and 17,000 Prusisans, and received orders to advance upon Rossiena, without precipitation, in such a manner as to cover the navigation of the Niemen, and to invade Courland in proportion as the Russians should fall back upon the Dwina. Napoleon directed Marshal Oudinot's corps, numbering 36,000 men, upon Janowo, and commanded the Marshal to pass the Wilia for the purpose of advancing upon Wilkomir. It was probable that this corps would encounter that of Wittgenstein, which would traverse Wilkomir in its retreat from Rossiena, and Napoleon reinforced it, therefore, with a division of cuirassiers, belonging to the third corps of the cavalry of reserve. He was anxious, also, to transport beyond the Wilia, but at a point somewhat nearer Wilna, Ney's corps, which also consisted of 36,000 men; for Oudinot and Ney, marching parallel to each other, would be sufficiently strong to keep the enemy in check until aid could be afforded them, even if,

contrary to all probability, they were to fall in with the main body of the Russian army. They would have nothing to fear, therefore, with respect to Wittgenstein or Bagowouth, either separate or united, and by acting in unison would be able to overwhelm them.

Having taken these, almost superabundant, precautions with respect to his left, Napoleon resolved to march directly upon Wilna, with Murat's 20,000 horse, Davoust's 70,000 infantry, and the 36,000 veteran soldiers of the guard; for with 120,000 troops immediately at his command, he felt certain of being able to vanquish all obstacles, and, by piercing the Russian line towards Wilna, of entirely separating Barclay de Tolly from Bagration.

With respect to the enemy's troops posted on our right, although nothing certain was known with respect to them, it was considered that they were situated between Nowoi-troki, and Lida, forming Barclay de Tolly's left wing, and amounting at the most to no more than 40,000 men; and as Prince Eugene would have 80,000 troops at his command in his projected passage of the Niemen at Prenn, he would have no difficulty in resisting them, should the Russians, contrary to their practice, take the offensive.

The execution of these orders, given on the day succeeding the passage of the Niemen, was carried out, whilst Napoleon, established at Kowno, devoted himself to the various subjects demanding his attention which, we have already mentioned; only advancing with the troops in person, when they advanced posts gave information of the presence of the enemy. On the 25th Murat and Davoust advanced, the one at the head of his cavalry, the other at the head of his infantry, as far as Zismary, after having traversed a difficult tract of country in which the Russians could easily have stopped their progress; for their course had lain in fact along the side of the wooded hills which separate the bed of the Wilia from that of the Niemen, confined between these hills and the steep banks of the Niemen and having but little space in case of an attack in which to deploy. On the evening of the 25th they halted at Zismary in a far more favourable country, the angle formed by the Wilia and the Niemen being infinitely more open. On the following day, the 26th, they passed the night on the Jewe road, having met in their march but a few Cossacks, who fled at their approach, after having first set fire, when there was time, to the farms and chateaux. The weather remained clear and serene, but the villages were already only met with at distant intervals, and the opportunities of obtaining supplies had become very rare. The soldiers of Marshal Davoust's corps, carrying their bread on their backs, and being accompanied

by a troop of cattle, were well provided with provisions; but they were somwhat fatigued with the length of their marches, and some of the younger of them, especially of the Illyrians and Dutch, remained on the road exhausted. The horses, especially, suffered much, and for want of oats were driven every evening to feed in the field on the green rye, which gratified whilst it failed to nourish them. The reserve artillery and the waggons loaded with munitions and provisions were in the rear. Murat's cavalry, which, unfortunately, he wore out with useless movements, was already very much fatigued.

By the 27th, Jewe was reached, and as this place is no more than a long day's journey from Wilna, Murat, in order to be able to reach this city early on the following day, advanced to Riconti, which is three or four leagues in advance of Jewe.

But neither the court of the Czar, nor his army, were to be found at Wilna. The passage of the Niemen, commenced on the morning of the 24th, was known on the evening of the same day at Wilna, whilst the Emperor Alexander was present at a ball given by General Benningson.

The news of this event, brought by a domestic of Count Romanzoff's, was a source of considerable consternation, and added to the confusion which already existed in the staff. Wishing to have the advantage of much advice Alexander had carried with him a crowd of personages of very various character, rank, and station. Independently of General Barclay de Tolly, who did not give his orders as general in chief of the army, but as minister of war, Alexander had with him General Benningsen, the grand duke Constantine, an old minister of war named Araktchejef, the ministers of Police and the interior, MM. de Balachoff and Kotchoubey, and Prince Walkouski; this last personage performing the functions of chief of the Emperor's staff. To these Russians, who were for the most part animated with violent sentiments, were added a number of foreigners who had fled to Alexander from the persecutions of Napoleon, or from his influence and his glory, which they detested. Amongst these were an officer of engineers named Michaux, of Piedmontese origin, and in high consideration with Alexander; a Swede, the Count of Armfeld, who had been compelled by the political events of Sweden to fly to Russia, a man of some mind, but nevertheless held in little esteem; an Italian named Paulucci, very imaginative and very petulant; several Germans, of whom may be more particularly mentioned the Baron de Stein, whom Napoleon had excluded from the Prussian government, who was the idol in Germany of all the enemies

of France, and whose character presented a strange mixture of liberalism and aristocratic sentiment blended with the most ardent patriotism; an active, intelligent, and well informed officer of the staff, ever eager to put himself forward, Colonel Walzogen; and lastly, a Prussian General, Pfuhl, who was more a savant than a military man, who exercised great influence over Alexander, for which reason he was detested by all the habitués of the court, and who was regarded by some persons as possessed of superior genius, whilst others considered him as incapable of rendering the least real service, and only capable of influencing for a certain time by his very singularity of character the mobile and dreamy imagination of the Emperor Alexander.

It was in the midst of all these counsellors that Alexander, who had more mind than any of them, but was less capable than they of grasping and holding firmly an idea, had lived for many months, when Napoleon's cannon forced him from his wavering and compelled him to decide upon some plan for the campaign.

Amongst the various above named personages two ideas had been constant subjects of debate. The men of impetuous spirit, and who, as is usually the case, were not the most enlightened, were averse to the plan of awaiting Napoleon's advance, and were desirous that the Russian armies should, on the contrary, be marched upon old Prussia and Poland, for the purpose of ravaging these countries, which were either the allies or the accomplices of France, and that they should retreat only after having increased by two hundred leagues the desert in which it was hoped that Napoleon would be lost. Calm and sensible men, however, regarded this project as dangerous, and maintained, with reason, that to advance to meet Napoleon was to shorten for him the road over which he had to pass, to relieve him consequently from the most serious difficulties of the war, which were those arising from the immense distances he had to traverse, and to afford him on the very borders of his own territory the opportunity, which he so much desired, of fighting a new battle of Austerlitz, of Friedland, a battle which he would doubtless gain, and the result of which in his favour would decide the whole question, or at least place him in the ascendant during the remainder of the war. They added that, instead of diminishing the distances which Napoleon's troops had to traverse, it was absolutely necessary, on the other hand, to increase them by retreating before them, and leaving them to continue their mission unchecked, so that when they should have advanced into the very heart of Russia, and become exhausted by hunger and fatigue, it would be possible to

overwhelm them and drive them back, half destroyed, across the Russian frontier. The inconvenience of this plan was, indeed, that instead of giving up old Prussia and Poland to ravage it demanded the devastation of Russia itself; but, nevertheless, the prospect of almost certain success was an argument of such weight that no consideration deserved to be placed in the balance with it.

The controversy between the maintainers of these two sets of opinions which had commenced at St. Petersburg, had not ceased at Wilna when the news that Napoleon had crossed the Niemen put an end to General Benningsen's ball. Alexander's intellect was of too high an order to permit him to hesitate respecting such a subject; indeed, to force Napoleon to endure the same species of campaign amidst the climate of Russia which Masséna had been compelled to endure amidst that of the Peninsula was manifestly pointed out by existing circumstances as the proper course to pursue; and political reasons moreover, left him no room for hesitation. Constantly anxious to obtain the sympathy of the Russian people, of Europe, and even of France in his struggle with Napoleon, he had carefully abstained from any action which could have given him the appearance of being the aggressor, and in pursuance of this system, therefore, he determined to await the enemy's attack.

This course of conduct was very simple and dictated by sound reason. But a desire had existed for the construction of an entire system of conducting the war, and General Pfuhl was the author of such a system, which he propounded to Alexander with an appearance of profundity which was well calculated to fascinate the Emperor's imagination.

Whenever a great man, drawing his inspiration not from theories but from circumstances, has performed great actions, it invariably happens that he is succeeded by imitators who substitute systems for the great deeds which have been the offspring of true genius. In the eighteenth century there was a general proneness to imitate the military manœuvres of Frederick, and after the battle of Leuthen to propound systems founded on the *ordre oblique*, to which was attributed all the Prussian monarch's success. In like manner after the year 1800, and the campaigns of General Bonaparte, who had known how to manœuvre so skilfully on his adversary's wings and lines of communication, nothing was spoken of but turning the enemy; and at Austerlitz, accordingly, Alexander's advisers had endeavoured to turn Napoleon, with what result we know. In 1810 a man of clear intelligence and decided character, Lord Wellington, aided by an extraordinarily fortunate conjunction of circumstances, accom-

plished a brilliant campaign in Portugal, and his manœuvres were everywhere quoted throughout Europe, as those which it would be henceforth necessary to follow. To fall back before the enemy, destroying everything in the line of retreat, to withdraw into an impregnable camp, to remain there until the enemy should be exhausted, and then to sally forth to overwhelm him, composed, in the estimation of some persons, since Torres Vedras, the whole science of war; and of this new science General Pfuhl had constituted himself the chief master in the midst of the Russian staff. With the exception of the Czar, who found deep satisfaction in his pretended profundities, the General had worn out and disgusted every one with his dogmatism, his pretence, and his pride; but Alexander regarded him as an unapprcciated genius, and entrusted him with the task of drawing up the plan of the impending war.

General Pfuhl after having studied the map of Russia had remarked, as indeed any one might at the first glance, that the long transverse line of the Dwina and the Dnieper form from the north west to the south east, a vast and excellent line of interior defence. He desired, therefore, that the Russian armies should fall back upon this line, form there a species of impregnable Torres Vedras, and pursue then a course similar to that which had been pursued by the English and Spanish armies in Portugal. Having, moreover, in the course of his attentive study of the map of Russia remarked at Drissa on the Dwina a place which seemed suitable for the establishment of an entrenched camp, he had proposed to form one at this place, and Alexander, adopting this proposition, had sent the engineer, Michaux, to trace out and superintend the execution of the works. In addition, also, to this camp of Drissa, General Pfuhl determined to effect a distribution of the Russian forces according to a system which he had deduced from the operations of Lord Wellington in Portugal; and accordingly he demanded two armies, a principal one and a secondary one; the one, on the Dwina, falling back before the French and retreating from them into the camp at Drissa; the other, on the Dnieper, also falling back before the French, but destined to assail them in flank and rear when the time should come for the Russian troops to act on the offensive. In accordance with this plan, therefore, had been formed the two armies of Barclay de Tolly and Bagration.

To retreat before the French and thus to induce them t plunge into the very depths of Russia, was certainly a mos just idea, from which Alexander was in time to reap the greatest benefits, and which, at the time of which we speak,

was generally entertained throughout Europe. But why should there be an entrenched camp, and above all why so near the frontier? Lord Wellington had taken care to provide an entrenched camp to preserve his troops from being driven into the sea; but the Russians already possessed an equivalent for an entrenched camp in all the space extending to the shore of the icy ocean. Moreover, to fix the point at which it was to be attempted to check the progress of the French on the Dwina, was to attempt to check them at the very outset of their invasion, whilst still in full vigour and possession of all their resources, as the event proved, and to expose the camp to the danger of being carried by assault. And finally, admitting that operations could be succesfully carried on against the enemy's flank, it would be a source of great danger to divide, from the very commencement of the campaign, the main body of the Russian forces; and it would have been much better to have left the troops returning from Asia to form this flank army, destined to harass the French, and perhaps, to cut off their retreat. In the meantime Alexander, who reserved to himself and a few German adepts the discussion of this plan, carried into execution its most important preliminary operations, advancing his troops, as we have seen, in two masses, the one resting on the Dwina, the other on the Dnieper, and directed, the first towards Wilna, the second towards Minsk.

There could be no objection to this arrangement of the troops, for it was very natural that the two principal bodies of the German troops should assemble behind these two rivers. But the more prudent members of the staff fully expected that these two armies were to be speedily united, and to fall back before the enemy, delaying to attack him until worn out and exhausted, and enticed sufficiently far into the Russian territory. This was particularly the advice of Barclay de Tolly, a cold, firm, intelligent officer, a scion of a Scotch family established in Courland, and on account of his foreign origin, regarded with little favor by the Russians, the fermentation of whose national passions made them regard all strangers with dislike. This advice, however, as we have already seen, was distasteful to many; for the men of impetuous character, whether Russians, Germans, Swedes, or Italians, detesting France, her revolution, and her glory, were excessively averse to the idea of granting to France the honour of seeing the Russian armies retreat before her troops, and declared that it would be far better to invade Prussia and Poland, to ravage a vast extent of territory, and afford Germany the opportunity she desired of throwing off Napoleon's yoke. This latter opinion was the one which was chiefly

maintained at the head quarters of the Prince Bagration; a prince of Georgian origin, courageous and skilful in the management of troops, but wanting in the talents of a commander in chief, and whose real wish, at this time, was to advance and make a furious attack upon the French. Jealous of Barclay, distrustful of the military savans, he favoured the expression amongst the persons around him of exclamations against the strangers who advised Alexander, and endeavoured to persuade him, they declared, to adopt a timid course of action.

Alexander had thus advanced with his two armies, secretly believing, although he refrained as yet from declaring his opinion, that the safety of his kingdom would be found in the adoption of the plan propounded by General Pfuhl. As, however, he was unwilling as yet to announce his determination, he did not dare to nominate a commander-in-chief, since he could not do so without giving evident proof as to which of the systems he inclined; and he accordingly entrusted Barclay de Tolly with the duty of giving his orders, as Minister of War; but the sudden apparition of Napoleon beyond the Niemen left him no longer at leisure to hesitate, and forced him to adopt some plan for the conduct of the campaign.

Alexander had been inclined to convoke a council of war, composed of councillors of all nations, and to submit to its consideration the plan propounded by General Pfuhl, not indeed by the General's own mouth, for he was a man quite incapable of defending his system against adverse objections, but by that of Colonel Wolzogen, his usual interpreter, and a man whose mind was at once clear and subtle. Colonel Wolzogen, however, had shown him that such a course would but lead to the brink of a fresh chaos, and that it would be far better simply to select at once a commander in chief, and to confide to him the execution of the plan which should be selected. For such a post General Barclay de Tolly was manifestly the most fitted, both on account of his obedience, his firmness, his practical talents, and his position as minister of war. Besides, the approach of the enemy with a crushing mass of about two hundred thousand men, when Russia had but one hundred and thirty thousand with which to meet them, had to a great degree quelled the eagerness of the partisans of an offensive system of action; and there was no reason, therefore, to fear that a retrograde movement, which had become inevitable, would meet with any great degree of blame. Alexander, consequently, adopted the advice of Colonel Wolzogen, the course pointed out by it being indeed the only one left open in the existing state of

circumstances, and confided to General Barclay de Tolly, not as General-in-Chief, but as Minister of War, the conduct of the retreat of the principal army upon the Dwina, in the direction of the camp of Drissa. These arrangements having been made, he set forth with a crowd of his counsellors, following the road which leads to Drissa by Swenziany and Vidzouy.

It was by no means an easy task to effect, in the presence of Napoleon, whose movements were ordinarily as swift as lightning, the retreat of the six Russian corps, which were posted around Wilna, and composed the principal army.

As we have already said, the first of these corps, under the command of Count Wittgenstein, was at Rosiena, where it formed the Russian extreme right, and was opposed to the extreme left of the French. The second, under General Bogowouth, was at Janowo; the third, composed of the Russian guard and the reserves, was at Wilna; the fourth under General Touczkoff, was between Kowno and Wilna, at Nowoi-Troki. For these four corps the retreat was easy, for they had to retire directly upon the Dwina, without being exposed to the danger of finding the French in their path; and no greater difficulty existed with regard to the heavy cavalry, which was distributed in two corps of reserve under Generals Ouvaroff and Korff, and posted in the rear. But the fifth corps under Count Schouvaloff, and the sixth under General Doctoroff, posted, the one at Olkeniki, and the other at Lida, and forming the extreme left of the semi-circle which the Russian forces described around Wilna, might, before they regained the Swenziany road, be stopped by the French, who were already on their march to Wilna. In the meantime the Hetman Platow, whose eight thousand Cossacks completed the one hundred and thirty thousand men of the army at the Dwina, was near Grodno.

General Barclay de Tolly hastened to order all the corps to fall back upon the Dwina, in the direction of the camp of Drissa, and directed the two, which were the most unfavourably placed, to conduct their retreat by turning around Wilna, and keeping as far as possible from this city, so as to avoid falling in with the enemy. At the same time he himself, despising the counsellors who had displayed so much eagerness in flying from the enemy, affected to remain with his rear guard, and slowly to retreat with it, disputing the ground with the enemy foot by foot. Meanwhile an order had been sent to Prince Bagration to march on the Dnieper, following as much as possible the course of the Minsk, in order to be in a position to join the principal army, when this

junction should become necessary. The Hetman Platow, who was directed constantly to render his troops a link between those of Barclay de Tolly and Bagration, was ordered to harass the French in flank and rear.

Before quitting Wilna the Emperor Alexander, though regarding the war as inevitable, and resolved to maintain it energetically, determined to attempt a last measure which, whilst failing to put a stop to hostilities, would throw the responsibility of the consequences upon Napoleon. Learning that M. de Lauriston had founded the demand for his passports on the demand made by Prince Kourakin for his, and on the pretence that a condition had been attempted to be imposed on the French relative to the evacuation of Prussia, he took pains to answer these two objections so as to place his adversary entirely in the wrong. He directed, therefore, M. de Balachoff, minister of police, a man of spirit and tact, to carry to Napoleon a message expressing his, Alexander's, extreme surprise at Napoleon's sudden rupture of the peace between the two nations without any previous declaration of war; declaring Prince Kourakin's demand for his passports as a most insufficient reason, since the Prince had not been authorized to take the course he had, and that the pretended condition of the evacuation of Prussia could not fairly be a serious cause of complaint, since it had been proposed, not as a necessary preliminary to negotiation, but only as a consequence to be promised and certain, of any pacific arrangement which might be made. Alexander even authorized M. de Balachoff to declare that this evacuation of Prussia was so little an absolute condition, that if the French desired to halt on the Niemen, he would consent to negotiate immediately, on the basis indicated in the course of the various preceding communications. These orders having been given Alexander set out on the 26th of June, at the same time addressing a spirited proclamation to his people, in which he pledged himself solemnly never to treat with the enemy so long as he should remain on the Russian territory.

Whilst Alexander was in the act of departing, M. de Balachoff hastened to meet the French army, and found it en route for Wilna. He had at first some difficulty in obtaining the recognition of his character of aide de camp to the Russian Emperor, but, when this difficulty had been overcome, he was conducted to the presence of Murat, who, glittering with gold, and his head covered with plumes, gallopped through the midst of his numerous squadrons.

Murat, facile, amiable, and indiscreet as usual, received M. de Balachoff most graciously, affected to deplore the

renewal of the war, to regret his fair Neapolitan kingdom, to be perfectly free from any desire of obtaining that of Poland, and to display himself in the character of a reasonable servant of a most unreasonable master, whilst his manner was full of those gracious demonstrations for which he had a natural talent, notwithstanding his education had been much neglected. He then sent M. de Balachoff to the infantry advanced posts, which were behind those of the cavalry, and there M. de Balachoff being presented to Marshal Davoust was received with coldness, reserve, and silence. Having expressed a desire to be permitted to proceed immediately to the presence of the Emperor the Marshal declined to permit him to do so, alleging his orders, and retaining the envoy in a species of imprisonment until a communication should have been received from head quarters. On the following morning a message arrived that M. de Balachoff was to be detained, to await, until the French should have entered Wilna, the interview he desired with Napoleon.

On the morning of the same day (the 28th), the cavalry under General Bruyére arrived at the gates of Wilna, and encountered there a large detachment of the Russian cavalry, supported by infantry and some pieces of artillery. The charge of the opposed troops was desperate, but the enemy's advanced guard, after having resisted for some moments, withdrew into the city, at the same time burning the bridges across the Wilia, and setting fire to magazines of stores within the town. Marshal Davoust, who had followed Murat's cavalry at a league's distance, entered with it into Wilna, where the Lithuanians, although they had submitted to the Russians for forty years, received the French with joy, and hastened to aid them in repairing the bridge across the Wilia. By the aid of some boats the communication between the two banks of the stream was speedily re-established, and immediate pursuit was made of the Russians, who retreated rapidly but in good order.

Thus the capital of Lithuania was taken almost without a blow, and after only four days of hostilities; and Napoleon entered it in the midst of the assembled crowds of the inhabitants, who gradually caught a spirit of enthusiasm from contact with our soldiers, especially the Polish soldiers, and the remembrance of that liberty which they had formerly enjoyed, but which the most aged of them alone had actually known. The Lithuanian nobles, who were the partisans of Russia, had already fled, and those which were not had awaited the approach of our troops, and readily assisted in the creation of new means for the administration of the country in the interest of the French army, which was at

that moment the interest of Poland also. At the same time their zeal was checked by the terrible fear that this attempt to effect the reconstitution of Poland would not be a genuine one, and that in less than a month the Russian couriers would re-enter Wilna, bearing orders of sequestration and exile.

The first service required at the hands of the inhabitants was the preparation of bread for our soldiers, who had arrived famished for the want, not of meat which they had had in abundance, but of bread, of which they had had scarcely the least supply. Grain was not scarce, but the Russians had taken pains to destroy in every direction flour, mills, and oats, being well aware that the mere possession of corn would not supply the enemy with bread, and that the French could not support for any time without oats the immense number of horses which followed the army. Napoleon now ordered that the masons which accompanied the French armies should be immediately employed in the construction of bakeries; and in the meantime those already existing in the town were seized for the use of the troops, but they could only furnish thirty thousand rations a day, whilst a hundred thousand were required immediately, and this number would be increased in the course of a few days to two hundred thousand.

Whilst Napoleon was devoting his attention to these preliminary matters, the various corps of the army were executing their prescribed movements without any misadventures beyond the inconveniences which were to be expected as the result of over fatigue and unfavourable weather. Marshal Ney, as we have already seen, had passed the Wilia nearer Wilna than Marshal Oudinot, namely, in the environs of Riconti, and had marched in the direction of Maliatouy, perceiving in the distance Bagowouth's corps, which was at first at Wilkomir, but which, in accordance with the retrograde movement made by the Russian corps, had marched from this point in the direction of Swenziany and Drissa. Ney, however, only fell in with the rear guard, which, composed of Cossacks, was eager in devastating with fire every thing which lay in the path of the French troops; but they had not always time to complete this operation, and were compelled, fortunately, to leave some resources at our disposal. In the meantime Marshal Oudinot, having passed the Wilia below, at Janowo, for the purpose of marching upon Wilkomir, had encountered there the troops commanded by Wittgenstein, who had marched from Rossiena to Wilkomir, and who on the morning of the 28th, at the moment when the main body of the French army was entering Wilna, being in position at Deweltowo, at the head of twenty-

four thousand men, displayed to Marshal Oudinot a line of about twenty thousand infantry slowly retreating under cover of a numerous artillery and a numerous body of cavalry. But the Russian General had encountered in Marshal Oudinot a man who would not allow himself to be braved with impunity; and although the latter had at his immediate command only his light cavalry, foot artillery, Verdier's infantry division, and Doumere's cuirassiers, he did not hesitate to attack the Russians, and having speedily driven their cavalry behind the lines of their infantry, he attacked the latter with Verdier's division, and forced it to retreat with a loss in killed and wounded of about four hundred men.

The troops under Marshal Oudinot were as fatigued as those under Marshal Ney, worn out by the marches on their way to the Niemen, as well as by those which they had made since they had passed it. They were in want of bread, salt, and spirits, and utterly disgusted with a diet which consisted of meat without salt, and a little flour mixed with water. At the same time the horses were very much enfeebled by the want of oats. A great number of soldiers remaining in the rear were in a manner lost, for there were but few inhabitants of whom they could ask their way, and those few did not speak Polish.

Such was the situation of affairs on our left and on the other side of the Wilia; and matters were almost in the same state in our centre, on the direct route from Kowno to Wilna, which the last divisions of Marshal Davoust's corps were now traversing, followed by the Imperial Guard. On our right Prince Eugene's corps was altogether backward, for this prince having had to traverse, not old Prussia as had Marshals Davoust, Oudinot, and Ney, but Poland, had crossed with difficulty, at the cost of great efforts and great privations, the sterile and shifting sands of the districts across which lay his route, and had only reached the Niemen on the very day when the main body of the army entered Wilna. In passing the Niemen at Prenn Eugene would debouch upon Nowoi-Troki and Olkeniski, points occupied by the corps of Touczkoff and Schouvaloff, which together numbered no more than thirty-four thousand men, and were consequently quite incapable of holding in check the eighty thousand men of the army of Italy. The difficulties, therefore, which were to be feared by Prince Eugene did not arise from the operations of the enemy, but from natural obstacles on the route he had to traverse.

Up to this time, with the exception of some passing snows, the sky had been serene, and the weather mild, but free

from that excessive heat which is so often experienced in extreme climates, which are by turns deprived of the sun in winter, or oppressed with its ardour in summer. Poland, which in the winter of 1807 had presented so dreary a landscape, was now verdant, and with its vast forests offered to the eye a scenery which was sufficiently agreeable, although wanting in that genuine gaiety, which the presence of man and man's industry always throw over natural scenery. The roads were to a great degree dried by the sun's heat, and presented no insurmountable difficulties.

Suddenly, however, on the evening of the 28th, this favourable state of the weather vanished; the sky was covered with clouds, and a series of terrible storms enveloped almost the whole of Poland. The ground was loosened beneath the tread of the soldiers and horses; and to add to the misfortune, the temperature changed as violently as the aspect of the heavens, becoming suddenly extremely cold. During the three days from the 29th of June to the 1st of July, the state of the weather was frightful, and the bivouacs extremely painful, for the soldiers had to sleep in a species of mud. Many of the younger men were attacked with dysentery, the result not only of the rapid change in the weather, but also of a diet almost exclusively of meat and frequently of pork. A portion of the divisions of Marshal Davoust, which were still, on the 29th, on their march upon Wilna, and the whole of the guard which followed them, being completely without shelter, (for the few dwellings scattered about the country were scarcely sufficient to lodge the staffs) had to endure the greatest sufferings. The troops of Marshals Ney and Oudinot suffered somewhat less, for the country which they traversed had been visited by neither French nor Russians; but on the right the sufferings endured by the corps of Prince Eugene, which was now crossing the Niemen, were much greater. The bridge had been thrown across the stream on the evening of the 29th, and a division had already crossed the Niemen when a violent storm of mingled hail, rain, wind, and lightning, swept away the tents and threw the troops into a species of universal panic. It was impossible for the soldiers to lie down on the inundated soil, the passagea cross the stream was interrupted, and during forty-eight hours, one half of the troops remained on one side of the stream, and one half on the other.

Prince Eugene's corps succeeded at length, however, in crossing the Niemen, and speedily advanced on Nowoi-Troki, although still in the state of disorder which had been produced by the sudden occurrence of bad weather. Napoleon

had levied horses for his armies as for his conscripts, by thousands, in Switzerland, Italy, and Germany, without paying regard to their age; for although he had given some wise recommendations on this point, the number he required had rendered it quite impossible to follow them. Many of these horses, therefore, harnessed too young and without any previous training, to immense waggons, were compelled to draw them. The cold and wet nights of the 29th and 30th of June destroyed many thousands, being especially destructive to those of Prince Eugene's corps, and in two days the roads were covered with dead horses and abandoned waggons. If the men and officers of the baggage train had been more experienced, they would have known how to remedy the misfortune to some extent by assembling in *parcs* by the side of the roads the waggons which had lost their horses, leaving detachments to guard them, and carrying forward with the horses which still remained those stores of which there was the most immediate need. In Prince Eugene's corps, which contained many Italians and Bavarians the disorder was extreme; and it also existed to a great extent in the rear of Marshal Davoust's corps, amongst the Dutch and Hanseatic troops and the Spaniards of the first corps; and these latter being foreigners, and little interested, therefore, in the honour of an army which was French, and feeling but slight enthusiasm for a cause which was not their own, were the first to disband themselves and to take advantage of the intricate character of the wooded country around to desert, and devote themselves to the pursuit of plunder, whilst even amongst our own troops there was some relaxation of discipline, but it existed only amongst those who, having been refractory conscripts, had been brought in by the columns mobile and forcibly compelled to serve. Between the Niemen and Wilna there were now from twenty-five to thirty thousand Bavarian, Italian, Wurtemburgian, Hanseatic, Spanish, and French deserters, who pillaged equally the abandoned waggons, and the castles of the Lithuanian nobles. In the meantime Prince Eugene, whose corps had suffered most from these complicated evils, having arrived at Nowoi-Troki, on the right of Wilna, although very unwilling to cause Napoleon any annoyance, informed him of the state of affairs; whilst from the other Generals proceeded similar reports.

Napoleon was not the man, however, to be terrified by such misadventures as these at the commencement of a campaign, for the successful conduct of which he had taken so many precautions; and he had, moreover, plucked a triumph in 1807, from the midst of a state of affairs which was very

similar, although on a less scale. He had no doubt, therefore, that he would succeed in vanquishing the present difficulties, which he regarded as entirely local, but which sprang, unfortunately, from radical causes. In Portugal, Masséna's soldiers had quitted the ranks for the purpose of procuring sustenance; but they had not failed to return in the evening, for they were Frenchmen and veteran warriors. But a large proportion of the troops which composed the army with which Napoleon invaded Russia, were neither Frenchmen nor veterans.

A halt of fifteen days at Wilna was the means by which Napoleon proposed to remedy the existing evils and to rally the stragglers; and more especially to bring up the long train of baggage waggons, which stretched not only from Wilna to the Niemen, but from the Niemen to the Vistula, from the Vistula to the Elbe. Such a halt would also afford the opportunity of arranging the affairs of Lithuania, and establishing there a Polish government, of which there was so much need. There could be no doubt, indeed, that a delay of fifteen days could be fully employed by Napoleon in the arrangement of many important matters, but it was a question whether such a delay would not nullify Napoleon's excellent plan of dividing the Russian line. Would not such a halt enable Barclay de Tolly and Bagration, who were retreating upon the Dwina and the Dnieper respectively, to unite their troops beyond these two rivers? Again, would it not have been better, if such a halt were necessary, to have made it at Kowno, before the Niemen had been passed, and the enemy put on the alert by the violation of the frontiers; and was it not better, on the other hand, now that the rash step had been taken, to follow out the bold course which had been adopted and to march forward without delay, with the object of attacking the Russians and obtaining some decisive result before they should have had time to withdraw into the depths of their country. These were grave questions, but they appeared to be a source of no embarrassment to Napoleon, for whilst he entertained the idea of rallying the stragglers, establishing an effective police in his rear, reorganising the land transport service, and creating a government for Lithuania, he by no means relinquished his plan of placing himself between the two principal Russian armies in such a manner as to isolate the one from the other during the remainder of the campaign.

The entrance of the troops into Wilna, which took place on the 29th of June, had scarcely been effected, when the reports of the light cavalry announced that many thousand Russian troops were on their march around Wilna, and were

advancing in a curved line from our right to our left doubtless with the purpose of joining Barclay de Tolly on the Dwina, In any case there was an opportunity of intercepting these troops, since even if Bagration were to be encountered, our troops would only have to meet the head of his corps, as it had to ascend northwards the whole distance from Grodno to Wilna, and there would certainly be time to intercept its road. Napoleon resolved, therefore, whilst still opposing Barclay de Tolly with his left, to make a rapid march on his right with the purpose of intercepting Bagration, enveloping him if possible, or driving him into the marshes of Pinsk, and thus paralysing him for the rest of the campaign.

The description already given of the theatre of war will enable the reader to perceive what were the movements which Napoleon had to make for the execution of his proposed plan. From the Rhine to the Niemen Napoleon's course had been north-east; after the passage of the Niemen it had taken an easterly direction, and retained it as far as Moscow. When the Niemen had been crossed and the course of the Wilia ascended as far as Wilna, our troops encountered the great transverse lines, of which we have already spoken, formed by the Dwina and the Dnieper, and had naturally advanced to the open space left by these streams at their birth between Witebsk and Smolensk; and in this movement the left wing had faced the Dwina, towards which were advancing the troops under Barclay de Tolly, and the right wing had faced the Dnieper, upon which Bagration was retreating. Napoleon's object being now, on the one hand, to halt so as to be enabled to rally the troops and baggage which had fallen into the rear, and on the other hand to pursue Bagration so energetically as to separate him from Barclay de Tolly, he determined to halt his left, which had but a short distance to traverse to reach the Dwina, whilst he endeavoured with his right to precede Bagration on the Dnieper.

Macdonald, who had at first been directed upon Rossiena, had been since ordered to proceed to the right upon Poniewiez, for the purpose of joining Oudinot; whilst the latter was in like manner ordered to take a direction to the right between Avanta and Widzouy, for the purpose of approaching close to Ney; and Ney himself was ordered to march towards Swenziany, close to Murat, who with all his cavalry was pursuing by Gloubokoé the Russian army on its retreat upon the Dwina. In the next place these commanders, whose troops might have amounted altogether since the last march to about one hundred and seven or one hundred and eight

thousand men, to remain in observation to mark the operations of the rest of the army, to rally their stragglers, to collect grain, and to convert it into flour, to repair the mills which had been destroyed by the Russians, to construct ovens, to bring up their heavy artillery and baggage trains, and to employ themselves, in short, in concentrating and reorganising their strength, in guarding against the attacks of the enemy, and carefully watching his least movements.

For the purpose of connecting this immoveable left with his right, which was to be very active, Napoleon ordered Murat to extend his cavalry from Gloubokoé to Wileika, at the same time arranging that it should be supported by one or two of the divisions of Marshal Davoust, which should first arrive in line; and to still further strengthen this connexion between the left and the right, he proposed to march upon the same point Prince Eugene's corps, which was now halting at Nowoi-Troki, for the purpose of taking a little repose and reorganising its disordered columns.

It was with Marshal Davoust's corps, which was always in the best order, and the most thoroughly provided for undertaking a march, that Napoleon resolved to make his projected movements on his right, against the troops which had been seen marching in a circular direction around Wilna, and which were, as we have already said, either the last troops of Barclay's corps, or the head of that of Bagration. On the 29th of June, therefore, the light cavalry of Davoust's corps was put in motion under the orders of Generals Pojol and Bordessoulle, the former taking the road from Ochmiana to Minsk, and the latter proceeding by the Lida road in the direction of Wiokowisk; these being the two great routes which descended from Wilna towards southern Lithuania, and on which might be met either the delayed detachments of Barclay's corps, or the whole of the army under Bagration.

On the evening of the 30th Napoleon sent Marshal Davoust with Compans' division, to follow Pojol in the direction of Ochmiana; at the same time marching Dessaix's division on the Lida road, in the wake of General Bordessoulle, and holding Morand's division in readiness to follow Marshal Davoust, if necessary. He urged on the movements of Prince Eugene, who, having halted after the passage of the Niemen, and receiving contradictory reports, had feared to encounter danger by advancing too rapidly; for he proposed that the troops of this Prince, ascending from Nowoi-Troki to Ochmiana, should also support, if needful, those of Marshal Davoust, or take their place in the line of battle beside Murat, so as to form the centre of the army and connect the right with the left wing. At the same time Napo-

leon ordered the cavalry under General Grouchy, which belonged to Eugene's division, to aid that of Bordessoulle, and to place itself, if necessary, at the command of Marshal Davoust, to whom also he gave the cuirassiers de Valence.

Marshal Davoust, it must be observed, could not, with the two divisions Compans and Dessaix, which were the only troops at his command on his departure from Wilna, envelope Bagration's army, which amounted to about sixty thousand men, and which some flying rumours had even raised to one hundred thousand; but there remained on the extreme right the twenty-five thousand men under King Jerome which, debouching from Grodno and following Bagration in the rear, would assist in surrounding him or driving him into the Pinsk marshes.

By this combination of movements, therefore, retaining his troops of the left in observation on the Dwina, and hastily throwing a portion of his troops of the right on the Dnieper, whilst the centre, after having reposed at Nowoi-Troki, was preparing to place itself in line, Napoleon afforded to two-thirds of his army the time to rally, and prepared with only the remaining third to cut off Prince Bagration's retreat. In the meantime, whilst he entered with his usual ability into every administrative detail affecting the welfare of his troops, he also devoted his attention to Poland, which, indeed, demanded his earnest consideration, since he was now present there, appeared to have arrived for the sake of its interests, and since, moreover, the war could not have a successful or genuine result, in the attainment of which the situation of Poland had not been duly considered.

At this moment, in fact, the greatest agitation prevailed at Warsaw, and on the arrival of the news of the passage of the Niemen by four hundred thousand men under the great man of the age, the reconstitution of Poland was proclaimed, the concentration of all its provinces into a single state was decreed, and finally, one of those general confederations was determined on, by which the Poles had formerly defended their soil, and their independence. Since Napoleon was compelled, therefore, when advancing into the very heart of Russia to raise the grave question respecting the reconstitution of Poland, whose territory he was traversing and whose aid he required, he would have acted judiciously, perhaps, had he adopted a decided course of action, and attempted to effect its complete reconstitution. In this case, he would have placed at his disposal the whole body of the Polish army, to the number of seventy or eighty thousand men, have been able to form his right wing with it, and marched it towards Volhynia and Podolia. A right wing

thus formed, would have guarded his flanks more faithfully than the Austrian troops, and have been better calculated to rouse Volhynia to his aid; and the adoption of this course would also have enabled him, instead of forming a separate government for Lithuania, to have immediately incorporated that territory with the general kingdom of Poland. He would thus have restored to Poland the sentiment of national existence, and would most probably have succeeded in exciting that national enthusiasm which was necessary to the accomplishment of his designs. But full of doubt, and unwilling to engage himself too far to the reconstitution of Poland, before he knew whether the Poles would make any genuine exertion to second his efforts, he hesitated now, as he had hesitated at many other critical moments of this campaign, yielding to a prudence which was perfectly out of place in the rash path on which he had entered, and which arose from his unwillingness to take a step which would alienate Austria, and make him appear to have resolved on war with Russia to the death. Having already divided the Polish army into several detachments, he renounced the idea of annexing Lithuania to Poland, and gave it a separate administration. And in the adoption of this course, he was influenced by an administrative reason of the most powerful nature. He was in the midst of Lithuania, about to carry on a campaign on its territory, and would probably have to occupy a position within it during one or two years; and to have confided, therefore, its administration to a government situated more than a hundred leagues distant, and from the newness of its creation only partly acknowledged and partly efficacious, would have been to renounce the power of drawing from the resources of this province that aid which he needed, and which he was sure to obtain, were its administration in his own hands.

Napoleon gave, therefore, to Lithuania a distinct and independent government, and thus offered a severe menace against Russia, while he still refrained from any action which might be regarded as a declaration of implacable hostility. He formed a commission of seven members selected from the most considerable of the Lithuanian nobles, whom Russia had been unable to gain, or had neglected to attach to her interests; and, persisting in connecting Poland with Saxony, he selected as a member of this commission, and at the same time governor of the province, Count Hogendorp, a Saxon officer, whom he had made his aide-de-camp. He divided Lithuania into four secondary governments, namely, Wilna, Grodno, Minsk, and Bialystok, each of which was to be governed by a commission consisting of three members, and

an intendant, who was to be subordinate to the governor-general. Executive agents were moreover established in each district, under the title of sous-préfets. The government of Lithuania thus organised, was charged with the care of the public property, with the collection of the taxes, the levying of troops, the maintenance and re-establishment of order throughout the country, the erection of magazines and hospitals, and, in short, with the duty of contributing that most efficacious means towards the reconstitution of Poland, which consisted in energetically aiding the French army. At the same time this Lithuanian government was authorised to join the great Polish confederation decreed at Warsaw.

The first act of the new government was to organise a public force, and it voted the creation of four regiments of infantry and five of cavalry, which were to number altogether twelve thousand men, and the cost of the first establishment of which could not be less than four millions of francs; a sum which the new government had no means of obtaining save from Napoleon, who refused to advance more than four hundred thousand francs. The Colonels were chosen from amongst the great land proprietors who had formerly served, and were attracted by the honours of high military rank, but Prince Poniatowski was required to supply the officers of a lower grade; the Lithuanian population, although already somewhat accustomed, as we have before said, to the Russian yoke, was nevertheless not without considerable enthusiasm for the cause of national liberty, whilst the nobles never ceased to dread the return of the Russians, and the decrees of exile and confiscation with which it would be accompanied. The rural population feared pillage and devastation. The inhabitants of the towns, with the exception of the Jews, were perfectly well disposed, but scanty in numbers, and much distressed; and all, whether poor or rich, had been equally ruined by the continental blockade and the sojourn of the Russian troops. Moreover, Napoleon and his subordinates only spoke to the Lithuanians with much reserve respecting Lithuanian independence, whilst they insisted with much vehemence on the subject of the sacrifices which it was necessary that Lithuania should make. These causes diminished the national zeal without destroying it, and much increased the difficulty attending the raising the new regiments.

Besides regiments of the line, the Lithuanian government also raised national guards and gardes-chasse, a species of mounted national guards, whose purpose was to keep the country in order, and who were of effectual service as guides to the French cavalry sent in pursuit of bandits and

marauders, who had unfortunately become very numerous, amounting to twenty-five or thirty thousand, and increased rather than lessened by the forced marches made by many of the corps of the French army. In fact so great had this evil become that one whole regiment of the first corps, the 33rd leger, (a Dutch regiment,) had, notwithstanding the good discipline enforced by Marshal Davoust, almost entirely disbanded itself, and pitilessly pillaged the canton of Lida, one of the most fertile in the country.

Another great inconvenience which had to be removed consisted in the dead bodies of men and horses which covered the roads, unburied, and infecting the air. In populous countries the inhabitants, for the sake of their own safety, hasten to bury the corpses of the dead; but in a country so thinly populated that the villages were five or six leagues distant from each other, this was a subject which was entirely neglected, and Napoleon was compelled, therefore, to make it one of the subjects to be attended to by the columns of cavalry sent to succour the country.

Napoleon also established from Konigsberg to Wilna a series of military posts, comprising a commandant, a magazine of stores, a little hospital, relays of horses, and a parol charged with the maintenance of the security of the road and the interment of the dead.

Whilst occupied with these various cares, Napoleon had devoted his attention to a matter which was still more urgent; the supply of provisions and the conveyance of stores. One of his first steps in this matter was to order the masons who accompanied the troops to construct at Wilna, ovens capable of providing a hundred thousand rations a day; and as it unfortunately happened that bricks, which were the only available material in a country where stone was so rare, could only be procured at some distance from Wilna, and the artillery horses were too exhausted to perform the labour of this conveyance, Napoleon did not hesitate to require that the horses drawing the baggage waggons of the staff should be devoted to this service; and each day he went in person to see how the works proceeded.

The construction of ovens, however, was not the only difficulty which had to be overcome before subsistence for the troops could be secured at Wilna. Grain, indeed, was sufficiently abundant, for the Russians had not always time to destroy it, but they had taken particular pains to destroy the mills, and it was necessary to repair them before the grain in our possession could be converted into flour. In the meantime Napoleon took care to create great magazines at Kowno, at Wilna, and at all the towns which fell into his

possession, determining to make Lithuania contribute large quantities of all sorts of grain and forage.

The intervention of Napoleon's active will was also demanded to procure the supply of the means of transport necessary to the execution of these various plans. The first convoys, under the direction of Colonel Baste, had succeeded, to Napoleon's great delight, in traversing the distance from Dantzic to Kowno; but there still remained to be traversed the sinuous course of the Wilia from Kowno to Wilna, which would occupy twenty days, although it was a fifth or a sixth shorter than the distance from Dantzic to Kowno, which had occupied no longer. Napoleon, therefore, determined to attempt to abridge this navigation, and if he could not succeed in that, to renounce it for a great land transport enterprise, which he proposed to entrust to a company of Polish Jews.

The new organisation of the baggage train had not succeeded as well as had been expected, and there had been lost between the Elbe and the Niemen one half of the waggons, a third of the horses, and a fourth of the men. Napoleon gave orders, therefore, that the want of horses should be supplied by oxen, and the horses of the country; but these orders were, unfortunately, more easily given than executed, for it was a very difficult matter to procure yokes with which to harness the oxen; iron, with which to shoe them; and herds to drive them.

In the meantime, actual experience rendered Napoleon more conscious of the difficulties attending the march of 600,000 men into a distant country; but it did not, as yet, diminish his sense of power. Within the space of a few days he had, in fact, obtained possession of Lithuania, and cut in two the Russian army; and in spite of the obstacles arising from the nature of the ground which had to be traversed, the climate, and the long distances to be passed over, he hoped that his skilful manœuvres would have results worthy of his policy and his glory. Whilst, therefore, he received Alexander's envoy, M. de Balachoff, with perfect politeness, he resolved to reject the propositions of which he was the bearer. And, indeed, neither Alexander nor Napoleon could now spare time for negotiations, and the question between them had reached a state in which it could only be resolved by the sword. The passage of the Niemen had rendered it beneath the dignity of either emperor to negotiate; and, moreover, Napoleon could not, in the month of July—when scarcely three months remained for active operations—grant time for discussion, which might be employed by the Russians in throwing upon the Vistula the troops engaged in the Turkish

war, or in uniting the troops under Bagration with those of Barclay de Tolly. To have refrained from commencing the war, would doubtless have been the best course, but when it had been once commenced, it was impossible to halt at Wilna.

Napoleon received M. de Balachoff at first with much politeness, and listened to him with gracious attention when he declared his master's astonishment at finding his territory invaded without any previous declaration of war, on the two-fold and disingenuous pretext of the demand made for his passports by Prince Kourakin; and that the evacuation of the Prussian territory had been demanded as an indispensable preliminary to all negotiation. Napoleon listened to all that was advanced by the envoy with the patience of a man who is perfectly reliant on his strength, and is thoroughly determined on his course of actions; but he replied that it was now too late to enter upon negotiations, and that it was impossible that he should recross the Niemen. He repeated his usual arguments, that he had only armed in reply to armaments previously made by Russia, and that through the whole course of his preparations for war he had remained willing to negotiate; and complained that the demand made for his passports by M. de Kourakin, and the attempt to impose upon the French a dishonourable preliminary condition, and the refusal of M. de Lauriston's demand for the honour of an interview with the Emperor Alexander, had destroyed the last chance of an amicable arrangement of the differences between the two nations, and induced him, Napoleon, to carry the French army beyond the Niemen.

M. de Balachoff was not sufficiently well acquainted with the actual facts to attempt to reply to these assertions by the utterance of the simple truth, and contented himself, therefore, with repeating that his master was earnestly desirous for peace; and being free, as yet, from any engagement with other powers, was always ready to conclude it on the conditions which had, since 1807, rendered the relations between the two countries so entirely satisfactory. "You are free as yet, I believe," said Napoleon in reply to these assertions, "from any alliance with the English, but the union will speedily take place; a single courier will suffice to bring about a good understanding between you, and tie the knots of a new alliance. Your Emperor has long displayed a leaning towards England, and I have long observed it. But oh! how glorious would have been his reign had he only consented to remain on good terms with me! I had given him Finland, and the promise I had made to him of Moldavia and Wallachia was speedily about to be realised, when

suddenly he placed himself amidst the ranks of my enemies, turning against me the arms which he had intended to employ against the Turks, and gaining only the certainty that he will never possess either Moldavia or Wallachia. . . . . It is even said," added Napoleon in the manner of an interrogation, "that you have signed a peace with the Turks, the terms of which do not grant you these provinces?" M. de Balachoff replied in the affirmative; and, under the influence of deep but concealed emotion, Napoleon continued, "Your master does not possess, then, those fine provinces which he might so readily have added to his empire, and which would have extended it in the course of a single reign from the gulf of Bothnia to the mouths of the Danube! An alliance with me would have been more fruitful in great results than the reign of Catherine the Great; and would have enabled Russia to share with me the glory of vanquishing the English, already reduced to the last extremities. And ah! how glorious in that case would Alexander's reign have been! But he has preferred to ally himself with my enemies, and to associate himself with a Stein, an Armfeld, a Wintzingerode, and a Benningsen! The first, a fugitive from his country; the second, an intriguing debauché; the third, a rebellious French subject; and the fourth, although possessed of rather greater military qualifications than the others, still very incapable, having shown himself thoroughly incompetent in 1807, and inevitably recalling to his master's mind the most horrible recollections. Barclay de Tolly, indeed, is said to be possessed of higher talents than these men, but it is difficult to believe it after having witnessed the first movements of your troops. Bagration is your only true soldier, and is, in fact, experienced, keen sighted, and decided in action. . . . But what course can your master pursue in the midst of this mob which will compromise him and lay upon him the blame of all their own errors? A sovereign should never be present with his army, save when acting as its general, but should, on the contrary, keep at such a distance as to leave the responsible general at liberty to pursue his own measures. You perceive what have been the results of your operations during the eight days which the campaign has now lasted? You have lost Wilna, your army has been cut in two, and chased from the Polish provinces. Your troops murmur at these things, and have good reason to do so. Again, I know the exact amount of your strength, I have taken as exact account of your battalions as of my own, and I know that you have only two hundred thousand men with which to oppose me, who come at the head of three times as many. As for your allies—the Turks will be of no

use to you, for they are good for nothing; and they have shown that this is so in signing a peace with you; and the Swedes, on their side, are destined to be at the will of extravagant men. They have got rid of one foolish king and taken another still more foolish; and indeed, it is necessary to be a fool before one can be at the same time a Swede and a Russian ally. And what, at the most, do all your allies amount to? What can they do for you? And how great is the difference between them and my allies the Poles, who are eighty thousand strong, fight for me with ardour, and will speedily form an army of two hundred thousand men! I am about to snatch from you the Polish provinces; I will deprive the kinsmen of your family of all that remains in their possession in Germany, and send them back to you discrowned and kingdomless. If Prussia become involved with you, I will blot her from the map of Germany, and give you a sworn enemy in her place. I will drive you back beyond the Dwina and the Dnieper, and re-establish against you a barrier which Europe has blindly and culpably permitted to be broken down.—These are the things which you will have gained by deserting my alliance, in the place of the glorious reign your master might have enjoyed by remaining faithful to it."

M de Balachoff, who could scarcely restrain his indignation whilst listening to these words, nevertheless answered respectfully, that whilst fully recognising the bravery of the French armies and the skill with which their movements were conducted, Russia did not yet despair of the result of the struggle in which she was engaged with them; that she was determined to make a most energetic, a desperate resistance, and that there could be little doubt that God would favour her exertions in a war in which she had justice on her side, and which she had unwillingly engaged in. And here the conversation recurring to the point at which it had been commenced was abruptly broken off, and Napoleon quitted M. de Balachoff to mount his horse, after having invited him to dine with him.

At his table the Emperor Napoleon behaved towards M. de Balachoff with much kindness, but at the same time treated him with a familiarity which was somewhat distressing, and frequently compelled the envoy to defend his sovereign and his nation. At length, in the course of conversation, Napoleon spoke of the large number of convents to be found in Poland and Russia, and declared that they were melancholy symptoms of a low state of civilisation; and M. de Balachoff replied that every country has its peculiar institutions, and that what is very suitable for one is ill adap-

ted to another. But when Napoleon persisted that the prosperity of convents was not so much a question of place as time, and that they were wholly unsuited to the present age, M. de Balachoff, hardly pushed, replied that indeed the religious spirit had disappeared from almost the whole of Europe, but that it still existed in two countries—Spain and Russia. This was an allusion to the resistance he encountered in the Peninsula, and to the resistance he might possibly meet with elsewhere, which somewhat disconcerted Napoleon, although he was usually as ready in conversation as in war, and he was at a loss for an answer. All the sensible persons who were present at this interview, much regretted the tone adopted towards the Russian envoy, and Napoleon himself became, at length, so far sensible of its injudicious nature, that at the conclusion of the repast, he took M. de Balachoff aside, and addressed him in a more serious and worthy manner, declaring that he was ready to halt and to negotiate, on condition that he should be permitted to retain possession of Lithuania, at least during the negotiations; and that he was ready to make peace on condition that Russia should sincerely and unreservedly co-operate with him against England; but that it would be simple folly for him, under any other circumstances, to halt, and lose the two months which still remained to him for the execution of the plans from which he hoped to obtain such great results. At the same time, he assured M. de Balachoff of his personal regard for the Emperor Alexander, and dismissed him with the utmost graciousness.

This prudent course, however, was adopted too late, and M. de Balachoff had to relate a great deal which could not but wound Alexander most deeply, and convert a political quarrel into a personal one. Napoleon was, subsequently, to experience that this was the case; and, indeed, although most capable of pleasing when he took the trouble to do so, the possession of supreme power had rendered him so irritable and incapable of bearing contradiction, that he could no longer safely attempt to hold diplomatic interviews. His famous conversation with Lord Whitworth, in 1803, shows that this was a fault of long standing; but his conduct during his interviews with Prince Kourakin and M. de Balachoff, show that this fault had very greatly increased under the influence of uninterrupted success.

Whilst Napoleon was at Wilna, occupied with the numerous cares which we have enumerated, the Russian and French armies continued their movements. The six corps of infantry and the two corps of reserve cavalry of General Barclay de Tolly, which were marching upon the Dwina, were the most

advanced, and opposite our left, were pursuing a direct course, whilst the others situated on our right, and having to execute a circular movement around Wilna, were compelled to use the utmost expedition to avoid being cut off by Marshal Davoust. The outcry against the plans attributed to General Pfuhl, and the division of the Russian troops into two armies, had increased in violence amongst the Russian staff; and as General Pfuhl could only meet it with outbursts of chagrin, or an assumption of the dissatisfied silence of an unrecognised genius, the Emperor Alexander had been compelled to yield to the spirit of opposition which had arisen against his views, and to send directions to Prince Bagration to march in all haste upon Minsk, so as to be in a position to join the principal army as soon as it should be considered necessary.

The three corps of Barclay de Tolly which were situated on our left, those under Wittgenstein and Bagowouth and the Guard, which had originally been at Rossiena, at Wilkomir, and at Wilna, had withdrawn in the direction of Drissa, without encountering any obstacle, and followed only by Marshals Macdonald, Oudinot, and Ney. The corps of Touczkoff and Schouvaloff, posted at Nowoi-Troki and Olkeniky respectively, and both, as regarded us, on the right of the Wilna, having commenced their march on the 27th of June, on the eve of the day of our entrance into Wilna, had had time to retreat and to escape from the pursuit of our troops; with the exception, however, of the rear guard of Schouvaloff's corps, which having been unable to pass in time the Ochmiana route, which was that followed by Marshal Davoust, had remained between Davoust's corps and the Niemen, wandering here and there, and endeavouring to join the Hetman Platow in order to escape with him to Bagration. Finally, the sixth corps under General Doctoroff, and the second of General Korff's cavalry, which were advanced farther than the others on the right, being posted at Lida, and had a longer circuit to traverse so as to reach the other side of Wilna, had commenced their march immediately on the receipt of the orders above mentioned, and proceeded without pause to Ochmiana and Smorgoni. On the 29th they passed the Wilna route at Minsk; on the 30th, arrived at Donachewo, and on the 1st of July resumed their march to join the great army under Barclay de Tolly.

Such was the state of affairs on the 1st of July; when there only remained on our right some detachments of Doctoroff's corps, the rear guard of Schouvaloff's corps, and the eight or ten thousand Cossacks under the Hetman Platow; all of which had only the one course open to them, namely,

to fall back upon Bagration, following the course of the Niemen.

In the meantime, Marshal Davoust having advanced on the 2nd and 3rd of July as far as Valosjin, half way from Wilna to Minsk, by sifting, as his experience well enabled him, the reports received from prisoners, country-people, and *cures*, perceived very clearly that a corps of the enemy (that under Doctoroff,) had escaped him on his left, and that on his right rear-guards of infantry and cavalry, cut off from the several corps, wandered amongst the forests, in which it might be possible to enclose and take them, by means of advancing upon Bagration; of whose force Marshal Davoust had no certain information, but supposed it, as was really the case, to amount to about sixty thousand men, of whom forty thousand were infantry.

In so thickly wooded a country, so great a master of defensive tactics as Marshal Davoust did not fear to meet forty thousand Russian infantry, with the twenty thousand at his disposal, consisting of the division Compans, which were under his own immediate command on the Ochimana route, and the division Dessaix, which was on the Lida route, and which he could at any time bring to his side by a transverse movement. In addition to these twenty thousand infantry, he had ten thousand cavalry, consisting of the hussars and chasseurs of General's Pajol and Bordessoulle, the Valentian cuirassiers detached from the corps of Nansouty, and Grouchy's entire corps, temporarily separated from Prince Eugene's troops, and thrown by Napoleon in the direction of Grodno, for the purpose of establishing a communication with King Jerome. But in such a country as that in which he now had to operate, Marshal Davoust would certainly have preferred three or four thousand infantry to the most splendid cavalry.

Marshal Davoust advanced, therefore, upon Minsk, without any fear of Bagration, and even determined, on the contrary, to interrupt his march, and prevent him from gaining the Dnieper, although he could not indulge in the idea that he should be able to envelope and take him with so few troops. To interrupt his march; however, was a matter of great importance, since it would force him to redescend towards the marshes of Pinsk, and there would be a chance, should King Jerome, who had succeeded in passing the Niemen at Grodno, advance rapidly with his seventy or seventy-five thousand men, of making prisoners of the second Russian army. Marshal Davoust informed Napoleon of the circumstances of his position, and of his resolution to advance straight to Minsk, and demanded such

support as he could afford him. At the same time he wrote to King Jerome to hasten his advance in the direction of Ivié, or Volosjin, points at which it would effect the junction from which such happy results were to be expected.

The brave Marshal advanced on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th of July from Volosjin towards Minsk; but perceiving that as he approached the latter the dangers which surrounded him increased, as did also the distance which separated him from his reinforcements, he multiplied his reconnaissances, relaxed his march, and halted a day and a half between Volosjin and Minsk, for the purpose of bringing up the division Dessaix and Grouchy's cavalry, that he might enter Minsk at the head of his united forces.

The demands for assistance sent to Napoleon by Marshal Davoust were extremely reasonable; for, with two additional divisions, the latter would have been able to have marched straight forward, without anxiety respecting his junction with King Jerome, to have advanced uninterruptedly to Minsk, from Minsk to the Berezina, from the Berezina to the Dnieper, and have been able, thus, to cut off Prince Bagration, who, by the simultaneous arrival of King Jerome, would have been completely surrounded, and probably have endured the same fate as that suffered by General Mack at Wilna. To have secured these advantages, however, it was necessary that Marshal Davoust should have made rapid marches, and have been sufficiently strong to have dispensed with those precautions which render rapid marches impossible.

Napoleon, whose attention was, however, unfortunately, occupied by too many combinations, neglected these considerations, and considering that the junction of Marshal Davoust with the King of Westphalia was certain and would as certainly result in the envelopement or overthrow of Bagration's troops, devoted his attention to a combination worthy of his gigantic intellect, and which, forcing Barclay de Tolly to succumb, whilst Bagration was vanquished by Davoust and Jerome, would at once put an end to the whole war. Halting ten days at Wilna for the purpose of rallying his troops and re-organising his baggage train, he planned to set out on the 9th of July, directing his march upon the Dwina, and, whilst Oudinot and Ney should occupy the attention of Barclay de Tolly with about sixty thousand men, to manœuvre behind them, advancing to the right with Davoust's three remaining divisions, the guard, the troops under Prince Eugene, and Murat's cavalry, with the purpose of suddenly crossing the Dwina on the enemy's left, and surrounding the great Russian army in the Drissa camp;

cutting off simultaneously the St. Petersburgh and Moscow routes, and leaving to the Russians no alternative but to lay down their arms. No wiser nor more formidable plan could have been devised to meet the Russian's indefinite plan of retreat, and, considering Napoleon's skill in manœuvring in front of the enemy, all the chances of success were in his favour.

The forces at Napoleon's disposal for the execution of this plan were almost two hundred thousand of his best troops, and, therefore, should he employ sixty thousand to mask his movement, he would have one hundred and forty thousand remaining with whom to cross the Dwina on the left of Barclay de Tolly, to surround and to destroy him.

Napoleon's only fault in forming this plan was that he attempted to accomplish too many purposes at once. In the meantime, being unwilling to weaken the three first divisions of the first corps, the divisions Morand, Friant, and Gudin, which he held in higher estimation than even the guard itself, but also anxious to give Marshal Davoust such a reinforcement as would enable him to maintain his position until King Jerome should have joined him, he detached from the guard the division Clarapéde, composed of the famous regiments of the Vistula, and the *Lanciers rouges* under General Colbert. Simultaneously with the despatch of this reinforcement, which only amounted to about six thousand men, but was valuable on account of the exellence of the troops of which it was composed, Napoleon sent to urge King Jerome to conduct his marches with as much energy as possible, and at the same time made preparations to commence on the 9th or 10th of July the decisive operations which he meditated against Barclay de Tolly.

Marshal Davoust, whose troops, including the reinforcements, amounted to twenty-four thousand infantry and eleven thousand cavalry, and who knew that he was supported on his left by the presence of Prince Eugene, no longer felt any anxiety as to the Russian troops which he might meet in his advance. Marching eastward, with a slight deviation to the south, he had the Niemen (which after flowing northwards from Grodno to Kowno, suddenly, above Grodno, takes an entirely different direction, flowing from east to west) on his right, and was separated by the numerous sinuosities of its course from Prince Bagration and King Jerome. Having about thirty-five thousand troops at his command, he did not hesitate to advance, and entered Minsk on the evening of the 8th of July with a simple advanced guard; obtaining possession by means of the rapidity of his march—which left the Cossacks no time to destroy them—of large quantities

of most serviceable stores, and finding in the city considerable zeal for Polish independence.

These circumstances were of the greatest advantage to Marshal Davoust, whose corps had marched without halting from Kowno to Wilna, from Wilna to Minsk, without having had two whole days of repose since the 24th of June, and which had fallen into a state of the greatest disorder, a third of the troops having fallen out of the ranks, the horses being exhausted, and the 33rd leger, a Dutch regiment, having disbanded and devoted itself to pillage. The Marshal took immediate measures to remedy this state of things, addressed the troops, distributed prizes and rewards to those who deserved them, threatened to disband the 33rd should it not behave better in future, and had shot a certain number of men who had pillaged shops in Minsk. He procured ten days rations from the flour which he found in the town, provided the horses with oats, placed his troops in proper order to undertake new marches, and, after having been only two days in the town, was in a position to have continued his operations, had not his position become one of greater uncertainty, and rendered it necessary that he should obtain more precise information before advancing any further. When once he had arrived at Minsk, it was open to him to have reached by a slight further advance, the Beresina, and by inclining a little to the right, to have arrived under the walls of Bobruisk, a strong place commanding the passage of that river, or, by advancing straight forward, to have reached the banks of the Dnieper at Mohilew. Which of these courses it would be the best to pursue, depended upon the movements which should have been made by Prince Bagration, who, according to the confused rumours which could be collected, appeared to have advanced as far as the Niemen, towards Nikolajef, and then, after having rallied the troops of Dorokoff and Platow, to have retreated towards the little town of Neswij, on the road from Grodno to Bobruisk, which was naturally the road to be followed by the army of the Dnieper. In this state of circumstances a junction with King Jerome would enable our troops to stop Bagration at Bobruisk itself and should this prince be checked by Davoust at the passage of the Beresina, whilst Jerome should assail him in the rear, he might be surrounded in such a manner that he would only be able to retreat into the Pinsk marshes. By advancing, on the other hand, as far as the Dnieper, to intercept his march at Mohilew, the uncertainty of success increased with the distance; since, indeed, the circle within which it would then be attempted to surround him, would be increased, and there would be left open more points for his escape. Marshal

Davoust determined, therefore, to halt a day or two for the purpose of obtaining information, and making preparations for his march upon Ighoumen, a point at which he would be equally near to Mohilew and Bobruisk.

In the meantime, as is usual with persons who wait, Marshal Davoust was excessively irritated at the slowness of King Jerome's movements, forgetting, in his own embarrassments the embarrassments which might have surrounded the path of the latter; to whose movements at and since the passage of the Niemen we may now direct our attention.

The Polish and Westphalian troops, preceded by the cavalry corps of General Latour-Maubourg, having set out from the environs of Pultusk, and been compelled to follow the Ostrolenka and Goniondz route, for the purpose of reaching Grodno, across a country so poor that they had to carry with them everything they required, and along roads on which the conveyances of heavy burdens was a matter of the greatest labour, had had extreme difficulty in reaching the Niemen about the latter end of June. At the same time General Reynier with the Saxons had advanced on the right to debouch by Bialystok, and the Prince of Schwarzenburg with about thirty thousand Austrians had arrived from Galicia at Brezesc-Litowsky.

Pressed by the reiterated orders of Napoleon King Jerome, who had placed at the head of his column the excellent troops under Prince Poniatowski, had sacrificed many horses and left many stragglers behind him in pursuit of his object of reaching Grodno as speedily as possible. On the 28th of June the Polish light horse, animated with the utmost fury against the Russians, had reached this town, immediately drove back Platow's Cossacks and made preparations for effecting the passage of the river, aided by the inhabitants, whom the presence of their compatriots and the news of the reconstitution of Poland had filled with enthusiasm. On the following day they had crossed the river and, without taking any repose, had proceeded by the Lida route in conformity with the orders of the staff general, which directed them to form a junction with Prince Eugene who, as we have already seen, had effected the passage of the stream at Prenn.

On the following day, the 30th of June, King Jerome arrived, and immediately devoted his attention to making preparations for provisioning his troops, who were much harassed and had not been able to bring up their baggage train, since the great storm of the 29th of June, which had burst over almost the whole of Poland, had rendered the roads impracticable and slain many of the horses. Refusing to

allow his exertions to be interrupted by the demonstrations of joy and homage which the inhabitants, delighted at the news of the independence of Poland and the presence of a brother of Napoleon, lavished upon him, he made the greatest exertions to procure the bread rations for his troops, of which they stood in so much need.

