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1800

MARENGO AND HOHENLINDEN

BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

MILITARY TRANSPORT.

MOBILIZATION AND EMBARKATION OF AN
ARMY CORPS.

ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF
THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION.

INFORMATION IN WAR.

MILITARY EXPEDITIONS BEYOND THE SEAS.

*The same translated into French—"EXPÉDITIONS
MILITAIRES D'OUTRE MER," by Brevet-Colonel
Septans, of the Colonial Army.*

PROVISIONING ARMIES IN THE FIELD.

THE ART OF MARCHING.

SCOUTING.

1800

MARENGO AND HOHENLINDEN

BY

COLONEL GEORGE ARMAND FURSE, C.B.,

LATE OF THE BLACK WATCH.

A cœur vaillant rien d'impossible.



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*J'OFFRE CORDIALEMENT CETTE ÉTUDE
À L'ARMÉE FRANÇAISE,
AUX SUCCESSEURS DE CES BRAVES
QUI, SOUS LA CONDUITE DU GRAND CAPITAINE NAPOLÉON 1^{er},
ONT PARTICIPÉ À TANT DE BELLES BATAILLES,
ET ONT HISSÉ LE DRAPEAU DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE ET DE L'EMPIRE
SUR PRESQUE TOUTES LES CAPITALES DE L'EUROPE.*

*HÉROS INCOMPARABLES !
QUI N'ENVIE PAS LEUR GLORIEUX SORT ?*

589215

PREFACE.

VERY much has been written on all that regards Napoleon's public and private life, his many campaigns and his pitiable end. If one more volume is now added to the rest, I trust I shall be excused when I explain that my ultimate purpose was to furnish what we do not appear to possess, namely, a conjoint account of what principally occurred in 1800 in the various theatres of war.

An individual of ordinary talent dare not attempt to draw up a narrative of those interesting campaigns without consulting the writings of many learned authors. I confess having done so to a very large extent, and, without giving a lengthy list of all the works consulted, shall content myself by complying with the Latin adage, *unicuique suum*.

There are many ways of compiling a narrative of past events, and every author, no doubt, flatters himself with the idea that his account of them is true and impartial. Nevertheless, with time, history becomes distorted, contradictory accounts occur, and many spurious incidents, introduced evidently to make the writing attractive, creep in and come to be accepted as truth.

The French Minister of War is to be thanked for

having conceived the happy idea of getting all bulletins, letters, reports, etc., now existing in the archives of the Bureau de la Guerre collected, classified, and published. In this manner, a mass of incontestable documents is now placed in the hands of the student, and this will enable him to elaborate a full and trustworthy narrative of any given campaign.

To Capitaine De Cugnac was assigned the task of gathering the documents referring to the Marengo campaign, and for his work, "La Campagne de l'Armée de Reserve en 1800," he has every right to my gratitude. His two volumes I have freely consulted; thanks to them I have been able to clear many contradictory and doubtful points and discard many legends. Most of the latter, though handed down to us during the last hundred years, one can feel sure, from the correspondence now published, not to contain anything more than an infinitesimal particle of truth.

G. A. FURSE.

ALPHINGTON,

FRIMLEY, SURREY,

1st February, 1903.

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1800.

MARENGO AND HOHENLINDEN.

CHAPTER I.

BONAPARTE BECOMES FIRST CONSUL.

Bonaparte receives the news of the landing of a Turkish army—Defeats Mustapha Pasha at Aboukir—Decides to quit Egypt—Reasons he gives to Marmont for doing so—Anxiety of his family during his absence in Egypt—Bruix gets out of Brest—Friction between Lord Keith and Nelson—Tragic affairs at Naples—Bonaparte sails for France and lands at Fréjus—Enthusiastic reception—People rush in crowds to behold him—Arrives in Paris—Prevailing discontent in France—A change of Government desired—The 18th Brumaire—Bonaparte becomes First Consul—His great qualities and ability—His power of fascination—Chooses capable coadjutors—Excellence of his rule during the Consulate—His restless activity.

THE year 1799 had been very disastrous for France. The Republican armies in Germany and in Italy had met with a series of glaring reverses, and even in the East the French, under their most renowned leader, had been compelled to retire from the battered walls of the little fortified town of Saint Jean d'Acre. The last year of the eighteenth century was fast approaching, and in that year fortune was to smile again on the French nation; the disasters of the previous year were to be driven into utter oblivion by splendid victories gained in the valley of the Danube and on the plains of Piedmont.

But before this could come to pass a more important event occurred. In the declining days of 1799, the ruling power in France was confided to a soldier of brilliant fame, to a genius in military and political matters, to a man the equal to whom the world had, perhaps, never seen. This was Bonaparte, the conqueror of Italy. He appealed to the people; he asked for money, iron, and soldiers, and in return promised them victory.

History records how well his promise was fulfilled in the first year of his rule.

The French army, returning from the siege of Saint Jean d'Acre, reached Cairo on the 14th of June, 1799, after a painful march. In the following months, rumours of fresh movements amongst the Mameluke Beys began to circulate. They, in fact, were making fresh efforts with the object of occupying the attention of the French, and to keep them away from the locality which the Turks had selected for the landing of their army. Elphi Osman and Mourad Bey were up in arms, but were defeated before long by La Grange and Murat.

Whilst Bonaparte was promenading in the neighbourhood of the Great Pyramids with Bourrienne on the evening of the 15th of July, he descried the approach of an Arab, who was riding in hot haste. It was a messenger Marmont had sent from Alexandria; the despatch he handed over to the general announced the arrival of a large Turkish army in Aboukir Bay on the 11th. This army, it appeared, had reached the shores of Egypt under the escort and protection of English ships of war.

It was the Turkish army which had arrived at Acre too late; the same that Bonaparte, the conqueror at the battle of the Pyramids,* boasted of having destroyed under the walls of that city.

On the 25th of July, 1799, Bonaparte defeated the army which, under the command of Mustapha Pasha, had landed at Aboukir. The conqueror was never loth to amplify his own performances. He much exaggerated this victory. His relation of the event, in point of numbers, at any rate, was not in strict conformity with the facts.† The number of Turks was not

* The battle of the Pyramids, in a certain sense, resembled the battle of Omdurman. The enemy in both instances dashed on recklessly and braved death, resorting to tactics which really proved the most favourable to their opponents. At the battle of the Pyramids the Mamelukes lost more than 2000 men; the French not quite 30, of whom about two-thirds fell victims to the cross-fire of their own squares. The Mamelukes dashed at the French squares, and were literally swept away by the fire of the defenders. The French spent nearly three days in dragging drowned Mamelukes out of the Nile for the sake of the booty to be found on them.

† In strict morality, as Carlyle puts it, no man is at liberty to tell lies. But if we accept the saying, "All is fair in love and war," an exception must be made in favour of the latter, when the end, to deceive the adversary, one of the greatest secrets of the art of war, is good. A falsehood should likewise be condoned when we aim to raise the *morale* of our troops.

quite 8000, but to give greater *éclat* to the victory it was magnified into 17,000.*

Kléber, writing to the Directory, states: "He (Bonaparte) cut to pieces, it is true, nearly 9000 Turks who had landed there (at Aboukir)." In point of fact, these troops were only the advanced guard of the Turkish army. Their main body consisted of 20,000 Janizaries and regular troops, with 25,000 irregulars, which reached Gaza only at the end of October.

From his earliest days Bonaparte gave proofs of a special talent in the elaboration of his bulletins and accounts of his military operations. These accounts were not simply dry details of military events; their style was pompous and studied, and calculated to rouse general admiration. In fact, they were written for a purpose. Even the writing of bulletins requires deep skill. The art lies in so wording them as to make people believe what you want them to believe. In this Bonaparte excelled.

However much the real value of history may suffer from intentional misstatements of this kind, it must be confessed that, in this instance, Bonaparte's exaggeration proved of infinite advantage to his own interests. The importance attached to this victory and to the previous one of Mount Tabor, of which the news reached France at the same time, added very much to the reputation he had previously acquired as a general. It also made up, in some way, for the mortifying check he had recently sustained under the ramparts of St. Jean d'Acre, from which he had to retire after an investment of 60 days' duration—the only check he experienced in his career until his troops crossed the Pyrenees.

Our indisputed dominion of the Mediterranean, and the annihilation of the French flag in that sea, rendered all correspondence with France a matter of extreme difficulty, almost an impossibility. All letters were captured by British cruisers or by the Turks, and sent to Constantinople. The French were as completely secluded from the rest of the world as they could well be.

The story is told that, after the defeat of the Turks at the battle of Aboukir, 400 or 500 wounded Turks were captured by the French, and that Bonaparte thought it desirable to send

* Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Thomas Wilson, "British Expedition to Egypt," p. 29.

them back to Patrona Bey, vice-admiral of the Turkish squadron. With this object, and under pretext of an exchange of prisoners, Descorches-Sainte-Croix, a naval officer, and Merlin, Bonaparte's aide-de-camp, visited the Turkish admiral under cover of a flag of truce.* On this becoming known to Sir Sidney Smith, he had the two officers sent on board his ship. Some trifling presents were exchanged, and, possibly with a formed intention of disheartening the French army, Sir Sidney gave the French officers a bundle of newspapers, and amongst others a copy of the issue of the *Gazette Française de Francfort* of the 10th of June, 1799.

We can well picture to ourselves how eagerly Bonaparte perused its pages, and with what poignant grief he learnt that all the fruit of his brilliant achievements in Italy was lost. In a rapid series of battles all the states he had conquered, with others acquired since, had been wrested from France. It is related that on learning all this he became much agitated; and exclaimed, brandishing the papers which he had received from Sir Sidney Smith, "Italy is lost! All the fruit of our victories has vanished. It is imperative for me to be off!"

On handing the newspapers to Descorches, Sidney Smith is said to have told him that, aware of the instructions from the Directory sent to Bonaparte ordering him to return to Europe, he desired to dissuade him from taking such a step, inasmuch as he had strict orders to prevent it.

Are we to credit this story? It certainly appears strange in the face of it that in a month's time Sidney Smith should have allowed his vigilance to relax to such an extent as to permit two French frigates, with Bonaparte on one of them, and two smaller ships, to slip out of Alexandria unobserved. The excuse alleged for Sidney Smith is that when he went to Cyprus for water he never dreamt that a general would abandon his army, nor that the French ships would brave the adverse winds of that season.

There is no doubt that the blockade was occasionally raised; for in writing to the minister of marine, Le Roy used the words, "during those periods when the blockade is accidentally raised." †

All the time that he was in Egypt, Bonaparte did not cease

* Marmont, "Mémoires," tom. 1-2, livre iv. p. 3.

† See "Copies of Intercepted Correspondence," p. 26.

to keep an eye on France. James states, in his "Naval History," that on the 3rd of July Gantheaume arrived in Alexandria from Cairo with orders to prepare for sea the *Muiron* and *Carrère*, in which Bonaparte intended to return to France at the first opportunity. This resolution the general had taken in view of the critical state of France, and in compliance with the desire of the Directory expressed in a letter dated the 29th of May, which reached him shortly after his return to Cairo from the Syrian expedition.

Had Bonaparte been *ordered* back to France, the simple truth would have been soon told; but there is no direct evidence to this effect. Bourrienne states that the idea of quitting Egypt was not conceived until after the battle of Aboukir. Messrs. Amédée Jaubert and Eugène Merlin, the former secretary-interpreter, the latter aide-de-camp to Bonaparte, who were always by his side, and embarked with him for Europe, agree that it was the intelligence contained in the English newspapers about the reverses suffered by the French armies, that induced Bonaparte to leave Egypt. This is repeated in the "Mémorial de Sainte Hélène." To Kléber Bonaparte sent the English and Francfort papers up to the 10th of June. But he makes not the least mention of an order of recall, which he would not have omitted as a justification for his departure, had he received one.

What Smith told Descorches, and James's statement regarding the letter Bonaparte received from the Directory, under date of the 29th of May, remain still unexplained.

After the destruction of the French fleet in the Bay of Aboukir on the 1st of August, 1798, the English had the entire command of the Mediterranean, and Bonaparte knew too well that it was impossible for the Directory to send him troops for the purpose of effecting more conquests in Africa. It was in the following words that he explained to Marmont the ground for the resolution he had taken:—

"Marmont," he said, "I have decided to leave and to return to France. The state of affairs in Europe compels me to take this serious step. Misfortunes overwhelm our armies; and God only knows up to what point the enemy has penetrated. Italy is lost, and the price of such great efforts, of so much blood spilt, passes away from us. In such a situation what can the incapable people placed at the head of affairs do?"

“With them all is ignorance, folly or corruption. I alone have borne the burden, and by a series of successes have infused some consistency into this Government, which, without me, could never have risen and maintained itself. I being absent, all had to totter. Let us not delay, therefore, until the destruction is complete, when the evil will be without remedy.

“The voyage back to France may be doubtful, difficult, risky; nevertheless, it will be less so than it was in coming here; and fortune, which has befriended me up to the present, will not forsake me at this moment. They shall hear in France almost at the same time of the destruction of the Turkish army at Aboukir and of my arrival. My presence, by rousing their spirits, will give the army the confidence which it needs, and the good citizens the hope of a better future. There will be a commotion in the mind all beneficial to France. We must strive to reach France, and we shall reach it.”

It was on fortune that Bonaparte always placed such implicit trust, fortune which failed him only when he began abusing its favours.

The dream of the Eastern empire was broken before the crumbling ramparts of Acre. There were no laurels to be gathered in Egypt. In France alone lay the real opportunity.

During Bonaparte's sojourn in Egypt, the members of his family were very uneasy about him, and not a few of his friends considered him entirely lost. So completely did the battle of the Nile cut off the communications of the French army with the mother country, that the general received news from France with the greatest difficulty. The English kept a strict watch over the coast.

The blunders made by the Government, the reverses which had overtaken the French armies in many fields, and the civil war rampant in the west and south of the country, all combined to disturb Joseph Bonaparte. The very unsatisfactory state of affairs, the hopeless incapacity and absence of all political ability in the body of the Directory, made him anxious to communicate with his brother, and in this he succeeded. To accomplish his object he employed a Greek sailor, Santer Bourbaki by name, who undertook to bear despatches to the general advising his immediate return to France. Bourbaki succeeded in his dangerous mission. Quitting Marseilles in a

small vessel flying a neutral flag, nominally bound for Beyrout, he reached the coast of Syria, and sailing along in sight of land, so as to be able to fly to the nearest shelter in case of danger, contrived to reach Alexandria in safety.

Miot asserts that Bonaparte received this letter from Joseph Bonaparte through the agency of this Greek named Bourbaki. Other writers, amongst them Bourrienne, deny the story about the letter. Nevertheless the fact is recorded in the "*Mémoires de Joseph Bonaparte.*" Alison corroborates Miot's assertion, and declares that both Lucien and Joseph Bonaparte had caused to be conveyed to their brother full intelligence of the disastrous state of the Republic, and had advised his return to France.*

Bonaparte wrote: "It was by way of Tunis that I received news of my family and of the events in Europe." M. Beaussier, French Consul at Tripoli, and M. Devoize at Tunis, appear to have facilitated the correspondence.

Popular opinion in France most thoroughly regarded Bonaparte as a victim of the Government, and believed that the Directory had exiled him to Egypt to get him out of the country. In France the expedition to Egypt had become extremely unpopular, and a head of accusation against the Directory, the majority persisting in attributing that undertaking to them.

We may well entertain some doubt whether any sincere desire existed on the part of the Directory for Bonaparte's return from Egypt. They regarded him in the light of a dangerous rival, and it is more natural to believe that they must have infinitely preferred to keep him away and to have him forgotten. That such a feeling prevailed may be gathered from the fact that, when Barras proposed to recall him and to give him the command of the Army of Italy, his colleagues unanimously silenced him.† They said, "Have we not already enough generals desirous to usurp the supreme authority without having need of that one? General Bonaparte is well where he is, and it is our dearest interest to leave him there." Nevertheless, in the spring of 1799, the Directory equipped a large fleet with the avowed object of bringing the troops back from Egypt,

* Alison, "*History [of Europe,*" chap. xxix. p. 193. See "*Jung Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires,*" vol. i. p. 270.

† Barras had first come across Bonaparte at the siege of Toulon. He had taken a great fancy to him, as he averred, on account of his great resemblance to Marat, with whom he had been on intimate terms.

or of retrieving the destruction of their naval power in the Mediterranean caused by the loss of the battle of the Nile.

After Jourdan's defeat at Stokach, Bruix, then minister of marine, fitted out a powerful fleet at Brest. Fortune favoured him, for at the end of April severe weather had blown Lord Bridport and the Channel fleet away from the coast. Taking advantage of this propitious moment, Bruix issued from Brest with twenty-five ships of the line, and appeared before Cadiz on the 4th of May, but failed in making an intended junction with the Spanish squadron. He then entered the Mediterranean on the 5th and steered for Toulon, which he reached on the 14th of May. After a short stay, he sailed from that port on the 26th.

Lords St. Vincent and Keith followed the French with sixteen ships. Cadiz being left unguarded, a Spanish fleet of seventeen ships of the line issued forth, entered the Mediterranean, and dropped anchor in Cartagena.

Bruix apparently did nothing beyond placing himself in communication with Moreau, and thus, to a certain extent, raising the flagging spirits of the Army of Italy. After a while he sailed back to Brest.

This cruise, fruitless as it was, nevertheless marks the commencement of the friction between Nelson and Lord Keith.

In June, 1799, Lord St. Vincent resigned all his command. His departure considerably irritated Nelson, for it led to Lord Keith assuming the chief command in the Mediterranean. Under Lord St. Vincent Nelson had been practically independent; that experienced commander trusted him so implicitly that he can be said to have entirely had his own way. He now conceived a singular antipathy for Keith, and eventually deliberately thwarted and defied his combinations. Possibly the British fleet might have rendered a good account of the French, had the two admirals worked thoroughly in unison; but Lord Keith was for several weeks ignorant of the locality of Bruix's squadron, and cruised about without any good result; whilst Nelson persisted in declaring that the presence of his squadron was indispensable in Southern Italy.

It is impossible to account for Nelson's conduct at that period, when he had, according to his own statement, received full powers from the King of the Two Sicilies to act as his representative.

Led by an idea that the appearance of Bruix's fleet in the bay of Naples was a near possibility, and having but inadequate means for the subjection of the insurgents, Cardinal Ruffo and Captain Foote of the *Seahorse*, the Russian (Keroindy) and Turkish representatives, had concluded an armistice with the French troops and Neapolitan insurgents who held the castles of Nuovo, Dell Uovo, and Saint Elmo. These castles were, under this armistice, to be evacuated as soon as transports could be found and got ready to carry their garrisons to Toulon. The treaty received the last of the contracting parties' signature on the 23rd of June, and, as an indication that hostilities had ceased, flags of truce were flying from the forts and the *Seahorse*. The following day Nelson, in the *Foudroyant*, arrived at Naples and immediately annulled the treaty.

Mahan thinks that Nelson acted within his right in disallowing the capitulation, but no argument, however ingenious, can ever demonstrate that he had any right to do so; that the arrival of adequate reinforcements—a fleet of eighteen sail—could put an end to a solemn engagement entered into by parties which, before his casting anchor before Naples, represented the various powers: No one can gainsay Alison's words: "The capitulation of the vanquished should ever be held sacred in civilized warfare."

Whether the treaty was infamous or not lies entirely outside the question; though Captain Foote, an honourable gentleman, seeing the circumstances under which it had been contracted, bitterly resented the use of the word. Cardinal Ruffo of the princes della Motta—the individual who gave back to Ferdinand his kingdom—in a warm discussion he had with Nelson on board the flagship, would not admit for an instant the correctness of Nelson's argument, that the treaty and armistice were virtually at an end by the arrival of the fleet.

The admiral, on his own authority, took out of the Polacks the most notorious chiefs of the rebellion, and had them secured on board British men-of-war. His arrival at Naples was not as fortunate for some of the insurgents as he vaunted, and by his action he connived at the execution of men who had come out of the castles in good faith. Nelson showed a very vindictive spirit, hoping that all those who were false to their king and country would be hanged.

An excuse was held to lie in the words "evacuation" and

“embarkation”—a worthless quibble. Really at this period Nelson was labouring under a reproachful infatuation, and with all his talent was unable to look at things in a perfectly reasonable light.

His admirers can find little fault in any of his deeds. Mahan writes: “Despite his fearlessness of responsibility, he was always careful not to overpass the legal limits of his authority, except when able to justify his actions by what at least appeared to himself adequate reasons.” These reasons, however, in this case, did not satisfy many right-thinking persons, and Nelson was severely blamed.

He has been censured for his share in the abrupt execution of Prince Francis Caracciolo, and on good grounds. His most ardent defenders cannot deny that he was saturated with the prevailing Neapolitan court feeling, and immensely under the influence of the queen and Lady Hamilton. The name of the latter is unfortunately intimately associated with his. She was a dangerously fascinating, ambitious, and artful woman, who did much to tarnish the glory of our greatest sea-warrior.

A court-martial on Commodore Caracciolo, a subject of the King of the Two Sicilies, was ordered to assemble on board Nelson’s flagship, the *Foudroyant*. Nelson himself had worded the charges. The court assembled at 10 a.m. on the 29th of June. Caracciolo was found guilty, and hanged at the foreyard-arm of the *Minerva* the same afternoon.

In the reaction which took place Nelson did not bring his influence to bear against the cruel executions carried out by order of that most feeble monarch, Ferdinand IV. Lord Keith had written to him, after having become acquainted with the details of Caracciolo’s execution, “Advise the Neapolitans not to be so sanguinary.” Whether this counsel was given or not no evidence exists. The dignity of virtue, the charm of beauty, and the power of knowledge seem to have been alike lost upon the Government. Men and women to the number of 99 were put to death, and of these unfortunates many were of noble birth, others renowned for their learning, and some even exemplary members of the Church.*

* In 1793, Naples had declared war against France, though its own interests did not in any way call for such a step. In 1798, King Ferdinand IV. conceived the Quixotic idea of reinstating the Italian sovereigns. With a badly organized army, not at all seasoned to war, he took the field in the winter, without waiting for Austria, which began operations only in the spring of 1799. He occupied Rome on

With regard to the difference between the two British admirals we borrow Mahan's words: "Friction between these two began at once. . . . Nelson, exasperated at the mere fact of the other's succession to command, speedily conceived for him an antipathy which Keith would have been more than mortal not to return; but it is to the honour of the latter's self-command that, while insisting upon obedience from his brilliant junior, he bore his refractoriness with dignified patience."*

Nelson's disobedience of orders was not overlooked at home. Keith, who had gone to England, was ordered back to the Mediterranean as commander-in-chief, and on this point

the 27th of November, and his forces which entered the city that day quitted it on the 8th of December. They had succeeded during those eleven days in making themselves thoroughly detested. Mack, who persisted in the system of dividing his forces, was beaten by the French on every side, and compelled to make a hasty retreat to Capua. The king, in a state of great fright, embarked on board Nelson's flagship on the 23rd of December, and fled to Sicily.

On the 23rd of January, after three days' hard fighting, the French found themselves established in Naples, and soon proclaimed the Parthenopean Republic. When Macdonald, in consequence of the defeats in Northern Italy, had to quit Naples, Cardinal Ruffo, by the aid of the *lazzaroni*, recovered the capital. Ferdinand then distinguished himself by his ferocity, which only equalled his cowardice.

"The executions commenced; and killing by order of the tribunals was accompanied by murders at the hands of anarchists. Neither age, sex, nor rank were spared. Great was the slaughter in the capital, but none less than in the provinces. The official records of the *Giunta di Stato* show 99 individuals condemned to death and executed; 222 condemned to imprisonment for life; 322 condemned to imprisonment for shorter periods; and 355 exiled. Heading the list of the executed is Francesco Caracciolo, commander-in-chief of the Republican navy, who was hanged and cast into the sea on the 29th of June, 1799, in consequence of a trial, and possibly condemnation, demanded by Nelson; and this sombre page of history closes on the 23rd of April, 1800, with the execution of Luisa Sanfelice, described as young, handsome, of noble blood, and mother of three children. Near the head of the same list, as an honourable distinction, comes as second Mario Pagano, a benign philosopher and a benevolent philanthropist, whom the entire generation regarded with love and respect. Then follow Domenico Cirillo, a distinguished doctor and naturalist; Francis Conforti, a priest certainly second to none for his learning in parochial and canonical lore, and possibly the first of all; Vincenzo Russo, an exemplary youth remarkable for his elevation of mind, eloquence, and humanity, one of the soundest leaders of the Republic; Gabriele Manthoné, minister of war and captain-general of the Republic; Eleonora Fonseca Pimentel, a woman renowned for her literary abilities, and still more for her virtue; then a score or two of illustrious bishops, priests, and professional men. Such a hecatomb is not to be found in the history of modern Italy; it can only be compared to the slaughters ordered by the Revolutionists in France in 1793."—Tullio Fontana, "La battaglia di Marengo del 14 Giugno, 1800, Raccontata al popolo," p. 81.

* Mahan, "The Life of Nelson," vol. i. p. 425.

Mahan writes: "Whether moved only by routine considerations of rank, as afterwards at Copenhagen, or whether his relations at the Sicilian Court, his conduct of affairs at Naples, and his collisions with Keith had excited doubt of the normal balance of his mind, the Admiralty decided to send Keith back." *

Men of pre-eminence, who set full value on their own worth, are, as a rule, impatient of control. However, it is difficult to distinguish up to what point non-compliance with orders is admissible, and may be condoned. What would be considered a breach of discipline in a moderately gifted individual might come to be looked upon as a stroke of genius in a very able man.

Nelson was superior to Lord Keith in military sagacity and insight; indeed, Lord St. Vincent held that there was but one Nelson; still there is such a thing as the accident of seniority to which the greatest genius has to submit.

Complying with the instructions he had received, Gantheaume had prepared for sea two Venetian frigates, *La Muiron* of 28 guns, bearing his flag, † and *La Carrère* of 28 guns, captain De la Rue. With these were two small advice-boats of 4 guns, *La Revanche*, ensign Picard, and *L'Indépendant*, ensign Gastaud, with provisions for 400 or 500 men for two months.

On being informed by Marmont that the coast was clear, as the blockading ships had gone to Cyprus for water, or as some say for provisions, Bonaparte quitted Alexandria with the pick of the officers of his army and a few hundred men. Bernadotte, when minister of war, later on, reproached him for not having brought back all his soldiers from Egypt. Always jealous of Bonaparte, Bernadotte spoke at random, and possibly was trying to make excuses for the ill success which had attended the French armies elsewhere in 1799.

Bonaparte and his suite embarked on board a few fishing-boats which lay concealed in a secluded part of the beach, and

* Mahan, "The Life of Nelson," vol. ii. p. 3.

† The ship *Muiron* had been named so after one of Bonaparte's aides-de-camp who was killed in the Italian campaign. Muiron, whose gallantry at Toulon had been noticed by Bonaparte, was serving as his aide-de-camp at Arcole. Seeing a bomb about to explode, he threw himself between it and his general, and thus saved his general's life by the sacrifice of his own. When at Saint Helena, the ex-emperor wished to assume the name of Colonel Muiron, such esteem had he for the memory of that brave officer.

were towed to the frigates then riding at anchor about a league from the shore. All told, officers and troops embarking amounted to something between 400 and 500 men. The horses of the regiment of guides, of the generals and of the staff, which had been left to run loose about the beach, went galloping back to Alexandria, whither their natural instinct led them. This created some alarm in the town, which was dissipated only by the arrival of the Turkish groom who led Bonaparte's charger back to Alexandria.

In August, the winds which almost constantly prevail in the Mediterranean make the voyage to France in sailing-ships extremely tedious. The winds were blowing continuously from the north-west, which obliged the ships to steer a north-easterly course along the coast of Africa. So adverse was the weather that they only made 100 leagues in twenty days. However, this long navigation was free from any danger of falling in with the enemy's cruisers, for the French frigates kept between the 32nd and 33rd degree of latitude, hugging the African coast. They were, consequently, sailing in unknown waters, or at least in waters little frequented by mariners, and too far from the route ordinarily followed by ships sailing from Egypt to Europe.

The voyage back to Europe was of long duration; adverse winds kept the two frigates for three and twenty days on the coast of Africa, ere a favourable south-easterly breeze enabled them to steer for the western coast of Sardinia. The ships sailed close to the shore the whole way, in order that they might be run aground, if necessary, and so escape falling into the hands of the enemy. It proved a weary voyage, in which the dread of being overtaken or stopped by the British cruisers overpowered every other thought. "Should the English approach," said Bonaparte, "I will run ashore upon the sands, march, with the handful of brave fellows and the few pieces of artillery we have with us, to Tunis or Oran, and there find means to re-embark."

A violent west wind, springing up on the 1st of October, drove the ships on the coast of Corsica, and compelled Cantheaume to seek refuge in the harbour of Ajaccio. The *Revanche* had been sent forward to gain information as to the fate of the island, for there was some uncertainty if it still remained French.

Bonaparte was detained in Corsica some days, impatiently

awaiting until favourable winds would allow him to sail out of the bay of Ajaccio. He was fretting to be gone; even his native town and the attention of his citizens having no attraction for him. It was during his stay there that he first heard of the loss of the battle of Novi on the 15th of August, and of Joubert's death; news which naturally added to his impatience.

Lissoni states that Bonaparte received some of the first details of the disasters of Cassano, the Trebbia, and Novi, from two officers of the Cisalpine cavalry, Sessa of Milan, and Lucki of Monza, after his landing in France.