In the meantime the most unjust and humiliating letters arrived from Napoleon, accusing Jerome of dilatoriness, want of zeal, and indulgence in pleasure. It is true that King Jerome, who was not able to discern by experience, like that of Marshal Davoust, the real state of affairs through the midst of popular rumours, had marched with a certain degree of apprehension of what he might encounter; but he had been most completely obedient to his brother's orders, losing not a single day or hour, and constantly urging General Reynier, who advanced parallel with him by Bialystok and Slonim to join as speedily as possible the principal column. Prince Bagration, however, was six or seven marches in advance, and it was not easy to come up with him. The Russian General, in fact, having set out on the 28th of June from Wolkowisk in accordance with the first order directing him to regain the banks of the Dnieper, had received, *en route*, a second, which had directed him to draw near Barclay de Tolly in his movement of retreat, and he had then marched upon Nikolajef, in order to cross the Niemen there, and to perform that circular movement around Wilna which had saved Doctoroff. At this place he had met with Dorokoff and Platow, and learning from them that Davoust was on their track, had, instead of ascending northwards, descended to the south, with the purpose of marching by Nowogrodek, Mir, and Neswij, upon Bobruisk. At Neswij he halted two days to refresh his troops, which were worn out with fatigue and the extreme heat of the weather, but as he was, nevertheless, quite ready to resume his march on the 10th of July, it was necessary that Jerome should arrive there by that time, if he was to come up with him; and this was an impossibility, since the distance from Grodno to Neswij, through Nowogrodek, was almost fifty-six leagues; and the King of Westphalia, should he even march seven leagues a day during eight days, which would be excessive toil for such roads and in the midst of the heats of July, could not arrive at Neswij before the 12th.

Harassed by his brother's letters, the King of Westphalia arrived at Nowogrodek on the 10th of July, and was then fourteen leagues from Bagration, who was at Neswij, and twenty from Davoust, who was at Minsk. As he had advanced, the less enormous had become the proportions as-

cribed to Bagration's army, which was now said to amount only to sixty thousand men; but this was still a very large force to have to meet with the forty-five thousand Polish and Westphalian troops who alone were at his command, the Saxons being too far off to be of immediate service.

On the same day, the 10th of July, King Jerome's light cavalry having advanced beyond Nowogrodek, on the Mir route, fell in with Prince Bagration's rear guard, consisting of six thousand Cossacks, two thousand regular cavalry, and two thousand light infantry. The ardour of our cavalry, consisting of chasseurs and Polish lancers, could not be restrained; and although only amounting to three thousand men, boldly engaged ten thousand of the enemy's troops, sustaining forty charges and losing five hundred of their number.

Such had been King Jerome's proceedings up to the 11th of July. In the meantime, Marshal Davoust, between whom and Jerome there had been no communications, from the fact of their making their reconnaissances in different directions, and who had been at Minsk since the 5th of July, became filled with an impatience which he expressed to Napoleon, and the latter in his turn, losing all mastery over his temper, sent an order to his brother to place himself under the commands of Marshal Davoust as soon as the junction between them should have taken place; a measure, which, amounting only to the subjection of a young prince to an old and experienced warrior, would have been very natural at the commencement of the campaign, but which, adopted suddenly and as a punishment, would very probably produce most disastrous misunderstandings, and prevent the attainment of the results which it was intended to insure.

In fact, without any change of command, had his Generals acted in zealous concert with each other, Napoleon's combinations might have been thoroughly executed; for Jerome, who on the 13th reached Neswij, from whence he could easily arrive at Bobruisk on the 17th, learning that Bagration, who was on the road to Bobruisk, could not reach it before the 16th, and would then require two days in which to effect the passage of the Beresina with all his materiel; and that Davoust, whose advanced guard was near Ighoumen, could reach Bobruisk in three days, in which case, Marshal Davoust debouching upon Bobruisk by the left of the Beresina with thirty-five thousand troops, and Jerome presenting himself on the right bank with forty-five thousand, it would be very possible to inflict a most severe blow on Bagration's army;—becoming acquainted with these circumstances, King Jerome communicated them to Marshal Davoust, urging him to march

upon Bobruisk, as the means of obtaining the most splendid results.

When Davoust, who had remained at Minsk until the 12th, not daring to advance since he had only two French infantry divisions, received Jerome's letter, he no longer hesitated to march, and determined to set out on the following day for Ighoumen. At the same time being anxious that the troops which were about to form a junction, should the more certainly act in concert, and not being wholly displeased to reduce to a subordinate position a young prince with whom he had been more than once discontented during his sojourn on the Elbe, he communicated tohim Napoleon's appointment of himself to the supreme command of the forces when they should have effected a junction, and at once adopting the position of commander in chief, ordered Jerome to march by Neswij and Slouck upon Bobruisk, whilst he himself should advance thither by Ighoumen. In the same letter he pointed out some cross routes, by which their light cavalry might form a link between their several corps.

The Marshal's letter reached Jerome on the 14th of July, and filled him with the most violent indignation; for he regarded this subjection to the commander of the 1st corps as a species of punishment, and the most profound humiliation; and yielding to these feelings he resolved, not to oppose Napoleon's will, but to resign his command—a resolution which was, unfortunately, the most disastrous for his brother's plans which he could possibly have taken. He committed to the chief of his staff, General Marchand, the command of his troops until the junction with Marshal Davoust should have been effected, and retired towards Mir and Nowogrodek, to await there the commands of the Emperor, and intending to return to his states should they not be in conformity with his ideas of his own dignity.

An officer bearing information of this resolution of the young prince reached Marshal Davoust on the 15th, at Ighoumen; and the Marshal failed on this occasion to act with his usual firmness, for instead of using the command —which he had seized somewhat prematurely—with the vigour demanded by circumstances, he was frightened at the idea of having offended a king, brother of the Emperor, and wrote to him a letter earnestly persuading him to remain at the head of the Polish and Westphalian troops under his, Davoust's, superior command, declaring that the adoption of this course was necessary for the Emperor's welfare. In the meantime, keeping his eye on Bobruisk, he also extended his observations beyond it, watching the course of events on

the other side of the Beresina, and making himself certain that the enemy was not preparing to cross it, in which case he would have hastened to advance upon Mohilew. He had already sent Grouchy's cavalry to Borisow to seize this town, its bridge across the Beresina, and its magazines; but they had only succeeded in securing the bridge. He had also thrown several bridges across the Beresina, especially in the neighbourhood of Iakzitcy, and had marched his forces thither, so as to be at the same time nearer to both Bobruisk and Mohilew.

When Davoust's letter arrived at Neswij, King Jerome was no longer there, and he did not receive it until the 17th, on the Nowogrodek road; he then sent a reply, which was a repetition of his previously expressed resolution, and which could not reach the Marshal until the 18th or 19th. And thus Napoleon's grand combination was rendered abortive, for it was necessary for its accomplishment, that both Davoust's and Jerome's troops should be under Bobruisk on the 17th, and that was no longer possible. All that could now be done, the opportunity of stopping and surrounding Bagration on the Beresina having been lost, was to outstrip him in the march upon the Dnieper, with the object of effecting the occupation of Mohilew. But the great results which were to be expected from the former measure were no longer to be hoped. Had Prince Bagration been checked on the Beresina, the only retreat open to him would have been in the direction of Mozyr and the Pinsk marshes, where he might have been readily assailed, surrounded, and taken. By being checked on the Dnieper, he would be prevented, indeed, from passing by Mohilew, but he would be able to descend upon Staroi-Bychow, and even if he should be checked in this latter direction, he would still be in a position to descend upon Rogaczew.

In the meantime Marshal Davoust, having received certain information respecting some of the enemy's movements beyond the Beresina resolved, without waiting for Jerome's reply, to give up the plan of a combined movement upon Bobruisk, and to march upon Mohilew, in order to secure, at least, some of the expected results. Having marched on the 16th some of his troops by Iakzitcy, beyond the Beresina, he himself, on the 17th, followed with the remainder of his corps d'armeé, and advanced by Pogost on the Dnieper, in the direction of Mohilew. He received on his road the letters by which King Jerome announced his definitive resolution, and he at once took upon himself the direction of the troops which had thus come under his command; ordering the Westphalians to proceed by Ouzda, Dukora, and Bori-

sow to Orscha, that they might have a position on the Dnieper between himself and the grand army, which he knew to be on its march towards the upper Dwina; and, as this movement could not be completed until the lapse of eight or ten days, directing Grouchy's cavalry upon Orscha, so as to establish the connection with the grand army as soon as possible. At the same time he marched the Polish corps, on which he chiefly relied, towards Mohilew, by Ouzda, Dukora, and Ighoumen; for, if he could bring up this corps in time, he would have at his command some fifty and odd thousand men; a force quite sufficient to vanquish the troops under Bagration. Latour-Maubourg's cavalry he devoted to the task of investing Bobruisk, whilst they should at the same time retain a position on the Beresina, and maintain a connection with Mohilew. The Saxons, and, to the right of the Saxons, the Austrians, remained to be disposed of, and we shall find that they were employed in conformity with Napoleon's orders.

Thus of the combination of movements which Napoleon had devised for the purpose of encircling and capturing Bagration's troops, there only remained the chance of checking them at Mohilew, compelling them to pass the Dnieper below it, and thus delaying, but by no means rendering altogether impossible, his junction with Barclay de Tolly.

When Napoleon became informed of the frustration of his scheme, he was excessively irritated against both Marshal Davoust and King Jerome, and especially against the latter. His accusation against Davoust being that he assumed the command of the two armies before the junction between them had been actually effected, and that he had not exercised the command thus assumed with sufficient vigour; whilst he reproached King Jerome with having lost him the results which should have been derived from one of his best manœuvres.

Although he could no longer hope for the success of his manœuvres against the army of the Dnieper, he still confidently expected that Marshal Davoust would drive Bagration upon the Dnieper below Mohilew at least; and that the second Russian army would be compelled to make a long detour, and thus be prevented from assisting the army under Barclay de Tolly. He ordered Marshal Davoust, therefore, firmly to maintain his position at Mohilew, and directed the Prince of Schwarzenberg to draw near the grand army with the Austrian corps, traversing Lithuania from south to north by Proujany, Slonim, and Minsk, replacing them with the Saxons on the upper course of the Bug, the frontier of Volhynia, and the Grand Duchy of Warsaw.

These measures having been taken, he directed his atten-

tion to his other measure, which was even more important than that of which we have just narrated the failure, since, if he should succeed in advancing with the greater portion of his forces in front of the camp of Drissa, in outstripping Barclay de Tolly, and in cutting him off from both Moscow and St. Petersburg, he would render impossible the execution of the project conceived by the Russians of an indefinite retreat, or at least reduce them to attempting its execution with mere disorganised wrecks of armies.

With regard to this grand movement, the halt made at Wilna was much to be regretted; but it had, nevertheless, been absolutely necessary for the purpose of checking desertion, bringing up the artillery which remained in the rear, reorganising the baggage train, preparing provisions, and bringing up the pontoon equipages; and every hour of the eighteen days, during which it lasted, was zealously devoted to the preparations required by these important matters. In the meantime, news arrived at Wilna from all parts of the world, leaving no doubt on the one hand that the Turks had concluded peace with Russia, and that Bernadotte had also given in his adhesion to the same power. This news which could not but lead Napoleon to expect the arrival, on his right, of the Russian armies of Tarmasoff and Tchitchakoff, and the probable descent of Swedish troops on his rear, was, however, counterbalanced by favourable news from England and America, which announced the assassination of Mr. Percival, a total change in British policy, and the certainty of a declaration of war between Great Britain and America. But Napoleon very properly allowed himself to be but little affected by news which did not immediately relate to the scene of action, and determined to trust the fortune of the war to the grand operations which he was about to undertake. He had already sent forward the light cavalry of the Guard, under General Lefebvre-Desnouettes, to prepare the way for the remainder of the army, and had followed it with the young Guard under Martin, the old Guard under Lefebvre; directing the first to proceed to Lowaritsky, Michælisky, the second by Swenziany and Postavy, and both to make for Gloubakoe, where Napoleon intended to fix his head quarters in front of the Dwina, between Drissa and Polotsk. In the rear of these troops he had dispatched the Guard's artillery reserve, which he regarded as particularly serviceable in actual battle, and recommended that it should be slowly carried forward so that the horses might not be worn out. On the same point, also, but somewhat to the left, and behind Murat, he directed the three divisions, Morand, Friant, and Gudin, which he had kept under his own imme-

diate command, for the execution of the more difficult part of his manœuvre, which would be close to the enemy, at the point where it would be necessary to turn them for the purpose of surrounding them. At the same time, he had caused Ney, Oudinot, and Macdonald, to execute a movement from left to right; carrying Ney from Maliatoui to Widzony, Oudinot from Avanta to Binchononi, and Macdonald from Rossiena to Poinwieri; whilst on his right, he had set Prince Eugene's troops in motion from Nowoi-Troki to Ochmiana, Smorgoni and Wileika, intending that they should form his right wing and communicate with Marshal Davoust by means of Grouchy's cavalry.

Before leaving Wilna, Napoleon made every arrangement for the due administration of all parts of the service during his absence; and resolved to leave there the Duke of Bassano with authority to carry on, not only diplomatic, but also administrative and military correspondence, to communicate to each chief of a corps what it might be suitable that he should know, and even to give orders with respect to all matters relating to the victualling of the army.

At the same time he concluded an agreement with the Polish Jews, for the establishment of a transport service from Kowno to Wilna; for the navigation of the Wilia had been found to be perfectly impracticable, and it had been resolved to employ a land transport service instead. And, finally, desiring that the army of reserve should make a movement corresponding to that which was about to be made by the army in the field, he ordered Marshal Victor, who commanded the 9th corps at Berlin, to advance upon Dantzic, and Marshal Angereau, who commanded the 11th corps, composed of fourth battalions and regiments of refractory recruits, to replace the Duke de Bellune at Berlin; directing that these latter troops should be replaced on the frontiers of France by the cohorts whose organisation he had ordered before quitting Paris. Wilna itself, which now contained ovens capable of furnishing a hundred thousand rations, hospitals capable of receiving six thousand patients, and officers ready to recruit or reorganise the stragglers who might be brought in by the columns mobile, he arranged should be garrisoned by a garrison mobile, consisting of troops on their march, of whom there would generally be present there not less than twenty thousand.

Napoleon resolved to set out on the night of the 16th of July; but before his departure he could not fail to receive the representations of the Polish Diet, of which there had been an extraordinary assembly at Warsaw. It will be remembered that M. de Pradt, Archbishop of Malines, was sent to

Warsaw, in the place of M. de Talleyrand, for the purpose of exciting and directing Polish enthusiasm. He was a man quite incapable of judicious action in the midst of a popular commotion, and finding himself, on arriving at his post, in the midst of a population intensely excited by the idea of the speedy reconstitution of their kingdom, quite ready to fight, but ruined by the continental blockade, distrustful of Napoleon, and far from confident in the success of his war against Russia, divided by a thousand different counsels, and turbulent and agitated as usual, he was surprised and disconcerted, and knew not how to act in the midst of the chaos in which he was immersed. In the meantime, passion led the Poles to adopt the idea of a general Diet, to be assembled immediately, and which, according to ancient usage, should proclaim, besides the reconstitution of Poland, the confederation of all its provinces, and a levy en masse of the population, against Russia. The poor King of Saxony, on whose head had fallen the Polish crown, had previously provided the ministers of the Grand Duchy with the necessary powers, and they gave in their cordial adhesion to the convocation of the Diet; and it was, accordingly, immediately assembled. Its first acts being the election as president of Adam Czartoryski, an octogenarian, and formerly marshal of one of the ancient Diets; the proclamation, in the midst of immense enthusiasm, of the re-establishment of Poland, the confederation of all its provinces, the insurrection of those which were still under foreign yoke, and the despatch of envoys to Napoleon to persuade him to declare with his sovereign lips—"Poland is re-established."

The Diet had separated after having appointed a commission entrusted with the duty of representing it and in some degree, the office of a national sovereignty, whilst the ministers of the Grand Duchy should fill that of the executive power. An arrangement of which one of the difficulties was that each of these bodies desired to exercise its own authority and that of the others also. But this was not the greatest of the inconveniences resulting from it. In the meantime it was necessary without loss of time, to direct their ardour towards those two essential objects, the levy of troops and the propagation of the insurrection in Lithuania, Volhynia, and Podolia; and if the Abbé de Prodt now had money at his command, extensive authority to act, and a genius for such undertakings as that in which he was now engaged, he might have succeeded in extracting from the fermenting elements around him, an organised force capable of raising Volhynia and Podolia, whilst Napoleon was organising Lithuania, already raised by his presence. But Napoleon

had neither given him money nor extended authority of action, and his operations had been limited to assisting the Poles in drawing up the manifesto which announced the re-establishment of the Polish kingdom, and which, when drawn up, was sent to Napoleon by the hands of a deputation, which was also charged to endeavour to persuade him to make some solemn declaration of adhesion to the step which had been taken.

The deputation arrived at Wilna shortly before Napoleon's departure, and greatly annoyed him, seeing he was very unwilling to be forced to any decided engagement, which might render the negotiation of peace with Russia too difficult. For although, at a distance, he had regarded the war as one which might be easily conducted, he now entertained juxta views respecting it, and was anxious that it should remain such a war, that a battle gained might conclude it with éclat. He knew very well that, were he to propose the reconstitution of the kingdom of Poland as one of the essential ends of the war, it would be necessary to reduce Russia to the last extremity; and he replied, therefore, to the Polish deputies in ambiguous terms, which were attended with all the usual inconveniences of ambiguous replies, being too clear for Russia and too obscure for Poland.

"Gentlemen," he said in reply to the address of the deputation, "Gentlemen, deputies of the confederation of Poland, I have listened with much interest to all that you have just addressed to me! Poles, I should have thought and acted in your place as you have done; I should have acted as you have acted in the assembly at Warsaw. The love of country is the first virtue of civilised humanity.

"In my position I have many interests to conciliate, many duties to fulfil. Had I reigned in the time of the first, the second, or the third division of Poland, I would have armed all my people in your support. As soon as victory enabled me to restore your ancient laws to your capital and a portion of your provinces, I eagerly seized the opportunity.

"I love your nation. During sixteen years I have been accustomed to see its soldiers fighting by my side, on the battle fields of Italy and Spain.

I applaud all that you have done; I sanction the efforts which you have made; all that I can do to second them I will do.

"If your efforts be unanimous you may well hope to succeed in compelling your enemies to recognise your rights; but in these distant and vast countries it is on the unanimous efforts of their peoples alone that such hopes of success can be founded.

"I addressed you in the same terms on my first appearance in Poland. I must add, that I have guaranteed to the Emperor of Austria the integrity of his states, and that I cannot authorise any manœuvre or movement tending to disturb him in the peaceable possession of what remains to him of the Polish provinces. But let Lithuania, Samogitia, Witebsk, Polotsk, Mohilew, Volhynia, the Ukraine, and Podolia, be animated with the same spirit which I have found to exist in great Poland, and Providence will crown with success the sanctity of your cause, and will recompense you for that devotion to your country which renders you so interesting, and has given you so many claims upon my esteem and protection, upon which, in all circumstances, you may always rely."

This address had no particularly unfavourable effect on the Polish deputies, for they were previously aware that Napoleon entertained the sentiments which it expressed, but its effect at Wilna, in spite of the enthusiasm caused by the presence of the victorious French troops, was most disastrous. "How can Napoleon," said the Lithuanian, "demand that we should lavish our blood and our resources in his service, when he is unwilling on his part, to declare the reconstitution of the kingdom of Poland? And what withholds him from this course? Prussia is at his feet; Austria is dependent on his will, and might readily, moreover, be recompensed by Illyria; and Russia is already flying before his armies. Is it the truth, that he is not willing to restore us to existence as a nation? Is it the truth, that he has come here only to gain a victory over the Russians, intending then to retreat without having effected anything with regard to us, save having added half a million of Poles to the Grand Duchy, and exposed the greater number of us to exile and sequestration?" To these doubts it was replied, that Napoleon was in a delicate position, that it was absolutely necessary that he should act with caution, but that it was easy to see through his caution, that his real intention was to reconstitute Poland, should he be seriously aided;—that it was necessary, therefore, for the Polish people to rise *en masse*, and furnish him with the means of accomplishing the undertaking upon which he had entered. But the party which held these latter opinions was by far the least numerous, and the large body of people made Napoleon's caution an excuse for want of energy, avarice, and selfish calculations.

Napoleon set out from Wilna on the evening of the 16th, after a sojourn there of eighteen days. On the morning of the 18th he arrived at Gloubokoé, a little town constructed of wood, and having taken up his quarters in its principal building, a large convent, hastened, as was his wont, to pre-

pare an establishment which might serve as a general depôt for the use of the troops.

In the meantime the various corps continued their movements and defiled successively in front of the Drissa camp, as though they were about to attack it; being under orders, however, to make no such attempt. Murat having halted for a few days in advance of Swenziany, at Opsa, with the cavalry under Generals Nansouty and Montbrun, and Marshal Davoust's three divisions, had defiled before the Drissa camp, and taken up a position opposite Polotsk, near to Gloubokoé, and at Napoleon's immediate disposal. During this march, General Sebastian had permitted himself to be surprised by the Russian cavalry, which, having crossed the Dwina to observe our movements, took advantage of some carelessness on our side, to attack General Saint-Geniés, who defended himself most valiantly, but was taken prisoner with some hundreds of his men. On receipt of information of this appearance of the Russian cavalry, however, our cavalry hastened up, threw themselves on the enemy, took General Koulnieff who commanded them, and forced them to repass the Dwina.

Ney followed Murat, executing a similar movement, and placing himself on the left of the divisions Morand, Friant, and Gudin. The wet and the want of proper food had caused much loss amongst his younger soldiers by dysentery, and there were reasons to fear that this complaint would become contagious.

After Ney marched Oudinot, who, defiling within sight of Dunabourg, where the Russians had constructed a strong *tete de pont* on the Dwina, could not refrain, in spite of Napoleon's recommendations to the contrary, from assailing the work, which the Russians abandoned. This incident had no ulterior consequences, and Marshal Oudinot took up a position, in his turn, on the left of Ney. All three corps were thus assembled within a space of a few leagues, some of them having passed the Drissa camp, in front of which they had defiled, whilst the others remained opposite to it, and all were at the immediate command of Napoleon, who was at Gloubokoé with his guard. Marshal Macdonald alone retained a position at some distance on our left, between Poniewiez and Jacobstadt, covering Samogitia and the course of the Niemen which our convoys followed on their way to Kowno.

The movements which had been ordered on Napoleon's right, had been executed with equal punctuality. Prince Eugene occupied this portion of the line forming the link of connection with Marshal Davoust on the Dnieper, and, after

having rallied his troops and baggage train at Nowoi-Troki, he had followed the Minsk route, as far as Smorgoni, from which point he had marched upon Wileika, from whence he had continued his route by Dolghinow as far as Beresina, at which place there is a canal called the Lepel canal, which unites the Beresina, which is a tributary of the Dnieper, with the Oula, which is a tributary of the Dwina, and which may be regarded, therefore, as the connecting link between the Black Sea and the Baltic. On the 21st he would reach Kowno, and would have but a few steps to take to reach the Dwina, at a place between Oula and Beschenkowiczy, where it may be easily forded.

A force of almost 200,000 men were thus posted within a space of a few leagues, and at Napoleon's immediate command; and as this was a force quite sufficient to overwhelm Bagration's army, he made immediate preparations to cross the Dwina on his left, to turn and surround him, according to his previously formed plan. Everything as yet had proceeded according to his wishes, and he only awaited the arrival of his heavy artillery, which would probably arrive about the 22nd or 23rd of July, to execute his grand designs. In the meantime he devoted himself with his usual activity to preparations conducive to the welfare of his army.

Whilst Napoleon was thus employed in conducting his own movements, Marshal Davoust continued to conduct the operations committed to his charge, the object of which was to check Bagration at Mohilew, preventing him from effecting the passage of the Dnieper at this point, forcing him to descend lower down, and to execute a long detour to rejoin, beyond the Dnieper and the Dwina, the great army under Barclay de Tolly. The success of this manœuvre was essential to that of Napoleon himself, and had Marshal Davoust had the whole of Jerome's corps at his command, he might not only have stopped but even overwhelmed Bagration's army; but, unfortunately, King Jerome's troops were six or eight marches distant and he was at Mohilew, whither he had hastened at the utmost speed for the purpose of barring Bagration's road, with only the divisions Compans, Dessaix, and Claparède, and a division of cuirassiers. The remainder of his cavalry had extended themselves to the left for the purpose of forming a line of communication with Prince Eugene, and to the right, for the purpose of watching the Polish and Westphalian troops actually on their march.

In the meantime Prince Bagration, having crossed the Beresina at Bobruisk, without having been overwhelmed by the united armies of Davoust and Jerome, considered

himself in safety, for he had the strong fortress in his rear as a protection against Jerome, and he hoped to reach the Dnieper at Mohilew, without encountering any obstacle. On the evening of the 21st, in fact, he approached this place, having sixty thousand effective troops at his command.

Marshal Davoust, as we have already said, occupied Mohilew with the divisions Compans, Dessaix, and Claparède. His forces, reduced by the fatigues of their march were still further weakened by the withdrawal of detachments which he was compelled to place at numerous points, and the effective force at his command with which to meet the sixty thousand troops of the enemy, amounted only to twenty-two thousand infantry and six thousand cavalry.

On the evening of the 21st a skirmish which took place between one of our advanced posts, consisting of a squadron of Bordessoulle's light cavalry, and Platow's Cossacks, announced the approach of the army of the Dnieper; and on the following morning Marshal Davoust, accompanied by General Haxo, made a careful reconnaissance of the field of battle. The Staroi-Bychow road, on which had taken place the skirmish of the previous evening, was also identical with the Bobruisk road which, after having run directly from the Beresina to the Dnieper, turned almost at right angles towards Staroi-Bychow, and followed the right bank of the Dnieper as far as Mohilew. The Marshal and General Haxo setting out from Mohilew descended this road, which, bordered by a double row of birch trees, like all the roads of the country, extended between the Dnieper which was on its left, and a streamlet named the Mischowska, on its right. After having advanced between the Mischowska and the Dnieper about three leagues, they saw that the Mischowska suddenly turned to the left towards the Dnieper, at a point at which was situated a mill, called the Fatowa mill, and which was provided with a milldam. The Mischowska thus cut the road, passing under a bridge on which was a great building called the Auberge de Saltanowka, and losing itself in the Dnieper. The space of ground which was thus circumscribed, at once suggested itself to Marshal Davoust and General Haxo as most suitable for a battle-field, and as a position on which there would be the greatest chance of holding the enemy in check, whatever might be their numbers or determination. Ordering such works, therefore, at the bridge and the mill as would prevent the enemy from crossing the Mischowska, and entrusting the defence of these two posts to the defence of five battalions of the 85th of the line under General Friederichs, (the 108th being posted in the rear under General Dessaix, as a reserve) and a portion

of his artillery, Marshal Davoust proceeded towards Mohilew for the purpose of observing whether the enemy would endeavour to cross the Mischowska on his right, which would have rendered useless any resistance at the Saltanowka bridge and the Fatowa mill; and having advanced in that direction about a league, he reached a place on the bank of the Mischowska at the little village of Seletz, at which the enemy might have crossed it. Marshal Davoust, therefore, posted at this spot one of the four regiments of the division; and, a little in the rear, a reserve of two other regiments of the division Compans—the 57th and 111th of the line—together with Valence's cuirassiers. Finally, as an additional precaution, he ranged the Polish division Claparède, behind the division Compans, to form a line of communication between Mohilew and the troops on the Staroi-Bychow route; and directed General Pajol with his light cavalry and the 25th of the line (the 4th regiment of the division Compans), to watch the Ighoumen route by Pogost, as it was possible that a portion of the Russian army might attempt to advance by it to turn our position at Mohilew.

On the following day, the 23rd of July, as soon as morning dawned, Prince Bagration, after having left the 8th corps on the Bobruisk route, as a protection against the possible but improbable pursuit of King Jerome, advanced the 7th corps against the Saltanowka bridge and the Fatowa mill, with orders to take them at any cost.

The division Kolioubakin attacked the Saltanowka bridge and the division Paskewitch the Fatowa mill. At first the contest was carried on on both sides merely by the sharpshooters and the artillery, but after some time the Russians, finding that they suffered greater loss than they inflicted, the division Kolioubakin advanced against the Saltanowka bridge, and was driven back with great loss, and compelled to retire into shelter.

Marshal Davoust, who had been attracted to the scene of action by the sound of the cannon, finding matters proceeding well in front, now withdrew to the rear, to the village of Seletz, to discover whether he were threatened on this side with an attack in flank.

Having become convinced that there was no imminent danger on this side, he carried the 61st, which had been posted at the village of Seletz, a little more forward, and at the same time advanced to a similar extent the 57th and 111th, and the cuirassiers; for he perceived that the enemy's great effort would be directed against the front of his position.

The Russians were, in fact, at this moment making a

great and last effort. The division Kolioubakin debouching en masse by the high road, advanced in close column upon the Saltanowka bridge, and the division Paskewitch deploying uncovered in front of the Fatowa mill, advanced to the edge of the milldam in spite of the well-directed fire of our artillery. General Friederichs, however, with the 85th received the division Kolioubakin with so furious a fire of musketry, that after having advanced boldly towards the bridge, it hesitated for a moment, and then beat a hasty retreat. In the meantime the division Paskewitch, finding in the stream a less insurmountable obstacle, attempted to cross it by passing over the dyke which retained the water for the mill; and the 108th perceiving this, advanced under the command of an officer brave even to rashness, and drove them back at the point of the bayonet. Unfortunately, however, instead of remaining contented with the advantage thus gained, their commander led them in their turn across the obstacle which had been so furiously disputed, and debouched in the midst of the open ground which extended beyond, where they found themselves exposed to a circle of the enemy's fire, and being attacked by the bayonet they were driven back across the stream, with a serious loss in killed and wounded and leaving a hundred of their number in the hands of the Russians.

At this moment the Marshal arrived from the rear, and immediately rallied the battalion which had just returned in disorder, causing it to execute some manœuvres under fire for the purpose of restoring it to confidence. He then brought the whole of his artillery, and directing it against the division Paskewitch once more forced it to retire into shelter. And thus from the Fatowa mill to the Saltanowka bridge the Russians had exhausted themselves in useless efforts, and lost their troops in the proportion of three or four to one of ours.

Nevertheless the division Paskewitch attempted to ascend on our right following the Mischowska as far as the village of Seletz, and succeeded in advancing in front of the village, when some of its skirmishers even ventured to cross the stream. The troops, however, who made this rash attempt were speedily driven back by the voltigeurs of the 61st, and the whole regiment throwing itself beyond the Mischowska attacked the Russians and compelled them to evacuate this portion of the field. In the meantime General Friederichs in our front, between the Fatowa mill and the Saltanowka bridge, had crossed the stream with some companies of picked men, had turned the open space in which the Russians had deployed in front of the mill, assailed them unexpectedly in the rear, driven them back with great slaughter at the bayonet's point, and thus cleared the front of the field of battle of the enemy.

Our troops now assumed the offensive, advanced en masse along the great Staroi-Bychow road, and after having pursued the Russians about a league, perceived on the open space of ground Prince Bagration in position with his whole army. And on this new battle-field the contest would have been as disastrous to us as it had been for the Russians on the brink of the Mischowska; but the intrepid Compans, who was as prudent as brave, checked the ardour of his troops, and retreated, unpursued by the enemy; for Prince Bagration, terrified at the loss, amounting to about four thousand in killed and wounded, which he had suffered on the banks of the Mischowska, and informed that Marshal Davoust would speedily receive reinforcements, considered that he ought to retreat upon Staroi-Bychow, for the purpose of passing the Dnieper, and then advancing upon Micislaw.

Thus terminated this glorious combat, in which the twenty-eight thousand men of the first corps, had checked the sixty thousand troops under Bagration. Had Prince Bagration been better acquainted with the ground on which the battle was fought, he might have executed a dangerous attack on Marshal Davoust's widely extended right with Borosdin's corps; but it would have had to encounter, and could not have easily vanquished, the infantry of Generals Compans and Claparède, and the cuirassiers of General Valence. We must also add that had Prince Poniatowski been able to appear, during this battle of the 23rd, by Iakzitcy, on the rear or flank of Prince Bagration's army, he might have inflicted upon it, even although the opportunity at Bobruisk had failed, a most serious disaster.

Marshal Davoust, employed the day succeeding that of the battle in bringing in his wounded, and, obtaining information respecting the Poles and Westphalians; being unwilling to leave before their arrival the species of entrenched camp which he had found so useful; and at the same time made every preparation for ascending the course of the Dnieper as far as Orscha, in order to approach Napoleon, who, as we have said above, awaited at Gloubokoé the propitious moment for turning, by Polotsk and Witebsk, the Russian army under Barclay de Tolly. To prevent Prince Bagration from joining the principal army would be henceforth impossible, for it would not be practicable to follow him indefinitely beyond the Dnieper; but this junction had been delayed for a time, and the success, although falling far short of that which had been at first hoped for, was sufficient for the accomplishment of Napoleon's chief design.

Napoleon's profound calculations had determined him to

choose the 22nd or 23rd on which to execute his great manœuvre. He was at Gloubokoé, having on his right towards Kamen, Prince Eugene, in his front, towards Ouchatsch, Murat's cavalry, and the three divisions Morand, Friand, Gudin, and on his left Ney and Oudinot, opposite the Drissa camp. The Imperial Guard was posted at Gloubokoé itself. And thus Napoleon had one hundred and ninety thousand men at his immediate command, ready to cross the Dwina on the left of Barclay de Tolly; whilst the success of Marshal Davoust was strongly conducive to the execution of the designs he had in view. But at this moment a singular revolution took place in the Russian staff.

Barclay de Tolly had, as we have seen, fallen back upon the Drissa camp, and by this manœuvre had excited a strong feeling of disapprobation; the lower ranks of the army being indignant at the idea of retreating before the French troops at all; and those of a superior grade, who could comprehend the wisdom of a plan of indefinite retreat, regarding the establishment of the Drissa camp as perfectly irreconcilable with common sense. And indeed, the establishment of a camp on the Dwina, on the very path of the French troops, and at the commencement, we might say, of their course, when their strength and resources must be still unimpaired, was scarcely in accordance with reason, since even if he did not force it, he would be able to turn it, or to take advantage of the forced immobility of the principal army, to penetrate by his right the opening which separates the sources of the Dwina from those of the Dnieper, and to divide for the remainder of the campaign, the long line of the Russian armies. Moreover the Drissa camp was constructed in such a manner as to offer but very slight means of security. The plan generally pursued, when it is intended to defend a river, is, to cover the troops charged with the defence with the river itself; but here the camp had been placed in front of the river, and was covered by it only in the rear and on the sides; for, at the instance of General Pfuhl the Russian engineers had selected a deep curve, formed by the Dwina at Drissa for the position of the camp, and defended its front by two lines of defence, extending from one bend of the river to the other; four bridges being provided for the retreat of the army, should it be compelled to evacuate its position.

Although the camp was calculated to oppose great obstacles to the impetuosity of the French, it was at the same time well calculated to assist Napoleon's manœuvre, which consisted in turning the Russian position, and thus surrounding the troops under Barclay de Tolly. If, in fact, Napo-

leon had had time to pass the Dwina and thus advance on the rear of the Russian army, it cannot readily be imagined how it would have been able to defile by the above mentioned four bridges, in the presence of two hundred thousand French soldiers.

In the meantime a universal cry of indignation arose throughout the Russian army against the plan of the campaign as described by General Pfuhl, and this was succeeded by expressions of disapprobation of the presence of the Emperor in the army, which introduced, it was said, the spirit of courts and the intrigues of courtiers, where military operations should be the only care. Alexander could not, it was declared, himself command, and that even if he could, he was unwilling to do so, and that by his presence he prevented any one else from properly commanding, on account of the deference which was naturally paid to his advice, and that the fear of incurring his blame, or that of his favourites, would always, as long as he was present, hinder the most resolute General from adopting any decided course of action. A strange spectacle was thus presented by this Czar, the perfect type in modern Europe of absolute sovereignty, who was thus dependent on his principal courtiers, and almost driven from his army by a species of émeute in his court! Such is the profound illusion of despotism. Our powers of command can only really extend so far as we are capable of conceiving and accomplishing our wishes; rank is really, as far as power is concerned, a thing of nought; and the most absolute monarch is frequently but the valet of a valet who knows that of which his master is ignorant. Genius alone can really command, because it has powers of comprehension and will, and even genius is dependent on wise counsels, for it cannot of itself see everything, and if, blinded by pride, it rejects counsel, it speedily falls into folly, and from folly into ruin.

The Russian military aristocracy, which, by turns threatening or supporting Alexander, had led him step by step to resist French domination, was not willing now that it had forced him into war, to allow him to dictate to them, as to the manner in which it was to be conducted. Violent and desperate, it was prepared to sacrifice the whole wealth and the whole blood of the nation in support of the contest, and was determined not to permit an Emperor, who was doubtless patriotic, but at the same time gentle, humane, and changeable, to check its patriotic fury.

In their excitement the chief persons of this military aristocracy determined to adopt a plan which would have the effect of compelling Alexander to resign the system pro-

pounded by General Pfuhl, and the position at the Drissa camp, and induce him to ascend the Dwina as far as Witebsk, where it would be possible to effect a junction with Bagration's army by Smolensk; and they resolved when these points should have been once gained, that they would take a step further, and invite Alexander to quit the army, adopting the respectful and even flattering pretext, that the direction of the war was not the principal task of government; that the care of providing means for its maintenance was a still higher duty; that one or two armies in the rear of that which was in the field were absolutely necessary; that these could only be obtained from the patriotism of the country; that Alexander, at that moment an object of national adoration, would be capable of obtaining all that he desired; that he should proceed in person, therefore, to the principal cities, Witebsk, Smolensk, Moscow, and St. Petersburg, to convoke all classes of the people, the noblesse, the clergy, and the bourgeoisie, and demand of them their utmost sacrifices;—that he would thus perform a service both more urgent and more useful than any which he could perform by remaining with the army; that it was the duty of his generals to die on their country's soil in its defence, and his to seek for others of her children who would be ready soon to perish in their turn. And to the honour of this imperious and devoted aristocracy, which had violently freed itself, twelve years before, from the rule of a mad prince, and which was now removing from the army an Emperor whose presence detracted from its efficacy, we ought to recognise the fact that in thus acting, its sole object was that it might with greater freedom pour out its own blood, and that of the armies, in the national defence.

The former minister of war, Araktchejef, a man of ordinary capacity, but considerable energy, and Balachoff, the minister of police, dared to present to Alexander an address in writing recommending his immediate departure for Moscow, for the reasons just stated; and the Generals Bagowouth and Ostermann besought Alexander with an energy which exceeded simple entreaty, to order the abandonment of the Drissa camp, and to direct a movement from right to left upon Witebsk, for the purpose of frustrating, by effecting a junction with Prince Bagration, the manœuvre which they began to suspect Napoleon was about to attempt.

Moved by these representations, Alexander summoned a council of war, which included not only his own staff but that also of Barclay de Tolly; together with Araktchejef, the engineer Michaux, and Colonel Walzogen, General Pfuhl's confidant. Having first given a general view of the scheme

which he had adopted for the conduct of the campaign, Alexander entrusted its justification in detail to Colonel Walzogen, who, however, after attempting to defend by arguments more or less specious, the position which had been chosen for the Drissa camp, yielded to the general feeling of the counsel, and admitted that it was necessary to quit this camp immediately, and to advance upon Witebsk, whence it would be possible to afford support to Bagration. This view, in entire conformity with the general desire, met with no opposition, and was unanimously adopted.

But although General Pfuhl's ridiculous attempt to seek at Drissa what Lord Wellington had found at Torres-Védras, was thus abandoned, Alexander by no means abandoned the essential part of his plan, which consisted in a retreat into the interior of the country, and which, indeed, was approved of by all persons of sagacity. He confided, therefore, the execution of this idea to General Barclay de Tolly, refraining from giving him the title of Commander-in-Chief, that he might not hurt Bagration's vanity, and leaving him in the position of Minister of War, which naturally placed all the Generals at his orders. Having made this arrangement, he yielded to the suggestion which had been made to him, and left head quarters, taking with him all the troublesome counsellors from whom Barclay de Tolly and the army were equally anxious to be freed. General Pfuhl departed for St. Petersburg with Araktchejef, Armfeld, and others; and the Italian Paulucci, at first disgraced for his frankness, was appointed governor of Riga.

Barclay de Tolly, who now remained at the head of the army, with the position of Minister of War, was of all the Russian Generals the most capable of directing its operations judiciously. Skilful, thoroughly acquainted with all the duties of his profession, cool and resolute, the sole inconvenience attending his command was, that he inspired his subordinates with a bitter feeling of jealousy, which his acknowledged superiority could not quench, and that he was responsible in the eyes of the army for a system of retreat which, however judicious, deeply wounded its pride. For the moment he adhered thoroughly to the idea of evacuating the Drissa camp, following the course of the Dwina as far as Witebsk, and taking up a position opposite Smolensk, where it was hoped that Bagration would speedily arrive by ascending the course of the Dnieper, for the purpose of affording support to the latter, by advancing into the space between the sources of the Dwina and those of the Dnieper, as circumstances might render necessary. This movement, although closing against us the Moscow route, would leave

that of St. Petersburg open, and therefore, for the purpose of closing it as much as possible he resolved to leave in position on the lower Dwina, between Polotsk and Riga, the corps under Wittgenstein, who, with twenty-five thousand men, speedily to be reinforced by the troops from Finland and the reserves from the north of the empire, would cover the important place Riga, and threaten the left flank of the French, whilst the army of the Danube, should it return from Turkey in time, might threaten their right flank.

These arrangements having been made, Barclay de Tolly commenced his march on the 19th of July, and ascended the Dwina, the infantry being on the right bank, whilst the cavalry were on the left, on which side they were more than once exposed to engagements with our troops, but were always able to cross the river, which, at this period of the year, above Polotsk, was always fordable. The rear guard consisted of the troops under General Doctoroff. The whole army after its separation from Wittgenstein's corps amounted to ninety thousand men, proceeded thus on its march along the two banks of the Dwina on the 20th, 21st, and 22nd of July, keeping at a sufficient distance from the French, who, on their part, had resolved, for the better execution of their manœuvre, not to approach the enemy too closely.

Napoleon speedily perceived, in spite of the efforts made by the Russian cavalry to cover the movement, that Barclay de Tolly was ascending the Dwina towards Witebsk, for the purpose of supporting Bagration, who, on his side, was probably ascending the Dnieper as far as Smolensk: and this manœuvre of the enemy rather encouraged him in the prosecution of his grand design. Had the Russians retired from the Drissa camp for the purpose of plunging into the depths of Russia, he might have despaired of overtaking them, but as Barclay de Tolly was ascending the Dwina and Bagration was ascending the Dnieper, each by a similar movement, it was always possible for him to interpose between them in pursuance of his original plan. Marshal Davoust, after having compelled Prince Bagration to descend the Dnieper, would reach Smolensk before him, and Napoleon himself had but to ascend the Dwina, making a vigorous movement on his right to find an opportunity of accomplishing at Witebsk what he had not been able to accomplish at Polotsk, namely, the passage of the Dwina on the left of Barclay de Tolly, for the purpose of overlapping him, and taking him in reverse.

In the meantime Prince Eugene was on the 22nd of July

at Kamen; Murat, with the cavalry, and the three detached divisions of the 1st corps on the left of Prince Eugene; whilst Ney and Oudinot were behind these, and the Guard followed by Gloubokoé. Napoleon marched all this mass of troops on Beschenkowiczy; at the same time ordering Marshal Oudinot to cross the Dwina at Polotsk, to drive back any of the enemy's troops he might there meet with, and then remained at the head of about one hundred and fifty thousand men, having Marshal Davoust on his right, at the head of his own three divisions, and the troops which had composed Jerome's corps.

Prince Eugene crossed the Oula on the 23rd and advanced with some light troops upon Beschenkowiczy, a little town situated on the bank of the Dwina, where it was possible to observe the movements of the Russian troops on the other side of the stream. At the same time on the right bank, which was the one occupied by our troops, the Russian cavalry rear guard displayed itself in the direction of Witebsk, and fell back defending itself with more than usual obstinacy, and giving rise to hopes on our side, that the Russians would at length, as was so ardently desired, join battle. Napoleon ordered Prince Eugene, who had been only able to reach Beschenkowiczy with an advanced guard, to bring up the whole of his corps on the following day, the 24th, together with the Nansouty cavalry, and to throw a bridge across the Dwina, for the purpose of making a reconnaissance on the other side. In the meantime, he had himself quitted Gloubokoé, and was half a march in the rear of Prince Eugene; having caused the whole of the army to execute a general movement of a similar character.

On the 24th Prince Eugene marched his corps to Beschenkowiczy; and whilst General Nansouty's light cavalry was passing this place, advanced along the Ostrowno-road, spread his Voltigeurs along the Dwina to drive back the Russian troops which were observed on the other side, and brought up his artillery to keep them at a still greater distance. The pontonniers attached to this corps threw themselves boldly into the stream, for the purpose of constructing a bridge, and within a few hours completed it; but the Bavarian cavalry, impatient to effect the passage, dashed into the stream, and hastened to sweep the opposite bank, eliciting the approbation of the whole army by the precision and rapidity of their manœuvres.

Towards the middle of the afternoon a great tumult of horses announced the approach of Napoleon. The Italian troops, which had not yet seen him, received him with

tremendous acclamations, which he only acknowledged, however, by a brief salute, so deeply engrossed were his thoughts by the plan with which they were occupied. He descended hastily from his horse for the purpose of addressing some observations to the chief of the pontonniers, and then, remounting, traversed the bridge at a gallop, and, following the Bavarian cavalry, proceeded some distance on the left bank of the Dwina for the purpose of observing the Russians on their march.

After having gone about two or three leagues, he returned, convinced that the whole Russian army had defiled upon Witebsk, and resolving to advance in this direction still more boldly and swiftly than before, for the purpose of placing himself, by force should it be necessary, between Witebsk and Smolensk, between Barclay de Tolly and Bagration. He ordered, therefore, Prince Eugene and General Nansouty to advance, on the following day, the 25th, upon Ostrowno; at the same time directing Murat to precede them with the cavalry.

On the same day, General Barclay de Tolly, desiring to retard the progress of the French by disputing the ground with them foot by foot, had posted in advance of Ostrowno, the 4th corps with a brigade of dragoons, the hussars of the Guard, the hussars of Towny, and a battery of horse artillery.

General Piré, at the head of the 8th hussars and the 16th horse chasseurs, advancing by the Ostrowno road, discovered at the top of a slight ascent, the Russian light cavalry escorting the horse artillery, and, in spite of a vigorous fire of grape which was immediately opened on our troops by the enemy, throwing himself upon the Russian cavalry, put to flight the regiment which occupied the middle of the road, charged that which was posted on the plain on the right, returned upon that which was posted on the plain to the left, and having defeated each in turn, threw himself on the Russian artillery, sabreing the gunners and taking eight cannon.

Scarcely had our troops ascended the slight eminence above mentioned, when they perceived in the plain beyond, the whole of the 4th corps (Ostermann's), supported on one side by the Dwina, and on the other by wooded hills.

Murat immediately made arrangements for meeting the enemy. On his left, towards the Dwina, he arranged his regiments of cuirassiers in three lines; in the centre he deployed the 8th leger, to reply to the fire of the Russian infantry, and supported them with a portion of the cavalry

under General Bruyère. On his right, he arranged the remainder of this cavalry, which consisted of the 6th Polish lancers, the 10th Polish hussars, and a regiment of Prussian Uhlans; and sent a message to Prince Eugene to advance as speedily as possible with Delzon's division of infantry.

These arrangements had not been completed, when the Ingrian dragoons advanced to charge his extreme right, and were met by the Poles, who, inspired with fury at the sight of the Russians, executed a movement from front to right, and precipitated themselves on the enemy, throwing them into disorder, slaying a great number, and taking two or three hundred prisoners. In the meantime, the two battalions deployed from the 8th leger, occupied the middle of the field of battle, and protected our cavalry against the fire of the Russian infantry. To free himself from them, General Ostermann sent against them three detached battalions from his left. Murat immediately charged these battalions with some squadrons, and forced them to fall back; and then, no longer daring to attack our cavalry in front, Ostermann advanced under cover of a wood; many other battalions on our right had also pushed forward, two on our left, with the same design. Murat, who up to this time had only the cavalry at his disposal, threw against the battalions which presented themselves on the right, the lancers, the Polish hussars, and the Prussian Uhlans, which, charging the enemy at full galop, forced them to retreat in disorder. On the opposite wing, the 9th lancers, supported by a regiment of cuirassiers, with equal vigour broke the Russian battalions which had been sent against our left, and compelled them also to retreat.

This struggle between the French cavalry and the whole of the Russian infantry had endured for many hours, when at length the division Delzons arrived, and the sight of its serried lines induced Ostermann to retreat upon Ostrowno; having lost eight pieces of cannon, seven or eight hundred prisoners, and from twelve to fifteen hundred in killed or wounded. The loss on the side of our cavalry, which had distinguished itself during the day by the vigor, rapidity, and skill of its movements, was, at the most, about three or four hundred.

This combat showed that the Russians intended to dispute our advance, and perhaps to give us battle; and nothing could be more in accordance with the views of Napoleon, who, persisting in his resolution to prevent the junction of Barclay de Tolly and Bagration; and, more especially to outstrip the former, could desire nothing more than a

battle, since he would then, most probably, be able to procure immediately all the results which he expected from a skilful manœuvre. He ordered, therefore, Prince Eugene and Murat to march their troops *en masse* upon Ostrowno, on the following day, and even to pass this point, for the purpose of approaching Witebsk as closely as possible.

On the following day, accordingly, Murat and Ney, having well concerted their movements, marched forward their troops in close company, and having in this manner traversed Ostrowno in the morning, at two leagues distance beyond it found the enemy ranged behind a great ravine, in strong masses of infantry and cavalry. The field of battle presented the same characteristics as those of the preceding days. Ascending the valley from the Dwina, there were on our right hills covered with wood, in the centre a great road bordered with birch-trees, and crossed with ravines, over which were thrown little bridges, and on the left the Dwina, pursuing a sinuous route, and at this season frequently fordable.

Reaching towards eight o'clock the brink of the ravine behind which the enemy was established, our troops encountered the Russian tirailleurs, and the cavalry was obliged to fall back, leaving to the infantry the care of forcing the obstacle. As soon as General Delzons had arrived in front of the ravine, which checked our advance, he directed the 92nd of the line on the thick woods on our right, together with a battalion of voltigeurs of the 106th, at the same time sending a Croatian regiment supported by the 84th of the line on the left, and keeping the remainder of the 106th in the centre in reserve. The artillery was placed in position by General d'Anthouard, in such a manner as to cover by its fire the attack which was about to be made by the infantry.

Whilst the troops on the right proceeded to ascend the wooded heights under a vigorous fire, those on the left, conducted by General Huard, succeeded in crossing the ravine and establishing themselves on a plateau which had been evacuated by the enemy. This movement was followed by the troops in the centre; and the 8th leger, the artillery and the cavalry, proceeded successively to occupy the plateau which the enemy had abandoned. Whilst the troops forming the left, and composed of the Croatian regiment and the 84th pursued their own success without taking into consideration the fortunes of their comrades on the opposite wing, and had advanced a considerable distance, the latter failed to make a progress equally rapid, had exausted itself in vain

efforts to penetrate into the thickness of the wood, which was defended by numerous infantry. Our right wing was thus held in check, whilst our centre was considerably advanced, and our left still more so; and the Russian General, Konownitsyn, perceiving this state of affairs, directed against our left and centre the whole of his reserves, and led them vigorously to the attack; whereupon the Croatian regiment and the 84th, which had not expected this sudden assault, finding themselves taken in flank, were speedily driven back and were about to be hurled into the ravine, leaving our artillery in the hands of the enemy, when Murat, at the head of the Polish lancers, hurling himself with the rapidity of lightning upon the Russian column, scattered the first battalion and strewed the ground with slain. At the same moment an officer named Ricardo, at the head of a company of the 8th leger, advanced to the rescue of our cannon, which the enemy were about to seize; whilst the 106th, which had hitherto been held in reserve, also advanced to the support of the 84th and the Croatians. These combined efforts checked the Russians, carried our left in advance, and sustained our centre, whilst Murat, Eugene and Junot, (commander of the army of Italy under Eugene, hastened to the right, where General Roussel, at the head of the 92nd of the line, and the voltigeurs of the 106th had the greatest difficulty in overcoming the double obstacle presented by the heights and the woods.

Perceiving other deep columns (those of Ostermann) beyond the troops of Konownitsyn, on ground which became more and more broken, Murat and Eugene now hesitated, although victorious, to advance their troops too far, as they did not know whether it would suit Napoleon's plans to bring on a general engagement. But suddenly they were relieved from their embarrassment by the approach of Napoleon, who appeared with his staff, and having cast a glance over the field of battle, gave orders to pursue the enemy until evening.

This second combat cost us twelve hundred in killed and wounded, including the brave General Roussel who was killed; the loss on the side of the Russians amounting to about two thousand.

Napoleon passed the night of this day in the midst of the advanced guard, resolving to place himself at dawn at the head of his troops, for each new step rendered the position of the army more perilous, and might be productive of the gravest consequences. He had ordered the detached divisions of the first corps, the guard, and Marshal Ney, to join the head of the army with the greatest possible despatch,

that he might be in a position to give battle should the enemy be disposed to accept it; and had left the Bavarians exhausted with fatigue, in the rear at Beschenkowiczy, to cover the communications with Polotsk, the post assigned to Oudinot, and with Wilna, the central point of all our resources and all our communications.

On the following morning at daybreak, Napoleon, followed by Prince Eugene and King Murat, went forward for the purpose of personally inspecting the movements of the troops. Witebsk was now at no great distance, and its steeples were already visible on our left, on the bank of the Dwina, at the foot of a hill. A ravine, the bridge across which had been burned, separated us from the enemy, and at some distance beyond it, on a rather extensive plain, were visible a numerous Russian rear-guard, composed of cavalry and light infantry preparing to dispute its passage, whilst beyond a little river which ran at the bottom of this plain, joining the Dwina near Witebsk, was the Russian army itself, in order of battle, and apparently amounting to ninety or a hundred thousand men. The adoption of this position by the enemy seemed to intimate that they were determined to give us battle to prevent us interposing to frustrate their intended junction with Bagration, and from penetrating into the open space which separates the Dwina from the Dnieper; and Napoleon, therefore, immediately sent off aides-de-camp after aides-de-camp to hasten the approach of the remainder of the army. During the delay necessarily occasioned by the reconstruction of the bridge over the ravine, and the defiling of the troops across it, Napoleon took up a position a little to the left, in the rear, on an eminence from whence he could survey at a glance the whole extent of the field of battle. The weather was superb, full of sunshine and excessively warm. The army of Italy formed, as usual, the head of our column, in company with General Nansouty's cavalry. Delzon's division, which had been in action the previous evening, now gave way to the division of General Broussier, who hastened to repair the bridge, which he speedily rendered fit for the passage of the troops. The 16th cavalry chasseurs of the brigade Piré were the first to pass the ravine, followed by three hundred voltigeurs of the 9th of the line, and defiling by the left at the foot of the eminence on which Napoleon had taken up his position, advanced into the plain, whilst Broussier's regiments were crossing the bridge in their turn, and proceeding a little too much to the left, the 16th was attacked by the Cossacks of the Imperial Russian Guard, and, in spite of a most gallant defence, was compelled to give way after having suffered severe loss. At

the same moment, the greater portion of the Russian cavalry was set in motion, and being thrown upon our left, seemed to swallow up the three hundred voltigeurs of the 9th, who, however, checked the numerous charges of the enemy with a well sustained fire. Still pursuing their movement in advance, however, the latter almost reached the foot of the eminence occupied by Napoleon, and attacked the squares which the troops of Broussier's division had formed as soon as they had crossed the ravine. But the first of these squares formed by the 53rd of the line, received them with the *aplomb* of veteran troops of Italy, and having repulsed their charge, advanced unbroken, and disengaged the chasseurs and the three hundred voltigeurs, who had remained as it were, drowned in the midst of a flood of assailants. The action took place in the sight of the whole army, and it was filled with joy as it beheld the little group of voltigeurs emerging in safety from the midst of the frightful mêlé in which it had been involved; whilst Napoleon, who had observed the whole affair, crossed the ravine, and riding in front of the brave voltigeurs, exclaimed, "Who are you, my friends?" "Voltigeurs of the 9th of the line, and all of us children of Paris," was the reply. "Ah! you are brave men, and all deserve the Cross of the Legion of Honour," rejoined the Emperor; and he went forward to the squares of Broussier's division, which had advanced into the plain, and pursued with the fire of its artillery the numerous cavalry of General Pahlen. As Nansouty's cavalry and Delzon's division also speedily came up on the centre and the right, respectively, the Russians, considering that it would be imprudent to attempt to hold their ground against such forces, had repassed the little river, the Loutcheza, and drawn up their troops there in battle array behind it; and had all his troops been now at his command, Napoleon would have seized the opportunity of giving battle while the moment seemed to offer. As, however, the troops at his immediate disposal were insufficient for the purpose, he resolved to employ the remainder of the day in reconnaissances, and in concentrating his troops. In the meantime our soldiers longed for the decisive contest, however bloody it might be. They were worn out, indeed, with a march which had no result, which had been pursued under a heat which had reached twenty-seven degrees Réaumur, and during which they had had only the very scantiest supply of brandy, scarcely any bread, and had been compelled to eat their meat without salt. Their ranks, also, had been much thinned by fatigue; the combats in which they had just been engaged had deprived them of three thousand men in killed

and wounded, and the departure of the Bavarians had been a loss of fifteen thousand more. Nevertheless, the remaining troops, consisting of Nansouty's and Montbrun's cavalry, the army of Italy, the three divisions of the first corps, the troops under Ney, and the Guard, still amounting to one hundred and twenty-five thousand men — all excellent soldiers—were more than sufficient for the army of Barclay de Tolly.

The determination of Barclay de Tolly to give us battle was, indeed, most daring, and was the result of a more powerful consideration than the bitter complaints of his troops, which were indignant at their continued retreat. Had he withdrawn a step further in the rear, the communication between Witebsk and Smolensk would have been intercepted, and Bagration, whom he had arranged to meet at Babinowiczi, would have been checked in his march, probably caught between the troops of Davoust and Bagration, and consequently destroyed. He resolved, therefore, whatever might be the consequences, to fight a desperate battle behind the little river Loutcheza, although the withdrawal of Wittgenstein's corps, the protracted marches, and the three days contest in which they had just been engaged, had reduced his troops to ninety thousand men, whilst the French amounted to one hundred and twenty-five thousand. His resolution was desperate, but the occasion was one of those in which desperate resolutions save empires.

He had employed the whole day in preparations, when an officer suddenly arrived bearing the most urgent reasons to induce him to change his plan. The officer was one of Bagration's aides-de-camps, and brought information of the battle of Mohilew, and its consequences, which were that Bagration, forced by Davoust to pass the Dnieper much lower than Mohilew, was compelled to make a long detour for the purpose of joining Barclay de Tolly in the opening which separates the sources of the two rivers, and could only, at most, hope to join the latter at Smolensk. Such was the information brought by Bagration's aide-de-camp, and it showed that, whilst a further retrograde movement would by no means render impossible the junction of the two armies behind the line of the Dnieper and the Dwina, it would be utterly useless to fight a dangerous battle for an object, the attainment of which would not be jeopardised by the continuance of the retreat. Relieved, therefore, of the immense responsibility which he had been nearly forced to incur, he resolved to continue his retreat the same night; and accordingly, late on the night of the 27th, when fatigue had begun to relax the vigilance of the French, the whole of his army

resumed its march with the most remarkable unity of action, silence, and precision. The watch fires were left burning and the Count Pahlen's rear-guard remained on the banks of the Loutcheza, the more completely to deceive the enemy. The army retreated in three columns, that of the right composed of the 6th and 5th corps (Doctoroff's and the guard) marching by the Roudnia route upon Smolensk, that of the centre, consisting of the third corps Touczkoff's) proceeding by Kolycki upon Poreczié, and that of the left, composed of the 2nd and 4th corps (Bagowouth's and Ostermann's) making for the same point by Janowiezi.

Poreczié, towards which two of the Russian columns were thus directing their march, was situated behind a little marshy and wooded stream, the Kasplia, which crossing the space of eighteen or twenty leagues which lies between the sources of the Dnieper and those of the Dwina, closes, so to speak, the gates of Moscovy. By taking up a position, therefore, with the bulk of his forces at Poreczié, behind a region of wood and marsh, and protected by the sinuous and muddy stream of the Kasplia, and free to march upon Sourage, on the banks of the Dwina, or upon Smolensk, on the banks of the Dnieper, Barclay de Tolly would be in a position to await for some days the junction with Bagration, whilst at the same time, covering both the Moscow and St. Petersburgh roads; and indeed, the promptitude with which he formed, and the precision with which he executed this plan, are in the highest degree creditable to the military judgment and skill of Barclay de Tolly, and prove that had he been less interfered with, he would have been able to conduct with prudence the operations of this serious and difficult war.

On the morning of the 28th of July, Napoleon, surrounded by his lieutenants, rode to the bank of the Loutcheza, where he hoped to find a new Friedland, and, above all things, that peace which he had so lightly abandoned, and which he now regretted; but his quick eye soon discovered through the skilful manœuvres of the brilliant rear guard conducted by Count Pahlen, that the Russians had retreated to await a battle. Ignorant of the motives which had regulated Barclay de Tolly's actions, he might well have thought that this retreat was intended as a method of enticing the French to a pursuit which should fatigue and exhaust them; but this opinion was rather that of his lieutenants, officers and soldiers, than his own, and he immediately gave orders that the troops, in spite of the heat, which was at 27 or 28 degs. Réaumur, and the fatigues of the preceding days, should hasten forward at their utmost speed, to endeavour to overtake at least some portion of the fugitive army. But Coun

Pahlen's cavalry, although never avoiding the charge of ours, always ended by retreating and yielding the disputed ground.

Our troops had scarcely commenced their march, when they perceived upon the left, on the Dwina, the city of Witebsk, the capital of White Russia, containing about twenty-five thousand inhabitants, and a place of some trade. One of our detachments entered it without difficulty, chasing before it the bands of Cossacks which, like ill-omened birds, never retreated without having filled the places through which they passed with unsightly ruin. On this occasion, however, they had only destroyed the principal magazines and the mills, not having had sufficient time to fire the town. But the inhabitants, with the exception of a few priests and merchants, had fled at our approach, terrified by the exaggerated reports which prevailed respecting the atrocities committed by our troops in Poland, and which had no foundation, in fact, as respected the army itself, although too true with respect to isolated bands of pillagers.

Having spent a few minutes in Witebsk and given some indispensable orders, Napoleon hastened to place himself again at the head of his columns, whose path was now strewed with men and horses, overpowered by the heat and the exhaustion resulting from the want of proper nourishment. Our troops continued their march for many leagues on the traces of the Russian army, without meeting a single man from whom any information could be obtained, and it was not until the close of the day that they came up with some Russians, who had been unable to sustain the rapidity of the march, and from the information given by these, and the glimpses which were occasionally obtained of the distant columns, it was presumed that the enemy was retreating partly upon Smolensk, and partly between Smolensk and Sourage, with the intention of effecting a junction with Bagration. The exact information which Napoleon had hitherto received of the movements of the enemy, afforded him all the necessary data for forming an opinion of the projects of the enemy, and at the close of the day, halting at a little place named Haponowtschina, he held a short conference with Murat and Eugene, in which he agreed with them that, as he was so much in advance of us, it would be useless to attempt to prevent the junction of Barclay de Tolly with Bagration; and that a continuance of the pursuit would only oblige these Generals to effect their junction ten or fifteen leagues further back. He agreed, therefore to halt, to afford his troops a few days of repose, to rally the stragglers, and to store in magazines the resources of the country

which the Russians had not had time to destroy; and having adopted this resolution returned to Witebsk.

Thus had Napoleon's combinations at the opening of this campaign, which were the most brilliant he had ever conceived, been baffled; although he had vanquished the enemy in every encounter, inflicted a loss upon him of about fifteen thousand in killed, wounded, or prisoners, and deprived him of his best provinces, such as Lithuania and Courland. Some errors in the execution of his plans had, doubtless, contributed to their want of success—such as having crossed the Niemen too hastily, and not having passed at Kowno, before the alarm had been given to the enemy, the time which it had been necessary to devote at Wilna to bringing up the stragglers and baggage; such as having relied too securely on the junction of King Jerome with Marshal Davoust, and of having too much relied, in short, on men and the elements. But, independently of these faults, his insuccess in itself was a great proof of the imprudence of this war, which he attempted to carry on with soldiers forcibly enlisted from various countries, and compelled to march through immense tracts too barren and too thinly inhabited to supply the necessaries which it was impossible for them to carry with them. At the same time we must remark, that had Napoleon, when he had once been so imprudent as to commence the war, been more imprudent still, and marched straight forward without halting at Wilna to rally his troops and convoys, he might have left many more stragglers in the rear, but he would probably in this case have been enabled to have overwhelmed Barclay de Tolly on the one side and Bagration on the other, and to have struck those terrible blows which would have brought about peace, or at least have given a lustre to this first campaign which would have rendered it unnecessary for him to seek in the depths of Russia those brilliant results which were necessary to preserve his prestige. But we may observe here, as we must observe hereafter, that forming plans too rashly and executing them with too much hesitation, were the fatal errors which caused Napoleon's failure in this war; that, in fact, if we might venture to say so, had he been more blind, he might have succeeded better. It must be added, that although his health remained unaffected, he seemed to be less active, being more frequently in his carriage than on his horse, either because the heat, or increasing stoutness, had somewhat reduced his physical not mental energy; because the vastness of the undertaking on which he had entered began somewhat to frighten him, and thus deprive his will of its natural strength and ardour; or, because, let us say, if we share the superstitions common to

humanity, that fortune, inconstant or fatigued, ceased to second his designs.

Napoleon's inexhaustible military genius was not yet, however, at the end of its resources, and the one hundred and forty thousand men who would be at Barclay de Tolly's command after the junction of the two armies of the Dwina and the Dnieper, could not be invincible before the two hundred and twenty-five thousand who would be at Napoleon's disposal when he should have rallied the troops under Marshal Davoust. At the same time, Lithuania and Courland had already been acquired, and the superiority of the French troops over those of the enemy brilliantly maintained.

Napoleon now installed himself in the palace of the Governor of Witebsk, with his military court; distributing the corps of his army around him in such a manner as to guard against surprise, obtain provisions, and be able to concentrate them immediately on the points on which it might be necessary to act. At Witebsk itself he posted the Imperial guard; somewhat in advance, at Sourage, a little town situated above Witebsk on the Dwina, Prince Eugene; a little to the right, towards Roudnia, in the midst of the space between the Dwina and the Dnieper, Marshal Ney; and in advance of the latter, at all the points at which an enemy might possibly approach, the entire mass of his cavalry. He encamped behind Ney, between Witebsk and Babinowiczi, the three divisions of the first corps, which awaited with impatience the moment in which they should meet the severe but paternal chief, under whom they had been accustomed to serve.

Marshal Davoust had, in fact, ascended the Dnieper after the battle of Mohilew, and was now established at Orscha, where he guarded the Dnieper, as at Witebsk, Napoleon watched the Dwina. He had extended Grouchy's cavalry on his left, so as to form a link of connection in the direction of Bobinowiczi with the main army, and had thrown the light cavalry of Pajol and Bordessoulle on his right, that it might follow and watch beyond the Dnieper the army of Prince Bagration, who was making a great detour by Micislaw with the view of effecting a junction with Barclay de Tolly towards Smolensk. The Polish and Westphalian troops, which were much exhausted, he had placed at Mohilew, and between Mohilew and Orscha respectively. In the meantime, General Latour-Maubourg slowly retired with his exhausted cavalry from Bobruisk upon Mohilew, watching the detached troops of the Russian General Tarmazoff; and Reynier, at the head of the Saxon troops destined to guard the grand duchy met the Austrians, who were on their march towards the grand army.

Napoleon was established, therefore, on the upper Dwina with the guard and Prince Eugene's troops, having between the Dwina and the Dnieper Murat, Ney, and the three first divisions of Marshal Davoust, whilst on the Dnieper itself were the remaining divisions of this Marshal's corps, together with the Westphalians and Poles; and he determined, while thus occupying a position free from liability to attack, to employ himself in supplying the necessities of his soldiers, and to recompose each corps according to its original formation, giving to Prince Eugene Grouchy's cavalry and the Bavarians, to General Montbrun the cuirassiers of General Valence, which had been temporarily lent to Marshal Davoust, to restore to the latter his three first divisions of infantry, and, in addition, to place under his command the Westphalians, the Poles, and the reserve cavalry of General Latour-Maubourg.

According to his custom, Napoleon ordered that the resources of the country should be immediately employed to afford the troops that subsistence which they had wanted during their march and to provide also a reserve of provisions sufficient to last them eight or ten days. As the surrounding country was tolerably well cultivated, and the Russians had not been able to destroy all the magazines, our troops were able to procure a certain amount of provisions; and Napoleon ordered the establishment of magazines, particularly at Witebsk and Orscha, where he determined to place his two principal points d'appui on the Dwina and the Dnieper. At the same time, as there was a great want of hospital accommodation, not only for our wounded, but also for the Russian wounded left in our hands, whom the good and skilful surgeon Larrey, a true hero of humanity, most carefully attended, in order that the enemy might, in turn, bestow some care upon their wounded prisoners, Napoleon took advantage of Davoust's presence at Orscha to have prepared at Orscha, and also at Borisow and Minsk, hospitals capable of receiving twelve thousand patients.

The chiefs of corps had spoken with so much earnestness to him respecting the extent to which the ranks of the army had been thinned by the sufferings attending their march, that, as soon as he had resolved upon a halt at Witebsk, he ordered, for the purpose of learning the real extent of the evil, that a detailed inspection should be made of every corps, from the extreme left to the extreme right, from Marshal Macdonald towards Riga, to General Reynier towards Brezecs, a line of more than two hundred leagues in extent, and the following were the sad results which it made known. Marshal Macdonald, who had under his command the Prussian and Polish troops, which had marched fifty

leagues at the most, and had had to endure but few privations, had only lost six thousand out of thirty thousand. Marshal Oudinot, whose corps, with the division of Doumerc's cuirassiers, which had been detached from Grouchy's cavalry corps, numbered thirty-eight thousand combatants at the passage of the Niemen, had no more than twenty-two or twenty-three thousand men at Polotsk—a terrible diminution, which he attributed to the prevalence of desertion amongst the foreign troops, such as the Croatian, the Swiss, and the Portuguese; the deserters amongst the French troops being only those of the last conscription. Marshal Ney, who was at the head of thirty-six thousand men at the commencement of operations, now declared that he had no more than twenty-two thousand capable of bearing arms; the strangers, in this case, Illyrians and Wurtemburgians, being in this corps as in the others the chief cause of the diminution. Murat's cavalry, including the cavalry reserves of General Nansouty and Montbrun, was reduced from twenty-two thousand horsemen, to thirteen or fourteen thousand. The Imperial Guard itself, which had originally numbered thirty-seven thousand men, was now diminished to twenty-seven thousand —this loss of ten thousand being chiefly due to the losses in the ranks of the young infantry and the light cavalry, which was constantly employed in the reconnaissances ordered by the Emperor himself, and to the extraordinary losses of the division Claparède, which had possessed mere skeleton regiments on its withdrawal from Spain, and had been recruited with young Poles, who had almost to a man succumbed to the fatigues of the march or the temptation of desertion. The Old Guard was the only force which retained undiminished strength.

Prince Eugene's troops, which had been estimated at eighty thousand men at the passage of the Niemen, now numbered no more than forty-five thousand. A frightful dysentery had reduced the Bavarians from twenty-seven to thirteen thousand; and their ranks became each day so much thinner by the increase of sickness amongst them, that their corps had been considered unfit for active service, and had been left at Beschenkowiczy. The Italian division was the corps which, next to the Bavarian, had suffered most severely from dysentery; and even the Italian guard, which was composed of picked men, had not escaped. The excellent French divisions of Broussier and Delzons had suffered less, having lost only a fourth part of their twenty thousand, —two thousand in engagements with the enemy, and three thousand from sickness and fatigue; and thus offering a very advantageous contrast to the Italian division Pino, which

from eleven thousand had been reduced to five thousand. Marshal Davoust's corps had suffered less than the others, being composed of stronger materials; and if it had had no Dutch, Hamburg, Illyrian, or Spanish troops in its ranks, would have suffered scarcely the loss of a sixteenth part of its effective strength. In consequence, however, of the presence of these troops and of refractory recruits in its regiments, its effective strength had been reduced from seventy-two thousand to about fifty-two thousand. Finally, Jerome's corps, which was composed of the Westphalian, Polish, and Saxon troops, together with Latour-Maubourg's cavalry, had lost eight thousand of its thirty thousand Poles, eight thousand of its eighteen thousand Westphalians, and four thousand of its seventeen thousand Saxons, whilst Latour-Maubourg's cavalry had been reduced from ten thousand to about six thousand.

Thus the army in the field, which at the passage of the Niemen had consisted of four hundred thousand men capable of bearing arms, and four hundred and twenty-five thousand including the artillery, engineer, and transport corps, now numbered no more than two hundred and fifty-five thousand. At the same time, it must be observed that there were one hundred and forty thousand men forming a second line between the Niemen and the Rhine, and from fifty to sixty thousand sick in the various hospitals in Germany and Poland; from whom very serviceable reinforcements might very probably be drawn.

Leaving sixty thousand men under Marshals Macdonald and Oudinot on the Dwina, and twenty thousand under General Reynier on the Dnieper, Napoleon would be able therefore to advance with an army of one hundred and seventy-five thousand men. A force which would speedily be increased by the thirty thousand Austrians of Prince Schwarzenberg, who were already on their march towards Minsk, and in the rear of which thirty thousand more might be marched from the one hundred and forty thousand men échelonedbetween the Niemen and the Rhine. But although this was doubtless a force quite capable of inflicting decisive blows upon an enemy, it was no less a cruel misfortune, after having been in the field no more than a month, and having fought no great battle, to be reduced to such proportions.

We have already pointed out the causes of this marvellous diminution, and the last marches rendered them still more apparent. The army of Italy had marched from March to July six hundred leagues, and the army which set out from the Rhine five hundred. One hundred and fifty thousand horses had been employed in the transport of munitions and

stores, but one half had already perished from the want of food for themselves, and a considerable portion of our baggage train had been necessarily abandoned on the roads. The privations resulting from this cause, added to the fatigue of long and continued marches, had prevented many even of those who were ardent soldiers, from following their corps, and the foreign troops, who had little inclination for serving in our ranks, although they fought well when in action under our eyes, from a feeling of vanity, had not the least scruple when they were fatigued or indisposed in remaining in the rear, having in the forests of Poland a safe retreat. Some of these perished in the hospitals, and some became brigands, but the greater number passed through Germany, favoured by the inhabitants, and returned to their homes. Next to the foreigners, the young soldiers and refractory troops were the most inclined to quit their ranks, and the regiments, in fact, at length only consisted of veteran soldiers, together with a few whom a military temperament had thoroughly associated with the spirit of the old troops. But it was the probable effect of the example of desertion thus offered, which was more to be dreaded than the loss of one hundred and fifty thousand men, which had already resulted from it, and Napoleon feeling it to be so, took the most minute and profoundly calculated precautions against the calamities which might arise from this cause.

As the Gendarmerie d'élite consisted of about three or four hundred, which ordinarily exercised the functions of police in the rear of the army, appeared to be insufficient for this duty, notwithstanding that it was assisted by the columns mobile, Napoleon ordered that all thetroops still remaining in the depôts of the guard, should be sent from Paris to head quarters. He created, moreover, and by this measure showed his opinion of the bad state of the army, two inspectors, who, under the titles of *aides-major-generaux* of infantry and cavalry, were to watch narrowly and constantly the condition of these two arms of the service, to learn the exact force of each regiment at the moment of each action, and to superintend, above all things, the little depôts left by the army on its route. The two officers chosen by Napoleon for the fulfilment of these duties were excellently selected; whether we consider their vigilance or their acquaintance with the species of troops they would have to superintend; and were, for the infantry Count Labau, for the cavalry Count Durosnel. But unfortunately the multiplication of officials can no more of itself remedy abuses, than the multiplication of physicians can of itself heal the sick; and Napoleon much more reasonably sought during this halt at Witebsk, a remedy for the

disorganised state of the army, in bringing up the stragglers and convoys which had fallen in the rear, and collecting a fresh reserve of provisions. At the same time, in the hope of renewing the spirit of discipline amongst the troops, he determined to review them himself in the *place* of Witebsk, and had some of the surrounding houses pulled down for the purpose of rendering it sufficiently large for the purpose. He first inspected the various brigades of the Imperial Guard, examining them most minutely, and addressing the soldiers and officers in language calculated to arouse in their hearts the most noble sentiments. During one of these reviews he received General Friant in the character of colonel commandant of the foot grenadiers of the guard, a post which had become vacant by the death of General Dorsenne, and embracing the General, who was one of the most accomplished and valuable officers France possessed, said to him, "My dear Friant, you must not assume your new command until the end of the campaign, for these soldiers themselves know how to perform their duty, and you must remain with your division, where you may still render me important services. You are, in fact, one of those men whom I wish to place wherever I cannot be myself."

In the meantime the impossibility of coming up with the enemy, was the general subject of bitter expressions of regret amongst generals, officers, and soldiers. "Still the cowards fly!" cried the soldiers, but the remarks of the officers on this subject, were to the effect that the Russians desired to entice us on, until fatigue and exhaustion should have so reduced our numbers, as to enable them to attack us at an advantage. This latter idea was also generally shared by the chiefs of the army, and it was generally asked in the circle immediately surrounding Napoleon, whether it were not time to check the movement in advance, now that the army had reached the true border between Europe and Asia, to take up a solid position on the Dwina and the Dnieper, to fortify Witebsk and Smolensk, to take Riga on the left, to extend the right wing as far as Volhynia and Podolia, for the purpose of arousing these provinces to revolt, to organise an army and a government for Poland, and to prepare winter cantonments in which the troops might wait, reorganised, well armed, and well fed, until the Russians should advance against them, prepared to give battle for the recovery of Poland.

There was considerable good sense in these ideas, but they elicited, nevertheless, very strong objections from Napoleon. In the first place, he said, cantonments were not so easily established as was implied; for the Dnieper and the Dwina

which now appeared to be a protecting frontier, would no longer be so when for a time obliterated, as within the space of three months they would be, by ice and snow; "and how then," he asked, "could such positions as Dunabourg, Polotsk, Witebsk, Smolensk, Orscha, and Mohilew, distant from each other about thirty and forty leagues, and but slightly fortified, be defended against troops whom winter was so far from disabling, that it rather facilitated their movements? How again, could the French troops, naturally so active, and so accustomed in the campaigns in which they had so lately been engaged, to rapid movements, be restrained during nine whole months, from the August of the current year to the June of the following year; whilst moreover, there could be no certain hope of their obtaining fit and sufficient food for so long an interval. And how," he continued, "would it be possible to explain to Europe the close in August of a campaign which had begun in June? Would it not be generally regarded as a sign of weakness, and be the cause of hostile movements in the rear of the French army? And would not Spain immediately become fertile in sources of embarrassment, which, comparatively of little moment, while the grand army was between the Elbe and the Rhine, would become very serious when it should be confined with its chief, for an indefinite time between the Niemen and the Barysthène." Such were the objections addressed by Napoleon to those who considered a position on the Dnieper and the Dwina as a sufficient result of the campaign; and there were many other objections to the plea urged by the latter, of which he was well aware, but which he refrained from mentioning; for if it were his nature to plunge into inextricable difficulties, he was most quick to discover those difficulties when he was once amongst them, and if he denied their existence it was not because he was ignorant of them, but because he was averse to owning his errors, and because he calculated that by denying their truth, he could in some degree diminish their reality. He knew, for example, although he was far from confessing it, that his popularity began to decline even in France, that a spirit of exasperation against him prevailed throughout Europe, and that amongst the troops, who formed his most faithful adherents, a certain degree of coldness and distrust towards him were the result of the fatigues to which he had exposed them.

Napoleon, however, by no means wholly discarded the idea of making the limits of Europe the limit also of his expedition, but he was willing only to put it into execution after having performed, as he hoped a halt of fifteen days

would enable him to do, some brilliant action, which would permit him to pause on the confines of Moscovy, without exciting distrust of his power in France, or elsewhere. In the meantime, projecting new and decisive operations, he directed in accordance with them, the movements of the corps which were not to share in the halt at Witebsk. We have seen above that he had ordered Marshal Oudinot to march upon the Count de Wittgenstein, to push him upon Sebej, the St. Petersburg route by Pskow, in order to disengage the left of the grand army; that he had ordered Marshal Macdonald to support the movement of Marshal Oudinot, marching on the lower Dwina, in order to take Dunabourg and make preparations for the siege of Riga, which would secure not only the peaceable occupation of Courland, but probably the possession also of the two strong points of defence of Dunabourg and Riga. We have also seen that in the direction of the Dnieper he had ordered General Reynier with the Saxons, Prince Schwarzenberg with the Austrians, to march to Brezese or Kobrin, and Minsk, respectively; Reynier having to cover the Grand Duchy, and to rouse Volhynia to revolt.

Marshal Oudinot had successively defiled before Dunabourg, Drissa, and Polotsk, and had finally passed the Dwina at Polotsk itself, having first, in accordance with Napoleon's orders, left his third division, composed of Swiss, Illyrians, and Dutch, under General Merle, at the Drissa camp, for the purpose of destroying its works; but the hands of these troops, enfeebled by exhaustion and unfurnished with tools (for the engineer matériel remained in the rear), had been able to make but very little progress in this important work of demolition, when the Marshal, finding himself far too weak before Wittgenstein's corps, which had been increased by the reinforcements of Prince Repnin to thirty thousand men, had recalled them to his corps. In order to conform to the order to push on to Sebej, on the St. Petersburg route, he had advanced a portion of his light cavalry on the 28th of July upon the little river, the Drissa, one of the tributaries of the Dwina, and had successively echeloned his first and second divisions with the cuirassiers between the Drissa and Polotsk. For the purpose of guarding against the Russian troops under Wittgenstein, posted beyond the Drissa, in a direction almost perpendicular to his left flank, he had posted at Lazowka, the remainder of his light division and the foreign division of General Merle. On the 29th he had made a step in advance, having crossed the Drissa at Sivotschina ford, carried his advanced guard near to Kliastitsoui, ranged his two chief divisions a little in the rear, and left the division

Merle to guard the Sivotschina ford; some detachments of cavalry and light infantry connecting it with Polotsk.

Such was Oudinot's position on the 29th of July, the second day of the entry of the grand army into Witebsk, and on that day, determined cavalry charges made by the enemy on the head and rear of his column, left him in no doubt with respect to the offensive projects of the enemy. At the same time, two Russian officers who fell into our hands, informed him that Count de Wittgenstein was marching diagonally towards him, with the intention of striking him a severe blow at Kliastitsoui, and with the intention of providing against this projected attack he advanced as far as the village and chateau of Iakoubowo, situated at the entrance of a little plain surrounded by wood. On the morning of the 29th, Wittgenstein debouched on this plain and furiously attacked the village and chateau, which Oudinot on his part defended with the first brigade of Legrand's division, placing the 26th leger in Iakoubowo itself, and posting the 56th of the line a little to the left, in connection with the wood, whilst he kept in reserve the second brigade commanded by General Maison. The contest was very desperate on each side, and at one moment the Russians had penetrated into the village of Iakoubowo, and even into the court of the chateau, but two companies of the 26th rushing upon them, drove them out at the bayonet's point, and killing two or three hundred of them, took prisoners about as many more. In every direction our troops drove back the enemy, but the numerous and well-served artillery of the latter on the edge of the wood, prevented the former from venturing to continue the combat there, Marshal Davoust being unwilling to risk so difficult an attack whilst he was uncertain with respect to the course of events in the rear. The Marshal feared, in fact—and with good reason—that whilst resisting the enemy at the head of his column, he might be taken in reverse and cut off from Polotsk, where were deposited his artillery and matériel. Under these circumstances he believed it would be wiser to retreat upon the Drissa, to recross it by the Sivotschina ford, and in that position to await the enemy.

Executing this retrograde movement on the 31st, Marshal Oudinot occupied a position on the evening of that day beyond the Sivotschina, having tirailleurs along the Drissa, the two divisions Legrand and Verdier at some distance in the rear, the cuirassiers in a position from whence they could support the infantry, and the division Merle in observation in the direction of Polotsk. Our tirailleurs were ordered, should the Russians pass the Drissa, to resist them only so much as might be necessary to entice them on, and to give

immediate information at head quarters of their approach. On the night of the 31st of July, the Russians marched upon the Drissa, and on the following morning began imprudently to effect its passage. This was the moment for which Marshal Oudinot had waited, and he immediately threw upon them in succession, the first and second divisions of the brigade Legrand.

As soon as our troops encountered the Russians they completely defeated them, killing or wounding about two thousand, and taking more than two thousand prisoners, together with a portion of their artillery. The division Verdier was sent in pursuit of the flying enemy, and crossing the Drissa, permitted its ardour to carry it too far, and thus, whilst making many prisoners, unfortunately left some of its own men in the hands of the enemy, when it became necessary to repass the Drissa. In spite, however, of the trivial advantage thus obtained by the Russians, the events of the day could not but be to them a most serious check; and Marshal Oudinot being convinced that they would prevent the Russians for some time from venturing to attack him, and considering himself not sufficiently strong with twenty-four thousand exhausted troops, withdrew from the Dwina, resolved to return to Polotsk where were his munitions and stores, and where he could await in safety, until the cessation of the extreme heat which had compelled Napoleon himself to halt at Witebsk. The only disadvantage attending this place was, that by withdrawing to Polotsk from the position he then occupied, five or six leagues in advance of it, he resigned the moral effect of the success he had obtained.

In the meantime, Marshal Macdonald with the Polish division Grandjean, and the seventeen thousand Prussians which had been placed under his command, had advanced upon the Dwina and obtained possession of Courland, by means of a rapid march. The Russians, retreating, had been taken in flank by the Prussians, and having suffered a severe blow at the hands of the latter, had precipitately fallen back upon Riga, resigning to us Mitau and the whole of Courland. It is a fact worthy of remark, that the Prussians, who detested us and were unwilling soldiers in our cause, were yet so excited by our presence, that they fought almost as well for us as they could have fought against us. And we must add, that whilst the troops furnished by the small allied states, such as Bavaria, Wurtemburg, and Westphalia, were much thinned by desertion, the Prussian and Austrian troops were retained in their ranks by true military spirit, and did not desert from us until they abandoned us *en masse*, in accordance with a change in their national policy.

Marshal Macdonald undertook the blockade of Riga with the Russian troops, and at the same time with the Polish division Grandjean approached Dunabourg, which the Russians, being unwilling to scatter their forces, very speedily yielded, and thereby much simplified the task which the Marshal had to perform; but it was still a task which would most probably occupy a considerable time, and possibly the whole campaign. He had been compelled to leave in the neighbourhood of Tilsit and Memel for the purpose of guarding the navigation of the Niemen and the Kurischehaff, and in the environs of Mitau for the purpose of guarding Courland, five thousand men of the Prussian corps, and he had therefore been able to retain only ten thousand before Riga, the works of which were very extensive, and which contained a garrison of fifteen thousand men. The Polish division Grandjean, which was the other force at his command, was reduced from twelve thousand men to eight thousand, and was the only force he had with which to watch the space between Riga and Polotsk —about seventy leagues in extent.

He hastened to send information, couched in sensible but somewhat ironical terms, of the situation in which he was placed, and to declare that unless he received a considerable reinforcement, he could not succeed either in the capture of Riga or in maintaining relations with Oudinot's corps. The most simple proposition he could have made, considering his position, would have been that a junction should be effected between his own corps and that of Marshal Oudinot, since Wittgenstein's corps could then, doubtless, have been vanquished, and the Niemen consequently protected from the enemy's approach; and although, in this case, Riga could not have been even besieged, much less taken, still we should have obtained a decided superiority on the left wing of our line of operations. Instead, however, of proposing this junction of the two corps, which was possible and even necessary, but which would have required on his part rare disinterestedness, for he would then have been under Oudinot's command, he demanded a reinforcement which there was no possibility of his obtaining.

In the meantime, on the other extremity of the vast theatre of the war, a hundred and fifty leagues to the south east, towards the upper course of the Bug, certain events were occurring which could not fail to produce certain changes in Napoleon's plans; General Reynier had retreated with the Saxons from Neswij to Slonim, and from Slonim to Provjany, for the purpose of covering the Grand Duchy, and subsequently invading Volhynia, whilst Prince Schwarzenberg had marched with the Austrian army from Provjany to Slonim

and Neswij, on his way to the head quarters of the French army, in accordance with the wishes of the Emperor of Austria, who was unwilling that his troops should be commanded by any one but Napoleon himself, and much to the dissatisfaction of Napoleon, who was unwilling to trust the defence of his rear to an Austrian army.

At this same moment, which was that also of Napoleon's entrance into Witebsk, the Russian General Tarmazoff commenced his march to threaten, as he had been ordered, the right flank of the French, which was a task Bagration could no longer perform, since he had to join the grand army, and at the head of forty thousand men he had marched boldly towards the upper course of the Bug, whilst Admiral Tchitchakoff, engaged in vast plans on the side of Turkey, was either to execute them or to descend upon Poland. As a precaution against the attempts which might be made by the Austrians assembled in Gallicia against his rear, he had spread about twelve thousand men from Bobruisk to Mozyr and from Mozyr to Kiew, with Prince Bagration on one side and Admiral Tchitchakoff on the other; for although the Court of Vienna had assured the government at St. Petersburg that its exertions in favour of France would be confined to the providing the contingent of thirty thousand men under Prince Schwarzenberg, General Tarmazoff was unwilling to advance without taking precautions against the possible results of Austrian policy. Having left, therefore, in his rear, the force above mentioned, he had advanced with about twenty-eight thousand men upon the Upper Bug, threatening the Grand Duchy, which General Reynier had to defend with about twelve or thirteen thousand Saxons, and, being informed by the Jews, who on every occasion betrayed the cause of Poland, of the presence of a Saxon detachment which was, unfortunately, unsupported, at Kobrin, he determined to signalise his approach by its destruction; and, on the 27th of July, effected this object, compelling it to yield after a fierce struggle, and thus inflicting a loss upon the Saxons of two thousand men in killed, wounded, and prisoners.

The moral effects of this misfortune, were more disastrous than the actual loss incurred by it, and produced a most unfortunate impression at Warsaw; for the wretched Poles who had entertained with so much ardour the project of a general insurrection, on learning that the Russian troops were so near them, immediately began to tremble at the idea of exile and sequestration, and many of them set the dangerous example of collecting the most precious portion of their property, and passing to the left bank of the Vistula. Much as they had rejoiced in the war which Napoleon was waging against

Russia, they now reproached him with having imprudently advanced beyond the Dwina and the Dnieper, and left them unprotected. They complained, also, on this occasion of the cold tone of his reply to their address at Wilna, imputing to its reserve their own want of zeal, and forgetting that it was for them to excite by the manifestation of enthusiasm on their side, the enthusiasm of Napoleon in their behalf.

In the midst of the complaints which now arose in Warsaw, and the demands for instant succour which he could not afford, M. de Pradt possessed no greater presence of mind than he had displayed during the excitement attending the meeting of the diet, and had recourse to the only measure which had suggested itself to his mind, and which was to write to M. de Bassano and General Reynier, requiring the despatch of troops from Warsaw. General Reynier, who had to fulfil a task very different from the defence of Warsaw, having to make head against thirty thousand Russians with eleven thousand Saxons, replied to the Prelate Ambassador to this effect; and by an urgent letter, entreated Prince Schwarzenberg to fall back in order to aid him to repulse the enemy, and to defer the continuance of his march towards the French head-quarters until the Russians should have been checked, and such a position occupied by our troops behind the Pinsk marshes as would prevent their advance. Prince Schwarzenberg replied that he perceived the danger of the situation, and that, notwithstanding the orders which he had received, he would fall back in order to afford him support. In the meantime, M. de Bassano replied somewhat ironically to M. de Pradt's expressions of terror, and being unable to take any measures with respect to them, forwarded all the demands for aid to head-quarters.

Napoleon was extremely annoyed by the news of these events, and especially irritated against the persons who had permitted themselves to be so easily terrified. He approved thoroughly of the determination taken by Prince Schwarzenberg to fall back upon Provjany for the purpose of affording support to General Reynier, and placed the latter under the Austrian commander's orders. He directed Prince Schwarzenberg to march boldly with the forty thousand men he would now have at his disposal, against Tarmazoff, who had no more than thirty thousand, and not to desist from attacking him until he should have driven him into Volhynia; at the same time promising that as soon as this task should have been accomplished, he would recall him to head-quarters in accordance with the wishes of the Emperor of Austria, to whom he wrote for a reinforcement for the Austrian corps, and to request that the Austrian corps which was at this time

in Gallicia, might be authorised to assume a threatening attitude on the side of Volhynia, which would act as a restraint upon General Tarmazoff's movements; but as he had but little expectation of being successful in this application, he insisted more particularly on a reinforcement of seven or eight thousand men for Prince Schwarzenberg.

These measures were perfectly sufficient to hold Tarmazoff's corps in check, and even to render it perfectly harmless unless Admiral Tchitchakoff should speedily double its strength. As, however, it was necessary that he should maintain communications with the Austrians and Saxons under Schwarzenberg, which would be at least a hundred leagues distant from Orscha, the point on which rested the right of the grand army, Napoléon consented to deprive himself of one of Prince Poniatowski's divisions that it might remain in cantonments between Minsk and Mohilew to secure us against sudden attacks from the Cossacks, and be connected by means of cavalry posts with the left of the Austrian corps.

Our right was thus, for the moment at least, rendered safe, but with respect to the left, Napoleon took measures which were less efficacious, although apparently sufficient. Neglecting to take into account the state of his troops, he blamed Marshal Oudinot's retrograde march upon Polotsk, and endeavoured to prove to the Marshal by very ingenious calculations founded on documents taken from the Russians, that Count Wittgenstein could not have more than thirty thousand troops, of very indifferent quality, at his command, and could not, therefore, be a source of terror to twenty thousand French veterans, and ordered him to march boldly against the enemy for the purpose of driving him far back upon the St. Petersburg route. That the Marshal might have no grounds for objecting to these orders, he resolved to send him the Bavarian corps, which was—as were all the troops furnished by the allies—very effective in action, although much weakened by fatigue, sickness, and desertion. Napoleon continued to consider the corps as numbering fifteen or sixteen thousand men, although it really numbered only thirteen thousand, and estimated that the troops at Marshal Oudinot's disposal would be raised by this reinforcement to forty thousand men, a force which he hoped would be quite sufficient to free him from Wittgenstein on his left, whilst the junction of Prince Schwarzenberg and General Reynier would, he calculated, relieve him from the presence of Tormazoff on his right. But whilst making these arrangements, Napoleon fully expected that the movements he was about to execute with the main army, would reduce to insignificance any events which

might occur on his wings. Believing that Marshal Oudinot would be able to drive back Wittgenstein upon Sebej and Pskow; he also concluded that Marshal Macdonald would immediately afterwards be able to concentrate his whole corps upon Riga, and to commence its siege.

In the meantime, Napoleon had not ceased to keep a careful watch on his rear, the command of which had been entrusted to Marshal Victor and Marshal Angereau; the former being posted in the direction of Konigsberg, and the latter in that of Berlin.

He had made great exertions to procure for Marshal Victor twenty-five thousand infantry, three or four thousand cavalry, and sixty pieces of cannon, and had entertained the idea of speedily summoning him to Wilna, that he might, if circumstances rendered it necessary, be ready to afford assistance to Marshal Macdonald, Marshal Oudinot, or Prince Schwarzenberg. At the same time he was equally engaged in the organisation of the fourth battalions, the regiments of refractory recruits intended to be placed under Marshal Angereau's command, the cohorts of the national guards which were to replace on the frontiers of the empire the troops carried to Berlin, and the Lithuanian regiments, which he desired to raise to the number of twelve thousand men. The ten days, therefore, that Napoleon had already spent at Witebsk had not been lost, and had, besides enabling his troops to pass a season of extreme heat under shelter, afforded him the opportunity of bringing up a large portion of the artillery, which had fallen into the rear, and of collecting thirteen hundred baggage waggons at Witebsk, and between that place and Kowno; a number sufficient for the transport of provisions for two hundred thousand men for ten or twelve days; whilst it in like manner afforded Prince Eugene, Ney, and Davoust, the opportunity of collecting a store of provisions sufficient for six or seven days' consumption, in addition to the troops daily subsistence.

Every preparation having been made for the execution of the new movement from which Napoleon hoped to obtain some decisive result, he resolved upon the adoption of that plan of action which appeared to him to be at this time the only practicable one, and the conception of which was quite worthy of his genius. Although he had failed to prevent the junction of the armies of Prince Bagration and Barclay de Tolly, it still remained possible to turn them, take them in reverse, and thus render it impossible for them to avoid meeting our troops in a decisive action, and under the most disadvantageous circumstances. Napoleon resolved, therefore, to take advantage of the tract of wood and marsh which separated him

from the Russians, and to effect a clandestine movement in front of them from left to right, similar to that which he had proposed to execute in front of the Drissa camp, to proceed from the banks of the Dwina to those of the Dnieper, from Witebsk to Rassasna, to cross the Dnieper, to ascend it rapidly as far as Smolensk, to surprise this town (which was in an undefended state), and to debouch from hence suddenly with the entire mass of his forces upon the left of the Russians, who would thus find themselves out-flanked and turned. And then, should fortune smile upon him as she had so often smiled, he might be able to execute against Bagration and Barclay de Tolly united, the plans he had formerly directed against Barclay alone, and probably force Russia to accept terms of peace, which would leave her completely humbled and the sceptre of the world in his hands.

An inconvenience, however, attending this movement, consisted in the fact that, although well covered by the wooded, marshy nature of the country, it would be of great length, for the right of the army, which was under Marshal Davoust at Rassasna, would have to march thirty leagues to reach Smolensk, and the left, which was with Prince Eugene at Sourage, would have to accomplish almost as long a journey to replace Marshal Davoust at Rassasna, and it would only be after the completion of their movements, that our troops would even have begun to approach the enemy's left. It was quite possible, indeed, to shorten this route considerably, by resigning the capture of Smolensk, and turning at a point closer to the enemy, whom it was intended to envelope; but to adopt this plan of action would only be to exchange one plan of action for another, to exchange, in fact, the difficulty of surprising the Russians, for the difficulty of overwhelming their left, at this moment formed by the valiant Bagration, so suddenly and so victoriously as to prevent the remainder of the army from escaping us. Before finally forming his resolution, Napoleon consulted Marshal Davoust as the most capable of advising him on this important subject, and the best qualified, moreover, by the position he occupied, to appreciate the relative position of the two armies; and after having heard his views on the subject, finally decided upon the more protracted movement, which consisted in crossing the Dwina, ascending its left bank, taking Smolensk, and suddenly debouching on the left of the Russian army, thus surprised and out-flanked.

Having resolved upon the execution of this excellent and extensive manœuvre, Napoleon ordered every preparation to be made for the departure of the troops on the 10th or 11th of August. Marshal Davoust was to rally his three divisions,

Morand, Friant, and Gudin, to unite them with the divisions Dessaix and Compans, the Poles, and the Westphalians, and to hold himself in readiness to cover, together with Grouchy's cavalry, the *debouches* of Rassasna and Liady, near which it was decided that the army should pass the Dnieper. The cavalry of Montbrun and Nansouty, under Murat, and the corps of Marshal Ney, were to proceed by Liosna and Fioubawiczi to Liady and Rassasna, and to cross the Dnieper close to Marshal Davoust, whom they would thus reinforce with thirty-six thousand men. Finally, Prince Eugene and the Guard, departing from Sourage and Witebsk respectively, to pass by Babinowiczi and Rassasna, would increase by fifty-five thousand men, the Guard numbering twenty-five thousand, and Prince Eugene's troops thirty thousand, that portion of the French army which was capable of being marched forward, and which, with Latour-Maubourg's five or six thousand horse, numbered a hundred and seventy-five thousand.

Napoleon left at Witebsk, for the purpose of guarding so important a point on the Dwina, and still more as a protection for his magazines and hospitals there, about six or seven thousand troops who were speedily to join the main army, being replaced at Witebsk by others, so that there might be there, as at Wilna, a garrison mobile.

In the meantime, the Russians were making preparations for the execution of a plan which was less well concerted than Napoleon's, and less likely to succeed. Prince Bagration had united with the principal army by Smolensk, the forty-five thousand men who remained of his force, and thus raised to one hundred and thirty-five thousand or one hundred and forty thousand men, the main army under Barclay de Tolly. A portion of Alexander's plan for the campaign still remained in force, and was that which proposed that the Russian troops should retreat before the French army, watching to take advantage of any errors which it might commit. Such errors the enemy now supposed that they saw in the apparent dispersion of our cantonments, which, extending from Sourage by Witebsk, Liosna and Babinowiczi, to Doubrowna, were to their eyes spread over a space of thirty leagues, since they were ignorant that behind the tract of wooded and marshy country which separated them from our troops, were posted, Murat with his fourteen thousand horse, and Ney with twenty-two thousand infantry, all admirable troops, and capable of being joined within the space of a few hours by the thirty thousand men of the divisions Morand, Friant, and Gudin. Since they were ignorant, moreover, that the twenty-five thousand troops of

Prince Eugene and the thirty thousand of the Guard, could be received in flank. And since such troops and such generals, posted with such skill, could not be easily surprised or routed by an unexpected attack on one of their cantonments.

Although the Russian Generals, who formed rather a military oligarchy than a staff subject to a single Commander-in-Chief, were forced to perceive the wisdom of retreating before the French troops until they should have been sufficiently exhausted, they did so very unwillingly, and were ever eager to find some favourable opportunity for a battle. Prince Bagration's natural ardour placed him at the head of those who were eager for an engagement with the enemy; and generally, throughout the army, those who still insisted on the wisdom of a continued retreat, were accused of cowardice. Barclay de Tolly feigned to bear the insults which were heaped upon him on this account with indifference; but in reality he felt them deeply. On the 5th of August, however, he called a council of war, at which were present, besides the two Generals-in-Chief, Barclay de Tolly and Bagration, the Grand Duke Constantine, General Yermolof and Colonel Toll, the former chief of the staff, and the latter quarter-master-general of the first army, the Count de Saint Priest, chief of the staff of the second, and Colonel Wolzogen, the most prominent representative of the system of retreat. Colonel Toll urged with the enthusiasm which was natural to him, and with the success always obtained by those who speak in accordance with the prevailing tendency of men's minds the expediency of acting on the offensive; and it was in vain that Barclay de Tolly and Wolzogen, set forth the advantages of a retreat which would entice the French into the depths of Russia, and enable the Russian armies to attack them when so exhausted as to render them an easy conquest. The members of the council either could not or would not see the force of this reasoning, and they very openly displayed to Barclay de Tolly, who was a foreigner in name, and to Colonel Wolzogen, who was a foreigner both in name and reality, the distrust with which this advice was received, and immediately resolved against all reason, that an offensive plan of action should be immediately adopted. It is seldom that men can retain their good sense when exposed to the influence of a dominant idea. Before the war, the tendency to imitation had inclined every one to the adoption of a plan of retreat similar to that executed by Lord Wellington in Portugal; and now, since the commencement of actual hostilities, the patriotic spirit had rendered the same minds eager for battles. Barclay de Tolly yielded to the prevailing opinion, and it was at length resolved

to attack the enemy on the 7th of August, in three columns; two of these columns, composed of troops of the main army advancing by the upper Kasplia upon Inkowo, against Murat's cantonments, which were supposed to present the feeblest point in the midst of the French line, and the third column, composed of troops of the second army, advancing under Prince Bagration from Smolensk upon Nadwa, to second the efforts of the two others.

On the 7th, the troops commenced their march in conformity with the plan which had been adopted, and on the 8th, a strong advance guard, consisting of Platow's Cossacks, and Pahlen's cavalry, approached Inkowo, where General Sebastiani was cantoned with Montbrun's light cavalry and a battalion of the 24th leger belonging to Ney's corps. General Sebastiani, who was endowed with more political than military sagacity, had permitted the enemy to approach, only sending word to his chief, General Montbrun, that his advanced posts had been so much contracted since the evening, that he feared he might find it difficult to provide his troops with rations. On receiving this intimation, Montbrun had immediately hastened up to behold twelve thousand of the enemy's cavalry pouring down upon the three thousand of General Sebastiani. The battalion of the 24th, led by an energetic officer, held the enemy in check for a considerable time, and Generals Montbrun and Sebastiani charged them more than forty times in the course of the day, but at length, after having lost between four and five hundred men, including an entire company of the 24th, they succeeded in gaining Marshal Ney's cantonment, where they were effectually protected from the enemy, who accordingly halted, convinced by this attempt, that, if some of the French outposts were not at this moment on their guard, it would, nevertheless, be impossible to surprise the main army. They perceived even on the side of Poreczié—opposite the cantonments of Prince Eugene—signs of extreme vigilance, and considerable masses of troops, which induced Barclay de Tolly to believe that the French had changed their position and had fallen back on their left, to turn the right of the Russians in the direction of the sources of the Dwina, and to cut them off from the road to St. Petersburg. Seized with this fear, Barclay de Tolly, who was advancing with extreme unwillingness, sent a general order from one wing to the other, prescribing a retrograde movement to his two principal columns, which they immediately obeyed, that they might execute a strong reconnaissance on his right. And it was fortunate that he took this measure, for had he continued to advance he would have been attacked by one hundred and twenty thousand men approaching from the Dwina, thus

driven upon the fifty-five thousand who guarded the Dnieper, and most probably have been utterly overthrown between them. In the meantime, Bagration remained in advance of Smolensk, in the direction of Nadwa.

The information of these movements of the enemy reached head quarters on the 9th of August, and were somewhat difficult of explanation, but Napoleon was so eager to meet the Russian troops in battle, that he was indifferent to the circumstances under which he might do so. Having Murat and Ney on his right, and somewhat in advance towards Liosna; the divisions Morand, Friant, and Gudin, in the rear, and being himself in a position to advance with Prince Eugene's troops and the Guard, he was confident of being able to overwhelm the Russians, and, driving them to the Dnieper, to throw them by thousands into the hands of Davoust. He ordered the whole army to be on the alert, and seemed to await the development of the enemy's designs before undertaking his grand manœuvre. But the 9th and 10th of August having passed without any visible decided movements on the part of the Russians, he supposed that the recent movements which had attracted his attention, had been mere changes of cantonments, and he put his army in motion on the 11th and 12th of August. On the morning of the 11th, the corps of Murat, Ney, and Eugene, the three divisions Morand, Friant and Gudin, commenced their march, preceded by General Eblé with the pontoon equipage. Murat and Ney defiled behind the woods and marshes, which extend from Liosna to Lioubawiczi, and reached the bank of the Dnieper opposite Liady. Prince Eugene followed Murat and Ney at the distance of a day's march, by Sourage, Ianowiczy, Liosna, and Lioubowiczi; and the divisions Morand, Friand, and Gudin, advanced by Babinowiczi to Rassasna, where they crossed the Dnieper by four bridges which had previously been thrown across it. The Guard had followed them. During the evening and night of the 13th, the whole army effected the passage of the Dnieper, and on the morning of the 14th one hundred and seventy-five thousand troops were assembled on its further bank, full of confidence, with Napoleon at their head, and believing that they were marching to obtain an immediate and decisive triumph. Never had so many men, horses, and cannon, been really assembled at the same point; for when historians speak of an army of a hundred thousand men, and it is but seldom, it would be a mistake to suppose that a hundred thousand were actually present under arms, the truth being in all probability, that the real number was no more than a moiety of the supposed one. The enormous crowd of men, animals, and waggons,

actually present, was indeed extraordinary, and at first appeared to be involved in inextricable confusion, which soon, however, yielded before the spirit of order breathed through the entire mass, by the governing mind which directed it. The sun had dried the roads, and the army advanced across immense plains covered with heavy crops, along a broad road, bordered by four rows of birch trees, and under a sun of unobscured brilliancy, but less intensely warm than it had latterly been. In the meantime, whilst the troops were ascending the left bank of the Dnieper and executing one of the most brilliant movements that had ever been accomplished, and advancing to turn the left of the Russian forces, they were seeking us on their right.

On the morning of the 14th, Murat, with the cavalry of Generals Nansouty and Montbrun, preceded by that of General Grouchy, marched upon Krasnoé. Ney followed with his light infantry; and everything proceeded in this direction as well as could be desired. Napoleon had ordered a movement in advance, ascending the Dnieper in the direction of Smolensk.

A little in advance of Krasnoé the enemy first became visible; the troops which were then seen being those of the division Névéroffskoi, numbering five or six thousand infantry, and fifteen hundred cavalry, and placed by Prince Bagration, in observation at Krasnoé, for the purpose of protecting Smolensk against the possible attempts of Marshal Davoust. Situated on the left of the Dnieper, whilst Bagration and the whole Russian army were on the right, it was a position of considerable danger, and being attacked by Bordessoulle's and Grouchy's light cavalry was driven into Krasnoé, whence it was again driven at the bayonet's point by some companies of the 24th leger under Ney. Still pursuing the enemy, our troops were stopped by a river, the bridge across which had been broken, but although the artillery was compelled to halt, the cavalry turned to the left, and traversing the bank of the ravine, found a place at which they were able to cross it, and immediately set out in pursuit of the Russian troops, which, formed by General Névéroffskoi into a compact square, were hastening forward along a road leading to Smolensk, and bordered by birch trees, of which they made skilful use as a defence against the attacks of our cavalry. Taking advantage of our want of artillery the enemy overwhelmed us with the fire of its own, at every halt but on the other hand, whenever the nature of the ground compelled the Russians to break the square, for the purpose of defiling, our squadrons seized the opportunity to charge, and penetrating it, took both men and cannon. Nevertheless,

constantly reforming, as soon as the obstacle had been passed, this body of Russian infantry retreated, defending their colours and artillery against the incessant attacks of a swarm of cavalry, and reached the town of Korytnia, having inflicted upon us a loss of four or five hundred cavalry in killed and wounded, and having themselves suffered a loss of eight pieces of cannon, seven or eight hundred killed, and a thousand prisoners.

Our advanced guard halted in front of Korytnia, the main army not having yet passed Krasnoé. Marshal Davoust had restored the Polish division Claparède, to the guard, Valence's cuirassiers to Nansouty, and had reserved the command of his three divisions of infantry, Morand, Friant, and Gudin, which were delighted to find themselves once more under their old leader. The Polish troops commanded by Poniatowski; and the Westphalians, whom Napoleon had entrusted to General Junot, were placed under the direct orders of head quarters, and posted at the head of the army, towards its extreme right, and Grouchy's cavalry accompanied the advanced guard of Murat and Ney, until Prince Eugene, who had the longest march to make, should have rejoined the main body.

On the 15th it was desired, even in these remote districts, to celebrate the fête of Napoleon, at least by some salvoes of artillery. All the Marshals, surrounded by their staffs, approached the Emperor to tender him their homage, and at the same moment were heard the reports of the cannon fired in his honour. Napoleon complained that gunpowder, at that moment so precious, should be wasted, and the Marshals replied that the powder used had been taken from the Russians at Krasnoé; he smiled at this answer, and willingly received the *vivas* of the troops, as a sign of their warlike ardour. Alas! neither he nor his troops then suspected to what terrible disasters they were to be exposed three months later on the ground they now occupied.

On the following day, the 16th of August, the advanced guard was ordered to march upon Smolensk, which, it was hoped on our side, might be surprised, for Néveroffskoi's division, of which a third had been taken or destroyed, being the only troops yet encountered, it was supposed that this city would be but slightly guarded, and consequently fall into our hands within the space of a few hours. Upon arriving, however, on the hills which overlook Smolensk, it was discovered that the hope of surprising it was a vain one, since a numerous body of troops posted on the other side of the Dnieper, on which river this city stood, were then seen

entering within its walls. These troops were those of the 7th, Raéffskoi's corps, which Bagration, on perceiving our movement, had directed thither in all haste, whilst he himself, advancing by forced marches along the right bank of the Dnieper, hastened to the succour of the ancient city of Smolensk, situated on the frontiers of Moscovy, and dear to the Russians, who had disputed its possession with the Poles for many ages.

Ney had scarcely approached a ravine which separated him from the town, when he was attacked by an ambuscade of several hundred Cossacks, received a ball in the collar of his coat, and was only with much difficulty disengaged by the light cavalry of the 3rd corps. Having perceived on his left, that a portion of the enciente of Smolensk was closed by a pentagonal citadel of earth, he attempted to take it with the 46th of the line; but this regiment being received by a furious fire, was compelled to withdraw from the attack, with the loss of three or four hundred men; and upon this Ney, who was ignorant on what point the city was susceptible of attack on this side, and who was unwilling to expose himself to the risk of any serious reverse in the absence of Napoleon, determined to await his arrival. Gradually the remainder of the 3rd corps arrived, and posted itself in line on the heights above the city. Ney took up a position on the left, and near the Dnieper with his infantry, whilst Grouchy's cavalry debouched on the right, and advanced towards a large body of Russian cavalry, which having shown a disposition to attack our troops, was charged at full gallop by our 7th of dragoons, and driven back upon the town.

Towards the middle of the day, Napoleon himself came up, and Ney communicated to him the result of his observations on the defences of the city before them.

Smolensk, as we have already said, is on the Dnieper at the foot of two ranges of hills, which contract its current. The old town, which is much the more important portion, is on the left bank, the one by which our troops had reached it, and the new town, called the faubourg of St. Petersburg, is situated on the right bank—the side on which were posted the Russian troops. A bridge unites these two portions of the city. The old town is surrounded by a brick wall about fifteen feet in thickness, twenty-five in height, and flanked at intervals with great towers. A fosse, with a road couvert and glacis, preceded and protected this wall, but the whole was very badly traced, and executed long before the rise of the modern system of fortification. In front of, and around the old town, were large faubourgs; one named Krasnoé, on the Krasnoé route, touching on the Dnieper; another in the centre, named Micislaw, from the Micislaw road which

runs into it; another still more to the centre, named Roslawl from a similar reason; a fourth, to the right, called the Nikolskoie; a fifth and last, named the Raczenska, forming the extremity of the semi-circle, and abutting on the Dnieper. From the heights on which the army had taken up its position the old town could be beheld, its enciente flanked with towers, its streets winding, and inclined towards the river, its noble and antique Byzantine cathedral, the bridge connecting the two banks of the Dnieper, and the new town dotting the sides of the opposite range of hills, whilst numerous bodies of Russian soldiers could be seen hastening up by the right bank of the river to defend a city which was almost as dear to them as Moscow. Napoleon, therefore, could no longer hope to surprise Smolensk, and he consoled himself by the hope that the whole Russian army would debouch for the purpose of giving him battle; for a great victory gained under the walls of this city, followed by the consequences which he well knew how to extract from all his victories, would be sufficiently in accordance with his plans.

In fact, Prince Bagration, who was ascending in all haste the right bank of the Dnieper by a movement parallel to that of our troops, and Barclay de Tolly, who was approaching by a transverse route which led from the Dwina to the Dnieper, began to appear on the heights opposite to those which we occupied; for each of these Generals having become acquainted with Napoleon's designs, was advancing with the utmost eagerness to the defence of the ancient Russian city, and resolved—although to give battle to the French in such a position was the height of imprudence—not to endure the shame of yielding it without a struggle. The adoption of this resolution was hastily agreed on throughout the Russian army, and the task of executing the various measures which had to be performed, adopted without discussion. And of these tasks there were two of pre-eminent importance, the first and most apparent of which consisted in the defence of Smolensk; but as it was possible that whilst defending Smolensk, Napoleon—his attack on that city being only a feigned one—might pass the Dnieper at some point above it and turn the Russian army, thus exposing it to that serious disaster to which it had been unconsciously exposed since the commencement of the campaign; it was agreed that Prince Bagration should take up a position with the second army above Smolensk on the banks of the Dnieper, to watch the fords, whilst Barclay de Tolly defended the city itself. Prince Bagration accordingly, immediately proceeded to take up a position with forty thousand men behind the little river, Kolodnia, a tributary of

the Dnieper; and General Raéffskoi, who had guarded Smolensk with the 4th corps, during the 15th, and the morning of the 16th, now withdrew, resigning it to the troops of Barclay de Tolly, who confided its defence to the 6th corps under General Doctoroff, together with the division Konownitsyn, and the débris of the division Névéroffskoi, which was the division which had fought at Krasnoé, and posted the remainder of his army on the other side of the Dnieper, in the new town, and on the hills above it. And thus—the French, to the number of one hundred and forty thousand men, occupying the heights of the left bank of the Dnieper, and the Russians to the number of one hundred and twenty-nine thousand, occupying those of the right bank,—was presented by each army to the other the most interesting and extraordinary spectacle.

The Russians having at length halted, it was impossible for Napoleon to retreat, or to allow them the advantage of having disputed with them the possession of such a place as Smolensk. He might, doubtless, have ascended the Dnieper, have been able most probably to ford it above Smolensk, and to have executed, a little higher, his grand manœuvre. But, on the one hand, he had not time to reconnoitre the stream and to render himself certain that it would be easy to effect its passage; and on the other, he could not but hesitate to attempt such an operation in the presence of the enemy, the more especially as he would thus leave in the hands of the Russians, the bridge of Smolensk, by which they would be able to debouch at any instant, and cut off his line of communication. To seize Smolensk by means of the most vigorous measures was, therefore, the only mode of proceeding suited to his position, or agreeable to his character, and the only one capable of preserving to him that reputation for success in warfare which was now, more than ever, necessary to his welfare.

Napoleon lost no time in placing his troops in line. On the left against the Dnieper, opposite the faubourg of Krasnoé, he posted the three divisions of Marshal Ney; in the centre, opposite the Micislaw and the Roslawl faubourgs, the five divisions of Davoust; on the right, in front of the Nicolskoié and Raczenska faubourgs, the Polish troops under Poniatowski; and finally, on the extreme right, on a plateau bordering the Dnieper, the mass of the French cavalry. In the rear, and at the centre of the vast semi-circle, he posted the Imperial Guard; and on the heights, in positions from which it could overwhelm with a plunging fire the unhappy city, he made the best possible disposition of his artillery.

Prince Eugene's corps was still three or four leagues in the rear at Korytnia, and Junot, who had been directed to advance with the Westphalians to support the Poles, had fallen into error with respect to the route; but the presence of these two detachments, which numbered together forty thousand men, was not necessary to enable the French army to overwhelm the enemy before it. The whole of the latter part of the 16th of August was thus employed, therefore, both by French and Russians, in taking up their relative positions, and passed without the occurrence of any serious encounter between them—with the exception that the French artillery directed an incessant fire against the city, in which it committed great ravages, and slew many of the troops with which it was overcrowded.

On the morning of the following day, the 17th, Napoleon, mounting his horse at an early hour, proceeded—accompanied by his lieutenants—to traverse the semi-circle of heights on which he was encamped, and distinctly saw the thirty thousand men of the divisions of Doctoroff, Konownitsyn, and Néveroffskoi, taking up their positions in the city and the faubourgs, whilst the remainder of the two Russian armies remained immovable on their heights. Amongst the events which Napoleon had considered to be possible, but very improbable was, that the Russians, in possession of Smolensk, and able at will to pass and repass the Dnieper under the shelter of strong walls, should go forth to offer him battle for the purpose of saving a city which they so highly valued. There was, in fact, beside Smolensk, on our right, a plateau in an excellent position and surrounded by a ravine, on which Napoleon planned to deploy his cavalry, but as he considered it was quite possible that this very position might tempt the Russians to occupy it, and as nothing would have been more in accordance with his plans than the commission of such a fault by them, he had taken care to leave it unoccupied and to withhold his cavalry in the rear in the hope of thus enticing them to advance. But to advance beyond the Dnieper, to give battle to the French in such a manner that, if beaten, they would have that river behind them, would have been so great an error that it could scarcely be hoped they would commit it; and they were, moreover, not so anxious to encounter our troops in battle as they were to die in defence of Smolensk.

Napoleon, however, allowed ten or twelve hours to elapse before taking any decided measures, as he was anxious to leave open to the last the opportunity for a general action; and in the meantime, many reflections were made in his hearing respecting the difficulty of taking Smolensk by

assault, whilst defended by thirty thousand Russians. To these remarks he made no reply, but brooded over the idea which had occurred to him of the possibility of crossing the Dnieper above Smolensk, and debouching unexpectedly on the left of the Russians, by which he would secure the complete execution of his grand manœuvre. To attempt, however, such an operation as this without imprudence, it was absolutely necessary that it should be conducted with the utmost celerity, and that the river should be fordable, since, if it should be necessary to throw bridges across it in the presence of the enemy, the Russians would infallibly oppose insurmountable obstacles to the establishment of such bridges, or would debouch by Smolensk on our flank and our rear, to cut off our line of communications, or would again retreat and escape us, leaving us certainly in the possession of Smolensk, but still depriving us of the opportunity of meeting them in battle. The whole success of such a manœuvre as the one alluded to, depended, in fact, on the answer to the question whether the river were fordable at any point near the position occupied by the French troops? For to proceed any considerable distance up the stream, and leave the enemy at liberty to debouch from Smolensk on our rear, would have been in the highest degree imprudent. Carefully taking all these considerations into account, Napoleon sent a detachment of cavalry to the bank of the river, for the purpose of seeking for a ford; but although the river appeared to be far from deep at this portion of its course, either because the reconnaissance was badly executed, or because it was not carried sufficiently high, no practicable ford was discovered; and the only measure that remained open, therefore, was to obtain possession of Smolensk by a vigorous assault. And on this measure, in spite of all objections, Napoleon resolved; for to hesitate in the presence of the enemy after having come so far to meet them, and to be timid of expending troops in actual conflict after having been so lavish of their lives on the march, would have been as unworthy of his genius as unsuited to the existing state of affairs. Between ten and eleven o'clock in the forenoon, therefore, he gave the signal for the commencement of the attack, and each portion of the troops advanced against the enemy in an order relative to the positions which they respectively occupied. On the right, the cavalry was thrown upon the plateau which had been left vacant, and which extended to the Dnieper; and the squadrons of General Bruyère driving back a brigade of Russian dragoons, protected the establishment of a battery of sixty pieces of cannon, which Napoleon had ordered to be formed on the very bank of the river, to

bombard the town, to enfilade the bridge connecting its two portions, and to command, also, the opposite bank on which the Russians were drawn up in order of battle. When this battery opened fire, the artillery of the enemy attempted to reply, but was speedily reduced to silence.

During the execution of these preliminary operations on our extreme right, Prince Poniatowski advancing with his infantry between the right and the centre, boldly attacked the faubourgs of Raczenska and Nikolskoié, which were defended by the division Névéroffskoi, and succeeded with his brave troops in pushing on throughout their whole extent. In the centre Marshal Davoust drove in the Russian advanced posts, in the faubourgs of Roslawl and Micislaw, and commenced a violent fire of artillery against the faubourgs and the town, which were in this quarter defended by the divisions Konownitsyn and Kaptsewitch. On the left, Ney, advancing with two divisions, and leaving a third in reserve, entered the Krasnoé faubourg, occupied by the division Likhaczeff, which he drove back even to the fosses of the city.

The principal attack was to be executed by Marshal Davoust, against the Micislaw and Roslawl faubourgs; and his first operation was to seize, with the division Morand, a great road which separated these two faubourgs and, descending to the town, ran on to the Malakofskia gate; his purpose being to isolate these two faubourgs from each other, and thus to facilitate the attack which he was about to direct against them in front. The 13th leger, led by General Dalton, and supported by the 30th of the line, crossed bayonets with the Russian troops which were in advance of the road, and drove them back with irresistible vigour even to the walls of the city. At the same moment, and a little to the left, the division Gudin, conducted by its General and Marshal Davoust in person, made an equally vigorous attack on the Micislaw faubourg, and driving back the division Kaptsewitch by which it was defended, entered it, driving the enemy from street to street, and thus reaching the edge of the fosse at the very moment when the division Morand arrived there by its side by the great road. On the right the division Friant had with less difficulty obtained possession of the Roslawl faubourg, and had arrived, as had the other three divisions, in front of the enceinte, when the whole three divisions might have been destroyed, had the old walls been provided with embrasures for artillery. Some shot and bullets did indeed reach their ranks from the towers; but the loss on the side of the Russians was far the greatest, for, driven at the bayonet's point into the fosses of the town, and

then exposed to a point-blank fire, their only means of entrance into Smolensk was by a few openings in the walls.

In spite of the successes thus obtained by our troops, the Russians, whom Barclay de Tolly had reinforced with the division of Prince Eugene of Wurtemburg, attempted to resume the offensive, and to execute desperate sorties by the Nikolskoié and Malakofskia gates, which Prince Poniatowski and Marshal Davoust, who occupied positions in front of these gates, had some difficulty in repelling.

When these sorties had been effectually repulsed, all the available artillery was directed against the enceinte of the town, but the balls burying themselves in the old brick walls, produced comparatively but little damage, they were thrown over the walls into the midst of the city, and being fired as they were from many hundreds of pieces of cannon, committed great ravages amongst the buildings, and strewed the streets and public places with hundreds of dead.

After six hours of fierce conflict, the enceinte, which we could not force, and which the Russians would not cross, remained between and separated the combatants. And Marshal Davoust, whom Napoleon had directed to take the city at any cost, made preparations for executing this command on the following morning, after he should have overwhelmed the town with projectiles during the night.

In accordance with information received from General Haxo, who had reconnoitred the town under a terrible fire, Marshal Davoust resolved to direct the assault upon an apparently accessible point, situated towards our right, between the position of the 1st corps, and that of Prince Poniatowski. There was an old breach at this point, called the Sigismonda breach, which had never been repaired, and was now only closed by an epaulement in earth, and General Haxo having declared the position susceptible to attack, Marshal Davoust granted to General Friant the honour of conducting his division to the assault on the following morning.

A terrible spectacle filled the night. The Russians determining, at length, to sacrifice the city so dear to their hearts, and in defence of which they had expended so much blood, now united their efforts with ours in its destruction, and purposely filled it with those conflagrations which we involuntarily caused by our cannonade. Through the midst of the darkness suddenly poured forth torrents of flame and smoke, presenting to the eyes of the army encamped on the heights, a spectacle which deeply affected them, and which much resembled an eruption of Vesuvius, in a fine night of

summer. It was a spectacle which prefigured the fury which should signalise the war of which it was one of the incidents, and whilst it failed to inspire fear, it could not but excite emotion. Our artillery added fresh flames to the fire, and rendered the city untenable by the enemy.

In truth the blood which they had shed in the defence of Smolensk had satisfied the sentiments of honour, duty, and piety, which had inspired its defenders; and now Barclay de Tolly, who had sacrificed for a moment the dictates of his reason to sentiment, resumed the course pointed out by his calculations, and ordered Doctoroff, Névéroffskoi, and Prince Eugene of Wurtemburg to evacuate Smolensk; an order which they obeyed after having so thoroughly fired it, as to leave in our hands a mere calcined ruin. At daybreak our troops entered the city, disputing its possession with the flames, and endeavouring to save some portion of it from their ravages. Our loss in the attack had been six or seven thousand, and that of the Russians, according to the most exact calculations, twelve or thirteen thousand.

A great portion of the city, including the principal magazines, was found destroyed by the fire, and the loss, especially of colonial produce, was immense. The Russians had themselves been the chief authors of this damage; but the merit of the sacrifice thus made, was much diminished by the fact, that the troops and their leaders had destroyed property belonging to the poor merchants, and had thus satisfied their fury at the expense of others. The inhabitants had for the most part fled, and those whom want of time or means to fly had retained in the city, were assembled in the principal church, an old, and in Russia renowned Byzantine Basilica. Crowded within its walls, women, old men and children, filled with terror, embraced its altars, bathed in tears. Fortunately our cannon had failed to injure the venerable edifice, and had spared us the chagrin of being the authors of useless profanation. The wretched group was comforted by assurances of safety, and conducted to such of the houses as had escaped destruction. The streets presented a hideous spectacle, covered as they were with dead and wounded Russians, and these latter the excellent doctor Larrey caused to be collected almost simultaneously with our own wounded, in accordance with the kind dictates of his heart, and in pursuance of his noble policy of tending the wounded of the enemy, that they might thus be induced to bestow a similar care upon ours. Unfortunately national fury, excited against us to the highest pitch, rendered his calculations vain.

Our army, in spite of the excitement which was the natural

result of the desperate conflict with the enemy, and victorious success, experienced a painful emotion on its entrance into Smolensk. In former times, in the course of our long career of victory, when our troops had entered conquered towns, the inhabitants, after a short period of terror usually became reassured by the gentle conduct of the French soldiers, and returned to their dwellings which remained undestroyed, and all the comforts of which they hastened to share with their conquerors. We met with no conflagrations in our conquests then, but those which we had involuntarily caused by our cannonade. But in this last campaign, on the other hand, especially since we had crossed the Muscovite frontier, solitude and flames had on every side surrounded our march; and if a few of the inhabitants here and there awaited our approach, their countenances were filled with expressions of terror and hate. The Jews even, who had been so numerous in Poland, and whose greediness had rendered them so serviceable, were no longer to be found beyond the Polish frontier, and were no longer ready to press upon us their timely but disgusting hospitality. As they gazed upon those flames, this solitude, those corpses lying in the streets, the French soldiers began to understand that they were not engaged in a war similar to those in which they had had so much experience, and in the course of which their heroism and humanity had disarmed the rancour of the enemy. They perceived that the present struggle was a far more serious one than any of those in which they had been previously engaged; but they still experienced transports of enthusiasm at the sight of Napoleon; still believed that they were executing a marvellous expedition surpassing all those of antiquity.

Napoleon traversed the town and the faubourgs on horseback, and then took up a position in one of the towers which flanked the enceinte on the side of the Dnieper and from which could be seen all that was passing beyond the river. He saw that the Russians were still in possession of the new town, but preparing to evacuate it, and only anxious to defend it until the evacuation could be accomplished. To secure the passage of the Dnieper was, therefore, the task of the immediate moment, and in accordance with Napoleon's orders, General Eblé took immediate measures for throwing bridges across it; employing for this purpose, his own pontonniers, and the troops of Marshal Ney.

In the meantime, although victorious, Napoleon experienced in the very midst of the fruit of his victory, the city which his soldiers had taken by assault, a feeling of sad foreboding; for he had just failed in accomplishing the third of

the grand manœuvres which he had planned for this campaign. He had failed to overtake Bagration at Bobruisk, he had in vain attempted to outflank Barclay de Tolly between Polotsk and Witebsk, and now, after having executed a most bold and skilful movement for the purpose of turning the united armies of Bagration and Barclay, he had been stopped in his course by Smolensk, and although it had yielded to his arms, been forced by it to lose the 16th, 17th, and 18th of August. From this moment, the hope of debouching beyond the Dnieper in time to outflank the enemy's left, could no longer be reasonably indulged in, for it would be impossible to effect the passage of the river until the Russians had gained at least a day's march in advance, and had been able to precede us on the St. Petersburg or Moscow routes; and Napoleon retired, therefore, into the dwelling which had been reserved for him in Smolensk, avenging himself for his disappointment by furiously blaming the Russian Generals, for having, as he said, uselessly sacrificed twelve thousand men; and indeed, had not the Russian Generals had good reason for the course they had pursued, the adoption of it would have been unjustifiable, but the truth was, that in endeavouring to defend Smolensk against us, they had yielded to the pressure of irresistible public feeling, and by delaying us two days before this city, had, in fact, saved themselves from one of the most dangerous combinations ever formed by their terrible adversary.

Those severe judges who after his fall became as harsh towards Napoleon as Fortune herself, attributed the ill success of his combinations to his own errors, and the circumstances above narrated will have shown that such blame is more or less well founded. We have seen, in fact, that when planning to surround Prince Bagration, or at least to isolate him during the remainder of the campaign, Napoleon had not sufficiently taken into consideration the difficulties which the nature of the country and the distances to be traversed opposed to the junction of King Jerome with Marshal Davoust; that he had behaved, also, with too much roughness to his younger brother, and had placed too few troops at the disposal of the Marshal. To a certain extent, therefore, the failure of his first combination is attributable to himself. In the case of the project of defiling before the Drissa camp and suddenly crossing the Dwina, between Polotsk and Witebsk, for the purpose of outflanking Barclay de Tolly and taking him in reverse, Napoleon's plan had been successfully carried out, and he is here only open to blame on account of the fact, that by urging war against

them he had taught the art of war to his enemies, and had thus enabled them to perceive the danger in which they had been placed by his combinations, and to escape from it whilst inflicting upon him the greatest possible amount of injury. Finally, with respect to his last project, it has been said that Napoleon should have paused before arriving at the Dnieper, have ascended this river by the right bank instead of the left, and turned the Russians by Nadwa. But it is well known that he calculated all the chances of this movement with Marshal Davoust, and that it was only after mature reflection that he resolved to march by the left bank, which was the one unoccupied by the Russians; and, indeed, the state of affairs which we know to have been actually existing at the time, show that he was right in adopting this resolution, for had he adopted the contrary course he would have found Bagration in a state of desperation at Nadwa, would have most probably have drawn the Russians *en masse*, on their left, and incurred the risk of being drawn by them into the Dnieper. Again, it has been said, that instead of attempting to turn the Russians by their left, he should have made it his object to turn them by their right, namely by Witebsk and Sourage; ascending the Dwina, descending upon the Russians by their right, and driving them upon the Dnieper. But a glance at the map will prove that Napoleon's calculations were better than those of his censors, for by throwing the Russians back upon the Dnieper he would have thrown them back upon the Smolensk bridge, which they would have been able to pass without difficulty, and from whence they might have readily regained the interior of the Empire by the southern provinces, which were the most fertile, and offered the vastest field for a continued retreat.