One night the municipality were giving a ball in his honour, when Gantheaume sent one of his officers to intimate that the wind having veered to the south, not a moment was to be lost, and that advantage ought to be taken of this propitious circumstance. Thereupon all hastened on board, sails were set, and the ships steered in the direction of Toulon. This short stay in Corsica proved to be the last visit Bonaparte made to the island where he first saw light.*

After a voyage of fifty days' duration, having only by sheer good fortune escaped between Corsica and France from falling into the hands of a British fleet,† Bonaparte arrived at Fréjus on the 9th of October, 1799. At the moment of his landing the great majority of the French were far from expecting to hear of his return. As the signals had been changed since the departure of the expedition to Egypt, *La Muiron*, not being able to reply to those made by the garrison, was fired upon by the shore batteries.

The spirit of the nation was reflected in the reply the people gave when warned to keep at a distance from *La Muiron*, for the ship had not complied with the laws of quarantine.

* In 1793, Bonaparte having quarrelled with Paoli, the latter sent to have him arrested as a traitor to the Corsican cause. In the floor of young Bonaparte's room there was a trap-door which communicated with the cellar; by this trap-door Bonaparte made his escape, and was able to make his way to a vessel lying in port. Had he been captured he would in all probability have been shot, and the history of Europe for the following quarter of a century would have been far different from what it was.

† The fourteen British battle-ships were only sighted at sunset on the 8th of October, and, as the French frigates were steering in their direction, Gantheaume's ships were believed to have belonged to the admiral's squadron. Others assert that the French vessels, being of Venetian build, were believed to be Italian store-ships.

The people fully ignored the risks they incurred, and loudly protested, "We prefer the plague to the Austrians!"

Egypt was subdued;* the care of keeping it could not satisfy the ambition of the conqueror; greater destinies he conceived called him to other lands. The moment was supreme; France was in a dire situation; her armies were routed. How sadly changed for the worse had the state of affairs in France become during Bonaparte's absence from Europe!

Defeat had followed defeat in Italy. The Archduke Charles had compelled Jourdan to recross the Rhine, whilst an Austro-Russian army was advancing towards the frontiers of Switzerland, ready to take possession of that country, and thence find a passage into the heart of France. Holland was generally disaffected, and partial insurrections had taken place in Belgium. Little was wanting to bring about a return of the sanguinary days of 1793. The French troops, disgusted, badly paid, insufficiently cared for, were ready to rebel, leaving the eastern and northern frontiers badly defended. In France itself, every province was a prey to anarchy and to the peculation of the constituted authorities. The Royalist bands of Bretagne, the Chouans, had risen afresh, and were organizing themselves to light the flames of civil warfare throughout the country. Disorganization was everywhere perceptible; the highways were infested by robbers, and the whole nation denounced the Government as incapable, and destitute of power, justice, and morality. France was threatened with invasion, and the restoration of the Bourbons seemed inevitable.

What Bonaparte thought of the sad change which had come over the country in such a brief space of time can be learnt by his words to Boutot, who was Barras's secretary. "What have you done," he said, "with the country I left so flourishing? I left you in peace, and I have found you in war; I left you victory, and I have found defeat; I left you conquest, and the enemy are passing our frontiers; I left you the treasures of Italy, and I find nothing but oppression and poverty. Where are the 100,000 heroes, my companions in arms, whom I left covered with glory? What has become of them? Alas! they are no more. This state of things cannot continue; in three

* Napoleon at Saint Helena declared that from the moment of Nelson's victory at Aboukir, the expedition was doomed; since an army which cannot have its waste made good can only melt away and end by laying down its arms.

years it will end in despotism ; but we will have a Republic founded on the basis of civil liberty, equality, and political toleration."

No wonder, then, that "a change was ardently desired by all classes," and all were looking for a man possessing public confidence, and capable of restoring tranquillity and order by concentrating the supreme power, and giving scope for the development of those institutions, hitherto free in name only, which had been purchased by France at enormous sacrifices.*

Orders had been sent by the Directory for Bonaparte's return from Egypt, but he had crossed them on the voyage, and the messenger sent never landed in Egypt. After his arrival in France his brother Joseph informed him of this fact, and made Fain show him the original drafts. He, however, much preferred to let this circumstance remain unknown, so as to give a more extraordinary semblance to his return.

Nothing caused more intense surprise than Bonaparte's unexpected arrival. While Barras was at dinner on the 9th of October, 1799 (17th Vendémiaire), the following telegraphic despatch was handed to him: "General Bonaparte has landed at Fréjus, followed by generals Berthier, Lannes, Marmont, and Andreossy; he is preparing to set out for Paris."

It was on the 21st Vendémiaire that the citizens of Paris were startled as if by a clap of thunder by the cries, "Bonaparte is in France! He has landed at Fréjus! He arrives!" That same night the news was proclaimed in all the theatres, and received with loud acclamation. The following day the columns of the *Moniteur* contained these short paragraphs—

"1st.—General Bonaparte arrived on the 17th of this month at Fréjus (birthplace of Siéyès). He was received by an immense multitude, who cried, 'Vive la République!' etc.

"2nd.—General Moreau has arrived in Paris."

The Directory was at first astonished by the news, and when communicating it to the Councils tried clumsily to tone it down by placing Berthier's name before that of Bonaparte.

Bonaparte's return to France caused Nelson the deepest mortification. He had been baffled in his determination that not a single Frenchman should be suffered to find his way back from Egypt. He certainly took comfort in considering that no blame could attach to himself. Still, as he was at the time

* George Moir Bussey, "History of Napoleon," vol. i. p. 227.

commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean, he cannot be held quite blameless for such supineness. As the guarding of the coast had been left to a commodore with one ship of the line and two frigates, there could have been no very great difficulty in evading such a small number of ships.

It is difficult to agree with Monsieur Durdent, who states that "when Bonaparte was nothing more than a commander-in-chief, without authority from his Government, he abandoned the army which he had led to Egypt to certain destruction." * He certainly abandoned an army which he had launched on a perilous enterprise, but there was no one in France who would have rescued this army in Egypt. There is pretty good evidence that Bonaparte tried his best in this respect, but he was badly seconded by the French navy. Gantheaume made several attempts, one from Brest in January, 1801, one from Toulon on the 19th of March, and another from the same port on the 27th of April.

Bonaparte declared to Gohier that he left his army to come and share the national perils, so alarmed had he been in Egypt by the dangers which threatened the Republic.

His desertion of his army caused considerable indignation amongst the troops. Michelet, Lanfrey, Walter Scott, and other writers blame Bonaparte for having quitted his army in Egypt. Alphonse de Beauchamp states that, suddenly deserting his army in Egypt, he hastened to France to seize the supreme power which he knew to be up at auction. We may, however, conclude that a nation knows better than any historian of what it is in need. At Fréjus France rushed forward to welcome the daring islander whom she already instinctively recognized as her master; in whom all classes appeared to discern the destined saviour of the country.

The French, in fact, far from reproaching him for his desertion, hailed Bonaparte's return with rapture. His presence was a pledge of safety, a presage of a return of the past glories; it aroused the enthusiasm of the entire population. His voyage from the sunny Riviera to Paris, amidst the ecstasy of the people, resembled a triumphal march. As he went from Fréjus to Lyons he was received with ringing of bells, illuminations and fireworks. At Lyons a brilliant reception awaited him.

* Durdent, "Campagne de Moscou," p. 80, 5th ed.

No sooner had the news spread that Bonaparte was on French soil, than a general joy filled all hearts, coupled with a forgetfulness of past misfortunes and present dangers. All voices were ready to cry hail to the mighty warrior, who hardly made a step in his journey from Fréjus to Paris without his ears being pleasingly struck by applause and festive welcomes. From every quarter the French rushed in crowds to behold him, to bow to him, and to proclaim him victorious even before he fought. The healthy, the young, the old, the women, all went, even the sick who could not walk bade their friends carry them where he was about to pass, and in seeing him found a solace for their ailments. France knew that a great man had appeared, and could admire his strength and his power.

The battles of the Pyramids and of Aboukir, the capture of Alexandria and Cairo, the French flag waving over the cataracts and the crumbling ruins of Memphis, were sufficient facts to dazzle the imagination of the French people.* The nation, under the charm of his victories, extolled his abilities, and from the moment he set his foot on French soil confided into his hands all the elements of moral and material power. The French, who had sadly missed his military genius, were grateful for his being again in their midst. Peace was the general aspiration of the country, and the French believed that it was Bonaparte alone who was capable of giving them the peace and rest of which they were so much in need.

This idea was not quite new, for in 1798, before he left for Egypt, a party composed of deputies possessing a certain influence in the two Councils, finding the Directory extremely unpopular, had urged Bonaparte to place himself at the head of the Republic. This, however, he had refused to do, as his good sense told him that he was not strong enough then to stand alone.

On the 16th of October, Bonaparte arrived in Paris, and when, two hours later, he waited on the Directory, the soldiers at the gate recognized their former general and raised loud cries of *Vive Bonaparte!* By the time of his arrival at the capital it was impossible for Bonaparte to make a mistake about the situation. It was only too evident that France was at his feet.

* The check before the walls of Saint Jean d'Acre, on the confines of Africa and Asia, Carrion Nisas calls a slight spot, soon obliterated by his return and by his last triumphs.

It is generally believed that up to that moment he had conceived no idea of seizing the reins of government. The acclamations by which he was welcomed on his arrival in Paris, however, put a term to all irresolution. This showed him that he possessed the unbounded popularity without which his daring enterprise could not succeed, and how very easy it would be to assume the supreme authority.

The utmost discontent and dissatisfaction existed. The ten years of revolution had made the people weary of strife and bloodshed. The unbounded distress and anarchy which had followed in the wake of the Revolution had given rise to an intense longing for some sort of orderly control. The impossibility of continuing the government of France for any length of time under the Republican form had come to be recognized by all alike.

The year VII. of the Republic had ended in a sad way for France. The Anglo-Russians in Holland and the Austro-Russians in Italy had proved too much for the French commanders. Every day France was saddened by the reports of fresh reverses, and the people, accusing the Directory as their cause, threatened to overthrow it. Only the battle of Berghen, Massena's victory at Zurich, and Bonaparte's at Aboukir, had managed to prop up the Government.

During her husband's absence in Egypt, Madame Bonaparte had opened her house to a choice and seclusive society; her *salon* was frequented by a number of the ablest men of the time. Of these, the greatest part were devoted to Bonaparte's interests, so that she built a strong party which had come to look upon Bonaparte as the only possible saviour of France. Josephine's conduct may not have been irreproachable, but although she gave cause for jealousy, she made some powerful friends for him at home; and these he needed.*

Nevertheless, on his return to Paris he refused to see his wife, for he had had suspicions of her honour. After three days, urged by Bourrienne, who made him understand how likely a conjugal quarrel was to interfere with his ambitious plans, he consented to a reconciliation.

* No one can be blind to the fortunate influence which Josephine exercised on Bonaparte's glory and happiness. When, thirteen years later, Napoleon cast away the wedding-ring which bound the two together, his star grew dim and the murmur of the distant thunder commenced to resound in his ears, as if that little ring had been the talisman which had sufficed to stave off all reverses.

Bonaparte attached a good deal of importance to babbling and scandalous tittle-tattle. It more frequently than not furnished him with false reports, and it was this that irritated him against his friends, his courtiers, and his own wife.

In the capital he did not find a vigorous opposition. The men against whom he had to contend were so insignificant that they are not worth mentioning. Indeed, everything was ready for a great change. Barras and his colleagues were at a discount, and for the space of two years had produced nothing but disasters. The majority had no aptitude for governing. The Government, in fact, was composed of incapable men. Sièyès was the least so, and, though a cool, shrewd calculator, possessed of considerable political resources, he was not a man of transcendent talent.

The Directory was tottering; it was absolutely necessary to substitute for it something really imposing, and what, after all, can be more imposing than military glory? As long as the world has existed, how many empires have owed their origin to the irresistible power and renown of a conqueror?

Many weighty motives existed for effecting a change at this critical period; but the greatest of all was the feebleness of the Government. This was composed of two democratic Chambers, one-third of which was renewed every year, and an elective quinquevirate.

Before the events of the 18th Brumaire, Bonaparte, by his own words, felt thoroughly convinced that France could not exist except under a monarchical form of government; but at that moment he felt that the country was not yet ripe for so great a change.

Perhaps nothing could afford a better proof of the nullity of the Directory than their inertness, for by making good use of the power which the Constitution gave them they could have easily thwarted the conspiracy for overthrowing the Government. But they were not even of one accord.

Many men who had made their mark during the Revolution had proposed to Moreau that he should place himself at the head of affairs; but Moreau would not hear of it. He desired them to address themselves to Bonaparte, who, as he said, understood perfectly the art of making war in the streets of Paris. The general stated that he believed himself made to command armies, and had not the least ambition to command

the Republic. If Bonaparte became the statesman of the impending revolution, Moreau reasoned that he himself would become the general of the new Government—fine ambition, well worthy of the man. Soldiering, in short, held out more attraction for him than governing. Of the other generals, Augereau, Jourdan, and Bernadotte were openly hostile to Bonaparte. The three were leading members of the Jacobin Club.

Bernadotte was the only one who flatly refused to listen to Bonaparte's arguments. Surrounded by a brilliant crowd of officers, Bonaparte saw him quitting his house in a furious temper, carrying in his breast his revelations, avowing himself his adversary, if not his denunciator. Segur states: "That same night, a meeting, formed of ten deputies of the Council of the Five Hundred, was held in S——'s house. Bernadotte attended it. It was then arranged that at nine o'clock on the morrow the sitting of the Council would open, but that only such as were of their way of thinking would be warned; that in order to imitate the wisdom shown by the Council of the Ancients in naming Bonaparte general of their guard, the Council of the Five Hundred would choose Bernadotte to command theirs; and he, fully armed, would remain ready to attend the first call."

Very little trust could be put on any one at that period. Self-interest seems to have overridden every other consideration. The above scheme had been concocted in Salicetti's house, and it was this very Salicetti who hastened to reveal it to Bonaparte. A simple menace sufficed to restrain these conspirators, not one of whom dared to attend the Council.

The majority of the nation seemed to agree that it was high time that some military leader of commanding talent should seize the helm; but of the most noted none possessed the courage and the moral resolution necessary for such a task. Bonaparte had returned, and from the moment he was back all eyes were fixed on him, for he was essentially the man for the emergency. He had the gift, so rare in men, of being able to rule others.

Siéyès spoke plainly enough. "We must have done with declaimers," he said; "what we want is a head and a sword." He expressed nothing more than the vote of the country when he told Bonaparte, "The sole hope of the Republic is in you;" for Bonaparte was the only man the nation judged able enough to restore peace to desolate France, the only individual who

had the genius and the strength necessary for governing the country.

By a blow equally illegal, but equally necessary, he assumed the government of the state. It may be questioned if the necessity, the good of France, did not, after all, sanction the step. Most people might feel inclined to think it did.

Considering how important were the consequences which followed, the revolution of the 18th Brumaire was a mean affair. It must be admitted that in this Bonaparte hardly showed himself equal to the occasion. His measures were extremely feeble, and but for the energy displayed by his brother Lucien he might have scored a failure. Lucien's share in it was still more contemptible. His statement, intended to seduce the soldiers, that a factious band, armed with stilettoes, besieged the tribune and interdicted all freedom of deliberation, was an unblushing falsehood.

The victory of the 18th Brumaire was in point of fact due to Lucien, for there was a moment when the issue was very doubtful, when the soldiers hesitated, as if overcome by some scruple in acting against the Corps Législatif. Lucien saved the situation by declaring that body to be tyrannized over by representatives armed with poignards, by brigands paid with English gold; by solemnly declaring that should his brother ever dare to menace the liberty of Frenchmen he would himself plunge his sword in his breast. It was his fiery address which raised the enthusiasm of the soldiers. After it, all hesitation was at an end, the grenadiers were too willing to invade the hall.

Rœderer was directed to write a letter of resignation for Barras to sign, which was presented to him by Talleyrand and Bruix. This letter contained a remarkable passage, the only instance in which Bonaparte ever paid a tribute of gratitude to Barras for having brought him to the front on the 13th Vendémiaire. Barras was made to declare in this letter that all the perils of liberty having been overcome, thanks to the return of the illustrious warrior to whom he had the good fortune to open the road to glory, he reverted with pleasure to the rank of simple citizen.

Still, the country was much in need of a new man, and necessity, dire necessity, could well afford to overlook any inadequacy in the arrangements. The plot succeeded, and the Directory was overturned. On the 24th of December, 1799, the

new constitution was proclaimed, and by this overthrow, which received the name of *la victoire sans larmes*—"victory without tears"—Bonaparte became First Consul. With him were associated two others, but of inferior power, inasmuch as they were to enlighten him by their counsel, but could not restrain him by their vote. In fact, all the authority of government was by the constitution vested in the First Consul, to the joy of the people, who cherished the hope of a new and better government founded on principles of justice and humanity.

On the 10th of November, 1799, Bonaparte, Siéyès, and Ducos were elected provisional consuls. The constitution of the year VIII. was published on the 13th of December, and came into operation on the following day. Bonaparte was elected First Consul by a popular vote, or plebiscite, on the 22nd Frimaire, year VIII. (13th of December, 1799). France had adopted him; France had sided with the strong man, with the man of all others who she thought might be able to give her what she needed so much, peace.

On the 18th Brumaire France saw at its head a warlike chief surrounded with the halo of victory and all the paraphernalia of invincible power. This chief, with his broad and vivid imagination, with the restless energy of his character, was predestined to be amongst the band of those who do and dare, who achieve great deeds. Bonaparte was not made for a quiet life; opportunities undoubtedly helped him to a prominent place in history, but he would have made his mark in the world even without them.

Looking at the sad condition into which the Republic had drifted for want of an able direction, it was not merely a general that France needed. What she required at that time was a thoroughly able statesman. The new head of the state had exceptional endowments. Not only was he remarkable at the head of armies, but he could acquit himself with distinction of the various functions of government. His genius was pre-eminent, and his grasp of knowledge was not limited to one single subject. He soon proved to France and to Europe that he was as conspicuously successful in the cabinet as in the field. As a writer well puts it, he united in his own person the various talents of the sword, the gown, and the finances.*

* It was remarked of the Emperor Napoleon how, even at the period of his greatest prosperity, he never lost the habit of inquiring into the price of articles, so as to ascertain if what was demanded was just.

In ingenuity of plan, audacity, and above all celerity of movement, he had outshone all the competitors he had yet met. Amongst the higher officers of the army there was not one of equal ability and weight; Moreau and Bernadotte in breadth of knowledge and in capacity could not be compared to Bonaparte. He possessed the moral courage without which no man can be truly great. To his natural impetuosity he united a remarkable decision of character. His was an iron will incapable of enduring opposition or contradiction, a quality of great help at that supreme moment.

He had unbounded confidence in himself, but though he appeared to trust overmuch in his good fortune, nevertheless he never neglected any precaution which it was possible to adopt. He never missed examining diligently all the facts and circumstances of a case; he always considered things under every imaginable point of view, and prepared beforehand for any failure or mischance. Let the after-result be what it would, he was consequently never taken unprepared.

It was his breadth of knowledge that had captivated the mind of the people. His disposition was also marked by an incredible degree of pertinacity, and by a scornful contempt for the feebleness of human nature.

Not only was he an able organizer and a thorough master of detail, he was more, he was a deep thinker and a man of great circumspection. No one, like him, could hold in his mind the threads of a multitude of different combinations.

Alert, masterful, skilful, and a thorough believer in his destiny, Bonaparte was created to guide the destinies of a mighty nation. Now and then, only at very rare intervals, like meteors, men of this stamp are born. Of him Johnston wrote:

“A frame of adamant, a soul of fire,
No danger fright him, and no labour tire.”

His influence over all around him seemed equally electric and irresistible. All who approached him were captivated by the versatility of his gifts, the keenness of his intellect, and the seductive charm of his speech.* Penetrating as his glance was, he possessed the power of banishing all expression from his face

* Of the personal fascination he exercised there is the well-known story of Lord Keith, who, after an interview with the ex-emperor, blurted out, “Damn the fellow, if he had obtained an interview with His Royal Highness (the Prince Regent), in half an hour they would have been the best friends in England.”

at will. His visage told nothing of what was actually passing in his mind. The fascination this extraordinary man exercised upon all who heard him was so potent as to inspire the greatest confidence.

With regard to his universal supremacy, Count Balmain, the Russian Commissioner at Saint Helena, wrote many years after: "What is most astonishing is the ascendancy that this man, dethroned, a prisoner, surrounded by guards and keepers, exercises over all who come near him. Everything at Saint Helena bears the impress of his superiority. The French tremble at his aspect, and think themselves too happy to serve him. . . . The English no longer approach him but with awe. Even his guardians seek anxiously for a word or a look from him. No one dares to treat him as an equal."

Never was a master so adored, and even privations and dire sufferings were incapable of lessening the devotion with which he was served by his soldiers.

Fitchett says of Bonaparte that, visionary as his character was, "it was marked by the hard-headed common sense, the grasp of practical details, the cool vision of realities such as we associate with the intellect of a Lowland Scot and of a Dutch burgomaster."*

"Nothing," wrote Meneval, "is more likely to strike the imagination than the prestige exercised by a man who has probably no equal in history, and in whose person Providence was pleased to unite an incomparable genius, fortune without limits, and an excess of adversity. To this imposing memory are attached imperishable souvenirs of glory and at the same time of sorrow."

Taking an impartial view of this great man, of his brilliant genius, of his remarkable deeds, it is impossible to deny that he was a great success.

Having now become the First Magistrate of the Republic, Bonaparte enjoyed, as he very well deserved, the entire confidence of the nation. The general wish had been to see him at the head of the Government, and he was nothing loth to take up the reins. The selection of capable coadjutors is always the mark of a great man, and in nothing does he show his ability more than in his choice of his colleagues. Bonaparte at once selected capable ministers, men who enjoyed a good reputation.

* Fitchett, "How England saved Europe," vol. i. p. 337.

Monsieur Gaudin received the portfolio of the finances; Talleyrand had that of foreign affairs; Berthier, of war.

On Talleyrand's advice, Bonaparte retained the direction of all that pertains to politics—namely, the Home, Foreign, and Police departments. Besides these he controlled the War and Marine—in all a pretty laborious task for any one man. But his was a master mind, and the complication of affairs and interests he attended to never once clouded his perception.

The First Consul not only conquered the enemies of his country, but he grappled with the chaos of the French Revolution, and reduced it to order. He had hardly been in office one month ere all the men of ability he had gathered round him, and whose opinions he had solicited, testified to the quickness of his apprehensions and the correctness of his views. All who had worked with him declared that he was a thorough administrator and politician. But what made Bonaparte more than anything else acceptable to the French nation was that the world also recognized in him civil and military talents of the highest order.

The First Consul was soon governing by himself, without paying much regard to the other consuls or to the two legislative commissions. Even before the constitution of the year VIII. had been accepted and had become law, he had repealed the law of hostages, recalled the proscribed prisoners from the Isle of Oléron and from Sinnamari, most of them transported on the 18th Fructidor, had reformed the ministry, and distributed the chief commands in the army.

Nature had endowed him with that rare ascendancy which is given only to a few men, of leading and coercing the rest. No one will ever contest that he possessed in a pre-eminent degree the instinct of governing. His steering of the bark of state was very remarkable in a man who up to that moment had not made his apprenticeship in the art of governing.

Siéyès comprised the whole of his gifts in one short sentence, *‘Il sait tout, il peut tout, il fait tout.’* With good reason in Bonaparte was epitomized the saying, *Knowledge is power.* On all matters he took in hand he left the imprint of his practical mind.

Nearly all were reconciled to Bonaparte's leading, and submitted in silence to an authority which they felt they could not resist. The army, that great power in the state, was dazzled

by his brilliant exploits ; most of it had rallied to his standards, and it was his heart and soul. When he returned from his first Italian campaign, it was observed that the troops made him the subject of their songs, in which they lauded him to the skies. Their verses expressed a wish that the lawyers should be turned out and the general made king. On the 18th Brumaire the very guards of the Directory sided with Bonaparte. When enjoined to receive no orders but such as emanated from him, who by a decree of the Council of the Ancients had been appointed to command the troops, their startled commanding officer consulted his soldiers, and they answered with shouts of joy. The same occurred when he addressed the grenadiers from the Council of the Ancients.

There were signs on every side that at last a strong hand had seized the reins of public affairs. A general improvement was soon seen ; a brighter future loomed in view. Domestic tranquillity was being gradually re-established throughout the country. Churches were reopened for public worship, religion was freely practised. Emigrants were wending their way back, and recent misfortunes and terrible scenes of violence were being forgotten.

Alison writes : “ There is nothing more striking in European history than the sudden resurrection of France under the government of this great man.” Indeed, what he was able to do in such a short space of time seems miraculous. Called to power at a period when things in France were at a very low ebb, he completely pacified the Vendée, revived public credit, and placed 250,000 men on a war-footing, with a reserve of 100,000 more.

The five years in which Bonaparte governed France as First Consul were undoubtedly his best. That was the period of his greatest and most enduring renown. It was during the Consulate, in a number of interviews which he had with erudite and practical men, that he acquired the science of finance, of industry, of commerce, of administration and of foreign affairs. He retained all their lore ; he forgot nothing of what he heard.

He never disdained to seek the advice of any who were willing to let him, so as to judge if their counsel was in any way preferable to his own thoughts. Nor would he be intentionally deceived, if the deception was attempted with the sole object of pleasing him.

There remained to stamp out the Jacobins, who were agitating in their clubs and papers, and at the same time to check the Royalists in their machinations in the west and south-west of France. He proved equal to the occasion, accomplished this, and laid hands on the low revolutionists who had grovelled in the mud since the 18th Fructidor. Some of them he deported, some he confined in La Rochelle. In this manner he took a first step towards repressing a bloody anarchy with a strong hand.

One of his first thoughts also on coming into power was the army, and naturally enough, considering that the hostility of the European powers had not abated in the very least. It was no secret that they still persisted in their determination of subduing and humiliating France.

As a soldier and conqueror, and that is the light in which he should be examined in this study, he had no equal. His genius for war has never been questioned. His exploits were greater than those of Hannibal and Cæsar. The tactics he followed were singularly his own. Surprise, despatch, and promptitude were their prominent features. His conceptions and their execution commonly followed each other as quick as thunder succeeds the lightning. He was conquered, but only by a very powerful combination of all the sovereigns of Europe.

What must have been the working of the master mind where germinated and grew the most original and daring conceptions! Bonaparte had the capacity of supervising operations down to the most minute details; nothing ever escaped his eye. He was not content with planning, he went further. He examined the difficulties and how to overcome them, sketched out the manner in which his plans were to be carried out, how the impediments were to be thrust aside, and devised the means. He was a strict disciplinarian; from his youth he had been accustomed to acknowledge no master and to command; once at the head of the nation, he obeyed no laws but those of his own creation. As emperor, he used to be greatly irritated by any opposition or resistance to his will; nevertheless, no man could, as Alison says, better appreciate dignified and honourable conduct in an adversary.

Bonaparte worked regularly from twelve to fifteen hours a day. A few years after Marengo, in 1803, Rapp, who was one of

his aides-de-camp, speaking of the duties the officers in attendance on him were called to perform, gives us an idea of his restless activity. "One would absolutely require to be made of iron to support it. The First Consul lives in the saddle and in his carriage. He has no sooner alighted from the latter, than away he goes on horseback for ten or twelve hours together. He talks with the men, and examines and looks into everything himself."

CHAPTER II.

BONAPARTE'S PROPOSALS FOR PEACE.

Bonaparte proposes peace to the King of England—Reply from Lord Grenville—His lordship urges the restoration of the Bourbons—Pitt believes in the exhaustion of France—Does not think there was sufficient guarantee for a durable peace—The advantages would be all for France—Bonaparte was sincere in his wish for peace—Nothing was ready for war—Austria not likely to conclude peace on the basis of the Campo Formio Treaty—Was already busy calling on the auxiliary states to arm—France needed and desired peace—The national pride hurt by England's refusal—Bonaparte sets to pacify the Vendée—France declares in his favour, and helps him to prepare for war—Volney's forecast of Bonaparte.

FOLLOWING great calamities and distress, rest and security come to be looked upon as the greatest godsend. After nearly eight years of war, it was but natural that the great majority of the French people should be longing for peace. The French Revolution had commenced with hunger, and the many years of struggle which ensued were not conducive to prosperity. Peace was, in fact, necessary to complete public felicity. How, in fact, but through peace, could commerce, industry, and public credit be restored?

From the moment that Bonaparte had become First Consul, and the destinies of France had been placed in his hands, he showed the greatest desire to let his country enjoy an honourable peace. He had promised peace to the Republic, and the first step he took, after seizing the reins of government, was to make proposals of peace to the King of England and to the Emperor of Germany. As the head of the French nation, he directly addressed the former of these monarchs on the 25th of December, 1799, barely six weeks after a revolution had placed him in power, so neglecting the customary channel of diplomatic intercourse.

He wrote with unostentatious simplicity, announcing his

accession to power, and suggesting a cessation of hostilities which had for the last eight years injured commerce, impaired national well-being, and destroyed domestic happiness. His words were, "Called by the wishes of the French nation to occupy the first station in the Republic, I think it proper, on entering into office, to make a direct communication to your Majesty. Must the war, which has for eight years ravaged the four quarters of the globe, be eternal? Are there no means of coming to an understanding?"* How can the two most enlightened nations of Europe, powerful and strong beyond what their independence and safety require, sacrifice to ideas of vain greatness the benefits of commerce, internal prosperity, and domestic happiness? How has it happened that they do not feel that peace is of the first necessity, as well as the truest glory? These sentiments cannot be foreign to the heart of your Majesty, who reigns over a free nation with the sole view of rendering it happy. You will see in this overture only the effect of a sincere desire to contribute efficaciously, for the second time, to a general pacification, by a step speedy, implying confidence, and disengaged from those forms which, however necessary to disguise the dependence of feeble states, prove only in those which are strong a mutual desire of deceiving each other. France and England may, by the abuse of their strength, continue for a time, to the misfortune of nations, to retard the period of their being exhausted; but I will venture to say, the fate of all civilized nations is attached to the termination of a war which involves the whole world."