On the other hand, by turning them by the left, and throwing them back upon the Dwina, he drove them into an angle formed by the Dwina and the sea, and took a step towards completely surrounding them. And the cause of the failure of this project is not to be found in any error of his military genius, but in the energy displayed by the Russians at Smolensk, and if we blame him, we must blame his adoption of a policy which led him to brave unknown regions and men driven to despair; both of which are calculated, in the very nature of things, to offer invincible opposition to any foreign attack.

Whilst Napoleon within the walls of Smolensk was devoting his attention to the necessities of his army, and his pontonniers were busily engaged, in spite of the vigorous fire of the enemy's tirailleurs, in throwing bridges across

the river, the Russian Generals were taking measures for securing their retreat; and it was necessary that they should hasten it, since the Moscow route, proceeding for some leagues along the right bank of the Dnieper, might at once be barred against them, should the French be successful in any of their numerous attempts to discover a ford. But, on the other hand, if a resolution to comply with a popular inclination might be adopted without hesitation, a determination to act in a manner entirely opposed to it required some time for consideration, and it was not until the evening of the 18th, when our bridges were finished, that Barclay de Tolly, who by every retrograde step deeply wounded the national pride of his troops, resolved to resign the new town to the French. Having resolved upon this measure, he ordered Bagration to advance, to seize the most important points on the Moscow route, and made preparations to follow with the main army. The Moscow route runs directly east, after having crossed the opening of twenty leagues, already alluded to, which exists between the sources of the Dwina and the Dnieper, and thus twice encounters the sinuosities of the Dnieper, first at Salowiewo, which is a day's march from Smolensk, and secondly at Darogobouge, which is two days' march from the same place. At Salowiewo, it crosses from the right bank of the Dnieper, the one occupied by the Russians, to the left bank, which was that occupied by the French; and thus was presented an opportunity to the latter of cutting off the retreating army. At Darogobouge the Moscow route encounters the Dnieper for the last time, and there, behind the Ouja, a little river falling into the Dnieper, was a position, the pre-occupation of which could not fail to be useful to the Russians. Barclay de Tolly ordered, therefore, Bagration to advance with the utmost expedition upon Darogobouge, and resolved to march himself to Salowiewo, setting out on the evening of the 18th, and marching all the night for the purpose of arriving there in time. But this retreat, which could be easily effected by Bagration, who was much in advance, was a matter of considerable difficulty for Barclay de Tolly, who was still at Smolensk, and who, in pursuing the Moscow road would have to pass for two leagues so close to the Dnieper, that he would be constantly exposed to an irruption of the French.

To avoid this danger, Barclay de Tolly conceived the idea of taking the cross roads, which would place him out of reach of attack, and conduct him back to the main road at a distance of three or four leagues further on near a place called Loubino; and in pursuance of this plan, divided into two columns the troops which were under his own personal

command. The one, composed of the 5th and 6th corps, under General Doctoroff, the 2nd and 3rd cavalry corps, the whole of the artillery reserve, and the baggage, was to make the longest detour, and to proceed to Salowiewo by Zikolino. The second composed of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th, corps and the 1st cavalry corps, under the command of Lieutenant General Touczkoff, was to make a less long detour and to proceed to Loubino by Krakhotkino and Gorbounowo. At the same time, as Barclay de Tolly, who had sent forward only four Cossack regiments under General Karpof, by the direct route, feared that there would not be a sufficient force for the occupation of the position Loubino by which the cross roads rejoined the main road, he despatched three more regiments of Cossacks, the Elisabethgrade hussars, the Revel regiment, the 20th and the 21st Chasseurs in the same direction. Having made these arrangements he set his whole army in motion during the night of the 18th, leaving before Smolensk a rear guard under General Korff.

Towards the close of the 18th of August the French had made great progress in the establishment of their bridges, and on the night of the same day began to pass across them to the other side of the Dnieper. On the following morning Ney and Davoust had effected the passage with their corps, and entering into action with the rear guard of General Korff, at once succeeded in driving it back. When our troops arrived on the heights on the left bank, two routes were open before them; the one running direct north, and leading, by Poreczié and the Dwina in the direction of St. Petersburg; and the other running eastward, following the course of the Dnieper, and leading by Solowiewo and Darogobouge in the direction of Moscow. On each of these routes a Russian rear-guard was visible, as would naturally be the case, since the bulk of Barclay de Tolly's army, about to pursue its march by the cross roads, would follow for the moment the St. Petersburg route, and General Karporf's detachment, on the contrary, being despatched by the shortest road to seize the débouché of Loubino, would simply follow the Moscow route. In a state of some uncertainty Ney hastened to attack the detachment of the enemy to which he was nearest, and which was the one on the St. Petersburg route, and coming up with it at a place called Gédéonowo succeeded in driving it back a considerable distance; whereupon, General Barclay de Tolly, terrified at the excessive propinquity of the French, and the possibility of their intercepting the cross roads along which he intended to march the two columns of his troops, immediately hastened up, and ordered Prince Eugene of Wurtemberg to defend this point at any cost, in order to afford time to the

troops yet in the rear to defile; and, accordingly, the Russians regarding the defence of the contested position as necessary to their safety, defended it with an energy far exceeding that with which the French attacked it, and the Russians remained, therefore, in the possession of Gédéonowo.

In the meantime, Napoleon, who had been watching the movements of the enemy both towards the north and the east, concluded that they were conducting their retreat in the direction of Moscow, and withdrew, therefore, Marshal Ney from the St. Petersburg route, on which he was furiously attacking the enemy, and sent him to the Moscow road, assuring him that if he were sufficiently quick in his movements, he would obtain some brilliant triumph before the end of the day. He despatched, also, in the same direction, a portion of the troops of Marshal Davoust, that they might support those of Ney, if there should be need, but left the remainder on the St. Petersburg route, that he might have the means of becoming thoroughly acquainted with the state of affairs in each direction, and then re-entered Smolensk, where a thousand cares demanded his attention, to await the result of the reconnaissances which his lieutenants were about to execute.

Marshal Ney followed with his three divisions the Russian divisions charged with the task of occupying the Loubino position, and drove them from two plateaux on which they successively attempted to resist our troops, to a last post which they determined to defend at any cost. Beyond this position, in fact, was the débouché of Loubino, and they could not make any further retrograde movement without allowing this débouché by which Barclay de Tolly's second column was to regain the main road, to fall into the hands of the French. The nature of the goound was favourable to the Russians, who had taken up a position behind a muddy streamlet, and flanked by a range of elevations covered with clumps of trees and thick brushwood. Barclay de Tolly had brought up to this spot the head of the second column, consisting of eight pieces of artillery, many regiments of grenadiers and some cavalry, and posting the chasseurs on the brink of the streamlet, and in the brushwood, the grenadiers on the right and left of the opening made by the passage of the road through the range of elevations, and a strong detachment across it, sent officers to demand the assistance of all the troops which might be sufficiently near to afford it.

Marshal Ney arrived in the course of the afternoon before this third position, and resolved to take it. But to effect this object was a matter of considerable difficulty, since it would

be necessary to force the road which descended somewhat to the right into a species of marsh, then crossed the streamlet by a bridge now destroyed by the Russians, and finally rose through the midst of thickets filled with the enemy's tirailleurs, across the range of elevations on which were posted both troops and artillery. As considerable reinforcements, therefore, were necessary to enable him to effect his object, he drove in the Russian advanced posts beyond the streamlet, hastened to re-establish the little bridge, and sent a demand to Napoleon for more troops.

During the progress of these events, Murat had executed reconnaissances in various directions, and now arrived with some cavalry regiments on the Moscow route and was ready to join Ney. Junot, who had been directed in consequence of his position during the preceding days, to pass the Dnieper above Smolensk, had crossed it at Prouditchewo, and now found himself on the flank of the enemy. Of the five divisions of Marshal Davoust, two were on their march upon the Moscow route, and one—that of General Gudin—arriving at about five o'clock in the afternoon at the little bridge which was being re-established across the streamlet, immediately prepared to attack the Russian position. But during the interval which had occurred before the arrival of reinforcements the Russians had received important additional strength, almost the whole of Barclay de Tolly's second column having come up, with the exception of Bagowouth's corps, which had been delayed by the combat of Gédéonowo. The 3rd and 4th corps, those of Touczkoff and Ostermann, had been immediately carried into line, and posted in the rear, on the right and left of the road, as soon as it reached Loubino; whilst the cavalry was posted far upon the left, opposite Prouditchewo, the point at which Junot had passed the Dnieper. And thus the position had become a most difficult one to carry, since it was defended by about forty thousand men and a formidable artillery.

Ney had, in fact, at his actual disposal only the two divisions of infantry, Razout and Ledru, reduced to twelve thousand men by the recent engagements, and the division Gudin which, after the capture of Smolensk numbered no more than eight thousand bayonets. Murat's three thousand cavalry were far to the right, endeavouring to traverse the marshes extending along the Dnieper, for the purpose of debouching on the left of the Russians, and Junot's ten thousand Wesphalians were so extended amidst the marshes that it was very doubtful whether they could be brought up to take part in the principal action.

These difficulties, however, did not check the exertions of

Ney or Gudin; and the latter prepared to seize with his division at any price the species of coupe gorge which extended beyond the little bridge. To effect this, it was necessary to plunge into the marsh, to cross the bridge under the fire of the tirailleurs who filled the brushwood, to ascend the road across a gorge crowned with artillery on either side, and finally to debouch on a plateau upon which the Russian troops were drawn up in dense masses. General Gudin formed his division into columns for the attack, whilst Marshal Ney prepared to support him with the division Ledru; the division Razout proceeding to engage the enemy's attention on the left, and Murat advancing with his cavalry to seek a passage across the marshes.

As soon as the signal had been given Gudin's columns of infantry defiled across the bridge, uttering cries of Vive l'Empereur, and unchecked by the fire of the enemy's tirailleurs and artillery to which they were exposed, succeeded in reaching the opposite bank. Ascending the elevated ground they encountered a troop of grenadiers whom they repulsed at the point of the bayonet, and then succeeded in debouching on the plateau. Fresh battalions of the enemy, however, advanced against them, and compelled them to fall back. The brave Gudin led them again to the charge, and a terrible mêlée took place between the stream and the foot of the rising ground, in the midst of which Gudin was struck by a ball which broke his thigh, and falling into the arms of his officers he transferred his command to General Gérard. Once more our troops threw themselves on the enemy, and ascending the elevated ground a second time appeared on the plateau. Ney supported them with the division Ledru, and they seemed to be masters of the position; until fresh Russian troops were seen advancing upon it and gave rise to fears that it would once more be torn from our hands

In the meantime Murat, who had hastened towards the right for the purpose of endeavouring to outflank the position, found Junot beyond the Dnieper awaiting orders, which did not reach him, and in default of which he committed the error of not making the necessary movements. Murat urged him to attack in reverse the long elevated position which Ney and Gérard were attacking in front, but unfortunately the effects of the excessive heat and the wound which he had received in his head in Portugal had deprived Junot of his usual energy, and in spite of the exhortations of Murat, whose cavalry could not supply, on such ground, the place of infantry, made but feeble and dilatory attempts to cross the marshes which separated him from the enemy,

endeavouring to form a passage by throwing fascines into the mud.

At its principal point, however, this desperate struggle was coming to an end. Barclay de Tolly desiring to make one last effort had directed the brave Konowitsyn division against the divisions Gudin and Ledru, for the purpose of driving them from the plateau which they occupied, and the latter, yielding for a moment before the violence of the enemy's attack, had returned to the charge, and throwing themselves upon the Russian infantry with the utmost fury, had succeeded in completely routing them. At ten o'clock in the evening three divisions remained masters of the débouché. The division Ragout joined them, and Murat having passsed all obstacles, in his turn deployed upon the plateau, and completely cleared it of the Russian troops.

This terrible combat, which has been called the battle of Valoutina, and is one of the most bloody of the age, cost the Russians six or seven thousand men, and the French as many; and we must go back to Hallobrunn, Eylau, Ebersberg, and Essling, to find its parallel. Unfortunately its result, since it was no longer possible to prevent the Russians from effecting the passage of the Dnieper at Solowiewo, could be of no other advantage to us than to prove the superiority of our arms.

When Napoleon was informed of the details of this action, he was surprised at its serious character, and deeply affected at having missed so excellent an opportunity of seizing an entire column of the Russian army, which would have given to the capture of Smolensk the importance of a great victory, and relieved him of the necessity of seeking any further triumph. At the sight of the field of battle, which he visited at three o'clock on the morning of the following day, the 20th, he was astonished at the energy with which his troops must have fought, and of which the number and positions of the corpses, as well as the nature of the ground, afforded means of judging. As he ascended to the plateau and carried his observations towards the right, he was excessively irritated against Junot, whose dilatoriness had contributed to save the Russians, and as those about him failed to inform him that the road which he had to traverse, was a very marshy and difficult one, and as he failed to remind himself that he had left Junot without orders, he resolved, in the first moments of his anger, to supersede him in the command of the Westphalians by General Rapp. Returning to the midst of the blood-stained bivouacs of the division Gudin, he had the troops formed into a circle, and distributed amongst them rewards for their courage, at the same time expressing

the deepest regret for the brave General Gudin who was dying. This illustrious General, indeed, who had for many years shared with Generals Morand and Friant, the glory acquired by Marshal Davoust, was, for his heroic courage, his goodness of heart, and his cultivated mind, an object of esteem with the officers, and of affection with the troops; and his death was regarded throughout the whole army as a common loss.

On his returning from Smolensk, Napoleon could not refrain from indulging in the most gloomy reflections, for throughout this campaign, which he regarded as the most important he had ever entered upon, which he intended, should it be successful, to be the last, and for which he had made such vast preparations, his genius had never in a single instance been seconded by fortune. Bagration separated from Barclay de Tolly by his skilful combination had finally succeeded in effecting a junction with him; and in spite of his well-formed plans, to out-flank and turn the latter, these two generals had now regained the Moscow route. In every encounter, indeed, his arms had been victorious over those of the enemy; and he had obtained triumphs at Deweltowo, Mohilew, Ostrowno, Polotsk, Inkowo, Krasnoé, Smolensk and Valoutina. The loss suffered by the enemy's troops in these encounters was threefold that suffered by his own forces; and moreover, without fighting any great battle, he had effected movements which secured the conquest of the whole of ancient Poland with the single exception of Volhynia. Nevertheless, accustomed as he had been to strike blows in warfare, of such a nature as could not fail to appeal forcibly to the imaginations of mankind, he appeared to have been unsuccessful in supporting during this campaign the prestige of his power. Napoleon was more conscious of this than he was willing to allow, and he felt it bitterly. At the same time he did not fail to perceive, that although he had forced the Russians to retreat, and left them no alternative, they had themselves formed a plan to retreat before him, and thus carry the war into the interior of Russia. Nevertheless, when any of his staff, to whom these tactics of the enemy were equally manifest, ventured to press them on his attention, he persisted in denying their existence, as men frequently deny the existence of a danger which they fear, and unhesitatingly affirmed that the Russians retreated because they were beaten and driven back, and that the movements which were affirmed to be the result of their tactics were in reality the simple effect of their inability to resist the pressure of the French arms.

But his real opinions were not altogether, or were but very

slightly in accordance with these declarations, and perceiving, as he did, the manner in which the ranks of his army had become thinned, even since the arrival at Witebsk, rather by the effects of the march than the enemy's force, he became awake to the danger which would be incurred by carrying the war any further into the interior of the enemy's country. At the same time he asked himself, as he had already asked himself at Witebsk, what would be the reflections and what the actions of the Prussians, Austrians, Germans, Dutch, and Italians, should they behold him halting before obstacles to which they would attribute whatever character they chose, which they would declare to be invincible, and which they would not fail to assert would be as invincible during the next year as they were this. Would there not be herein, he asked himself, a source of extreme danger to an empire composed, as was his, of elements so discordant and so rebellious? Moreover, would it be so easy to establish, to defend, and provision that line of cantonments which he was so constantly urged to form from Bobruisk to Riga, over a line three hundred leagues in extent, on the Dwina and the Dnieper? Would these rivers, filled up with snow as they would be from the last days of October to the beginning of April, be a sufficient frontier? How would his troops, who were now for the first time, infected with the contagious malady of desertion, endure in a state of inactivity eight months of painful and wearisome winter? Who would be able, under such circumstances, if he himself did not remain among them, to maintain discipline and to preserve confidence amidst their ranks? And if he should remain amidst these cantonments, how would it be possible for him to govern from the midst of so difficult a position the course of affairs at Rome and Cadiz?

These were serious considerations, which are too little taken into account by those persons who blame Napoleon for not having terminated this first campaign at Smolensk, and which prove that the dangers attending this war were inherent in its very nature, rather than the effect of one or another method of conducting it. They caused Napoleon deep and painful reflections, and were the result of circumstances which demanded the adoption of some immediate plan of action. Nevertheless, although it was necessary to take some decided course without delay, there was little doubt that certain circumstances, which would be speedily apparent must to a great degree determine what this course must be; namely, the attitude which the enemy should adopt beyond Smolensk, the disposition he should manifest either to encounter our troops or to retreat before them, and the

situation of the Generals left on the wings of the main army, of Marshal Oudinot at Polotsk, of Prince Schwarzenberg and General Reynier, at Brezesc. Should the enemy display an inclination to give us battle, it would be necessary to encounter them at once. Should Marshal Oudinot, the Prince of Schwarzenberg, and General Reynier, have been vanquished, it would be necessary to proceed to their aid; should they have been victorious, the main army would be more free to advance.

As the lapse of three or four days would suffice to afford him certain information on these points, Napoleon resolved to halt for that time at Smolensk, taking in the meantime those preliminary measures which would be necessary, should he eventually resolve to advance farther into the country. Accordingly, he ordered Murat and Marshal Davoust, the two most dissimilar men in the whole army, and acting as useful checks the one on the other, to follow the enemy with two corps of cavalry and five divisions of infantry respectively, and to discover as accurately as possible, the plans of the Russian Generals. As Marshal Ney's troops, which had formed the advanced guard since the departure from Witebsk, had need of repose, and the Marshal himself was too energetic for the conduct of the intended operations, Napoleon ordered him, after his divisions should have rested one or two days, to follow Murat and Davoust, but at some distance; and at the same time sent Prince Eugene a little to the left of the main army in the direction of Doukhowtchina, for the purpose of sweeping the country between the Dnieper and the Dwina, and learning what might be on this side the intended movements of the enemy.

The information, in fact, which arrived every moment from both right and left, from both Brezesc and Polotsk, was of a very satisfactory character, and was generally to the following effect:—General Reynier had fallen back upon Slonim for the purpose of meeting Prince Schwarzenberg, who had been ordered, as we have already seen, to retrace his steps towards the Bug, and to effect a junction with the Saxons for the purpose of driving General Tormazoff into Volhynia. The intended junction between the Saxons and Austrians had been effected on the 3rd of August, and the united troops had moved upon Pronjany and Kobrin, where had occurred the unfortunate incident of the surprise of the Saxon detachment by the Russian General, Tormazoff. As General Reynier's troops were reduced to eleven thousand, and Prince Schwarzenberg's to twenty-five thousand, their allied forces numbered no more than thirty-six thou-

sand men; but as those of General Tormazoff, who had been obliged to leave troops at Mozyr to guard his rear, numbered scarcely so many, the latter had not failed to retreat before the French, and hastened to return towards Kobrin and Pinsk, for the purpose of covering the Bug, the Pripet, and the celebrated marshes of that part of the country.

Pursuing the retreating enemy with considerable activity, the Austrians and Saxons arrived on the 11th of August, at a place named Gorodeczna, at some leagues distance from Kobrin, and found the Russians established there in a strong position which they were evidently determined to defend. At Gorodeczna, the Kobrin road ascended somewhat elevated ground, at the foot of which ran a stream, of which the banks were somewhat marshy, and to effect the passage of which would necessarily be a matter of difficulty; and it was on this elevated ground that General Tormazoff was now posted with thirty-six thousand infantry and sixty pieces of cannon. Perceiving the difficulty of carrying such a position by an attack in front, Schwarzenberg and Reynier sought on their right for some passage, which would enable them to outflank the enemy's right, and at a village named Podoubié, found a position which afforded the opportunity of outflanking the Russian left, but the passage would have to be effected not only across a marsh-bordered stream, but at a point over which the enemy kept a careful watch. A little beyond this place, however, on the declivity of the elevated ground which it was intended to seize, was a wood which was unoccupied by the enemy, and through which ran a road which joined a league further the main Kobrin road.

General Reynier, who was a skilful officer and able tactician, had speedily discovered the enemy's error, and proposed to take advantage of it by penetrating below Podoubié—the wood which the Russians had neglected to occupy—and thus turning their position. Prince Schwarzenberg at once assented to the plan and gave Reynier an Austrian division, as well as a large portion of his cavalry, that he might have ample means for the execution of the proposed manœuvre. It was agreed, also, that on the morning of the following day, the 12th of August, the Prince should make a serious attack on Garodeczna in front with the bulk of his forces, for the purpose of occupying the attention of the Russians on this side, whilst Reynier should make a vigorous effort to turn them on their left.

Everything having been thus arranged, Reynier penetrated during the night into the wood in question, established

himself within it, and as soon as it was day, suddenly debouched into a little plain into which merged the elevated ground occupied by the enemy, who having soon perceived the movement made by the Saxons, had left a portion of his troops at Garodeczna to resist the attack of Prince Schwarzenberg in front, and had thrown the remainder on their left flank, for the purpose of meeting the troops of General Reynier. And on this double line did the opposed troops contend during the whole of the 12th.

Although both Austrians and Saxons fought in their respective positions with the utmost valour, the conflict of the day would have had no result, had not Prince Schwarzenberg directed an attack against the intermediate point at Podoubié, which was nearer the Russian left flank. At this spot, however, Colloredo's Austrian regiment, together with the Saxon chasseurs, plunging through the marsh, climbed the rising ground at the very moment when the conflict between Reynier's troops and the enemy was at its height. Their appearance filled the latter with dismay, and General Reynier seizing the opportunity to attack them still more vigorously, succeeded in gaining ground on their left, and at the same time threw the whole of his cavalry on his extreme right on the enemy's rear; by this means threatening the great Kobrin road. As soon as the Russians perceived this movement they met our cavalry with their own, but after some fighting considered that it would be imprudent to attempt any longer to defend a position so difficult to maintain, and retreated under cover of the night, having lost in killed, wounded, and prisoners, about four thousand men; a loss more than double that suffered by their opponents.

Had proper advantage been taken of the results of this day's conflict, it might have enabled our troops to drive the Russians into Volhynia, to have even pursued them thither, and at least to have prevented them from returning, if their force had not been doubled by the arrival of the troops from Turkey. Its immediate effect would be to appease the terrors of the Poles, and to cover our right flank; and the news of it was so gratifying to Napoleon that he sent a gift of five hundred thousand francs (the second of that amount) to the Austrian army, together with a large number of decorations, and wrote to Vienna to request that the bâton of Marshal might be bestowed upon Schwarzenberg. At the same time it was impossible that he should not perceive that this portion of his forces had been reduced by the late battle to thirty-two or thirty-three thousand men, and he besought his father-in-law to increase it by three thousand cavalry and six thousand infantry which, with reinforcements which he had demanded

at Warsaw, would raise the number of Prince Schwarzenberg's army to forty-five thousand men, and be sufficient, he considered, to free Volhynia from the Russian yoke.

This event necessarily diverted Napoleon from the intention which he had entertained of summoning Prince Schwarzenberg to the main army; for to have caused Prince Schwarzenberg to have traversed one hundred and twenty leagues for the purpose of arriving at Smolensk, and Prince Poniatowski to have accomplished as long a march from Smolensk to Kobrin, would have been to paralyse these two corps for more than a month at the most critical moment of the campaign, and to have deprived them, moreover, of a fourth or fifth of their effective strength by the fatigues of the march. And although he could not flatter himself, that the Austrians would be very active propagators of the Polish insurrection in Volhynia, their conduct during the campaign enabled him with some degree of confidence to confide to their honour the defence of the French right and rear.

In the meantime, the course of events had been no less favourable on our left, on the side of the Dwina. Marshal Oudinot had, as we have seen, after the checks inflicted by him on the Count Wittgenstein on the 24th of July and the 1st of August, retreated upon Polotsk, for the purpose of affording his troops some repose, a position which they might readily defend, and the advantage of being able to gather forage under the protection of the Dwina. Napoleon, however, fearing some unfavourable moral effect from these retrograde movements, and indulging in exaggerated ideas of the resources possessed by his lieutenants, had addressed reproaches to Marshal Oudinot, declaring that by retreating after a victory, he had placed himself in the position of one who had been vanquished; which was doubtless to some extent the truth, but it was no less true that Marshal Oudinot's troops were worn out, reduced from thirty-eight thousand men to twenty thousand by the fatigues of the march, the heat, and desertion, and that they were in absolute need of some repose. Moreover, the Bavarians, whom Napoleon had sent to reinforce Marshal Oudinot, were no less in need of an opportunity to recover from the effects of the heat, fatigue, and dysentery, which had reduced them to thirteen thousand men, and rendered them totally unfit for active operations in the field.

However, after some days of repose, Marshal Oudinot, who was constantly being urged on to active operations by Napoleon, considered that he ought to resume the offensive against Wittgenstein, and moved to the left from Polotsk upon the Drissa, towards Valeintsoui, some leagues below

the Sivotschina, where he had inflicted so severe a blow on the Russians some time previously. Failing to find them behind the Drissa, he had crossed this river and moved upon Svoiana, behind which were encamped the troops of Count Wittgenstein, which had been increased by reinforcements to a number equal to that of the French, who now amounted, with the Bavarians, to thirty-two or thirty-three thousand men. But it is necessary to add that the Russian troops were in a much better state than ours, although inferior as soldiers, and were entirely Russian, whilst of Marshal Oudinot's corps scarcely half were French.

Conscious that his corps, which numerically amounted to thirty-two or thirty-three thousand men, had no more than twenty-five thousand really effective troops, and placing but little reliance on the allied troops, Oudinot would not have resumed the offensive, had he not felt too deeply the reproaches directed against him by Napoleon. During many days he remained on the bank of the Svoiana, in front of the Russian camp, harassing the enemy with his light troops, and endeavouring to force them into repeating the fault which they had already committed on the Drissa at the Sivotschina ford; but the Russians took care not to permit themselves to be caught a second time in a similar snare, and several days passed over without any other result than the useless loss of several hundreds of men from ambuscades.

However, Marshal Oudinot, who had taken up an advanced position to the left of Polotsk, and had descended the Drissa as far as Valcintsoui, feared, with some reason, that he might be turned towards his right by the route from Polotsk to Sebej, which was unfurnished with troops. He repassed the Drissa therefore, and proceeded to establish himself between Lazowka and Biéloé, in front of the vast forest of Gumzéléva, which covers Polotsk; and resolving, since his troops had been still further reduced by their later marches, and he had an exaggerated idea of the enemy's force, that he would approach still nearer to Polotsk, lest he should be cut from this city, and he accordingly established himself beyond the river Polota, a little river which runs, covered with hills, farms, and all kinds of buildings, through plains and cultivated fields, and turns round Polotsk, falling into the Dwina somewhat below it.

Established in this position on the 16th of August, he convoked a council of war, for the purpose of discussing the question, whether it would be better to engage the enemy or to repass the Polota and the Dwina, in order to attain a position protected by those two rivers, and in which he might confine his operations to disputing with the enemy the much

larger course of the Dwina. General Saint Cyr, who formed one of the council in his character of commander of the Bavarian army, maintained that it would be useless to engage the enemy and incur the loss which must necessarily arise from such a measure, in case the enemy had failed to follow our troops; but that if, on the contrary, the Russians had followed in our track, it would be necessary to check them by a vigorous combat, for the purpose of proving that the reason of the retreat was not timidity but the desire of obtaining a more convenient position. At this moment, however, the sound of cannon put an end to all deliberations, and induced every one to run to arms to resist the Russians, who were attempting to cross the Polota. A French and a Bavarian division posted in advance of the Polota, received the Russians with considerable energy, and repulsed them vigorously on its bank, until the approach of night put an end to this preliminary contest. On the following day, Marshal Oudinot, who never failed to exaggerate the Russian force, and considered his position to be a very insecure one, felt much uncertainty with regard to the course which he ought to take. And, indeed, the position which he occupied was not a particularly favourable one, for whilst it was covered in front by a little river, the Polota, there was behind it the larger river Dwina, which was at this part crossed by no other available bridge but that of Polotsk, and presented, therefore, but a very insufficient means of retreat in case of a repulse. As is too often the case in such situations, the Marshal decided to adopt a medium course of action, resolving to defend vigorously, with a portion of his troops, the position he then occupied, and to convey the other portion, with the artillery and baggage, across to the left bank of the Dwina.

Having taken this resolution, he ordered that the banks of the Polota should be vigorously defended, whilst the remainder of the army should traverse Polotsk and cross the Dwina; and the defence was executed accordingly with a vigour which effectually prevented the Russians from advancing a single step; but unfortunately, the Marshal himself, whose rare courage led him to expose himself too frequently to danger, was severely wounded, and compelled to resign the command to General St. Cyr, who, although wounded himself, immediately assumed it.

The General called together the chief officers to consult with them respecting the best course to pursue for the purpose of escaping from a situation which was exceedingly complicated. As energetic as he was prudent, he explained the inconveniences attending a purely defensive attitude, and showed the danger which existed, that the enemy might attack them on both sides of the Dwina, and proposed that

on the following day, whilst apparently continuing the retreat, advantage should be taken of the covered ground on which the battle had taken place to repass secretly the Dwina and the Polota with the greater portion of the troops, to inflict upon them, if possible, a severe blow, and then to fall back, under cover of this success, behind Polotsk and the Dwina. The objection that the soldiers were too much exhausted by marching and fighting to meet the enemy, having been overruled by the General's declaration that four hours would be sufficient to enable him to inflict upon the Russians a serious check, it was resolved to devote the morning to repose, and to encounter the enemy in a new and final conflict in the afternoon of the following day.

On the 18th of August, accordingly, General St. Cyr proceeded to carry out his proposed plan, leaving his artillery and baggage on the left bank of the Dwina, whither Marshal Oudinot had already sent them, and even moving them along the Oula road, as though he were approaching the grand army, and taking advantage of this feigned movement to concentrate around Polotsk Verdier's division and Doumerc's cuirassiers. Towards the middle of the day he suddenly transported his troops to the right of the Dwina, moved them between this river and the Polota, and ordered the attack.

The Bavarian and French troops were in the ravine of the Polota, the Bavarians on the right, the two French divisions, Legrand and Verdier in the centre, and a moiety of General Merle's Swiss division on the left with Doumerc's cuirassiers. The other moiety of Merle's division was on the hither side of the Polota to hold in check any of the enemy's troops which might attempt to cross this river on the extreme right, and to debouch from the forest of Gumzéléva on our rear.

The Russians on their side were posted beyond the Polota in a semi-circle around our position, and very close to our advanced posts, that they might be ready to throw themselves upon us as soon as we should beat a retreat, as they expected us to do as soon as they perceived the movement of our artillery on the left of the Dwina. At a given signal the whole of our artillery, Bavarian as well as French, suddenly advanced, to the number of sixty pieces, and overwhelmed with missiles the surprised and disconcerted Russians. Their cavalry were not on their horses, and but a portion of their infantry in their ranks, and our divisions, seizing this moment of their confusion to advance to the attack, forced them to fall back in great disorder, leaving the fields and marshes covered with their wounded and their cannon, which they were equally unable to carry off. As soon as they had reached their second line, however, they halted, and presenting to our troops a more determined

front, renewed the combat, which now became furious and desperate. Two hours, however, had scarcely elapsed, when the enemy was repulsed at all points and obliged to resign to us the field of battle, covered with their dead and their artillery.

We were completely victorious along the entire front of the two armies, the enemy was driven back to the edge of the forest, and had our troops been less fatigued, we should have been able by pursuing them into the forest to have taken many prisoners and cannon. Our soldiers were, however, thoroughly exhausted, and paused on the edge of the forest, after a brilliant victory, of which the trophies were one thousand five hundred prisoners, fourteen pieces of cannon, a large quantity of caissons, and three thousand of the enemy slain. Our own loss was less than a thousand men.

The principal advantage of this victory to ourselves was that it forced Count Wittgenstein to fall back, deprived him of any inclination to act on the offensive, at least for some time, and enabled us to halt tranquilly in advance of Polotsk without fear of losing our foragers, however far they might extend their researches. Its sole regret, and it was a regret universally felt, was that which was inspired by the death of the brave and aged Bavarian General, Deroy, who was slain during the action.

This victory, which was known at Smolensk on the 19th of August, the day succeeding that on which that city had been entered by our troops, was a source of extreme satisfaction to Napoleon, and caused him to be just, at length, with regard to General St. Cyr, whose energetic determination had regained for us on the Dwina the prestige of victory. He sent a Marshal's bâton to the General, numerous rewards to the French and Bavarian troops, which had equally distinguished themselves, and granted donations to the widows and orphans of the Bavarian officers fully equal to those granted to the widows and orphans of French officers. He ordered, also, particular honours to be paid to the memory of General Deroy, the loss of whom and of General Gudin, were at present the greatest losses which the army had suffered. How soon, alas! was it to suffer losses far greater, or at least, far more numerous?

These two victories of Gorodeczna and Polotsk, which were obtained on the 12th and 18th of August respectively, seemed to guarantee the security of our flanks, and to enable us to advance still further should there appear any hope of obtaining a decisive victory on the Moscow route.

This was Napoleon's own view, and calculating that the Austrians and Saxons would be sufficiently strong to hold Tormazoff in check on his right, and that the French and Bavarians would be equally able to stop Wittgenstein on his left, without taking into account Marshal Macdonald, who had been left between Polotsk and Riga, he could see no cause in the position of his wings which should induce him to halt if there should appear any opportunity by making a forward movement, either of concluding the war, or of obtaining glory. The only source of misfortune that could be foreseen was in the probable return of Admiral Tchitchakoff, whose troops would become available by the establishment of peace between the Russians and Turks; but as the 9th corps, under Marshal Victor, would afford, by its advance from Tilsit to Wilna, a resource against almost every imaginable accident, Napoleon, in forming his final resolutions, had only to take into account the relative positions of the grand army under his own personal command, and the grand Russian army under the command of Barclay de Tolly, and now on its retreat upon the Moscow route. In this direction his thoughts were constantly turned, sometimes inclining to the plan of halting at Smolensk for the purpose of reorganising Poland and preparing winter quarters for his troops, at the cost of exciting all the ideas which could not fail to spread throughout Europe, respecting a mode of action so opposite to his character; and sometimes determining that it was absolutely necessary to plunge into the depths of Russia for the purpose of striking, before the end of the season, a blow of too decisive a nature to be resisted by a character so fickle as that of the Emperor Alexander. In the meantime, he received those reports from his two Generals of the advanced guard which could not fail to afford him reasons for deciding to adopt the one or the other of these two courses of action.

Murat and Davoust were following, in fact, with their cavalry and infantry respectively, the grand Russian army, which was retreating by the Moscow route. They had entered Solowiewo after some skirmishes with the enemy's rear guard, and leaving to others the care of preserving this post, had hastened on to Dorogobouge, the last point at which the Moscow route encounters the sinuosities of the Dnieper. The reports sent by the two commanders were as various as their characters. The brilliant but inconsiderate valour of Murat, prodigal of his cavalry, had come into collision with the firm and calm temperament of Marshal Davoust, who was most averse to making any useless sacrifice of either the lives or strength of his

troops, and who, by advancing less quickly than others, reaped the advantage of never having to retrace his steps. They had not advanced in company more than a few days before bitter altercations had arisen between them, and this spirit of dissension was fully displayed in the reports which they presented to the Emperor.

The Russian troops, of which the retreat was conducted by Barclay de Tolly, had retired with firmness and good order; retreating by echelons, placing cannon and tirailleurs at all points at which it was possible to hold our cavalry in check, and defending them by these means until the arrival of our infantry, when the troops which had halted, fell back behind other echelons equally well posted. There was nothing in this method of proceeding which evinced anxiety or difficulty, and indeed, it displayed, on the contrary, a system of resistance which would increase in firmness until the moment when the enemy should consider that they had a favourable opportunity for meeting us in a general engagement. Murat, however, observing but very superficially what was passing before him, and only considering this successive abandonment of positions which they had occupied, asserted that the Russian troops were demoralised, and that it would only be necessary for our troops to come up with them by a series of rapid marches to obtain over them an easy triumph. Marshal Davoust stoutly maintained, on the contrary, that he had never seen a retreat better conducted, or one which left less opportunity for obtaining a victory by simply galloping in the enemy's track. He considered that we should soon have to engage them in some position chosen by themselves; and that we should, consequently, take care to lead our forces up to it in the best possible order. But however opposite were the opinions of the two Generals of our advanced guard on most points, they were unanimous in supposing that we should soon encounter the enemy in a pitched battle.

As they approached Darogobouge, our troops perceived the Russians drawn up in battle array behind a little river named Ouja, which fell into the Dnieper on our left at a place called Ouswiat; and in such attitude and numbers as seemed to show the imminence of a general engagement. The little river which we had to cross in order to reach them was no serious obstacle, although its banks were muddy and difficult; and, moreover, it was hoped that by ascending a little to the right we should be able to turn the Russians, and probably succeed in driving them into the angle formed by the Ouja with the Dnieper. There was a good opportunity, therefore, at this point, of encountering the enemy in a

grand and decisive engagement, and on the evening of the 22nd, a report to this effect was sent to Napoleon from our advanced guard, which had left Smolensk on the 20th; whilst the Polish army, which marched at two leagues on our right, proceeded to take up a position towards the sources of the Ouja, the point by which it was hoped we might succeed in turning the enemy.

The conjectures of the generals of our advanced guard were in accordance with the actual state of affairs. The judicious and intrepid Barclay de Tolly, after having courageously borne the disparaging remarks of which he was the object, had at length given way before the taunts levelled against him from all ranks of his army; for when it was urged upon him that there was great danger of the rapid demoralisation of troops, amongst which contempt for their leaders began to be so widely spread, he determined to abandon his plan of a retreat into the interior of Russia, and to encounter our troops immediately in a desperate battle. He sent, therefore, the quarter-master general, Colonel Toll, to select a field of battle, and the Colonel had chosen the position which presented itself behind the Ouja, in front of Darogobouge. Arriving there on the 22nd, Barclay de Tolly altered the position of the second army, commanded by Bagration, and posted it on his left, at the very point at which our generals considered it possible to turn the Russian line.

Napoleon received the report of the generals of his advanced guard some hours after it had been despatched, for although the space to be traversed had occupied the troops of the advanced guard three days, it was only a journey of ten or twelve hours to a courier; and as soon as he had received it hastened to quit Smolensk, for the purpose of hastening that decisive and important event which he considered absolutely necessary to support him in the position in which he found himself placed. The single fact of his departing from Smolensk, several days' march, with all his forces would of itself, in great measure, decide the grave question which at this time so deeply occupied his attention, but the reasons which urged him to seek this battle even at the distance of some marches, were so powerful that he could not hesitate to do so; and on the 24th accordingly, he set out with the guard. At the same time, although he still remained undecided whether to winter in Poland or to march on to Moscow, he made all his preparations as though he had decided upon the latter measure, for he could not but foresee that circumstances might constrain him to adopt it, and he was unwilling to move a step in advance without having taken in his rear precautions worthy of his foresight.

He had already devoted some days at Smolensk to the arrangement of those military establishments which he never failed to form on his route, and which were not, unfortunately, always finished at his departure. He left there a division of his young guard under General Delaborde, to remain until the detachments still in the rear should come up to garrison the important city, and summoned thither those which he had left at Witebsk where they would be replaced by others. He changed the route of the army, and instead of causing it to pass by the points which he had himself traversed, namely, Gloubokoé, Ouchatsch, Beschenkowiczy, and Witebsk, determined that it should pass by Smorgoni, Minsk, Borisow, Orscha, since this line of route was the shorter.

He added to the Polish division Dombrowski, which had been detached from the corps of Poniatowski and posted at Mohilew for the purpose of connecting the grand army with the Austro-Saxon corps, a brigade of light cavalry, that it might be able to extend its surveillance to a greater distance, and more fitted to watch our new base of operations. To Marshals Saint-Cyr and Macdonald, who guarded the Dwina, and to Prince Schwarzenberg, who guarded the lower Dnieper, he wrote informing them that he was about to advance for the purpose of engaging the enemy in a decisive battle, and desiring them to be careful to protect the flanks of the grand army whilst it should be engaged in the attempt to inflict a mortal blow on the Russian army, and finally, he commanded the Duke of Belluna to prepare to proceed to Wilna, since, from that central point the 9th corps would be the resource of that one of our generals who should be left to fight the one or other of our wings.

Having sent forward the guard on the morning of the 24th, and ordered Ney, who followed Davoust, to approach close to the head of the army, and Prince Eugene, who had advanced upon the left by Doukhowtchina to march upon Darogobouge, he himself set out towards evening, and continued his journey through the night that he might reach at sunrise the place where he hoped to engage the enemy, which was the object of his most ardent wishes.

On his arrival, however, he found that the probability of a decisive engagement, at least for the present, had almost entirely vanished, the fact being, that after a single glance at the position of which he was to occupy the part most difficult to defend, Prince Bagration had declared it to be a most ill chosen one, insulting General Toll when he attempted to justify its selection. The battle, therefore, was now postponed by the desire of the very persons who had been most eager in demanding it, and Barclay de Tolly had consequently broken up his camp

and rapidly passed through Dorogobouge on his way to Wiasma, where, it was said, there could be found a position in every way much more advantageous.

The acute discernment of Napoleon and the great experience of Davoust, did not fail to convince them that these halts of the Russian troops followed by sudden retreats, were not the result of irresolution, but rather the hesitation of an army determined to fight, but anxious to encounter its enemies on a field of battle, which should afford them the greatest possible advantages; and they clearly perceived that within two or three days the Russians would be ready to encounter the French troops in that pitched battle for which the latter had so frequently offered them the opportunity. This being the state of affairs, Napoleon, as he had already passed the three stages between Smolensk and Dorogobouge did not hesitate to advance still further over the three which separated Dorogobouge from Wiasma, where it was probable that he would at length come up with the Russian army. Nevertheless, as he was not the man to deceive himself respecting the consequences of his actions, he foresaw that the adoption of this measure would very possibly compel him to proceed to Moscow; since it would be scarcely possible, should he gain a great victory at some marches distant from Moscow, to pause and renounce the immense éclat of leading the French troops into this distant capital of the Czars. Setting out from Smolensk without having come to any fixed determination, he formed his final resolution at Dorogobouge, and on the 26th gave orders which seemed to have been framed in accordance with the necessities of a march which should only terminate at Moscow.

Although on the eve of his departure from Smolensk, Napoleon had devoted his attention to his base of operations, it occupied his thoughts still more deeply, now that he was about to advance so great a distance into the country. This base had at first been at Dantzic and Thorn, then at Konigsberg and Kowno, and subsequently at Wilna, successively changing its position in accordance with the progress of the extraordinary march of the French troops across Poland and Russia; and it was evident that its new position should be at Smolensk; this city being the connecting link between the Dwina and the Dnieper, and connecting them also with Wilna and Kowno. Napoleon resolved, therefore, to summon to Smolensk, immediately, the corps of Marshal Victor, consisting of about thirty thousand men, that it might remain there to be ready to support either Marshal St. Cyr or Prince Schwarzenberg in case either of these two should encounter any reverse. At the same time, Napoleon consi-

dered that it was far more probable that these commanders would obtain great successes, rather than suffer any reverse, even so great as being reduced to the defensive; he regarded the corps under Marshal Victor's command as destined, in fact, to face the Russian troops which might return from Turkey. As he was unwilling, however, that this corps should be scattered in small garrisons, he had already marched upon Wilna various Saxon, Polish, Westphalian, and Hanseatic regiments, which had, hitherto, remained at Dantzic and Konigsberg, and he now ordered that they all should be marched to Minsk and Smolensk, for the purpose of providing at these places such garrisons and detachments as might be necessary. As a substitute for these troops at Dantzic he had previously summoned thither one of Marshal Augereau's divisions commanded by General Lagrange, and he now determined to move this division itself to Smolensk, that it might from thence reinforce the various corps of the grand army, supply the vacancies which might be caused in the ranks by future battles, and in the meantime mark out the route. This division was to be replaced at Dantzic by another of Marshal Augereau's divisions, that of General Heudelet; and as the Marshal would be entirely deprived of the division which was to be sent to Smolensk, Napoleon resolved to recompense him for its loss by ordering General Grenier, whom, in his distrust of the court of Naples he had posted at the head of a corps composed of excellent French troops and foreign troops in the service of France, between Rome and Naples, to march with his French troops, which would form a division of fifteen thousand of the best soldiers in Italy, with the utmost speed consistent with prudence, upon Augsberg. By this measure the corps of Marshal Augereau would receive a larger number of troops than it had lost, and Napoleon considered, holding Murat as he did, under his own hand, and having no reason to fear his fickleness, that the Neapolitan army, together with the regiments of Isemberg and Latour-d'Auvergne, would be sufficient protection for the South of Italy.

Thus, with a corps of fifty thousand men between Berlin and Dantzic, with strong garrisons at Dantzic, Konigsberg, Memel, Kowno, Wilna, and Witebsk; with the two corps of Marshals Macdonald and St. Cyr on the Dwina, with that of Prince Schwarzenberg on the Dnieper, with an excellent Polish division at Mohilew, to connect Prince Schwarzenberg's corps with the grand army, with the corps of the Duke of Belluna at Smolensk, perfectly ready to succour either of his wings which might be in peril, or to follow his own march to Moscow; and finally, with a continual succession

of battalions serving as garrisons in all the towns on the route, until they should continue their march for the purpose of recruiting the grand army; with all these resources at his disposal we say, Napoleon was able to persuade himself that he was safe, and thought not of comparing his own position with that of Charles XII.

The vast measures which he had taken were certainly worthy of his keen foresight, and seemed to be such as must secure him against all accidents; but yet one of them was the subject of much disapproval on the part of his lieutenants, too timidly expressed and unfortunately justified by the event. This measure was that which consisted in leaving divided into two corps, the troops destined to guard the Dwina. The corps of Marshal St. Cyr now composed of twenty thousand French and ten thousand Bavarian troops, would have been sufficient perhaps, under a very enterprising general, and with proper provisions, to have vanquished Wittgenstein's corps; but when reduced, as it was, to twenty-four thousand men, by the necessary absence of numerous foraging parties, and situated at great distances from his appuis, in the midst of unknown regions, we cannot be surprised that even under the command of so able a General as Marshal St. Cyr, it should have effected no decisive operation. Marshal Macdonald with twenty-four thousand men at the most, situated between Riga and Dunabourg, could neither take the former place, nor maintain communications with Marshal St. Cyr. But had these two corps united, in accordance with Marshal Macdonald's proposition, they might have overwhelmed Wittgenstein, have advanced beyond the Dwina, have established themselves at Sebej, have thus forced Wittgenstein to fall back upon Pskow, and have gained on this side a decided superiority over the enemy. It is true that Courland would have been exposed to the incursions of the garrison of Dunabourg, and that it would have been impossible in this case to have besieged Riga, to the possession of which Napoleon attached so much importance. But if we had occupied Tilsit in force, and had well guarded the course of the Niemen as far as Kowno, the incursions of the Cossacks into Courland could not have had very important results; and with regard to the siege of Riga, it was very improbable that a corps of less than twenty-four thousand men, compelled to disperse a third of its effective strength in detachments, would be capable of executing an operation of such difficulty.

With the exception of this measure, which was the result of Napoleon's fatal desire to attain too many objects at once, the numerous plans which Napoleon now carried out were well

suited to the existing state of affairs. Perceiving the difficulty of securing the preservation of the line of communications between the grand army and its rear, through a line infested with bands of Cossacks, he ordered the governors of Minsk, Barisow, Orscha, and Smolensk to furnish from their several garrisons, each of a series of little citadels which he had constructed along the line of communication, with a hundred infantry, fifteen cavalry, and two pieces of cannon; by this means securing the uninterrupted transmission of information and orders. And further, as he intended, should the loss of a great battle and the capture of Moscow fail to bring Alexander to submission, to return to winter in Poland, he made arrangements for procuring either by means of money or requisitions a quantity of provisions more than sufficient for the supply of his army during a year. And it was very possible that this vast amount of food and provender might be raised in Poland, especially by the employment of the treasury which Napoleon now had at his disposal, consisting partly of a great sum in money, and partly of a still larger sum in false paper roubles which he had forged in Paris without scruple, considering himself justified by the example of the coalitionists who at another period filled France with forged assignats.

All these precautions having been taken, Napoleon moved his troops from Dorogobouge in the following order. Murat with the light cavalry of Marshals Davoust, and Ney, the cavalry of reserve of Generals Nansouty and Montbrun, with a considerable force of artillery attileé, formed the advanced guard; in immediate succession followed Marshal Davoust, having one of his divisions always ready to support the cavalry. After Davoust marched Ney, and after Ney the guard. On the right, Prince Poniatowski's corps, and Latour-Maubourg's cavalry, at two or three leagues distance from the grand route, endeavoured to outstrip the enemy and to obtain information. Prince Eugene occupied a similar position on the left, also endeavouring to outstrip the Russian troops, and preceded by the cavalry of General Grouchy.

The quartier-general followed, with the parks of artillery, the engineers, and a thousand waggons laden with provisions for the guard, which Napoleon was unwilling to accustom to habits of pillage, and for the general supply of the army on the day on which the troops might be concentrated to engage the enemy in battle. With the exception of Davoust's corps, the troops of which had eight days provisions on their backs, besides a reserve sufficient for three or four days conveyed by waggons, the other troops were to procure their

subsistence from the districts through which they might pass. It had been found, in fact, that the villages were less completely dismantled than had been at first supposed, and that on the lateral routes, especially, where the Russians had not time to complete their work of destruction, there still remained a large quantity of provisions. The army was freed from a large portion of its baggage train, and even from the bulkier portion of its pontoon equipages, since the rivers on this central plateau which separate the Baltic from the Black Sea, are almost all close to their source and consequently neither rapid nor deep. With respect to the constitution of the army itself:—as it had lost about fifteen thousand men in engagements with the enemy; about fourteen thousand by the fatigues of the march, and had left a division of the guard at Smolensk; an Italian division and General Pajul's light cavalry in observation on the Witebsk route; it was now reduced from one hundred and seventy-five thousand to about one hundred and forty-five thousand men, but these were all most excellent troops. The weather was perfectly serene, and the line of march lay along a large and fine road bordered with many rows of birch trees, traversing green plains; and although the Generals were desponding, the troops themselves superstitiously trusted to the guidance of the Emperor's star. The rumour had already spread that they were on their way to Moscow! . . . To Moscow! cried the soldiers, to Moscow! And they followed Napoleon as in old times the Macedonian soldiers had followed Alexander to Babylon.

On the 28th the army reached Wiasma, a pretty town, well inhabited, and traversed by a river, the bridges across which had been broken. The Russians had set fire to it, in accordance with the plan they had adopted, before quitting it, but had had too little time to effect this object completely, and our soldiers were, therefore, able to save some of its houses, together with a portion of the provisions which it contained; but unfortunately, although they did not hesitate to throw themselves into the midst of the flames to check the extension of the devastation, they found it a matter of great difficulty to do so, on account of the circumstance that the greater portion of the habitations were constructed of wood; and when their exertions had been repaid by a certain degree of success, their own carelessness with regard to the fires at which they cooked their rations was the cause of the renewed spread of the conflagration.

According to the information received by the advanced guard, and which was, indeed, true, our army should have found the Russians at Wiasma ready to engage in that te-

ble conflict on which they had at length resolved; and which they had determined to accept as soon as they should have found a position in which they could advantageously engage our troops. But the fact was that the Russians had considered that there was no such position in the neighbourhood of Wiamsa, and had determined, therefore, to take up their ground at Czarewo-Zaimitché, situated two days' march beyond Wiamsa. It seemed to be, and was, the case, that as soon as Barclay de Tolly had resolved upon a battle in compliance with the wishes of Bagration and his party, the latter became excessively fastidious with respect to the position in which they should engage us. And we may observe in this another of those many circumstances which concurred to induce the continuance of that system of retreat which tended to draw us into the depths of Russia.

In the meantime, Napoleon, being convinced that the enemy intended, sooner or later, to risk a battle with our troops, was little troubled by the fact of having to follow them one or two marches further, for the purpose of affording them the opportunity, and resolved, therefore, to follow them along the Ghjat road. But sad presentiments began to fill the minds of all the persons who surrounded him. Every day the army was further diminished by some hundreds of men and horses, lost in foraging expeditions, or overwhelmed by fatigue; and at length Berthier, with extreme reserve, ventured to make some representations to the Emperor relative to the danger of pushing the expedition on which he was engaged too far, and of attempting to accomplish it in a single campaign instead of two. But Napoleon, who was perfectly aware of all that could be said on the subject, and who was irritated at hearing from another the expression of thoughts which oppressed his own soul, received the Major General's representations very coolly, and replied to them with the reproach with which he usually met any similar objections. —"And you too, you are also one of those who would fain hang back?" he began, and then continued in an insulting strain, comparing him to an old woman, telling him that he might return, if he pleased, to Paris, and that he could very well dispense with his services. Berthier, much humbled by the answer, replied in accents of extreme distress, and retiring to his quarters, refrained during several days from taking his meals, as he usually did, at the Emperor's table.

Another incident, equally to be regretted, took place at the same time. We have seen above, that a spirit of great dissension existed between Davoust and Murat, whilst commanding together the advanced guard; and at length, when they had reached Wiasma, Davoust, irritated at the prodigal manner

in which Murat expended his cavalry, refused to grant him his infantry, being unwilling to see it treated as Murat had treated the horse. In spite of Murat's claims as a king and brother-in-law of the Emperor, Davoust persisted in his refusal, before the whole army forbidding General Compans to obey the King of Naples; and it is difficult to say to what extent the quarrel might have grown, had it not been appeased by the presence of Napoleon, who, whilst he considered Davoust to be in the right, felt hurt at the little respect shown by the Marshal to one so nearly allied to the Imperial family, and, accordingly, inflicted on him a public rebuke, by deciding that the division Compans should obey Murat's orders as long as it formed a portion of the advanced guard.

On the 31st, the French army set out from Wiasma for Ghjat, hoping to find the Russians at Czarewo-Zaimitché; but on arriving there they found that the enemy had again retreated, as at Wiasma and Dorogobouge. Still it was resolved on our side to continue the pursuit, and indeed, all the stragglers whom our army met unanimously declared that the Russians intended to give us battle, and only awaited reinforcements, which were expected from the centre of the empire. In the course of the day (the 31st) the light cavalry took prisoner a Cossack belonging to the corps of Platow, whom, as he appeared very intelligent, the Emperor conversed with personally through an interpreter.

The Cossack, ignorant of his interrogator's rank, discoursed freely on the affairs of the war; boasted of the services of the Cossacks, who, he declared, had saved the Russian army from being vanquished; affirmed that a great battle would take place very shortly, and that the French would have no chance of being victorious in it, unless it took place within three days. And added that the French were commanded, it was said, by a General named Bonaparte, who usually vanquished all his enemies, but who would probably be less fortunate in the approaching contest with the Russian army, which was about to receive immense reinforcements &c. . . . Napoleon was much interested by this conversation, smiling at many of the young Cossack's replies, and at length wishing to see what effect the knowledge of his presence would have upon this child of the Don, directed the interpreter to inform him that General Bonaparte was the person with whom he had been discoursing. Scarcely had the interpreter given him this information, when the Cossack, as though overwhelmed with astonishment, became suddenly dumb, and kept his eyes immovably fixed on the warrior whose name had reached even him across the

steppes of the East. All his loquacity had vanished and given place to a sentiment of genuine and silent admiration. Napoleon gave him a present and permitted him once more to go, free as a bird that returns to the fields of its birth.

In the course of the day, the advanced guard reached Ghjat, a little town tolerably well stored with provisions, especially grain, a quantity of which our soldiers were able to rescue from the flames. On the following day, the 1st of September, our head quarters were established there. A sudden fall of rain had converted the dust of the Muscovite plains into a thick mud, and Napoleon, fearing the loss of men and horses should he attempt to advance through it, determined to halt at Ghjat during two or three days. As he had determined to follow the Russians to Moscow, he felt certain of meeting them, and considered it wise, therefore, to advance in such a manner as would enable him to do so with an undiminished and unexhausted army. He ordered consequently, all the generals to review and inspect minutely the soldiers under their command, to provide them with two or three days' provisions, and to endeavour to inspire them as much as possible with an enthusiastic expectation of the great impending struggle. But there was, in truth, little need of this latter measure, for our troops were ardently desirous for the event which they believed would put an end to their fatigues, and be one of the most glorious of their glorious lives.

The moment when the battle was to take place had, indeed, at length arrived, and the Russians had resolved no longer to decline it; nor would they have done so at Czarewo-Zaimitché, had not a fresh delay been rendered necessary by a change which had taken place in the army, and which had its origin at Saint Petersburg in the very bosom of the Russian court.

When Alexander was driven, as to a certain extent he was, from his army, he had retired to Moscow to fulfil there the office which had been represented to him as the one most suited to his dignity and most conducive to the defence of the empire, namely, that of exciting the enthusiasm and the efforts of his people against the French. Upon his arrival at Moscow he had convoked the corps of the noblesse and merchants, for the purpose of demanding of them some genuine proof of their devotion to their prince and country. The governor Rostopchin had been charged with the superintendence of these convocations, and had experienced but little difficulty in inflaming spirits which the approach of Alexander towards the capital already filled with patriotic ardour, but at the sight of Alexander himself, coming to demand the support of the nation against a foreign invader, their

excitement had burst forth in sobs and cries of affection. The noblesse had voted a levy of one man in ten on their domains; and the commercial body had voted considerable subsidies; the several supplies being together capable of furnishing, it was said, a militia force of twenty-four thousand men for the government of Moscow. And similar levies, independently of those which the Emperor had ordered to be raised in the inperial domains, were to be raised in all the governments which were not occupied by the enemy.

After he had received these testimonies of ardent and sincere patriotism, Alexander had returned to St. Petersburg for the purpose of taking all the measures necessary for carrying out this species of levy en masse, and to preside over the general direction of the military operations. The noblesse which was at this moment resident in the capital was composed of old Russians, whom their age forced to live far from camps, and who were delighted with having Alexander in the centre of his empire, to a certain degree in their own hands, far from the violent impressions of the battle field, and far, especially, from the seductive powers of Napoleon, one interview with whom at the advanced posts after a battle would, they feared, lead the Emperor anew into the toils of the policy of Tilsit. MM. Araktchejef, Armfeld, Stein, and all the Russian or German councillors who, since the departure from Wilna had gone to attend Alexander at St. Petersburg, surrounded him, held him, as it were, besieged, and permitted him to take no resolution which was not in accordance with their own passions; and in the prosecution of this plan they had derived considerable assistance from the presence of Lord Cathcart, the General who had commanded the British army before Copenhagen, and who had represented England at St. Petersburg since the conclusion of peace between that power and the Russian court.

This peace had been concluded immediately after the commencement of hostilities with France, but not before, as Alexander had promised to M. de Lauriston; and had been negotiated by M. de Suchtelen on the part of Russia, and Mr. Thornton, the English Agent, who had been sent to Sweden, and stipulated for the concurrence of the whole strength of each empire in the prosecution of the new war. Lord Cathcart had arrived immediately after the peace had been signed, and he concurred with the German councillors and the Prince Royal of Sweden, that success could only be obtained in the war by perseverance, that two or three battles would, doubtless, be lost, but that a single victory would suffice to destroy the French, advanced, as they were, into the interior of the empire. Alexander, who was

wounded to the heart by the haughty manner in which Napoleon had behaved towards him during the last three years, and at the open indifference with which he had received the overtures of peace made by the Russian court, was determined to carry on the war now that it had been begun, to the utmost extent, trusting in the efficacy of his system of a continued retreat. At the same time, the pursuance of this system was necessarily attended by some humiliation and considerable loss, since not only the towns of Smolensk, Wiasma, and Ghjat, had fallen a prey to these ruinous tactics, but also, all the chateaux and villages situate on the French route, through a space of twelve or fifteen leagues. And in addition to these ill consequences, was the fact that the generals who conducted the retreat were called cowards or traitors who did not dare to face the French in battle, and who preferred to oppose them rather with a devastated country than with their lives.

Alexander having ceased to be responsible for the conduct of the war since his departure from the army, all the odium of the subsequent military events had fallen upon the unfortunate Barclay de Tolly. To have lost Wilna, Witebsk, and Smolensk, without a battle, to be in retreat, on the road to Moscow, to have given up the heart of the empire to the enemy without having first immolated thousands of men, was, according to the popular notion, a treasonable crime, and the masses as they pronounced the name of Barclay de Tolly, which was not Russian, declared that they were not surprised at so many reverses, since all the foreigners who were in the service of Russia betrayed her. The cry of popular passion, swelled by the voices of those who envied him spread not only throughout the army, but throughout the whole country, denouncing Barclay de Tolly as the author of the catastrophe at Smolensk. And yet what could the unfortunate General have done? Nothing as we have seen! He had sacrificed twelve thousand Russians in attempting to save this place, and if he had committed any error, it was in having attempted to defend a town not capable of being seriously defended.

Barclay de Tolly was consequently a lost man; for even the persons who were thoroughly aware of the truth, perceiving as they did the outrageous fury of which he was the object, and the insubordination which was spreading throughout the army from this cause, advised that he should be sacrificed. In the midst of this excitement was one name in everyone's mouth, and it was that of General Kutusof, that old one-eyed soldier whom Admiral Tchitchakoff had replaced on the Danube, who had previously lost the battle of Austerlitz, and who nevertheless had become, by virtue of his

thoroughly Russian name and his having been a pupil of Suwarrou's, the favorite of public opinion. It must be added, that Kutusof had restored the fortunes of Russia in the last campaign against the Turks, and that although seventy years of age, so perfectly worn out by war and pleasure as to be scarcely capable of holding himself on his horse, thoroughly corrupt, false, perfidious, and a liar, he was possessed of consummate prudence and had the art to make himself the idol of the party which was ardent for the plan of engaging the enemy, whilst he was himself the decided partisan of the system of retreat. And no man could be more capable than he was of gaining the mastery over men's minds, of directing them as he chose, of ruling them by affecting passions which he had not, and of opposing Napoleon by patience, the only arm with which he could be successfully fought. Providence, which had prepared an adversary for him in the extremities of the Peninsula; a man of resolute will and keen intellect, firm as the rocks of Torres-Vedras—Lord Wellington—had also prepared an adversary for him in the depths of Russia, in the person of a man who had not that inflexibility of character which was absolutely necessary at the extremities of the Peninsula where there was no more room to fall back, but who was astute and patient, as flexible as the space in which he would have to plunge, who knew both how to resist and to yield, and who was capable, not indeed of vanquishing Napoleon, but of deceiving him, and of thus defeating him. It is not with equals but with inferiors Providence opposes the genius which it has resolved to punish, as though it desired thus to render the punishment more severe.

Old General Kutusof was therefore the second adversary who was about to stop Napoleon at the other extremity of the European continent, and it must be acknowledged that popular passion had seldom less erred than in pointing out Kutusof as the man to be selected by their Emperor. But when we speak of the popular passion we do not wish to intimate that the populace of St. Petersburg attempted to compel the Emperor to accept their selection of his Generals, but that the passions which rule a court even may have a popular character, and do have such a character when wise and foolish, young and old, men and women, all concur in demanding something of which they know only the name, being alike ignorant of its real qualities and unfurnished with genuine reasons for desiring it. With such a popular passion, then, were the most aristocratic circles of the capital inspired when they demanded the appointment of Kutusof who, since his return from Turkey, had very hypocritically

placed himself at the head of the St. Petersburg militia, thus obtruding himself upon public notice. Alexander had no confidence in him, considering him to be wanting in firmness and skill on the battle field; and indeed, Kutusof's sole merit as a warrior was, and it was a very great one, that he was profoundly skilful in giving the general direction to the conduct of a war. Overwhelmed, however, by public opinion, Alexander determined to select Kutusof as commander in chief of the united armies of Bagration and Barclay de Tolly, leaving these two Generals in command of their respective troops. General Benningsen, who had followed Alexander to St. Petersburg, and whose character, in spite of some disadvantageous recollections attached to it, would have satisfied the popular leaning of the moment, had he borne a Russian name, was nominated Kutusof's chief of the staff.

As soon as he had received his appointment, Kutusof set out for the army, and it was his arrival at Czarewo-Zaimitché which had prevented the Russians from meeting the French troops in battle. Colonel Toll, who remained quarter-master general, had found in the environs of Mojaisk, twenty-five leagues distant from Moscow, at a place named Borodino, a position which offered as many advantages to an army acting on the defensive as it could hope to find in the species of country in which the campaign was being carried on, and General Kutusof who, although disapproving of actually encountering the enemy, was willing to fight one battle that it might afford him the opportunity of declining many others, had adopted the ground selected by Colonel Toll, had proceeded in person to Borodino, and ordered such field-works as would add the defences of art to those of nature. The army, which had been much weakened, not only by the contests at Smolensk and Valoutina, but also by its incessant marches, from which, although very well provided, it had suffered almost as much as the French troops, was now reinforced by fifteen thousand men from the reserve and depôt battalions, and ten thousand of the Moscow militia, now numbered one hundred and forty thousand men, and, posted at Borodino behind earth intrenchments, awaited Napoleon, under its old General Kutusof, who, being forced to commit a fault, took care, with prudent resignation, to render it as innocuous aspossible.

A general acquaintance with the above facts had persuaded Napoleon, that he should encounter beyond Ghjat the Russian army prepared to meet his troops in battle. But at this very moment he found himself checked for a time by the weather, which, during the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd of September

was terribly adverse, turning the roads which had hitherto been tolerably good, into quagmires. The horses died by thousands of fatigue and inanition, the cavalry was gradually disappearing, and there was great reason to fear that there would be no means of carrying forward the artillery, the absence of which would have rendered it impossible to engage in any great battle. At the same time, the bivouacs, cold and wretched, were in the highest degree injurious to the health of the men. Napoleon attributed the evil to error on the part of his lieutenants, and severely rebuked Marshal Ney, who lost some hundreds of his troops each day. His corps had been reduced to subsist on such provisions as it could gather on its march, and had been as much weakened by the exertions rendered necessary by this state of destitution as it might have been by a bloody battle. Ney had revenged himself for the rebuke he had received, by recounting the sufferings endured by his troops in their too protracted marches, and declaring that to continue the movement in advance would be to expose the army to perish. Murat, who was partly to blame for the evils complained of, confirmed Ney's statement, and Berthier, who did not dare to repeat his representations, supported it by a sullen silence. Napoleon was strongly moved by these assertions, and replied to them, "Ah! well, if the weather have not changed by to-morrow we will halt," .... which was equivalent to saying that he should have considered the bad season to have commenced, and would have returned to Smolensk! And never would Fortune, who threw a fog over his fleet to enable it to escape from Nelson when he went to Egypt, who granted him the little road by which he turned the fort of Bard, who granted him the sun of Austerlitz—never would Fortune, we say, have more manifestly favoured him than she would have now, had she now sent him three or four days of bad weather. But Fortune no longer favoured him so much as to oppose his wishes on this occasion for his own advantage; and on the morning of the 4th of September there arose a radiant sun and a lively breeze, such as would most probably dry the roads within the space of a few hours. "The lot is cast!" cried Napoleon, "let us advance! Let us march to meet the Russians!" and he ordered Murat and Davoust to set forward about noon, when the roads would have been in some degree dried, directing their movement upon Gridnewa, which was half way from Ghjat to Borodino. The remainder of the army was ordered to follow the movement made by the advanced guard.

Obedient to destiny the army set out and proceeded to pass the night at Gridnewa. On the following day, the

5th of September, it resumed its march, and advanced towards the plain of Borodino, a place destined to become as famous as Zama, Pharsala, or Actium. On the line of march stood a celebrated abbey, that of Kolotskoi, a great building flanked with towers, the roofs of which, being formed of coloured tiles, contrasted vividly with the sombre hues of the surrounding landscape. During many days the troops had been advancing along the elevated plateaux which separated the waters of the Baltic from those of the Black Sea, and the Caspian, and on setting out from Ghjat, began to descend the slopes, from which the Moskowa on the left, and the Protwa on the right, flow by the Oka into the Volga, by the Volga into the Caspian sea. The landscape appeared to sink towards the horizon, and to be covered with thick forests, whilst a sky half veiled with the light autumnal clouds, served to increase its sad and savage aspect. All the villages were either burned or deserted, and there remained only a few monks at the Abbey of Kolotskoi. Our army left this abbey on the left, and continued its march along the course of a little river now half dried up, called the Kolocza, flowing direct east, the direction which had been constantly pursued by our troops since the passage of the Niemen. The cavalry rear guards, after a certain amount of resistance on the part of the enemy, which had been speedily overcome, threw themselves upon the right of the Kolocza, and hastened to take up a position at the foot of a fortified mamelon, where there was a large detachment of about fifteen thousand men of all arms.

Napoleon paused to consider this plain, on which was to be decided the fate of the world. The Kolocza flowed right in front of us, traversing a bed which was by turns either muddy or almost dried up, until, having arrived at the village of Borodino, it turned to the left, passing for more than a league through hills considerably escarped, and at length, after a thousand windings, losing itself in the Moskowa. The hills on our left, at the foot of which passed the Kolocza, appeared to be covered with the Russian army, which also extended over the chain of hills on the right of the river, this latter portion of its line being much the weaker, since the hills here were much less escarped, and protected at the foot by simple ravines instead of the course of the river; and although the most considerable works had been constructed at this point, they were not such as would offer any invincible obstacle to the attack of our troops.

The first work which opposed the advance of our troops to the right of the Kolocza was a redoubt, more advanced than the others, constructed on a mamelon towards which the

Russian rear guard had fallen back; and Napoleon considered that it would be necessary to gain immediate possession of it, in order to be able to establish himself at his leisure on this portion of the plain, and uninterruptedly make his preparations for the impending battle. He ordered, therefore, Murat and Compans, whose cavalry and infantry were at his immediate disposal, to carry this redoubt, which was called the Schwardino redoubt, from a neighbouring village of that name. Murat with his cavalry, and Compans with his infantry, had already passed the Kolocza, and were now on the right of the plain, and towards nightfall Murat forced the Russian cavalry to fall back, and thus cleared the ground for the advance of our infantry. On an elevation in front of the redoubt General Compans posted some pieces of cannon and a body of tirailleurs, and after a vigorous cannonade deployed the 57th and 61st of the line to the right, the 25th and 111th to the left, personally directing the former two regiments, and entrusting the latter two to General Dupellin. Our troops advanced with the utmost energy and firmness across a little ravine which lay between them and the redoubt, and having reached the further side exchanged with the Russian infantry during several minutes a fire of musketry of the most murderous description. General Compans rightly considered that a charge at the bayonet's point could not have such deadly effects, and gave the signal for the charge; but in the midst of the clamour and the smoke it was not well understood, and galloping, therefore, to the head of the 57th, which was the regiment nearest to the redoubt, he conducted it himself with fixed bayonets against the grenadiers of Woronzoff and Mecklenburgh, whom it speedily drove back in disorder. The example thus set by the 57th was followed by the 61st, which was at its side; and as the 25th and 111th had been equally successful on our left, the redoubt was outflanked by this double movement, and fell into our hands; the Russian artillerymen being almost to a man slain on their pieces.

But the 111th having advanced too far to our left was suddenly charged by Douka's cuirassiers, and placed in some peril. It formed into a square and checked with a storm of musketry the charge of its brave assailants. A Spanish infantry regiment, (that of Joseph-Napoleon,) which belonged to the division Compans, courageously hastened to the succour of its comrades, but found that the 111th had been sufficient for its own defence, although it had lost the two small cannon belonging to the regiment, having being unable to carry them off when falling back to form in square.

This short but glorious struggle, in which we lost four or five thousand men and the Russians seven or eight thousand, having left us masters of the whole of the plain on the right of the Kalocza, Napoleon hastened to place his army in position there; intending that those troops only which had not yet arrived should remain on the left of the Kolocza. The position which during two days the Russians had occupied on the heights of Borodino, the defensive works which they had constructed, and the reports of prisoners, all concurred in showing that at length was to be fought that battle which the French desired, because they hoped that it would be the means of their obtaining some decisive triumph, and the Russians desired because they were ashamed of continually retreating, and weary of devastating their country. Believing, therefore, that there could be no doubt that this battle was at length about to take place, Napoleon determined to halt for a day, for the purpose of rallying the troops which had not yet come up, and of having time deliberately to reconnoitre the ground; and bivouacked his troops from right to left of the vast plain which they occupied.

On the morning of the following day, the 1st, the sun shone once more on thousands of helmets, bayonets, and pieces of cannon, on the heights of Borodino, and our army had the satisfaction of perceiving that the Russians were still in position, and evidently determined to fight. Napoleon, who had bivouacked on the left of the Kolocza, in the midst of his guard, proceeded at a very early hour, surrounded by his Marshals, to reconnoitre the ground on which he was about to measure his strength with the Russians.

After a most careful reconnaissance of the position occupied by the enemy, Napoleon was confirmed in the opinion he had formed at a single glance, that the left of this position being greatly escarped, and protected by the deep bed of the Kolocza, that the attack should be directed against its right, where the heights were less precipitous and defended by ravines without depth and without water. The great Moscow road which we had followed, passing at first along the left of the Kolocza, continued upon the right of this river to Borodino, and rising on the Gorki plateau traversed the chain of hills on its way to Mojaisk. This portion of the position, which was its centre, was as impregnable as that on the left, and it was only at some distance from Borodino and towards the right of the Kolocza that the ground presented any facilities for an attack. The first elevation on the right of the Borodino was covered with thick brushwood at its foot, and was terminated at its summit by a sort of tolerably large plateau, which was crowned by a redoubt the sides of which were prolonged

in curtains, and the embrasures of which were filled with twenty-one pieces of cannon of great calibre; and which was to be named in the memorable battle, which was about to take place, the great redoubt. Still more to our right there was another elevation, separated from the first by a little ravine called the Séméneffskoié ravine, from a neighbouring village of that name, which, less large but steeper than the first, was surmounted by two rows of artillery and a third placed en retour and turned towards the ravine of Séméneffskoié. The village of Séméneffskoié, situated at the commencement of the ravine which separated the two elevations, and previously burned by the Russians, was surrounded by an elevation of earth and armed with cannon. Still more to the right were woods extending far into the distance and traversed by the old Moscow road, which rejoined the new road by the village of Outitza. It would have been possible to turn on this side the position of the Russians; but the woods were dense and little known, and a movement of this sort would have rendered necessary a long detour.

Having concluded this inspection, Napoleon resolved to leave but a small portion of his forces on the left of the Kolocza, to execute a vigorous attack on the centre of the enemy's position, towards Borodino, by the new Moscow road, in order to draw off the enemy's attention, but to direct his principal effort towards the right of the Kolocza, against the two elevations, crowned by the great redoubt and three pieces of cannon; and at the same time to advance across the woods, upon the old Moscow road, the corps of Prince Poniatowski, which had always formed the extreme right of the French army. His intention being to direct such a force upon this point as must cause the Russians serious alarm, and might perform even more effectual services should circumstances favour.

Whilst Napoleon was making these dispositions, Marshal Davoust, who had executed an accurate reconnaissance by plunging into the woods, and had thus become convinced of the possibility of turning the Russian position, offered to Napoleon to execute with his five divisions, the detour which would lead across the woods to the old Moscow road, and promised that, should he set out in the night, he would be at eight o'clock on the following morning on the Russian flank with forty thousand men, and attacking them in the centre drive them péle-méle into the angle formed by the Kolocza with the Moscowa; from which position, although the bed of the Kolocza was in several places dry, and the Moscowa was fordable, it would necessarily be extremely difficult for them to escape, and from which they certainly could not carry off a cannon.

The proposition was an enticing one, and the success it offered very probable, for the Russian position—which was almost impregnable toward its left and centre, and well defended on its left by the redoubts—could only be readily attacked towards its extreme left, by the woods of Outitza, which could not be considered impenetrable, since a man so exact as Marshal Davoust, was willing to engage to traverse them in the course of a single night. To Napoleon, however, it seemed that the detour would be too long, that it would have to be executed across woods extremely thick and obscure; that by the execution of such a movement the army would be separated during some hours into two parts at some distance from each other: that even the success of such a manœuvre would have a very disadvantageous result, since the Russians on finding themselves turned, would very probably retreat and once more deprive us of the much desired opportunity of encountering them in battle; and that, moreover, the proposed manœuvre could be executed much nearer and with much less hazard, by passing between the redoubts and the extremities of the woods, with two or three of Marshal Davoust's divisions, risking in the depths of the woods only Prince Poniatowski's corps, and thus obtaining all the advantages of the proposed operation without any of its inconveniences.

Prince Eugene, who since the departure from Smolensk had always formed the left of the army, was alone directed to operate on the left of the Kolocza; and he, even, was instructed to act on this side with the smaller portion of his forces. He was ordered to leave his light cavalry and the Italian guard before that portion of the heights which their escarpment and the Kolocza rendered inaccessible, and to execute with the French division Delzons, a vigorous attack on Borodino, to gain possession of it, to cross the Kolocza bridge, but to refrain from executing any movements on the other side of the river, and to establish at Borodino itself a strong battery which should take in flank the great Russian redoubt. With the French division Broussier, and two of the divisions of Marshal Davoust, which were placed under his command for the day, and the divisions Morand and Gudin, he was to attack the great redoubt and to carry it at any cost. Marshal Ney, with the two French divisions Ledru and Razout, the Wurtemberg division Marchand, and Junot's Westphalians, was to attack in front the second elevation and the three lines of artillery which Marshal Davoust was ordered to attack in flank by the border of the wood, with the divisions Compans and Dessaix. Finally, Prince Poniatowski, thrown as a forlorn hope into the midst of the woods, was to endeavour to turn the

Russian position, debouching by the old Moscow road upon Outitza.

The three cavalry corps, Nansouty, Montbrun and Latour-Maubourg, were directed to take up positions, the first behind Marshal Davoust, the second behind Marshal Ney, and the third in reserve. The division Friant and the whole of the imperial guard were posted in the rear and in reserve, to be employed according as circumstances should render necessary. For the purpose of returning the fire of the Russian redoubts, Napoleon ordered the construction of the batteries covered with earthen epaulments, in front of the three lines of artillery, the great redoubt, and Borodino, and armed them with one hundred and twenty pieces of cannon. That the enemy might not become acquainted with the secret of his plan of attack, Napoleon determined to pass the 6th in the same position which he had occupied during the 5th, and to draw up his troops in order of battle on the 7th at day break. To facilitate communications between the two sides of the river Generals Eblé and Chasseloup had constructed upon the Kolocza five or six ponts de chevalets, which would afford a passage across the river at the principal points without the necessity of passing through its muddy and broken bed. The actual strength of the army was now about one hundred and twenty-seven thousand men, all of whom were animated with the utmost ardour and confidence, and it was provided with five hundred and eighty cannon.

The Russian army had, in the meantime, made preparations for an obstinate resistance, and had resolved not to yield up the position which it occupied until almost annihilated. General Kutusoff, who had received the title of Prince in reward for the services which he had recently rendered in Turkey, had General Benningsen for the chief of his staff, and Colonel Toll for his quarter-master general; the latter of whom for the most part not only executed but suggested his plan of operations. Barclay de Tolly and Bagration continued to command under his orders the armies of the Dwina and the Dnieper, respectively; and were equally resolved to die, should it be necessary, in support of the Russian arms; the one being inspired with indignation at the manner in which he had been treated, and the other by patriotic ardour and hatred of the French. All the officers were filled with a spirit of equal devotion; and, in fact, the Russian aristocracy was as much engaged in this war as the Russian state, and was ready to shed its blood to satisfy the passionate sentiments which governed it.

The Russians were drawn up in the following order;—

On the extreme right, opposite our left, behind Borodino,

the point which was least exposed to attack, were posted the 2nd corps, Bagowouth's, and the 4th, Ostermann's, under the command of General Miloradovitch. Behind these were the 1st cavalry corps of General Ouvaroff, the second of General Korff, and a little farther to the extreme right, Platow's Cossacks, watching the banks of the Kolocza, as far as its junction with the Moskowa. The regiments of the foot chasseurs, of the guard, and Bagowouth's, and Ostermann's corps, guarded the Borodino. In the centre, was the 6th corps, General Doctoroff's, resting its right on the top of the Gorki plateau, behind Borodino, and its left on the great redoubt. Behind Doctoroff's corps was ranged the 3rd cavalry, under the orders of Baron de Kreuzt, who replaced Count Pahlen, at this time ill. Here ended the line of the first army, and the command of General Barclay de Tolly.

In immediate succession to the first army was the second army under the command of Prince Bagration. The 7th corps, under Raeffskoi, rested its right on the great redoubt, its left on the ruins of the village of Séméneffskoié. The 8th, under Borosdin, had its right bent back, on account of the curve of the Russian line around Séméneffskoié, and its left established near the three lines of artillery which were guarded by the 27th division, under Névéroffskoi, placed, for this day, under the orders of Prince Gortschakoff, together with the 4th cavalry corps of General Siewers. Numerous battalions of foot chasseurs filled the thickets and the wood. The militia, which had recently arrived from Moscow, together with some Cossacks, was posted at Outitza. Finally, at some distance behind the centre, in the environs of Psarewo, was placed the reserve, consisting of the guard, the 3rd corps, Touczkoff's, and an immense artillery of heavy calibre.

The Russian army consisted altogether of about one hundred and forty thousand men, of whom one hundred and twenty thousand were regular troops, the remainder being Cossacks and Moscow militia. The principal body of the Russian force was on their right, opposite our left, and the best portion on their left, opposite our right, the part of their line against which Napoleon had resolved to make his principal effort; and although Napoleon had not divulged his designs, the proceedings he had already taken had sufficiently served to point out to the Russians the danger which threatened their left, towards Séméneffskoié, the three lines of artillery and the Outitza wood. But when representations to this effect were made to Kutusof, who, as has been already remarked, was more fit to conduct a campaign, than to fight a great battle, he failed to perceive their force, and obstinately retained the corps of

Ostermann and Bagowouth in the positions they then occupied, because he still saw the bulk of the French army on the new Moscow road, and only detached the 3rd corps from the reserve to post it at Outitza. These were the sole arrangements he had made for the battle; but the energy of his army, the firmness of Barclay de Tolly, and the patriotic courage of Bagration, were well calculated to supply the place of what he had left undone.

By a species of mutual consent the 6th had been allowed to pass by without even the discharge of a musket. It was the portentous calm which precedes great tempests. The French troops passed the day in repose, indulging in their bivouacs in the cheerful discourse so usual with French soldiers, who are, perhaps, the gayest and the bravest of any in the world. None of them doubted they were about to obtain a great victory, and to enter Moscow under their invincible and fortunate General. The love of glory was the passion with which their souls were fired.

Feelings of a very different tone filled the hearts of the Russians. Gloomy, exasperated, resolved to fight to the death, having no hope but in God, they were on their knees in the midst of a thousand flambeaux, before a miraculous image of the Madonna of Smolensk, saved, it was said, on the wings of angels from the conflagration of that unfortunate city, and now carried in procession by the Greek Priests through the bivouacs of the camp of Borodino, whilst old General Kutusof, who, so far from believing in the miraculous image, believed scarcely in God, so manifest in the Universe, uncovered, and with eyes bent to the ground, accompanied the procession in the midst of his staff.

In the meantime, Napoleon under his tent completed his arrangements, and heard with a singular mixture of raillery and humour, the account given him of the battle of Salamanca by Colonel Fabvier, who had just arrived. When the Colonel had concluded his account he dismissed him, saying that he would repair on the morrow on the banks of the Moskowa the faults committed at Arapiles. M. de Bossuet, prefect of the palace, also arrived at the camp on this day, bringing the portrait of the King of Rome, painted by the famous artist, Gerard. Napoleon gazed for a moment with emotion at his son's likeness, then had it replaced in its case, cast a final glance on the enemy's position to assure himself that the Russians had no intention to retreat, perceived with the utmost satisfaction that their camp displayed no signs of the adoption of such a measure, and then entered his tent to take a brief repose.

An absolute calm, a profound silence reigned over the plain

which was on the morrow to be the theatre of a scene the most horrible and stupendous. The laughter of the French troops, and the pious hymns of the Russians had at length given place to the stillness of slumber. On each side the soldiers slept around huge fires, which had been lighted to protect them from the chill of the night and the damp arising from a shower of small rain, which had fallen during the evening.

At three o'clock in the morning the French troops began to take their arms, and to take advantage of the mist to pass over to the right of the Kolocza, and to assume their appointed stations; Prince Eugene opposite Borodino and the great redoubt, Ney and Davoust in front of the second hill, the cavalry behind them, Friant and the guard in reserve in the centre. Poniatowski far upon the right, crossing the wood. Whilst our troops were taking up these positions in silence, so as not to attract the attention of the enemy, the artillerymen of the great batteries, with which it was intended to meet the fire of the Russian works, were at their guns waiting Napoleon's signal to open fire. Napoleon himself had taken up a position at a very early hour in the morning at the Schwardino redoubt, at a point where he would be able to observe all that took place, and at the same time be in some degree sheltered from the Russian bullets. Murat, glowing with ardour and embroidery, wearing a tunic of green velvet, a plumed cap, and yellow boots, and presenting an object for ridicule, did not his heroism forbid it, galloped in front of his cavalry, radiant with confidence and inspiring his troops with the same spirit by means of his martial bearing. Clouds obscured the heavens, and the sun, rising opposite to us and beyond the Russian lines, announced its approach only by a ruddy line along the horizon, but speedily displaying its whole disc as a ball of red hot iron, Napoleon, who watched it rise in the midst of his lieutenants, exclaimed—"Behold the sun of Austerlitz!" Alas! yes! But veiled in clouds!

Napoleon had prepared a short and energetic proclamation, to be addressed to the soldiers at the moment previous to the commencement of the battle; and the captains of each company, the commanders of each squadron, forming their troops into a semi-circle, read out to them in a loud voice these words of their Emperor, which were enthusiastically received.

This address having been read, and the troops having taken up their respective positions, about half-past five o'clock the report of a cannon on the right was the signal, at which the most terrible uproar succeeded the previous

unbroken stillness, and a long trail of fire and smoke instantly pourtrayed in fearful outlines the positions of the opposed armies. Whilst one hundred and twenty pieces of cannon directed their fire against the Russian works, whilst Davoust and Ney on the right advanced with their infantry, Prince Eugene had sent the divisions Morand and Gudin across the Kolocza against the great redoubt, leaving the division Broussier on the bank of this little river in reserve, and with the division Del ons advancing towards Borodino, where the Kolocza turned to the left, and covered the Russian right up to its junction with the Moscowa; the intention being that Prince Eugene should commence the action by attacking Borodino, in order to persuade the enemy that we were desirous of debouching by the great Moscow road, called the New Road.

Prince Eugene advanced, therefore, with the division Delzons upon the village of Borodino, which was defended by three battalions of chasseurs of the Imperial Russian Guard. General Plauzonne, at the head of the 106th of the line, penetrated into the interior of the village, whilst the other regiments of the division pressed forward on the right and left. The 106th drove the Russians out of the village, drove them beyond it, and following with the utmost vigour crossed the Kolocza in spite of the instructions of Napoleon, who had desired only to feign and not in reality to debouch, by the great Moscow road. Two regiments of Russian chasseurs, the 19th and 20th, which were posted at this point, opened a terrible fire on the companies of the 106th which had crossed the river, and completely overwhelmed them, taking or slaying all the men who had not time to fly. The brave General Plauzonne himself received a mortal wound. But the 92nd hearing the perilous position of the 106th, hastened to its aid, rallied it, and established it firmly in possession of Borodino; a position which remained in our hands throughout the battle.

This first portion of Napoleon's plan having been thus executed, Prince Eugene was to await the capture by Davoust and Ney, of the three lines of artillery which covered the Russian left, upon which he was to attack, with divisions Morand and Gudin, the great redoubt of the centre.

Marshal Davoust, in fact, preceded by thirty pieces of cannon, had advanced at the head of the divisions Compans and Dessaix along the wood, the depths of which were being traversed by the troops under Poniatowski. He had approached that one of the three lines of artillery which was most to the right, and had formed the division into columns of attack, leaving the division Dessaix in reserve for the purpose of

guarding his right flank and his rear. Scarcely had the division Compans found itself within reach of the enemy than it was suddenly overwhelmed by a terrific fire from the three lines of artillery and the lines of Woronzoff's grenadiers. Its brave general and almost all its officers were struck down, and although still undaunted, its troops paused for a moment from want of leaders. The Marshal perceived their indecision, and learning its cause, hastened up to replace General Compans, and threw the 67th on the right flèche. This regiment entered with fixed bayonets and slew the Russian artillerymen at their guns, but at the same moment a bullet struck Marshal Davoust's horse, inflicting a severe contusion on the Marshal himself and depriving him of consciousness.

As soon as he was informed of this circumstance, Napoleon sent an order of immediate attack to Narshal Ney; at the same time despatching Murat to replace Marshal Davoust, and his aide-de-camp Kopp to take the place of General Compans. Murat—who was of a most excellent disposition—hastened to the assistance of the Marshal who was his enemy, but found the latter somewhat recovered, and persisting, in spite of frightful sufferings, in remaining at the head of his soldiers; information of which Murat instantly sent to Napoleon, who received it with the utmost satisfaction. At the same moment Ney, with the division Ledru in front, the Wurtemberg division in the rear, and the division Razout on the left, advanced upon the right flèche, possession of which had been obtained by the 57th, and which was with difficulty held by that regiment against Woronzoff's grenadiers. Ney himself entered the position at the head of 24th leger, and audacious and invulnerable, threw himself into the midst of the mêlée as though he had been a captain of grenadiers. At the same moment, Névéroffskoi came up with his brave division to the assistance of Woronzoff's grenadiers, and the united troops threw themselves together upon the disputed work; but Ney, advancing the division Marchand, and debouching with it right and left, succeeded in repulsing them, and at the same time sent the division Razout against the flèche on the right.

At the commencement of the battle, Prince Bagration, who was opposed to the two Marshals, Ney and Davoust, perceiving that he was threatened by formidable forces, had withdrawn some battalions from the 7th corps, which was posted between Séménoffskoié and the great redoubt, had advanced the Mecklenburg grenadiers, the Douka cuirassiers, and the 4th regiment of Siewer's cavalry, and sent for the division Konownitsyn which formed a portion of Touczkoff's which was directed upon Outitza. At the same time he

had immediately sent information of what was taking place on his side to Kutusof, for the purpose of warning the Commander-in-Chief to send him reinforcements.

The disputed works themselves were too narrow to serve as battle fields and the combat was fought on the right, the left, and in front. Ney occupied the line of artillery to the right with the divisions Ledru and Compans, and being unable to support the line of artillery to the left, which had been captured by the division Razout, the troops of the latter had been driven out by the reinforced Russian troops, when, fortunately, Murat, who had been sent to this point by Napoleon for the purpose of determining the proper moment at which the cavalry should take part in the action, galloped up, followed by the light cavalry of General Bruyère. At the sight of our soldiers in retreat and almost routed, he flung himself from his horse, rallied them, and led them forward, directed a close and destructive fire upon the enemy and then, having first cleared the ground with Bruyère's light cavalry, entered the work, sword in hand, at the head of Razout's soldiers, who slew the Russian artillerymen at their guns and permanently established themselves in the position. In the meantime Ney, who had at his disposal only the light Wurtemburg cavalry of General Beurman, threw it upon the lines of Névéroffskoi and Woronzoff and compelled them to fall back.

By means of these vigorous measures our troops succeeded in retrieving their position on these two points. Murat, assuming in concert with Ney the direction of the battle on this side, ordered General Nansouty to climb the slopes covered with brushwood and to take up a position on the right of the works which we had just carried; for there was beyond a sort of plain slightly inclined towards the Russians, on which the cavalry could be of great service. As Davoust, in spite of his determination to remain in the midst of the battle, was unable to lead them, Ney took the command of the divisions Compans and Dessaix, and adding to them the Westphalians, who were behind, endeavoured to support Prince Poniatowski, whose artillery was now crossing the Outitza wood.

Our troops thus gained ground by extending themselves to the right; and being masters of the heights they had the advantage of being able to direct against the Russians a plunging fire. The Russians replied by a fire which was less well directed but very vigorous, and the cannonade on this point speedily became tremendous; whilst Ney on the right, and Murat on the left, continuing their movement in advance, approached the Séméneffskoié ravine, and passed the third line of artillery which formed the retour en arrière, and

naturally, therefore, fell into our hands. But in this position they found themselves suddenly exposed to the enemy's fire from the Séméneffskoié village, and to that of the Raeffskoi corps which occupied the other side of the ravine, and extended from Séméneffskoié village to the great redoubt.

Murat's troops suffered considerable loss from the enemy's fire in this quarter, and their commander, having no infantry at his disposal, and perceiving that the Séménoffskoié ravine was in this direction but of slight depth, ordered Latour-Maubourg to cross it with his cavalry, to charge the Russian infantry, to take possession of its cannon, and then to return should their position be found untenable. And to assist this perilous manœuvre he collected all the artillery usually attached to the cavalry, and arranged it along the brink of the river in such a manner as to cover the advance of our squadrons with his fire.

Latour-Maubourg, in obedience to Murat's signal, descended with the Saxon and Westphalian cuirassiers into the ravine, ascended the opposite side, attacked the Russian infantry, broke two of its squares, and forced it to fall back; but having achieved this success was forced to retreat from a position in which he would be exposed without support to the attack of the whole Russian army.

Whilst these events were taking place on the right in advance of the three flèches, Prince Eugene on the left, having very early carried the two divisions Morand and Gudin across the Kolocza, had subsequently directed the division Morand against the great redoubt, and left the division Gudin at the foot of the work, with the object of husbanding his resources. The division Morand had ascended the elevated ground on which the great redoubt was constructed, and had supported with admirable coolness the fire of eighty pieces of cannon, and when, advancing through a cloud of smoke, it had arrived close to the redoubt itself, General Bonamy, at the head of the 30th of the line, had thrown himself upon it, and driven out the Russians at the point of the bayonet. The whole division had then, debouching to the right and left, repulsed the division Paskewitch of Raeffskoi's corps, which had thus found itself driven back on the one side by Morand's infantry, and on the other by the cuirassiers of Latour-Maubourg.

At this moment the battle might have been gained with immense results, although it was scarcely ten o'clock in the morning, had we directed a vigorous effort against the Séméneffskoié village, passing in force the ravine which had been crossed by Latour-Maubourg's cavalry, and which

Reeffsko's broken corps was quite incapable of defending, penetrating the enemy's line with a torrent of troops, advancing to Gorki, behind Borodino, and thus enclosing the centre and the right of the Russian army in the angle formed by the Kolocza and Moscowa. But although Murat and Ney, occupying positions on the brink of the Séméneffskoié ravine, burned with impatience to snatch the advantages which they perceived might be obtained within a single half hour, this half hour was allowed to slip by unused; for unfortunately Napoleon was at Schwardino, where he was able to obtain the best view of the progress of the battle. Murat and Ney sent General Belliard to him with a request for all the reinforcements he could possibly afford them, and declaring that if left free to act, they would obtain a greater triumph for him than any he had hitherto reaped. But Napoleon, oppressed with a severe cold, was less sanguine than his lieutenants, less certain that the victory might be easily gained, and considered that to make use of his reserves at ten o'clock in the morning would be very premature. He sent towards Séméneffskoié, however, the division Friant, which was the only reserve remaining at his disposal, with the exception of the guard.

In the meantime Kutusof, who was at table a little in the rear of the field of battle whilst Barclay and Bagration were exposing themselves in the midst of the most deadly fire, was on his side besieged with the most urgent requests that he would fill up with his reserves the gap made in the Russian line; and in compliance with reiterated demands had detached from the guard, which was posted at Psarewo, the regiments of Lithuania and Ismailow, the Astrakan cuirassiers, those of the Empress and Emperor, together with a strong reserve of artillery, and had sent them towards Séméneffskoié. He had also determined to withdraw Bagowouth's corps from the extreme right, and had advanced one of the two divisions of which it was composed, that commanded by Prince Eugene of Wurtemberg, towards Séméneffskoié, and the other commanded by Olsoufief, towards Outitza, for the purpose of aiding Touczkoff to resist the attack of Prince Poniatowski. And, finally, in compliance with the solicitations of Platow and Ouvaroff, who, posted at the extreme right of the Russian army, on the heights protected by the Kolocza, perceived our left to be much weakened, and were anxious to take advantage of the fact, he had given them permission to cross the Kolocza with their cavalry, and to make a diversion which could scarcely fail of having considerable effect, since it would be altogether unexpected by the French.

In the meantime, Barclay and Bagration had resolved to recover at any price the great redoubt and the three flèches; and Barclay, at the same moment Yermaloff, the chief of his staff, and the young Kutuaisoff, commander of his artillery, had hastened up to rally Raeffskoi's broken corps, and borrowing from Doctoroff, who was posted in the neighbourhood, the division Likatcheff, had marched upon the great redoubt which had fallen into the hands of Morand's division, whose General had unfortunately been severely wounded, and which now found itself almost without guidance. The 30th of the line occupied the redoubt, and was deprived of the support of the two other regiments of the division which had been left on the right and left and much too far in the rear. At the same time, the division Gudin was in a ravine on the right, the division Broussier on the left on the back of the Kolocza, and equally inactive by the error of Prince Eugene, who had neither the experience nor the zealous energy necessary in decisive moments. Seeing this state of affairs, therefore, Yermaloff and Kutaisoff marched at the head of the Ouja regiment and Raeffskoi's infantry, and advancing upon the 30th, overwhelmed it by force of numbers. At the same moment, they attacked with cavalry the two other regiments of Morand's division posted on each side of the great redoubt and were about to drive them to the foot of the elevated ground when Prince Eugene, arriving at the head of Gudin's division, checked their advance, and compelled them to be content with the capture of the great redoubt.

In the meantime, Barclay having hastened up with Prince Eugene of Wurtemberg, had found the redoubt retaken, and posted the Prince between the redoubt and the Séméneffskoié village to fill up the void left by the almost totally destroyed corps of Raeffskoi, and then calmly remained in a position upon which the French were pouring the most destructive fire, feeling a sort of pleasure in thus nobly disproving the despicable calumnies of his ungrateful countrymen

Bagration, on his side, having received the Konownitsyn division detached from Touczkoff's corps, together with the foot and cavalry regiments of the guard, had sworn to die or to recover the three flèches situated on his left and our right. He had to encounter the troops under Murat and Ney, who had Latour-Maubourg and Friant on their left; the divisions Razout, Ledru, and Marchand in the centre; and on the right the divisions Compans and Dessaix, the Nansouty cuirassiers and the Westphalian infantry; and the combat in this quarter speedily became one of the most terrible

description, exceeding in fury any combats our troops had ever beheld, until at length, desiring to terminate the battle on this point, Murat and Ney ordered a great movement of cavalry, which was accordingly made by the Saint Germain and Valence cuirassiers on the right, and by those of Generals Vathier and Defrance on the left, a portion of the Russian cavalry was broken, but the other, consisting of the Lithuanian and Ismailow regiments resisted the shock, and the mêlée became murderous, the victims being as numerous as illustrious. Montbrun, the heroic Montbrun, the most brilliant of our cavalry officers, fell, slain by a bullet. Rapp, who commanded the division Compans, received five wounds; and General Dessaix, who left his own troops for the purpose of replacing him, was struck down in his turn. There remained only Generals of brigade to take the command of divisions. But in the midst of this carnage Murat and Ney, always in front and under the heaviest fire, continued, as though they had been invulnerable, untouched. A man of rare excellence, Friant, the model of all warlike virtues, the only one of the old chiefs of Davoust's corps who had not been touched, for Davoust himself had been placed hors de combat, Morand was dangerously wounded, and Gudin died at Valoutina, was at length struck down in his turn, and carried to the same ambulance at which lay his own son. The command of his division devolved upon a young Dutchman, General Vandedem, a courageous man but wanting in experience, and who was eager, therefore, to resign this honour to Galichet the chief of the staff. Murat came up at the moment when the latter had assumed the command, and whilst they were speaking together, a bullet passed between them interrupting the discourse—"Not a very safe position this," said Murat, smiling. "But we will remain in it, nevertheless," replied the intrepid Galichet. At the same moment the Russian cuirassiers poured down en masse, and the division had scarcely time to form into two squares connected by a line of artillery. Murat took the command of one of them and Galichet of the other, and during a quarter of an hour they received, with the most imperturbable sang froid the furious charges of the Russian cavalry! "Soldiers of Friant," cried Murat, "you are heroes!" "vive Murat! vive the King of Naples!" replied the soldiers.

It was thus that we occupied, in default of possessing more forces, this portion of the field of battle which extended from Séménolfskoié to the Outitza wood. Suddenly an illustrious victim fell on the side of the Russians. Bagration was mortally wounded, and carried off the field amidst cries of grief from his troops, with whom he was almost an object

of idolatry. Raeffskoi was summoned to take the command of the second Russian army, which was now without a leader, but he could not quit the remnant of the 7th corps, which continued to occupy, together with Prince Eugene of Wurtemberg, the interval between the grand redoubt and Séménoffskoié; and General Doctoroff was then summoned to replace Bagration.

At this same moment the Russians became aware that Poniatowski, after having traversed the wood, had seized the heights of Outitza from Touczkoff, who had been deprived of the division Konownitsyn, without having been joined as yet by that of Olsoufief; and that Touczkoff, the eldest of the three brothers, had been killed. In the anxiety caused by this information, and in answer to importunate demands for it, the division of Prince Eugene of Wurtemberg had been immediately despatched from the position which it had hitherto occupied, under a terrible fire of artillery, in the space between Séménoffskoié and the great redoubt. And this important space, therefore, which the Russians had made such desperate endeavours to hold against us, was now almost open before us. By directing the whole of the Imperial guard upon this point, we might have penetrated to the centre of the Russian army.

Ney and Murat sent to propose, for the second time, this manœuvre to Napoleon, who, finding the state of the battle ripe for such a measure, assented to their representations, and gave the preliminary orders for its execution. He ordered the advance of the division Claparède and the young guard, and, quitting Schwardino, placed himself at their head. But suddenly a terrible tumult arose on the left of the army, beyond the Kolocza, and our troops displayed in that direction all the signs of having been routed. At this sight Napoleon checked the advance of the guard, and galloping up to learn what had taken place, after some time discovered that the cavalry of Platow and Ouvaroff had crossed the Kolocza on our weakened left, and whilst Platow attacked our baggage, Ouvaroff had fallen upon the division Delzons. Unable to obtain accurate information with respect to what had taken place in this direction, and being unwilling to deprive himself entirely of his reserve, Napoleon sent to Ney and Murat all that remained of the artillery of the guard, advanced the division Claparède, so that it might be ready to take a direction either to the right towards Séméneffskoié, or to the left towards Borodino, and awaited himself, at the head of the infantry of the guard, the progress of events on the left of the Kolocza.

At the first moment of this sudden irruption of the enemy,

the Viceroy had left the centre, and, passing to the left bank of the Kolocza, had advanced with the utmost speed to Borodino, where he found his regiments already formed into square, and stedfastly awaiting the enemy's charge. At the sight of the numerous Russian squadrons, the light cavalry of General Ornano, too weak to resist Ouvaroff's eight regiments of regular cavalry, successively fell back in good order upon our infantry, from before which, after various useless evolutions, which cost them many of their men, the Russian cavalry retired across the Kolocza.

Vain as this attempt on the part of the enemy had been, it nevertheless had cost us more than an hour, had interrupted the movement of the guard, and afforded time to Kutusof, who at length perceived the necessity of the measure, to move Ostermann's corps to the centre from his right, where it had been uselessly posted opposite our left. The Russian General had now, moreover, moved the whole Russian imperial guard to close the Séméneffskoié gap in his line, and upon forcing this gap in the enemy's line thus again filled up, Ney and Murat had not refrained from scornful remarks on the absent Emperor, who was occupied with cares of which they were ignorant.

Napoleon, who had sent Marshal Bessières to Murat and Ney, and who learned from him that the Russian centre was again reinforced, and that the measures proposed by Ney and Murat were no longer capable of execution (Bessières pretended that they never had been), now ordered Prince Eugene to do the only thing which appeared to him at the moment calculated to terminate the struggle, and which was to seize the great redoubt of the centre. At the same time he ordered Murat, who had at his disposal an immense quantity of artillery, to overwhelm with grape the strong columns of the enemy which were advancing, and to be prepared to charge with his cavalry at the decisive moment.

And this decisive moment was now, at length, at hand. On the one side Murat had ranged upon his left, along the Séméneffskoié ravine, the mass of artillery at his disposal, and behind it the three cavalry corps of Generals Montbrun, Latour-Maubourg and Grouchy, awaiting the order to pass the ravine and to charge the lines of the Russian infantry. On the other side Prince Eugene, concentrating on the right of the great redoubt the division Morand and Gudin, had moved upon its left the division Broussier, which was entirely fresh and eager to signalize itself in its turn. It was now about three o'clock in the afternoon, and the terrible conflict of the opposed armies had lasted about nine hours. Murat and Ney hurled the fire of two hundred pieces of

cannon against the Russian centre. The whole of Doctoroff's corps had been sent behind the redoubt, and although it suffered much, suffered less than Ostermann's corps, which had been posted uncovered between the redoubt itself and Séméneffskoié. Considering, at length, that the enemy's line had been sufficiently shattered by our cannon, Murat determined to renew those cavalry charges which had so well succeeded in the morning under Latour-Maubourg. He gave the signal, and Coulaincourt, at the head of the 2nd cavalry corps, passing the ravine debouched beyond it, and having overwhelmed, with the assistance of General Defrance, who had followed him with two regiments of carabineers, some remains of Raeffskoi's corps which were still upon this part of the field, together with the cavalry of Korff and the Baron de Kreutz, he passed the great redoubt at full gallop, and then perceiving behind him Likatcheff's infantry which guarded the great redoubt, he fell upon it by a sudden movement to the left and sabred it at the head of the 5th cuirassiers; when, unhappily, he was struck dead. In the meantime Prince Eugene, who was on the left, put himself at the head of the 9th of the line, and having addressed them in a few animated words, rushed with them up the elevation, took advantage of the tumult of the combat and the denseness of the smoke to escalade the parapets of the redoubt and crossed them at the moment when the 5th cuirassiers were sabring the infantry of the division Likatcheff. Throwing themselves upon the division with fixed bayonets they took some and slew a large number of its troops, and then proceeded to take part in the desperate cavalry combat which was being waged between the Russian horse guards and our cuirassiers, and which resulted in the former being forced to retreat behind their infantry.

In the meantime, posted as it was in advance of the great redoubt, the 9th suffered cruelly; and at length the divisions Morand and Gudin which remained on the right, afforded it their support advancing beyond the redoubt whilst Murat and Ney, forming an angle with them, gradually gained ground, and passed the Séméneffskoié ravine, carrying forward their right. Our whole army thus occupied a position in which it enveloped in an angle of fire the Russian army, now terribly thinned, and the troops of the latter slowly retired upon the border of the Psarewo wood, where they supported with the utmost firmness the concentrated fire of three hundred pieces of cannon which the French directed against them, whilst awaiting the execution of the decisive movement.

At this period the victory was certainly in our hands, for

we had entire possession of the field of battle. On the extreme right, beyond the wood, Prince Poniatowski, after a desperate contest, had succeeded in establishing himself beyond Outitza, on the old Moscow road. On the extreme left, Delzons had uninterrupted possession of Borodino, and at the essential point, namely, between the two elevations which had fallen into our hands the Russian army was held in check, driven back upon the border of the wood, and falling before the fire of three hundred cannon. There still remained, however, three hours of daylight, and although we had no longer an opportunity such as had been twice offered to us during the day, of executing a decisive manœuvre, we might still, by attacking the Russian army a last time, advancing the right reinforced with a mass of fresh troops, have driven back the Russian army towards the Moscowa, and inflicted upon it a blow sufficiently terrible, probably, to overcome Alexander's already wavering constancy. But the execution of such a measure as this would have required the whole of the Imperial guard, which numbered eighteen thousand men, infantry and cavalry, who had not yet been engaged. There remained on the left, in the division Delzons; at the centre, in the divisions Broussier, Morand, and Gudin; and on the right, in the division Dessaix, troops which, although they had already taken part in the battle, were still quite capable of taking part in any great decisive movement. And now, Napoleon, whom the height of the sun above the horizon urged to decisive action as much as the urgent instances of his lieutenants, mounted his horse to make a personal inspection of the field of battle. A severe cold from which he suffered at the time was a source of great annoyance to him, but was not of a nature to paralyse his powerful intellect. At the same time, the horrors of this terrible battle, which was unexampled even in his experience, had in some degree shaken him. Almost every instant of the day had brought him information of the fall of some one or other of his principal officers, Plausonne, Montbrun, Coulaincourt, Romeuf, Chastel, Lambert, Compère, Bessières, Dumas, Canouville, were slain; Marshal Davoust, Generals Morand, Friant, Compans, Rapp, Belliard, Nansouty, Grouchy, Saint-Germain, Bruyerè, Pajol, Defrance, Bonamy, Teste, and Guilleminot, had fallen severely wounded. The determined manner, moreover, in which the Russians had fought, although not unexpected, had been such as could not fail to inspire serious reflections, for, to the honour of human nature be it said, there is something in the fierce spirit of patriotism even when vanquished which in some degree awes the boldest aggressor. And

thus Napoleon, as he surveyed the enemy's lines, remained in a state of irresolution, which was so unusual to him that those who were about him accounted for it by declaring that it resulted from ill-health. Galloping along the line of positions which had been seized by his troops, he beheld the Russians, drawn back, indeed, but remaining firm in solid masses; and although their position was such that a final shock directed against them obliquely, might have thrown them into disorder in the direction of the Moscowa, he could not be quite certain that despair might not be able to triumph even over the eighteen thousand men of his guard; and to neglect at that distance from his base of operations, to preserve unbroken the sole corps which remained to him intact, appeared to him a species of rashness from which no advantages could result equivalent to its manifest dangers. Turning to his principal officers, he said, "I will not destroy my guard. At a distance of eight hundred leagues from France, it would be scarcely wise to risk our last remaining reserve." And doubtless he was right; but in justifying this resolution he condemned, in fact, his attempt to carry on such a war, and for the second or third time since the passage of the Niemen, expiated, by an excess of prudence which was unusual with him, the error of his rashness. Passing the great Moscow road, and approaching Borodino, Gorki's troops became visible in the only advanced position which still remained in the hands of the Russians. And Napoleon considered for a moment whether he should carry it, but determined in the negative, as the result could not be worth its cost.

At the bottom of the field of battle the Russians, drawn up in close masses, presented a wide mark for our cannon, and seemed to defy us. "Since they are still anxious for it," said Napoleon, with the cruel jocosity of the battle field, "let them have it!" And during many hours the Russian masses persisted in remaining in line under the fire of nearly four hundred cannon directed against them by the French, who on their side suffered losses, but certainly not a sixth part so great as those which they inflicted.

At length the sun sank on this terrible scene which is without a parallel in the annals of humanity. The cannonade gradually subsided, and the opposed forces thoroughly exhausted, permitted themselves to indulge in some repose. Our Generals withdrew their divisions far enough to be out of reach of the enemy's fire, and posted at the foot of the heights which had fallen into our hands, being perfectly convinced that the Russians would not attempt to recapture them. Napoleon victorious, entered his tent in the midst of his

lieutenants, some of whom were full of discontent at what he had left undone, whilst the others declared that he had been wise to remain satisfied with the result which he had obtained; that the Russians were, in fact, destroyed, and the gates of Moscow were open to the French army. But none of that manifestation of joy and admiration which had burst forth at Austerlitz, at Jena, and at Friedland, were heard this evening in the conqueror's tent.

That night the French and Russian armies slept side by side on the battle field, and at day break awoke to a horrible scene, which sufficiently manifested the terrible sacrifice of human life which had taken place on the previous day. Ninety thousand men, a number of human beings equivalent to the population of a great city, covered the battle field dead or wounded. From fifteen to twenty thousand horses stretched on the ground or wandering about, uttering the most frightful cries, from three to four hundred gun carriages, and an infinite amount of every species of ruin, completed a spectacle which smote the heart, especially in the neighbourhood of the ravines, whither a species of instinct had led the wounded to seek shelter from fresh wounds. And there they lay in heaps without distinction of nation.

Happily—if, indeed the spirit of patriotism permits us to make use of an expression which is in this case almost inhuman—happily, our share in this mournful spectacle was less than that of the enemy, for whilst we had about nine or ten thousand killed, and about twenty or twenty-one thousand wounded, altogether thirty thousand men placed hors de combat, the loss of the Russians amounted, according to their own admission, to no less than sixty thousand. In this battle we had taken lives, where, in former battles, by skilful manœuvres, we had taken prisoners. Amongst our losses, and the numbers would appear incredible were they not attested by authentic documents, were forty-seven generals and thirty-seven colonels, killed or wounded, and the Russians had lost about as many. A convincing proof of the energy displayed by the leaders on either side, and of the close quarters at which the troops had fought. After this frightful duel our army numbered, taking into account the Italian division Pino, and the division Delaborde of the young guard, which arrived after the battle, about one hundred thousand men; whilst the Russians, on their side, could not have placed in line as many as fifty thousand. But they were in their own country, and we were eight hundred leagues from ours! They were engaged in a war to which they had been forced, and we were engaged in a war into which we had been

plunged by a spirit of ambition. And at every step we made in advance, when the giddiness of Fortune left no room for reflection, we blamed in our inmost hearts the chief whose dazzling fortunes we were following.

Kutusof, as complete a liar as he was a Russian, finding that his army was not to be wholly destroyed, had the audacity to write to his master, declaring that he had resisted during a whole day the assaults of the French army; that he had slain as many of his foes as he had lost of his own troops, and that if he retired from the field of battle, it was not because he was beaten, but because he desired to make the first movement, for the purpose of covering Moscow. He knew more perfectly than any other man in the world, how far to lie to flatter human passions, and especially the passions of an unenlightened people, and whilst, therefore, he refrained from declaring that he had been victorious, he dared to write almost equivalent falsehoods. He sent word to Count Rostopchin, who was destined speedily to obtain a terrible immortality, that he had fought a bloody battle in defence of Moscow, that he was far from having lost it, that he was about to fight others, that he could promise that the enemy should not enter the sacred city, but that it was absolutely necessary that he, Rostopchin, should furnish him with all the men capable of bearing arms, especially the Moscow militia which had been promised to him, to the amount of eighty thousand men, but of whom he had only received fifteen thousand. On the morning of the 8th of September he gave the order for the retreat of his army, directing that Mojaisk should be disputed sufficiently long for the removal of the provisions, munitions, and such of the wounded as could bear it; and entrusting the command of his rear-guard to General Miloradovitch.

Napoleon, who had not the same reasons for making use of dissimulation, since he was decidedly victorious, was nevertheless in some degree embarrassed with respect to the terms in which he should describe his triumph. He had formerly been able to announce, in return for the loss of some thousands of his troops, the capture of thirty or forty thousand prisoners, some hundreds of cannon, and flags. But on this occasion he had taken neither prisoners, flags, nor cannon, (with the exception of a small number of pieces of artillery found in the redoubts). At the same time sixty thousand of the enemy lay dead or dying upon the battle field..... Selecting in accordance with his custom, a name for this battle, which the Russians called the battle of Borodino, calculated to touch the imagination, he styled it the battle of the Moskowa, from the river of that name flowing at about

a league's distance from the battle field, and traversing Moscow in its course.

Anxious to reap the fruits of his victory Napoleon directed Murat upon Mojaisk with two divisions of cuirassiers, several divisions of light cavalry, and one of the infantry divisions of Marshal Davoust, who followed with his four other divisions, being himself conveyed in a carriage, as he was unable to maintain his seat on his horse. At the same time Prince Poniatowski was directed, as he had been during the whole march, upon the right of the grand route, by the Wereja road, and Prince Eugene upon the left by the Rouza road. Napoleon himself with Ney's corps and the guard remained one day longer on the field of battle, for the purpose of executing the measures demanded alike by humanity and the interests of the army. And the first of these was the conversion of the Kolotskoi Abbey into a hospital for such of the wounded as were too ill to be transported any distance; it being arranged that the others should be conveyed to Mojaisk as soon as it should be in our hands. For the cure of the horses and the repair of the cannon, which were but slightly injured, Napoleon established a cavalry and artillery depôt in the villages surrounding the Kolotskoi Abbey, and determined that Junot with the Westphalians should remain in this position to guard and to procure for the unhappy wounded soldiers the provisions they were unable to obtain for themselves.

Having taken these first and indispensable measures, Napoleon sent orders to Smolensk for the immediate dispatch of an immense fresh supply of ammunition, and ordered a new movement in advance to be made by all the French or allied corps which remained at the various stations of Smolensk, Minsk, Wilna, Kowno, and Kœnigsberg.

The army had continued, in the meantime, its forward movement, and Murat had arrived on the evening of the 8th in front of Mojaisk, a town of some importance, which the French were anxious to capture undestroyed. As they drew nearer Moscow the country appeared to increase in richness, but also displayed signs of a more determined destruction on the part of the enemy. There were at the same time more flourishing villages, and more columns of flame. The Russians, for the purpose of securing time to effect the removal of certain portions of their wounded and matériel, had posted in advance of a marshy ravine, a strong rear-guard of infantry and cavalry, and resolved to defend the position against the French troops. The position might have been turned, but as our forces failed to perceive, on account of the darkness of the night, the point at which

they might have succeeded, it was resolved to avoid the confusion of a midnight encounter with the enemy, and to bivouac within cannon range of the Russians.

On the following day the French forced their way into Mojaisk, where they found some wounded Russians, whom they consigned to the care of their surgeons, and also provisions and buildings for a second hospital, which was a fortunate circumstance, as that of Kolotskoi was far from being sufficient for our necessities. Napoleon resolved to remain at Mojaisk for the cure of his own indisposition; intending to rejoin the army as soon as it should have arrived at the gates of Moscow, that he might accompany it on its entrance, or direct its movements should it have to fight another battle.

The Russians continued their retreat, and the French their pursuit. Prince Eugene having taken the lateral route on the left, seized Kouza a pretty little town, abounding in resources, just before the furious peasants had time to destroy it; and made a day's halt here, collecting provisions for the use of the grand army. On the lateral route on the right, Prince Poniatowski was equally successful in obtaining the means of subsistence, since he left the enemy no time to fulfil the dictates of their rage.

The principal column under Murat arrived at Krimskoié on the 10th of September. The leader of the Russian rear guard, Miloradovitch, wishing to take advantage of a good position, which he had observed near the marshy sources of the Nara, posted his light infantry and artillery behind a muddy tract of ground, covered with thick brushwood, the only means of approach to which was by the great road which he took care to occupy in force. The whole day was passed by the opposed troops in a struggle around this position, and many men were lost on both sides, but at nightfall the Russians were forced to retreat, leaving behind them nearly two thousand killed and wounded.

On the 11th the French reached Koubinskoié, on the 12th Momonowo, and on the 13th Worobiewo, the position immediately before Moscow; at the very gates of which the Russian army had established itself towards the Dorogomilow barrier. The Moskowa on entering Moscow, where it describes numerous windings, forms a very concave arc, open on the side of the Smolensk road; and against this the Russian army leant back, supporting its right on the village of Fili, and its left at the top of Worobiewo, tracing in a certain measure the cord of the arc described by the Moskowa; its only opening for retreat being a bridge leading across the Moskowa to the interior of the Dorogomilow faubourg.

This was scarcely a safe position in which to give battle to an enemy; and of this Kutusof was perfectly conscious, being also thoroughly convinced of the impossibility of checking the advance of the French upon Moscow. But still faithful to his system of constantly flattering popular passion, because he believed that it might be more easily directed by means of flattery than by opposition, he had constantly written to Rostopchin, the governor of Moscow, that he was to defend it to the utmost. There was considerable astonishment in Moscow, therefore, when the real state of the Russian army was discovered, and it took up a position so near to the town, that there remained no space for the execution of the movements which an engagement would render necessary. And although Kutusof had resolved to save his army rather than the capital, he called a council of war that he might share the responsibility he was about to incur with his lieutenants. In spite of the cunning and coldness of his nature he could not but be agitated as he heard the cries of rage which arose around him, and the voice a thousand times repeated, rather to perish under the ruins of Moscow than abandon it to the French—a vow dictated by feelings very similar to those which might lead a man rather to stab his cherished spouse in his very arms than yield her up to the outrages of others. But Kutusof knew that Russia would not necessarily be lost because Moscow might fall into the hands of the French, and that, on the other hand, it would be lost if the grand army should be destroyed. At the same time he would have been glad to throw the odium of measures which he knew to be necessary upon others, and he summoned to the memorable council which now assembled on the Worobiewo height, Generals Benningsen, Barclay de Tolly, Doctoroff, Ostermann, Konownitsyn, and Yermoloff. Colonel Toll assisted at it as quarter-master-general. Barclay de Tolly, with his usual simplicity and practical experience, declared the position then occupied to be untenable, affirmed that the preservation of the capital was of but slight importance in comparison with the preservation of the army, and advised that it should evacuate Moscow, retreating by the Wladimir road, by which means new tracts of territory would be added to those which the French army had already had to traverse, and the Russian army would not only be left in communication with St. Petersburg, but be able, at the right moment, to resume the offensive. Benningsen, who was perfectly capable of appreciating this advice, but who was unwilling to incur the odium of supporting it, maintained that the Russian army should defend to the utmost the sacred city of Moscow; and Konownitsyn, yielding in like manner to popular opinion,

also supported the plan of making an obstinate resistance, but with the provision that they should leave the position in which they were then encamped, and find another by advancing towards the enemy. Generals Ostermann and Yermoloff were of the same opinion, and, indeed, it was the expression of the courage of despair. But Colonel Toll, on the other hand, proposed that the army should retreat, advancing immediately to the right upon the Kolocza road, by which means it would be able to take up a position at once threatening to the enemy's communications, and in direct relation to the richest provinces of the south. As is generally the case under such circumstances, this council of war was agitated, confused, and filled with opposite counsels.

Kutusof had already, however, determined upon his course of action and we must confess that it was worthy of a great captain. Of all the various counsels which had been given none had been thoroughly good although most possessed certain recommendations. To have fought a battle for the sake of Moscow would have been utterly unwise. To have defended it against the enemy as Saragossa had been defended, barricading the streets and arousing the whole of its population to the aid of the army, would have certainly been to have involved its destruction, for it was not built of stone, like Saragossa, but of wood, and it could not in this case but have perished by the flames. The only means, in fact, in the power of the Russians of preserving Moscow from the grasp of the French was by effecting its destruction, but such an idea as this had not yet been entertained, for no one desired the destruction of this capital, and its capture by the French was not regarded as equivalent to its being destroyed.

To retreat, then, appeared the only course open to the Russian army. To fall back upon Wladimir, as Barclay de Tolly proposed, would have been to push the system of retreat too far, and would have involved the loss of communications with the south of the empire, which was far richer in resources of every kind than the north. Thus the only line of retreat, which could wisely be adopted was upon the right of Moscow (the right as regarded us), which would lead the Russian army upon the communications of the French, and place it in direct communication with the south provinces and the army returning from Turkey. But to have marched immediately in this direction as was proposed by Colonal Toll, would have been to have excited the French to instant pursuit, and to have revealed the plan of the system of retreat, which now that the French had been enticed so far, consisted in manœuvring upon their flanks with the purpose of attacking them when

they should have been sufficiently enfeebled. A much better mode of action was to retreat across Moscow itself, to leave this city in the hands of the French, to take advantage of the time during which they would certainly be employed in seizing upon this rich prey, to defile tranquilly before them, and then, turning round Moscow to take upon their flank that threatening position which Colonel Toll advised should be taken immediately and without the intervention of any manœuvres. This was the plan drawn by the old Russian General from all the various counsels which he had received; drawn from them with a sagacity as profound as it was fatal to the French, and which, fatal as it was to us, cannot but demand the admiration of posterity.

It was accordingly determined that the Russian army should retreat during the night of the 13th of September, the rear guard avoiding combats with the French in order that Moscow, which the Russians were anxious to save, and which they believed that they were saving by leaving it in the hands of the French, might not be set on fire by the howitzers; and that the retreat should be by the Riazan road, from which it would be easy, by means of a slight detour, to return some days later to the Kalouga road, on which it would subsequently be necessary to operate.

We must now turn to Rostopchin, the governor of Moscow, a Russian full of savage passions concealed under polished manners, and inspired with a spirit of patriotism so furious that it had become fanaticism. He hated us as a Russian, he hated us as a member of the European aristocracy. He would have willingly sacrificed the city could he at the same time have destroyed twenty or thirty thousand Frenchmen; and he considered that after having destroyed all the villages, there could be no honourable reason for sparing Moscow. As no proposal, however, had been made, that the army should barricade itself within the city and defend it to the last, he could only in silence brood over the idea which he cherished in the depths of his exasperated spirit. The futility of the hopes which had been kept up by General Kutusof had profoundly irritated him against the General, and he expressed himself to him with extreme bitterness; but there was no time for recrimination: it was necessary to make immediate preparations for the evacuation of the city. In the excess of his hatred, Rostopchin was anxious that there should not be a single Russian left to adorn the triumph of the French, and using his authority as governor, he ordered all the inhabitants of Moscow to depart immediately, taking with them whatever they could, and he threatened the infliction of the most severe chastisements on those who

should not have quitted by the morrow. Moreover, such atrocious calumnies had been spread abroad with respect to the conduct of the French troops, that this was no occasion for the use of threats to induce the Russians to fly from before them. Nor was Rostopchin anxious only to leave the enemy a city without inhabitants. He was anxious, without calculating the consequences of such a measure, to leave them instead of a luxurious home, a heap of cinders amongst which they would be able to find no means of supporting existence, which should be a testimony of the terrible hatred with which they had inspired the Russian heart, which should be a declaration of war to the death. But to have breathed such a project to any one would have been to render its execution impossible. The gentle spirit of Alexander would have revolted at such a proposal; the Generals would have shrunk from the responsibility of sharing such a secret; and to have submitted such a design to the inhabitants would have been to excite them more furiously against the author of it than even against the French. But although he was thus forced to keep his purpose profoundly secret, he had accumulated, under the pretence of fabricating an infernal machine against the French, an immense quantity of inflammable materials in one of his gardens; and when the hour for the evacuation had arrived, he selected as executors of his project, those infamous persons who possessed nothing but the prisons in which their crimes had procured them an asylum, and who possessed an innate taste for the work of destruction. To these criminals he committed the task, when the evacuation should have been completed, of secretly and thoroughly firing the city, assuring them that by thus ravaging their country they would be performing for her the most useful of services. At the same time, in order that the French might have no means of checking the conflagration, he had all the pumps destroyed. On the morning of the 14th he followed the army from the city, taking with him none of his wealth, and consoling himself for its loss by the idea of the terrible surprise he had prepared for the French.

During the evening and night of the 13th and a portion of the 14th of September, the Russian army defiled across the city of Moscow, and stopped at the Moskowa bridge which, was the only one remaining at this point, they accumulated in the Drogomilow faubourg in such a manner as to show very plainly how great a disaster might have been the result of a retreat across Moscow after a defeat. The disorder throughout the unhappy capital was at its height. The wealthy, whether nobles or merchants, had withdrawn to their most distant estates; and the remainder of the inhabitants, sub-

mitting to the odious edict imposed upon them, and filled also with the idea that the French would fire the town, quitted their dwellings in a state of despair, carrying with them their most precious possessions in carriages or on their shoulders. Knowing not whither to go, or how they should be able to procure the means of subsistence, the bulk of the population uttering the most frightful lamentations, mechanically followed the army. Some of the inhabitants, however, had declined to take part in this flight, preferring to remain in the city with the victorious French, (whose real mode of acting they had become better acquainted with than their compatriots) rather than follow in the track of an army of whose line of march or proposed movements they were utterly ignorant. Amongst these latter were many merchants of various nations and especially of our own, who had no fear of the French, but for whom the moment of the evacuation was one of the most frightful terror, for they suddenly learned that as the Russian troops left the city with the authorities, three thousand abandoned wretches would be let loose to indulge in unrestrained pillage. With trembling impatience, therefore, these unhappy inhabitants awaited in their houses the arrival of the army which was to replace the one departing.

In the meantime, Miloradovitch, perceiving that the evacuation of the city would occupy some hours, proposed to the French advanced guard that all hostilities should be suspended whilst it was taking place, as well for the sake of those who were about to enter as of those who were departing, since an attack would necessarily call forth a desperate defence, and consequently cause the entire destruction of the city. An officer was despatched to Murat with this proposal.

With rapid steps the French army advanced towards the heights whence they hoped to perceive at length the great city of Moscow; and if the Russians were filled with the utmost sadness, the hearts of the French were equally inspired with feelings of joy and triumph, and the most brilliant illusions. Reduced from four hundred and twenty thousand, which was its number at the passage of the Niemen, to one hundred thousand, and utterly exhausted, our army forgot all its troubles on its approach to the brilliant capital of Muscovy. There were many officers and soldiers in its ranks who had been at the Pyrenees, to the banks of the Jordan, to Rome, Milan, Madrid, Vienna, and Berlin, and who trembled with emotion at the idea that they were about to visit, also, Moscow, the most powerful metropolis of the East. Doubtless, the hope of finding there repose, abundance, and

probably peace, contributed to their feelings of satisfaction on the occasion, but Imagination, the empress of all hearts, and especially of those of soldiers, Imagination, we say, was strongly excited within them at the idea of entering Moscow, after having entered all the other capitals of Europe with the exception of London, protected by the sea. Whilst Prince Eugene advanced on the left of the army, and Prince Poniatowski on its right, the bulk of the army, with Murat at its head, Davoust and Ney in the centre, and the guard in the rear, followed the great Smolensk road. Napoleon was in the midst of his troops, who, as they gazed upon him and drew near to Moscow, forgot the days of discontent, and uttered loud shouts in honour of his glory and their own.

The proposal submitted by Miloradovitch was readily accepted, for the French had no desire to destroy Moscow, and it was agreed that not a shot should be fired during the evacuation, on condition that the Russian army should continue to defile across the city without a moment's halt.

At length, having reached the summit of a hill, the army beheld beneath it an immense city, brilliant with a thousand colours, crowned with a multitude of domes, gleaming in the sunlight, and altogether, with its mingled Gothic and Byzantine aspect, realising what is told in Oriental tales of the marvels of Asia. Monasteries flanked with towers formed its girdle, and in its centre, on an eminence arose a strong citadel, a species of capitol, where, side by side stood temples reared to God and imperial palaces; where above embattled walls arose majestic domes, bearing the emblem which is the epitome of the whole of Russian history and Russian ambition—the Cross above the reversed Crescent. This citadel was the Kremlin, the ancient dwelling-place of the Czars.

At the magic sight, their imaginations and their love of glory alike excited, the soldiers cried out together, "Moscow! Moscow!" Nor was Napoleon less deeply moved by it. Arrived at that point of his greatness from which he was to descend so rapidly to ruin, he experienced a species of intoxication, forgot all the reproaches which his good sense, which is the conqueror's only conscience, had addressed to him during the last two months, and believed that he had performed an act of great and fortunate rashness, justified by the event, in having dared to march from Paris to Smolensk, from Smolensk to Moscow. And his lieutenants, in like manner forgot the discontent they had so frequently experienced during the progress of the campaign, and bestowed upon him those congratulations which they had failed to express after the battle of Borodino.

Murat was ordered to march with rapidity, for the purpose of preventing any disorder. General Durasnel was sent forward to communicate with the authorities, and to conduct them to the feet of the conqueror; and M. Denniée was ordered to go on to prepare provisions and bivouacs for the troops. When Murat reached the Moskowa bridge, he found a Russian rear-guard, which was retreating, and having inquired who was the commanding officer, he held out his hand to the white-haired old warrior who was pointed out to him, and the latter took it with empressement. So readily subsides even national hatred before true valour. The Russian rear-guard defiled rapidly to yield the ground to our advanced guard, and the King of Naples, followed by his staff and a detachment of cavalry, plunged into the streets of Moscow, and traversing by turns the humblest quarters and the wealthiest, perceived everywhere the most profound solitude, and seemed to have entered a city of the dead. Suddenly a few persons made their appearance, Frenchmen, who had been established in Moscow, and who begged, in the name of Heaven, for protection from the brigands who had been left in possession of the city. They were received with much kindness, and attempting, although in vain, to dissipate their fears, the French troops accompanied them to the Kremlin, where they were immediately fired upon by the bandits whom Rostopchin's furious patriotism had let loose. Many of them were sabred by our soldiers, and the Kremlin was immediately freed from their presence. But the information which was now obtained, that the whole population of the city had fled, saddened the exultation of the commanders of our advanced guard, who had flattered themselves that they would have had the pleasure of surprising the inhabitants by their kindness.