Lord Grenville, the English minister of foreign affairs, sent, on the 4th of January, a brusque letter to Talleyrand, refusing all negotiation with a Government the stability of which was not assured. "The king," he wrote, "has given frequent proofs of his sincere desire for the re-establishment of secure and permanent tranquillity in Europe. He neither is, nor has been, engaged in any contest for a vain or false glory. He has had no other view than that of maintaining against all aggression the rights and happiness of his subjects. For these he has contended against an unprovoked attack; and for the same objects he is still obliged to contend. Nor can he hope

* This brings to mind one of Bonaparte's letters to the Grand Vizier, which commences with, "Alas! why are the Sublime Porte and the French nation, after having been friends for so many years, now at war with each other?"

that this necessity could be removed by entering at the present moment into negotiation with those whom a fresh revolution has so recently placed in the exercise of power in France ; since no real advantage can arise from such negotiation to the great and desirable object of a general peace, until it shall distinctly appear that those causes have ceased to operate which originally produced the war, and by which it has been since protracted, and in more than one instance renewed. The same system, to the prevalence of which France justly ascribes all her present miseries, is that which has also involved the rest of Europe in a long and destructive warfare, of a nature long since unknown to the practice of civilized nations. For the extension of this system, and for the extermination of all established Governments, the resources of France have, from year to year, and in the midst of the most unparalleled distress, been lavished and exhausted. To this indiscriminate spirit of destruction, the Netherlands, the United Provinces, the Swiss Cantons, his Majesty's ancient allies, have successively been sacrificed. Germany has been ravaged ; Italy, though now rescued from its invaders, has been made the scene of unbounded rapine and anarchy. His Majesty has himself been compelled to maintain an arduous and burdensome contest for the independence and existence of his kingdom.

“ While such a system continues to prevail, and while the blood and treasure of a numerous and powerful nation can be lavished in its support, experience has shown that no defence but that of open and steady hostility can be availing. The most solemn treaties have only prepared the way for fresh aggressions ; and it is to a determined resistance alone that is now due whatever remains in Europe of security for property, personal liberty, social order, or religious freedom. For the security, therefore, of these essential objects, his Majesty cannot place his reliance on the mere renewal of general professions of pacific dispositions. Such dispositions have been repeatedly held out by all those who have successively directed the resources of France to the destruction of Europe, and whom the present rulers have declared to have been, from the beginning and uniformly, incapable of maintaining the relations of peace and amity. Greatly, indeed, will his Majesty rejoice whenever it shall appear that the dangers to which his dominions and those of his allies have so long been exposed have really

ceased; * whenever he shall be satisfied that the necessity for resistance is at an end; that, after the experience of so many years of crimes and miseries, better principles have ultimately prevailed in France; and that all the gigantic projects of ambition, and all the restless schemes of destruction, which have endangered the very existence of civil society, have at length been finally relinquished: but the conviction of such a change, however agreeable to his Majesty's wishes, can result only from experience and the evidence of facts.

“The best and most natural pledge of its reality and permanence would be the restoration of that line of princes, which for so many centuries maintained the French nation in prosperity at home and consideration and respect abroad. Such an event would at once have removed, and will at any time remove, all obstacles in the way of negotiation or peace. It would confirm to France the unmolested enjoyment of its ancient territory; and it would give to all the other nations in Europe, in tranquillity and peace, that security which they are now compelled to seek by other means. But, desirable as such an event must be, both to France and the world, it is not to this mode exclusively that his Majesty limits the possibility of secure and solid pacification. His Majesty makes no claim to prescribe to France what shall be the form of her government, or in whose hands she shall vest the authority necessary for conducting the affairs of a great and powerful nation. He looks only to the security of his own dominions and those of his allies, and to the general safety of Europe. Whenever he shall judge that such security can in any manner be attained, as resulting either from the internal situation of that country, from whose internal situation the danger has arisen, or from such other circumstances, of whatever nature, as may produce the same end, his Majesty will eagerly embrace the opportunity to concert with his allies the means of a general pacification. Unhappily, no such security hitherto exists; no sufficient evidence of the principles by which the new Government will be directed; no reasonable ground by which to judge of its stability.”

The British Cabinet had no desire to conclude peace. Lord

* With regard to the dangers which threatened his own dominions, his Majesty was right enough. But his ally, Austria, was not so disinterested. Austria did not fight so much for a principle as for an expansion of her territories.

Grenville's despatch was clearly not couched in that sense; it gave no hope. It reproached France, and justly too, for all that had passed during the last twelve years, but it gave no promise of suspending hostilities to judge "of the principles by which the new Government would be directed." The main condition would seem plainly enough to be contained in the last paragraph, the restoration of the ancient line of kings. This was a stipulation which any statesman might have at once seen to have been tantamount to an abrupt rejection of the First Consul's advances. It also ignores the fact that it was the weakness and irresolution of one of these same kings that had indirectly brought about the Revolution.

Bonaparte had disappointed the hopes which not a few of the Royalists had formed of him. A fraction of the party had persisted in regarding him as a probable restorer of the royal family of the Bourbons. He might certainly have accepted the rôle of a Monk, and by reinstating the Bourbons have restored peace to France. But what prospect, after all, did such a rôle offer to an officer who was young, who had tasted victory, who was devoured by endless ambition, and who had unbounded faith in his star and a firm confidence in the future? It is very doubtful, moreover, if the people would have countenanced the return of the Bourbons; for the insistence that Europe had the greatest interest in the restoration of the Bourbons had great effect in making the old dynasty more than ever unpopular in France. As events proved, an entirely new dynasty was much more acceptable.

Had the answering of Bonaparte's letter rested with Pitt, the reply would probably not have wounded the French half as much, for Grenville, as will be seen, sent to the foreign minister at Paris a supercilious and overbearing note,* which in effect was nothing more nor less than a fresh declaration of war. He told Talleyrand that his Majesty could not place any reliance in the mere renewal of general professions of pacific dispositions. He demanded more tangible guarantees, the chief of which appeared to be the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty. Even King George did not like the tone of the reply, and it is stated that he wrote on the margin of the dispatch, "In my opinion much too strong, but I suppose it must go."

* This answer the Opposition styled as lofty, imperious, declamatory, and insulting.

Grenville tried to dictate terms to a soldier on whom fortune had been singularly smiling, and one, consequently, not likely to submit to anything couched in terms so authoritative.

Whilst Lord Grenville was inditing this letter to the First Consul, Pitt, who had decided on the continuation of the war before Bonaparte even wrote to the king, was arranging with the enemies of France the subsidies they were to receive to keep their armies in the field. When Bonaparte returned to France, France was much exhausted by the long continuous wars, but by no means yet in a desperate state. Pitt committed the mistake of believing that France was completely exhausted, foreign emissaries being eager to make the world believe that France was reduced to a miserable condition. This might possibly have been not far from the truth had the destinies of the country rested in the hands of an incompetent and corrupt Directory. But with the First Consul, who knew how to call forth fresh resources, at the head of affairs, the case was different. Pitt's refusal to come to terms and to bring the war to an end gave Bonaparte Marengo and the empire.

It was not a blind hatred of France, but the true interests of England, which made Pitt refuse the peace proposed by Bonaparte. According to him there was no sufficient guarantee of such peace as was desirable so long as France continued to hold Belgium and could dispose of the maritime resources of Holland, which constituted a menacing condition against England. According to Pitt's opinion, all the victories of 1799 did not make up for this.

A point which was fully debated in the House of Commons was whether the amount of confidence which might be accorded to Bonaparte was sufficient to guarantee entering into negotiations with him. Dundas, who led the debate, asked whether it were possible to place any trust in a man who whilst in Egypt had abjured his own God when he deemed this to be useful to his designs. That in treating with the former Government, the treating was carried on with the French nation, whereas now it would be with Bonaparte alone, because Bonaparte was everything in France. To accept his overtures would be to recognize him, to consolidate him, to become the instrument of his will.

That France must have constantly fresh stimulants has often been said. Pitt thought that the seizure of the consular throne by Bonaparte made France more dangerous on account of his

restless and insatiable spirit, consequently he deemed it unwise to sheathe the sword.*

Yet Pitt was eager enough for a cessation of warfare. Only, being a far-seeing statesman, he discerned that the actual state of the situation in France did not hold out any lasting security for peace. If he advocated the prosecution of the struggle—which he had named “a social war”—it was because he could foresee that a peace under the existing conditions would only prove a momentary truce, to the advantage of the French, who would await more propitious circumstances to renew hostilities. He believed that by persevering a few more months the coalition would impose a more advantageous and durable peace.

Pitt argued thus: “France would now derive great advantages from a general peace. Her commerce would revive, her seamen be renewed, her sailors acquire experience, and the power which hitherto had been so victorious on land, would speedily become formidable on another element. What benefit could that bring to Great Britain? Are our harbours blockaded, our commerce interrupted, our dockyards empty? Have we not, on the contrary, during the war acquired an irresistible preponderance on the seas; and is not the trade of the world rapidly passing into the hands of our merchants? Bonaparte would acquire immense popularity by being the means of bringing about an accommodation with this country; if we wish to establish his power, and permanently enlist the energy of the Revolution under the banners of a military chieftain, we have only to fall into the snare which he has so artfully prepared. In turbulent republics it has ever been an axiom to maintain internal tranquillity by external action. It was on that principle that the war was commenced by Brissot and continued by Robespierre, and it is not likely to be forgotten by the military chief who has now succeeded to the helm of affairs.” † In Parliament he said, “It is because I love peace sincerely that I cannot content myself with vain words; it is because I love peace sincerely that I cannot sacrifice it by seeing the shadow when the reality is not within my reach. *Cur igitur*

* “William Pitt the younger was born at Hayes in 1759, in the full splendour of his father’s famous ministry; in the year that saw Quebec fall before the dying Wolfe; that saw the glorious but inconclusive victory of Minden; that saw Hawke in November storm and crush the French fleet—the year that produced Burns and Wilberforce.”—Rosebery, “Life of Pitt.”

† Alison, “History of Europe,” chap. xxx. p. 256.

pacem nolo! quia infida est, quia periculosa, quia esse non potest."*

In Parliament the question of peace was fully discussed. Fox reflected the mistrust of the Government when he said that they wished to keep Bonaparte some time longer at war as a state of probation. Nevertheless, the desire for peace was very general, and a proof of this was given by the transports of joy and enthusiasm with which Lauriston, the French envoy, bearing the terms of the treaty, was received in London in the autumn of 1801.†

For a man like the First Consul, who had only just assumed the reins of government, in a country in which public affairs had been so grossly mismanaged, nothing would appear more natural than that he should really desire peace. Bold indeed would have been the man who would have voted for war at a time when the armies were defeated and discouraged, the treasury exhausted, and the people disunited.

Peace was necessary because nothing was ready for war. It was necessary to gain time, and at that moment war was very unpopular in France.

When Bonaparte landed at Fréjus, France was not only without an army, but without the resources necessary for raising one. The department of war had shared in the general mismanagement. After the 18th Brumaire, when Bonaparte assumed the presidency of the Consulate, Dubois de Crancé was the minister at war. No one could have been more ignorant of his duties. He was unable to furnish a single report on the state of the army. Many corps had been formed in the provinces, of which even the very existence was unknown to the minister. When asked for an account of the pay, he simply replied, "We don't pay the army." When called upon to furnish the returns of the victualling office, he declared that it was quite out of his province. "What, then, about the clothing?" "We do not clothe the troops." All this had to be thoroughly rearranged before any one could think of going to war; for none knew better than Bonaparte that energy in a campaign cannot atone for the neglect of previous preparations.

Many writers hold that all Bonaparte desired to do was to create a great effect, that he neither hoped nor desired peace,

* Words borrowed from Cicero.

† The Treaty of Amiens was not definitely signed till the 27th of March, 1802.

but simply wished the French people to believe that he had done all in his power to obtain it.

The great desire for peace was not a fiction or a political make-believe, it was Bonaparte's prevailing thought as being imperative to secure the safety of France. It was said that he was insincere; that the desire for peace he paraded was not to be trusted; that the dealings of the French with other nations, even when in progress of treating, did not inspire confidence. But the First Consul must have yearned for peace more than the people. Peace he needed, for his position was anything but well established. Still, the peace he wanted for his country was not to be a cringing peace, but one adorned with laurels.

Lanfrey tells how elated Bonaparte was at England and Austria having rejected his pacific proposals. He had attained his object, which was to pose as a moderate and pacific chief. He believes that no one more ardently desired war. His letters to England and Austria were apparently written more to irritate than to convince foreign rulers. Now, however, he could throw the responsibility of the war on the coalesced powers.

Madame de Staël has written: "Nothing was more contrary to Bonaparte's nature or his interest than to have made peace in 1800." These words were evidently written after the event, and it is notorious how that woman of genius detested the emperor.* The pacification of the Vendée, which occupied the First Consul's attention at that moment, would tend to show that the desire for peace was not strange to his mind.

Such has been the habit of attributing ulterior motives to all Napoleon's actions, that he is never given credit for having acted in good faith. We are fully convinced, however, that in this instance he would have welcomed peace, more especially as it was most convenient for him. Surrounded as he was

* From the very first she distrusted Bonaparte's designs, and her *salon* was the head-quarters of the anti-Bonapartist faction. She used to call Napoleon Robespierre on horseback (*c'est Robespierre à cheval*), and thought it great wit. But Napoleon was a genius, a master of the art of war. Of the two, one raised an empire, was and shall ever be the glory of France; the other was a monster, the evil genius of the Reign of Terror, who caused streams of innocent blood to flow through every part of the country.

To Madame de Staël's honour, she bravely sought to save the life of Marie Antoinette by writing a pamphlet, "Reflexions sur le procès de la Reine, par une Femme," urging the impolicy and injustice of further severity against the royal family, and appealing to the women of France to defend the queen by the arms which Nature had given them.

with perils, at the head of an uncertain Government, menaced by a powerful coalition of which England was the head, compelled to press heavily upon the resources of an impoverished people, it was surely in his interest to seek a peaceful arrangement. To declare that he was acting a part, that the sole object he had in view when he wrote to the King of England and to the Emperor of Austria was to prove to the people his anxiety to put an end to the scourges of war, and that the proposals for peace were simply a mask to veil aggressive intentions, cannot be true. Nor can we tax him with bad faith, had he, under cover of this peace, laboured to perfect his army, as was supposed to have been his intention.

When he was emperor it was another thing. Then it was said, and with truth, that no one could count on peace from one month to another.

Europe had combined to crush France and place her without the pale of social community. The British Cabinet had steadily followed that policy. Peace was only to be made with that country when it had been thoroughly humiliated. Pitt did not relish seeing Malta and Egypt remain in the hands of the French if the proposed peace was concluded. Even more he desired the restitution of Belgium and the renunciation of the influence the French Republic exercised over Holland. Nothing short of this would be accepted as a basis of an arrangement. This, however, the Consuls were not likely to concede; there was scarcely any hope of their going back from the Treaty of Campo Formio, little inclination towards giving and taking.*

Mathieu Dumas pertinently remarks that peace could not have been made without some concessions by the French; that Bonaparte could not endanger his popularity at the very commencement of his administration by concluding an humiliating treaty.

Our belief is that when Bonaparte proposed peace he was seriously disposed to come to some amicable arrangement,† but

* When, at a later date, Pitt, through Lord Minto, who was at the time the British Ambassador at Vienna, made overtures for peace, the French tried to take advantage of this amicable disposition, and stipulated that they should be allowed, while the negotiations were pending, to send supplies to their army in Egypt and likewise to their garrison at Malta, which place was then blockaded by a British fleet. These were terms beyond what was reasonable, no doubt, but recent success had emboldened the French to make such demands.

† Sir Walter Scott adduces as a proof of the sincerity of Bonaparte's desire for

that when treating was denied to him he at once saw what political capital he could make of the summary rejection of his overtures.

Very probably no lasting peace was practicable, and nothing more than a truce the ulterior object of Bonaparte's overtures to the British Government, nevertheless it cannot be denied that it was the hatred of all his neighbours that thrust war upon him. They refused to recognize in him a new order of things, political as well as military, and would not give him a chance. Rosebery acknowledges that "in the first period of the Consulate, Bonaparte was almost an ideal ruler," and an ideal ruler is not one who seeks to plunge his nation into war simply to satisfy his own personal ambition. No more can any one be described as such who provokes a flat refusal, simply for the purpose of putting himself in a good light with his subjects. The emperor certainly admits in his own memoirs that when he made proposals to Pitt he had no serious intention to conclude peace, but on this point, as on many others, it is doubtful what amount of credence can be placed on these memoirs. Bonaparte could, at any rate, well declare that he had proposed peace to the Cabinet of St. James's and of Vienna, and that his amicable overtures had been rejected.

In replying to Lord Grenville, he denounced England as the author of the war which had raged since 1792 and was about to be resumed. He reminded the king at the same time that he himself, as First Consul, ruled by the consent of the people. In one sense he had a right to complain, for it was Great Britain that was the mainspring of the coalition; and the majority of the Parliament were most decidedly in favour of a continuance of the war.

Peace did not suit the Austrians, who deemed it inadvisable to stop short in their career of success. It was nothing more than could be expected that they would refuse to treat when the basis laid down by the First Consul was the Treaty of Campo Formio. How could Austria consent to this whilst still in possession of Lombardy, Piedmont, and a portion of the Papal States? She consequently replied that she could not treat except in conjunction with her allies. Consequently, nothing remained but to fight.

peace his moderation after the signal victories of Marengo and Hohenlinden, when the conditions imposed were not more advantageous to France than those of Campo Formio.

On the 4th of December—three weeks before the First Consul addressed himself to the rulers of Austria and Great Britain in the interests of peace—the Archduke Charles issued circulars to the several states of the German empire to urge them to raise fresh levies. He went on to show the futility of hoping for a durable peace with a country in such a state of revolutionary excitement as France, adding that France was not likely to be less formidable or more pacific now that all the power of government had been concentrated in the hands of a successful chief.

It seems particularly strange that, in the face of this urgent appeal, Archduke Charles should have strongly advised his Government not to fight. This counsel was pressed very strongly on the grounds that Russia was withdrawn on one hand and Bonaparte was added on the other. The Archduke was removed from his command, having lost confidence in the issue of the approaching contest.

The First Consul must not be accused of insincerity for having, early in the month of January, with the other consuls, decreed the formation of an Army of Reserve. What other Government, however much it might have desired peace, would have neglected to make preparations when the enemy threatened two of its frontiers?

There can be no question that it was peace, and not war, that the French nation so ardently desired; nevertheless, it must have been evident to all that, according to the Latin saying, *Si vis pacem, para bellum*, the best guarantee for peace was speedy preparation for war and the creation of an army which would impose respect. Bonaparte fully comprehended the aspirations of the people, and intended that the French should be thoroughly persuaded not only that the new chief magistrate was inclined to bring about a general peace, but also that he would give it to them the moment he could do so with honour.

The coalesced powers, as we have seen, were not to be conciliated. Nothing seemed likely to satisfy them short of the restoration of the royal family of France, and the punishment of the Republicans. With the exception of the Czar of Russia, who had commanded his troops to withdraw behind the confines of his dominions, the other powers took every possible measure for insuring the success of the next campaign. Austria, it

had been agreed, would furnish the men, Great Britain the funds.

Pitt rendered Bonaparte an immense service. Till then public opinion in France had been all in favour of peace. The disdainful rejection of the peace proposals deeply wounded the national pride, and the people became exasperated with England. The consequence was that all parties soon became convinced that to obtain peace it was absolutely necessary to conquer; that peace could only be the reward of victory. The entire nation promptly stepped forward ready to make any sacrifice. France was prepared to grant to the First Consul all that he wanted. War, in short, became very popular. The nation had not forgotten the brilliancy of his early Italian campaigns, and how utterly indifferent he had shown himself to any consideration beyond those which tended to advance the interests of France.

The French nation had by this time undergone a change. The fanaticism entertained for liberty had passed into a craving for dominion, for glory; an ambition had taken possession of every one to carry the French name very far. Of the French people a goodly number were casting longing looks to the other side of the Alps, thinking of the smiling Italian provinces which the incapacity of the Directory had lost. Bonaparte promised them victory. "Frenchmen!" he said, "we have conquered liberty. But it still remains for us to conquer peace, which we have in our power to do. I will lead you in person, and in the fullest confidence conduct you to victory." He had become the idol of the Parisians, and from him alone they expected everything.

Still, Bonaparte spoke to all of peace, of humanity, of the termination of the existing evils, of an age of prosperity about to commence for the general happiness of the human race. He was a master of the art of seduction, and his plausible words raised great hopes in many breasts. At one period he professed himself willing to sacrifice his life if peace could only be obtained.

Meanwhile he devoted himself to putting down internal troubles. Hoche, by his prudence and firmness and the employment of a number of movable columns, had made an end of the civil war; but this was not long in breaking out afresh. Its original ennobling character had disappeared. It was no longer

a people in arms for the defence of its religion, of its traditions, or of its allegiance. The Vendéans were absolutely tired of war; they no longer looked upon the Republican troops with dread; they prayed only for peace and quiet. The strife in Brittany and Normandy had degenerated. It was carried on by feeble bands of vagabonds and rolling stones, allured by the love of pillage, the stopping of diligences and the abduction of public revenues. The Directory had closed their eyes on these disorders, which were the natural outcome of the general sad state of affairs, and the Royalist party had taken advantage of their neglect. The resistance of the insurgents was encouraged by the British Cabinet and by the promises of help, in which it was profuse.

Bonaparte took decisive measures for bringing this state of things to an end. He sent Brune from Holland to the banks of the Loire with 20,000 men. These troops swept all parts of the Vendée, separated the various bands, and pursued them in every direction. Georges, conquered at Grand-Champ, laid down his arms. Luzannet, Bourmont, La Prevelay, beaten in every encounter and deserted by their soldiers, had to submit. The last in arms in Brittany and in Normandy, overpowered by the numerical superiority of the forces brought against them, were compelled to capitulate. Count Frotté was betrayed, tried, and shot.

Frotté had irritated the First Consul by holding him up to ridicule, so that Bonaparte conceived a bitter animosity against him. Writing to Gardanne, he placed a price on his head, 1000 louis were to be the reward for whoever should capture or kill him. Frotté demanded to treat, but in reply was told to surrender and trust to the generosity of the Government. He acted accordingly, but was tried on the 17th of February, condemned, and shot on the following day.*

* Bonaparte was opposed to executions for political offences. He granted a suspension of the capital sentence passed on Frotté, but unfortunately the reprieve reached its destination too late. Some will have it that this was done intentionally.

He neglected no measure for pacifying the Vendée. He made use of the former parish priest of St. Laud, the Abbé Bernier, and also appealed to the priests who were at that time returning from all parts of the provinces. He desired immensely to have an interview with Georges Cadoudal, and this took place on the 5th of March, 1800. Comparing his size with that of Bonaparte, Cadoudal stated that, had he wished it, he could have crushed him in his arms. Nothing was spared to induce him to quit the cause of the Bourbons, but even Bonaparte's irresistible

All armed opposition being overcome, the insurrection ceased to torment those regions. Bonaparte succeeded in tranquillizing La Vendée rather by lenient than coercive measures.

To insure the continuance of tranquillity, he proclaimed a general amnesty, he also declared the principle of religious tolerance, suppressed the conscription, and remitted some of the taxes. In this manner he brought back calm to the population. Everywhere regularity succeeded to trouble and disorder. Canclaux looked after the administration with a vigilant and severe police to back him.

But Bonaparte knew far too well that his destiny would have been nothing without the strength and splendour of battles. Once shorn of his victories, what remained to his name? War was his element; his most dazzling and effective triumphs were those of the battlefield. It was war that was to electrify public opinion with bulletins of victories gained, of trophies captured. The day when he could no longer dominate the people of France by this means, his power would be compromised. He was inconsolable for the loss of Italy; a feeling which can be easily appreciated when we look at the immortal renown he had acquired in 1796 by his striking strategy in his first campaign. Now the nation had declared in his favour, and was ready to back him, no difficulty was too great to prevent his recovering the fruit of his early victories. He was not only resolved to hasten to renew the glories of his first Italian campaigns, but also to wipe out the defeats which had shorn the French armies of their well-merited laurels.

It was, then, for these reasons that Bonaparte embarked on his own enterprise and laid the foundations of his victory at Marengo. Marengo, the name of a very insignificant little Italian hamlet, was to be rendered famous hereafter in history, for by the reputation gained there Bonaparte eventually placed the crown of France on his head. Marengo gave the name to the gold coinage of the Republic.

The campaign of Marengo was a most important event, inasmuch as it decided the fate of Europe, consolidated the French

seductions failed. "Rather death," he was wont to say, "than to betray my oath." *Potius mori quam fœdari*, and he clung to this resolution to the very last. One of his biographers has written of him, "Georges Cadoudal was a genius of his own kind, he fought without ambition for the simple principle of royalty, and all his actions are marked by the very greatest disinterestedness."

Revolution, and proved the audacity, the good fortune and the glory of Bonaparte. To such as taunted him with being the Corsican usurper, he could well say, "The crown of France was lying upon the ground, and I lifted it upon my sword-point."

Marengo recalls the finest days of this famous soldier's career and the commencement of his dominion. The name alone—Marengo—awakens in every mind an echo. Whatever faults Bonaparte may have committed in later years, when he had attained supreme power and had become a despotic ruler; however unscrupulous he may have been in his dealings; however insatiable in his love of power,—we must all admit that in 1800 we find in Bonaparte more of the soldier bent in using his brilliant talents as a means for humbling the enemies of his country and endeavouring to restore peace and tranquillity to France, than of the absolute monarch consumed by a craving for subduing all nations and imposing his will on the vanquished, careless of the blood he spilt and the misery he caused.

At that time Bonaparte was thirty-one years of age, in full vigour of mind and body, and in robust health. Of his career the earliest years were unquestionably the best and the most brilliant. The prediction of Dugommier to the Committee of Public Safety was, "Reward and promote that young man; for if you are ungrateful towards him, he will raise himself alone."* Both in Italy and in Egypt this prediction had been fulfilled. Up till then circumstances had not caused Bonaparte to resort to measures which have since called down on him the opprobrium of the entire civilized world.†

* Barras took part in the defence of Pondichéry, and soon after quitted the service with the rank of captain. He was commissary of the Convention at the siege of Toulon, and it was there he detected the great military qualities of young Bonaparte. When on the 12th Vendémiaire France needed a general of great nerve and skill, Barras proposed him to the Convention.

† The celebrated traveller and academician, Volney, disgusted by the excesses committed in France, crossed over to the United States. When he told Washington's old comrades that a young man of twenty-six had been appointed to the supreme command of the Army of Italy, they became persuaded that the French had gone mad. But when Volney predicted and explained to them in minute detail all that this young man was about to accomplish, they thought that it was the narrator who had lost his head.

Volney had known Bonaparte in Corsica, and, on landing at Nice, one of the first persons he came across was Bonaparte, who was then doing ordinary duty on the coast of Provence. At a dinner at which Volney, a commissioner of the Convention, and two or three other functionaries were present, Bonaparte denounced the inaction of the army to which he was attached, which became later on the Army

The general order Bonaparte issued after assuming the reins of government at once satisfied the soldiers that, though elected first magistrate of the Republic, he would himself direct their future operations; and that the distress, mismanagement and disorganization which the crass negligence of the Directory had brought about, would speedily disappear. "Soldiers!" he said, "in promising peace to the French people, I have been merely your organ. I know your valour. You are the same men who conquered Holland, the Rhine, Italy, and gave peace under the walls of astonished Vienna. Soldiers! the defence of your frontiers must no longer limit your desires. The states of our enemies remain to be subdued. There is not one among you who, having made a campaign, is ignorant that the most essential quality of a soldier is to endure privations with constancy. Many years of maladministration cannot be repaired in a day. As First Magistrate of the Republic, it will be grateful to me to declare to the whole nation what troops deserve, by their discipline and valour, to be proclaimed the best supporters of their country. Soldiers! when the proper time arrives, I will be in the midst of you, and awe-struck Europe shall confess that you are of the race of the brave!"

of Italy. Warming on his subject, he explained his conception of crossing the Alps and carrying the war into Italy.

The following day, before the same individuals, whose interest and curiosity had been aroused, he developed his plan of campaign, map in hand, with the greatest wealth of detail. All had been marked down, all had been foreseen.

When in after-time the newspapers from Europe reached the United States, this plan, which at one time had appeared so fabulous, or at least so extraordinarily daring to the American warriors, developed itself point by point.

CHAPTER III.

MOREAU.

Moreau sides with the Revolution—Captures the Danish fleet when ice-bound—Suspected of having favoured Pichegru—Operations in Northern Italy under Schérer—Defeat of the French at Magnano—Moreau replaces Schérer—Macdonald's defeat at the Trebbia—Moreau replaced by Joubert in command of the Army of Italy—Battle of Novi, Joubert killed, and Moreau resumes command—Appointed to command the Army of the Rhine—The 18th Brumaire, Moreau aids Bonaparte—Strength of the Austrian forces in Germany—French Army of the Rhine—Bonaparte's plan for the campaign in Germany—Moreau objects—Dessoles goes to Paris to explain Moreau's plan—The Army of the Rhine not very favourable to Bonaparte—Moreau delays, Bonaparte urges him to commence operations—Bonaparte stipulates for a portion of the army to pass into Italy—Moreau crosses the Rhine in three places—Battles of Stokach, Engen, Mösskirch, and Memmingen—The Austrians lose their magazines—Carnot goes to Moreau to get the troops for Italy—Monecy sets out for the Saint Gothard.