The information sent to Napoleon of the actual state of affairs deeply afflicted him. He had waited during the whole afternoon the arrival of the keys of the city, and the prayers of a submissive population for that mercy which he was always ready to accord to the vanquished. This disappointment, so immediately succeeding to a moment of triumph was, so to speak, the dawn of ill fortune. Being unwilling to enter during the night a city which an implacable enemy had but just left, and which might very possibly contain many ambushes, Napoleon paused in the Drogomilow faubourg, sending forward detachments of cavalry to take possession of the gates, and to act as police. Eugene on the left guarded the gate on the St. Petersburg road: whilst Davoust in the centre, guarded the Smolensk gate, by which the bulk of our army would enter, and extended his troops on his right as far as

that of Toula. The cavalry, which had passed through the city, was to guard the gates on the north and east, opposite to those by which we were about to enter. From our ignorance of the city, however, many means of egress were left open, and twelve or fifteen thousand stragglers of the Russian army were thus enabled to make their escape. There remained, indeed, fifteen thousand wounded whom the Russians recommended to our humanity; but to Russian humanity should they rather have recommended them, for they perished by other hands than ours.

On the morning of the 15th September, Napoleon entered Moscow, at the head of his invincible legions, but passed through a deserted city, and his soldiers were now for the first time on entering a capital the sole witnesses of their own glory. Their feelings on the occasion were sad ones. As soon as Napoleon had reached the Kremlin, he hastened to ascend the lofty tower of the great Ivan, and to survey from its elevation the magnificent city he had conquered. The Moskowa flowed at his feet, traversing the capital with numerous windings. Thousands of black-plumaged birds, crows and ravens, as numerous in those regions as are the pigeons in Venice around the palaces and churches, gave to the great city a singular aspect, which contrasted strongly with the splendour of its brilliant colours. A sullen silence, broken only by the tramp of the cavalry, had replaced that populous life which during the very previous evening had rendered the city one of the most animated in the world.

The army was distributed through the various quarters of Moscow, Prince Eugene occupying the north-west quarter, Marshal Davoust the south-west, and Prince Poniatowski the south-east. Marshal Ney who had traversed Moscow from west to east, established his troops in the district comprised between the Riazan and Wladimir roads; and the guard was naturally posted at the Kremlin and in its environs. The houses were full of provisions of every kind, and the first necessities of the troops were readily satisfied. The superior officers were received at the gates of palaces by numerous servants in livery, eager in offering a brilliant hospitality; for the owners of these palaces, perfectly unaware that Moscow was about to perish, had taken great pains, although they fully shared the national hatred against the French, to procure protectors for their rich dwellings by receiving into them French officers. And with extreme delight the latter plunged into the midst of a luxury fraught with all those signs of sensuousness which form so strange but frequent a contrast with ardent popular devotion and savage military energy, in nations which

have suddenly arisen from a barbarous state to a civilized one; for the first lesson which men learn from those who have learned how to live, is how to live pleasantly.

From their splendid lodgings, the officers of the French army wandered with equal delight through the midst of the city, which resembled a Tartar camp sown with Italian palaces. They contemplated with wonder the numerous towns of which the capital is composed, and which are placed in concentric circles, the one within the other: first, in the very centre, on an eminence, on the bank of the Moskowa, was the Kremlin, surrounded with ancient towers, and filled with gilded churches; at the foot of the Kremlin, and under its protection, as it were, was the Old Town, called the Chinese Town, in allusion to the old and genuine Russian commerce, that of the East, then, surrounding these was a large, spacious town, thronged with palaces, which was called the White Town, and finally, encircling the whole, there was the Earth Town, as it was called, consisting of a mixture of groves and villages, and new and imposing edifices, and surrounded by an earthen *épaulement*. And of all these four towns, prominent features were many hundreds of churches surmounted by domes fashioned, as in the East, to the form of immense turbans, and bell towers, which manifested that Russia had had intercourse of old with Persia and Turkey: for it is a singular circumstance, that whilst religions oppose each other, they nevertheless imitate each other in matters of art. A few days before, Moscow had contained a population of three hundred thousand souls, of whom scarcely a sixth part now remained, and of these the greater number were concealed in their houses, or prostrated at the foot of the altars. The streets were deserts, and only echoed with the footsteps of our soldiers.

Although they had become sole possessors of the disputed city, our troops, always sociable, were distressed that there were none whom they might astonish by their gentleness after having terrified them by their boldness. But although the solitude of the city was a source of great vexation to them, they had no suspicion of any approaching catastrophe, for the Russian army, which alone had hitherto devastated their country, had departed, and there appeared to be no fear of fire.

The French army hoped, therefore, to enjoy comfort in Moscow, to obtain, probably, peace by means of its possession, and at least good winter cantonments, in case the war should be prolonged. But on the afternoon they had entered, columns of flame arose from a vast building containing vast quantities of spirits, and just as our soldiers had almost suc-

ceeded in mastering the fire in this spot, a violent conflagration suddenly burst forth in a collection of buildings called the Bazaar, situated to the north-east of the Kremlin, and containing the richest magazines, abounding in stores of the exquisite tissues of India and Persia, the rarities of Europe, colonial produce, and precious wines. The troops of the guard immediately hastened up and attempted to subdue the flames, but their energetic efforts were unfortunately unsuccessful, and the immense riches of the establishment fell a prey to the fire, with the exception of some portions which our men were able to snatch from the devouring element. This fresh accident was again attributed to natural causes, and considered as easily explicable in the tumult of an evacuation.

During the night of the 15th of September, however, a sudden change came over the scene; for then, as though every species of misfortune were to fall at the same moment on the ancient Muscovite capital, the equinoctial gales suddenly arose with the extreme violence usual to the season, and in countries where wide spread plains offer no resistan e to the storm. This wind, blowing first from the east, carried the fire to the west into the streets comprised between the Iwer and Smolensk routes, which were the most beautiful and the richest in all Moscow. Within some hours the fire, spreading with frightful rapidity, and throwing out long arrows of flame, spread to the other westward quarters. And soon rockets were observed in the air, and wretches were seized in the act of spreading the conflagration. Interrogated under threat of instant death they revealed the frightful secret, the order given by Count Rostopchin for the burning of the city of Moscow as though it had been a simple village on the Moscow route. This information filled the whole army with consternation. Napoleon ordered that military commissions should be formed in each quarter of the city for the purpose of judging, shooting, and hanging, incendiaries taken in the act; and that all the available troops should be employed in extinguishing the flames. Immediate recourse was had to the pumps, but it was found they had been removed; and this latter circumstance would have proved, if indeed any doubt on the matter had remained, the terrible determination with which Moscow had been given to the flames.

In the meantime, the wind, increasing in violence every moment, rendered the efforts of the whole army ineffectual, and suddenly changing with the abruptness peculiar to equinoctial gales, from the east to the north-west, it carried the torrent of flame into quarters which the hands

of the incendiaries had not yet been able to fire. And after having blown during some hours from the north-west, the wind once more changed its direction and blew from the south-west, as though it had a cruel pleasure in spreading ruin and death over the unhappy city, or rather, over our army. By this change of the wind to the south-west the Kremlin was placed in extreme peril. More than four hundred ammunition waggons were in the court of the Kremlin, and the arsenal contained some four hundred thousand pounds of powder. There was imminent danger, therefore, that Napoleon with his guard, and the palace of the Czars, might be blown up into the air.

The officers who surrounded him, and the artillerymen who knew that his death would be their own, thronged about him with entreaties that he would retire from so dangerous a position. The peril was most threatening; and even the old artillerymen of the guard, although accustomed to such cannonades as that of Borodino, almost lost their *sang froid.* General Lariboisière at length approached Napoleon, and with the authority he had by virtue of his age and his devotion, entreated that the troops might be permitted to save themselves without having their embarrassment increased by the excitement caused by the presence of their Emperor. Several officers, moreover, who had been sent into the adjacent quarters to make enquiries, reported that it was scarcely possible to traverse the burning streets, and that to depart immediately was the only means of escaping from being buried under the ruins of the doomed city.

Napoleon, therefore, followed by some of his lieutenants, descended from the Kremlin to the quay of the Moskowa, where he found his horses ready for him, and had much difficulty in threading the streets, which, towards the north-west, in which direction he proceeded, were already in flames. The terrified army set out from Moscow; the divisions of Prince Eugene and Marshal Ney fell back upon the Zwenigarod and Saint Petersburg roads. Those of Marshal Davoust fell back upon the Smolensk route, and with the exception of the guard, which was left around the Kremlin, to dispute its possession with the flames, our troops drew back in horror from before the fire, which, after flaming up to heaven, darted back towards them as though it wished to devour them. The few inhabitants who had remained in Moscow, and had hitherto lain concealed in their dwellings, now fled, carrying away such of their possessions as they valued most highly, uttering lamentable cries of distress, and, in many instances, falling victims to the brigands whom Rostopchin had let loose, and who now exulted in the midst of the conflagration, as the genius of evil in the midst of chaos.

Napoleon took up his quarters at the château of Petrowskoié, a league's distance from Moscow on the Saint Petersburg route, in the centre of the cantonments of the troops under Prince Eugene, awaiting there the subsidence of the conflagration, which had now reached such a height, that it was beyond human power either to increase or extinguish it.

As a final misfortune, the wind changed on the following day, from south-west to direct west, and then the torrents of flame were carried towards the eastern quarters of the city, the streets Messnitskaia and Bassmanaia, and the summer palace. As the conflagration reached its terrible height, frightful crashes were heard every moment; roofs crushing inwards, and stately façades crumbling headlong into the streets, as their supports became consumed in the flames. The sky was scarcely visible through the thick cloud of smoke which overshadowed it, and the sun was only apparent as a blood-red globe. For three successive days, the 16th, the 17th, and the 18th of September, this terrific scene continued, and in unabated intensity.

At length, after having devoured four-fifths of the city, the fire ceased, gradually quenched by the rain, which, as is usually the case, succeeded the violence of the equinoctial gales. As the flames subsided, only the spectre as it were, of what had once been a magnificent city, was visible; and, indeed, the Kremlin, and about a fifth part of the city were alone saved; their preservation being chiefly due to the exertions of the imperial guard.

As the inhabitants of Moscow themselves entered the ruins seeking what property still remained in them undestroyed, it was scarcely possible to prevent our soldiers from acting in the same manner, and accordingly searching among the crumbling edifices, they speedily penetrated to the cellars and found there quantities of provisions still in great part uninjured by the fire, and in an abundance, which was due to the custom prevailing in the country, on account of the length of the winters, of storing up provisions for many months. In many of the houses, also, which the fire had injured sufficiently to render their pillage excusable without actually destroying them, were found the most exquisite articles of luxury, furs, and plate, which latter spoil the troops, in their improvidence, preferred to either food or clothing, and superb porcelain, which in their h[illegible] they despised or idly destroyed.

It was a lamentable and grotesque specta[illegible] now presented, as the crowd of our troops and [illegible] of the city thronged the smoking embers of [illegible]

city, laughing at the singular costumes in which they had robed themselves, bearing in their hands articles of the utmost value, selling them for the most insignificant prices to those capable of appreciating their value, or dashing them to pieces in pure wantonness. And this wild and melancholy scene, in which intoxication was also a great element, for quantities of liquors had been discovered in the cellars, was rendered still more sad by the return of the unfortunate inhabitants who had fled at the moment of the evacuation or the breaking out of the fire, and who now returned, for the most part, to weep over the ruins of their dwellings, or to dispute with an unbridled mob, the fragments still remaining of their possessions. Their only shelter the huts they could construct of the ruins which lay around them, their only beds the cinders of their former dwellings, they had no other food but what they might be able to beg from our troops. Thus gradually and mournfully, the population of Moscow returned; and with them, came back, equally in search of their former habitations, and uttering the most dismal croakings, the clouds of crows and ravens whom the flames had driven away. And of this horrible scene, the chiefest horror of all remains to be told; the Russians had left fifteen thousand wounded in Moscow, and incapable of escaping, they had perished, victims of Rostopchin's barbarous patriotism.

On the 19th of September, deeply saddened by the terrible events which had taken place, Napoleon re-entered Moscow. He had continued his march as far as this city, in spite of all the objections urged by his genius against the adoption of such a plan, in the hope of finding peace there, as he had found it at Vienna and at Berlin; but what could be expected of a people capable of committing so terrible an act, and giving so cruel a proof of implacable hatred? On each of those burned palaces, on which there remained but the blackened walls Napoleon seemed to see written in words of blood and fire—"No peace—war to the death!"

Napoleon's feelings during this terrible conflagration were the bitterest and most sombre he had ever experienced in the course of his life. He had never hitherto lost his confidence in his own good fortune, neither at Arcola, on the bridge which he could not cross, nor at Saint Jean d'Acre at the moment when the eighth assault had been repulsed, nor at Marengo, nor at Eylau, nor at Essling. But now for the first time, he seemed to perceive the possibility that he might be the subject of some great disaster.

However, without permitting himself to be overwhelmed by the consideration of what might possibly be the con-

sequences of the conflagration of Moscow, he employed himself in giving orders which were demanded equally by humanity and the interests of his army. He issued the most stringent commands for the suppression of pillage, and with some difficulty the prevalent disorder was suppressed, and regular searches established throughout the town for the discovery of its resources. The city was partitioned out between the various corps of the army almost as on the day of its arrival, each having its tête de colonne at the Kremlin, and its chief bulk in that portion of the city at which it had made its entry; Prince Eugene's troops being between the Saint Petersburg and Smolensk gates, Marshal Davoust's between those of Smolensk and Kalouga, Prince Poniatowski's towards the Toula gate, the cavalry beyond it, in pursuit of the enemy, Marshal Ney's eastward between the Riazan and Wladimir gates, and the guard in the centre, at the Kremlin. The houses which had escaped the conflagration were reserved for the officers, and the great buildings were converted into magazines to which the troops each day conveyed what they found in the city, so that there might be a reserve of provisions for the use of the army whether it continued in Moscow or departed from it.

But although sufficient bread and salted provisions were procured in this manner for the consumption of the army during many months, fresh provisions could not be provided without cattle, which again could not exist without forage, and on this subject as well as with respect to the absolute necessity of forage for the artillery and cavalry horses there was felt the greatest anxiety. Napoleon hoped to supply the necessity, first by extending his advanced posts ten or fifteen leagues from Moscow, and thus embracing a space sufficiently large to contain vegetables and forage in the requisite quantities; and, in the second place, by gaining over the peasants to his service by means of good pay. Paper roubles being the money which was current in Russia, and the French army chest containing a large quantity of them, fabricated in a manner which has already been described, but of which there was then no suspicion, he caused it to be announced that all provisions, and especially forage, brought into Moscow, would be paid for, and directed that those peasants who answered to the appeal should receive ample protection. He also paid the army in these paper roubles, at the same time arranging, however, that those officers who desired to send their pay to France, should be able to exchange this paper for genuine money at the government treasuries.

At the same time he afforded succour to all those whom the conflagration had deprived of their homes, preferring,

however, to give them money that they might procure provisions for themselves, rather than supply strangers, who were at the same time enemies, from those magazines of which it was so absolutely necessary to be careful. The French inhabitants of Moscow were treated as our own troops, and the educated persons amongst them were charged with the establishment of a provisional municipal administration.

Beneath the walls of the Kremlin was a vast building which had attracted Napoleon's notice from his first entrance into Moscow, and was a foundling hospital, from which most of the children had been conveyed, but which, on account of the great difficulty of conveying infants of tender years, still contained, on our entrance into Moscow, some children of four or five years of age who, grouped around the venerable governor of the hospital, General Toutelmine, awaited our approach with tears and trembling. As soon as Napoleon was informed of the circumstance he sent a guard thither, which watched over the noble institution both before and during the conflagration. On his return to Moscow he visited the hospital on foot, and was received at the gate by General Toutelmine, surrounded by his pupils who threw themselves at Napoleon's feet, kissing his hands, and catching hold of the skirts of his coat, eager to thank him for having preserved their lives. "Surely," said Napoleon to the old general, "surely your children did not suppose that my troops would have devoured them? That we French were as barbarous as the men who govern you? As absurd as the governor of Moscow?—For what purpose are all these ruins? For what purpose are such savage deeds performed, deeds which must cost Russia more than she could possibly have suffered from the most disastrous war? A thousand millions would not pay for the loss suffered in the destruction of Moscow alone. If, in place of yielding to this madness, you had spared your capital, I would have been as careful of it as of Paris itself; and I would have written to your sovereign proposing to him equitable and moderate conditions of peace, and this terrible war would have been almost at an end. But as it is, the course of destruction must still continue, for I am far from the period of my departure from the Russian territory, and God alone knows what this war must still cost humanity." General Toutelmine, who detested, in common with all the inhabitants of Moscow, the deed which Rostopchin had executed, acknowledged the justice of Napoleon's observations, expressed his regret that Napoleon's disposition toward Russia was not better understood, and seemed to intimate that if it were properly understood at Saint Petersburg, affairs would speedily wear a very different complexion. Napoleon

seized the occasion which, indeed, he had taken pains to bring about, and when General Toutelmine, in answer to his permission to him to ask for whatever he might desire for the children under his charge, requested leave to inform the Empress, who was the patroness of the hospital, that his pupils were safe, Napoleon invited him to write, promising to take care that his letter reached its destination. "May I mention," said the old General, "the tone of the observations which your majesty has addressed to me? "Yes," replied Napoleon; "Say that if the enemies who are interested in fomenting quarrels between us, should cease to interfere between the Emperor Alexander and myself, peace would be soon concluded between us."

Toutelmine's letter was immediately written, and was on its way to Saint Petersburg before the end of the day. Almost at the same time, Napoleon held an interview with a Russian, apparently of some distinction, who had remained at Moscow, and who, less blinded by passion than were most of his compatriots, deeply deplored the atrocious fury of Rostopchin. In conversation with this person, Napoleon declared, as he had previously declared to General Toutelmine, that he had desired to carry on a political war, and not a social and destructive one. That Lithuania might have been the theatre of such a war, in lieu of Muscovy itself, that then one or two battles might have decided the dispute, and a treaty, consisting of very easy conditions, have re-established the alliance between France and Russia, and not the dependence of the latter upon the former, as had been asserted for the purpose of exciting national fury. But instead of this plan having been adopted, he said, every attempt had been made on the part of Russia, to give an atrocious character to the war worthy of the negroes of Saint Domingo, whilst Count Rostopchin, wishing to play the Roman, had displayed all the characteristics of a barbarian.

M. de Jakowleff, the Russian to whom Napoleon expressed these sentiments, disputed none of Napoleon's assertions, for having before his eyes, as he had, the horrible sufferings endured by the wretched inhabitants of Moscow, he was indignant with Rostopchin, and considered that such a war should be concluded as soon as possible, or, at least, conducted on a different plan. He urged upon Napoleon, as General Toutelmine had done, that he should make his pacific inclinations known at Saint Petersburg, and Napoleon, who desired nothing better, proposed to M. de Jakowleff that he should himself be the bearer to Saint Petersburg of a written declaration of the sentiments he had

just heard expressed. M. de Jakowleff accepted the mission with the utmost alacrity, and set out with a letter for Alexander, couched in terms which were at once courteous and haughty.

The inconvenience attending these overtures, was doubtless, that they displayed in some degree the embarrassments into which we had already fallen; but on the other hand it was certain that the Russian Emperor would be prevented by his pride, which had been deeply wounded, from taking the initiative.

In the meantime, General Sebastiani, who had replaced Murat at the head of the advanced guard, was compelled to acknowledge that he had been deceived by the Russians as effectually as at Borodino. In fact, whilst following Kutusof's army at first along the Wladimir route, and afterwards by that of Riazan, he had crossed the Moskowa at about eight or nine leagues from Moscow in pursuit of the Russians, and seeing always before him parties of Cossacks, and troops of regular cavalry, he had proceeded in a south-easterly direction as far as Bronitcy, a distance of twenty leagues at least, constantly mistaking the shadow for the reality. But having arrived at that point, he perceived that he had fallen into error, the enemy not being in front of him, and he frankly sent word to Moscow that he knew not where to find them. At the same time information was received that two squadrons escorting ammunition waggons, and advancing upon Moscow by the Smolensk route, had been surprised by a cloud of Cossacks in the environs of Mojaisk, and forced to surrender with their convoy. The alarm was speedily given along the whole route from Moscow to Smolensk, and a cry was already raised that the enemy had descended upon our line of communications, and was from henceforth in a position to cut off our retreat.

On receiving this information, which reached Moscow during the 21st and 22nd September, Napoleon was excessively irritated against General Sebastiani, notwithstanding the esteem in which he held him, and ordered Murat to proceed immediately to the head of the advanced guard, taking with him Poniatowski's corps, although it was thoroughly fatigued and worn out, in order that, being accompanied by troops speaking the Sclavonic tongue, he might the more easily discover the route of the Russian army. As the incursions of the Cossacks afforded reasons for believing that General Kutusof had executed a flank movement upon our right with the purpose of marching upon our rear by the Kalouga route, Napoleon directed Murat to proceed from

south-east to south, in other words, from the Riazan route to the Toula route, and to continue his march until he should receive information of Kutusof. At the same time, being unwilling to leave the search for the Russian army in the hands of Murat alone, he despatched by the Kalouga Gate, with orders to march upon Kalouga itself, Marshal Bessières with the lancers of the guard, Grouchy's cavalry, the light cavalry and the fourth division of Marshal Davoust's infantry; and finally, he threw back by the Smolensk route the dragoons of the guard, a division of cuirassiers, and the division Broussier of Prince Eugene's corps. He was himself almost certain that Kutusof would be found on the Kalouga route, being drawn into that direction by the double object of threatening our rear, and placing himself in communication with the richest provinces of the Empire. But although he was almost convinced that this was the case, he was nevertheless impatient to obtain positive information. He did not share the terrors of those who feared that we should be cut off, but he was resolved not to permit Kutusof to take up a threatening position on our rear, and was determined to go forth from Moscow to fight a second battle if the Russian General should take up a position too close to our army and the line of its retreat. Marshal Davoust, indeed, entreated Napoleon at once to combat and crush the enemy, and the Emperor was disposed to follow this advice, provided it could be executed without too protracted marches. He awaited, therefore, in a state of readiness for immediate departure, the arrival of information with respect to the new position which had been taken up by the Russian army.

We will now turn our attention to the plans formed by General Kutusof, and the movements executed by his army. The first intention of the Russian General on departing from Moscow, had been to adopt a medium course between all those which had been proposed, taking up a position on the French flank but refraining from turning too close to them, so as not to come too suddenly into contact with them. His first project, therefore, concerted with Alexander's aid-de-camp, the Piedmontese officer, Michaud, had been to fall back behind the Oka, a rapid river which, rising in the south, and passing by Orel, Kalouga, and Riazan, receives a number of tributaries, the Moskowa being one of them, and falls into the Wolga at Nijney-Nowogorod. But whilst the adoption of this plan would have afforded the Russian army a well covered position, and placed at its disposal all the resources of the southern provinces, it would, at the same time, have left open a vast field to the French foragers, and have infinitely added to the discouragement of the

Russian army, which had failed in its mission since it had not been able to defend Moscow. This army, in fact, began to be overwhelmed with despondency, and Kutusof, genuine Russian as he was, to be as unpopular with it as Barclay de Tolly.

Such was the state of affairs, when suddenly, during the terrible night of the 16th, the violent north-west wind carried to the Russian army, which was turning Moscow, the roaring and sombre glare of the flames of Moscow. The horrible spectacle, rising up from the horizon as the eruption of a volcano, drew the troops and the fugitive population of the city from their bivouacs, and as they summoned each other to view this terrible disaster to themselves and their country, their rage reached its height. The real incendiary, Rostopchin, and Kutusof who was not entrusted with Rostopchin's secret, but suspected it, hastened to declare that the French troops had caused the conflagration, and this calumny spread amongst the people and the troops with incredible rapidity. On all sides arose cries of rage; immediate vengeance was desired, and the troops demanded to be led immediately against the enemy. And thus, Rostopchin, whilst in burning Moscow he had deprived us of nothing, since there still remained in it sufficient roofs to shelter us, sufficient provisions to feed us, had nevertheless opened by this deed, an immense gulf between the two nations, excited against us the extreme national hatred of Russia, rendered negotiations impossible, and reanimated the energy of the Russian army, which the apparent uselessness of its efforts had begun to discourage.

This was not the moment, therefore, for falling back to any great distance from the French; and to have descended upon the Riazan route as far as the city of Kolomna would have been a course too apparently prudent, and uselessly so, for, occupied as it was in collecting the resources of Moscow, the French army was not in a position to follow and disturb that of Russia. Thus, when Kutusof had reached by the Riazan route the bank of the Moskowa, he considered that he ought to commence at this point his projected flank movement, giving a radius of ten leagues instead of thirty to the arc of the circle which he proposed to describe around Moscow, from east to south.

Taking advantage of some communications which had passed between General Sebastiani and General Raeffskoi, for the purpose of avoiding useless conflicts, he had given orders that all the wishes of the French should be complied with for the purpose of lulling their vigilance, and completely concealing from them the direction which the Russian army was

about to pursue; and, on the 17th, whilst a cavalry rearguard continued to pursue the Riazan route, and to draw in this same direction General Sebastiani, the bulk of his army suddenly changing its direction, turned from the south-east to the south-west, and advanced behind the Pakra, a little river which, rising near the Smolensk route, pursued a circular course around Moscow, similar to that which the Russians wished to describe about it, and which would serve very suitably therefore as their line of defence. It was behind this river then, and not behind the Oka, that Kutusof took up his position, establishing himself, not precisely on the line of our communications, but beside it, and within a day's march of it.

Such was the situation of the Russian army when the corps of Murat and Bessières commenced their search for it; Murat proceeding in a south-easterly direction, by the Riazan route, and Bessières a southerly one by the Toula route. The error into which General Sebastiani had fallen was speedily discovered, and Murat, turning to the right and ascending the Pakra, had speedily found the enemy's track, whilst Bessières, turning somewhat from the south to the south-west, arrived at Desna, where he found the bulk of the Russian rearguard, under the command of Miloradovitch. The French Generals had been ordered to push the enemy with extreme vigour, and consequently marched resolutely upon them, Murat, who had crossed the Pakra on the traces of the Russian army, threatening, in his turn, to take it in flank.

At the sight of Murat beyond the Pakra the courageous Benningsen was eager to rush upon and overwhelm him. But Kutusof, in addition to his jealousy of the proposer, had excellent reasons for declining this advice, for he was ignorant that Murat was present with only his cavalry and Poniatowski's infantry, and considering it very probable that he was accompanied by the whole of the French army, was unwilling to hazard the chances of an uncertain step at the moment when he was about to gather the fruits of the painful plan of campaign which he had adopted. From Kalouga he was about to receive considerable reinforcements of regular troops; from the Ukraine he expected the arrival of a superb division of veteran Cossacks, and the inclement season which was approaching would probably weaken the French army to as great an extent as the Russian army was about to by reinforced. Kutusof was theoretically right, therefore, in resolving as he did to fall back upon the Kalouga route as far as would be necessary to enable him to avoid Murat.

Pursuing this course of action, Kutusof at length arrived

at Taroutino, behind the Nara, a river, which arising near the Smolensk route, in the environs of Krimskoié, pursues a course around Moscow but describing a more extended arc than the Pakra, and thus, instead of falling into the Moskowa, ending in the Oka. Its banks are escarped, especially the right bank, on which the Russians were established, and Kutusof determined to take advantage of the natural strength of the position, to establish there an almost impregnable camp, in which he would remain until his army had attained a strength which would enable it to attack the French at an advantage. Bessières and Murat who had followed him thus far now paused, not as though they had renounced the offensive, but as though they awaited fresh orders.

It was an important moment for Napoleon, a moment which would probably decide, not only the campaign, but his own fortunes; and he ceased not, therefore, to ponder in the recesses of the Kremlin on the course which he ought to pursue. To expose the army to fresh fatigue in pursuit of the Russians without the certainty of coming up with them, appeared to Napoleon to be a plan perfectly inadmissible; and as the month of September had passed by without the arrival of any reply to the overtures which had been sent to Saint Petersburg, it was necessary either to make provision for the establishment of the army in Moscow, or to depart from their capital for the purpose of drawing near to his magazines, his reinforcements, and his communications with France, or rather Poland.

The idea of passing the winter at Moscow, at a distance of three hundred leagues from Wilna, three hundred from Dantzig, and seven hundred from Paris, with no certainty of being able to procure means of subsistence, and the probability of being blockaded, not only by the country, but by the whole strength of the Russian forces, was utterly discountenanced by all save Napoleon, who considered that in a retrograde movement he would be acknowledging to the world that he had committed a great fault in marching thither, and that he despaired of obtaining then that peace which he had marched thither to seek; and further, that to take such a step would be to lose, to a great extent, and perhaps altogether, that prestige by means of which he was enabled to hold Europe in subjection, to keep France docile, and preserve the confidence of his troops, and secure the fidelity of his allies.

It was not Napoleon's pride alone, therefore, which rendered him repugnant to the idea of making a retrograde movement, but his profound perception of his actual position

The check which his army had apparently received in the south, before Torres-Vedras, might be attributed to his own absence from the scene of the campaign, but should they encounter a similar check in the north, where he commanded in person at the head of his principal armies, it would be regarded as a sign that his career of victory had closed, and enslaved Europe, which awaited but the dawn of the slightest hope that he might be vanquished, would rise unanimously against him in his rear, and submerge the modern Pharoah beneath the waves of an European insurrection.

Napoleon had good reason, therefore, to be excessively anxious to quit Moscow only as an enemy who was executing a manœuvre, and not to quit it as an enemy who was beating a retreat. And for this purpose the only plan that appeared to Napoleon worthy of adoption, was that which should unite the four following conditions: first, certain and constant communication with Paris; secondly, the approach of the army to its resources of provisions, equipments, and recruits; thirdly, the preservation of the undiminished prestige of our arms; and fourthly, continued support to the negotiations for peace which had recently been attempted. These four conditions he had found embodied in a plan which his inexhaustible genius, strongly excited as it was by the dangers of his situation, had conceived, and which was worthy to be ranked with any which he had yet devised. This plan consisted in an oblique retreat towards the north, which, in combination with an offensive movement carried on by the Duke of Belluna upon Saint Petersburg, would have the twofold advantage of reconducting us into Poland, and of leaving us at the same time in an attitude as menacing as ever, and consequently as fully capable of negotiating.

Napoleon had reserved, as we have already seen, besides the army of the Prince of Schwarzenberg on the Dnieper, and the army of Marshals Saint Cyr and Macdonald on the Dwina, the corps of the Duke of Belluna in the centre, which awaited at Smolensk ulterior orders. This corps, which numbered thirty thousand men, and could be raised to forty thousand, by incorporating with it a portion of the Westphalian, Saxon and Polish troops which had not yet had time to join, and the batallions de marche destined to recruit the army, might easily be carried to the north of the Dwina by the Saint Petersburg route through Witebsk, and Veliki-Luki. By the junction of the troops under Marshal St. Cyr, and a division of Marshal Macdonald's, it would number seventy thousand men, at least, ready to advance upon the second capital of Russia, the seat of government; and the Prince of Wittgenstein could not but promptly fall back before them

upon Saint Petersburg. At the moment when the Duke of Belluna should commence his movement, Napoleon with the guard, Prince Eugene, and Marshal Davoust, would withdraw obliquely to the north, in the direction of Veliki-Luki, marching almost parallel to the Smolensk route, and at a distance from it of about twelve or fifteen leagues, whilst Marshal Ney following with his corps the direct route from Moscow to Smolensk, would cover our retreat, and Murat, stealing away from Kutusof by a movement on his right, would proceed to Mojaisk, and establish himself with Marshal Ney between Smolensk and Witebsk. After ten or twelve days march, in accordance with this profoundly devised plan, the army would be thus posted;—the Duke of Belluna would be at Veliki-Luki with seventy thousand men threatening Saint Petersburg, Napoleon with seventy thousand at Wielij, ready to support him, or to join the thirty thousand men under Murat and Ney for the purpose of making head against Kutusof by whatever route he might advance. By pursuing this route we should be taking a line of march untraversed by troops and consequently well provisioned, we should be driving the Russians in a direction they could not pursue without losing half their reinforcements, and without having suffered any loss, either moral or physical, would retrieve the error of the march to Moscow by one of the boldest and most finely conceived marches which had ever been executed. At the same time there was every appearance that the winter subsistence of the troops would be easily procured, for the magazines established at Wilna might be readily transported, the roads in winter being easily traversed, to Polotsk and Witebsk; and the immense quantity of cattle collected at Grodno would have no difficulty in arriving at Witebsk, since they would have to pass through a friendly country on their way to that place. And when the spring should have arrived, and Napoleon, having employed the whole winter in assembling new forces, should be ready to march with three hundred thousand men upon Saint Petersburg, it was most probable that the simple menace of such a march would be the means of procuring peace; and if it did not, we should be able to occupy Saint Petersburg, without danger of finding this second capital wrapped in a conflagration, for it was far less generally built of wood than Moscow, and Muscovite fanaticism, moreover, had not attained there to the same intensity.

Conceived and matured in the latter days of September, and the commencement of October, this plan, than which Napoleon's genius had never conceived anything more pro-

found and admirable, might, by immediate departure, have been completely executed by the 15th of October, when the weather would most probably be still favourable, and when it was in fact extraordinarily fine. But all Napoleon's most excellent plans during this campaign, were destined to be frustrated by his error of being advanced to so great a distance. Having already demanded so much of his soldiers, and his lieutenants, and being able after having brought them so far, to offer them only the ruins of Moscow, he was compelled to be cautious in his treatment of them, and in place of imperiously commanding them, as he had been wont, to endeavour to persuade them to look favourably on his projects. To troops amongst whom prevailed wide spread lassitude and profound despondency, the result of the terrible spectacle of Moscow in ashes, and of secret dread of the fearful Russian winter, which within a month would be upon them, it was necessary not to speak as an imperious master justified in his commands of daily success, but as one who concilates and consults, employing persuasions rather than orders. But when Napoleon submitted his plan to each of his lieutenants in succession, they protested, without exception, against a fresh progress northwards, an attempt against the second capital of Russia.

Napoleon's plan did not propose, in fact, to capture the second Russian capital, but an oblique retrograde movement upon Poland, and the assumption of a position behind a corps, which was, itself, not intended to advance against St. Petersburg, but simply to menace it. This was an essential distinction, but it was one which restless and desponding minds were not fitted to entertain.

Compelled, therefore, to abandon, or at least to adjourn, the sole plan capable of extricating him from his embarrassment, Napoleon permitted his thoughts to entertain various plans which at first he had regarded as entirely inadmissible, such as establishing the army in Moscow itself, and passing the winter there, or of placing a garrison in Moscow, and proceeding to take up his quarters in the rich province of Kalouga, from whence he would be able to extend his left to Toula, and his right to Smolensk. But to all these projects there were grave objections, which rendered him most anxious now for that peace which he had foolishly sacrificed to his pretensions of universal dominion, and which he now, although victorious, longed for as ardently as if he had been vanquished.

In the midst of these perplexities Napoleon conceived the idea of sending M. de Coulaincourt to St. Petersburg for the purpose of frankly opening a negotiation with the Emperor

Alexander, considering that whatever might be the embarrassments of his position, the fact of his treating from Moscow in the attitude of a victor, surrounded him with an air of power sufficient to justify such a step. But M. de Coulaincourt, who feared that the real difficulties of his position would be perceived through the disguise of this seeming power, and who feared, moreover, that he would not find at St. Petersburg the same favour which he had formerly enjoyed there, refused to undertake such a mission, affirming, and with reason, that it would not succeed. Napoleon then turned to M. de Lauriston, whose modest good sense he had too much despised, and directed him to proceed to the camp of General Kutusof, not for the purpose of negotiating peace, but of persuading the Russian Generalissimo to give the war a less ferocious character; not that this species of war embarrassed the French, for it had not prevented them from procuring subsistence, as was apparent from the abundance they were then enjoying amidst the smoking ruins of Moscow, but because they saw with regret a character impressed upon the war, which was simply political, a revolting character of barbarity and irreconcileable hatred.

Should these representations be listened to, M. de Lauriston was directed to proceed farther, asserting that the war had arisen rather from a misunderstanding than from actual causes of enmity, and was the work of the enemies of the two countries, who had fomented war between them to serve the purposes of England. He was to declare that terms of peace could be easily arranged, and that if Russia desired it they would not be rigorous. And finally, he was to exert himself to the utmost to obtain, at least, a provisional armistice.

M. de Lauriston set out on the 4th of October, having previously sent forward a letter to General Kutusof, announcing his desire for a personal interview with the General of the Russian army. On the same day he reached the enemy's camp. The prudent Russian General, surrounded by the most eager partisans of the war policy, and the English agents by whom he was eagerly watched, hesitated at first to grant a personal interview to M. de Lauriston from the fear of being compromised and called a traitor, as had been Barclay de Tolly. He sent, therefore, the Emperor's aide-de-camp, Prince Walkonsky, to receive and entertain the French General at Benningsen's quarters. But M. de Lauriston, offended at this proceeding, refused to confer with Prince Walkonsky, and retired to Murat's head-quarters, declaring that he would only speak with the General-in-chief himself. This sudden rupture of relations

somewhat disturbed the Russian staff; for the vehement national hatred against the French began to subside amidst the higher ranks of the army, and they were unwilling to render peace quite impossible. And even the persons opposed to peace regretted the manner in which M. de Lauriston had been treated, although for a different motive, —their fear that this offensive treatment might induce the French army to advance against them full of anger and determination before the Russian army had been reinforced or reorganized. The astute Benningsen, who united cunning with audacity, sought an interview with Murat, and by feigning a desire for peace which was not real, enticed the latter into making similar protestations, which were but too apparently genuine. Similar interviews took place at the advanced posts between the officers of each army, and a species of armistice was thus established, the result of which was that it was agreed on the part of the Russians to receive M. de Lauriston at head-quarters.

Kutusof received M. de Lauriston with much politeness, and held with him many and long interviews, in the course of which, he declared that he had employed his utmost endeavours to preserve the character of the war, that of a regular war between civilized nations, but he had not been able to compel the Russian peasants to comply with his wishes, and he was not surprised that he had found it impossible to civilize in three months a people whom the French called barbarians. To M. de Lauriston's representations with respect to the burning of Moscow, he replied that he was far from accusing the French, and that he himself believed that this great sacrifice had been the result of Russian patriotism. In answer to the hints respecting the establishment of peace, or even an armistice, he represented himself as completely powerless to negotiate, and as being compelled to refer to the Emperor. He proposed, therefore, and the proposal was accepted, to send the aide-de-camp Walkonsky to St. Petersburg, to convey thither Napoleon's overtures, and to bring back a response. With regard to the armistice, it was agreed, that although the Russian General could not sign one, the advanced posts on either side should cease to carry on hostilities.

Although Napoleon had little expectation of peace after the conflagration of Moscow, and the fruitless overtures which had been made through M.M. Toutelmine and Jakowleff, he yet considered that it would be well to await the lapse of the ten or twelve days which it was said must pass before an answer could be received from St. Petersburg. Persons thoroughly acquainted

with the climate of the country had assured him that the frost would not set in until the middle or end of November, and he could not suppose that by setting out on the 15th or 18th of October, he would be setting out too late. In the meantime he made those preparations which would be necessary whether he should eventually determine to fall back on Smolensk, or to pass the winter in Moscow. He ordered Murat to hold himself in observation before the Taroutino camp, affording his troops as much repose and as good subsistence as possible, and sent him, to as great an extent as the means of transport allowed, the provisions drawn from the cellars of Moscow. He ordered a fresh movement in advance of the troops left in the rear, and of the battalions intended to recruit the various corps. He gave directions for the formation of a division of fifteen thousand men at Smolensk, which was to advance upon Jelnia for the purpose of co-operating with him should he advance upon Kalouga. He recommended the Duke of Belluna to hold himself in readiness to undertake movements in any direction; gave directions as to the manner in which the stragglers who had been assembled at Wilna, Minsk, Witebsk, and Smolensk, were to be reconducted to the army; and began to take measures relative to the removal of the wounded, whom he directed Junot to separate into three divisions, consisting severally of those who would be capable of marching, by the end of the following fortnight, of those who were not likely to recover until after a longer interval, and of those who were too ill to be removed, and of those three groups he directed him, neglecting the first and third, to remove the second to Wilna.

At the same time, as he considered it possible that the army might pass the winter in Moscow, he directed that the Kremlin should be put into a state of defence, that some of the principal convents in the city should be fortified, that ample provision of ammunition should be prepared for the army's six hundred cannon, and that the surplus should be carefully managed so as to secure sufficient to last the troops during five or six months. He endeavoured to conciliate the peasants of the surrounding country by paying them a very high price for the provisions they brought in. He sought out the priests for the purpose of persuading them to reopen and celebrate divine worship within the churches of Moscow, and even to offer up prayers for the legitimate sovereign, the Emperor Alexander. And, for the purpose of soothing in some degree the anxieties of his officers, he reopened the theatres and attended at the dramatic representations, which were formerly the delight of the Russian nobility.

And thus, sometimes full of confidence, sometimes much depressed, he dwelt in the palace of the Czars, at the very solstice of his power, or in other words, at that undetermined period which separates the moment of the greatest elevation of the stars from that of their decline.

BOOK XLV.

THE BEREZINA.

STATE of public feeling in St. Petersburg—Interview at Abo between the Emperor Alexander and the Prince Royal of Sweden—Proposed manœuvres in the rear of the French army—Reinforcement of the troops of Finland sent to the Count de Wittgenstein, and junction of the army of Moldavia with the army of Volhynia under Admiral Tchitchakoff—Orders given to the Russian Generals to advance upon the two French armies guarding the Dwina and the Dnieper, in order to close the line of Napoleon's retreat—General Kutusof directed to decline any species of negotiation, and to renew hostilities as speedily as possible—Napoleon, although having little expectation of peace, delays at Moscow, from a repugnance to a retrograde movement which would degrade him in the eyes of Europe and render negotiations impossible—He inclines to the project of leaving a considerable force in Moscow, and of proceeding with the remainder of the army to take up a position in the rich province of Kalouga, where he might be in communication with Marshal Victor, removed from Smolensk to Jelnia—Whilst Napoleon is in this state of uncertainty, Kutusof, having refreshed and reinforced his army, surprises Murat at Winkowo—Brilliant engagement in which Murat redeems his carelessness by his courage—Napoleon, irritated, marches upon the Russians for the purpose of punishing them for this surprise, and sets out for Moscow, leaving it garrisoned by ten thousand men under Mortier—Departure from Moscow on the 19th of October, after a stay there of thirty-five days—Arrival of the army on the banks of the Pakra—Having reached this point, Napoleon conceives the idea of concealing his march from the Russian army, for the purpose of passing from the old to the new Kalouga route unobserved, and of thus reaching Kalouga without a conflict, and the burden of wounded which must result from it—He gives orders for the execution of this movement, which necessitates the definitive evacuation of Moscow—The Russian army, receiving timely information, advances to Malo-Jaroslawetz, on the new Kalouga route—Desperate and glorious battle of Malo-Jaroslawetz fought by the army of Italy and a portion of the Russian army—Napoleon, believing himself able to penetrate to Kalouga, is anxious to persist in his project, but the fear of a fresh battle, the impossibility of carrying with him nine or ten thousand wounded, and the remonstrances of all his lieutenants determine him to resume the Smolensk route, which the army had already followed on its way to Moscow—A fatal resolution—First rains and difficulties of the road—Toilsome march upon Mojaisk and Borodino—Dearth consequent on the exhaustion of the provisions brought from Moscow—The

army traverses the field of the battle of the Moskowa—Its melancholy aspect—The Russians pursue us—Difficulties encountered by the vanguard entrusted to Marshal Davoust—Nocturnal surprises by the Cossacks—Destruction of our cavalry—Danger incurred by Prince Eugene and Marshal Davoust in the defile of Czarewo-Zaimiché—Soldiers unable to keep up with the army from want of food and strength to continue their march—Movement of the Russians for the purpose of reaching Wiasma before the French army, whilst a strong rear-guard under Miloradovitch prepares to harass and seize its stragglers—Combat between the French army under Marshal Davoust and the Russians at Wiasma—Marshal Davoust saves himself from a position of great peril by his energy and the aid of Marshal Ney—The first corps, exhausted by the fatigues and difficulties it had had to encounter, is replaced by the third corps under Marshal Ney, thenceforth entrusted with the task of covering the retreat—Sudden cold, and the commencement of cruel sufferings by the army—Loss of horses, and the abandonment of a portion of the gun-carriages—Arrival at Dorogobouge—Napoleon's despondency and inactivity during the retreat—Information received by him of the movement executed by the Russians on his line of communication, and the conspiracy of Malet at Paris—Origin and details of this conspiracy—Precipitate march of Napoleon upon Smolensk—Disaster suffered by Prince Eugene at the passage of the Vop during the march of the prince upon Witebsk—He rejoins the grand army at Smolensk—Napoleon learning at Smolensk that Marshal St. Cyr has been obliged to evacuate Polotsk, and that the Prince of Schwarzenberg and General Reynier have permitted themselves to be deceived by Tchitchakoff, who is advancing upon Minsk, hastens to reach the Berezina, in order to escape the danger of being surrounded—Departure of the French army in three columns, and encounter with the Russian army at Krasnoé—Three days of conflict around Krasnoé, and separation of Ney's corps—Extraordinary march of this corps for the purpose of rejoining the army—Napoleon's arrival at Orscha—He learns that Tchitchakoff and Wittgenstein are about to effect a junction on the Berezina and to cut him off from every means of retreat—He hastens to reach the bank of this river—Serious deliberation respecting the point at which to effect its passage—At the moment when it appears impossible to find a suitable one, General Corbineau arrives, pursued by the Russians, and discovers at Studianka a point at which it is possible to effect the passage of the Berezina—All the efforts of the army directed upon this point—Praiseworthy devotion displayed by General Eblé, and the corps of pontonniers—The army employs three days in effecting the passage of the Berezina, and during these three days combats with the enemy both in front and rear—Napoleon's energy and manifestation of genius in this moment of peril—Heroic struggle and terrible scene at the bridges—The army miraculously saved, proceeds to Smorgoni—Having arrived at this place, Napoleon, after deliberation on the advantages and disadvantages attending such a step, determines to quit the army clandestinely for the purpose of returning to Paris—He sets out on the 3rd of December, accompanied by M. de Coulaincourt, Marshal Duroc, Count de Lobau, and General Lefebvre-Desnouettes—After Napoleon's departure, its disorganisation and the sudden increase of the cold complete the destruction of the army—Evacuation of Wilna and arrival of the staffs at Kœnigsberg without a soldier—Characteristics and results of the campaign of 1812—The real causes of its terrible disasters.

BOOK XLV.

WHILST the course of events proceeded as above narrated at Moscow, the Emperor Alexander, having withdrawn to St. Petersburg, devoted his days and nights to the conduct of the war, although he had renounced the direction of the actual operations of the army on the field; occupying himself with the general management of the campaign, with providing the necessary supplies, and extending the circle of his alliances.

As has been already narrated, he had refused to treat with the English until the moment of his final rupture with the French, but after the departure from Wilna and the return of Balachoff, he had no longer hesitated, and, the Prince Royal of Sweden conducting the negotiation, on the 18th of July peace had been signed between Russia and Great Britain, on the simple and brief condition of an alliance offensive and defensive, the manner in which this condition was to be carried out being left to circumstances. Immediately after the signature of peace, Lord Cathcart had hastened to St. Petersburg to be the English representative there; and under the auspices of this ambassador had been arranged an interview, which was the object of the most eager desires of the Prince Royal of Sweden, since it would afford him the opportunity of receiving the Imperial confidence, and the Imperial assurance that he should be maintained on the Swedish throne and be gratified by the acquisition of Norway. It greatly hurt Alexander's pride to hold an interview with such an ally as Bernadotte, but as it was of great importance to him to secure the co-operation of the Swedish armies, he had consented to meet the Swedish Prince Royal at Abo, the point of Finland nearest to the Swedish boundary; and on the 28th of August it had, accordingly, taken place there, in the presence of Lord Cathcart. Alexander took care on this occasion to make his Russian pride bend to the exigencies of the moment, and as the reward for his condescension persuaded the new Prince to consent to all the arrangements which

Russia desired. It was decided that the Russian corps at that time retained in Finland under pretence of assisting Sweden in obtaining Norway, should be sent to the Dwina, and that the Swedish army should be reserved to be thrown upon some point on the French rear; that the whole strength of the allies, in short, should be employed in combatting Napoleon, this being the essential object of the war, and the most certain means of securing to the future king of Sweden the possession of Norway. These arrangements having been made, the Prince Royal had then given advice to the Emperor Alexander which was as serviceable to him as injurious to us, and was expressed in terms of the most bitter enmity. Napoleon, he said, was not the profound military genius he was generally supposed, but was merely an impetuous leader who knew how to advance but not how to retreat, and might readily be vanquished by perseverance. After the Russians had lost one, two, or three battles, he continued, they would begin to fight drawn battles, and from doubtful engagements would proceed to victories.

Whilst Alexander was entering into these arrangements with Sweden, he had concluded peace with the Porte, on terms somewhat different from those which he had originally flattered himself that he would be able to obtain. After having successively desisted from his demands for Wallachia, for Moldavia as far as the Sereth, and finally for Moldavia altogether, he had finally persisted only in claiming Bessarabia, for the purpose of acquiring at least the mouths of the Danube, and on the alliance of the Turks, indulging in the chimerical idea of inducing them to invade the Illyrian Provinces, perhaps even Italy, in concert with a Russian army. The Turks weary of the war, and weary also of their relations with the European powers, had imprudently consented to yield up Bessarabia, which a few days' patience would have secured to them, but had resolutely refused to enter into any species of alliance with Russia. The treaty of peace, already signed, remained unconcluded only from this cause; and Admiral Tchitchakoff, finding himself frustrated in the hope of invading the French empire in company with the Turks, had devised the contrary plan of invading the Turkish empire itself, and had proposed to Alexander to march directly upon Constantinople for the purpose of seizing it; hoping that, habituated as the world then was to the overthrow of Italy, this magnificent conquest might be secured to Russia by the arrangements of the next peace. When this proposition was first submitted to Alexander it greatly excited him, and he was on the point of giving orders for carrying it into execution. But fearing, on reflection, that such an

action might displease, and even alienate, not only his declared allies, England and Sweden, but even his secret allies, Prussia and Austria, by laying violent hands on Constantinople, considering the difficulty of marching upon this capital with, at the most, fifty thousand men, the imprudence which he would be committing in invading another country when the invader was actually in his own, and the great advantage which might result from moving these fifty thousand men in conjunction with the thirty thousand under Tormazoff, upon the flanks of the French army, he had restrained his rash friend, Admiral Tchitchakoff, recommending him to defer his designs upon Constantinople and to march immediately upon Volhynia.

Such were the political arrangements which had been made by Alexander with those able to assist him, and with those possessing the power to injure him. On his return to St. Petersburg from the conference at Abo, he had received the news of the battle of Moskowa, and having at first regarded it as a victory, had sent a Marshal's bâton to Prince Kutusof, together with one hundred thousand roubles for himself, and five roubles for each soldier of the army, and ordered that thanksgivings should be offered up in all the churches of the empire. But he had speedily discovered the truth, and was indignant at the impudence of his commander-in-chief, although he did not dare to resent a lie which supported the spirits of his subjects. On receiving news of the capture of Moscow and the catastrophe which had overwhelmed it, he had experienced the most profound emotion; and the impression produced by this event had, indeed, been immense throughout the whole empire, especially in St. Petersburg, where it produced as much consternation as distress.

St. Petersburg, the artificial production of Peter the Great, the seat of government officials, of courtiers, of merchants, of foreigners, was not as Moscow was, the very heart of Russia, but was rather its head. At first it had desired war, regarding it only as a means of obtaining the renewal of commercial relations with Great Britain; but now that it had seen how long was the train it had brought with it, of sacrifices and dangers, it was far less eager for hostilities. It began to complain of the evils of the system of indefinite retreat, to accuse the Russian Generals of treason or of negligence, and the Emperor himself of weakness, and to seek relief for its terror in the use of the most bitter and violent language. General Pfhul could not appear in the streets without running the risk of being insulted; whilst General Paulucci, who was generally

regarded as the representative of opposite views, was received with the most cordial demonstrations of favour.

The idea that Napoleon would immediately march from Moscow to St. Petersburg universally prevailed, and preparations for departure were already commenced. In the meantime, the bolder spirits who desired war to the death, did not hesitate to declare that if Alexander should weakly hesitate it would be necessary to depose him, and to summon to the throne the Grand Duchess Catherine—his sister, and wife of the Prince of Oldenburg, whose patrimony Napoleon had seized—a princess of much beauty and spirit, reputed to be very hostile to the French, and residing at this period with her husband, governor of the provinces of Jwer, Jaroslaw, and Kostroma. The moderate party, on the other hand, was anxious that negotiations for peace should be at once entered upon, being terrified at the idea of seeing the French in St. Petersburg, the Emperor flying towards Finland or Archangel. The Empress mother, proud and hostile to the French as she was, had begun to grow timid and to entertain a desire for peace as well as the Grand Duke Constantine, who had quitted the army since the loss of Smolensk, and who was opposed to the plan of carrying on in Russia a war to the death such as the Spaniards had carried on against the French during the last four years. But the timid expostulations of the advocates for peace, amongst whom was now, strange to relate, M. Arcktchejef himself, formerly one of the most eager partisans of the war party, were completely overpowered by the fury of those who demanded a war to the death.

In the meantime, Alexander, profoundly distressed by the destruction of Moscow, and by no means certain that he would be able to defend St. Petersburg, might have yielded to the dictates of his despondency had not his wounded pride supported him. To yield still further to the imperious ally of Tilsit and Erfurt by whom he had been so disdainfully treated, was a humiliation to which his pride made death seem preferable; and he declared to his intimate associates that he and Napoleon could no longer reign together in Europe; that it was necessary that one or the other should retire from the world's stage. Weary of the chaos of discordant opinions which surrounded him, he had secretly taken the resolution never to yield, and proceeded to take measures which seemed proper to support such a resolution.

As the Russian fleet of Cronstadt would soon become enclosed in the ice, and thus become exposed to the danger of falling into the hands of the French, he determined upon the painful sacrifice of entrusting it to the English; and

having informed Lord Cathcart of his fears respecting its safety, declared that he confided it to the honour and good-faith of Great Britain. The English Ambassador, delighted at such a proposal, promised that the deposit should be faithfully guarded, and that the Russian fleet should be received with the most cordial hospitality in the English ports. Alexander, accordingly, having stored in it his most valuable possessions, had the fleet moved towards the Great Belt, in order that it might be able to leave the Baltic at the first signal, under the protection of the British flag. At the same time, much property belonging to the crown, especially the state papers, was conveyed to Archangel.

These precautions having been taken, Alexander proceeded to carry out measures, the probable effect of which would be either victory or defeat. He made arrangements with Sweden relative to the despatch to Livonia of the corps d'armée of General Steinghel, which had hitherto been retained at Finland, and, renouncing the attractive but dangerous plans of Admiral Tchitchakoff, ordered him to march upon Volhynia, to incorporate there with his own army the troops under General Tormazoff, and with the seventy thousand men who would thus be placed at his disposal to ascend the Dnieper for the purpose of concurring in a concentric movement, which had been planned, of the Russian armies on Napoleon's rear. Amongst the ideas suggested to him by General Pfuhl, was one which had particularly struck Alexander, and was that of operating on the flanks and rear of the French army, when it should have been enticed into the interior of the empire. And now that the French army was at Moscow was the time, if ever, to advance upon its line of communication, for the troops left in the rear had nowhere acquired a decided ascendant, and if Count Wittgenstein, after receiving large reinforcements, could succeed in driving back Marshal St. Cyr from the Dwina, and in advancing himself between Witebsk and Smolensk, whilst Admiral Tchitchakoff, leaving a corps to hold in check the Prince of Schwarzenberg, should ascend the Dnieper and the Berezina for the purpose of acting in concert with Wittgenstein, these two commanders might effect a junction on the upper Berezina, and there meet the French troops as they returned from Moscow, exhausted by a long march, and harassed by Kutusof.

Induced to adopt this plan by his interviews with General Pfuhl, and encouraged to persevere in them by his aide-de-camp Michaud, Alexander directed M. de Czernicheff to proceed in succession to Prince Kutusof, Admiral Tchitchakoff, and Count Witgenstein, for the purpose of inducing

them to concur in its execution. And being occupied, therefore, in such views as these, it was not probable that Alexander would make a favorable answer to Napoleon's overtures, which caused him much satisfaction, as a proof of the embarrassments which the French had begun to experience in the midst of Moscow, and which presaged, not only the safety but also the triumph of Russia. As, however, it was of importance to retain Napoleon in Moscow as long as possible, Alexander determined to delay his answer to those overtures, without allowing the enemy to suspect what would be its character.

In the meantime, Napoleon awaited the response to his overtures in the moral agitation of uncertainty, sometimes indulging in expectations of peace, but at length, when Alexander still continued silent long after he must have received the overtures made through MM. Toutelmine and Jakowleff, despairing of this result, and declaring that it was necessary to adopt decisive measures. The weather was extraordinarily fine, and equalled in clearness and mildness any autumn that had ever brooded in September on the plains of Fontainebleau and Compiégne. But in proportion to the present fineness of the weather would be the rapidity of the complete change which it must soon undergo, and the more necessary was it to make immediate preparations for the retreat. The troops of the army were thoroughly refreshed by the repose and the abundance which they had enjoyed, and were full of health and confidence; and it now numbered one hundred thousand effective soldiers of all arms actually present, and possessed six hundred pieces of cannon, well provided with ammunition. The whole state of the army was, indeed, thoroughly satisfactory, with the exception of its deficiency in the means of transport; for whilst the men were strong and healthy, the horses, but very meagrely supplied with forage, were thin and feeble, and in a condition which was a source of the greatest anxiety.

On the 12th of October, a date at which it was impossible that any answer to the communication made to Kutusof on the 5th should have arrived, Napoleon perceived that it was absolutely necessary to take some decided steps, and that he ought, if he intended to remain in Moscow, to drive back the Russians from their cantonments, and if he intended to depart to commence his retreat immediately, before the setting in of unfavourable weather. He had already ordered the departure of all the wounded capable of being removed, and given directions that everything should be in readiness at Smolensk to assist the progress of the army in whatever direction he might order. But still he hesitated, withheld

by the reflection that the first backward step which he took would be the commencement of a series of painful and dangerous confessions;—confessions that he had advanced too far, that he was unable to maintain his position at that distance, that he had deceived himself, that he had failed to obtain the object for the sake of which he had entered on the campaign. And what defections, what ideas of rebellion, would there be excited by the spectacle of Napoleon, hitherto invincible, compelled to retreat.

Shrinking from this danger, he constantly brooded over the idea of either passing the winter in Moscow, or of executing a movement which, while it conducted him nearer to his magazines, would have the appearance of being a manœuvre and not a retreat. The plan of passing the winter in Moscow was one of singular audacity, and was not without its partisans, the chief of whom was a man whose opinion deserved the greatest respect, and who was M. Darn, accompanying Napoleon as secretary of state, and in this character charged with all the details of the management of the army. This eminent administrator considered that it would be easier to feed the army in Moscow, and to secure its communications whilst it remained there, than to convey it safely and in good condition to Smolensk, by an unknown route, should a new one be adopted, or a devastated one, should it retrace the path by which it had advanced. The great difficulty was not how to find the means of subsistence, for the army possessed, as has already been observed, great stores of corn, rice, vegetables, spirituous liquors, and salted provisions; but how to provide forage for the horses, which were dying of inanition, and for whom it was found scarcely possible to provide food even at a season which was far from being the least favourable of the year. But even if this difficulty could be overcome, there remained the no less serious difficulty of maintaining the communications between the posts on the route from Smolensk to Moscow, for which purpose it would be necessary to convert each post into a fortress, and to garrison them with forces which would necessarily amount in the aggregate to twelve or fifteen thousand men, without taking into consideration those which would be necessary at Dorogobouge, Wiasma, Ghat, Mojaisk, and many other places of less importance, but which it would, nevertheless, be necessary to defend. And what would happen in Paris—what would take place in Europe, if, in spite of all the care which might be taken to keep open the communications, there should some day be no news of Napoleon, and if he should be separated from the empire as Masséna had been during the campaign in Portugal? And,

finally, supposing that all these difficulties should be successfully overcome, what advantage, it was asked, would the French have gained by being at the commencement of the succeeding spring in Moscow? In Moscow, which was one hundred and eighty leagues from St. Petersburg—one hundred and eighty leagues of the most difficult road, without taking into account the one hundred leagues between Smolensk and Moscow, and which would raise the number of leagues to be traversed by the reinforcements which the grand army would require when about to march for St. Petersburg, to two hundred and eighty leagues; whilst, if it took up a position at Witebsk, the distance which would thus have to be traversed would only be one hundred and fifty leagues.

But although there were, therefore, such serious objections to the plan of passing the winter in Moscow, Napoleon was so averse to making a retrograde step that he would not entirely resign this plan, and, whilst he sent away the wounded, so that they might not encumber his movements, he fortified the Kremlin and brought up reinforcements for the army.

In the meantime Napoleon's real inclinations pointed towards the execution of that finely conceived manœuvre, which, whilst it carried him towards Poland by an oblique march towards the north, would have placed him behind the Duke of Belluna at Veliki-Luki, and would have made him appear not as in retreat, but as accomplishing an offensive movement against Saint Petersburg. But, unfortunately, each succeeding day found the army more adverse to any movement northwards; and in the meantime, by the news from the south, it appeared that whilst the French forces remained inert, Admiral Tchitchakoff returning from Turkey after the signature of peace with the Turks, had traversed Podolia and Volhynia, and the neutrality of Gallicia having been secured by secret agreement with Austria, had penetrated as far as the bank of the Styr for the purpose of reinforcing Tormazoff; and that then having assumed the command of the united forces, which numbered sixty thousand men, he had compelled Schwarzenberg and Reynier, whose combined troops amounted to no more than thirty-six thousand, to fall back upon the Bug, and behind the Pinsk marshes, for the purpose of covering the Grand Duchy. Warsaw was once more filled with alarm, and exclamations that Napoleon had abandoned Poland, and complaints that he had not incorporated Lithuania with it, were made excuses for taking no active steps towards either sending recruits or matériel to Prince Poniatowski.

This being the state of affairs, and a movement to the

north, therefore, most objectionable; Napoleon devised a mixed combination, consisting in an advance upon the Taroutino camp, driving back Kutusof either to the right or the left, then advancing upon Kalouga, drawing thither the forces under the Duke of Belluna by the Jelnia route, or at least, a strong division already at Smolensk, and thus taking up his winter quarters at Kalouga, in the midst of a fertile country, in a somewhat less rigorous climate, in communication by his right with Smolensk, and by his rear with Moscow. At the same time he proposed to guard the Kremlin by leaving there Marshal Mortier with four thousand men of the young guard, four thousand men of the dismounted cavalry converted into battalions of infantry, with six months provisions, and to deposit there the heaviest portion of his matériel, his wounded, sick, and stragglers.

This plan, the execution of which would have been so far from bearing any resemblance to a retreat, that it would, on the contrary, have carried the French army into new provinces, which were the finest and the most central of all Russia, was not the one which Napoleon preferred, but was the one which appeared the most suitable in the existing position of affairs. A slight frost having occurred on the 13th of October, whilst the weather still remained as fine as before, it was universally declared that the moment had come when it was necessary to decide. Napoleon assembled his marshals for the purpose of receiving their advice, and Prince Eugene, Major-General Berthier, Darn, the minister of state, Marshals Mortier, Davoust, and Ney obeyed his summons; Murat and Bessières being absent, because compelled to be present before the Taroutino camp. The first question discussed by the council was the state of each corps, and the second, what plan of operations it would be most wise to adopt. The consideration of the state of the corps could not but be productive of sadness, for that of Marshal Davoust was reduced from seventy-two thousand to twenty-nine or thirty thousand; that of Marshal Ney, from thirty-nine thousand to ten or eleven thousand; whilst Prince Poniatowski's troops numbered no more than five thousand, the Westphalian two thousand, and the guard, which had not been in action, twenty-two thousand. In fact, inclusive of the engineer and artillery troops, the army which on its passage of the Niemen had numbered four hundred and twenty thousand men, and on its departure from Witebsk one hundred and seventy-five thousand, was now reduced to but little more than a hundred thousand. At the same time, however, the condition of the men was satisfactory, and they were full of courage, although rendered somewhat uneasy by the hazardous nature of the position which they occupied.

With respect to the plan of operations to be adopted there was much diversity of opinion; Marshal Davoust expressing himself strongly in favour of the Kalouga route, and intimating very plainly his opinion that the army had already delayed too long at Moscow, whilst Major-General Berthier, accustomed to make his opinions conform to those of Napoleon, and conscious of the preference of the Emperor for the northern route, proposed that the return should be upon Witebsk, the line of march lying laterally to the Smolensk route, by Woskresensk, Woloklamsk, Zubkow, Bieloi. Marshal Mortier, loyal and submissive, concurred in this opinion, whilst Ney, on the contrary, giving way to his natural roughness and indocility, reiterated Marshal Davoust's opinion that the army had already delayed too long at Moscow. Prince Eugene, too timid to maintain any opinion contrary to that of the staff as represented by Berthier, acquiesced in the views supported by the latter; and M. Darn, putting forward an independent opinion, declared that the army ought to remain at Moscow during the winter; since, he maintained, provisions of all sorts could be obtained then in sufficient abundance, and the adoption of this plan would relieve the army from the double inconvenience of a retreat, and a movement across districts which were either unknown or devastated, at an advanced period of the year.

When Napoleon sought the counsels of others he usually received them without remark, reserving his own opinion; and the perplexities in which he was involved were sufficient cause for his silence on this occasion. He was most anxious to remain, but he perceived the difficulty there would be, should he adopt that measure, in obtaining provisions for the army, and maintaining his communications, and at the same time, the approach of the bad season and the appearance of Admiral Tchitchakoff upon the Lower Dnieper, were forcible arguments against a movement northwards, and in favour of the plan of marching upon Kalouga, establishing the army in winter-quarters in this rich province, leaving a garrison at the Kremlin, and posting the Duke of Belluna at Jelnia, for the purpose of maintaining communications with Smolensk. This plan, therefore, was the one finally selected, but still the vague hope of receiving some answer from Saint Petersburg, the difficulty attending the evacuation on account of the want of waggons, the fineness of the weather, and the natural repugnance to commence a retrograde movement, caused a further delay of four or five days, and the final orders were about to be given directing the march upon Kalouga,

when on the 18th of October a sudden and serious occurrence caused the most unfortunate delay.

On the morning of the 18th, in fact, as Napoleon was reviewing Marshal Ney's corps, the firing of cannon was heard from the south, in the direction of the Kalouga route, and almost immediately afterwards information arrived that Murat, who had relied on the assurance given by the Russians that they would give him some hours' warning before recommencing hostilities, had been surprised and attacked that morning by the whole Russian army, and although he had extricated himself from his peril by means of courage and good fortune, that yet he had only succeeded in doing so with the loss of men and cannon.

Although Kutusof, whose army was now raised by the arrival of reinforcements to eighty thousand infantry and regular cavalry, and twenty thousand Cossacks, had determined to risk nothing against such an enemy as Napoleon, and only to attack him when he should have already been three parts vanquished by the climate, the position occupied by Murat was well calculated to induce him to break this resolution. Situated in the midst of a great plain, behind the Czernicznia ravine, Murat had his right covered by the deepest portion of this ravine which fell into the Nara, but his left was unprotected, since the ravine in that direction was not of sufficient depth to be a defence against an enemy's attacks. By taking advantage of a wood which extended between the two camps, and which would serve to screen its movements, the Russian army could easily debouch on Murat's left, turn him, cut him off from Woronowo, and might possibly succeed in destroying his corps, which comprised, besides Poniatowski's infantry, almost the whole French cavalry.

The ardent Colonel Toll had reconnoitred this position in concert with General Benningsen, and induced Kutusof to consent to the execution of a bold *coup de main*, the success of which would, he declared, so greatly enfeeble the French army that it would immediately sink into a great numerical inferiority to that of Russia. On the evening of the 17th of October, therefore, General Orloff-Denisoff, with a great mass of cavalry and many regiments of foot chasseurs, and General Bagowouth with his whole infantry, received orders to advance secretly across the wood which lay between the two camps, and to debouch suddenly upon the French left, whilst the bulk of the Russian army marched directly upon Winkowo.

This manœuvre had been executed during the night of the 17th, and on the morning of the 18th General Sebastiani had found himself suddenly attacked, and being unpre-

pared for such a movement on the part of the enemy, lost some pieces of cannon, several hundreds of men taken prisoners by the enemy, and a considerable quantity of baggage. But nevertheless, by means of prodigies of valour, in the course of which he dispersed Orloff-Denisoff's cavalry and sabred four battalions of infantry, and by means also of ill-judged tactics on the part of the Russians, Murat succeeded in falling back in safety upon Woronowo, as much a conqueror as vanquished, and in possession of the Moscow route. He had lost about fifteen hundred men, whilst the loss on the side of the Russians was about two thousand.

On receiving this information. Napoleon was excessively irritated on account of the carelessness of Murat and his lieutenants on the one hand, and the breach of good faith displayed by the Russians on the other.

At the same time he saw that the best means of chastising the latter would be to put into execution the proposed march upon the Kalouga route; and he, accordingly, immediately ordered Prince Eugene, Marshals Ney and Davoust, and the guard, to prepare during the afternoon of the 18th of October for departure on the following morning. Being unwilling to resign possession of Moscow, he directed Marshal Mortier to establish himself there with ten thousand men; and placed such of the wounded as were incapable of being removed, in the foundling hospital, under the care of the worthy General Toutelmine. He gave orders also to General Junot to hold himself in readiness to quit Mojaisk at any moment, for the purpose of marching upon Smolensk, to the governor of which place he wrote, directing him to throw upon Jelnia a division which had been formed of the troops de marche under General Baraguey-d'Hilliers, and ordered the Duke of Belluna to prepare to follow it. He took all those preliminary measures, in short, which would be necessary whether he should execute a simple movement upon Kalouga, retaining possession of Moscow, or a definitive retreat upon Witebsk and Smolensk.

On the morning of the 19th of October, the first day of this retreat which was to be ever memorable for the misery and the heroism by which it was to be signalized, the corps under Prince Eugene commanded the movement of the army, followed successively by those of Marshals Davoust and Ney, and the Imperial guard. The cavalry under Murat, the Poles under Prince Poniatowski, a division of Marshal Davoust's corps under General Fredericks, were at Woronowo, in front of the Russian rear guard; and General Broussier's division of Prince Eugene's corps had for some days past occupied a position on the new Kalouga route,

which passed between the old Kalouga route, now followed by the bulk of the army, and that of Smolensk.

The rear of the retreating army presented a strange spectacle, for after the immense mass of ammunition which had been provided for the abundant supply of six hundred cannon by which the army was accompanied, came a vast quantity of baggage such as had never been seen in motion since the barbarous ages when, over the whole surface of Europe, entire populations were wont to displace themselves for the purpose of seeking new territories.

The waggons of the country filled with prisoners, and the spoils rescued from the flames of Moscow followed each regiment, each battalion, and in the wake of the army moved a species of deplorable colony, composed of the French, Italian, and German families, which had dared to remain with us in Moscow, but feared to await the return of the Russians and had demanded permission to accompany us.

This strange and immense appendage to the army was a source of considerable anxiety and even alarm, for how, it was asked, would it be possible for the army to manœuvre, when burdened by such an incumbrance; and how, moreover, to resist the attacks of the Cossacks. Bound by these considerations, Napoleon was strongly inclined to give orders which would relieve the army from this source of embarrassment; but on reflection it occurred to him, that the accidents which would occur on the line of march, and the daily consumption of provisions, would speedily reduce the mass of baggage to more moderate dimensions, and that it was unnecessary, therefore, to distress its proprietors by rigorous regulations.

The army occupied the whole of the 19th in effecting its departure from Moscow, and had not, at the most, proceeded on its march more than three or four leagues on that day; but on the following day, the 20th, the weather still continuing fine, it was enabled by means of a forced march, to encamp between the Desna and the Pakra. Napoleon, who had remained at Moscow during the 19th for the purpose of superintending the evacuation, set out on the morning of the 20th, and having speedily arrived at the château de Troitskoié, there formed a sudden resolution of the utmost importance. He had set out from Moscow, not with the idea of beating a retreat, but with the intention of punishing the enemy for the manner in which he had surprised our troops at Winkowo, of driving him back beyond Kalouga, and taking up a position in this city, communicating on the one hand with the troops marched from Smolensk upon Jelnia, and on the other, with Marshal Mortier, who had been left at the

Kremlin. But as soon as he had glanced at the enemy's position he modified his plan with the most admirable promptitude. The fact was that there were two routes by which he could reach Kalouga; the one to the right, parallel to that of Smolensk, called the new route, passing by Scherapowo, Fominskoié, Borowsk, and Malo-Jaroslawetz, entirely free from the enemy, occupied by the division Broussier, and for the most part passing through countries which had not been devastated; the other, that which the French army was actually following, passing by Desna, Gorki, Woronowo, Winkowo, and Taroutino, in the possesssion of the Russians, who had established themselves upon it in a camp which had been carefully constructed; and the brilliant manœuvre which Napoleon now suddenly devised, was to avoid an engagement with the enemy, which would probably cost him twelve or fifteen thousand men, by secretly defiling in front of the Russian army, concealing the movement by making a sudden détour to the right, which would carry the army from the old Kalouga route to the new, and place it out of danger of attack from the enemy. But whilst the adoption of this plan would enable the French army to recover its endangered communications, and conduct it to the most fertile district it could possibly find in these regions at this season, it would involve the necessity of definitively abandoning Moscow, for should it adopt the plan of avoiding, instead of engaging and vanquishing the Russians, and leave them between itself and Moscow, unvanquished, and a hundred thousand strong, it would be unable to maintain Marshal Mortier in his position in the Kremlin, since it could not, in this case, send him aid. Napoleon, therefore, determining upon his line of action with all the promptitude of a great captain, immediately sent orders to Marshal Mortier to evacuate the Kremlin, to destroy it by means of mines which had been already prepared, and to rejoin the army by the Wereja route. At the same time he sent orders to Junot to evacuate Mojaisk with the last columns of the wounded by the Smolensk route, which the army was about to cover by its presence on the new Kalouga route.

These orders having been despatched relative to the evacuation of Moscow, Napoleon devoted his attention to the movement from left to right, which he had determined that the army should execute for the purpose of proceeding from the old Kalouga route to the new. He planned that the army should make this movement by the road running from Gorki to Fominskoïé by Ignatowo, and ordered Prince Eugene, a portion of whose cavalry and the division Broussier were already at Fominskoié, to make the first advance in

this new direction, Marshal Davoust to follow him, and the guard to follow Davoust. Marshal Ney, who remained at Gorki with his corps, with the Polish division Claparède and a portion of the light cavalry, was to replace Murat in front of Woronowo, to render himself conspicuous before the Russian advanced posts, and to make demonstrations in the neighbourhood of Podolsk, continuing this species of comedy until the evening of the 23rd, so as to deceive the Russians as long as possible and thus allow time for the passage of our baggage; and then was to carry his own troops from the old Kalouga route to the new by forced marches, reaching Malo-Jaroslawetz by the 25th.

The chief obstacle to the successful execution of this brilliant manœuvre consisted in the enormous bulk of the masses of men and baggage which would have to be moved. With such an army as Napoleon had commanded in Italy, or such an one as that led by General Moreau in Germany, such a movement as that which Napoleon had now devised would have been successfully executed and formed one of the most illustrious claims to glory of him who had conceived it; but the circumstances under which Napoleon had to attempt it were such as to render its execution a matter of extreme difficulty.

Having in this strange manner, then, and in a sudden moment of inspiration, as it were, resolved to beat a retreat and to evacuate Moscow, Napoleon passed the day between Troitskoié and Krasnoé-Pakra, for the purpose of personally assisting in ordering the defiling of the army, which continued to present a spectacle as extraordinary as it was a subject of anxiety, by reason of the burdens which encumbered its rear, and which, at every ravine, at every little bridge, at every village, caused a deplorable delay which gave ample intimation of the terrible consequences which might be expected to ensue when the army should be pursued by the enemy's innumerable light cavalry.

Prince Eugene's corps having been fatigued by the long march which it had executed on the 21st from Gorki to Fominskoié, it had been permitted to halt during the 22nd for the purpose of reposing and bringing up its baggage and being strengthened by the addition of Marshal Davoust's five divisions, which would raise its force to fifty thousand of the best infantry in the world. On the same day Napoleon himself proceeded from Ignatowo, where had passed the night of the 21st, to Fominskoié, and carried Prince Poniatowski's troops somewhat more to the right, for the purpose of forming a closer communication with the Smolensk route, by which was to be effected the removal of

the wounded and the matériel under the care of General Junot.

On the 23rd Prince Eugene reached Barowsk, and but a step was wanting to complete the execution of the manœuvre which Napoleon had planned on the evening of the 20th, for at Barowsk we were on the new Kalouga route. This little town was situated beyond a river named the Lougea, and by Napoleon's orders Prince Eugene sent forward General Delzons from Barowsk, which had been reached at an early hour, for the purpose of arriving at Malo-Jaroslawetz the same day.

In the meantime the Russian army remained with singular carelessness at its camp at Taroutino, perfectly unconscious of the humiliation which was being prepared for it, and supposing only that Napoleon intended to attack and carry Taroutino in revenge for the surprise at Winkowo. Nevertheless, the light troops of General Doctoroff having given intimation of the presence at Fominskoié of Broussière's division, which had been during some days past in occupation of the new Kalouga route, Kutusof imagined that the purpose of this division was to connect the main body of the French army, which was now distinctly visible on the old Kalouga route, with the troops which pursued the Smolensk route, and he resolved to seize it, considering it to be in a position very open to his attack. He entrusted the execution of the proposed measure to General Doctoroff, but the latter having advanced as far as Aristowo on the 22nd, believed that he had discovered before him something more considerable than a simple division; and as information, moreover, reached Kutusof on the morning of the 23rd, that French troops had been observed executing a transverse movement from Krasnoé-Pakra to Fominskoié, it became evident to the Russian General that Napoleon had abandoned the old Kalouga route for the purpose of reaching the new, and turning the Taroutino camp. To stop Napoleon at Barowsk, was not, therefore, any longer possible, and the only chance which the Russians now had of barring his road was by advancing to Malo-Jaroslawetz, behind the Lougea. Kutusof, therefore, ordered Doctoroff to proceed thither with the utmost despatch, and at the same time made the most strenuous exertions to assemble his army so as to be able to direct it by way of Letachewa, upon Malo-Jaroslawetz, the possession of which, it appeared probable, would decide the campaign.

On the 24th, General Doctoroff having passed the Protwa, a river into which falls the Lougea, below Malo-Jaroslawetz, arrived at day-break in front of Malo-Jaroslawetz itself, which

is situated on the heights, at the foot of which flows the Lougea, through a marshy channel. The French, coming from Moscow, had to cross the Lougea, then to climb the heights, and to maintain their ground in Malo-Jaroslawetz, whilst the Russians, marching by their left on the other side of the river, had to throw themselves into the town, and to drive us out of it, hurling us from the heights into the bed of the Lougea beneath them. At five o'clock on the morning of the 24th of October, the Russians commenced the attack, bringing up eleven or twelve thousand men against the five or six thousand under Delzons, and by means of this superiority succeeding in compelling the latter to give way. The brave General Delzons fell sword in hand mortally wounded; and Prince Eugene, sending General Guilleminot, the chief of his staff, to replace him, hastened himself with the division Broussier to retrieve the fortune of the conflict, leaving in reserve on the other side of the Lougea, the division Pino, together with the Italian guard.

The division Broussier penetrating into the town, chased Doctoroff's troops from street to street, and compelled them to fall back upon the plateau; but at this time the corps of General Raeffskoi, preceding the Russian army, arrived at the town, and immediately took part in the furious struggle which the Russians were making to check the French in their desired retreat upon Kalouga, nevertheless the French, although now only ten or eleven thousand against twenty-four thousand enemies, and exposed to a furious fire of artillery, held their ground. The unhappy town, which was soon in flames, was taken and retaken no less than six times, and the combat was carried on in the midst of a conflagration which destroyed the wounded, and calcined their corpses. At length, just as we were about to be finally driven back, the Italian division Pino, which had not hitherto engaged the enemy in this campaign, and which was most eager to distinguish itself, crossed the stream, and climbing the heights, reached the plateau in spite of a furious fire, and debouching on the left of the town, drove back the masses of the Russian infantry, but Raeffskoi's corps speedily attacked it, and, in spite of its firmness, it was in great need of reinforcements, when the chasseurs of the Royal Italian guard hastened up in their turn, and supported it with the utmost valour; and Malo-Jaroslawetz having been retaken for the seventh time by the French with the aid of the Italians, remained in our hands, covered with thousands of corpses and filled with smouldering ruins.

As evening drew on, however, it was by no means certain that the battle was over, or that the disputed point would be left in our hands, for large masses of the Russian army were seen advancing towards it at quick march. Fortunately, however, two of the divisions of the first corps arrived under the command of Marshal Davoust, and with this reinforcement, it was certain that the French would be able to resist all the attempts of the enemy; and in fact, the Russians perceiving the advance of reinforcements resigned all hope of being able again to dislodge us, and fell back somewhat less than a league, leaving in our hands the fearful battle-field, on which lay the corpses of four thousand French and Italians, and six thousand Russians.

Napoleon bivouacked a little in the rear of the Lougea, at the village of Gorodina; convinced that his finely conceived manœuvre, which would have been successful had he attempted to execute it at the head of less considerable numbers, was no longer possible without fighting a desperate battle, which would probably add ten thousand wounded to the immense encumbrances by which the army was already burdened. He passed the night deliberating on the favourable and unfavourable chances of a determined march upon Kalouga, and early on the morning of the 25th hastened to reconnoitre the position taken up by the Russians. Setting out from the village of Gorodina, surrounded by his principal officers, he had reached the bank of the Lougea, and was about to cross it, when suddenly were heard the tumultuous cries of a number of suttlers flying from a body of about four or five thousand Cossacks, who had passed the Lougea on our right, with a display of that skill in the art of surprise which is so distinguishing a property of these indefatigable savages. The Hetman Platow and the whole Cossack nation were constantly brooding over the idea of effecting the capture of Napoleon, and taking him a prisoner to Moscow; considering that hundreds of millions would not be too great a reward for such a capture; and on this occasion had but one amongst them been acquainted with the features of him with respect to whom they entertained this dream of avidity, it might have been realized. Rushing right and left, they thrust their lances against the imperial group, which fought sword in hand in a close circle around Napoleon, who smiled at the misadventure, when, fortunately, the dragoons of the guard, having perceived the danger, hastened up under the command of the brave lieutenant Dulac, and throwing themselves upon the enemy, sabred some, and drove the remainder beyond the Lougea.

Napoleon affected to consider this incident of no moment, and continued the reconnaissance which he had commenced; advancing close to the Russian army, which Kutusof had posted behind a strong ravine, thus throwing upon the French, should they venture upon an attack, the inconvenience of fighting with the Lougea behind them. Having carefully and silently studied with his lieutenants the enemy's position, Napoleon repassed the Lougea, and discussed with his staff in a farm of the village of Gorodina the plan of action which it would be most wise to adopt, and on the selection of which depended the fate of the grand army, and consequently that of the empire also.

He laid the question which had to be decided before the generals who were present, and permitted them to express their candid opinions upon it, for the serious state of affairs was incompatible with either reserve or flattery. Would it be better to persevere in the proposed line of march, and to fight another battle for the purpose of opening the way to Kalouga, or simply to fall back by the right upon Mojaisk, in order to regain the grand Smolensk route? To the former plan there was the great objection, that its adoption would compel the French army to fight a battle, which would probably cost it twenty thousand men, and reduce it to a dangerous equality with the Russian army, besides compelling it either to carry with it or to abandon some ten thousand wounded. But to adopt the latter plan, would on the other hand render it necessary for the French troops to make a march of a hundred leagues across a country which the Russian and French armies had already converted into a desert. A great portion of the provisions brought from Moscow had been consumed in the seven days' march to Malo-Jaroslawetz, and the remainder would certainly be finished during the three days which must still elapse before the army could reach Mojaisk. And thus, should this latter plan be adopted, there would have been uselessly wasted ten days' march and ten days' provisions, which, had the army made use of them, simply in pursuing the Smolensk route, would have enabled it to advance a considerable distance towards this city, or at least to have reached Dorogobouge, where it would have found the convoys sent to meet it.

But although it must ever be the subject of regret that this plan was not adopted, the French army could not and ought not to have ventured to put it into execution. The unanimous opinion of the council which now sat under the roof of an obscure Russian cottage, was in favour of an immediate and direct retreat by Mojaisk and the beaten Smolensk route; but Marshal Davoust, whilst fully sharing in

the opinion that it was absolutely necessary to renounce the attempt to force a path to Kalouga, nevertheless, proposed the adoption of a line of march which still remained open and which, lying between the new Kalouga route, occupied by Kutusof, and the Smolensk route, filled with desolation, passed by Medouin, Jouknow and Jelnia, across a country which was undevastated and abounded in provisions.

This advice, however, was received very coldly by Davoust's colleagues, who saw safety only in the line of march which led most directly to the Smolensk route, and which was that which lay by Mojaisk; whilst Napoleon himself inclined neither to the opinion of Davoust nor to that of his other lieutenants, still persisting in thinking that the best plan would be to give the enemy battle, to penetrate to Kalouga, and thus to establish himself victoriously in that fertile province, from which the Russians took so much pains to withhold us. The moral strength resulting from a victory would, Napoleon considered, compensate for the diminution in numbers which must necessarily be one of its consequences. At the same time he could not consider with composure the idea of leaving behind him in agony on the battle field some ten thousand wounded.

Perplexed, agitated, tormented by the opposite views which were presented to his consideration, he knew not on what course to decide, and in this moment of hesitation, with a familiarity which he sometimes permitted himself to display towards his lieutenants, taking hold of the ear of Count Lobau the old General Monton, he demanded of him what he thought of the various courses of action which had been proposed. Count Lobau immediataly replied that he considered it most advisable to depart as soon as possible, and by the shortest road, from a country in which the French army had already delayed too long; and the decided manner in which this opinion was expressed seemed to induce Napoleon to adopt the general opinion; but still he deferred making his final decision until the morrow.

In the meantime, Ney, having quitted Gorki during the night of the 23rd, was at this time defiling behind the main body of the army, and was two days' march distant from its head. Rain had suddenly come down during the night of the 23rd, and, softening the roads, had rendered the labours of the horses far beyond their strength. The bivouac was already cold, and everything wore the same sad and sombre aspect.

On the 26th of October, at a very early hour, Napoleon reconnoitred the new position taken up by the Russians, and found them to be making, apparently, a retrograde movement, with the purpose, probably, of taking up a better

position, and one in which they might more advantageously defend the Kalouga route. In the meantime, Prince Poniatowski having, unfortunately, attempted to advance along the Medouin road, the intermediate route which had been pointed out by Marshal Davoust, had experienced there a check which was not likely to recommend the adoption of this line of march; and Napoleon at length resolved to execute a direct retreat by the Smolensk route, and gave the necessary orders for its execution.

The definitive movement in retreat commenced on the 26th of October; and from this moment a feeling of deep despondency prevailed over the whole army, for they could no longer deceive themselves by the idea in which they had hitherto indulged, that they were executing manœuvres and passing through fertile countries for the purpose of reaching more favourable climes; since it was, on the contrary, quite evident that the army was making a compulsory retreat by a route which had already been traversed and on which the troops could only expect to meet with misery.

On the 27th of October the army was on its march from Malo-Jaroslawetz upon Wereja, the guard leading the way, Murat and Ney following the guard, Eugene's corps being next in order, and Davoust's bringing up the rear, and consequently having to encounter the largest share of difficulties and dangers; since it was embarrassed by the mass of baggage which the preceding corps left behind them in their haste to reach their bivouacs, to endure continually the fire of the enemy's artillery and the unceasing incursions of the Cossacks.

For the due performance of the harassing duties which thus fell upon the rear guard it was necessary that the infantry should be assisted by a numerous body of cavalry, but as Davoust found, at the third march, that Grouchy's cavalry was so excessively fatigued that there was danger of its total destruction, he determined to perform the services required of the rear guard with his infantry alone.

And now failure of the means of transport already began to strew the roads not only with baggage, but also with the wounded. For a few days the wounded had been carried on with the army by means of giving up all the baggage waggons to their use, without exception even of those of the staff; but at every step it now became absolutely necessary to leave some behind from the want of means of transport; and Davoust, who, stern and inflexible as he was, was distracted by this cruel necessity, stated his embarrassments to the staff; which, occupying a position at the head of the army, gave too little attention to what was taking place in the rear. In the mean-

time, Napoleon, who had long been accustomed to entrust the execution of details to his lieutenants, who had at this time no great manœuvre to order, and was, moreover, profoundly humiliated by the retreat which could no longer be dissimulated, began to remain perpetually in the midst of his staff, confining himself to the expression of blame directed against Davoust's management of the rear guard, declaring that he was too methodical and marched too slowly; and he added to the difficulties of the rear guard, by ordering, in his irritation against the Russians, the destruction of the villages on the line of march, and thus, as he neglected to confine the performance of this duty to Davoust's corps, deprived the rear guard of food and shelter which it might otherwise have obtained.

Three painful days were thus employed in the march to Mojaisk, but still the army was full of confidence, for the first difficulties of the retreat had fallen almost exclusively on the rear guard. From Mojaisk, seven or eight days' march would carry the army to Smolensk; and as the weather, although cold, was still fine, the troops hoped to find at Smolensk, repose, abundance, and good winter quarters.

Marshal Mortier had rejoined the army at Wereja, having, previous to his departure from Moscow, blown up the Kremlin and made an important capture, being that of M. de Wintzingerode, who was a Wurtembergian by birth, and who, having entered the Russian service, commanded a corps of partisans in the environs of Moscow. Believing that the French had departed, he had ventured into the city a little too soon, and had been taken prisoner with one of his aide-de-camps, a young man of the Narishkin family. When these two officers were brought before Napoleon he received M. de Wintzingerode with great sternness, deciding that as he was of the confederation of the Rhine, he was therefore his —Napoleon's—subject, and consequently a rebel, and should be tried by a military commission that he might be treated according to the rigour of the law. He behaved with more gentleness towards the younger prisoner, simply expressing his surprise that a young man of noble family should condescend to serve under one of those mercenaries by which Russia was infested. But Napoleon's officers, who regretted, for the sake of his own dignity and that of the French army, the manner in which he had treated M. de Wintzingerode, showed this officer the utmost civility and kindness.

The army having arrived on the Mojaisk heights bivouacked on the field of the battle of Borodino, and could not but experience, as it gazed upon it once more, the most painful emotions. In a peopled country a field is soon freed

from the signs of deadly strife, but in this instance the inhabitants of Mojaisk and the surrounding country having fled, there had been none to remove the fifty thousand corpses, the broken waggons, the dismounted cannon, the innumerable arms and pieces of armour with which the conflict had strewed the ground. The corpses were half devoured by beasts of prey, and swarms of carrion birds filling the air with sinister cries obscured the heavens. The frost which had begun to prevail during the nights had fortunately checked the dangerous exhalations which would have otherwise proceeded from the corpses; but had rather increased than diminished the repulsiveness of their appearance. The reflections inspired by this spectacle were of the most sombre character. How many had been the victims, it was said, and how futile the results! From Wilna to Witebsk, from Witebsk to Smolensk, and still on to Wiasma and Ghjat, had the army hurried for the purpose of engaging the enemy in a decisive battle at Borodino; this battle had at length been fought, and the army had then marched on to Moscow to reap there the fruit of its victory and had found there only a vast conflagration. From thence it had been forced to retreat without having forced the enemy to submission, to retreat without adequate resources, with the certainty of having to pass a painful winter in Poland, and with scarcely any hope of peace, since peace would scarcely be the result of a retreat which was evidently compulsory; and for such results as these had the earth been strewn with fifty thousand corpses!

Anxious that the troops should not be utterly overcome by so melancholy a spectacle, Napoleon ordered that each regiment should stay only during one night at Borodino. The army found there poor General Junot, who was suffering from his wound and still more from the contemptuous treatment he had received during the campaign, and whose troops were now reduced to little more than three thousand from the ten thousand they had numbered at Smolensk, and the fifteen thousand they had numbered at the passage of the Niemen. Whilst the main army was at Moscow he had devoted himself to the care of the wounded in the Kolotskoi Abbey, and had conveyed as many as he was able to Smolensk. There still remained, however, two thousand to be transported thither, and Napoleon, still full of solicitude as he ever was, with respect to the wounded, gave orders that every person, without exception, whether officer, cantinier, or fugitive from Moscow, who possessed any species of vehicle, should undertake the conveyance of a certain number of the wounded. The surgeon—Larrey—

whose goodness of heart knew no bounds, had already hastened forward for the purpose of bestowing on the wounded in the Kolotskoi Abbey, all the resources of his skill. He found there some Russian officers who owed their lives to his care, and when they expressed the extreme gratitude they felt towards him, he demanded of them as the sole recompense he would receive, that they would pledge their honour that when they should themselves be free, they would bestow upon other unfortunates who might then be in their power, such care as they had themselves received from the surgeon-in-chief of the French army. They unanimously gave the required promise, and it is known to God alone whether they paid the debt contracted with the best of men.

The rear guard quitted this frightful spot on the morning of the 31st, and passed the night of that day on the road leading to the little city of Ghjat. The night was extremely cold, and from this time the troops suffered bitterly from the lowness of the temperature. The enemy continued to follow us with regular cavalry, artillery, and swarms of Cossacks under the command of the Hetman Platow. But we saw nothing more of the main body of the Russian army. General Kutusof, since Malo-Jaroslawetz, had been as much perplexed as his adversary had been despondent, for whilst his prudence made him very unwilling to fight murderous battles with an enemy whom exhaustion and the elements would of themselves sooner or later overcome, he was constantly urged by presumptuous and passionate youth, and the English officers present in his camp, to adopt more decisive measures. The day after the conflict at Malo-Jaroslawetz, whilst Napoleon had retreated upon Mojaisk, he had himself retreated upon Kalouga, as far as a place named Gonzerowo, under pretence of covering the Medouin route, which he might have more securely covered by remaining at Malo-Jaroslawetz, his real object being to avoid a battle.

As soon as he had been informed that Napoleon had reached Mojaisk, he had determined to follow us, but taking the most northerly road, leading to Witebsk by Woskresensk Wolokolomsk, and Bieloi, he had uselessly pursued us almost to Mojaisk. Having perceived his error and retraced his steps, he had taken the Medouin and Jouknow route which was parallel with that of Smolensk, and by this route, which was the one proposed by Marshal Davoust, proceeded to flank the march of the French army, to harass it, and, if any favourable opportuninty should offer, to inflict upon it some decided check.

After having passed the night between Borodino and

Ghjat, Marshal Davoust proceeded to Ghjat itself. Each succeeding day increased the difficulties attending the retreat, for each day the cold became more intense. He had retained no portion of Grouchy's cavalry, and consequently the infantry, having to fulfil all the services required of the rear guard, had to perform the duties proper to the various arms of the service, and veterans as they were, they did perform them; sometimes checking the charge of the enemy's cavalry with their bayonets, sometimes rushing upon his artillery and taking possession of it, although they were soon forced to leave it on the road on account of the want of the means of transport, the same want gradually compelling us to destroy our own munitions, and to abandon the wounded.

This latter necessity, which was much aggravated by the cruel selfishness of the owners of the waggons to which the wounded had been entrusted, these persons frequently under cover of the night casting the helpless wretches on the road, was a constant source of distress, and had a most disastrous effect on all but the veteran troops. Murmurs arose that devotion on the part of the soldier was an absurdity, and large numbers of men leaving their ranks under various pretexts, joined that daily increasing and miscellaneous crowd which followed in the wake of the army, subsisting as it could, and which increased to an immense degree the labours of the rear guard.

On approaching Ghjat on the evening of the 31st of October, Marshal Davoust had been anxious to send out columns of infantry, as he had no cavalry, to the right and the left, for the purpose of obtaining provisions for the 1st corps and the famished crowd which followed it, but the enemy's cavalry appeared in such force on our flank and rear that it was absolutely necessary to renounce this prudent intention and to trust to chance for the means of subsistence.

Quitting Ghjat on the 1st of November, the Marshal knew that at the village of Czarewo-Zaimitché would be found a difficult defile, at which would arise a great amount of confusion, since it would be necessary to cross a little stream bordered on each side by marshes which could only be passed by a single narrow path. Foreseeing this difficulty, Davoust had written to Prince Eugene intreating him to hasten his march, and promising, on his own part, to delay as long as possible; but in spite of these precautions Prince Eugene's corps had fallen into the greatest confusion at the passage of this defile, and the bridge had broken under the weight. For the purpose of relieving in some degree the mass which encumbered the route, it had been attempted to ford the stream with some of the artillery waggons, and in some in-

stances the attempt had succeeded, but in others the waggons had broken down, and thus choking up the path, had raised the confusion to its height.

The 1st corps reached the spot shortly before nightfall, and a few minutes after its arrival a mass of the enemy's cavalry accompanied by many cannon came up and directed a vigorous fire as well upon the 1st corps as upon the column under Prince Eugene; rendering it necessary for Davoust and his generals, and the soldiers of the division Gerard, to pass the night, without either food or sleep, in checking and driving back the enemy, re-establishing the broken bridge, and throwing chevalets across the stream at various points.

On the following day, the 2nd of November, at daybreak, Marshal Davoust again urged Prince Eugene to advance with the utmost despatch, so that he might arrive at an early hour on the 3rd at Wiasma, where Napoleon, who had been there since the 31st of October, waited with impatience the arrival of the rear guard, and where there was reason to fear an encounter with the main body of the Russian army, debouching by the Jouknow route. At the close of the day Fédérowkoié, a place very little distant from Wiasma, had been reached, and it was agreed that Prince Eugene should set out from thence at three o'clock on the following morning. Unfortunately Prince Eugene was not endowed with sufficient vigour to carry out this arrangement, and it was past six o'clock before his troops were in motion.

At the distance of a league and a half from Wiasma the enemy became suddenly visible on the left, and opened fire on the miscellaneous crowd which followed the army, and was followed in turn by the extreme rear guard. At every discharge arose frightful shrieks from the helpless crowd, composed of unarmed soldiers, of sick and wounded men, of women and children. The 4th corps, that of Prince Eugene, urged it forward even with cruelty, and had just succeeded in defiling in its entirety, when, taking advantage of the interval between the two brigades of the division Delzons, a portion of the enemy's cavalry threw itself across and blocked up the road.

A brigade of the division Delzons and the remainder of Poniatowski's troops were thus checked in their advance and thrown back upon the head of the 1st corps, the five divisions of which were advancing in good order under the command of Marshal Davoust himself; and numbering fifteen thousand, to which they had been reduced from the twenty-eight thousand they numbered at Moscow, and the seventy-two thousand who filled their ranks at the passage of the Niemen.

The brave General Gerard, whose division formed the

advanced guard, perceiving that the rear of the 4th corps had been surprised and thrown back, hastened forward, under a vigorous fire, to seize the enemy's cannon, and the Russian cavalry immediately fled before him. Behind this cavalry was drawn up in order of battle the infantry under Prince Eugene of Wurtemburg, but as the division Gerard immediately marched upon it whilst Delzon's second brigade and the remainder of the Polish troops threatened to take it in flank, Miloradovitch, who commanded it, did not dare to hold his position and withdrew to the left of the road, thus leaving it open.

Delzon's second brigade and the Polish troops having been thus delivered by the 1st corps, hastened to enter Wiasma, which town it would have been advisable to traverse, if possible, without a conflict with the enemy, but as fresh masses of the enemy were visible every moment flanking the route, and the bulk of the Russian army appeared in the direction of Jouknow, a combat was inevitable, and it became necessary to make the requisite preparations.

At the sound of the cannonade Marshal Ney had halted his corps at the moment it was leaving Wiasma, and, having proceeded in person to Davoust and Eugene, had arranged with them that he should deploy in front of the Jouknow route for the purpose of checking Kutusof, who, in fact, had arrived with the bulk of the Russian army, whilst Eugene posted the division Broussier between Wiasma and Davoust's corps, and the latter took up a position on the left of the route, for the purpose of making head against Miloradovitch. All the troops which were not required to be in line, together with the baggage and the stragglers, being directed to cross the river which divided Wiasma into two parts and was called by the same name, as soon as possible, and to hasten to gain the Dorogobouge route.

A little river, a tributary of the Wiasma, formed a natural defence around the city on the Jouknow side, and behind this little river Ney took up his position with the divisions Razout and Ledru, now reduced to six thousand men, whilst Broussier's troops formed the connecting link between Wiasma and Davoust's corps, which was drawn up in order of battle on the flank of the route, and possessed only forty serviceable pieces of cannon, although it had carried with it one hundred and twenty-seven.

A furious cannonade was exchanged between the opposed troops, but the nature of the ground being so marshy as it was, the Russian General, Miloradovitch, dared not to attack the imposing line of our veterans; as the night advanced, therefore, we retreated upon Wiasma, where a second

contest awaited us, a portion of the town having been invaded by the enemy, and where considerable confusion was caused amongst our troops by the fact that there were only two bridges across the Wiasma—one in the town and the other beyond it.

The French troops that had now entered Wiasma found no provisions there, all the resources which it had contained having been already exhausted by the guard and the various corps which had previously traversed it. In the cold and gloomy hours of the night, therefore, our troops had to plunge into a wood for shelter, and lighting three huge fires, prepared a meal of horse-flesh. And now, the troops under Marshal Davoust having during fifteen days formed the rear guard, Napoleon determined to replace them by Ney's corps; not because a sense of justice impelled him to give the former repose; but because, according to him, they had marched too slowly. In the midst of the guard, which marched at the head of the army, and consumed such provisions as could be procured from the country they traversed, leaving dead horses as the sole means of subsistence for those who followed, he saw nothing of the retreat, and wished to see nothing of it, for to have done so would have been to gaze too closely on the consequences of his own faults. Instead of taking an active part in the conduct of the retreat and bearing the brunt of the terrible evils of which he was the author, he remained two marches in advance of the rear guard, and sometimes on horseback, sometimes on foot, but most frequently in a carriage, between Berthier, who was plunged in consternation, and Murat, who was almost annihilated by terror, he passed whole days without uttering a word—only rising at intervals from the abyss of gloomy reflections in which he was sunk, to utter complaints of his lieutenants, as though he could still deceive any one by blaming others than himself. When he received Marshal Davoust, whom he had not conversed with since the departure from Malo-Jaroslawetz, it was with the most bitter reproaches; whilst the latter, who, although moulded to the obedience of the time, possessed a proud spirit which no authority could bend, defended with bitterness the honour of the 1st corps, asserting the merit, not of his own services, but of those of his glorious lieutenants. Napoleon listened to the Marshal's defence in silence, but up to the time of his departure from the army, refrained from holding any further intercourse with him. As Masséna had been accused of being the cause of the misfortunes in the Peninsula, Davoust was now accused of being the cause of those which had attended the retreat, which, during fifteen days he had

conducted with the most indefatigable vigilance, the most unshrinking firmness.

On the 5th of November Napoleon arrived at Dorogobouge, Prince Eugene's corps reaching it on the 6th, and the other corps on the 7th and 8th. The cold had for some time past been very bitter, but not of a deadly intensity, but on the 9th a sudden and violent snow storm cruelly increased the general misery. Except in the ranks of the rear guard, which Davoust had conducted with inflexible firmness, and which Ney now conducted with an energy which no suffering could subdue, the sentiment of duty began to be utterly neglected in the ranks of the army. All the wounded had been left behind, and certain of the allied troops, to whom had been entrusted the Russian prisoners, had relieved themselves of the charge by destroying them. Seized by that contagious selfishness which is ever so sad and striking a feature in great calamities, immense numbers of soldiers deserted from their ranks to seek the means of subsistence, and to increase the disorderly and unarmed crowd which followed the army, and which numbered at the departure from Dorogobouge about fifty thousand persons. More than ten thousand soldiers had already been left dead on the route; there remained scarcely fifty thousand under arms, and all the cavalry, with the exception of that of the guard, was dismounted. But there remained only three more marches between the army and Smolensk, and there the army hoped to find magazines, provisions, clothing, shelter, reinforcements, and fortified walls. This hope supported the courage of the army, and Smolensk! Smolensk! was the universal cry.

But at Dorogobouge Napoleon received the most unfavourable news; unfavourable with respect to the course of military operations on the wings, and unfavourable with respect to affairs in France, where the government had been audaciously attacked.

On the two wings of the army the plans of the enemy had been completely developed. Admiral Tchitchakoff, after having joined Tormazoff with about thirty thousand men, and assumed the command of the two armies, had commenced operations on the offensive against the Prince of Schwarzenberg and General Reynier, who commanded with much unity but without much energy, the Austro-Saxon corps; driving them before him from the line of the Styr to that of the Bug. At the same time the allied generals were scarcely to blame, for General Reynier could not be more enterprising than the Prince de Schwarzenberg, and the latter could scarcely have done more than he did. Had he received a reinforcement of

ten thousand men he might have displayed greater hardihood, but the Austrian government, resolved to observe the terms of the agreement it had made with Russia, was far from desirous of increasing the auxiliary corps with which it had furnished Napoleon, and would only consent to raising it to thirty thousand by a reinforcement of five or six thousand.

The allied generals were in a position which formed their usual asylum, behind the marshes of Pinsk, when Prince Schwarzenberg having received information of the approach of these five or six thousand men by Zamosa, left General Reynier in position and proceeded to meet them. Having united these troops with his own he returned to Reynier, who, on his part awaited a reinforcement of twelve or thirteen thousand men, the division Durutte, which he expected to arrive by way of Warsaw. In the meantime Admiral Tchitchakoff, in conformity with the Emperor Alexander's instructions which had been sent to him by M. de Czernecheff, had left General Sacken with twenty-five thousand men in front of the allied generals, and had marched with thirty-five thousand upon the upper Berezina, for the purpose of acting in concert with Count Wittgenstein, who had been directed to repulse Marshal St. Cyr from the banks of the Dwina, and to advance to meet the army of Moldavia.

Whilst this was the condition of affairs on the right, that on the left, or in other words, on the lower and upper Dwina, was still worse. Marshal Macdonald, after having remained during the months of September and October close to Dunabourg, with a Polish division of seven or eight thousand men for the twofold purpose, in pursuit of which he was entirely unsuccessful, of covering the siege of Riga, and maintaining communications with Marshal St. Cyr, had withdrawn towards the lower Dwina, for the purpose of supporting the Prussians against the troops of Finland, which had been carried to Livonia according to the arrangement made by Russia with Sweden, and being from this moment thrown out of the radius of the operations of the grand army found itself condemned to a long period of inaction.

At Polotsk itself the progress of affairs had been still more disastrous. The Finland troops embarked for Revel had landed in Livonia, marched upon Riga, seconded General Essen in the demonstrations which had recalled Marshal Macdonald to the lower Dwina, and then ascended this river to the number of twelve thousand men, under the Count de Steinghel. Wittgenstein, reinforced by these troops and some militia, which raised the strength of his corps to forty-eight thousand men, had resolved to assume the offen-

sive for the purpose of obliging Marshal St. Cyr to evacuate Polotsk, and to act in concert with Admiral Tchitchakoff on the upper Berezina. In conformity with the plan of operations sent to St. Petersburg, the Count de Steinghel was to cross the Dwina below Polotsk for the purpose of harassing the rear of Marshal St. Cyr, and thus rendering more easy the execution of the direct operations which were in preparation against him. Marshal St. Cyr's whole force only amounted to twenty-two thousand men at the most, whilst that of the enemy against which he had to defend himself amounted to forty-five thousand, of whom thirty-three thousand were to attack him in front and twelve thousand to take him in reverse.

The city of Polotsk, situated, as we have already said, within the angle formed by the Polota and the Dwina towards their confluence, had been covered by defensive works of considerable strength. On the left, the Polota, which protected the front of the position, and the greater part of the town was furnished with well armed redoubts, whilst on the right, in the opening of the angle formed by the two rivers, earth-works had been thrown up. Behind the works on the Polota, which were the most easy to defend, Marshal St. Cyr had placed the Swiss and Croatian troops; and on the right, towards the opening of the angle, where it was most probable that the enemy's attack would be successful, the French divisions Legrand and Maison. The Bavarians were on this side of the Dwina with the cavalry. Many bridges crossing the river offered a means of retreat to the army should it be necessary to fall back.

This was the position in which Marshal St. Cyr firmly awaited the two attacks with which he was threatened, and towards which the enemy advanced on the morning of the 18th.

In accordance with the advice of General Diebitch, a young, able, and zealous officer, destined at a later period to acquire great renown, Wittgenstein carried the best and larger portion of his troops upon our right towards the opening of the angle formed by the Polota and the Dwina, for the purpose of drawing our whole force towards this most accessible part of our position, and then seizing with the remainder of his troops the Polota, which would then be undefended.

The Russians having debouched boldly on our right, advanced without hesitation towards that portion of the town which was unprotected by the Polota, and were vigorously encountered by the divisions Legrand and Maison, the latter of which, in a more exposed position than the former,

maintained its ground with the utmost firmness although assailed on every side, and at length succeeded in driving back the enemy to a considerable distance. The division Legrand acted with equal vigour, and the Russians were not only completely checked, but repulsed. In the meantime, Marshal St. Cyr had been sufficiently prudent not to leave his left unprotected, and when the remainder of the Russian troops, debouching in their turn, threw themselves upon the Polota redoubts, they were permitted to approach to the very foot of the works, and were overwhelmed by their fire. On this point, therefore, as on the other, in spite of some confusion caused by the over eagerness of the Swiss troops, the army of Count Wittgenstein was repulsed with a loss of from three to four thousand men, our own loss being about half this number.

Had he not been threatened by an attack in the rear by the corps under the command of Count Steinghel, Marshal St. Cyr would have considered himself well established on the Dwina; but this corps, after having passed the Dwina, ascended the left bank for the purpose of effecting a junction under Polotsk with a portion of Wittgenstein's forces, and in the presence of this danger of a double attack on both banks of the Dwina, Marshal St. Cyr considered that it would be wrong to persist in maintaining his position any longer, and evacuated Polotsk, therefore, during the night, with the intention of retreating in good order behind the Oula (which the Lepel canal unites with the Berezina), where he hoped to meet the Duke of Belluna.

The Duke of Belluna, in fact, after having long hesitated between Admiral Tchitchakoff, who came by the south, and Generals Wittgenstein and Steinghel, who came by the north, had been decided at length by what had taken place at Polotsk to hasten to the north, for the purpose of affording succour to Marshal St. Cyr. And as, unfortunately, the new arrangement which had changed the route of the army, had posted him, not at Witebsk, but at Smolensk, he had to traverse a very considerable space of ground to arrive at Lepel.

Thus at the end of October, two armies, consisting respectively of thirty-five thousand and forty-five thousand men, were on the point of effecting a junction on the upper Berezina, and closing the line of our retreat with eighty thousand men, a state of things of which the danger could only be removed by the junction and victory of Marshals Oudinot and Victor.

A great addition to Napoleon's sources of anxiety consisted in the fact that the abundance which the army had hoped to find at Smolensk did not actually exist there

for the active transport service which had been established by M. de Bassano from Kowno to Minsk by Wilna, had been chiefly employed in the conveyance of spirituous liquors and munitions of war, as it was confidently believed that sufficient corn would be found in Lithuania; but when an extensive requisition had been issued to the Lithuanian farmers for the corn which our commissariat required, they had made the want, either real or pretended, of waggons, a reason for neglecting to satisfy the demand.

In the meantime Napoleon received news from France which was of a still graver character; for France, which he had left so tranquil, so submissive, had been within the possibility of being torn from his grasp by an audacious maniac, whose easy success during a few hours proved how completely everything at this period in France depended on a single life;—a life incessantly threatened not by poignards but by bullets.

There had been detained during many years in the prisons of the conciergerie, an old officer, General Malet, an ardent and sincere republican, formed, as were so many men of his time and birth, in the school of J. J. Rousseau, who had been made a General by the republic, and could not pardon Napoleon for having destroyed it. The domination of a single idea renders a man mad or capable of extraordinary actions, and frequently produces both results simultaneously. The sole idea which filled the mind of General Malet was, that a ruler who was constantly making war would most probably one day be shot, and, that armed with news of this event, whether true or invented, he—General Malet—would easily seize the whole authority of the state, and compel the nation to accept another form of government, since the whole existing power lay in Napoleon himself alone. Completely governed by this idea, he never ceased to form plans for the purpose of surprising the authorities with fabricated news of Napoleon's proclaiming a new form of government, and inducing the nation, weary of despotism, silence, and war, to submit to it. Having, at length, in 1807 and 1809 almost determined to put his plan into execution, he was betrayed to the police and placed in confinement in Paris. As a prisoner he still brooded over the same idea, and being convinced that the moment when Napoleon was in Moscow was a most favourable time for putting his plan into execution, he proceeded to carry it out with incredible avidity.

In the Maison de Santé near the porte Saint Antoine, in which he had been confined, he had formed an intimacy with a priest who was animated by sentiments similar to his own, and with his assistance he selected two young men; very

innocent but very bold, and ignorant of his secret, whom he designed to employ as his aides-de-camp. By the assistance of these young persons he procured uniforms and pistols, and on the evening of the 22nd October, the day on which Napoleon was manœuvring around Malo-Jaroslawetz, he escaped by a window from the place in which he had been confined (the priest, his colleague, having already fled), ran to the lodging where the two young men awaited him, dressed one of them as an aide-de-camp, clothed himself in the uniform of a general, told them that Napoleon had died at Moscow on the 7th October; that the senate assembled that night had voted the re-establishment of the Republic; and then, displaying false orders which had been carefully prepared in his prison, proceeded to the Popincourt barrack, then occupied by the tenth cohort of the national guard, commanded by an old officer of the Revolution, named Soulier, who had served and acquired honour in Spain. General Malet had this officer awakened, and then proceeded to his bedside, feigning to be General Lamotte, declaring that Napoleon was dead, slain at Moscow by a ball on the 7th October; that the senate had secretly assembled, decided on the re-establishment of the Republic, and named General Malet commander of the public force in Paris; and that he, the speaker, had been sent to assume the command of the 10th legion to carry into execution certain orders on various points of the capital. This news was received by Soulier and the troops under his command, to whom he immediately communicated it, with extreme surprise, but without doubt, and the supposed commands were met by unhesitating obedience.

General Malet—the pretended General Lamotte—conducted the legion to the *Force* before daybreak; sent for the governor, showed him an order of release for Generals Lahorie and Guidal, obtained their deliverance with the utmost ease, embraced them, declared the wonderful news, and pretending to share the delight which it caused them, showed them the decree of the senate, and pointed out to them the manner in which they were to act. Guidal was to proceed to seize the minister of war, and Lahorie the minister of police, whilst he, Malet, seized General Hulin, governor of the fortifications. Malet then sent one of his young men to Frochot, the prefect of the Seine, with the pretended decrees of the senate and an order to prepare the Hotel de Ville for the sittings of the provisional government; and despatched the other to one of the regiments of the garrison, with orders to the Colonel to seize all the barriers of Paris, and to let no one either enter or depart.

The minister of police having passed the night in sending off despatches, had given strict orders that he should on no account be disturbed; General Lahorie, therefore, having entered his hotel, burst open the door of his chamber, and appearing before the surprised minister, with whom he had served and been on terms of friendship, exclaimed, "Surrender without resistance, for I love you and am unwilling to injure you. The Emperor is dead, the empire is abolished, and the senate has re-established the Republic." The Duke of Rovigo replied that he must be mad, that a letter which had arrived the previous evening from the Emperor, disproved the assertion, and that its author must be an impostor. Somewhat moved by the Duke's assertions, although he still persisted in his own belief, Lahorie ran to consult with Guidal, and returning with him, repeated his assertions, commanded the minister to be silent, and sent him to the conciergerie, to which place the prefect of police had already been sent by similar means.

Up to this point the plot had succeeded well, but the arrest of the minister of police had somewhat delayed that of the minister of war, and General Malet himself lost time in effecting that of General Hulin, the governor of the place de Paris, whom he had surprised in bed, and to whom he had made the same assertions which had already met with so much success. General Hulin had received without hesitation the news of Napoleon's death, but was reluctant to believe that the Republic had been re-established by a decree of the senate, and demanded of General Malet the production of his orders, when the latter—more faithful to his plan than his accomplices had been—replied to General Hulin that he would show them to him in his cabinet, and accompanying him thither shot him down with a pistol. From the cabinet Malet proceeded to the chief of the staff, Doucet, repeated his tale, announced to him his elevation to the grade of general, and demanded of him the immediate surrender of the command of the fortress. But at this point of his undertaking his nerves began to give way, he hesitated, lost time, and encouraged by his manner an incredulity which he failed to overwhelm by an absolute affirmation of the truth of his assertions or another pistol-shot. Whilst he was conversing with Doucet, another officer of the fortress named Laborde, came up, and recognising Malet's features, at once surmised that he was conducting an audacious conspiracy, called to the spot an officer of police who was well acquainted with Malet, and who perceived that he was one of the persons under his charge, and demanding how and why he had quitted his prison, embarrassed and disconcerted him to such a degree that he lost all command over

his troop; and, upon his attempting to use his arms, he was overpowered and placed under arrest in the presence of his soldiers, who began to think that they might have been deceived. Malet flattered himself that his accomplices would come to his succour; but instead of them, a portion of the imperial guard soon afterwards came up and arrested those who had come to make arrests.

Within an hour the Duke of Rovigo and the prefect of police were set at liberty, and resumed the functions of their several affairs. In the meantime the prefect of the Seine, who had arrived from the country at day-break, hearing on all sides the news of which the Hotel de Ville was full, had not doubted its truth, and had begun to arrange the apartment, respecting which Malet had sent directions. In like manner the commander of the regiment which had been charged with the duty of taking possession of the barriers had obeyed the orders received, and had sent detachments to carry them into execution.

It was scarcely noon when the whole affair was over, everything in its old position, the authorities, for a moment surprised, re-established in their functions; and Paris, becoming informed of this rapid series of events, passed from a feeling of alarm to one of intense amusement at the expense of a detested police which had been so easily overpowered. And this feeling of amusement was again, in its turn, succeeded by one of terror at the existence of such a state of things as that which had permitted this affair to take place. In the meantime the police and the military authority, fearing that Napoleon would attribute the blame of this extraordinary adventure to one of them, were equally anxious for an examination into the facts of the case, each hoping that the result would be its own justification and the blame of the other. The fact was that although the police had not discovered, and the military authorities had assisted in the execution of the plot, they were equally and entirely innocent; for on the one hand the police could not possibly have discovered what existed only in the head of a single man, and on the other it was perfectly natural, that an inferior military authority should believe the occurrence of so probable a circumstance as the death of Napoleon. The government, composed of the ministers, the great dignitaries present in Paris, assembled under the presidency of the arch-chancellor Cambacérès, to determine upon what steps should be taken in respect to what had just occurred, and resolved upon the appointment of a military commission for the purpose of trying more than twenty accused persons. The result was that fourteen unhappy wretches were

arrested, and within fifteen days judged and condemned, and twelve of them executed.

Such was the strange news which reached Napoleon at Dorogobouge; news which was of a nature to cause him great anxiety both with respect to his retreat and to the signs which it manifested of the ephemeral nature of his prodigious power. But what he was most struck by was the complete forgetfulness of his son, which was displayed by all those persons who were so ready to trust in and to obey himself. "What then!" he frequently exclaimed, "they hold in no account my son, my wife, the institutions of the Empire?" And every time that he gave utterance to this sad exclamation he relapsed into sombre reflections of which the bitterness could only be judged by the sad expression of his countenance. With respect to the executions which had taken place in Paris, he expressed considerable dissatisfaction, saying, "These imbeciles, having permitted themselves to be surprised, endeavour to conciliate me by shooting people by dozens."

But Napoleon had little time to spare to the consideration of the ephemeral conspiracy which had taken place at Paris, for it was absolutely necessary that he should take immediate measures for preventing the concentration of all the enemy's forces on our rear; a danger which was very imminent, and the reality of which would very probably reduce the French army to pass under the Caudine forks, and even throw Napoleon himself into the hands of the Russian Emperor.

Napoleon sent orders to Schwarzenberg and Reynier to march as speedily as possible against Admiral Tchitchakoff, since the presence of this general on the Berezina, or in other words, on the line of retreat of the French army, might have very disastrous results. To the Duke of Belluna he wrote directing him to join Marshal Oudinot immediately, that the two marshals might advance against Wittgenstein with their united forces, which would be much superior to the enemy both in number and quality, and by driving him beyond the Dwina, and gaining over him a great battle, relieve the grand army itself from the necessity of fighting one. To Wilna he sent directions that one of Marshal Augereau's divisions (General Loison's) should be sent from Kœnigsberg. At the same time he recommended M. de Bassano, who displayed at Wilna the greatest administrative ability, to direct upon the various depôts of the army, namely Minsk, Borisow, Orscha, and Smolensk, all the resources which could be procured; and ordered the purchase of fifty thousand horses in Germany and Poland.

Having despatched these orders Napoleon set out for Smolensk, urging Marshal Ney, who was to cover the retreat, to delay the enemy as long as possible, and directing

Prince Eugene to leave the Smolensk route at Dorogobouge for that of Doukhowtchina, which he had already traversed, on which it would be possible to procure a certain amount of provisions, and from whence it would be possible to secure the position at Witebsk, which was at this moment threatened by Wittgenstein.

Napoleon quitted Dorogobouge on the 6th of November, and the whole army followed on the 7th and 8th. The season in which the expedition had been commenced, and the belief that the army would have returned before the approach of the inclement weather, had led to the neglect of warm clothing or ice cramps, and our unhappy soldiers marched wrapped up in all variety of clothing, which had been snatched from the flames of Moscow, and quite unable to protect themselves from the cold only nine or ten degrees above zero; whilst at every elevation, rendered slippery by the ice, the artillery horses, even when doubled or trebled, failed to draw pieces of the smallest size. The greater portion of the munitions had been abandoned almost at the commencement of the march, and now with shame and reluctance our soldiers found it absolutely necessary to leave their cannon to be seized as trophies by the Russians. Day by day the waggons which accompanied the army diminished in number, for large numbers of the horses died each day, and of those which remained many were sabred by the soldiers that their flesh might provide the evening meal, which the troops prepared at the huge fires around which they bivouacked at night, and beside which they laid day after day, with scarcely a thought, dead and dying wretches, whom the snow speedily covered, and who lay there the victims of the most foolish of enterprises.

Whilst Napoleon marched upon Smolensk, Prince Eugene followed the Doukhowtchina route, and at the close of the first day's march, his artillery and baggage were suddenly checked by a hill, up which the most strenuous efforts of the artillerymen could only raise the very lightest cannon, and at the foot of which, consequently, the heaviest pieces had to be abandoned. On the following morning the troops resumed their march at an early hour for the sake of crossing the Vop, a river which in the month of August had been a mere brook, but which now rolled wide and deep, and was full of mud. The pontonniers who accompanied Prince Eugene's troops had hastened forward, and had employed the night in the construction of a bridge, which was, however, but partly completed, when a crowd of stragglers coming up in the midst of a thick mist, attempted to cross it with so much eager-

ness that many were precipitated into the water and drowned. In the meantime some of the cavalry who still possessed their horses, made a successful search for a ford, by which the transit of the river was at length accomplished by the main body of the troops; but when it was attempted to convey the cannon across to the other bank, some of the pieces soon became fastened in the bed of the river, and thus obstructed the passage at the very moment when between three and four thousand Cossacks ran up, uttering the most savage cries, and, upon being checked by the fire of the rear guard, threw a storm of bullets upon the terrified crowd of unarmed soldiers and fugitives from Moscow, who were still attempting to pass to the other bank of the river. At every instant the tumult increased, and it became necessary to resign the baggage, which was the sole source of subsistence, to the fugitives, and which had up to this time afforded some resources to the officers.

This deplorable event known in the history of the retreat as the disaster of Vop, and the prelude of another disaster of the same nature but a hundred times more horrible, retained the army of Italy beside the Vop until and during the night; and on the following day it resumed its march by the Doukhowtchina route, having lost all its baggage and all its artillery with the exception of seven or eight pieces; whilst a thousand unhappy wretches, struck by the enemy's bullets or drowned in the stream, had paid with their lives for this which we shall soon find to have been an entirely useless march.

In the course of the 10th of November Prince Eugene's troops arrived at Doukhowtchina, a little town of some wealth, in which the army of Italy had already passed the preceding August. The Cossacks now occupied it but were speedily chased away; and in this town of Doukhowtchina which, although deserted still contained some resources, the unfortunate corps which had now reached it, found a certain degree of repose, shelter, and abundance.

Some Poles having been dispatched in search of information of the general state of affairs, brought back news which almost convinced Prince Eugene and his staff that the city of Witebsk had been taken, and rendered them, therefore, unanimously of opinion that the wisest plan would be to rejoin the grand army by marching directly upon Smolensk. In order to gain a march the corps set out during the night of the 11th, having first set fire to the poor wooden town which had afforded them so much succour; and continuing their march during that night and a portion of the following day, closely pursued by the Cossacks, passed the night o

the 12th under the shelter of a few villages; and resuming their march on the following morning, about midday perceived from the hills which border the Dnieper, in the midst of plains gleaming with snow, the towers of Smolensk, which, ignorant of what, alas! was still to come, they regarded almost as the frontier of France.

During these same days, the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th of November, the grand army had continued its march by the Dorogobouge route to Smolensk, strewing its path with the corpses of men and horses, and abandoned baggage, the troops consoling themselves with the idea that at Smolensk they would find repose, provisions, reinforcements, and victory. But whilst the head of the army pursued its march, having to contend only with the one great enemy—the inclement weather, the rear guard, conducted by Marshal Ney, was engaged in perpetual encounters with the enemy's forces. At Dorogobouge Ney resolved to defend that town sufficiently long to enable the body of the army, with its matériel and the miscellaneous crowd which accompanied it, time to reach Smolensk. He accordingly remained two days at Dorogobouge and then, as the Russians, having passed the Dnieper on his right, threatened to surround him, he withdrew towards the other passage of the Dnieper, at Solowiewo, when he again checked the enemy's advance. At some leagues from this place, on the Valoutina plateau, he had determined to take up a position and maintain it against the enemy, but having reached the ground he found it necessary to enter Smolensk, and accordingly did so, after having made every exertion to delay the enemy's pursuit.

Napoleon knew, as he entered Smolensk, that it did not contain the vast magazines which the army supposed to be there, but he hoped that the eight or ten days' provisions which actually were there would suffice to attract the disbanded soldiers to their standards, as he intended that provisions should only be distributed at the quarters of each regiment. Having entered Smolensk at the head of the guard he ordered that none others should be admitted; an order which inspired a general feeling of despair and indignation, and of jealous dislike of the Guard, which had been of so little service throughout the campaign. These feelings were most bitterly and loudly expressed by the stragglers, but they were shared by the soldiers of the 1st corps, which had never for a single day been spared any labour or danger; and, in spite of their habits of discipline, they joined the unarmed crowd which blocked up the gates of Smolensk, and making a violent entry into the streets of Smolensk advanced towards the magazines, the keepers of which, directing the famished

troops to proceed to the quarters of their respective regiments, assuring them that they should be supplied there with rations, were for a moment believed and obeyed. But when, after having wandered in every direction throughout the town the soldiers could find no trace of the distribution of rations which had been promised, they returned, uttering seditious cries, and casting themselves upon the magazines, burst open the doors and pillaged them.—"The magazines are being pillaged," was a cry which created a general feeling of terror and despair, and attracted every one to the spot in the hope of obtaining some share of the spoil. After some time, however, a certain degree of order was re-established, and a portion of the contents of the magazines were preserved for the corps of Prince Eugene and Marshal Ney, which now arrived, continually fighting with the enemy and checking their advance upon the town. There was no longer room for the illusion that the army would be able to find at Smolensk either food, clothing, shelter, or reinforcements; and it was evident, on the contrary, that it would be absolutely necessary to set out on the following day, recommencing an interminable march, enduring every species of privations, and engaged in perpetual conflicts with the enemy, with the cruel certainty that to receive a wound would be equivalent to becoming the prey of the wolves and the vultures. This was a prospect which threw the army into despair, and yet it knew not the worst.

In the meantime Napoleon had received news still more disastrous than that which had reached him at Dorogobouge. In the first place General Baraguey d'Hilliers having advanced, in accordance with orders received from head quarters, with his division upon the Jelnia route, had fallen into the midst of the Russian army, and having lost the brigade Augereau, consisting of two thousand men, returned to Smolensk, when Napoleon by an order of the day directed him to return to France that his conduct might be made the subject of inquiry before a military commission. At the same moment Napoleon was informed that Tchitchakoff's army had made fresh progress, threatening Minsk and the immense magazines which it contained, and our line of retreat; that Prince Schwarzenberg, hesitating between the plan of following Tchitchakoff and the fear of leaving Sacken on his rear, was losing time in useless inactivity; that the Duke of Belluna (Marshal Victor) had found upon the Oula the 2nd corps separated from the Bavarians and reduced by this separation to ten thousand men, his own forces amounting only to five thousand; and that the two Marshals, Victor and Oudinot, entertaining exaggerated ideas

of the forces at Wittgenstein's command and fearing to give him battle with their united forces, numbering thirty-eight thousand men, had confined themselves to marches and counter-marches between Lepel and Sienna. The French general having neglected, therefore, to drive them by a prompt victory beyond the Dwina, Tchitchakoff and Wittgenstein advanced rapidly towards each other, with the purpose of effecting a junction on the upper Berezina. And what would be the position of the wreck of the French army between Tchitchakoff and Wittgenstein in front and Kutusof in its rear ?

It was necessary, however, to adopt some decided measure, for it was absolutely impossible to remain at Smolensk, where there were not at the most more than seven or eight days' provisions. The French army would be compelled, therefore, to seek the means of subsistence elsewhere, in the midst of Poland, and beyond the Berezina, which the two Russian armies threatened to close against us; and consequently, it could not with safety delay a single day at Smolensk.

Napoleon resolved to leave Smolensk on the 14th with the corps which had arrived there on the 9th; and to order that those which had successively entered on the 10th, 11th, 12th, and 13th, should resume their march on the 15th, 16th, and 17th. And in this instance Napoleon committed a fault little worthy of his genius and only explicable by the false ideas which he had formed respecting the army under Kutusof, and in fact trusting to the terror with which he knew he was regarded by this Russian General, he supposed it most improbable that he should find him on his road from Smolensk to Minsk, and expected that at the most he would only venture on some skirmishes with the rear guard. Entertaining these ideas, therefore, he failed to take care to place the Dnieper between the Russian army and himself, or even to continue his retreat upon Minsk by the right bank of this river; preferring to follow the beaten track on the left bank running from Smolensk to Orscha, by which he had come, and which was the shortest and best. And so convinced was he of the justice of the opinion which he had formed, that he did not even move the whole of his troops en masse, in which case he would still (alas! that we should have to make such a statement) have had thirty-six thousand men to oppose Kutusof's fifty thousand, for, in his haste to pass the sixty leagues which intervened between Borisow on the Berezina, he thought that by making the troops which had arrived on the 9th set out on the 11th, and those that had arrived on the 10th, 11th, and 12th, set out on the 15th, 16th, and 17th, respectively, he would be allowing to each corps

time to obtain some repose, and a certain degree of reorganization before encountering the army of Moldavia—the only hostile force which Napoleon at the moment took into consideration.

After having in some measure reorganized his army—now consisting of about twelve thousand men under Davoust, five thousand under Ney, six thousand under Eugene, one thousand under Junot who commanded the Westphalians, seven or eight hundred Poles under Prince Poniatowski, the eleven thousand to which the Guard, in spite of the care which had been bestowed upon its preservation, had been reduced, and the five hundred of the cavalry who alone remained mounted—Napoleon for the second time ordered Prince Schwarzenberg to pursue Admiral Tchitchakoff with the utmost vigour for the purpose of taking him in the rear before he should have time to attack the main body of the French army, and at the same time directed Marshals Oudinot and Victor to attack Wittgenstein without delay, for the purpose of driving him from the Berezina if it were not possible to throw him back beyond the Dwina. Having given these orders he set out on the morning of the 14th with the Guard preceded by the dismounted cavalry under General Sebastiani and followed by a large portion of the encumbrances by which the army was attended. At the very moment of his departure he ordered that Marshal Ney should not set out until the various arrangements he had made relative to the departure of the army from Smolensk should have been completely carried out, and gave time for the execution of this order until the 17th—a fatal resolution which cost the lives of many of our best troops.

Napoleon having set out, as has been already stated, on the morning of the 14th, passed the night of that day at Koritnia, situated half way between Smolensk and Krasnoé, and on the following day reached the last named place where he found General Sebastiani, who had advanced thither on the previous day with the dismounted cavalry, resisting the attacks of the enemy in a church in which they had driven him to take refuge. Napoleon released Sebastiani and his troops from their state of siege, but learned with painful surprise that Kutusof, not content with merely harassing our march, was approaching Krasnoé with his whole force. And in fact the Russian generalissimo, although he did not intend to bar the road of the French army completely and thus drive us to despair, had determined to inflict upon us some serious loss, and wtih this purpose had taken up a position in the defile of Krasnoé, situated half way between Smolensk and Orscha, and consisting of a bridge crossing a ravine through which flows the Losmina, a river which falls into the Dnieper at two leagues

distance from Krasnoé. The route from Smolensk to Krasnoé lay over this bridge and ravine, and the enemy, therefore, having purposely permitted a portion of the French army to pass them, could, by blockading Krasnoé with a portion of their forces and occupying the bank of the ravine with the remainder, interrupt the passage of those of our columns which had not yet crossed it.