THE officer who after Bonaparte played the most important rôle in the great events of 1799 and 1800 was General Moreau.

Jean Victor Moreau was born at Morlaix, in Brittany, on the 11th of August, 1763. The Revolution found him a law student at Rennes, where he exercised considerable influence on his fellow-scholars. The political events altered the whole course of his life; Moreau embraced the side of the Revolution, resigned the law, and gave his attention entirely to military matters. He was selected to command the battalion of volunteers d'Ille-et-Vilaine, and his advancement, as often occurred in those turbulent times, was rapid. He displayed such military talents under Dumouriez, that in 1794 he was promoted general of division.

Moreau's devotion to the new order of things received a rude shock when his father, an honest advocate, was put to death by the guillotine during the Reign of Terror. In Morlaix, Moreau's father had, by his probity, charity, and humanity gained the honoured name of "Father of the poor." Virtue, learning, and

generosity, however, were not respected by the bloodthirsty Jacobins, and an exhibition of leniency towards some emigrants in administering their affairs supplied an excuse for sending him to the scaffold.

Distracted by this terrible event, Moreau wished to retire from France, but his friends' sage advice and his own patriotism prevailed. His first grief over, he came to recognize the fact that his services were only too necessary to his country.

He himself but just escaped a fate similar to that of his father. The Convention had sent forth a barbarous decree, ordering that no quarter was to be given to British soldiers. Moreau, in the face of such an order, allowed the garrison of Nieuport, composed entirely of Hanoverians, to go free. This step had been approved by the commissioner Lacombe Saint Michel, who was at that time attached to the army of the north. Moreau's conduct, nevertheless, was denounced to the Convention on the 8th Thermidor, and Robespierre demanded his head.* A deputy observed that Moreau's clemency towards the British soldiers had probably been instrumental in saving 5000 or 6000 soldiers to the Republic, as they might have been shot by the English by way of reprisal. The tyrant replied, "And what are 6000 men to me when it is a matter of principle?" It would most certainly have gone hard with Moreau had not Providence intervened, for on the following day, 9th Thermidor (27th of July, 1794), Robespierre himself was denounced, arrested, and soon after executed with twenty-two of his partisans.

The tyrant's reply reminds one of an incident related of young Bonaparte. One day while he was speaking of Turenne with considerable warmth, a lady observed "he was a great man, but I should have liked him better had he not ravaged the Palatinate."

"What does that signify," replied Bonaparte, briskly, "if this burning was necessary to his views?"

Moreau was a soldier of great abilities. Amongst other qualities, he excelled in keeping his plans from the enemy, who is almost always beaten when surprised.

He commanded on the occasion of that marvellous seizure of the Danish fleet on the 18th of January, 1795, when it was

* The bloodthirsty canaille that crowded round the terrible guillotine was within an ace of seeing the heads of some of the most gifted soldiers of France roll into the basket.

overcome by the frost in entering the straits between West-Frise and the island of Texel. Moreau, perceiving the precarious position of the vessels arrested by the ice, battered them with cannon, and sent cavalry to secure them.

In 1796, Pichegru fell under suspicion of treachery, and the Directory conferred on Moreau the chief command of the Army of the Rhine and Moselle. The campaign against the Archduke Charles, and, above all, Moreau's able retreat to the Rhine, added greatly to his military reputation. Nevertheless, a suspicion that he had connived in Pichegru's plots cost him his command.

It all rested on the fact that Moreau had shown a certain degree of forbearance towards his old colleague at the time when the waggon belonging to General de Klinglin was seized. This fostered the idea that a political intrigue was at the bottom of the delay which Moreau allowed to occur before informing the Directory of the seizure of Pichegru's compromising correspondence.

This correspondence, found in General de Klinglin's waggon, by means of which Pichegru's treason became revealed, was in cypher, but in this case was made out without any difficulty.*

After Bonaparte's departure for Egypt matters for the French in Italy had gone from bad to worse. The invasion of Switzerland had offended the Austrian emperor, Francis II., and the occupation of Malta had irritated the Czar, Paul I.

The news of the battle of the Nile and of Nelson's destruction of the French fleet in the Bay of Aboukir re-echoed from one end of Europe to the other in the month of September, 1798. The so-much-dreaded Bonaparte and his invincible army were settled in Egypt, and unable to return to Europe. What more propitious moment could the enemies of France desire for resuming hostilities?

So the news acted like an electric spark, and caused a conflagration which soon enveloped the entire Continent. The King of Naples welcomed Nelson, and received him in triumph. Turkey declared war against the Republic, and at the close of

* Little use appears to have been made of secret correspondence during the wars of the Revolution and the Empire. Possibly this may be attributed to the fact that there exists no system of secret correspondence which the expert will not soon be able to unravel.

the year, England, Austria, Russia, and the Two Sicilies, found themselves united in a second coalition.

About the same period the Czar Paul, with all the characteristic impetuosity of his disposition, entered into the alliance against France, and laboured to cement a league between all the sovereigns of Europe for the overthrow of the French Revolutionary power, and for the restoration of all the interests which had been subverted by the French arms. He went further, for he contemplated the settling of all religious controversies, and the union of all followers of Christ, to whatever denomination they might belong, under the banners of one Catholic Church.

Suwarroff,* the conqueror of Ismail, a general of the very highest order, was appointed to command the Russian auxiliary army which was to co-operate with the Austrians in Italy.

The Austrians and Russians together numbered about 225,000 men. The Archduke Charles commanded the army in Germany, Suwarroff being appointed general-in-chief of the allied armies in Italy.

It was only on the 12th of March, 1799, that the Republic, looking on the passage of the Russian troops across the territory of Austria as a *casus belli*, declared war. Hostilities commenced in Germany. Massena invaded the Grisons, and drove the Austrians out of it, defeating them afterwards, on the 25th of March, at Taufers. He thus opened a direct communication with the Army of Italy then posted on the Adige.

In Italy hostilities commenced somewhat later. Schérer only reached Milan on the 11th of March, and at that time Melas had not quite completed the concentration of his army.

Early in the year 1799, the contending forces in Germany and in Italy were disposed as follows: Jourdan was chief commander of a French army of 45,000 men in Germany. He had 30,000 men under Massena in Switzerland, and a corps of observation under Bernadotte on the Rhine. In Lombardy, Joubert, incensed by the manner in which the Directory had treated Championnet, had resigned.† His resignation had been

* Suwarroff had naturally a weak constitution, but rendered it almost invulnerable by exercise, strict temperance, and the regular use of cold baths. His mode of life was of Spartan simplicity.

† For attempting to arrest the exactions of the French commissaries, Championnet was removed from his command and indicted for disobedience.

accepted, and Schérer, who had been minister of war, replaced him. Schérer had on the Adige 57,000 French, 10,000 more were in Lombardy, another 10,000 in Piedmont, and 5000 in Liguria. Macdonald, who had replaced Championnet in Southern Italy, had 34,000 men, mostly at Rome and Naples. The Directory had thus scattered one-half of the troops along the Peninsula from Piedmont to Calabria.

In the plan of operations sketched out for the Army of Italy, Schérer was to push his left forwards towards Trent, whilst the right, crossing the Adige by Verona and Legnago, would drive the enemy beyond the Brenta and the Piave.

In Germany, Jourdan was beaten by the Austrians at Stokach, and compelled to recross the Rhine. Jourdan and Bernadotte thereupon quitted the army, the command of which was conferred on Massena. Massena prudently retired into Switzerland.

In Italy the contending armies were, in the latter part of March, face to face in the neighbourhood of the Adige on the line Verona-Legnago. Kray, an officer who was only surpassed in ability by the Archduke Charles, had assumed temporary command, as Melas at that time was absent through indisposition. With great foresight, the Austrians had been strengthening their position on the Adige. On the 25th of March, the French made preparations for crossing the river the following day. In the battle which raged on the 26th their left was routed with the loss of all its artillery. On the 30th, Serrurier's division was defeated above Verona; and on the 5th of April, the French suffered a still greater defeat on the plains of Magnano. The French force amounted to 34,000 infantry, with 7000 cavalry; the Austrians had nearly 45,000, of whom 5000 were cavalry. The success was dubious until Kray, having called up the garrison of Verona, was able to separate and envelope the two French divisions of the right.

The victory was decisive; nevertheless the Austrians, fearing they might tarnish their success by a too precipitate advance, moved very slowly after the beaten army.

Undoubtedly Magnano was a dire defeat for the French. Still, covered by the Mincio, and resting on Mantua and Peschiera, Schérer could have offered a vigorous resistance, and might to some extent have regained the superiority and prestige which the French arms had lost. It was hopeless, however,

to expect great things from him, for he had entirely lost his head. Forming an exaggerated conception of the danger of his situation, he placed 10,000 men within the walls of Mantua, and with the remainder of his army fell back behind the Adda.

On the 11th of April, Kray handed over the command of the Austrian forces to Melas, who had by that time recovered. On the 14th, arrived Suwarroff with the advanced guard of the Russian contingent, and at once assumed the supreme command of the allied armies. Schérer, who had lost by the defeat at Magnano, and by the confusion of the retreat, the little confidence and consideration remaining to him amongst his officers and soldiers, was replaced by Moreau in the command of the Army of Italy. This had been sadly reduced in numbers by sickness and the sword.

The Archduke Charles and Suwarroff had planned the entire separation of the French armies of Italy and of Switzerland, with a view to combining the movements of the Russian and Austrian armies in the conquest of the Italian Alps, Lombardy, and Piedmont, to penetrate afterwards into France through its most defenceless side by the Vosges mountains and the defiles of the Jura.

Suwarroff, having detached 20,000 men under Kray to besiege Peschiera and blockade Mantua, took steps for forcing the line of the Adda.

Moreau strove to hold that line, but his predecessor had imprudently scattered his troops along the course of the river. The French position extended for more than twenty leagues between Lecco and Pizzighettone. The allies coming from Brivio and Vaprio defeated Moreau at Cassano on the 27th of April, forced the passage, and inflicted an immense loss on the French.

They had lost above 11,000 men, and could hardly muster in their retreat 20,000 with whom to make head against the 60,000 of the allies. Milan had to be abandoned, and the Republican army, having left a garrison of 2000 men in the castle, was withdrawn behind the Ticino into Piedmont.

On the 29th, Suwarroff entered Milan in triumph. The multitude, always fickle, received him with the same enthusiasm they evinced when Bonaparte first came amongst them. A reaction had set in, and a religious fanaticism now replaced the love of liberty.

Moreau retired on Alessandria and Turin. The army was divided into two columns; he himself took the road to Turin, his column forming the escort for the artillery parks, the military chest, and the baggage. The other column, composed of Victor's and Laboissière's divisions, moved towards Alessandria, with a view to occupying the defiles of the Bocchetta and the approaches to Genova. Suwarroff followed him very slowly.

By his tardiness he missed on this occasion the opportunity of destroying the French army in its retreat. Suwarroff's slowness of movement is difficult to explain, for he hated all manœuvring, and all his military principles could be expressed in these few words, *Stoupaž i bi* ("Forward and strike"). His skill as a general has often been questioned, and it certainly failed him on this occasion. Incalculable results are sometimes attained by vigorous enterprise; but Suwarroff frequently relaxed his efforts when victory had been gained, and abstained from reaping from his victories the full fruit which might have attended them.

On one occasion General Chastelar, chief of the staff of the Austrian army in Italy, proposed to Suwarroff to make a reconnoissance. The marshal promptly replied: "Reconnoissance! I am for none of them; they are of no use but to the timid, and to inform the enemy that you are approaching. It is never difficult to find your opponent when you really wish it. Form column; charge bayonet; plunge into the midst of the enemy; these are my reconnoissances."

Suwarroff sent Vukassevich* by Novara, and Ivrea towards Turin by the left of the Po. He himself crossed that river at Piacenza and Pavia, advanced on Tortona, and took the town under the fire of the fort. His design was to interpose between Macdonald's and Moreau's armies, and to threaten Moreau's communications with Genova. Macdonald remained too long in Tuscany, and thus unwittingly enabled Suwarroff to repair the mistake he had made.

After the retreat of the French forces into Piedmont, they were destined to meet with humiliating defeats in two severely contested battles, those of the Trebbia and of Novi.

As the fortune of war had manifestly declared itself against the French, General Macdonald was called up from Naples with the object of reinforcing Moreau's army. Macdonald's march,

* According to Alison, Wukassowich.

however, was delayed by an insurrection which broke out in Tuscany and kept him twelve days in Florence. Rejecting the most direct route leading to Genova by the Corniche, which was reputed impracticable for artillery, he descended from the Apennines in the provinces of Bologna and Modena. He defeated the Austrians at Saint Giovanni, near Bologna, on the 11th of June, and again close to Modena on the 12th. After these minor engagements, Macdonald continued his march, reaching Piacenza on the 16th, but he was unable to prevent Suwarroff from placing himself athwart him and Moreau. Victor's division alone, which had marched by way of Sarzana, succeeded in joining the latter.

On the 17th, 18th, and 19th of June a most sanguinary battle was fought on the Trebbia, in which Suwarroff inflicted a complete defeat on his adversary. A combined plan of action had been settled between Moreau and Macdonald. Moreau was to advance on Tortona, and Lapoype's corps was to come down the valley of the Trebbia to Bobbio to keep up the communication between the two armies, to flank Macdonald's left, and if necessary to make a powerful diversion in his favour. On the 19th the issue was yet uncertain, though both sides had lost very heavily. Suwarroff could bring up reinforcements, Macdonald was without resources; nor was there any news of Moreau and of Lapoype. The reappearance of Hohenzollern and of Klenau at Parma and Modena decided Macdonald to declare himself beaten and to retire.*

On the 16th of June, Moreau advanced in two columns against Tortona at the head of 14,000 men. Bellegarde was in front of Tortona with four brigades, but deeming his force not sufficiently strong to arrest Moreau's progress, he retired to a defensive position near Alessandria. Moreau speedily raised the blockade of Tortona, after which he turned his immensely superior force against Bellegarde, and defeated him with a loss of 1500 prisoners and five guns. Moreau was advancing towards Piacenza when news reached him of Suwarroff's victory over Macdonald at the Trebbia and the fall of the citadel of Turin.

When Suwarroff, at that moment on the Larda, heard of Bellegarde's defeat and of Moreau's advance, he marched to meet the French general. Moreau, however, after having

* Macdonald was recalled by the Directory; and his division generals, Montriard and Lapoype, were disgraced.

revictualled Tortona, fell back rapidly by Novi and Gavi to his former position in the Apennines. Suwarroff had received positive orders from the Aulic Council not to attempt any operations beyond the Apennines till the fortresses of Lombardy had been reduced. This injunction checked his movements, and gave time to Moreau and Macdonald to join forces. The month's suspension of hostilities which ensued gave Moreau an opportunity of reorganizing his army.

The Russians made their entry into Turin on the 26th of May; but the citadel was not captured till the 22nd of June, after a bombardment which lasted six days. Alessandria surrendered on the 31st of July.

However able may have been Moreau's conduct of the war, the Directory reposed little faith in him, and did not confirm him in the chief command of the Army of Italy. This was conferred on Joubert. On the same day, the 18th of July, Moreau was appointed to the command of the Army of the Rhine.

The previous year Joubert had found himself compelled to submit his resignation, and he was at the time idling about Paris. A party hostile to the Directory undertook to draw him again into activity as a reproach to the Government. Joubert was first given the command of the 17th Legion, stationed in Paris, and subsequently the command of what still remained of Moreau's and Macdonald's troops in Italy, with the injunction to drive the Austro-Russian forces out of that country.

Joubert had just married Mademoiselle Montholon, and wasted a precious month and more over his honeymoon; a fatal delay which enabled the allies to concentrate their troops.

On quitting his bride, Joubert told her: "You will behold me again dead or a conqueror;" an excusable boast for a youthful general—for he was barely thirty years old—about to assume the chief command of an army. The first of Joubert's predictions came true, for he found a soldier's grave at Novi.

When he joined the army he stipulated that the formal handing over of the command should not take place until after the battle which he was about to fight against Suwarroff. Moreau complied with Joubert's wish, remained with the army, and aided that young general to the utmost of his power.

On the 21st and 30th of July, the citadel of Alessandria

and fortress of Mantua had fallen into the hands of the allies,* and Kray, at the head of 20,000 men, set out to join Suwarroff. This raised the Austro-Russian army to 62,000 men; the French had barely 40,000.

When Joubert found himself in a position to take the field, he moved his army from the Riviera di Genova, with the intention of relieving Tortona and Mantua, and on the 9th of August made for Novi. Some rumours already announced the fall of Mantua, and of this the French soon had ocular proof, for they found Kray's corps deploying in front of their left.

On thus learning that Mantua had fallen, Joubert was undecided whether to retire or not, and naturally enough, seeing that the principal motive for assuming the offensive no longer existed. He now felt sure that he would have to contend with very considerable forces. On the morning of the 15th of August, before he had begun to withdraw his troops, he was vigorously attacked by Suwarroff, and was killed in the first onset.

In the terrible battle that ensued the allies were at first repulsed. For eight hours victory remained in suspense. Suwarroff's impetuosity had brought on an attack before all his troops were at hand. The Russians were a league from the battlefield when the first attack was delivered, and Melas did not reach it before four o'clock in the afternoon. Moreau took advantage of Suwarroff's thoughtlessness to repair to the threatened point and make dispositions for a fresh charge. The French, irritated by the death of their general, attacked the Austrians with fury, and drove them back into the plain.

At four in the afternoon Melas arrived on the field with his column, turned the French right first, and then their entire position, which was far too extended.

No one can contest the fact that Melas made a fine flank attack. It was a most dexterous and decisive movement, and he had every right to claim a large share in the results of the battle.

At Novi the allies outnumbered the French, who, with 36,000 men, fought 45,000. The battle was one of the most

* Mantua, which has never yet yielded to direct assault, had sometimes succumbed to famine and capitulation. In 1796, Bonaparte invested it on the 4th of June; it surrendered, starved out, on the 2nd of February, 1797, after eight months' blockade. In 1799, with a garrison of 13,000 men, it capitulated, after a vigorous siege of eleven days!

bloody and obstinately contested that had yet occurred in the war, but without commensurate results.

Moreau continued to hold his position on the Apennines, and an attempt made by Klenau to capture Genova was defeated by Moreau's right wing. Moreau and Macdonald had had to contend against Suwarroff, who was, in the beginning of October, overcome by great difficulties in Switzerland. This occurred almost at the very moment that the news of Bonaparte's return restored hope in every breast.

Suwarroff turned his back on Italy on the 11th of September to go to the assistance of the allies in Switzerland. He arrived there two days after the battle of Zurich had been fought. His troops were to replace a number of Austrians which had been moved to the Lower Rhine. One of the effects of Massena's victory was that Suwarroff found himself isolated from the friends he expected to meet; and the forces with him being insufficient in number, he had to think first of placing his army in safety. This he was able to accomplish only after his men had endured untold hardships and made superhuman efforts, which extended over a period of ten days. On the 9th of October, he reached a place of safety at Ilanz.

After the battle of Novi, Moreau, having reconducted the army to the mountain passes above Genova, departed to assume the command of the Army of the Rhine. It was in Paris, on his way through, that he was sounded with regard to assuming the government of the country; but he refused, not thinking himself equal to the task at a time when France was so divided into parties.

Championnet succeeded Moreau in the command of the Armies of the Alps and of Italy. Coni was captured on the 4th of December, when the French armies in Italy reverted to positions nearly identical to those which they had occupied when Bonaparte was appointed to their command in 1796.

Thus in a short time the French lost all that they had conquered. They might have fared even worse but for the misunderstandings which arose amongst their enemies; those alone saved them from still greater humiliations.

Bonaparte and Moreau did not meet until the return of the former from Egypt. When chance threw them together for the first time, they contemplated each other for a while before speaking. Bonaparte spoke first, and expressed to Moreau the

desire which he had long felt to be personally acquainted with him. Moreau replied: "You arrive from Egypt victorious, and I from Italy after a signal defeat. Had Joubert determined to profit by the first enthusiasm which his presence would have caused in the army, and joined it the moment he was appointed to be its chief, it is beyond doubt that the Russians and Austrians, with the troops that they had at that moment, would have been unable to withstand Joubert's impetuous attack. But the month he remained in Paris for his marriage had given them time to collect all their forces, and the premature surrender of Mantua added to the rest 15,000 men, who arrived on the very eve of the battle. It was impossible for our brave army not to be overwhelmed by so many forces united. It is always the greater number that beats the less."

Moreau, like many other intelligent men, deplored the incompetence of the Directory, and threw himself with little scruple into the scheme for displacing the incapable men then ruling the Republic. He was amongst the officers who rallied round Bonaparte on the 18th Brumaire, and was given the command of the troops at the Luxembourg, the residence of the executive, so that indirectly he had the custody of those Directors who had not resigned.

Sloane thinks that Moreau helped Bonaparte only to forward his own personal ambitious views, inasmuch as once the young general had become a civilian there should be no military rival to oppose him. Moreau, however, at no time showed such cunning foresight, nor had Bonaparte, by becoming a statesman, cast all military ambition to the winds. It would have been indeed strange if, once having tasted the sweets of conquest and renown, his ears tingling with the uproarious acclamations of the multitude, he could forego such gratification for ever, even to be the Chief Magistrate of the Republic.

On the 18th Brumaire, Moreau was detailed to guard the Luxembourg, and 500 men of the 86th Regiment were placed under his orders for the purpose. But the troops refused to obey. They evidently had no confidence in Moreau, who was not, they said, a true patriot. The suspicion which had fallen on him had not yet been effaced. Bonaparte found himself compelled to address the troops, and to assure them that they could depend on Moreau acting uprightly.

The friendship between Bonaparte and Moreau at first

appeared sincere, as their correspondence shows. It was after Moreau's marriage that this feeling cooled down, and in the course of 1801 it gave place to bitter animosity. A jealous influence on the part of Madame Moreau is generally supposed to have brought this about; nevertheless there are very good grounds for believing that it was due to professional jealousy, which had its origin in 1800, in the contentions regarding the plan of campaign in Germany.*

Moreau's independent disposition being somewhat difficult to overcome, Bonaparte began by writing him a flattering letter; and, though it was said that the First Consul was very jealous of him, he placed under his orders the finest and strongest army the Republic had at the close of the century.

Meanwhile the Cabinet of Vienna, led by Thugut, who was animated by an inflexible hostility to republican principles, disdaining the wise counsel of the Archduke Charles, and fully persuaded that France was at the end of her resources, determined on prosecuting the war.

The Austrians, who had brought together a very considerable army—about 228,000 men in all—had resolved on resuming the offensive vigorously in Italy, whilst remaining purely on the defensive in Germany. The First Consul had likewise decided to assume the offensive, but he had determined to employ the principal forces of the Republic in the valley of the Danube, so that the danger which threatened their capital might have the effect of staying the march of the Austrian army in Italy. With singular ignorance of the art of war, the Aulic Council had made operations in their own country secondary in importance, and dreamt of conquests on the Var and in Provence. When hostilities recommenced, the Austrian forces were already in the neighbourhood of Geneva.

Their army of Germany was 92,000 strong, of which 18,000 were splendid cavalry, with 400 guns. To these numbers should be added 20,000 more belonging to Bavaria and other minor states. What, however, told so greatly against the Austrians was that their forces in Germany were spread over a very large front from the Maine to the Tyrol, for which reason they could not bring a large number of men together at any one point.

* It stood to Moreau's credit that, when compelled, in 1796, by the admirable skill of the Archduke Charles to retire, knowing Bonaparte to be hard pressed by Alvinzi in Italy, setting aside all ignoble rivalries, he generously detached a corps from his own army to march across the Tyrolese Alps to reinforce him.

The centre, under Kray, who had succeeded the Archduke Charles in the command of the army, comprised 40,000 men, and was behind the Black Forest near Villingen and Donaueschingen. Its advanced posts observed the Rhine from the lake of Constance to Kehl. Kray's headquarters were at Donaueschingen, and his principal magazines at Stokach, Engen, Mösskirch, and Biberach.

His army was divided into four corps, including his own. Kienmayer guarded the passes from Renchen and the valley of Hell with 15,000 men. A brigade watched Vieux-Brisach. The right wing, about 16,000 strong, guarded the course of the Rhine from Renchen to the Maine. The left wing, commanded by the Prince of Reuss, numbering 28,000 regular troops and from 8000 to 10,000 Tyrolese militia, was almost an independent body, and only connected with the rest of the army by an armed flotilla on the lake of Constance. It occupied the Vorarlberg and the Grisons.

Three advance-guards were thrown out in front of the army to screen it; that of the Archduke Ferdinand was to observe Bâle and the course of the Rhine as far as Schaffhausen, where it connected with those of the Prince of Lorraine and of General Sporck, which extended as far as the lake of Constance.

The Republic in the coming struggle with Austria assembled a powerful army on the eastern frontier. Everything in the way of men and materials was sent to this "Army of the Rhine," the most imposing that France could produce. The corps were composed of old soldiers, of men who had borne arms under the most famous leaders the Republic had brought forth—Pichegru, Hoche, Kléber, and Moreau. Of conscripts there were few, just enough to infuse youth in the mass. Thiers says in their praise: "They were wise, sober, disciplined, instructed and intrepid. The chiefs were worthy of these soldiers." Lecourbe, Richepanse, Saint Cyr, Ney were secondary leaders of the highest order.

This brave army was led by Moreau, a chief broken to war, whose martial spirit seemed to increase every day amongst the trials of active service. Practice had sharpened his military insight, and by his experience, his habit of commanding, and his high renown, he was at that period the only man, after Bonaparte, who was reputed capable of handling an army of over a hundred thousand combatants. To skill in war, Moreau added

prudence and circumspection. He trusted nothing to chance. Gifted with rare sagacity and imperturbable coolness in presence of danger, he could judge to a nicety the right condition of a contest. In the midst of brilliant successes he was unpretentious, and when overcome by reverses he met them with admirable fortitude.

If at times he was undecided, once face to face with the enemy his indecision invariably gave way to wise and firm resolutions. Moreau trusted for victory to skilful combinations and methodical arrangements, rather than to those master strokes which, though attended with peril, frequently turn out successfully.

Of the two frontiers threatened by the Austrian armies that of the Rhine was the most important for both France and Austria alike, for to either of these powers a battle gained or lost on the Danube or on the Rhine would involve the gravest consequences. A victory in the Riviera di Genova or elsewhere in Italy was not likely to have the same effect. Melas risked much by taking up a position so far from the Austrian territory and his natural base, for, should a defeat have overtaken Kray, coming to his aid was quite out of the question. It was here that Bonaparte showed his skill. He made Moreau's army strong, and did little or nothing to strengthen that of Massena. In doing this he acted in keeping with his declaration that, "the commanding frontier is that of the Rhine, for in Germany alone could he look for decisive results." Moreau asked too much, for before he knew to what purpose Bonaparte intended to employ the Army of Reserve, he urged time after time that it should be sent to Switzerland to act as a support to the Army of the Rhine.

The Austrians left the French in undisputed possession of Switzerland. That advanced position, so valuable for offensive operations both in Germany and Italy, remained to the French. Their opponents evidently feared to assail Switzerland after the disastrous results of their operations in the previous year.

The configuration of that country was very favourable to Bonaparte's designs, for Switzerland jutted out like an enormous wedge between the two Austrian armies. He could consequently use the country, which has been aptly called the great central bastion of the European system, as a base of operations for an attack on Kray's army in Germany or on the one which Melas

commanded in Italy. The distance between the two Austrian armies already prevented any combined operations, and they were destined to find themselves more and more separated by the interposition of a large part of the Republican forces. Bonaparte's intention was that the Army of the Rhine should drive Kray back from the Alps, and put it out of his power to render any assistance to Melas.

The Austrians were in an embarrassed condition, for not a single alternative open to them presented much prospect of success. The best plan they could have followed in the emergency would have been to increase their army in Swabia at the expense of their army in Italy. But by so doing Italy would have been simply handed back to the French.

Bonaparte had conceived a very brilliant and bold plan for the French armies in 1800. It was a real inspiration of genius. He had recognized the expediency of operating with vigour in Germany, for he, quite as well as Moreau, was aware that it was in that country where the fate of the war was to be decided, and where the bulk of the troops were to be concentrated. All the efforts of the French were to be directed against Kray, while Massena remained strictly on the defensive. Once Kray was defeated, it was possible either to dictate peace at Vienna, or to take Melas's army in reverse and cut off its retreat.

Moreau was to drive Kray back along the valley of the Danube, and separate him from Switzerland and Italy completely. This done, Bonaparte would come into action with the Army of Reserve, gather to himself the troops Lecourbe would be bringing from Germany, and cross into Italy, while Melas's attention was completely fixed on Liguria. What the First Consul did not relish was that all the honour should be reaped by Moreau; he had decided that it should be himself who would deliver the decisive strokes of the war. In place of making the operations in Germany the principal object of the campaign, he made them in his scheme entirely subordinate to the blows he intended to deliver in Italy at the head of the Army of Reserve.

Moreau was to prepare for the advance of that army by deceiving the enemy, crossing the Rhine between Schaffhouse and the lake of Constance on Kray's extreme left, and so turn the defiles of the Black Forest.

Now remains to be related a most remarkable part in this

memorable campaign, how the ideas and dispositions of two talented leaders differed, and how their conflicting opinions were reconciled by the prudent foresight of one of them.

Bonaparte, as we have said, had conceived a skilful plan. All the troops of the Army of the Rhine were to concentrate in Switzerland and cross the Rhine in the vicinity of Schaffhouse. The march of the left wing from left to right was to be concealed by the river, and, all the measures having been carefully taken beforehand, it could be kept totally unknown to the enemy. By collecting in the affluents of the Rhine, and above all in the Aar, a sufficient number of boats, four bridges would be simultaneously thrown over the river in the neighbourhood of Schaffhouse. By the aid of these bridges the entire army could move across the river, and in twenty-four hours would be able to reach Stokach, overpower the enemy's left, and take in rear all the Austrian forces stationed between the right bank of the Rhine and the defiles of the Black Forest. Bonaparte fully believed that if this operation was executed with vigour and suddenness it would promptly end in crushing the Austrian army. Moreau, by gaining two or three marches on Kray, would have been at the point of passage before the Austrians could have gathered sufficient forces to prevent the crossing.

From Constance to Bâle the Rhine flows from east to west. At Bâle it takes a northerly direction, passing by Brisach, Strasbourg, and Mayence. The Black Forest (Schwarzwald), which derives its name from the dark-tinted leaves and immense number of its fir trees, is a wooded mountain chain in Baden and Würtemberg, running from south to north along the western side of Swabia, parallel to the course of the Rhine after its great bend near Bâle. These mountains lie in the angle of the Rhine between the lake of Constance and Strasbourg on the south. They are very steep, rugged, and thickly wooded.

The French army, had Bonaparte's scheme been followed, would have appeared before Ulm six or seven days after the opening of the campaign, and those of the Austrian army who could not get away would have been compelled to fall back on Bohemia. In this plan the first movement of the campaign would have resulted in separating the Austrian army from Ulm, Philippsburg, and Ingolstadt, and in placing Würtemberg, Swabia, and Bavaria in the power of the French. Such a scheme of operations would be calculated to bring about more

or less decisive events, conclusive according to the good fortune, the audacity, and rapidity of the movements of the French commander.

Thiers writes: "*Moreau agissait, à la guerre, sans grandeur, mais avec sûreté*" ("Moreau waged war without grandeur, but with security"). Always more remarkable for prudence than for daring, he had not quite the talent necessary for executing or possibly even for comprehending all the import of such a plan of campaign. Its very boldness startled him. Not accustomed to such venturous conceptions, he dreaded most that Kray, having penetrated his intentions, might concentrate rapidly before the spot selected for crossing the Rhine, present himself in strength at the point of passage, contest the crossing and render it impossible. These fears furnished some reason for not accepting Bonaparte's plan. Moreau, however, gave to the Austrians credit for effecting their concentration with more ease and speed than the event proved to be within their power. The alternative plan he set forth met with full success.

Bonaparte on the 1st of March wrote to Berthier, then minister of war, a long letter of instructions for Moreau. One of the paragraphs runs as follows: "You will let General Moreau know that I desire that his chief of the staff should proceed as speedily as possible to Paris, with a plan of the organization of the army in conformity with the above. This chief on his return will take with him the plan of the first operations of the campaign, combined with those of the other armies." In compliance with this order, Dessoles quitted Moreau and went to Paris, arriving there on the 13th of March.

Bonaparte, glad to have to deal with a man of judgment and penetration, endowed with tact and a conciliatory disposition, explained to him all his ideas, and made him understand and even prefer them to Moreau's. Nevertheless, Dessoles pleaded in favour of Moreau's plan. Thiers reports the conversation that ensued, which, he states, he heard from the mouth of General Dessoles himself. "But General Dessoles did not persist any the less in advising the First Consul to adopt Moreau's plan, because, according to him, it was fitting to leave the general who operates to act according to his ideas and his character, given that he is a man worthy of the command which has been entrusted to him. Your plan," he said to the First Consul, "is grander, more decisive, probably also the most

sure; but it is not adapted to the genius of the person who has to carry it into effect. You have a way of making war which is superior to all others. Moreau has his, which doubtlessly is inferior to yours, though, nevertheless, excellent. Let him act. He will do well, possibly slowly, but surely; and he will procure you as many results as you require for the success of your general combinations. If, on the other hand, you try to impose your ideas on him, you will vex him, you may even offend him, and in consequence of having wanted too much you will get nothing from him." The First Consul, who had a great knowledge of human nature, appreciated the wisdom of Dessoles' words and yielded. "You are right," he said to the general; "Moreau is not capable of grasping and executing the plan I have conceived. Let him do as he likes, provided he beats Marshal Kray back on Ulm and Ratisbonne, and that afterwards he sends back in good time his right wing to Switzerland. The plan which he does not understand, which he dares not execute, I am going to carry out, on another part of the theatre of war. What he hesitates to do on the Rhine, I am going to do on the Alps. He may regret in the time to come the glory which he hands over to me."

The plan which Moreau's chief of the staff was enjoined to set forth did not depart greatly from the strategy of the campaigns of 1796 and 1797. Moreau proposed crossing the Rhine at three points—at Mayence, Strasbourg, and Bâle, in place of at one. But this missed the principal end of Bonaparte's plan, which was to cast the entire French army on Kray's left flank, and thus sever him at once from Bavaria.

Bonaparte felt that he was not strongly enough seated in the Consular chair to alienate so influential a rival as Moreau, and that it behoved him to treat him with tact. It was therefore wiser to leave him all the honour of the conception of his plan of campaign, and to furnish him with all that was needed to carry it out. Much of what has been set down as the jealousy of a rival on the part of Bonaparte may possibly be more correctly accounted for as under-estimation of Moreau's abilities by a general of a very different stamp, who judged things in a different way.

Though Moreau's reserve and simplicity of manner were against him, and did not make him popular in the ordinary acceptance of the term, his character was held in high esteem.

At the end of the eighteenth century he was more popular with the army than Bonaparte. The latter's brilliant campaign in Italy, the humbling of Austria by the Treaty of Campo Formio, and the marvellous expedition to Egypt, had not been sufficient to gain for him an exclusive ascendant. Besides which, the nation had not quite forgotten that what had first brought him to notice was his cannonading the sections on the 13th Vendémiaire. Though Bonaparte had eclipsed all competitors by his talents and fortune, at that moment Moreau was better known, and possessed the affection of the soldiers to a greater degree. He had fought with distinction in Holland, in Germany, and in Italy, in the last of which theatres of war his spirited retreat before Suwarroff had gained him immense consideration.

The Army of the Rhine may have nourished some feeling of jealousy towards Bonaparte and his Army of Italy for their brilliant success in 1796, and for the rich harvest of glory they had reaped in Northern Italy.

Lanfrey states that the Army of the Rhine was the seat of discontent. The officers were better instructed than those of the Army of Italy, entertained more liberal ideas, and were deeply attached to Republican institutions. They consequently witnessed their fall with silent sullenness.

Historians aver that Bonaparte designed the expedition to San Domingo with the intention of getting rid of that army. The land forces for the expedition were almost all composed of the conquerors of Hohenlinden. These he sent to a distance, knowing full well at the time the dangerous climate and the difficulties to be encountered, points on which he had been thoroughly instructed by Colonel Vincent. It seems strange, if he had any dark designs on these troops, that he should have sent his favourite sister * and his brother-in-law out with them. But it is said that he did so purposely as a proof to show how entirely he disbelieved the reports as to the insalubrious nature of the climate.

Fouché writes on this subject: † "The First Consul ardently seized the happy opportunity of sending away a great number

* Pauline Leclerk, Bonaparte's lovely sister, who for her silliness was nicknamed la Princesse Folette, so resisted being sent to San Domingo that force had to be employed in putting her on board.

† Fouché, "Mémoires," p. 148

of regiments and general officers formed in the school of Moreau, whose reputations caused him anxiety, and whose influence over the army, if not quite a subject of alarm, was at least one of restraint and inquietude. He likewise comprised in the expedition the generals whom he judged not to be sufficiently devoted to his person and interests, or who were considered as still attached to republican institutions."* Bourrienne, who wrote the instructions for Leclerk, is silent on this point.

For the important expedition to San Domingo Bonaparte naturally selected his best soldiers, and none more than those of the Army of the Rhine were so inured to war. What others were there to compare with them? In this he followed his custom; when he went to Egypt he did not hesitate to take the choicest battalions of the Army of Italy.

Moreau's plan consisted in turning to account the three bridges on the Rhine at Strasbourg, Brisach, and Bâle, and in moving in several columns over to the right bank of the river. He hoped by so doing to mislead the Austrians, and draw their forces to the defiles of the Black Forest corresponding to the bridges of Strasbourg and Brisach. Then his own forces were to steal away, skirt the Rhine, and take up a position in front of Schaffhausen, so as to cover the remainder of his army.

Moreau, generally admitted to have been one of the best generals of the time in Europe, lacked the dash and audacity necessary for doing what the First Consul would have done, and what he did afterwards in 1805 when he had become emperor. On that occasion, uniting a considerable army on the Rhine, and leaving a small force in Italy, Napoleon marched like lightning on Vienna, without troubling himself about his flanks or rear, relying for safety on the dashing blows he dealt to his principal enemy.

With his habitual prudence, Moreau delayed commencing operations. His assumption of the offensive was the indispensable condition for the advance of the Army of Reserve across the Alps, for Kray had it in his power to attack its left wing or rear.

* San Domingo was, with the exception of Cuba, the largest and most flourishing of the West India islands. Its prosperity had increased in a most extraordinary degree, and it seems quite natural that when Bonaparte had leisure he should turn his eyes in that direction and try to stamp out the revolution and reassert French dominion in the island.

Time was everything—looking at Massena's critical position at Genova—nevertheless, Bonaparte had to await the arrival of favourable news from the army in Germany. The reason was plain enough, as only if the operations there took a favourable turn, and Kray was entirely separated from Melas, could he feel justified in demanding that Moreau should place a portion of his troops at his disposal.

Such was his annoyance at the delay that at one moment Bonaparte even contemplated placing himself at the head of the army. He calculated that he could be under the walls of Vienna before the Austrians could penetrate as far as Nice. Nothing but the agitation still rife in the interior of the Republic restrained him. It was not prudent for him, the chief officer of the state, to absent himself from the capital for so long a period. Moreau also had shown too plainly that he had no intention whatever of serving under his orders.

On the success of the first operations of the Army of the Rhine depended that of the Army of Reserve. Moreau alone could open a passage into Italy for the latter, by driving the Austrians away from those outlets through which they might have cut the communications of the Army of Reserve with France.

Again and again did Bonaparte urge Moreau to commence operations, for time was precious; but the general, cautious and slow by nature, could not grasp the necessity for all this despatch. What appeared to him of much greater consequence was not to cross the frontier and advance into the enemy's territory until his army had been supplied with everything necessary to render its fighting power complete.

In one of his letters we find the First Consul writing: "Hasten, hasten by your success to accelerate the arrival of the moment when Massena can be extricated. That general is in need of provisions. For fifteen days he has been enduring with his debilitated soldiers a struggle of despair. Your patriotism is entreated, your self-interest; for should Massena be compelled to capitulate, it will be necessary to take from you a part of your forces, for the purpose of hurrying down the Rhine, in order to assist the departments of the south."

But there was another reason to explain Bonaparte's impatience, inasmuch as it had been arranged with Moreau that as soon as he had scored a victory over Kray, he would detach

a body of 25,000 men to strengthen the army which the First Consul was passing into Italy.

This was a delicate matter ; delicate because no commander relishes, after he has once entered into a campaign, consenting to a diminution of his forces. In his letter to Berthier of the 1st of March, to which reference has already been made, Bonaparte directs that Moreau's 100,000 men shall be divided into four corps. "This fourth corps," he adds, "will bear the name of Reserve Corps, and shall be commanded by General Lecourbe. In reality it is destined to serve as a corps of reserve to the other three, to hold Switzerland, and to combine its operations with those of the Army of Italy."

To insure compliance with his demand in future, Bonaparte compelled Moreau to sign a stipulation with General Berthier, under the terms of which he bound himself, when once he had succeeded in driving Kray back from the lake of Constance, to detach from his army some 20,000 or 25,000 men to send to Italy under Lecourbe. Berthier and his chief of the staff, Dupont, proceeded to Bâle, where an informal conference was held to settle the effective strength of the troops which were to remain in Switzerland, and those which Moreau would detach for operating in Italy.

It appears strange that a convention should have been thought necessary to bind Moreau. This shows how independent the military chiefs could be, and that the head of the state could not make sure of their faithfully carrying out his orders.

Besides the troops to be withdrawn from Moreau's command, Bonaparte longed to have Lieutenant-General Lecourbe placed at his disposal. Lecourbe was known as an able, energetic officer, well versed in mountain warfare. His abilities had been clearly demonstrated in the previous campaign. Moreau, who reposed unbounded confidence in him, distinctly refused to part with him, and nothing availed to make him change his mind on this point. In order to harmonize with him, Bonaparte yielded, and it was decided that General Moncey should go to Italy in Lecourbe's place. Moreau complained to the minister of war and to Bonaparte (29th of December, 1799, and 2nd of January, 1800) that Massena had taken away the best divisional generals from the Army of the Rhine. Writing to the former, he states that he was impatient for the

arrival of General Saint Cyr. On the 15th of December, 1799, Saint Cyr, by his brilliant combat of Montefascio, had brought to an end the series of fine operations by which he secured possession of the Riviera di Genova. He was loth to quit the Army of Italy, and protested against his removal; however, Massena, who was not on the best terms with him, insisted on his leaving, and taking up his post with the Army of the Rhine.

In all justice to Moreau, it must be noted that what delayed the commencement of his operations was the deficiency of horses for the artillery and cavalry, the scarcity of means, and the want of a pontoon-train, tools, and camp equipment. His letters to the First Consul, to the minister of finances and of war, show most clearly how badly found his army was in all essentials. Such had been the mismanagement of the war department in Paris during the year 1799 that the force at his command was not properly supplied with any single requisite. Alsace and Switzerland, utterly exhausted, were unable to furnish the amount of transport which his movements demanded; and he was simply unable to commence operations until a month after the time arranged.

Moreau's plan, as has been already stated, was to employ the bridges at Strasbourg, Brisach, and Bâle, and then to reascend the Rhine to Schaffhausen. The execution of this commenced on the 25th of April. Three imposing columns crossed the Rhine simultaneously by the above-named bridges. Sainte Suzanne, on the left, crossed by the bridge of Kehl at the head of his three divisions, and advanced on the road of Rastadt and Appenweier, chasing before him Kienmayer's light troops. Having, after a brisk fight, got possession of Griesheim, he established his left at Linx, and his right beyond the Kintzig. Saint Cyr the same day issued from Vieux-Brisach and marched on Fribourg. Ney, who commanded his first division, pushed in the direction of Burkheim and of Eichstetten, as if desirous to connect with Sainte Suzanne. Richepanse, Delmas, and Leclerk, with the reserve, crossed the Rhine at Bâle.

The enemy was led to believe that Sainte Suzanne intended to approach the Danube by the Black Forest, advancing by the valley of the Kintzig, and that Saint Cyr was bent on operating in the Val d'Enfer (Höllenthal); that being the most direct route for an army intending to reach the Danube from the Rhine.

On the 26th, Sainte Suzanne and Saint Cyr did not stir, and

most of the 27th was occupied by the French in misleading the enemy with regard to the direction about to be followed by their columns. But at nightfall Sainte Suzanne withdrew quickly on Kehl, recrossed the Rhine with his corps, and marched by the left bank of the river for Neuf-Brisach.

Saint Cyr had quitted Fribourg, and was marching up the Rhine by the right, or German bank, by way of Saint Hubert, Neuhof, Todnau, and Saint Blaise. Unfortunately, the French staff had been led to believe in the existence of certain roads which in reality were not to be found. Saint Cyr was compelled to cross a frightful country, always in close proximity to the enemy, and without his artillery.

Moreau marched up the right bank with the reserve. On the 29th, the centre under Saint Cyr and the reserve under Moreau were in line on the Alb, from the Abbey of Saint Blaise up to the junction of the Alb and Rhine. Sainte Suzanne, at Neuf-Brisach, followed the left bank of the river, Lecourbe was concentrating between Diesenhofen and Schaffhausen.

On the 30th, Sainte Suzanne recrossed the Rhine and showed himself in the Val d'Enfer; Saint Cyr remained in the vicinity of Saint Blaise. Moreau moved on the Wutach. On the 1st of May, Sainte Suzanne came across Kienmayer in retreat, and followed him step by step. Saint Cyr continued to march side by side with the corps of the Archduke Ferdinand, and drove him out from Bettmaringen to Stühlingen on the Wutach, which stream Moreau's troops crossed without experiencing any resistance.

Lecourbe, having early in the morning placed a large battery of artillery (thirty-four guns) in position on the heights on the left bank of the Rhine, to sweep the approaches to the village of Reichlingen, moved a bridge, which had been prepared on the Aar, into position on the Rhine. This was firmly established in an hour and a half, and then Vandamme led a large part of Lecourbe's troops over the river.

By the evening of the 1st of May, the French army, from 75,000 to 80,000 strong, was across the Rhine. It extended along its right bank from Bondorf Stühlingen, Schaffhausen Radolfzell, to the lake of Constance. Lecourbe's troops were on the roads leading to Engen and Stokach, menacing at the same time the enemy's magazines and line of retreat.

The manœuvre had been completed in six days and in a very

fortunate manner. As Moreau's plan met with success it was judged accordingly, but if Bonaparte's was objected to by Moreau as being too bold, what must be said of his own, which was full of risks? Saint Cyr and himself for several days marched between the mountains and the Rhine, presenting a flank to the enemy, whilst Sainte Suzanne proceeded all alone in the Val d'Enfer. The dangers of these movements were very great. Had it only occurred to Kray to attack either of these columns, its defeat would have rendered a retreat of the whole French army unavoidable.

Bonaparte relied on being able to surprise the Austrians by keeping his flank march concealed from their knowledge by the waters of the Rhine, and by concluding it with crossing the Rhine with overwhelming forces, against which the unprepared Austrian left would have had no chance of making head. Moreau's object was to attain the same end by misleading the enemy whilst the flank march was being carried out, by riveting his attention to the principal issues of the Black Forest. Whereas in Bonaparte's scheme the Austrians would have remained unaware of the storm till it was on the point of bursting, till the French army had concentrated at Schaffhausen and was crossing the Rhine; according to Moreau's they were put on their guard from the first day of the French movement, and they could accordingly take the necessary precautions. There can be no doubt in which plan the balance of advantages rested.

Kray, who, by drawing Reuss and Starray to himself by forced marches, might have rendered the happy issue of the French plan highly problematical, did next to nothing. However, in this Kray was overruled by the Aulic Council, which had given him peremptory orders for his left to remain in the Vorarlberg. Uncertainty had full sway at his headquarters, and, as invariably happens, this gave rise to many unnecessary and contradictory directions. Kray imagined the French columns to be pressing forward by all the roads, and in place of employing light troops to gain timely notice of the enemy's advance, only issued tardy and powerless orders.

Soon a series of engagements took place, at Stokach, at Engen, at Mösskirch, at Memmingen, the result of all being that Kray before long found himself cast back on Ulm.

Acting in conformity with his instructions, Lecourbe arrived before Stokach on the 3rd of May, beating and pursuing the

Prince of Lorraine and Generals Sporek and Kospoth. Stokach contained immense magazines, and on account of its communications was a position of the very highest importance for either side. The Austrians were determined to defend it; but Lecourbe had sent in the morning Vandamme's division to Wahlmes and Seruadingen round their left flank. This precaution, and a vigorous attack delivered by Montrichard and Nausouty, ultimately gained the day. The principal result of this victory was that henceforth a junction between Reuss and the rest of the army was almost hopeless.

Moreau beat Kray's army at Engen on the same day, and again at Mösskirch on the 5th. On the 9th, the two armies were once more face to face.* The Austrians were placed in a wrong position on the heights of Mittel-Biberach. They only made a show of resistance, and soon went pell-mell into the valley of the Riss.† Kray, by advancing powerful reinforcements, came to their help. Nevertheless, a general retreat ensued, the Austrians being seriously pressed by the two divisions of Saint Cyr. On the 11th of May, Kray found safety for his army in Ulm, and after that for a certain period neither the French nor the Austrians performed anything of much importance.

The Austrians had collected in magazines at Stokach quite close to the lake of Constance and at Donaueschingen immense quantities of supplies. As all know, the localized accumulation of stores acts as a drag on military operations; they shackle to a great extent the movements of an army, and so it proved in this instance. To this must be added the fact that the magazines had been established far too close to the frontier. If we look at the action at Biberach we shall see that it was evidently fought with the hope of saving what remained of the magazines. But Kray lost a very large amount of provisions, and got beaten as well. The French army revelled in abundance, for

* In these battles of Engen and Mösskirch it has been remarked that the French erred in bringing up their divisions in succession, and that this accounted for their being so long contested. The first divisions that came up were greatly wearied when the others arrived, and the latter had to re-establish the balance in the contest before thinking of striving for victory.

† After his proscription, Pichegru had taken refuge in Germany. As the French entered Biberach he hastily left the town. Moreau's rapid march had surprised him there. Here was a strange accident. Pichegru, the conqueror of Holland, afraid of falling into the hands of French soldiers; a general flying before Moreau, his pupil in the art of war!

not only was the country rich, but it had captured the greater portion of the magazines which the Austrians had formed with such pains. To the latter the loss was double; for, as the French did not establish magazines of any like magnitude, the capture not only deprived the Austrian troops of the stores accumulated in them, but these went to meet the wants of their adversaries, and to nourish the victorious troops.

After the first successes of the Army of the Rhine, Bonaparte awaited Moreau's compliance with the stipulation entered into at Bâle.

The demand made on the Army of the Rhine was not acceptable to Moreau, and he was considerably annoyed when it was reiterated. Some critics accuse the First Consul of having taken from Moreau one quarter of his troops, and of having in that manner crippled his army. A careful examination of the operations will show this criticism to have been hardly fair. Not only had the first battles much reduced his opponent's forces, but Moreau was far from crippled, and strong enough to contend against Kray, as was seen in the operations which culminated in the victory at Hochstett.

To smooth the way, Carnot, who had been appointed minister of war in the place of Berthier when the latter was appointed to the command of the Army of Reserve, was sent to Moreau's headquarters to insist that the troops should be directed to set out forthwith. Being a determined man, Carnot succeeded in his mission, and persuaded Moreau into compliance. He had left Paris on the 6th of May, was at Bâle on the 8th, and travelling day and night, was at Moreau's headquarters by 9 a.m. on the 10th. He was the bearer of an order from the Consuls for a corps of 25,000 men to be detached from the Army of the Rhine, and sent by the way of the Saint Gothard into Italy. Having accomplished his mission, Carnot quitted the Army of the Rhine, and reached Lausanne on the night of the 13th of May. According to Thiers, he left for Paris immediately after having witnessed the start of the troops intended to descend into Italy by way of the Saint Gothard.

Carnot related the circumstances of his mission in a letter he wrote to Lacuée, who was at that time acting for him.

"I could well expect that I should cause a good deal of pain to the general-in-chief, coming, so to say, to stay him in the course of the most brilliant victories by a demand for a

considerable portion of his forces for another army. He has been really affected by it. But, as he is at the same time a good citizen as well as an able general, he has complied, after having explained to me the inconveniences that might affect the Army of the Rhine, which only fights with success against the enemy through its superiority in bravery and by extraordinary efforts. He fears he will not be any longer able to maintain an offensive attitude, and then will find himself incapable of holding his advanced position. He will be obliged to fall back, and abandon the resources which the locality furnishes. Discouragement would then seize hold of the minds of his soldiers, and the enemy would become more bold. These reasons have not, however, prevented his complying with the First Consul's orders."

From Gouvion Saint Cyr we learn his opinion of Carnot's visit. Very probably his views were shared by other officers of the Army of the Rhine.*

"The mission of the minister of war at a moment when he must have had so much work to attend to at the headquarters of his ministry, and for the purpose of enforcing the execution of an order (a thing which might have been done just as well by an ordinary officer employed as a message-bearer); the employment, I say, of so high a functionary must have furnished plenty of matter for conjecture. The most likely supposition was that the chief of the state, entertaining no doubt of Moreau's ambition, and attributing to him a character which was never his, considered it quite possible that Moreau would refuse to allow so considerable a section of his army to quit him, lest its departure should in any way lessen his personal influence or even put a period to his successes. As Carnot had for a long time been on friendly terms with him, it was hoped that he would exercise sufficient influence on him to overcome his repugnance. Those who understood Moreau's character best, who knew him so timid in political affairs, imagined that he would have obeyed the most simple order without the least hesitation; and believed that Carnot's mission would only serve to heighten his importance, by showing him with what delicacy the First Consul acted towards him."

Carnot was the bearer of a letter from Moreau to Bonaparte, written from Biberach. The general expresses himself thus:

* Gouvion Saint Cyr, "Mémoires," tom. ii. p. 235.

“The detachment which you demand upsets our arrangements, nevertheless, we shall do our best. . . . I am going to concentrate in Switzerland and as speedily as possible 20 battalions, 20 squadrons, and the guns which the minister has demanded from us. These troops will be placed at the disposal of General Moncey.”

Carnot was at the same time furnished with a return showing what troops were about to be transferred from the Army of the Rhine to the Army of Reserve, in all 18,714 infantry and 2803 cavalry. Moncey, nevertheless, writes to Bonaparte from Lucerne on the 24th of May, and says he has not more than 11,000 men in all. His totals, in a return which accompanies his letter, are—

Cavalry ...	...	...	...	...	2160 men.
Infantry	...	...	...	...	9350 ,,
					11,510

Bonaparte evidently was not entirely satisfied with the arrangements proposed by Moreau. In a letter written on the 14th of May, he remonstrates, pointing out the distance some of the corps were from Switzerland, which would make their arrival in Italy far too late. He concluded by urging that a good corps might be given to Moncey, and that it might be so arranged for him as to be in a position to issue from the Saint Gothard during the first decade of the month Prairial. He strengthens this recommendation by showing the unfortunate results which would follow the capture of Genova and a defeat of the Army of Reserve.

It was Carnot's personal influence that succeeded in making Moreau accede to Bonaparte's wishes, for the general a short time before had entertained quite different views. This is shown by the two letters sent by Berthier on the 2nd of May to the First Consul, in both of which mention is made of a letter from General Dessoles which proved that not only Moreau had no intention of sending reinforcements to the Army of Reserve, but that he contemplated calling up Moncey with all the troops he had under him, and making the Army of Reserve undertake the protection of Switzerland.

On the 11th or 12th of May, Moncey * set out for Italy with

* Moncey, as senior marshal, was ordered to preside over the council of war which was to try the unfortunate Marshal Ney. He declined, and for so doing was sentenced to three months' imprisonment, and was deprived of his rank.

the troops Bonaparte had demanded from the Army of the Rhine. To conceal from the enemy the diminution of his forces, Moreau had drafted men from every corps to make up the contingent for Italy. It was left to Monecy to undertake the organization of this corps on the march. Marmont states that it consisted of two divisions, under Lorge and Lapoype, and that it was about 12,000 strong.

Evidently in numbers it fell below what was expected. Bonaparte complained to the minister of war that where he expected at least two-thirds of the troops shown in the return delivered to him on the 13th of May, Monecy arrived in Lombardy with only one-third, and of that third one-half were unreliable men.

The idea of a diversion by the Saint Gothard appears to have been entertained by Massena, Berthier, and other officers. Writing to the First Consul from Chalons, Berthier says: "But I believe, as I have already thought, and Massena is of the same opinion, that the enemy is lost should a corps of 12,000 or 15,000 men show on the Saint Gothard at the moment when we shall enter into Italy by the Saint Bernard. This is the only measure for destroying the enemy."

In Massena Bonaparte had a stubborn officer, one who would in all probability find plenty of occupation for Melas in Liguria, and was likely to keep him there the time necessary for giving the Army of Reserve full development. For all that Massena was left without any help; he was accorded no reinforcements, no stores, no materials. His army might struggle to the utmost, and then succumb, so that the armies in the other fields might have time to issue out victorious.

To Moreau, on the contrary, was given the very best army, and, though the First Consul has been accused of having been jealous of him, all the men and materials available were sent to him. He had a fine body of artillery, and sufficient means for crossing the Rhine.

Of the three armies of operation, Moreau was to have about 130,000 men, Bonaparte 40,000, and Massena 36,000. Bonaparte's genius had nevertheless recognized the importance of driving Kray back on Ulm and Ratisbonne as being vital for the success of all the operations. This could not be done without employing a force about equal to his own.

CHAPTER IV.

AUSTRIAN PLANS.

The Aulic Council—Thugut overrides the advice of the Archduke Charles to negotiate—The Archduke removed from his command—Discourtesy of the Russian generals—The Czar Paul approaches the First Consul—Withdraws from the coalition—Austrian preparations—Prussia promises to remain neutral—The Austrian army in Italy to assume the initiative—The Aulic Council believes that France is quite exhausted—Kray ordered to remain on the defensive in Germany—The Austrians are blind to the danger which menaces them in the valley of the Danube—Melas appointed to command the Austrian army in Italy—He scatters his troops—The Aulic Council obstinately disbelieves the existence of an Army of Reserve—Melas does so likewise, and fails to concentrate his army betimes.

THE events in Northern Italy have been described in Chapter III. The coalition in which Austria, Russia, England, and the Two Sicilies were represented had in the year 1799 chased the French literally out of the country. Coni, the last place they held in Italy, had been captured, and when that fell all that was left to the French in Italy was a narrow strip of littoral bound by the sea on one side and by lofty hills on the other. All Germany had been evacuated, and on that side the French were on the defensive, occupying the strong places on the left bank of the Rhine.