Napoleon passed the morning of the 16th in a state of great anxiety with respect to Prince Eugene's corps, which, having set out from Smolensk on the 15th with the intention of passing the night of that day at Koritnia, ought to appear before Krasnoé during the 16th; and, in fact, accompanied by a large number of disbanded soldiers and escorting almost all the parks of artillery belonging to the Guard and the 1st corps, it did reach the border of the Losmina ravine, and found there Miloradovitch's corps flanking the route with a portion of its troops and barring it with the remainder; at the same time beholding behind Miloradovitch's corps other columns of infantry and cavalry surrounding in dense masses the little city of Krasnoé. A single glance showed that the only practicable course which could be adopted was to force a passage through the enemy at the sword's point, and Prince Eugene did not hesitate a moment to adopt it. Placing the division Broussier on the left of the route, the division Delzons on the route itself, and the wrecks of the Italian, Polish, and Westphalian divisions in the rear, he made a vigorous attack upon the enemy, who besides the advantages of their position had at their command an immense number of well posted cannon with which they covered our troops with grape. Always heroic, the division Broussier advanced under this murderous fire towards the left of the route, resolved to take the enemy's batteries at the point of the bayonet, but after having sustained and valiantly resisted the charge of a host of cavalry, and lost within the space of an hour between two and three thousand in killed and wounded, it was compelled to fall back, and resign the attempt to pierce the wall of fire with which the Russians blocked up its path.

After having disdainfully dismissed an officer sent by Kutusof to summon in respectful terms the Prince to surrender, Eugene concerted with his generals a plan which appeared to offer some chance of success, and which consisted in leaving the division Broussier in line to feign another attack upon the left, against the heights which bordered the route, whilst the remainder of the troops gained the plain on the right, beside the Dnieper, and then clandestinely defiled towards Krasnoé under cover of the night, which at this period of the year commenced about four or five o'clock. This plan

involved the destruction of the remainder of the division Broussier, but implicit reliance could be placed on the devotion of this heroic troop. Towards nightfall, therefore, Prince Eugene having carried forward upon the left the remnant of the unhappy division Broussier, so as to direct towards it the enemy's entire attention, led the remainder of his troops towards the Dnieper under cover of some elevated ground, and thus, after a two hours' march, succeeded in reaching Krasnoé, having left upon the road two thousand in killed and wounded, and the remainder of Broussier's division, which could only be saved by the arrival of Marshals Davoust and Ney.

Napoleon received his adopted son with a species of joy mingled with bitterness, and being relieved of anxiety on his account became completely absorbed in reflections on what might have been the fate of Davoust and Ney who still remained in the rear, and who, marching a day's march apart from each other in accordance with the orders which he had given, would have to encounter the enemy separately and to suffer cruel losses before they could reach Krasnoé. But the more reason Napoleon found for regretting that he had not marched his troops from Smolensk en masse and taken the right bank of the Dnieper, the more resolved he was to await at Krasnoé the arrival of the two Marshals, whatever might be the consequences, and to fight a battle if necessary, for the purpose of reopening the route. He resolved now to devote wholly to the purpose of extricating his two lieutenants the Guard, which he had hitherto taken such pains to preserve, and thus to provide himself with the best possible reason for not having employed it at Borodino.

The plan which Napoleon proposed to follow was very simple, and consisted in advancing the guard along the Smolensk route, which was that which would be pursued by Davoust and Ney, and awaiting the appearance of the former of these Marshals on a plateau behind Krasnoé, at the foot of which passed the Losmina ravine. This measure was duly executed, and as the Russians had on the same evening taken up a position in Koutkowo, a village very close to Krasnoé, he had it carried at the bayonet's point by a regiment of the young Guard, which took vengeance on the troops of Count Ojarowski for the losses which we had suffered during the day.

In the meantime Marshal Davoust having personally visited during the night of the 18th, which his divisions passed at Koritnia, the spot where the four hundred men, who alone remained of the three thousand who had originally composed the unhappy division Broussier, lay upon the snow

mingled in a confused heap with the dying and the dead, he promptly formed the resolution to save, sword in hand, not only his his own corps, but this remnant of Prince Eugene's column also. As he had left one of his divisions, the 2nd, with Marshal Ney, for the purpose of reinforcing the rear guard, he had only four of his five divisions, consisting of about nine or ten thousand men, at his command, but he did not for a moment doubt that with such a force as this, resolutely used, he could force a passage through any obstacle.

A little before daybreak he carried his four divisions in advance, formed in close column, and ordered them to charge the enemy at the bayonet's point, and force a passage through the enemy's ranks in a hand to hand conflict. In the meantime Kutusof, supposing that Napoleon was already en route for Orscha, had sent a portion of his forces under General Tormazoff for the purpose of preventing his re-entry into Krasnoé, and had posted the remainder around Krasnoé itself, leaving only Miloradovitch and his troops along the Losmina ravine to bar the Smolensk route.

Marshal Davoust's four divisions charged the troops under Miloradovitch as they had been ordered; and as the latter, terrified at their inpetuosity, withdrew from before them to the side of the route, they arrived almost uninjured at the border of the Losmina ravine, where they found the young Guard, and posted themselves there in such a manner on the right and left of the ravine as to afford support to all the troops which had not yet arrived; and thus were saved the remnant of Broussier's division, and the parks of artillery which had hitherto been left in the rear.

Continual and violent attacks on the part of the enemy, however, rendered it necessary to adopt some decided course, and as General Tormazoff had commenced his movement around Krasnoé for the purpose of intercepting the Orscha route, Napoleon resolved not to persevere in the bold attempt to hold the enemy in check at Krasnoé at the risk of being cut off from Orscha, the only point open to the French at which they could effect the passage of the Dnieper, and thus forced to lay down his arms. To retreat would be in all probability to sacrifice Marshal Ney, and as Napoleon, whilst extremely eager to reach Orscha, was at the same time very unwilling to give orders, the execution of which must necessarily involve the abandonment of Ney, he issued equivocal commands which were alike unworthy of the integrity of his spirit and the vigour of his character, and which were startling manifestations of the horror of the position in which he had placed himself. By ordering the 1st corps to follow the other troops in their departure from

Krasnoé, and at the same time directing it to await there as long as possible the arrival of Marshal Ney, he threw upon this heroic and well disciplined corps, the terrible responsibility of abandoning Marshal Ney.

Napoleon now departed in all haste by the Krasnoé route to Orscha, accompanied by his Guard, and under a terrible fire from the enemy's guns, but without meeting any invincible obstacle. As each French corps defiled along the road Tormazoff's columns advanced, evidently with the intention of blocking up the road which in the meantime they covered with their fire; and Marshal Mortier, who had to sustain whilst effecting his departure from Krasnoé frequent charges from the enemy's cavalry, perceiving the imminence of the danger, sent information of his departure to Marshal Davoust and urged him to follow him, declaring that he had not a moment to lose. The day was declining, the enemy overwhelmed Krasnoé with a complete storm of fire, and the confusion there was at its height. The five thousand men who were still under Marshal Davoust's command demanded that they should not be condemned to a useless death or certain captivity, and their leader found it necessary to conform to the only command which circumstances permitted him to follow, and to depart from Krasnoé. As Ney had not set out from Smolensk until the morning of the 17th he could not have reached Krasnoé before the evening of the 18th, and by waiting his arrival until then Marshal Davoust would, without saving Ney, have exposed his troops to captivity or death. He proceeded from Krasnoé, therefore, in the direction of Liady.

In the meantime Marshal Ney's corps and the division Ricard, which had also been entrusted to this Marshal, having blown up the towers of Smolensk, hidden in the earth or thrown into the Dnieper all the cannon which they could not remove, and pushed forward as far as possible the crowd of disbanded soldiers, had departed from Smolensk on the morning of the 17th. Marshal Ney had set out from Smolensk expecting to find the enemy hovering on his rear and on his flanks, and prepared to make a vigorous resistance to his attacks, but by no means expecting to find his path closed by a hostile force as impassible as a wall of fire. Marshal Davoust had sent him information from Koritnia on the evening of the 16th of the perils which he would probably encounter on the following day; but as the enemy had shortly afterwards interposed between them, communication between the two Marshals was no longer possible, which was a most unfortunate circumstance, for had Ney received timely warning of the state of affairs, he might have left Smolensk by the

right of the Dnieper, and by means of a night's march have probably reached Orscha before the Russians had time to become acquainted with their departure, and to cross the river on the ice which was not in every part sufficiently solid to afford a passage. Being without any precise information, Marshal Ney set out on the 17th in accordance with Napoleon's directions, reached Koritnia in the evening, and on the following day, the 18th, advanced upon Krasnoé.

The division Ricard arrived first in the presence of the enemy, and marching boldly to the attack, was immediately overwhelmed by so terrible a fire from the Russian artillery posted on the bank of the Losmina ravine that it was compelled to pause and await the approach of Marshal Ney, who, as soon as he came up, lost no time in forming his troops into columns of attack, and crossing the ravine under a terrible fire of musketry drove the Russians at the point of the bayonet to the left of the route. But although thus for a time successful, renewed charges on the part of the Russians, accompanied by the fire from a hundred pieces of cannon, again compelled them to give way, and to fall back upon the position from whence they had commenced the attack, reduced within the space of an hour from seven thousand men to four thousand. Against the whole of Kutusof's army, and the whole of it was present, such a force as this could not hope for success, and Ney, renouncing the expectation of it, immediately formed a resolution of remaining out of reach of the enemy's fire until the close of the day, and then, under cover of the darkness, to cross the Dnieper and escape by the right bank ; for, with his habitual confidence, he appeared to entertain no doubts that the ice was in such a state as to afford a passage for his troops ; and when one of his officers ventured to express some doubt on the subject, he had replied roughly, that the passage would be effected across the ice, or in some way or other.

The Russians, having no suspicion of Marshal Ney's design, supposed, when they found him retreating out of the range of their fire, that he and his troops must certainly become their prisoners in the course of the following day, and being willing to avoid an useless effusion of blood, sent to inform him of the desperate nature of his position, advising him to capitulate, and declaring that the valour of his troops should be acknowledged by the offer of such conditions only as were worthy of them. Ney, however declined to give any answer to this message, and detained the messenger lest he should, on his return, carry back some intimation of the course the French were about to pursue.

At nightfall, in accordance with his proposed plan Ney carried his troops forward towards the Dnieper, and having succeeded in gaining its bank, found it just sufficiently frozen to allow its passage to be effected by the exercise of great caution. The troops having crossed the river, together with a few pieces of cannon and some baggage waggons which had been carried over with considerable difficulty, proceeded along the bank of the river in the direction of Orscha. As they had to march fifteen leagues across an unknown country not a moment was to be lost, and they continued their march constantly throughout the night until the noon of the following day, when they came to some villages and found a certain quantity of provisions, which, famished as they were, they instantly proceeded to devour. Scarcely had this repast terminated when a considerable number of Cossacks appeared, commanded by Platow himself, and towards the close of the day assailed the French in such masses that their road appeared to be cut off. However, they threw themselves into the woods which bordered the Dnieper, and defended themselves until nightfall. About one o'clock they rallied round a village where they found some provisions, and at two o'clock resumed their march towards Orscha.

Towards noon it was unfortunately necessary to traverse a considerable plain, on which Platow's troops, who appeared in still more considerable numbers than on the previous day, directed against our soldiers the fire from a very numerous artillery. Marshal Ney, however, immediately formed his troops into squares, and supporting their failing hearts with his own undaunted energy, succeeded in repulsing the Cossacks, slaying many of them, and then led his troops to a village where they found both food and shelter. He had sent forward a Pole to Orscha to give information of his miraculous retreat, and to demand aid; and when his troops, who had resumed their march after taking some repose, were within a league of Orscha, they perceived with unspeakable consternation the approach of an armed force; but Ney, always confident and relying on the message which he had sent by the Pole, did not hesitate to advance, and found the strange troops to be three thousand men advancing to his relief under Prince Eugene and Marshal Mortier.

And thus of six or seven thousand men Ney had brought back to the army twelve hundred at the most; and these almost dying from fatigue and utterly incapable of any active service. But at the same time he had saved the honour of the French armies, rescued for France his name, his person, and by the successes of his manœuvre forced from the enemy an expiation of the cruel success they had obtained during the

last few days. Napoleon himself was intensely rejoiced at Ney's return, for it spared him the humiliation of having it said throughout Europe that Ney was a prisoner in the hands of the Russians. But he had the wickedness to allow the odium of the abandonment of Marshal Ney to fall on Marshal Davoust, and either from anxiety to exonerate himself, or from the bitterness of spirit which the unfavourable state of affairs was so calculated to aggravate, he manifested with respect to Marshal Davoust a degree of disapprobation, which the general despondency and the pleasure common to human nature of depreciating a hitherto unstained renown, hastened to accredit and to propagate.

The total strength of the army at Orscha was now, at the most, twenty-four thousand armed men and twenty-five thousand stragglers; the half of the numbers which had set out from Moscow, and the eighth part of the four hundred and twenty thousand men which had passed the Niemen. But at the same time, although the Russians had obtained great results, they had not obtained an equal amount of glory, for with fifty thousand or sixty thousand thoroughly effective troops, an immense artillery, and a position such as that of Krasnoé, they should have been able, if not to stop the whole army, at least to have taken the chief portion of it. As the case actually was, they had obtained no trophies but the corpses of the French soldiers who had fallen beneath the grape of their cannon, and crowds of stragglers whom wretchedness had deprived of their arms. Throughout these operations, in fact, the only real merit to be attributed to the Russians, is in respect to the constant prudence of Generalissimo Kutusof, who, relying on the effects of the winter and the climate, had resolved to expend as little blood as possible, and to obtain the most brilliant success without having incurred any corresponding risk. But deserving of praise as this prudent conduct is, still, when we consider the decisive results which he might have obtained by more vigorous conduct, we can only regard it as the hesitation of a timid old man, who eventually took credit for results which were rather the work of fortune than of himself.

Finding himself at Orscha in a secure position and in possession of well furnished magazines of provisions, Napoleon made a new attempt to rally his army, and, by means of a detachment of gendarmerie d'élite, which had recently arrived, to incorporate in its ranks the crowd of disbanded soldiers. But all such efforts were fruitless, for the men who had once thrown off the yoke of honour were not inclined to resume it. The moral contagion had extended

even to the Guard, and Napoleon found it necessary to assemble it for the purpose of addressing it in person, and endeavouring to inspire it with its old feeling of duty, by declaring that it was the last asylum of French military honour, that to it especially belonged the obligation of giving the example of good discipline, and of thus saving the remainder of the army from the dissolution which threatened it; that if the Guard should fall away from the path of duty it would not have the excuse of want possessed by the other corps, since such resources as had been obtainable had always been reserved for its use; that he would employ the severest means to preserve the discipline of his Guard, but that he hoped that it would be maintained rather by its old military virtues, and that from its devotion rather than its fear would be obtained the good example he desired it to display.

At Orscha, also, struck with the inconvenience occasioned to the army by the presence of long files of baggage, Napoleon commanded that all the baggage waggons should be destroyed except those which contained the wounded or the fugitive families, or belonged to the artillery or engineer corps, and except one for himself and Murat, and one for each of the Marshals. In his zeal for the preservation of the artillery, and in spite of the representations of General Eblé, he even ordered the destruction of the two pontoon equipages which had been left at Orscha, permitting only, at General Eblé's urgent request, the transport of the materials necessary for a pont de chevalets. At this time were destroyed also Napoleon's military correspondence and a quantity of other precious papers.

The efforts, however, which were now made to bring the army into shape were as useless as all the previous attempts of the same nature. A prolonged period of repose, a secure position, abundance of resources, and association with troops in a good state of discipline, could alone have restored order to the ranks of the army. The prohibition to distribute provisions to any but those soldiers who should be present at the quarters of their regiments was disregarded after a few hours, to save the magazines not only from pillage, but also from the destruction with which they were menaced by the rapid approach of the enemy.

Whilst at Orscha news reached Napoleon which was of a more disastrous character than any he had yet received; and which informed him that Schwarzenberg had been decidedly outflanked by Admiral Tchitchakoff on the upper Berezina, the latter having marched, whilst Schwarzenberg was hesitating what course to pursue, by Slonim upon Minsk,

to the abundant provisioning of which M. de Bassano's efforts had been principally directed, and compelled the three thousand troops under General Bronikowski to evacuate it; thus snatching from our grasp one of the principal points on the Wilna route, and one which contained provisions sufficient for a month's subsistence. After evacuating Minsk General Bronikowski effected a junction with General Dombrouski, whose excellent Polish division had been left in the rear for the purpose of guarding the Dnieper; and the united troops, numbering four or five thousand, advanced to Borisow upon the upper Berezina, for the purpose of defending the Borisow bridge, since, if this bridge on the Berezina were to fall into the hands of Tchitchakoff, the road would be entirely closed against the grand army, unless it were to ascend to the very sources of the Berezina, and even in this case it would be exposed to the danger of encountering Wittgenstein, whom the information which had now reached Napoleon pointed out to be a more formidable enemy than even Tchitchakoff.

Napoleon had expected that Marshals Oudinot and Victor, whom he supposed to be in command of forty thousand men, would have driven Wittgenstein and Steinghel before them beyond the Dwina, and then marched their forty thousand victorious troops upon the Berezina; as he had also expected that Schwarzenberg and Reynier would on their side have marched thither the forty thousand men whom they commanded, after having vanquished Tchitchakoff. In this case eighty thousand men would have been available for the infliction of a severe blow on the Russians before the end of the campaign. But all Napoleon's calculations with respect to affairs on the side of the Dwina, as on the side of the Dnieper, were defeated, for thetwo marshals, having attacked with the thirty-two thousand or thirty-three thousand men who alone were at their disposal, a strong position which had been taken up by Wittgenstein behind the Oula and near Smoliantzy, had lost two thousand men without succeeding in carrying it, and then, fearful of compromising a corps which was Napoleon's last resource, awaited at Czeréia at two marches on the right of the route pursued by Napoleon, some intimation of his definite intentions, which they had sent General Dode to learn.

Without criticising what they had already done, Napoleon sent General Dode to the two marshals with orders to Marshal Oudinot to proceed immediately by a transverse movement from right to left, from Czeréia to Borisow, for the purpose of supporting the Poles and aiding them to defend the bridge over the Berezina; and with orders to Marshal Victor to remain on the right, opposite Wittgenstein and Steinghel, for the purpose of holding them in check by inspiring them with the fear of a manœuvre of the grand

army against them, and thus affording it time to reach the Berezina. Should these instructions be followed, as it was to be presumed they would, Tchitchakoff having been driven from Borisow by Oudinot, and Wittgenstein held in check by Victor, the grand army would be able to reach the Berezina in time to pass it, rallying Victor and Oudinot, to retake Minsk and its magazines, to rally Schwarzenberg, and thus to find itself ninety thousand strong, in a position to overwhelm one or two of the three Russian armies, and thus to terminate a campaign which had been brilliant up to the entrance into Moscow, and calamitous since the departure from Malo-Jaroslawetz, but which was destined, perhaps, to become once more brilliant and even triumphant towards its conclusion.

On the 20th of November Napoleon advanced from Orscha to the château de Baronoui; proceeding from thence on the 21st to Kokanow, and marching from this place on the 22nd for Bobr. The weather although still very cold, had suddenly become less severe than it had been, but the change afforded no alleviation to the sufferings of the army, for the moisture which succeeded the snow and ice rendered the cold more penetrating, whilst it was almost impossible to drag the gun-carriages through the half frozen mud.

Having reached Toloczin at noon on the 22nd, Napoleon received there a despatch from Borisow, by which he learned that Generals Bronikowski and Dombromski, after having defended with the utmost obstinacy the bridge which crossed the Berezina there, and lost between two thousand and three thousand men, had been obliged to retreat behind Borisow, and were then a march and a half in advance on the route followed by the main body of the French army, which was now only a few leagues from the hostile force which might cut off its retreat across the Berezina, and was deprived of the only bridge by which it could cross that river. To construct a new bridge would be almost impossible with the insignificant amount of materials possessed by the army for such a purpose, and, moreover, there could be little doubt that whilst the French were attempting to cross the Berezina they would be attacked on the left by Tchitchakoff, on the right by Wittgenstein, and in the rear by Kutusof.

On receiving the dispatch containing the information of this state of affairs, Napoleon descended from his horse, perused the dispatch with feelings of emotion of which he permitted no trace to become apparent, advanced a few steps towards a bivouac fire which had been lighted on the route, and, perceiving General Dode, who had returned from his mission to Marshals Oudinot and Victor, ordered him to approach, and as he came up said, gazing at him with a glance

of which the expression was unequalled, "*They are there*"—meaning that the Russians were at Borisow; and then entering a cottage and spreading out a map of Russia on its coarse table, proceeded to discuss with General Dode the method by which it would be possible to extricate the army from its perilous position. General Dode proposed the plan of ascending the course of the Berezina towards the point of its junction with the Oula, in the neighbourhood of Lepel, where it was very shallow and could be readily forded; and having effected a junction with Victor and Oudinot, re-entering Wilna by the Gloubokoé route. To this proposition Napoleon objected the length of the détour which separated the army from Wilna, the danger there was that the Russians would have preceded its arrival there, and the imminent peril of encountering Wittgenstein. But whilst General Dode was replying to these objections, Napoleon, paying no attention to the speaker, traced with his finger the course of the Berezina and the Dnieper, and as his eyes fell on the spot marked as Pultowa he started from the map, and pacing up and down exclaimed "Pultowa! Pultowa!" appearing to have forgotten the presence of General Dode, who watched in silence this singular scene, and contemplated with mingled grief and surprise the new Charles XII., who, both a hundred times greater and a hundred times more unfortunate than the original one, now at length acknowledged his consciousness of his destiny. At this point of the interview Murat entered the cottage with Prince Eugene, Berthier and General Jomini, who having been governor of the province during the campaign, had studied its localities, and was very capable, therefore, of giving advice on the present occasion. As soon as Napoleon perceived General Jomini he said to him "It is just, that when the fortunate become unfortunate their ill fortune should equal their good fortune." He then asked the General's advice, which was, that the army should attempt the passage of the Berezina a little above Borisow, and from thence make for the Smorzonia route, which was the shortest to Wilna and the least devastated. The subsequent course of events showed that this was very sensible advice; but Napoleon, without disputing or even appearing to have heard it, suddenly burst forth into a torrent of complaints, and walking to and fro and speaking with extraordinary animation, declared that if the hearts of those around him were not smitten by such weak despondency he would ascend towards the upper Berezina, attack Wittgenstein's army, compel it to yield, and re-enter Europe with a Russian army captive in his train. To this proposition General Jomini simply replied that the execution of such a manœuvre

might be possible with a thoroughly effective and well provisioned army, but certainly not with one thoroughly exhausted by long privations.

In the midst, however, of the observations made by those around him, and of the brilliant dreams in which his soul indulged, Napoleon determined upon the course which he would pursue with the utmost tact and discernment; resolving to advance directly upon the Berezina, to send Oudinot to Borisow to snatch this position from the enemy's grasp, and, should this be impossible, to seek a passage in the environs. He sent suitable instructions to Oudinot who had arrived on the right of the French army, and proceeded to Bobr for the purpose of personally superintending the execution of his proposed manœuvre.

And now fortune, as though weary of overwhelming him with so many evils, appeared to have resolved to save him by a miracle from the last humiliations. As has been already stated, Marshal St. Cyr, after the evacuation of Polotsk, had detached from the 2nd corps General Wrède, for the purpose of opposing Steinghel, and this Bavarian General permitted himself to become isolated from the 2nd corps, and remained in the environs of Gloubokoé, retaining with his other troops the light cavalry division of General Corbineau, composed of the 7th and 20th chasseurs, and the 8th lancers. As the 2nd corps, however, soon had reason to regret the absence of this division, it had set out, in accordance with directions which had been sent to it from Gloubokoé, on the 16th of November, and having arrived close to Borisow, after encountering and successfully passing amidst the parties of troops which Admiral Tchitchakoff had thrown forward for the purpose of connecting his own army with that under Wittgenstein on the upper Berezina, it had found, as the Russians were already at Borisow, that the only course open to it was to traverse the Berezina, and to join the grand army, to which, enfeebled as it was in its cavalry arm, seven hundred cavalry would be an important addition. It had proceeded, therefore, along the right bank of the Berezina above Borisow, in search of a place at which it might be possible to cross to the other bank, and having found a point at which the water was unusually shallow, opposite the village Studianki, three leagues above Borisow, had reached the other bank, and, proceeding as speedily as possible to Bobr, had there found Marshal Oudinot crossing the Smolensk route on his way to Borisow. General Corbineau had made his report to his Marshal and then rejoined the 2nd corps to which he belonged, whilst almost at the same moment Marshal Oudinot, throwing himself suddenly upon Borisow, had surprised there and

surrounded Count Pahlen's advanced guard, taking five or six hundred prisoners and slaying or wounding an equal number; and had then hastened towards the bridge, which the Russians, eager to fly and despairing of being able to defend it, had burned.

Although, however, the bridge across the Borisow had been thus destroyed, the unexpected discovery of a ford made by General Corbineau afforded a ray of hope, and Napoleon, after having received from General Corbineau in a personal interview, a minute account of its position, sent orders by the General to Oudinot to make immediate preparations for effecting the passage of the Berezina, by the Studianka ford, but at the same time enjoining the utmost secrecy, and the execution of such manœuvres below Borisow as might deceive Tchitchakoff, and divert his attention from the point at which the French army was about to attempt the passage.

General Corbineau, quitting Napoleon on the 23rd, lost no time in rejoining Marshal Oudinot, and the latter, proceeding on the following day, the 24th, to execute the orders he had received, took advantage of the night and the wood which bordered the Berezina, to send General Corbineau secretly with all the available pontonniers to commence the works which would be necessary to enable the army to cross the Berezina by the Studianka passage. In the meantime, Napoleon, having proceeded on the 24th to Lochnitza on the Borisow route, with the intention of reaching Borisow itself with the guard on the following day, for the purpose of inducing the Russians to believe that he intended to cross the Berezina below instead of above that town, had sent orders to Marshal Davoust, who, since the battle of Krasnoé, had again commanded the rear guard, to hasten his movements, that the passage of the Berezina might be effected, if at all, with the utmost possible expedition, and, especially, had despatched General Eblé with the pontonniers and their matériel to Studianka, to complete the construction of the bridges which the pontonniers of the 2nd corps had been only able to commence.

General Eblé set out on the evening of the 24th from Lochnitza towards Borisow, with his four hundred men, followed by the able General Chasseloup, who still possessed some of his sappers, although quite unfurnished with matériel, and marching throughout the whole night, reached Borisow at five o'clock on the morning of the 25th, and from thence, by a movement to the right, reached the bank of the Berezina at Studianka in the course of the afternoon, when General Eblé, addressing his troops, declared to them that the fate of

the army was in their hands, inspired them with his own noble sentiments, and obtained from them the promise of the most absolute devotion; a promise which bound them, although they had just marched during two days and two nights, and the cold had again become most intense, to remain in the water throughout the whole of the night and the following day, in the midst of enormous masses of ice, and exposed to the bullets of the enemy, without an hour of repose, and only taking time to snatch a morsel of the roughest food.

Napoleon, after having proceeded from Lochnitza to Borisow, and slept at the château de Storoï Borisow, galloped up to Studianka on the morning of the 26th with his lieutenants Murat, Berthier, Eugene, Coulaincourt, and Duroc, and watched the pontonniers fixing the bridges, without daring to urge to further exertions, men, who at the exhortations of their worthy General, were exerting to the utmost all their strength and intelligence. In the meantime, as it was a subject of the most anxious inquiry whether the French troops would have to encounter or not the Russian army at the moment when they were attempting the passage of the river, Marshal Oudinot's aide-de-camp, Jacqueminot, had with some difficulty crossed to the other bank, and seized on an inferior officer of the Russian army, from whom it was learned that Tchitchakoff with the bulk of his forces was before Borisow, fully deceived by the pretended intentions of the French below that town, and that he had only a detachment of light troops at Studianka.

Whilst the bridges were still in progress, Corbineau, with his cavalry brigade, taking behind them a certain number of voltigeurs, plunged into the Berezina, and having surmounted the many difficulties presented by the passage of the river, ascended the opposite bank, and took up a position in the wood on its borders; Napoleon at the same time posting on the left bank forty pieces of cannon which were to fire, if necessary, over the heads of our men at the risk of striking them, the state of affairs rendering such an inconvenience unavoidable.

Working in the midst of the freezing water, with the utmost ardour, and without even complaining of the terrible hardships they were undergoing, the pontonniers rendered practicable one of the two bridges they were constructing an hour after noon, and the divisions Legrand and Maison, and Doumerc's cuirassiers of the 2nd corps, and the remains of the division Dombrowski, amounting altogether to nine thousand men, immediately passed over it to the other bank, where they immediately engaged and put to flight some light infantry troops which General Tchaplitz, who commanded

Tchitchakoff's advanced guard, had moved upon this point; and established themselves in a position in which they would be able to cover the passage of our troops.

At four o'clock in the afternoon the second bridge was completed, and after the Guard had effected the passage, it was attempted to accomplish that of the artillery; but having been necessarily most hastily constructed, and with ill prepared materials, it twice gave way under the weight to which it was now exposed, and was not fully established until six o'clock on the following morning.

In the meantime, the bridge which had been first completed, and which was on the right, having been devoted solely to the passage of those on foot and the infantry, had never ceased to be practicable, and during the night of the 27th of November almost all the unarmed crowd of stragglers reached the opposite bank by its means. The attraction of some farms and a certain amount of provisions, however, had retained a portion on the left bank of the river, and about ten or fifteen thousand men, distributing themselves around bivouac fires, resolved not to leave the left bank that night for quarters which might be far less endurable, and thus, the bridge to the right being rendered useless, whilst that on the left was rendered impracticable by breaking down under the artillery, was lost (and it was a loss, which was very soon to be bitterly regretted) the night of the 27th.

On the morning of the 27th Napoleon traversed the bridges with his staff, and having taken up his quarters in a little village named Zawnicky, on the right bank, behind the corps of Marshal Oudinot, remained on horseback during the whole day for the purpose of superintending in person the passage of the various detachments which still remained on the left bank. During the course of the day the 4th corps (Prince Eugene's), the 3rd (Marshal Ney's), the 5th (Prince Poniatowski's), and the 8th (the Westphalian), accomplished the passage; the two former numbering about two thousand each, and the two latter about five or six hundred each. Towards the close of the day came up the 1st corps which, since the departure from Krasnoé, had resumed the position of rear guard, and was now the only corps which preserved any appearance of discipline.

The 9th corps, that of Marshal Victor, after having slowly fallen back before Wittgenstein, had finally made a decided retrograde movement, for the purpose of covering the grand army, and had posted itself between Borisow and Studianka in such a manner as to protect these two positions; and Napoleon, considering it a matter of extreme importance to deceive Tchitchakoff with respect to the point at which the

army was about to cross the Berezina, ordered Marshal Victor to leave at Borisow the French division Partouneaux, already reduced from twelve thousand men to four thousand, whilst he himself with the Polish division Gerard and the German division Dâendels, numbering altogether about nine thousand men, and seven or eight hundred cavalry, covered Studianka. At the same time, making every attempt to resist the enemy's attack, he directed Marshal Davoust, as soon as he should have effected the passage of the river, to advance on the Zembin route, which was also the Wilna route, to seize before they should be occupied by the Cossacks, the many important defiles which occurred along it.

The 27th was thus employed in crossing the Berezina, and preparing a desperate resistance; and on the same day a third accident occurred to the bridge on the left, which, although it was speedily repaired, caused considerable confusion amongst the number of waggons which were being hurried across it.

In the meantime, Tchitchakoff had been completely deceived with respect to the place at which we had determined to effect the passage of the Berezina; so completely, indeed, that when General Tchaplitz informed him of the movements of the French army at Studianka, he regarded them as mere pretended operations designed to deceive him with respect to Napoleon's real intentions. When, however, information of the actual passage of the army reached him, he was at length undeceived and determined to attack us violently on the right bank on the 28th of November in concert with the two other Russian armies posted on the left bank. The forces at his disposal were between thirty and thirty-two thousand, of whom ten or twelve thousand were cavalry, which would be by no means an advantageous arm on the species of ground on which the opposed forces would most probably meet.

In the meantime, Kutusof, having halted at Kopys on the Dnieper, to refresh and rally his troops which were much exhausted, had contented himself with sending beyond the Dnieper, Platow, Miloradovitch, and Yermoloff with an advanced guard of about ten thousand men, and these troops having arrived at Lochnitza, were ready to co-operate with Tchitchakoff and Wittgenstein in the destruction of the French army. The position at this moment of Wittgenstein, who had followed Victor's corps together with Steinghel, was in the rear of Victor, between Borisow and Studianka, and as his troops numbered thirty thousand, there were thus about seventy two thousand Russian soldiers, without taking

into account the thirty thousand remaining in the rear with Kutusof, ready to attack the twelve or thirteen thousand under Victor, the nine thousand under Oudinot, and the seven or eight hundred of the Guard.

The terrible struggle commenced on the evening of the 27th. The unfortunate French division Partouneaux (the best of Victor's three), had to remain in front of Borisow during the whole of the 27th, in order to detain there and deceive Admiral Tchitchakoff. In this position it was separated from its corps by three leagues of wood and marsh, and was cut off, as was to be expected, from the other divisions of Victor's corps, employed in covering Studianka, by Miloradovitch's advanced guard, effecting on the Orscha route its junction with Wittgenstein and Steinghel. It was on the evening of the 27th that Partouneaux first perceived the perilous nature of his position, and found himself suddenly attacked on the Orscha route, and on the other side by Tchitchakoff's troops which were attempting to cross the Berezina on the wrecks of the Borisow bridge; the embarrassment of his position being immensely increased by the presence of many thousands of stragglers, who had accumulated about his troops with their baggage, believing that their passage across the Berezina was really to be effected below Borisow, and who, seeking refuge in their despair, with cries of anguish, amidst Partouneaux's troops, impeded their movements, and increased the desolation of the scene. Partouneaux, resolved, nevertheless, in spite of these adverse circumstances, to extricate himself from his perilous position, and attempted to cross the labyrinth of wood and marsh which separated him from Studianka, but he had only a force of four thousand men with which to contend with forty thousand, and after a most heroic contest he surrendered, or rather was taken prisoner, with two thousand men who alone remained to him. A battalion of three hundred men alone succeeded under shadow of the darkness in ascending the Berezina and gaining Studianka; whilst the stragglers, unable to escape, fell before the Cossack lances.

On the morning of the 28th the conflict commenced on the two banks of the Berezina; on the right bank with those of our troops which had effected the passage, and on the left bank with those who covered it. The enemy's fire became terribly vehement, and on each bank thousands fell, to die. Nevertheless, although the Russian Generals had concerted amongst themselves measures calculated to drive the French troops on each bank of the Berezina, into its waters, they were, fortunately, so intimidated by the presence of Napoleon and the grand army, that, though possessed of the

advantage both in numbers and position, they acted with extreme reserve, and did not display that vigour which must have completed our ruin.

Marshal Oudinot was engaged from an early hour of the morning with the troops of Tchaplitz and Pahlen, which were supported by the remainder of Tchitchakoff's forces, and a detachment of Yermoloff's; and his Generals, Maison, Legrand, and Dombrowski, by the exercise of as much skill as valour, had just succeeded in driving back Tchaplitz and Pahlen upon the bulk of Tchitchakoff's corps, when Oudinot himself was wounded and carried off the field. As General Legrand was also wounded, Napoleon sent Ney to replace Oudinot, and Ney immediately hastened up with the wreck of his corps, followed by the division Claparède, and proceeded to support the divisions Maison and Legrand, and to aid them to drive back the head of Tchitchakoff's troops upon their corps de bataille. He ordered Doumerc to hold himself in readiness to charge towards the right, and arranged his infantry columns in such a manner as to be able to charge with them either on the centre or on the left, at the same time directing a violent cannonade against masses of Russian troops which were posted in the thickest part of the wood. Doumerc, impatient for action, perceiving on his right six or seven thousand veteran Russian infantry supported by a line of cavalry, charged them with the 7th cuirassiers, under Colonel Dubois, and having thus broken the Russian square, hastened up with the 14th cuirassiers to prevent the enemy's line from re-forming, whilst the fourth held the enemy's cavalry in check on the left, and the light cavalry held it in check on the right. The conclusion of this portion of the battle left us in possession of about two thousand prisoners, and had cost the enemy a further loss of one thousand in killed and wounded. In the meantime Ney had advanced his infantry against the enemy's line, and compelling the Russians to retreat into the thickest portion of the wood, continued the pursuit to the extremity of the Stakow forest, half way from Brill to Borisow, and there paused, concluding with a cannonade a battle which had resulted in a complete victory for us, and had cost the enemy three thousand in killed and wounded, and as many prisoners.

In the meantime Marshal Victor on the left bank of the Berezina, had to maintain his ground against forty thousand Russian troops, with nine or ten thousand soldiers whose movements were embarrassed by the presence of ten or twelve thousand stragglers. He had taken up a position, which was fortunately well calculated for defensive operations, on the side of a ravine which ended in the Berezina,

and had posted there the Polish division Girard, together with the German division and the Dutch division de Berg. By his right he covered Studianka and protected the bridges, and he was supported on his left by a wood which he had not sufficient forces to occupy, but in front of which he had posted the eight hundred cavalry which were still at his disposal under the command of General Fournier; whilst with twelve pieces of cannon, he had established a dominant and murderous fire against the Russian troops, and thus held them in check.

At daybreak the Russian attack, which was directed by General Diebitch, the chief of Wittgenstein's staff, became very vehement, and after a vigorous cannonade, numerous squadrons of the enemy's cavalry attacked the French left, composed of Fournier's cavalry, but were repelled by the latter and even driven back beyond the ravine. At the same time the Russian infantry chasseurs, attacking our right, had descended into the ravine, and posting themselves in the brushwood, had afforded General Diebitch the opportunity of establishing there a strong battery, the fire of which was directed upon the bridges, towards which a mass of stragglers and baggage was proceeding in terrified haste.

Marshal Victor, fearing for the safety of this portion of his line, since the defence of the bridges was his chief duty, threw several columns of infantry against the Russian batteries, whilst the imperial Guard, on the opposite bank of the Berezina, having perceived the peril, posted some pieces of cannon in such a manner as to answer those of the enemy. And thus for some hours was exchanged a torrent of projectiles between the two banks of the river, and close to the bridges, which received a portion of them, whilst a large number fell amidst the terrified crowd which was hastening with almost mad eagerness to cross to the other bank, and which now presented in its agony, confusion, and despair, a spectacle which was in itself a fearful condemnation of this mad expedition.

When Victor, who displayed throughout the day the most devoted courage, perceived that there was some danger that his right would be broken, and imminent peril of a frightful catastrophe thus taking place towards the bridges, he resolved to make a furious attack towards the enemy's centre, and throwing a column of infantry across the ravine, assailed and drove back the Russian line at the same moment that General Fournier, executing a final charge with his cavalry, thus supported the movement and rendered it decisive.

The Russian artillery having been thus driven back, ceased to aggravate the disorder at the bridge by its fire; but Gen-

eral Diebitch, unwilling to consider himself vanquished, re-formed his line, which was three times more numerous than ours, and returning to the charge, drove the French troops once more beyond the ravine, when the approach of night separated the exhausted combatants, and the contest ended, leaving Fournier with scarcely three hundred of his seven or eight hundred horse, and Marshal Victor with scarcely five thousand of his eight or nine thousand infantry, the Russians having lost in the double contest waged on each side of the Berezina ten or eleven thousand men, without taking into account the three thousand men who had fallen into the hands of General Doumerc. But the Russian wounded were saved, whilst ours were necessarily abandoned, together with the stragglers, whom it was now useless to hope to be able to transport across the river in time to avoid the enemy.

The night brought with it a certain degree of calm in the place of the carnage and confusion which had marked the whole course of the day, and the French army could fairly indulge in the feeling of having obtained a glorious triumph; but it was nevertheless necessary that it should on the following day not so much retreat as fly, and from nine o'clock in the evening, until Marshal Victor's troops crossed the Berezina, taking with them all their artillery and matériel, with the exception of two pieces of cannon. There still remained, however, several thousands of disbanded stragglers or fugitives on the left bank, who wished to defer their passage across the river until the morrow, and as Napoleon had ordered that the bridges should be destroyed at daybreak, General Eblé, and several other officers, proceeded to their bivouacs, to entreat them to cross the river immediately, and to declare to them that the bridges were about to be destroyed. But all his efforts were in vain.

At daybreak on the following day, the 29th of November, General Eblé received orders to destroy the bridges at seven o'clock, but being anxious to give every opportunity to the stragglers, who, convinced too late of their danger, now hastened to cross the river with the utmost eagerness, he delayed the execution of this order until nearly nine o'clock, when the Russians being almost upon them, he was compelled with a heavy heart to set fire to the heaps of inflammable materials which had been placed under the bridges to facilitate their destruction. Immediately torrents of smoke and flame enveloped the two bridges, and the unhappy wretches who were upon them precipitated themselves into the stream to avoid being carried down with them in their fall. From the midst of the crowd which had not yet effected the passage arose a cry of bitter despair, accompanied by tears and con-

vulsive gestures, the wounded and the women stretching out their arms towards their companions, who were making a desperate effort to reach the opposite bank, either by the burning bridges, or through the stream itself, to avoid a captivity less endurable than death. The Cossacks now galloped up, and thrusting their lances into the midst of the crowd slew some of the unfortunate wretches of which it was composed, and then drove the others, numbering from six to eight thousand, men, women, and children, disbanded soldiers or fugitives, towards the Russian army.

The French army retreated overwhelmed with a deep feeling of affliction caused by this spectacle, and no one was more bitterly distressed at it than the generous and intrepid Eblé, to the exertions of whom and his gallant pontonniers the fifty and odd thousand individuals armed or unarmed, who had crossed the Berezina, owed both life and liberty.

Such was the immortal event at the passage of the Berezina, one of the most tragic to be found in history, and a fit completion of this terrible campaign.

It was now necessary that the army without a moment's loss of time should proceed by Zembin, Pletchenitzy, Ilia, and Molodeczno, to rejoin the Wilna route; and on the 4th of December, the head of the army had reached Smorgoni, whilst the rear guard was at Molodeczno, where a violent and desperate encounter took place between it and a Russian force, consisting of Platow's cavalry and the division Tchaplitz, ending in the repulse of the latter, but leaving Ney's troops reduced to four or five hundred, and consequently insufficient for the service of the rear guard which was now entrusted to Marshal Victor, with the Bavarians under General Wrède.

Napoleon having arrived at Smorgoni considered that he had satisfied all the demands of honour in remaining with the army up to the point where the Caudine forks no longer threatened it, and resolved to return to Paris. M. Daru, indeed, to whom he communicated his intention by his own mouth, and M. de Bassano, to whom he sent information of it by letter, insisted strongly upon the necessity of his remaining with the army, but Napoleon disregarded their advice, being most strongly impressed by the sense of the danger he should incur, should he find himself with a few worn out troops incapable of any resistance at four hundred leagues distant from the French frontier, the Germans on his rear being very disposed to revolt. What would be the result, he asked himself, what would be the effect on the empire, should the Germans entertain the very evident idea, that by preventing his return to France they would at one blow destroy the fabric of his

power, and should they give effect to this idea, by closing the Rhine route against him and the wrecks of his army? Exaggerating this peril with that vivacity of perception which was one of the distinguishing qualities of his mind, Napoleon was impatient to quit his army now that the passage of the Berezina had been miraculously effected and the claims upon his Imperial honour no longer demanded his presence at the head of his troops. Fearing that as soon as his disasters became known, a thousand arms would be outstretched to bar his road, he was anxious to escape at once with Coulaincourt, Lobau, Duroc, and Lefebvre Desnouettes, traversing Poland and Germany secretly, and to reach the Tuileries unexpected even by his wife.

But although there were many reasons which urged the adoption of this course, there were many also of considerable weight which were of an opposite tendency. He was still at the head of twelve thousand armed troops, followed by forty thousand stragglers, who were quite capable, by the aid of a month or two of repose and proper resources, of being reconverted into disciplined troops, and, in the meantime, the twelve thousand troops who still preserved their arms would be joined between Molodeczno and Wilna by Wrède's six thousand Bavarians, at Wilna itself by Loison's nine thousand French troops, the two brigades of Poles and Germans under Franceschi and Coutard, numbering altogether about seven or eight thousand men, and, in addition to these organised corps, some squadrons and battalions de marche numbering about four thousand, and six thousand Lithuanians. The junction of these various corps with the grand army would form a force capable of offering a considerable degree of resistance to the enemy, and numbering forty-five thousand well armed and disciplined troops. At the same time there were, on the right, Schwarzenberg with twenty-five thousand Austrians, and Reynier with fifteen thousand French and Saxon troops; whilst Macdonald commanded on the left ten thousand Prussians, who would not dare to be untrue to the French army as long as it was true to itself, and six thousand Poles who would be proof against every hostile influence. In the rear the division Heudelet of Augereau's corps reached Kœnigsberg fifteen thousand strong, whilst Augereau himself was in command of an equal number, together with Grenier's corps, which had passed the Alps, eighteen thousand strong. Augereau would be able to hold Berlin with thirty thousand men, Heudelet to fill up the intervening space with fifteen thousand, and Napoleon would have the power of assembling around Wilna one hundred thousand, a force equal to that which was at the disposal of the Russians.

Kutusof's troops numbered only fifty thousand, Wittgenstein's twenty thousand, and Tchitchakoff's about as many, whilst Sacken, after the disastrous conflicts he had had with Schwarzenberg and Reynier, had now no more than ten thousand. Moreover, should the French army gain a battle before Wilna, the influence of such success would be sufficient to attract the thirty or forty thousand stragglers into its ranks, and it would be sufficiently strong to hold the Russians in check, to await reinforcements from France, and to procure resources from Poland.

But the moral sentiment was wanting to Napoleon's mind which would have caused him to prefer the loss of a throne to the abandonment of an army which he had led to disaster. Had his life only been in danger Napoleon was a sufficiently good soldier to have remained without hesitation with an army which his own errors had compromised; but to be dethroned, and, which was far worse, to become a prisoner in the hands of the Germans was a prospect which he could not bear to contemplate, and he formed the resolution at Smorgoni to return immediately to France.

Confiding the chief authority in his absence to the King of Naples, Napoleon left with him Major General Berthier, hoping that the service would thus have a wise, laborious councillor, capable of restraining his impetuosity, and of supplying his want of knowledge of details. Unfortunately, the major-general was completely demoralised, and his health totally destroyed. He was anxious to set out with Napoleon, and the severest language was necessary to induce him to remain.

On the evening of the 6th of December, at Smorgoni, Napoleon assembled Murat, Eugene, Berthier, and his marshals, and communicated to them his intention. They were greatly astonished and considerably agitated by this declaration, but did not dare to offer any opposition to the resolutions of their master, whom, although vanquished, they still feared; moreover, both his arguments and manner, which was on this occasion extraordinarily bland and persuasive, had considerable weight with them. He declared that he would speedily rejoin them at the head of a formidable army, and recommended them in the meantime to support each other, and faithfully obey Murat. Having concluded his address he embraced his hearers, and throwing himself into a sledge, followed by M. de Coulaincourt, Marshal Duroc, Count Lobau, and General Lefebvre-Desnouettes, set out in the middle of the night, leaving his lieutenants acquiescent in, and almost persuaded of the wisdom of the step which he was taking, but at the same time overwhelmed with astonishment and almost with despair.

The greatest secrecy was to be observed until the morrow in order that news of his departure might not precede him on the road which he was about to traverse in the strictest incognito. Before his departure he had issued the twenty-ninth bulletin, which subsequently became so celebrated, in which for the first time in the course of the retreat, he acknowledged that portion of the disasters suffered by the French army which could not be positively denied, attributing them to the inclemency of the weather, and relieving the account of his reverses by a description of the glorious and immortal passage of the Berezina.

When the army became informed of Napoleon's departure it fell into a species of stupefaction, for with him had vanished its last hope, and it mechanically continued its march, anxious to reach Wilna, as a month before it had been anxious to reach Smolensk. Each successive day brought an increase of its sufferings. On its departure from Molodeczno the cold had become still more intense, and had descended to thirty degrees Reaumur. Almost all the horses were dead, and the men daily dropped on the roads by hundreds. The troops marched huddled together, careless of their ranks, steeped in the silence of stupefaction and the depths of despair, saying nothing, regarding nothing. Smitten by the intense cold those who were of feeble constitution lost in succession, sight, hearing and consciousness, and then fell without power of motion to die on the road, and be trampled on by the crowd of those who followed.

And whilst the troops thus perished of cold on their march, they also perished in their bivouacs through the unrestrained enjoyment of warmth; for too eagerly exposing their frozen limbs to the heat of the bivouac fires, many of them brought upon their feet, and hands, and even faces, fatal gangrene. Many also perished by being burned to death, through their own carelessness in farm-houses in which they passed the night.

At length this desolate crowd of beings, lean, exhausted, clothed in rags and wearing over their uniforms all varieties of strange costume brought from Moscow, arrived on the 9th of December at the gates of Wilna, and experienced on the occasion in hearts which appeared to have been deprived of all sensation one last feeling of pleasure. Wilna! Wilna! . . . It was a word which was identified in the minds of the troops with the ideas of repose, security, and abundance; and, in fact, although this city did not contain such resources as was generally supposed, it was capable of affording far more than what would supply the most pressing necessities of the army, and enable it to reach the Niemen

in good order. At the sight of the walls of the city, the crowd, forgetting that the largest gate would be but a very narrow entrance for such numbers, neglected to make the circuit of the walls in search of several gates, and mechanically following the head of the column, accumulated about the gate which was towards Smolensk in a state of terrible confusion similar to that which had arisen at the bridges across the Berezina. When at length the troops had entered the town, this scene of confusion was repeated in its streets, for as no attempt was made to supply the necessities of the soldiers or to preserve order amongst them, and the inhabitants, terrified at their wild appearance and clamourous cries, closed their shops and warehouses against them, even when they approached to purchase provisions, Wilna was speedily a sacked town.

The army reached Wilna during the 8th and 9th of December. Some days of repose were necessary to our exhausted soldiers, and it might easily have been procured for them, had proper orders been given to Schwarzenberg and General Reynier, the former of whom, having received a reinforcement of six thousand men, had reached Slonim whilst the latter had advanced towards Narew for the purpose of acting in concert with the division Durutte which came from Warsaw, and had inflicted a severe check upon the Russian General, Sacken, whom he encountered upon his road. Schwarzenberg receiving information of this event, had marched upon Sacken's flank, and assailing him in his turn had contributed to throw him back in disorder towards Volhynia. This success had cost the Russians some seven or eight thousand men, and had afforded Schwarzenberg and Reynier the security for their rear necessary before they could undertake any movement in advance, and had they been informed of the real state of affairs, Schwarzenberg, probably Reynier also, would certainly have marched upon Wilna, which he might have reached before the 10th of December. But Napoleon had set out without giving any orders to this effect, and Schwarzenberg and Reynier lingered between Slonim and Neswij, uncertain what course to pursue, and unable to determine between the various contradictory reports which reached them from all sides. The result was, therefore, that Wilna was completely uncovered, and that there was no hope of making an effectual defence there against the three Russian corps which were advancing against it.

Each corps of the French army had fallen into complete dissolution under the influence of the cold and incessant fatigue; and at the gates of Wilna Victor had reached the conclusion of his duties as commander of the rear guard by

finding himself without a single soldier. The only troops remaining in their ranks were about three thousand in Loison's division, and about as many of the Imperial Guard. The generals, whether wounded or well, having no men to command, wandered hither and thither, and Murat, horrified at the responsibility which had fallen upon him, alarmed for the safety of his kingdom in the midst of the wide spread ruin which had begun to take place, and receiving but little support from Berthier, who was both sick and paralysed with fear, knew not what to do, or to order.

The enemy, however, left him no time for hesitation. On the evening of the 9th, Platow appeared with his Cossacks before the gates of Wilna, and aggravated to the highest possible pitch the disorder which prevailed within it. There was no longer any rear guard in existence, and General Loison, therefore, who alone had any troops at his disposal, hastened up with the nineteenth, and attempted to cover the town, whilst Ney and Lefebvre, running through the streets cried to arms, and endeavoured to collect some of the armed soldiers for the purpose of conducting them to the ramparts. By these means the Cossacks were checked, but only for a time, and each man from this moment only thought how he might effect his own flight. Murat, the hero of the plains of the Moskowa, Murat, the invulnerable Murat, who seemed proof against every weapon, was among the first to fly, and set off on the night of the 10th, declaring that he was going to Kowno, where it was to be attempted to assemble the army behind the Niemen. All who were capable of doing so fled in confusion, leaving to the enemy vast magazines of all kinds and some eighteen or twenty thousand wounded or exhausted men, many of the former of whom had been placed in the houses of the Polish Jews, and were thrown from the windows or murdered by these wretches, as soon as the French army was in retreat.

As the ground from the gates of Wilna for about the distance of a league was covered with ice it was difficult, and even impossible, for the horses to drag up the ascent the carts which bore the sick and wounded officers, the gun carriages, or the chests of treasure; which latter M. de Bassano, unwilling to manifest by their removal the danger of the situation, had left at Wilna as long as possible. At the bottom of the hill, therefore, there ensued a scene of the most terrible confusion, and after some hours of ineffectual exertion, it was found necessary to abandon the artillery, the trophies brought from Moscow, many of the sick and wounded, and to resign to the pillage of our own troops the greater portion of the

treasure. As the night ended the Cossacks hastened up to substitute their own pillage for that of the French, and to seize a booty such as had never before been offered to their avidity.

During the 10th, 11th, and 12th, the French troops traversed the twenty-six leagues which separated Wilna and Kowno; and in what destitution did they now re-pass the Niemen which six months ago they had crossed numbering four hundred thousand men and sixty thousand cavalry, twelve hundred pieces of cannon, and with incomparable éclat! All who had not been entirely deprived by the severity of the weather of all sense and feeling, could not avoid making this bitter comparison, and felt their eyes fill with tears as they considered it. As the Niemen was frozen over and the Cossacks had already crossed it at a gallop, there could be no hope of defending Kowno, and it only remained to depart, having first emptied, or to speak truly, pillaged the magazines which the activity of General Baste had filled with all the resources of Dantzig.

On the morning of the 12th of December Murat consulted with the Marshals, Prince Berthier and M. Darn, on the course which it would be proper to adopt. The only troops which remained in their ranks were about two thousand men in Loison's division, and about one thousand five hundred in the Guard, of whom only some five hundred were capable of bearing a musket; and Murat, exasperated into hatred of Napoleon by a state of things which imperilled the safety of the crowns possessed by the Bonaparte family, permitted himself to indulge in bitter complaint of Napoleon's ambition which had caused it. Davoust, indeed, having a thorough dislike of the King of Naples, silenced him by observing that if Napoleon was to find censors in the army, they should not be those of his lieutenants whom he had made kings, and that under existing circumstances, the object in view should be to discover some means of safety, and not to sanction by evil example the want of discipline amongst the troops.

The defence of Kowno and the conduct of the conclusion of the retreat, was unanimously entrusted to Marshal Ney, and for the purpose of affording the remains of the French army time to escape, he was to defend Kowno for forty-eight hours with the remains of the division Loison, and some troops of the German confederation, and then to fall back upon Kœnigsberg, when he would be joined by Marshal Macdonald, who, on his side, retreated from Riga upon Tilsit. Marshal Ney demanded that in this last effort under the walls of Kowno he should be assisted by General Gérard, and this request was acceded to.

As soon as these plans had been arranged, the remains of the French army immediately departed for Kœnigsberg, leaving Ney and Gérard at Kowno to attempt to hold in check the Cossacks, who appeared on the morning of the 13th by the Wilna route, in front of the bridge across the Niemen, upon which the German troops, after some hesitation, in spite of the remonstrances of Ney and Gérard, and although the Cossacks had been compelled to fall back by the fire of a detachment of the 29th, gradually disbanded, inducing by their example the soldiers of the 29th to do so likewise. Finding themselves therefore, on the evening of the 13th with only five or six hundred men and eight or ten pieces of cannon, Ney and Gérard resolved to depart during the night. But at the point of departure from Kowno, a hill arose as at the commencement of the route from Wilna, and, covered as it was with ice, had caused a terrible scene of confusion which was much increased by the fact that some Cossacks having crossed the Niemen on the ice and ascended the opposite side of the hill, threatened to cut off the route; and at this new danger the five or six hundred men who still followed Ney and Gérard dispersed, each now seeking his own safety, and the latter, with a few officers who still remained with them, turning to the right followed the course of the Niemen, and succeeded in gaining in safety the Gumbinnen route at Kœnisberg; thus performing for France a last service, the only one in their power, since it was at least something in the immensity of this disaster to save two men such as these.

From this moment not a trace of any corps of the army remained; the disbanded soldiers continuing their retreat across the frozen plains of Poland pursued by the Cossacks, who, after having advanced some leagues beyond the Niemen re-crossed it, since the Russian armies, triumphant but exhausted and much reduced in numbers, did not intend to advance to the opposite bank.

There were at Kœnigsberg about ten thousand individuals in the hospitals, of whom some were wounded but the greater number sick. Of these latter some had their limbs frozen, whilst others were suffering from a horrible species of pestilence, named by the doctors fièvre de congélation, and terribly contagious. The heroic Larrey, worn out with fatigue and suffering, had caught this fever, and died of it. Heroism, of whatever species it may be, is the one consolation in the midst of great disasters, and this consolation for the disasters of the Russian campaign was granted to France in a measure which fully equalled those disasters. Amidst the crowd of those unhappy ones who expiated at Kœnigsberg by their death, either the ambition of Napoleon or their own

intemperance were some whom France must ever regret, and amongst these were General Lariboisière and General Eblé; the former of whom, borne down by fatigue, which he supported with rare fortitude in spite of his age, but inconsolable for the loss of a son slain before his own eyes at the battle of the Moskowa, died of the contagion prevailing at Kœnigsberg, whilst the latter, who had succeeded him in the chief command of the artillery, had been himself smitten by a mortal disease at the Berezina, and expired two days after the chief whom he succeeded.

Many attempts have been made to reckon up the losses suffered by France and her allies in this Russian expedition, and although such a calculation is as impossible as terrible, some idea of the truth may, nevertheless, be attained. The total force of the army intended to act from the Rhine to the Niemen consisted of six hundred and twelve thousand men (with the Austrians, six hundred and forty-eight thousand), and one hundred and fifty thousand horses. Of these five hundred and-thirty three thousand had passed the Niemen, of whom there remained, under the Prince Schwarzenberg and Reynier, about forty thousand Austrians and Saxons, fifteen thousand Prussians and Poles under Marshal Macdonald, and some isolated troops, numbering about thirty or forty thousand. Of the remaining four hundred and thirty eight thousand, about one hundred thousand had fallen into the hands of the Russians: and according to this calculation, therefore, about three hundred and forty thousand would have perished; but this happily was not the case, for a certain number of men who had deserted their ranks at the commencement of the campaign, had gradually rejoined their country across Poland and Germany. Nevertheless, it can be no exaggeration to say, that in the course of the campaign about three hundred thousand men fell beneath the enemy's fire and the severities of cold and want.

What can we say of the expedition which caused this terrible loss? What judgment pass upon it which has not already been passed by the general good sense of the world?

It was an enterprise which under no circumstances, or under scarcely any, could have possibly succeeded; the most perfect system of execution could not have corrected its essential fault, and the errors which were committed, and which for the most part were natural results of its inherent principle, rendered its success entirely impracticable.

It was not an enterprise which political causes compelled Napoleon to execute, for by employing all his resources in carrying on the war in Spain, he might have solved the Euro-

pean question, and by sacrificing some of his territorial acquisitions, which were more burdensome than useful, might have doubtless obtained a general peace. But even supposing this to be an error, and that it was inevitable that Russia should enter into an alliance with England and make war with France, to invade Russia instead of awaiting her attack upon the Vistula was one of the greatest political faults recorded in history, and was the fruit of that impetuous element of Napoleon's character which rendered him at once both impatient and rash. Had Europe, indeed, been united for the purpose of securing its independence, into a league against this vast empire, it might by attacking it by sea, or even by advancing against it methodically by land, have succeeded, since it would have had no reason to fear an attack on its rear, in obtaining a victory over her. But for Napoleon to march upon Moscow across Europe, secretly conspiring against him, and thus left full of hatred in his rear, was a proceeding of the rashest temerity; whilst, by awaiting Russia in Poland or Germany, he might have vanquished Russia and Germany by the same blow, had the latter constituted itself the ally of the former.

But if this enterprise was unreasonable in its very principle it was still more so considering the state of Napoleon's military resources in 1812. The greater number of the veterans of Austerlitz and Friedland were dead or were dying in Spain; and although some of them remained in Davoust's corps, and some old divisions of Ney, Oudinot, and Eugene, these corps were unfortunately immoderately swelled with young and refractory conscripts, and mingled, moreover, with allies who hated us, and who, although the sense of honour constrained them to fight well on the actual battle field, deserted on the first opportunity. It would have been better to have had three hundred thousand soldiers, such as were those of Marshal Davoust, than the six hundred thousand which were actually collected, for the difficulty of providing their subsistence would have been only one half, and being fed they would have remained in their ranks. In 1807, with excellent troops he had failed to reach the Niemen, and to attempt in 1812 to advance twice as far with troops only half as efficient, was to ensure some terrible disaster. At this period, indeed, the difficulties attending such an expedition were as great as possible, whilst the means for executing it were almost entirely wanting, for after having aroused against himself the rage of the Spaniards, who consumed many of our best troops, to advance an immense distance through enraged Germany for the purpose of provoking the frenzied enmity of the Russians, and then too, with an

army composed of troops in a very imperfect state of discipline, and consisting to a great extent of foreigners secretly hostile, was almost certain to invoke the most horrible of catastrophes.

The fault of this enterprise was so thoroughly essential to its very nature, that to enquire into the errors which were committed in its execution would be almost entirely useless, had not these errors themselves been the inevitable consequences of this principal fault.

Thus it is true that Napoleon, entering Russia on the 24th of June, lost eighteen days at Wilna; that when he advanced Davoust against Bagration he failed to provide him with sufficient forces, from his desire to reserve with himself a crushing force with which he might at once overwhelm Barclay de Tolly; that he lost twelve days at Witebsk; that when he set out from Witebsk for the purpose of turning the two Russian armies assembled at Smolensk, he wrongly; perhaps, hesitated to ascend the Dnieper as far as Smolensk, by which course, probably, he might have obtained the desired result; that instead of stopping at Smolensk he permitted himself to be led on by the desire of obtaining some brilliant result, in pursuit of the Russian army into those depths in which his own was to perish; that at the great battle of Moskowa, his hesitation to send his Guard into action was probably the cause which prevented the complete destruction of the Russian army; that when he found it necessary to evacuate Moscow, and had devised a vast and skilful combination for the purpose of returning upon the Dwina by Veliki-Luki he had not had sufficient firmness to overcome the opposition of his lieutenants; that his pride led him to remain at Moscow after he perceived that his position there was untenable; that he again wrongly yielded to the opinion of his lieutenants in resigning his plan of turning the Russian army at Malo-Jaroslawetz, for the purpose of penetrating into the rich Kaluga province; that when the retreat was necessary he neglected to conduct it in person; that at Krasnoé, by moving the army in detachments instead of en masse, he had lost there the whole of Marshal Ney's corps, almost all the troops which remained to Prince Eugene, a portion of the Guard, and of the troops under Davoust; and finally, that miraculously saved at the Berezina, he departed from the army, and thus neglected the opportunity of concentrating the remnants of his forces, and, with the force thus formed of striking the Russians a blow which would have compensated for his disasters by a triumph. All this is perfectly true, but they form but a feeble opinion with respect to the great catastrophe, who do not perceive

that the errors above recounted were not the result of any want of genius in Napoleon, but the natural consequences of the essential fault of the expedition itself. When he lost time at Wilna and Witebsk, awaiting the stragglers, his fault was not in waiting for them, but in having brought his troops so far; when he sent Davoust against Bagration with an insufficient force, he relied upon being able to concentrate troops in a manner which the nature of the country rendered impossible, and for this error the nature of the expedition was chiefly to blame as it also was for the error of his not stopping at Smolensk, for if it was dangerous to advance to Moscow, it would have been no less dangerous to winter in Lithuania with frozen rivers alone for a frontier, and with Europe in the rear, full of hatred against him and beginning to doubt his invincibility. If at the Moskowa he did not make use of his Guard, it was because he found it necessary to act cautiously in an enterprise of which he began to perceive the folly; if he remained too long at Moscow it was on account of the danger of exposing his embarrassments to Europe, always so ready to pass from a state of submission to one of revolt; if he paid too much deference to the opinions of his lieutenants with respect to his projected movements upon Veliki-Luki and Kalouga, it was because he had already demanded too much of them, and dared no longer demand anything of them but what was absolutely necessary; if in the retreat he displayed not that energy of which he had previously given so many proofs, it was because his energy was paralysed by the excessive consciousness of his errors. And, finally, if he abandoned the army at Smorgoni, it was because he perceived too clearly, and even in an exaggerated aspect, the consequences of the disasters which he had suffered, and which he considered could only be repaired at Paris. All this was not the result of any want of strength in Napoleon's mind or character, as he was speedily to prove on numerous battle-fields, but of the essential fault of this enterprise, or rather of that intemperate trait of Napoleon's character which hurried him into committing it.

At the same time let us not impute this disastrous catastrophe solely to earthly accidents, but also to moral causes; for to do this is demanded of us by our reverence for Providence, our sovereign judge, the supreme disposer of our fortunes in this world as in the next. To no fault of mere detail should we attribute this catastrophe, and not even to the fault of entering upon the Russian expedition at all, but to the far greater fault of having attempted to control the affairs of the world in a manner contrary to the rights and affections of its peoples, and without regard either for the

sentiments of those whom it was necessary to vanquish, or for the lives of those by whose aid this conquest would have to be effected—to the intemperance, in short, of genius blinded by a spirit of ambition. It is neither truthful nor useful to depreciate Napoleon, for to do so is simply to depreciate human nature and human wisdom; but both truth and wisdom demand that he should be rightly judged and displayed in his true light to the universe, together with the real causes of his errors, that nations, monarchs, and warriors, may perceive by a notable example the consequences which result when genius bursts the bonds of self-restraint, and permits itself to be carried away by the instigations of unlimited power. We need not wish to draw any other lesson from this terrible catastrophe. Still must be attributed to him who fell into this disastrous blindness, that greatness which adds to the greatness of the lesson, and which at least affords to its victims the recompense of Glory.

END OF VOLUME XIV.

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