At that period a vicious system obtained in Austria of intrusting the best interests of the country to the consideration of the Aulic Council. This was a council of high officers at Vienna, with whom rested the direction of the military concerns of the empire. This method of sending from Vienna, far from the seat of operations, plans of campaign cut and dried was an eminently vicious system. Instructions prepared far away from the theatre of war necessarily labour under many serious inconveniences. To the meddling of the Aulic Council with the designs of the various Austrian commanders during the Napoleonic wars, and to its forcing upon them instructions

regarding the conduct of their operations, may be attributed many of the disastrous results of the various campaigns both in Germany and in Italy.

Austria, badly advised by Baron de Thugut and the Cabinet of Vienna, had committed a great error in not profiting by the favourable situation which the victories of Suwarroff had gained for her to enter into negotiations with France. Furthermore, Austria did even worse, for it took away from the Archduke Charles—the best general the nation possessed, the only one who could direct the war with some hope of success—the command of the army, and this for no other reason than because he was opposed to the continuance of the war.*

This distinguished officer had in his wisdom and experience foreseen the dangers which threatened his country, should Austria continue at war with the Republic. He argued that now, when the coalition would no longer have to contend against an incapable Directory, and when Russia, on one hand, had withdrawn her army, and such a distinguished antagonist as Bonaparte had been added on the other, it would be prudent to take advantage of the successes of the last campaign, and endeavour to come to terms with the French.

The Archduke's treatment—for, under pretence of being appointed Governor of Bohemia, he was removed from his command—caused intense displeasure in Germany, for his achievements in the campaign of 1796 had gained him a well-deserved reputation in his country. His removal from the command, moreover, shook the confidence of the soldiers, who simply adored him.

Thus at the very time when Bonaparte was appointing Moreau to command the Army of the Rhine and Massena to lead the Army of Italy on account of their personal acquaintance with Germany and Italy, the Cabinet of Vienna was removing from the command of their army an officer who not only possessed the full confidence of the soldiers, but was quite familiar with the probable theatre of operations.

At the close of the past year a disagreement between the Archduke Charles and Suwarroff regarding the conduct of the

* In 1804, General Duka, Quartermaster-General of the Austrian army, supported the Archduke Charles in his remonstrations against a fresh war with France. He was at once named commander of the district of Temeswar, the most distant quarter of the empire!

war, the jealousy of the two states, and the exhausted condition of the Russian treasury were causes which combined to lead to a rupture. The Russian troops withdrew, and took no further part in the war.

When the Czar Paul joined the coalition, in a very disinterested spirit he had laid down the principle of restoring to all belligerents what territory they had lost, and Suwarroff in his conversation made no secret of this intention of his master. Austria, nevertheless, was very grasping, and while keen to make the Russian victories the means of strengthening the hold she had on the territory of Northern Italy, she became very uneasy regarding her possession of Venice. Chevalier de Cavour asserts that the very apple of discord between the Russians and Austrians was the occupation of Ancona by the latter. The only plausible reason the Austrians could adduce for placing there a garrison of 6000 men was that such a measure would prevent the French from occupying that city.

The behaviour of the Russians towards their allies seems to have been somewhat strange, and, to say the least, very discourteous. Alison quotes two instances, which are as follows: "The presumption and arrogance of Korsakoff were carried to such a pitch, that in a conference with the Archduke Charles, shortly before the battle (of Zurich), when that great general was pointing out the positions which should in an especial manner be guarded, and said, pointing to the map, 'Here you should place a battalion.'—'A company, you mean,' said Korsakoff.—'No,' replied the Archduke, 'a battalion.'—'I understand you,' rejoined the other; 'an Austrian battalion, or a Russian company.'"*

Later, in October of the same year, not quite approving of a plan Suwarroff had proposed, to abandon the Grisons, advance with all his forces to Winterthur, form a junction with Korsakoff and attack the French in concert with the Austrians, the Archduke suggested an alternative one not quite so difficult and perilous. But Suwarroff, who still smarted under the irritation caused by the defeat of the Russians at Zurich, replied in angry terms. Hart relates that Suwarroff's letter terminated with the following expressions: "I am field-marshal as well as you; commander, as well as you, of an imperial army; old, while you are young; it is for you to come and seek me."

* Alison, "History of Europe," vol. v. p. 124.

Alison * quotes from Hard part of a letter from a Russian officer on Suwarroff's staff to Count Rostopchin at St. Petersburg: "Our glorious operations are thwarted by those very persons who are most interested in their success. Far from applauding the brilliant triumphs of our arms, the cursed Cabinet of Vienna seeks only to retard their march. It insists that our great Suwarroff should divide his army, and direct it at once on several points, which will save Moreau from total destruction. That Cabinet, which fears a too rapid conquest of Italy, from designs which it dares not avow, as it knows well those of our magnanimous emperor, has, by the Aulic Council, forced the Archduke Charles into a state of inactivity, and enjoined our incomparable chief to secure his conquests rather than extend them; that the army is to waste its time and strength in the siege of fortresses which would fall of themselves if the French army were destroyed. What terrifies them even more than the rapidity of our conquests, is the generous project, openly announced, of restoring to every one what he has lost. Deceived by his ministers, the Emperor Francis has, with his own hand, written to our illustrious general to pause in a career of conquest of which the very rapidity fills him with alarm."†

In the summer of 1799, by insisting that no operations were to be undertaken against the Army of Italy until Mantua and other places were reduced, the Aulic Council had thwarted Suwarroff's scheme for completing Moreau's overthrow. The Russian commander-in-chief's plan consisted in blockading, and nothing more, the principal fortresses the French still held in Italy, so as to be able to follow with overwhelming forces the army of the Republic, at that moment in retreat, and to drive it over the Maritime Alps. Austria was evidently jealous of having to share the conquest of Italy with a powerful ally, whilst the pride of the Russians was hurt at beholding their most renowned commander held subject to the orders of the Aulic Council, a body which was all in favour of a slow and methodical system of warfare.

* Alison, "History of Europe," vol. v. p. 63.

† An essential requirement in war is singleness of direction; alliances generally lead to friction. The idea that a common interest binds the two nations is illusory. Differences of opinion soon crop up, and are apt to mar concerted operations. The *entente cordiale* is not lasting, it is a myth. The desire to obtain the lead in the command, jealousy, national prejudices, etc., are all against it.

Looking at this conflicting state of ideas, how was a cordial co-operation of the allied troops possible? Things went from bad to worse, until there was a separation of the Russian from the Austrian forces, both in Italy and in Switzerland. In point of fact, their mortifying defeat at Zurich had greatly irritated the Russians. Suwarroff abruptly stopped all further discussion by declaring angrily that his troops were unfitted for mountain warfare, and much in need of rest. He would not listen to the Archduke's representations, and churlishly rejected all proposals for a personal interview.

Bonaparte possibly had become aware of this unsatisfactory state of things, and foresaw how very advantageous it would be for France if he could succeed in detaching Russia from Austria, and put an end to their dangerous alliance. He devised means for conciliating the Czar, and to pave the way sent back to Russia 5000 or 6000 Russian prisoners who had been captured at Zurich and in Holland; and not only did he forbear to demand an exchange, but he had the Russians freshly equipped.* This act of generosity, added to the misunderstanding existing between Suwarroff and the Austrian generals, had the result of making the Czar hold aloof from the coalition.

He was much exasperated with George III. for various reasons. One was that the Russian soldiers included in the capitulation of Alkmaar were coolly received when conveyed to England, and afterwards as good as imprisoned in the island of Guernsey. Another was that the king would not comply with his whimsical demand for the surrender of Malta, and his own recognition as Grand Master of the Order of Malta. The English, besides, had laid siege to the place, and this caused him great offence. He was ready to accuse England of treachery.†

The Emperor Francis furnished other causes of complaint. Not only was he fully determined to retain all Northern Italy,

* When returning from Marengo, the First Consul passed through Sens, where a large number of Russian prisoners were confined. These unfortunates were in a pitiable state. Bonaparte had a sum of money distributed amongst them, and promised that their lot would speedily change. In this he kept his word.

† The Czar had been elected Grand Master of the Order of Malta in October, 1798, but Nelson held that the King of Naples was the legitimate sovereign of the island. England, in any case, did not like Malta to pass into the hands of either the French or the Russians, considering it very necessary for her communications with India.

but he was against the re-establishment of the House of Savoy and the reinstatement of Charles Emanuel IV.*

What annoyed the Czar greatly were the sufferings of his army whilst transferred from Italy to Switzerland in the latter part of the previous year, the utter want of preparation which led to one long disaster, and to Suwarroff's retreat into Bavaria. Again, when Ancona fell before the attack of the combined Austrian, Russian, and Turkish forces, the Russian standard had been hauled down, and only the Austrian left flying.

The Czar Paul, in short, had become dissatisfied with the politics of Austria and England. The flower of his army had perished in Italy, fighting under Suwarroff, in Switzerland under Korsakoff, and in Holland under Hermann. The old and new pretensions of England regarding the navigation of neutrals had day by day added to his discontent. He now imagined that he detected a new era in the measures introduced by the French Government since the 18th Brumaire. His hatred of the Revolution abated; and, added to all this, a certain personal admiration for the character of the First Consul led to his ordering his armies to recross the Vistula.†

The Archduke Charles makes some sound observations on the hapless result of coalitions. He says: "The alliance between Austria and Russia came to be broken, as occurs with

* Charles Emanuel IV. came to the throne at an evil moment in October, 1796. His predecessor, who had obstinately entrusted his armies to the care of very aged officers, had lost all Savoy and the county of Nice. Embued with great hatred for the French Revolutionists, Charles Emanuel contracted a very close alliance with Austria. To keep a portion of his territory, he had been compelled in 1797 to make a treaty with France. Notwithstanding this treaty, the French instigated the Republican party in Piedmont. Joubert, on the plea that the king had not furnished the contingent of 9000 men he was bound to provide by virtue of this offensive and defensive treaty with France, and on account of his refusal to give up the arsenal, seized all the principal towns of the kingdom. It was then that Charles Emanuel IV. retired with his family to Cagliari.

When Suwarroff took possession of Turin, one of his first acts was to send Count di Giffenga to Cagliari to induce the king to return to Piedmont; but the king made no move. Had it not been for Russia and England, Austria would have taken possession of Piedmont, but she was forced to moderate her views, limiting her ambition to the possession of Tortona and Alessandria, which in past times had been wrested from the Milanese by the sovereigns of Savoy, and which she claimed had to return to Austria.

† Paul soon lost Suwarroff, that commander who had the reputation of being invincible. Shortly after his arrival at St. Petersburg he fell under the displeasure of the emperor; that and vexation for the loss of his reputation for invincibility hastened his end.

most coalitions founded on the computations of powers equal in forces. The idea of a common advantage, the prestige of a confidence which rests on identical opinions, prepare the way for the first advances; the difference of opinion with regard to the means for attaining the common end sows the seed of misunderstanding, and this perfidious feeling goes on increasing in proportion as the events alter the point of view, disconcert the objects, and deceive the expectations. In the end it breaks out just when the independent armies should be acting together. The very natural desire to obtain pre-eminence in success as well as in glory, rouses the rival passions of the chiefs of nations. Pride, jealousy, tenaciousness, and presumption are born from the contention between ambition and conflicting opinions. Endless contradictions keep irritating more and more, and it is a fortunate accident when a union of this kind is dissolved without the two sides taking up arms against one another."

All these irritating matters led to the Czar withdrawing from the coalition in December, 1799. The discord between the allies can be reckoned as one of the fortunate circumstances which favoured Bonaparte in his campaign. The egoistic and covetous policy of Austria led to it. Rather than restore the lost provinces to the princes who had been driven out, Austria hoisted everywhere the yellow and black flag, and in place of recalling the rightful sovereigns made herself mistress of their states.

Bonaparte had detected his opportunity, and at once commenced by flattering attentions to gain Paul's favour. He lost no chance for cultivating a good understanding with the capricious Czar, and was so adroit in his acts that at length he succeeded in establishing a perfect understanding between the two Governments. Paul, who had been dazzled by the brilliancy of Bonaparte's victories in Italy and in Egypt, remained up to the day of his murder his most ardent admirer. He wrote to him a flattering letter—

"CITIZEN CONSUL,

"I do not write to you to discuss 'the Rights of Man;' these are the abstractions of your Revolution. I confine myself to a fact, that when a great nation has placed at its head an estimable man, of distinguished merit, it has a Government; and I address myself to you because we can understand each

other, and I can treat with you. I wish to unite with you to put an end to the injustice of England, who violates every article of the law of nations, and has no guide but her egotism and interest."

The friendship of the Czar was flattering to Bonaparte, being the homage of a sovereign; but, on account of the peculiar characteristics of that monarch, less valuable in a political point of view.

The withdrawal of the Russians from the war was a great disappointment to Austria and to Great Britain, for those two powers had derived very efficient assistance from the Russian troops in the past campaign.*

Notwithstanding the secession of the Russians and the retirement from the army of the Archduke Charles, whose views about the prosecution of the war were not in unison with

* On the night between the 23rd and 24th of March, 1801, the Czar, at the age of forty-six, was brutally murdered in the Michael Palace. A conspiracy, numbering sixty members, had been formed to dethrone him, as latterly his actions had been so extravagant as to have given rise to a very general belief that he laboured under a certain degree of insanity. It was said that the intention was simply to dethrone the Czar without depriving him of his life, but the brutality shown in the sequel proved that the conspirators were prepared to go any length. A portion of the conspirators, led by General Benningsen, who took a leading share in the execution of the plot, presented themselves before the door of the Czar's apartments and demanded admittance. A trusty Cossack, who slept there, having refused to let them pass, the conspirators set on the faithful and unfortunate soldier, and after a desperate resistance he was despatched.

Paul, who was in bed, startled by the noise, tried to escape to the empress's apartments, but he had forgotten that by his own orders the door of communication had been closed up. He then concealed himself in a press. The conspirators, having broken the door open and searched everywhere, eventually found him out, and dragged him from his hiding-place. They presented him with a paper containing his abdication, which he first refused to sign. At last he consented to abdicate, if the conspirators would consent to release him, but, fearing a rescue, they seized him, knocked him down, and tried to suffocate him. The Czar was making a desperate resistance, when one of the conspirators despatched him by stamping his heel into his eye, thus beating his brains out, while others held him down. Another version of the murder is that Paul was strangled with an officer's sash after a desperate struggle, but that before this was accomplished his brain had been nearly beaten out with the pommel of a sword.

Paul undid in the evening what he had done in the morning; raised one and crushed the other, without any one knowing why. He was described in three words, *Order, counter-order, disorder*. Countess Potoka writes of him, "To say the truth, Paul's tyranny and his extravagances, which partook of cruelty in a certain measure, justified those who, having failed to force his abdication, found themselves obliged to take his life." A strange justification for murder, surely, especially

those of Thugut and the English party in Vienna, Austria, proud of the successes gained in the preceding campaign, and relying on its superb army, which numbered 200,000 combatants, resolved to continue the war.

By a treaty signed on the 16th of March, the Elector of Bavaria agreed to put 12,000 men in the pay of England to be employed in the war. The Elector of Mayence and the Duke of Würtemberg each agreed to furnish 6000 men under the same conditions. On the 20th of June of the same year Great Britain and Austria made a very important treaty, binding themselves not to make a separate peace; each power covenanting to obtain the consent of the other. The emperor agreed to raise his forces in Germany and Italy to the greatest possible strength; England engaged to advance a subsidy of two millions sterling, and to augment as much as possible the German and Swiss troops in the British pay in the German campaign.

Notwithstanding the flattering promises Bonaparte made to Prussia, she refused to become his ally. However, she promised to remain neutral, and to induce many of the minor German states to follow her policy.

There were two theatres of war, one in Germany in the countries of the Rhine and Danube, the other in Italy in the valley of the Po. On the first, the Austrians had concentrated under the command of Baron Kray an army of over 112,000 men, with a fine proportion of cavalry and well found in artillery. In Italy, another army was commanded by the veteran Melas, somewhat superior in numbers, and composed of tried soldiers rendered confident by the victories of the previous year. The army in Italy was supported by an English fleet, which was cruising about the gulf of Genova.

murder attended by a ferocity which was hardly to be expected considering the rank of the conspirators.

Bonaparte evidently at first did not know what was the manner of the Czar's death, for he writes to his brother Joseph—

“ Paris, April 11, 1801.

“ The Emperor of Russia died on the night of the 24th of a stroke of apoplexy. I am so dreadfully afflicted by the death of a prince whom I highly esteemed that I can enter into no more details. He is succeeded by his eldest son, who has received the oaths of the army and of the capital.”

Bonaparte's insinuations that England had connived in the assassination of Paul I. were unworthy of him. Possibly they were prompted by the letter the Emperor Alexander wrote to the King of England, expressing his earnest desire to re-establish the amicable relations of the two countries.

It was at that time open to the Austrian Government to adopt one of the following plans. The Austrians could concentrate their principal forces in Swabia on the Lower Rhine, advance on that river, and, after having scored a first success, combine with a British army landed in Holland or in Belgium. The Austrian forces in Italy would in that case remain peacefully on the Po, ready to meet on the plains a French army which might have arrived with little cavalry and badly horsed artillery.

On the other hand, the Austrian forces might have remained on the defensive in Germany, and operated with their army in Liguria and on the Var. This latter was the plan that was adopted by the Austrians.

The Cabinet of Vienna were by this time nourishing vast and bold designs. The Austrian army under Kray in Germany was intended to maintain a strictly defensive attitude up to the moment when the French, recalled to their southern provinces by Melas's progress, would withdraw from the banks of the Rhine. Kray was then to seize the fortunate moment and carry the war into Switzerland and Alsace, pushing on, possibly, to the valley of the Saône to effect a junction with Melas in the plains of Burgundy. There the terrain was favourable for the development of their numerous cavalry, and their armies could act with much greater energy, as the country presented far less difficulties than were to be encountered in a mountainous region.

But what real prospects were there of these designs meeting with success? Their two armies were already too far from each other to admit of rendering mutual support in the coming operations, and would find themselves driven further asunder by the interposition of the greatest portion of the Republican forces.

Their army in Italy was intended to operate too far from the hereditary states on which it was naturally dependent for aid. Neither could it go to Kray's assistance should he fare badly in the coming conflict.

The initiative in the operations was to be left to their army in Italy, which the previous year's victories, those of the Trebbia and of Novi, had led to the foot of the Apennines. That army, aided by the British fleet, was to blockade and capture Genova, advance on the Var, and march on Toulon. At

Toulon it was not only to be joined by the British fleet, but by a body of British soldiers coming from Mahon,* and also by a number of French emigrants. It was, moreover, thought possible to endeavour to profit from the restlessness of the *Chouannerie*, which was again commencing to make itself felt in the southern provinces of France.

The Austrians were led to assume the offensive in Italy by certain plausible considerations, the principal of which appears to have been the great difference in the numbers of the opposing forces. The 116,000 men the Austrians had in that country could well cope with Massena's army, which was known to be very weak. To this should be added the promised co-operation of the British fleet. The disastrous result of the battles fought the previous year had likewise been taken into account, as being likely to have lowered the self-confidence and *morale* of the French army.

To all this should be added that the Aulic Council steadily derided such a thing as the existence of an Army of Reserve. Even after it had received notice of the destination of the same army, it paid not the least attention to this warning. All the bombast regarding its formation so loudly trumpeted in the *Moniteur* was taken to be nothing beyond a ridiculous invention, originated to frighten Melas and to divert him from his bold designs for an invasion of France. The real formation of this army had been so carefully concealed that for a time even in France no one would believe in its existence. Thugut enjoined Melas not to place the slightest faith in the so-called Army of Reserve, and to consider it a pure fabrication.

The Aulic Council also shared the common belief that the strength of France was exhausted, and that the allies would

* A despatch from Downing Street of the 8th of February, 1800, promised the Austrian Government a loan. Also that a body of from 15,000 to 20,000 British troops would be employed in the Mediterranean to act in concert with the Austrians in Upper Italy. It was understood that Sir Charles Stuart was to have commanded this contingent, but these expectations were disappointed by the arrival of intelligence that he had declined accepting the command. The disappointment of the troops on that occasion was considerably lessened by the happy choice as successor to their late commander-in-chief of Sir Ralph Abercromby, who arrived on the 22nd of June, 1800. The delays which occurred in the organization of this army rendered it useless as far as the plan of the allies was concerned. The victory of Marengo quite altered the situation before the British contingent was in a condition to be landed on the Continent. The following year it rendered a good account of itself in Egypt.

only have to engage in a war of invasion, certain that in the ensuing campaign the French would easily be brought to sue for terms.

Moreau's army was large, the Army of Italy was small, so it was possible for the Austrians to remain on the defensive in Germany and to hold the larger French army in check, whilst their superiority in numbers was made to tell in overcoming the French in Italy. Evidently the object of the allies was to compel the First Consul to weaken the Army of the Rhine by drawing off a certain amount of troops to cover the southern provinces of France. This would have enabled Kray to assume the offensive and enter into action. Had this plan been successful, France would have been invaded by two powerful armies, and left to the mercy of the invaders.

The Austrians were deceived by the great success of the former campaign, and little dreamt how great would be the change when a man of genius like Bonaparte assumed the direction of the operations. They had considered many things, but had omitted to take the most important into account. They forgot that the ruler of France was a general of the very first order, a real genius in war, a man who defied and overcame all obstacles.

Bonaparte had to be prepared for either eventuality, but finding the first alternative the more dangerous of the two, he posted an army of 140,000 men on the Rhine, and created an Army of Reserve. It was possible to employ the latter in two ways: it might either be told off to reinforce Moreau, and so enable him to outnumber Kray in Germany; or, by drafting a contingent from Moreau's army, strengthen with it the Army of Reserve sufficiently to enable it to act alone, cross the Alps, descend into Italy, and operate on Melas's rear.

Fortunately for Bonaparte, the Austrians played into his hands by remaining on the defensive in Germany. By doing this they gave him the opportunity of assuming the offensive and gaining some victories in the valley of the Danube which indirectly favoured the operations of the Army of Reserve in Italy.

Moreau wrote to the First Consul from Strasbourg on the 28th of February, 1800: "The offensive beyond the Alps leads to nothing particular. The emperor can neither hope for marked success on the Rhine on account of the strong places

which line that frontier, nor will he be able to collect an army as strong as ours with all the troops of the empire put together.

“He has caused some troops to pass over from here into Italy, where, in reality, his army was much reduced. But I repeat it, I believe he wants to capture Genova, and, after that, will be ready to make what conditions you like for Germany as long as you will let him enlarge himself in Italy.”

Alarmed by the result of the previous campaign, Austria renounced to dispute the possession of Switzerland, of that advanced position so precious for the French. Bulow argues that they should have attacked the French in that country, as the conquest of Genova was not so important by half. But Italy was the sole aim of Austria and the ardently coveted prize of the war.

The greatest error the Cabinet of Vienna committed in 1800 was to suppose that Italy was the quarter in which the decisive attack was to be made. The country about the Apennines and the Var was full of natural obstacles, and consequently easily defended, notwithstanding the numerical superiority of the Austrians. While dreaming of conquests on the Var and in Provence, Austria was quite blind to the danger which really menaced the empire in the valley of the Danube, the true avenue to the Austrian states. The Cabinet once committed to this plan, Bonaparte had the game in his hands, as long, naturally, as he could act with vigour.

Blind to their best interests, the Austrians, who had adopted the second alternative, were compelled to make their army in Italy a strong one, leaving the French numerically superior on the Rhine. Alison gives the Austrians 96,000 men in Piedmont, with 20,000 more in Venice, Lombardy, and Tuscany. In Germany he reckons they had 92,000 men—of which number 18,000 were excellent cavalry—and 400 guns. To this should be added 20,000 men furnished by Bavaria and some of the smaller German states subsidized by England.

Everything considered, it is very evident that it would have paid the Austrians better had they carried hostilities into French soil, and made France support the burden and miseries of the war.

At the head of the Austrian army in Italy was Melas, an officer of considerable experience and ability. But he was old,

and little competent to cope with the fiery and enterprising generals of the French Republic. He was also badly seconded.

Melas had commenced his military career during the Seven Years' War, fighting against the Prussians. Like the rest of the Austrian officers, he was strictly tied to traditions; his conceptions were made subordinate to certain rules, from which he never departed. He was systematically slow and without energy. His chief of the staff was Baron de Zach, an able officer, brisk, intelligent, and well versed in administration and tactical details.

In fighting qualities the Austrian troops were not to be at all compared with the French. Nothing, possibly, had demonstrated this point better than the continuous attacks on the outworks round Genova, when the Austrians, contending against a straitened and starving army, always lost more heavily than their adversaries.

When, in the first days of April, 1800, the campaign in Italy opened, the Austrian active troops amounted to 96,000 men. Melas had, however, made a poor disposition of his forces, and wasted his strength by scattering them injudiciously. Consequently, he was not able to put more than 60,000 men in the field. The French had no more than from 25,000 to 30,000, and occupied only Genova and the Littoral, with Oneglia and Nice. In Germany Austria had a numerous army, but the troops were scattered over an immense extent of country, from the sources of the Rhine up to the banks of the Maine. Kray, consequently, could only concentrate 45,000 men about the decisive point—the valley of the Danube. The French, on the other hand, could bring fully 75,000 men to compete with them.

Every salutary lesson which dearly bought experience had taught the Austrian commanders was fated to be wasted. Before the battle of the Trebbia the allies had in the field an army of 100,000 men; nevertheless they could hardly assemble 30,000 at any one point. Their troops were scattered over the plains of Italy, for the Aulic Council insisted in adhering to the old system of establishing a cordon of troops all over the territory which they occupied.

Chevalier Cavour, the great-uncle of Count Camillo Benso di Cavour, the able and faithful minister of King Victor Emanuel—a Piedmontese cavalry officer who was at Alessandria when

the battle of Marengo occurred—declares that all the faults committed by the Austrians in the wars in Italy were revived and heaped together in the single campaign of Marengo. “These faults were the outcome of disdainfulness, obstinacy, avidity, and ignorance; and their result the misfortune and desolation of Europe.”

Much of the dispersal of the Austrian forces was a consequence of the plan of operations adopted. The intended invasion of France by the line of the Var, carried too far from the base, and exposed in all its length to a flank attack from any French force which might issue from the Alps, was pregnant with risk. The plan might have answered at one time, but certainly not when the destinies of France were in the hands of such a pre-eminent master of the art of war. Possibly, even without Bonaparte being there, such an invasion might have collapsed from want of vigour, for the Austrian reinforcements had a very long march to make to join their army.

Melas is not to be entirely reproached for having disbelieved the existence of an Army of Reserve, after the most positive assurances on this point which he had received from the Aulic Council at Vienna. But he remained incredulous too long.* It was on the 13th of May that the first note of alarm reached him, that he received the first intimation that the Army of Reserve was moving in the direction of the Saint Bernard. He was on the point of crossing the Var and invading France when this news reached him. Still he did not believe it. He laughed when first told of it, and remarked that those who had seen this army must have looked through a magnifying-glass. How was it possible for an army at that early season of the year to cross the mighty Alps with cavalry and artillery? Nevertheless, as a precaution, he sent Generals Haddick and Palfy towards Turin, with orders to watch the issues of the valley of Aosta, if necessary.

News more and more pressing was arriving every day. At last Melas resolved to go back. He left Nice on the 20th, arrived at Cuneo on the 23rd, and continued *viâ* Sevigliano for Turin. He arrived at the last place on the 26th, to hear the unwelcome news of Haddick's defeat at Chiusella.

* It is related by Bonaparte himself that, to make sure of his presence with the army in Italy, Melas ordered an officer of his staff, who was personally acquainted with him, to go and confer with the First Consul under a flag of truce.

A general and well-understood principle enjoins, when the enemy manœuvres against your communications, to retaliate at once by manœuvring against his. It is evident that one cannot cause him greater embarrassment and injury than by going where he is not. At one moment, when Bonaparte marched from Ivrea to Milan, his position was critical, for an advance of the Austrians would have severed his communications before he had opened fresh ones by the Saint Gothard.

When surprised by the arrival of the Army of Reserve in Italy, the Austrians had no settled plan, and kept to a strict defensive against an enemy that, badly provided with artillery, weak in cavalry and wanting in munitions and supplies, had ventured into a vast basin studded with fortresses. The Austrian troops were made to march and to countermarch; the plans of to-day were upset on the morrow. Melas allowed himself to be hemmed in; to be deprived of all his communications, until matters got to such a point that he felt bound to venture Austrian supremacy in Italy upon the doubtful issue of a battle.

Melas would have done better had he at once withdrawn all his troops from Piedmont, from the Var, and from Genova, and directed them by forced marches on Piacenza. This could have been done in time had not a moment been lost. After he left Genova, Ott was very near reaching Piacenza before the French. What immense difference a few hours make in military operations! Had Ott complied with Melas's orders on their first arrival he would have been at Piacenza to contest the crossing of the Po on the 6th of June.

The essential point, when the news that the Army of Reserve had entered Piedmont had been received, was to concentrate every possible detachment. To do so at Alessandria was questionable, owing to the distance. The concentration should have been carried out further to the east, at Piacenza, where Vukassevich could have come. What was to be gained by his being left to cover Milan? It could have only brought about small fights in which good soldiers would have been lost to no purpose. Was it not better to gather all the forces, to be strong at some point, ready to deliver a good blow?

CHAPTER V.

MASSENA'S OPERATIONS IN LIGURIA.

Massena's early career—Destitute state of the Army of Italy—Massena reaches Genova—Insufficient troops, and bad disposition of the Genovese—Orders for the division commanders to concentrate—Bonaparte recommends not to occupy too extended a line—How circumstances prevented his doing so—Austrians delay commencing the operations—Melas attacked on the 6th of April—Separates Suchet from Massena—Ott expels the French from Monte Faccio—Massena recovers the position on the 7th—Operates outside Genova to recover communications with Suchet—Operations in the Ligurian hills for two weeks—Soult fails to gain possession of Ponte Ivrea—French forces retire on Voltri—Melas fails to cut them off from Genova—Genova blockaded—Ott invests it with 25,000 men—Serious difficulties of supply—Ott makes a general attack on the 30th of April—Massena attacks the heights of Coronata, and is driven back with heavy loss—Attacks Monte Creto, baffled by a storm—Soult wounded and captured—Internal discontent—Massena's heroic determination—Franceschi's mission to Bonaparte—Returns and brings back news of the Army of Reserve—False rumours of the approach of the Army of Reserve—Massena is invited to a parley—Compelled to lend an ear to the proposal of the allies—Conceives a plan for cutting his way through—Ott very keen to remain before Genova till Massena capitulates—Massena accedes to an evacuation of the city.

In the year 1800 the destinies of France rested in the hands of three of her most able generals, Bonaparte, Moreau, and Massena. Of the two last, Moreau was eminent above all others for wisdom and the soundness of his combinations; Massena possessed incomparable seduction, and inspiration in the heat of the combat.

Massena was born at Turbia, in the principality of Monaco, on the 6th of May, 1758. This eminent warrior, though of low extraction, had a most brilliant career. He worked as a sailor for four years. At the age of seventeen he quitted the marine and joined the Royal Italian Regiment, in which he served for a period of fourteen years, attaining the rank of adjutant under officer. That was the highest post he could obtain; there was no further advancement to satisfy his ambition open to him in the Sardinian army.

In the early days of the French Revolution, on the 1st of February, 1792, he joined the second battalion of the National Guards of the Var as adjutant, and speedily rose to high rank.

In his long conversations at Saint Helena, Napoleon said with regard to Massena that he was a "general endowed with a rare courage and remarkable tenacity, whose talent augmented with the greatness of the danger; who, when overcome, was always ready to begin afresh as if he had not been vanquished."

Massena was one of the most artful of Italians, and the foremost amongst Napoleon's marshals. He was a general of real genuine ability, and before his unsuccessful campaign in Portugal was in France deemed equal to Napoleon as a general, and by not a few held to be even Napoleon's superior. He was a real leader of men—that is, he had the gift of rousing his soldiers to great exertions when everything conspired against him, when the circumstances were so disastrous as to cast the whole of the army into gloom and despair. He had the power of infusing in his men his determination not to be beaten; he could make them believe thoroughly in their superiority over the enemy.

After Jourdan's defeat at Stokach on the 25th of March, 1799, Massena had been appointed to the chief command of the French forces in Switzerland. There he had to contend with serious difficulties, nevertheless he held his ground stoutly against the Archduke Charles. At Zurich, on the 25th of September, he gained a brilliant victory over the Russians, and averted from France all danger of invasion.

Bonaparte, who had a genius for understanding men, and was well acquainted with Massena's ability and spirit, recalled him from Switzerland and confided to him the supreme command of the Army of Italy. Having been born in the Riviera, and having taken part in the campaigns of 1795 and 1796, Massena was well acquainted with the Ligurian coast and with the issues from the Apennines. He was, moreover, the fittest officer for command in mountain warfare, in which he had quite recently shown signal ability.

It must be confessed that the command of the Army of Italy was poor recognition for Massena. He was compelled to quit victorious troops, to assume the command of a few thousand men scattered over the hills around Genova, to command an

army in which misery and disorganization held supreme sway ; an army without supplies, magazines, or money.*

On the 3rd of November, Joubert, in assuming the command of this army, wrote to the Directory : "I have the honour to inform you, citizens Directors, that General Brune has left me the Army of Italy in as good a state as circumstances permitted." But the citizens Directors were famous for bringing any army to ruin ; so when Massena arrived to take command of the Army of Italy he found but a shadow of an army. The troops were unpaid, their uniforms worn to shreds, themselves bare-footed and dying of starvation or from epidemic brought about by continuous privations. His predecessor, General Championnet, was so overcome by grief in having to behold the privations which his soldiers had to endure that he sickened and died † of an epidemic which broke out amongst the troops ; a last scourge of an army once so flourishing and splendid. With his death had disappeared what little remained of self-respect in the army. When Massena took over the command of the French troops, nothing could equal their state of destitution. Everything at that moment forebode inevitable disasters. On every side it was impossible to avoid seeing the germs of disorganization and death. There were no chiefs and no discipline. The officers quitted their posts, the soldiers broke and sold their arms. Marbot, who served with this army, writes : "The troops were unpaid, almost unclad and unshod, receiving only quarter rations, and dying of starvation or epidemic sickness, the result of privations. The hospitals were full, and medicines were lacking. Bands of soldiers, even whole regiments, were every day quitting their posts, and making for the bridge over the Var. They forced their way into France, and scattered about Provence, declaring themselves ready to return to their duty at once if they were only fed. The generals had no power against such a mass of misery ; every day their discouragement grew deeper, and they were all asking for leave, or resigning on the ground of illness." ‡

* Massena's ill success in Portugal arose from the same causes. He experienced immense difficulties in getting provisions. He had to advance through a deserted country, where everything which the inhabitants could not carry away was delivered to the flames. This was the principal cause which compelled him to abandon his enterprise and to withdraw into Spain.

† Championnet died on the 22nd of December, 1799.

‡ "Mémoires de Baron de Marbot," vol. i. p. 66.

The venality, avarice, and fraudulent embezzlements of the Directory were conspicuous. They always managed to neglect their troops. The utter carelessness they showed in the maintenance of their armies in the field was the subject of Bonaparte's first proclamation to the Army of Italy in 1796. In 1799, for want of food, many brave soldiers, the heroes of Lodi and Arcole, the conquerors of Castiglione and Rivoli, were driven by starvation to beg on the roads of the Apennines. Some even went to a greater length, and affiliated themselves to bands of brigands, to procure for themselves the simple necessaries of life, which their Government made no efforts to give them.

The troops were for the most part in a miserable condition. The disasters of the previous campaign had depressed their spirits. The artillery was in a bad state, the cavalry was much in need of remounts.

An officer who was with the army describes in the following words the appearance of the troops at that time: "The soldiers, pale, languid, disfigured, starving, naked, discouraged, and dejected, presented the appearance of so many miserable spectres. The streets were covered with the dying and with corpses; and such of the former as succeeded in crawling as far as a hospital found themselves in worse conditions, without straw, without the least morsel of food, without attendance of any kind—a berth on the stony cold floor, and in the midst of filthy corpses (for latterly in many hospitals the dead were buried very late). There they met with a death more ready, more cruel, and more certain than if they had remained in the unhealthy fields, or on the roads they had quitted."

Massena made a great sacrifice in accepting the command of this unhappy Army of Italy. He well knew the sad condition that army was in, and how the Government could do next to nothing for it. Nevertheless, he went to Paris, and did not quit the capital until he had made sure of being given such articles of primary need as he knew for a certainty would be required by the army now placed under his command. Always keeping in view the requirements of that army, when passing through Lyons and Marseilles, on his way to join it, he took measures to obtain provisions, clothing, horses, etc. All the way down, as he passed by Toulon, Fréjus, Antibes, and Nice, he worked hard to see how he could put a term to the disgraceful desertion which he believed to be the outcome of the privations and

sufferings to which the soldiers had for a long time been subject.

When discipline is lost, it is with difficulty that it can be restored. The primary source of all the trouble was the neglect paid to the proper maintenance of the troops. Still, a very unsoldierlike spirit had more or less seized hold of all ranks. This had to be repressed with a strong hand. Massena punished the deserters severely, shot a few of their principal leaders, degraded and expelled such officers as had secretly connived at this disgraceful abandonment of their posts. His firm rule soon had the desired effect. It inspired confidence throughout the ranks, for the soldiers, always ready to obey an officer with a high reputation and a name, soon regained all their habits of obedience and self-respect.

Massena reached Genova on the 20th Pluviôse (10th of February). There he was soon to make himself a glorious name. His obstinate courage and the superhuman efforts he made to hold that place had very important consequences, for the entrance of the Army of Reserve into Italy might have become a serious task indeed had the Austrians been free to meet the French as they issued from the valley of Aosta.

From the Col di Tenda, where the mountains make their great bend to the northwards, near the sources of the Tanaro, a vast range branches off from the Alps. This, known as the Apennines, forms after a time the watershed between the Mediterranean and the Adriatic. This great range, as it runs inland for a considerable extent to the extremity of Calabria, bears different names, which have been given to its different sections by modern geographers. The section known under the name of Ligurian Apennines overhangs the gulf of Genova in the immediate vicinity of the sea.

“The majority of the chief towns of Italy,” George states, “owe their importance very largely to their geographical position, while one or two are conspicuous exceptions to the general rule that geographical considerations mainly determine which seats of human habitation shall grow in importance. It was inevitable that a large maritime town should grow up somewhere on the strip of coast between the Apennines and the Western sea which alone gives access to Italy without the necessity of crossing a mountain-chain. That Genova should be the place was decided by two facts, that it possesses a pretty

good harbour, and that the easiest route across the Apennines into the basin of the Po starts from thence."*

The city of Genova is the chief commercial seaport of Italy. Vessels of the largest class can enter inside the harbour, and, notwithstanding the heavy swells occasioned by the south-west wind (the Libeccio), the harbour is remarkably safe. But the series of moles and piers which protect the harbour were constructed long after the Austrians besieged the city in 1800. As one of the first commercial ports in the Mediterranean, Genova is a formidable rival to Marseilles.

The people possess all the qualities of a commercial and maritime community, and had been long remarkable for a spirit of enterprise and freedom, which strongly characterized the period of the ancient Republic.

Some hold that the name of the city was formerly *Genua*, being probably a corruption of *Janua* (a gate), to indicate that it was the gate of Northern Italy. Others declare that its name was derived from the fact that the shape of the coast here resembles that of a knee (*genu*).

The city presents a very imposing appearance when beheld from the sea.

"Ecco l'vediam la maestosa immensa
Città, che al mar le sponde, il dorso ai monti
Occupata tutta, e tutta a cherchio adorna."

Bettinelli.

Genova had participated in the Crusades, and secured to herself a busy trade in the Levant. She once possessed colonies at Constantinople, in the Crimea, in Syria and Cyprus; and the rivalry of the Genovese and Venetians was a fruitful source of war.

The Genovese are proud of claiming Columbus, the discoverer of America, as a native of their city, though it is contended that he saw light first, not in the city of Genova, but somewhere in the neighbourhood. Tradition points to the village of Cogoletto as being Columbus's birthplace, but Savona also lays claim to that honour. In any case, proud as the Italians are of Columbus, they took no part whatever in his voyages.

The Genovese have a greater right of being proud of the famous Andrea Doria, who in 1528 freed his country from foreign invaders and restored to Genova republican institutions.

* H. B. George, "The Relations of Geography and History," p. 196.

Doria was offered the ducal authority for life, and there is no doubt that he might have acquired the absolute authority, all of which he refused. However, in 1797, the people put an end to Doria's constitution, and, not satisfied with this, an excited mob burnt the Golden Book and destroyed the statue of the greatest hero of Genovese liberty—a barbarous act, which caused great displeasure to Bonaparte.

It will not be considered irrelevant here to narrate how the general's first acquaintance with the Republic of Genova was fraught with important consequences.

In July, 1794, Bonaparte was sent by the representatives of the Convention upon a secret mission to Genova. At that time the younger Robespierre was in supreme command at Toulon. He had conceived a very high admiration for Bonaparte, and urged him to throw over his mission to Genova and to accompany him to Paris, where he was returning to support his brother. He offered him the command of the National Guard, to supersede Heriot, of whose capacity the Committee of Public Safety had become somewhat doubtful.

To his brothers, who strongly recommended him to close with the offer, Bonaparte replied: "I will not accept it: this is not a time to play the enthusiast; it is no easy matter to save your head in Paris. Robespierre the younger is an honourable man, but his brother is no trifle; if I went to Paris, I should be obliged to serve under him. Me serve such a man! Never. I am not ignorant of the service I might be in replacing the imbecile commander of the National Guard of Paris, but I do not choose to do so; this is not the time for engaging in such an undertaking. What could I do in that huge galley? At present there is no honourable place for me but the army; but have patience: the time is coming when I shall rule Paris." *

His defence of Genova will always be reckoned as the most brilliant part of Massena's illustrious career. And not without good reason; for when we take into account the wretched state of the garrison, the epidemics and sickness, the serious discontent of the population, caused by the stoppage of their business and occupation, as well as by starvation and death, it seems miraculous that he managed to hold out as long as he did. His supreme contempt for his adversaries, the result of

* Alison, "History of Europe," vol. iv. chap. xx.

the several victories he had gained over the Austrians, was shown in the words he spoke to Lord Keith: "Give me some provisions, and none of these gentlemen, I declare, will ever set foot in Genova."* He disdained the idea of a capitulation; but he had to bow before necessity, for he had to keep his troops alive. The enemy never succeeded in subduing him.

In place of an army of 60,000 men which he was told he would have under his orders, there were not more than 30,000 men between Mont Cenis and Genova on whom he could count. On the 28th Nivôse (7th of January) we find Massena writing to the minister of war on this point: "You have no real knowledge of the actual strength of this corps, for it is very far from what it is shown in the returns which you gave me in Paris."

Having received some slight reinforcements, reorganized his army, and re-established some measure of order and system of provisioning, Massena was ready to confront the Austrians. He was to present a stubborn front to the enemy for two months, and, though he fought fiercely, a starving army and a starving city proved the most redoubtable enemies he had to contend against.

At the end of the eighteenth century, Genova was the only important place which remained to the French in Italy. After the disasters of the past campaign, the residue of the Army of Italy was left to defend that noble city. The Aulic Council attached great importance to its capture, more so as all the odds were dead against the French. Had fortune befriended her, Austria would have become mistress of the whole of Italy. She would then have regained her former positions on the Maritime Alps, would have been in a position to attack Switzerland, or reinforce her army on the Rhine.

Austria undertook the conquest of Genova by enlisting everything in her favour, and in this was much aided by fortune. The French, on the other hand, had to contend against an enemy three times as numerous, and were doomed to play a passive rôle so as to insure a full success in other points. To make up for inferior numbers and scanty resources, they had only genius and valour. Not only were they in inferior numbers and in straitened circumstances, but a large and influential part of the inhabitants were strongly attached to the cause of the Imperialists, and did

* Crossard, who inspected the city, felt convinced of the difficulties which an attack by main force or by escalade would have experienced. To hold the city, it only needed supplies and troops for manning the extent of its defences.

not cease to be a source of serious embarrassment to the general. The working classes who had lost their occupation, owing to the blockade established by the English fleet, were also seriously disaffected.

Writing to Bonaparte on the 28th of February, 1800, and expressing his opinion that the Emperor of Austria was seriously bent on capturing Genoa, Moreau says: "If General Massena has organized his army, with a little skill and plenty of vigour he can save the place." Well did the rugged warrior play his part in the great war of 1800, fighting desperately amid famine and death all through two wearisome months, striving by all he knew to subdue the despondency of his officers and men. History has few examples of a more stubbornly contested struggle than Massena's defence of Genoa. He was enjoined to offer a stubborn defence, and to occupy and detain the enemy as long as possible, so as to facilitate the offensive enterprises of the other two armies. He did what had been prescribed to him, and with most consummate ability.

The principal passes which lead from Piedmont to the shores of the Mediterranean are three in number—the Col di Tenda, Cadibona, and Bocchetta. All are practicable for artillery. Operating by the first, the Austrians would have left nearly the whole of the Army of Italy on their flank, they would have missed their special object, which was to divide it, and were, besides, liable to encounter more obstacles and to run greater risks. Advancing by the Bocchetta, the entire French army would be found concentrated on their front, and they would have secured no advantage whatever from their position. That of Cadibona alone offered, without incurring any risk, every possible advantage. If in the end the most was not made of these advantages, the reason can be found in the slowness of the Austrian movements.

Massena had given the most minute instructions to his subordinates, who were enjoined to concentrate their divisions at the first aggressive attempt the enemy should make. Genoa, the too-evident objective point of the allies, was indicated as the rendezvous of the three divisions of the right wing.

From the 5th to the 12th of March, Bonaparte had written to Massena several letters full of forethought. He had, in a special way, recommended him not to occupy too extended a line, to keep four-fifths of his troops in Genoa, and to occupy

the Alps, Nice, with its surrounding forts, and the Col di Tenda with detachments. The Austrians, he believed, would issue from the passes on the French right in the neighbourhood of Genova, or on the centre in the direction of Savona, if not from both points at the same time. Massena was recommended to avoid one of these attacks, and to throw himself with all his forces on the enemy on the other. The ground would not permit Melas to draw any advantage from his superiority in artillery and cavalry. Bonaparte considered that a clever manœuvrer in a country like Liguria could beat 60,000 men with one-half that number. He ends one of the letters by reminding Massena that his opponent, Melas, being inferior to him in activity and talents, there is no cause for being afraid of him. He will not dare to go far, with Massena in Liguria, ready to fall on his rear or on the Austrian troops left in Piedmont.

In the beginning of March, Admiral Lord Keith established a blockade of the harbour of Genova. On the 5th of April following the entire British fleet cast anchor before that city, and cut off every means of communication by sea.

Massena had been deceived by the apparent immobility of the Austrians, and had come to believe that their troops, like his own, had been seriously weakened by the effect of contagious diseases. But at the commencement of April, the concentration and movements of troops which had been taking place for the last ten days, and the frequent reconnaissances made all along their front, left no longer any doubt in the mind of the French that an attack was imminent. This surmise was strengthened by the intelligence brought in that the Austrians had established magazines in different localities. Massena, however, did not expect to be attacked yet for another fortnight, and was very busy collecting supplies and ammunition.

Melas was very keen to secure the assistance of the population. He accordingly, on the 5th of April, issued from Acqui a proclamation to the Ligurians. In this he announced that he was about to reconquer their country, and called on all patriots to rise *en masse* against the French.

All of a sudden an order was issued for all the Austrian corps to concentrate at their headquarters. All were put in motion together, and by well-combined marches directed on the localities they were to occupy in the plan of operations sketched out.

Melas himself transferred his headquarters first from Turin

to Alessandria, and later on to Acqui. The greater portion of his forces had assembled in the valley of the Bormida. On the 5th of April he went from Acqui to Cairo, and thence to Carcare, Malale, and Cadibona. His intention was to cut the French line of defence in twain as near as possible to Genova, with the object of isolating Massena, and then, with the co-operation of the British fleet, to starve him out. If he succeeded in doing this, nothing would be left to Massena but to surrender the city. By this manœuvre the French left wing would be entirely separated from the rest of the army; and, as Suchet would find it impossible to feed his troops in the Riviera di Ponente, he would find himself compelled to retire behind the Var, in order to avoid the risk of being cut off from France. Melas's scheme was calculated to see the speedy evacuation of the Genovese territory by the French.

Massena occupied a very extended line of operations; with the left at Finale, under Suchet, 12,000 strong; the centre (12,000 more) at Cadibona and Bocchetta, under Soult; the reserve (2200 men) under his own command at Genova; and Miollis, with his division, on the right at Recco and Torriglia.

He had a difficult question before him: Was it best to make the Army of Italy depend entirely on France, or to abandon his communications with France, and make Genova his pivot of operations? It was open to him, in the first case, to provide Genova with a garrison of 7000 or 8000 men, keeping the rest of his troops concentrated between Savona and Finale; in the second alternative he could hold in hand some 30,000 men, with the left at Savona, and the right at Genova ready to confront the Austrians. The latter arrangement recommended itself only if he could make sure of collecting in Genova sufficient provisions for the subsistence of his army.

Massena did not follow either of these alternatives. With 30,000 troops he occupied a line 50 leagues in extent from the Col di Tenda on the left to the gulf of Levante on the right. This was a long and narrow strip of land, extending parallel to the sea and three leagues in breadth, having one single line of communication with the base which ran parallel to its front. It was a dangerous position, being easy to be overcome at any one point. Indeed, it was one of the many fortuitous circumstances of this campaign that all the danger of this position turned in favour of the French. It was not from option that Massena

occupied it. He was in a certain way compelled to do so, for either of the two alternatives mentioned above hardly satisfied the requirements of the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed.

The operations sketched out by General Zach, and fixed to commence on the 27th of February, were adjourned. The Austrians were deterred by a heavy fall of snow which occurred on the 13th of February, and began to be alarmed lest the ships which were to come from Leghorn with provisions for the Austrian army might not be able to reach Savona in time. For these reasons the execution of the plan was put back for six weeks—a fatal delay, which in the end brought about the loss of their possessions in Italy.

Jomini, with very good reason, observes that circumspection was the favourite virtue of the Austrians. There is no doubt that all through this campaign lack of enterprise was equally conspicuous.

The Austrian staff were fully acquainted with the feebleness of the French troops. Reports of their misery and of their state of disorganization had reached the headquarters of the Austrian army. Melas, who after the fall of Coni had spread out his troops over Piedmont, Lombardy, Tuscany, and the Romagna, to get them to recover from the hardships of the past campaign and to repair their *matériel*, had fully restored the efficiency of his men. The disparity in the condition of the two armies was such that when the Austrian forces were ready for the contest it was a great blunder to give time to the adversary. And what made the adjournment more strange was that there were already rumours about of large forces being assembled by the French in the Valais to come in aid of the Army of Italy.

Had the Austrians commenced operations only a fortnight earlier, which was not at all impossible, they might have overcome Massena, and had plenty of troops at their disposal for confronting Bonaparte as he issued from the valley of Aosta.

Melas commenced the campaign by making his appearance simultaneously before Genova and Savona. His plan was very ably conceived, and the attacks were well combined.

His preparations were so ably concealed that Massena had not the least notion of what was about to happen. To distract his attention from the principal point, Ott had been directed to make a threatening demonstration against the extreme French right on the 5th.

On the 6th, the entire French line was attacked by a number of columns, and the contest was carried out from Nervi to San Giacomo.

In the operations of the 6th of April, Ott, who commanded the Austrian left wing, had 15,000 men. He issued from the valley of the Trebbia, and was directed to move on Monte Cornua, attack the forts on Monte Faccio, and operate against the French right. Hohenzollern, at the head of other 10,000 men, was to endeavour to force the Bocchetta pass. Melas, with the centre, consisting of three divisions, 25,000 men, was to advance by the valley of the Bormida, and make for Savona by way of Altare and Cadibona; his object, as we have said, being to separate the French left wing from the rest of the army. Elsnitz, who commanded the Austrian right, and Morzin, with two more divisions computed at 18,000 men, were to attack the French left at Monte San Giacomo's intrenchments, and to assist in making the telling movement of the centre a success.

Palfy, with a division, commenced by attacking the fortified position of Cadibona. He moved to the attack, passing by Altare and Torre, whilst General Saint Julien, at the head of his brigade, moved on Sassello and Montenotte with the object of supporting the attack. Gardanne, with 4000 men, was in position at Stella, Santo Bernardone, Madonna di Savona, and Vado; further away on the heights he occupied the redoubts of Montenotte, and behind it the intrenchments of Cadibona. He resisted the dashing onsets of Palfy's division all the day, and then fell back on the positions of Cadibona.

Saint Julien, having carried the heights of Montenotte and Monte Negrino, pursued the French in the direction of Madonna di Savona.

The Austrians, having cleared away the first impediments, rushed on the enemy and drove him back in disorder. Soult occupied Monte Moro, which covered Savona. This position was carried by a frontal attack, aided by a turning movement. The French retired precipitately, and were so closely followed by the Austrians that both entered pell-mell into the suburbs of Savona. Night alone put a period to the fighting.

By sheer force of numbers Melas had succeeded in beating Massena back towards Genova and separating Suchet from the French main body. Both sides fought with great determination,

RETURN OF THE ARMY OF ITALY ON THE 5TH OF APRIL, 1800.

HEADQUARTERS STAFF (HEADQUARTERS, GENOVA).

MASSENA, Commander-in-Chief of the Army.

Oudinot, General of Division, Chief of the Staff.

Andrieux, Adjutant-General, Under Chief of the Staff in the absence of Brigadier-General Franceschi.

Thiébaud, Reille, Gautier, and Campana, Adjutant-Generals employed under the Commander-in-Chief.

Degiovanui, Ottavi, Adjutant-Generals, and Hervo, Acting Adjutant-General, employed on the general staff.

Auberon, Chief Executive Commissary.

Artillery.

Lamartillière, General of Division, Commanding Royal Artillery.

Sugni, General of Division, Chief of the Staff of the Artillery.

Navy.

Sibilla, Chief of Division, commanding the naval forces of the army.

Engineers.

Mares, Chief of Brigade, Commanding Engineer.

Couche, Captain, Chief of the Staff.

STAFF OF THE RIGHT WING (HEADQUARTERS AT CORNIGLIANO).

SOULT, Lieutenant-General, Commanding.

Gauthrin, Adjutant-General, Chief of the Staff.

Unattached Officers.

Fressinet, Brigadier-General.

Trivulzi, Adjutant-General.

Ccrisa, Adjutant-General.

First Division.

Miollis, General of Division, Commanding.

D'Arnaud, Petitot, Generals of Brigade.

Hector, Adjutant-General, Chief of the Staff.

Second Division.

Gazan, General of Division, Commanding.

Poinsot, Spital, Generals of Brigade.

Noel Huart, Adjutant-General, Chief of the Staff.

D'Aoust, Squadron Commander on special duty.

Third Division.

Marbot, General of Division, Commanding.

Bujet, Gardanne, Generals of Brigade.

Saqueleu, Adjutant-General, Chief of the Staff.

DISTRIBUTION AND STRENGTH OF THE DIVISIONS.

Division Miollis.	Men.	Division Gazan,	Men.	Division Marbot.	Men.	Reserve.	Men.	Garrison of Genova and Gavi.	Men.	Total.	Men.
Headquarters—Albaro.		Headquarters—San Quirico.		Headquarters—Savoua.		The Reserve held Sampierdarena with the 92nd.		Adjutant-General Degiovanui commanded in Genova, and had for garrison—		Division Miollis	4200
Held San Alberto and Recco with the 8th half-brigade of light infantry.		Held Cazella, Buzalla, and Savignone with the 3rd of the Line.		Commanded by Gardanne, Marbot being sick.		Strength 500		The 41st, strength ... 350		Division Gazan	4920
Strength 600		Strength 1300		Held Stella and la Madonna with the 3rd Light Infantry.		Sestri di Ponente and Cornigliano with the 25th Light Infantry.		The 55th, strength ... 250		Division Marbot	4700
Tortiglia and Scofera with the 24th of the Line.		Teggia with Piedmontese Grenadiers 90		Strength 900		Strength 1700		The 73rd, strength ... 500		Reserve 2200	
Strength 800		Voltaggio and Carasio with the 5th Light Infantry.		La Vagnola and Montebotte with the 62nd.		Total ... 2200		The 45th, 500 strong, was at Gavi 500		Garrison of Genova and Gavi 1600	
Monte Cornua with the 74th.		Strength 500		Strength 1500				Total ... 1600		Total ... 17,620	
Strength 1100		Campo Marone Rivarolo and Rouco with the 2nd of the Line.		St. Bernardone and the Madonna of Savona with the 63rd.						Deducting the garrisons of Genova, Gavi, and Novi 2,300	
Albaro and Nervi with the 106th.		Strength 1600		Strength 500						There remained for the active army... .. 15,320	
Strength 1700		La Bochetta with a company of artillery ... 40		Savona with the 93rd.							
—		Campo Freddo Marcarolo and Masone with the 78th.		Strength 500							
Total ... 4200		Strength 1300		Vado and Cadibona with the 97th.							
		San Quirico with three companies of Pioneers.		Strength 1300							
		Strength 90		Total ... 4700							
		Total ... 4920									

All deductions made, the three divisions and the reserve could only put 12,000 men in the field. With this slender force, this wing of the Army of Italy had to guard a front of sixty miles. It could not do otherwise if the most practicable passes were to be occupied and communication maintained with the rest of the army.



SCALE
Of English Miles.



and the Austrians experienced an obdurate opposition, but their great superiority in numbers was bound to tell.

At two in the morning of the following day, having placed in the citadel of Savona a reinforcement of 600 men and furnished the place with a supply of provisions, Soult evacuated Savona and retired towards the heights of Albissola. The enemy was already there, but not being in any great strength was quickly brushed aside. Savona, Cadibona, and Vado were occupied by the Austrians.

Suchet was attacked on the 7th of April; the movements of the previous day had already turned his position on Monte San Giacomo. He made the Austrians pay dear for their success and the possession of that post, but, attacked by superior forces, he had to retire to safeguard his communications. The fight was spirited, and several redoubts were taken and retaken more than once. At Melogo the Hungarian grenadiers were not successful. Suchet was now completely detached from the rest of the army, and retired fighting step by step, disputing every inch of ground, but always compelled to give way.

Whilst Melas was pursuing his success in the direction of Savona, Ott expelled the French from Monte Faccio. General Darnaud in vain offered a serious resistance to Gottesheim, but this important post was eventually captured. Monte Faccio, so closely situated to the city, was in a military point of view, and owing to the moral effect caused by its loss, the most decisive gain the Austrians had scored on that day. Petitot was not more successful at Torriglia and Scofero, and had to give way before Leczeni's brigade. Gazan's division occupied many posts between the valley of the Orba and of the Scrivia. Fighting went on gallantly at all these points, until Gazan at the approach of superior forces, fearing he might be overlapped and turned, retired, and occupied a position at Buzetta, between the Monte Giovi and the Scrivia. Hohenzollern, whose task was to carry the Bocchetta, displayed little energy. He tried to outflank the French on both wings, but his movements lacked the unity necessary for success. He took Ronciglione and the hamlet of Marcarolo, but he was soon after chased from these positions.

Ott also carried Monte Ratti, and invested the forts of Quezzi, Richelieu, and Santa Tecla, within cannon-shot of the walls of the city.

Massena found himself in a serious predicament, but he was

not a man to be easily daunted. He knew how expedient it was to keep the field outside the works as long as possible, and how desirable it was to beat the enemy within sight of the Genovese, who had been witnesses of the Austrian successes, and were greatly inclined to favour the Imperialists.

The same night the Austrians, to convey a great idea of their strength, displayed a large number of fires on the Monte Faccio. This was done with the intent of inciting the population of the city and surrounding country to rise against the French. Emissaries had been also sent to visit the villages and to induce the people either by promises or by threats to take up arms.

Massena made his preparations during the night of the 6th, and at daybreak on the 7th sallied out of Genova, attacked the Austrians on the Monte Faccio with great vigour, and recaptured that important position. Miollis, coming with his right from Quinto, his left from Parisone, and supported by a reserve column in the valley of the Bisagno, drove the Austrians brilliantly out of the Monte Cornua and Monte Faccio. The second division moved as far as Borgo di Fornari and Savignone, and the third deployed from Varaggio to Ciampani. Torriglia and all the passes of the Apennines were lost to the Austrians that day, with 1500 men taken prisoners.

Besides the prisoners captured by the French, the brilliant results of the day's battle reanimated the patriots, and had a great effect in deterring the discontented and the agitators. The population from the walls of Carignano and from the fields of the Bisagno had been entranced spectators of the combat, and Massena's return to Genova was a real triumph.

The success gained on the 7th of April was not enough to satisfy Massena. When he heard of Soult's retreat on Genova, and how Suchet had evacuated the posts of Melogno, Sette Pani, and Finale to concentrate his forces at Borghetto, he determined to re-establish the connection with his left as being the measure which pressed the most. He decided to assume a vigorous offensive with the object of raising the blockade of Savona and effecting a junction with General Suchet.

This gave rise to so many engagements, delivered in many and divergent directions, that it is rather difficult to relate them in proper sequence, and this may somewhat confuse the student.

The operations between the 9th and the 18th of April were carried out on the rugged ground of the Ligurian hills. Besides

the ordinary impediments, mountain warfare is surrounded by embarrassments of a character more serious than the mere difficulty of movement. There is the difficulty of concealing the march of the troops and the difficulty of insuring complete harmony of action. Operations of this nature abound in perplexities.

Of all the French armies in the field in the campaign of 1800, the Army of Italy was the one which saw most constant and stubborn fighting, and that on most difficult ground. Nor should we overlook the low physical condition to which the troops had been reduced by want of sufficient nourishment, epidemics, and general discouragement. It was a difficult task to get them to keep the field and to call on them to undergo fresh privations and great fatigues. How well it was accomplished this chapter will show.

Massena carried his plan into execution on the 9th of April. Miollis, with the brigades of Darnaud and Spital (7000 men), was left to guard Genova and keep Ott in countenance. The rest of the troops were divided into two columns—one of 5000 men under Gazan, directed to move by Voltri on Sassello; the other, of 4500 under Gardanne, was to follow the coast route. Soult went with the first, Massena with the second. These two columns, with the object of dividing the enemy's attention, were to march by different roads, in the hope that the enemy would split up his forces; then, after having passed Varaggio, Gardanne by a rapid march was to effect a junction with Soult on the heights of Montenotte, with the prospect of crushing any Austrian troops that might happen to be there, or to meet at Savona or Vado, pounce on Melas's magazines, and join hands with Suchet, who had been ordered to suspend his retreat and to come from Borghetto and manœuvre in the direction of Cugliano between Vado and Savona.

Melas, however, had resolved to march on Genova, and having established Elsnitz on the heights of Vado, so as to hold Suchet in countenance, he set out to encounter Massena and connect with Hohenzollern. He rightly judged that his adversary would direct his principal efforts to re-opening communications with France and the left wing of his army.

Melas, who led his right column, directed Bussy on Varaggio, Lattermann on Prasi, and Sticker on La Stella. Bellegarde's, Saint Julien's, and Brentaro's brigades marched on his left on the mountain position of Sassello and La Verreria. A column

coming from La Bocchetta had pushed advanced posts as far as Ponte-Decimo. Another body coming from the huts of Marcarolo was marching to occupy the post of Madonna dell' Acqua Santa, three miles only from Voltri.

On the night of the 8th of April, all the troops which were to form Soult's column were directed on Voltri. The population of Genova and the neighbourhood was badly disposed towards the French, and all round the city that night the alarm-bell sounded. Signal rockets were also fired from Carignano and San Pier d'Arena, in response to signals made on the mountains and at sea.

Both commanders had decided on an offensive movement. Neither one nor the other was able to carry his conception into effect. The two generals manœuvred on wrong suppositions, relying on results which could no longer be attained. The difficulty of penetrating the adversary's intentions, and of carrying out the directions received, made the various columns fall on each other according to the more or less favourable nature of the ground.

The movements of the columns coming from La Bocchetta and Marcarolo had the effect of diverting Soult from his objective. As he was about to leave Voltri for Sassello, he deemed it necessary, first of all, to drive the Austrians from their positions at Ponte-Decimo and Madonna dell' Acqua Santa, so as to gain complete security for his rear. This move affected the plan laid down by Massena.

In accordance with this decision, Soult marched by Acqua Bona, Martino, and San Pietro del Orba on Sassello on the 10th; whereas he should have been there the previous day. Saint Julien was at that moment marching on La Verreria, with the object of making for Ciampani on Massena's rear, and cutting off his retreat on Voltri. Soult took post at Pallo, on the road which leads from the Verreria to Pouzonne, whilst a portion of his division attacked briskly and cut off at Sassello General Saint Julien's rear-guard. In Sassello he captured 600 men of the Deutschmeister regiment, with three guns and a convoy of ammunition. Saint Julien arrived at La Verreria with the bulk of his troops, but he found his forces paralyzed, being almost separated from his centre.

Massena had marched in two columns. The one on the right, commanded by Saqueleu, was to ascend by Santa Giustina; the one on the left, with which he himself moved,

marching under Gardanne's orders, issued from Varaggio, and proceeded past Castagnebo towards La Stella.

Whilst Bellegarde developed his attack, closing with the French columns, Lattermann, following the coast, attacked and carried Varaggio. Massena had stopped his movement, and taken post at Santa Croce. There he stayed to await the result of Soult's attack; and there, with 1400 men, he had to contend for several hours against an immensely superior force.

Receiving no news from his right, the reinforcements he expected from Genova failing to put in an appearance, and being overlapped on all sides, after directing General Fressinet to cover the retreat, Massena quitted the left column, and, with his adjutant-general Thiébault and two other staff officers, went across country, at a great risk of being captured by the Austrians or killed by the peasants, to the right column. This column had been delayed by the length and arduousness of the march, and by the slowness experienced in distributing provisions. It had consequently not yet engaged the enemy, and was directed to reoccupy the position it held in the morning in rear of Varaggio. In the evening of this day Massena ordered his troops to fall back, and take up a position in front of Cogoletto.

Massena remained steadfast in his design. But the excessive fatigue and the disorder prevailing in the ranks prevented his carrying out a desperate resolve. He had intended nothing more nor less than to march to his right during the night, and effect a junction with Soult; then to attack and crush Melas's left, and to push forward on Loano, so as to join Suchet. Lastly, to march with all his forces united in the direction of Genova, and free Miollis. This junction of forces, being unexpected, would, he deemed, cause the destruction of the corps which was opposing Soult, and might lead to happy results. The darkness would hide his movements, and four hours would have sufficed for the success of this bold enterprise.

The troops of Gardanne's column, however, were demoralized; and when the time came for setting them in motion it was found that they had scattered about, that they were tired and famished, and that not a few had gone across the mountains back to Genova. When day broke, the report of the generals confirmed this sad state of things. At about ten o'clock Adjutant-General Gautier arrived from the right column, and

persuaded the general-in-chief that Soult was in imminent need of reinforcements.

Seeing the steady progress of his adversary's column, Massena found himself compelled to hold the position of Cogoletto, so as to detain as many of the enemy's troops as possible before him. He detailed four battalions for this purpose. The remaining six battalions, under General Fressinet, he detached to his right to reinforce Soult. By a singular chance Melas was at that identical moment employed in sending his centre and part of his right to reinforce Saint Julien at La Verreria, so that for four miles the Austrians and French marched on parallel crests within cannon-shot of each other.

Soult would not let Saint Julien effect his retreat in peace. Having left a detachment beyond Sassello to watch the roads leading from Ponzone and Acqui, he marched with the rest of his troops on La Verreria, and attacked the regiments of Lattermann, Deutschmeister, and Vukassevich, that held that place. The Austrian general could only effect his retreat on Ponte Ivrea after having lost 2000 prisoners and seven flags. The defence was really stiff, but the extraordinary bravery of the French, combined with the excellence of their dispositions, made them overcome all the obstacles of locality and numbers. Soult did not follow far in pursuit, and rallied his troops on the hillock of Grosso Pasto, an eminent position parallel to the mountain of L'Ermetta, which he believed the enemy would be sure to occupy before long.

Soult, informed during the night that Saint Julien had left for L'Ermetta, whilst La Verreria was only guarded by a detachment, got Gazan's division to carry that post at two o'clock in the morning. Saint Julien, reinforced by Bellegarde, occupied a position on the mountain of L'Ermetta, and endeavoured to turn Gazan's right, as that general led his division to the attack. The combat was stubborn, and the result doubtful; but the victory seemed if anything to be inclining towards the side of the Austrians, when, after a five miles' march, Fressinet's column appeared on the scene of action. These troops appeared on the Austrian right, overthrew everything which stood in their way, and joined Gazan's division on L'Ermetta. Saint Julien, protected by Bellegarde and Brentano, fell back with them to Santa Giustina.

On the afternoon of the same day, Melas, with all his right,

attacked the four French battalions at Cogoletto, drove them out of the place, and pursued them vigorously as far as Voltri. The Austrians neglected to make the most of their advantage. They failed to occupy Voltri, and withdrew to their previous positions. The French on the hills were within an ace of being cut off from Genova; but in the early hours of the 12th Massena brought up a brigade of 2000 men, drawn from Miollis's column, and strongly occupied the post. By this skilful measure Massena saved one of his divisions from a dire disaster.

Soult, ignorant of Massena's retreat, was confronting the enemy. To do so needed daring, for the troops he commanded were without provisions and ammunition. Bellegarde and Brentano, in possession of Monte Faiale, kept Soult from extending to his right. He determined, therefore, to carry that position. This he did on the 12th, and whilst Poinot was threatening Saint Julien at L'Ermetta, two columns, one led by himself, the other by Fressinet, attacked Monte Faiale, and after immense efforts wrenched it from the enemy. Soult carried his attack further on, but the two Austrian brigades, reinforced by fresh troops, turned and drove him back to the position he had so gallantly captured. He remained there all the 13th, but on the following day, learning that the Austrians were employed in effecting a concentration, he endeavoured to take advantage of this, and to capture their camp at Giustina. But in this he failed.

Melas resolved to reinforce his left and to withdraw his right. On the 14th, Bussy's brigade was added to the others on the mountain, whilst Lattermann was directed to withdraw to the strong position of Albissola, and there to keep on the defensive. The Austrians concentrated five brigades on Montenotte and Monteleggino, with the object of lending a hand to Hohenzollern's corps and of driving the French before them into Genova. The operation was ordered to take place on the 15th.

Soult, the purpose of whose operations had been all along to enter into communication with Suchet by way of Sassello, anticipated the Austrian attack, but found himself confronted by superior numbers; and his operations for capturing the position of Ponte Ivrea ended in complete failure. The combat was renewed on the 16th. The French fought with conspicuous gallantry, though borne down by fatigue and want, not being in any way as well provided with food and ammunition as their

opponents. Melas employed most of his forces; two brigades were directed on Sassello; Bellegarde took the direction of La Verreria; two other brigades went to L'Ermetta. Soult soon perceived that he could not contend against such overpowering forces, so he tried to place himself in communication with Massena, whom he expected to find somewhere about Savona. With this intent he moved in the direction of Monte Pasto, but only to fall in with Bellegarde's column, whose chief summoned him to surrender. Soult was in a critical position, attacked in front and in rear; eventually he was compelled to order a retreat. There was yet time for this. In a dense mist he gained the heights of La Verreria, and from that point made for Voltri, only disturbed by small parties of the enemy, which he easily brushed aside.

Whilst Soult was fighting for the position of Ponte Ivrea on the 15th, Massena set out from Voltri to attack Lattermann at Albissola. After a combat which lasted three hours, he was repulsed, and retired on Varaggio, closely followed by the Austrian Grenadiers. Hearing then that Hohenzollern was marching with four battalions against his right flank, he ordered the retreat to be continued as far as Arenzano.*

Both French columns were in retreat, and came together at Voltri on the 17th. Being unable to effect anything in the direction of Savona, Massena decided to place his troops under the protection of the guns of Genova. The retreat thither was ordered; but it was delayed to clear what there still remained in Voltri of stores and provisions. This delay cost the French a certain loss of men.

From the summit of Monte Faiale Melas had been able to survey the position occupied by the French, then encamped between Acqua Santa and Arenzano. He decided to profit by this knowledge, to crush them by a combined attack, and to cut them off from Genova by anticipating them at Sestri, whilst Bellegarde and Lattermann would occupy the enemy's attention along the coast. Melas descended from Monte Faiale, and marched on Voltri with Bussy's brigade; whilst Ott, coming from Masone, made for the same place. Sestri di Ponente was a most important point for the Austrians, but it was not

* Oudinot declares that though Massena's and Soult's troops had been fighting for some days, they had suffered more from hunger than from the engagements which they had sustained or delivered.

strongly occupied by Ott. It was owing to their inability to appreciate all the value of this point and their tardiness of movement that the Austrians failed to score a signal success.

Ott was the first to attack Voltri. His troops drove the French before them, and seized one of the bridges, but the French reserve attacked his column to favour the return of the troops engaged on the mountain and of those coming from Arenzano, which were much harassed by Bellegarde. The fight was carried out at close quarters, both sides losing heavily.

On being apprised of the enemy's march on Sestri, Soult hastened the retreat, judging it far more important to outstrip the enemy at Sestri than to hold out at Voltri. This made his rear-guard and reserve in succession maintain themselves in Voltri, to gain time for the arrival of the column coming from the mountain and the troops arriving from the coast. The battle continued until late in the night, and was conducted by the light of torches.

The French had anticipated the enemy, and by deploying on the heights of Sant Andrea, covered the passage of the Polcevera at the bridge of Cornigliano, by which their army fell back on Genova.

In the fortnight during which this heavy fighting had been going on, Miollis had had daily combats with the Austrians in the neighbourhood of Genova.

However ably the French occupied the ground in all these operations, the numerical superiority of the enemy always told heavily against them. After a fortnight of constant and determined fighting, Massena was at last shut up in Genova. All hope of co-operation on the part of Suchet or of receiving reinforcements from France could be absolutely dismissed.

General Thiébauld sums up the operations of these two weeks in the following words: "But soon he (Massena) resumes the offensive, and, not satisfied with beating the enemy under the walls of Genova with eight or nine thousand debilitated men, he goes as far as the walls of Savona, to contend the victory with thirty thousand men picked out of the finest army in the world, and keeps the field for fourteen days. The brave men he commands kill or wound more than eight thousand men of the enemy; fall back around Genova without Melas being able to cut them off; lead back more than six thousand prisoners, and

amongst other spoils bring away with them six standards and five guns as tokens of their victory."* For want of sufficient escorts, many of the Austrians captured on the Ligurian hills and during the blockade managed to effect their escape and get back to their corps.

The Austrians now occupied all the heights around Genova. All the defiles of the Apennines had been forced, and nothing remained for Massena to do but to concentrate his small army. On the 21st of April, the blockade of Genova was established.

Melas was soon on the Var, and all the Genovese territory, save the citadel of Savona and the city of Genova, *Genova la Superba*, was lost. Great was the alarm in Provence; Toulon and Marseilles did not consider themselves safe.

General Ott was placed at the head of 25,000 men, and to him were confided the operations for the reduction of the city. As to the remainder of the troops, they marched in the direction of Vado, for Melas's intention was to combine with General Elsnitz and drive Suchet back across the frontier of France.

The ancient city of Genova, which has occupied a distinguished place in the history of modern Europe, with a population of more than 100,000 souls, lies on the shores of the Mediterranean, at the foot of the southern slope of the Apennines, seventy-nine miles south-east of Turin. Built in the shape of a horse-shoe, the city rises like a superb amphitheatre on the lowermost spurs of the Apennines, and the bleak summits of the loftier ranges are capped with forts, batteries, and other works which constitute a line of fortification of great strength and extension.

Owing to the configuration of the ground, which rises on all sides, it became necessary in fortifying the city to include in the zone of defence the various heights which, rising in succession from the seashore, end in Monte Diamante at 1500 feet above the level of the sea.

Two torrents placidly meander round the city, La Polcevera and the Bisagno. They have their sources in the highest peaks of the surrounding mountains, and their names frequently recur in the narratives of the siege.

The city has two inclosures, one exterior, and one interior. The latter, which protects Genova more thoroughly, is formed of an irregular line of bastions.

* General Paul Thiébault, "Journal des opérations militaires du siège et du blocus de Gênes," p. 220.

The exterior line of ramparts is divided into nine principal sections. To the west are the Lanterna fort, which borders on the water battery of the same name, the section of the Tenaglia, and that of Degato. On the north there is but one section, that of the Sperone. On the east there are five, that of Castellozzo, of the salient above San Bartolomeo, of the important height of Zerbino, of the curtain by the Porta Romana, and lastly of Carignano, which descends to the sea. On the south a parapet extends from the lighthouse gate to San Tommaso.

The Sperone, lying at the top of the great triangle, was reputed to be the key of the position, because from that point the whole line of the ramparts could be enfiladed and taken in reverse. In front of the Sperone are two hills called Spino and Pellato, otherwise called the Monte dei Due Fratelli, on which a work had been constructed called Forte del Diamante.

On the east, the spur of the Apennine, which forms the left strand of Bisagno from Monte Cornua up to Nervi, is studded with three forts, Santa Tecla, Quezzi, and Richelieu. These were constructed on a projection named Monte Ratti.

On the south-east, on the heights of Albaro, is the only locality where regular approaches can be made. From that direction also it is possible to bombard the populous quarters of the city, which on that side approach more closely to the ramparts than on any other.

With respect only to the state of its defences, Genova was badly prepared to withstand a siege. Still the zeal, talent, and activity of General la Martillière, Sugni, and Marès fully made up for this drawback. All the most necessary repairs of the fortifications were speedily executed, and a general system of defence laid out.

Massena could barely hope to compete against an enemy whose forces were three times as numerous as his own. But he devoted his energies to strengthening his position and to discovering what means of subsistence the city could command.

The troops were divided into two divisions—one under Miollis, 4500 strong; the other under Gazan, numbering 3500 men. Besides these two divisions there was a reserve. But this comprised only 1600 men. In the terrible combats of the last fifteen days the army had lost fully one-third of its numbers.

Massena called out the National Guard to assist in maintaining order. Besides this, he organized a legion composed

of Italian refugees and of some hundreds of Poles found amongst the prisoners captured from the enemy. This arrangement enabled him to keep in hand all the forces capable of engaging the Austrians beyond the walls.

The country round about Genova had been for three years subject to a terrible scourge—the presence of numerous armies. The local resources had become exhausted, and there was no way of drawing means of subsistence from so miserable a region.

Massena did his best to purchase all the grain which could be got on the spot. He also wrote for it to Corsica, to Marseilles, and to Suchet. He established a very rigorous supervision over the manufacture of the bread and over its distribution, and had a census made of all the horses.

The three divisions of the French entered the city of Genova, which was blockaded on the land side by the Austrians, and by the English on the sea. For two months both the garrison and the inhabitants suffered unheard-of privations and hardships. During that period the ravages of famine, typhus, and war were on a very large scale. The garrison lost heavily. Every day 700 to 800 corpses of the citizens—individuals of every age, sex, and class—were picked up in the streets, and buried in an immense trench filled with quicklime, and which stood behind the church of Carignano. The number of victims during the blockade surpassed 30,000, the great majority starved to death.

“It would not be possible to describe in detail,” writes Gaston Stiegler, “the famous siege, with its sorties, its incessant combats, the sufferings of its inhabitants, the riots of the women, the endurance of the soldiers, the famine, the necessity of eating loathsome articles, herbs, unclean beasts, and, under the illusive name of bread, a mysterious compound of starch, linseed, and cocoa.”

At that period there was not in the city of Genova a single private bakery, all the bread being baked in state ovens. The dread which the old Genovese Government had entertained of the population was the origin of this singular arrangement. To maintain the population in submission, the Government had from time immemorial claimed a monopoly of grain, flour, and bread. The bread was baked in an immense building guarded by soldiers and cannons. Under this system, whenever the Doge or the Senate wished to prevent a revolt or to punish

the people, they had only to close the state bakeries, and the people were soon starved into submission.

These bakeries habitually provided bread for a population of more than 120,000 souls, but, for want of grain, they remained closed for forty-five days out of the sixty during which the siege lasted.*

When hostilities commenced, all the wheat, all the grain and pulse that could be discovered was collected. It was then estimated that the city could withstand a fortnight's blockade. More thorough searches were made during those fifteen days, and by vigorous measures grain and other substances were found with which the people and the troops could be fed for fifteen days more.

On the 30th Germinal (20th of April) it became necessary to eat bread made of rye and oats. The cavalry horses were also sacrificed. The staff gave up their reserves for the help of the sick, who were overcrowding the hospitals. This was of very slight assistance, for through want of medicines the mortality soon became appalling.

On the 15th Floreal (5th of May), a small ship ran the blockade and brought grain to last five days; but on the 20th, as the supplies were beginning to run short, the grain was all reserved for the troops. The rations were reduced, and no more bread was issued to the inhabitants.

The troops received a miserable ration of $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of horseflesh and $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of what passed by the name of bread. This was a compound of damaged flour, sawdust, starch, hair-powder, oatmeal, linseed, rancid nuts, and other substances, to which a certain consistency was given by the admixture of a small portion of cocoa.

Neither bread nor meat was publicly sold for forty-five days. The more wealthy of the inhabitants were able, during the first part of the siege, to obtain a little codfish, sugar, figs, and other provisions. Oil, wine, and salt never failed.

Men were compelled to shoulder a musket and enrol themselves amongst the combatants, in order to claim the wretched ration which was distributed to the soldiers. At the commander-in-chief's table, bread, roasted horseflesh, and dried pease, were served once a day. The portions were extremely minute.

* *Genova* had a population of about 120,000 souls. Of this number some 40,000 belonged to *Albaro*, *San Martino*, *Bisagno*, and *San Pier d'Arena*.

Massena allowed his officers to retain only one horse; the rest had to be sent to the butcher. As the horses were lean from want of forage, the flesh was not of much account. Even diseased horses were killed, and the flesh issued as rations.

All the dogs and cats in the town were soon eaten; rats fetched a high price. Whenever the French made a sortie, crowds followed them outside the gates, and set to work to cut grass and nettles, and to collect leaves, which were subsequently boiled with salt. Rich and poor, women, children, and old men, took their share in this work. The local Government had the grass which grew on the ramparts mown, and afterwards cooked in the public squares and distributed to the sick people who were not strong enough to procure this coarse food and cook it themselves.

Some few vessels from Toulon, Marseilles, or Corsica, succeeded in deceiving the vigilance of the English fleet, and got into port. But these were very rare cases indeed.

Men, women, and children were paid by the discontented to saunter along the streets in a state of almost entire nudity (representing a pretended state of destitution), uttering heart-rending cries and heavy moans, with the object of shaking by this counterfeit of distress the resolution of the authorities.

Leather and skins of every kind were consumed, and, horrible to relate, numbers of the starving wretches sought support from the dead bodies of their fellow-citizens.

From the nature of the ground, Genova offers almost insurmountable obstacles to a regular siege. At this period the Austrian operations were retarded by a deficiency of transport. Transport, without which no military operations can be carried out with vigour, was scarce. If there was little of it for the conveyance of provisions, there was less for a siege-train and artillery park coming from Turin or Alessandria. Without guns no impression could be made on the city.

Before starting on the 27th for his expedition against Finale, Melas decided to occupy San Pier d'Arca. The column of attack, led by the Nadasti regiment, advanced with that object on the 23rd. But the French, reinforced by the reserve, drove it back in disorder beyond the Polcevera, with the loss of 400 prisoners. On the same day occupied Rivarolo, and Hohenzollern failed at Forte Diamante. Miollis drove Gottesheim

out of Monte Parisone, but failed in an attempt to turn the camp at Castagna.

On the 30th of April, Ott made a general attack with the object of chasing the French from the exterior line of defence. He planned a general assault on Massena's defences on the Bisagno, the Polcevera, and the fortified summits of the Madonna del Monte, and the Monte Ratti. The attack was successful only at first, for whilst on one side Ott had not a sufficient force, Massena on the other turned skilfully to account the immense advantage which his central position in an intrenched camp gave him. Both sides fought with great resolution, and for a time success was doubtful. In the end the Republicans remained victorious on the Monte Ratti, which, with its forts and 400 prisoners, fell into their hands. By taking advantage of the ravines, Soult had penetrated in rear of the Due Fratelli; and Hohenzollern, attacked in rear by the garrison of Forte Diamante, and in front by a body of fresh troops, was broken. The Austrians had to abandon all the ground they had gained from their opponents, excepting the Monte Faccio, losing 1800 prisoners.

On the following day, Massena attacked the fortified heights of Coronata, but was repulsed with great slaughter, and driven back to Genova.

For the next ten days nothing occurred of any special importance. Such, however, was the dire condition of the beleaguered city that Massena could not remain inactive. He determined to make a sally on the 11th of May. The Austrians had been celebrating Melas's success on the Var by a *feu de joie*, and Massena determined by a vigorous effort to show them that the spirits of his troops were not sinking. Miollis was to attack Monte Faccio on the front of the Sturla, and Soult, ascending by the bed of the Bisagno torrent, was to take it in flank. Soult was successful, and the Austrians were only able to force their way through their pursuers by leaving 1300 prisoners in the hands of the French.

Massena was very keen to undertake an expedition to Portofino, with the intent of laying a hand on the corn which was known to have been collected there. However, at a special meeting held to consider the question, he was, much against his will, persuaded to give it up, and in its stead endeavour to carry the camp of Monte Creto, the most prominent and commanding

point of the Austrian lines. The loss of this place would possibly have obliged the besiegers to fall back from Genova and retire behind Voltri and Sestri di Levante, to evacuate Portofino, and to abandon all the guns they had at Cornigliano and Sestri di Ponente.

Nothing was neglected that might secure the success of such an important enterprise, Massena being thoroughly alive to the fact that this was the last offensive movement he could attempt. The troops were picked for it, and the best leaders were chosen.

As the enemy fully realized the vital importance of Monte Creto, he had posted there and in the vicinity the greatest portion of his forces. The intrenched camp on Monte Creto had been fortified with care, and Hohenzollern, backed by a powerful reserve, was intrusted with its defence. The attackers were divided into two columns. Soult led the right column direct on Monte Creto, and this column, having quitted Genova by the Porta Romana, moved along the valley of the Bisagno. Gazan, who led the left column, issued from the Sperone, and passed by the Due Fratelli.

The French advanced to the attack with intrepidity. At first both Soult and Gazan were successful, but a violent storm which lasted three-quarters of an hour interrupted the operations. The rain fell in torrents, the French got drenched, their uniforms got soaked, and the roads became bad and slippery. Meanwhile, the Austrians received reinforcements from the valleys, which had escaped the fury of the storm.

The assailants had lost the resolution necessary for carrying strong works by force, for the dire effects of rain and want of food combined had taken all the energy out of them. Fresh efforts were called for, and the officers set a noble example, but all to no purpose. The troops were exhausted. Enthusiasm, the great motor of all combatants, and of such consequence for the French, had subsided.

A fresh reserve came forward under Hohenzollern, charged, and dispersed the French. Soult and his brother strove to rally them, but in vain. In this attempt Soult was seriously wounded in his right leg. He then ordered the retreat. The ground was in such a slippery state that his soldiers could not bear him away. Seeing this, he sent his sword to Massena, and remained on the battlefield, where the enemy captured him.

The French, thoroughly broken and in the utmost confusion, fled to Genova.

The ill success of this attack, the decline of the soldiers, and, above all, the greatly felt loss of Soult, left no hope to Massena of tiring out the assailants. With this fight all defensive action beyond the walls of the city ended. Massena had to look after the safety of Genova, had to evacuate Monte Faccio, and to draw his posts closer in. He could labour under no illusion of being able to cut his way through his foes. The port, hermetically closed by the British fleet, dispelled all hope of obtaining supplies. Death was the only prospect. Massena might have waited for it calmly, but the citizens were not inclined to die of starvation; and if they were to die, the soldiers preferred to die fighting.

The Genovese are a shrewd, active, and laborious race. They make skilful and hardy seamen, energetic traders, and thrifty husbandmen. When the main part of their occupation was maritime, one may picture to one's self what a blow a rigid blockade of their port must have been for them. To the enemy outside was soon added an enemy within, for the dearth of food and the threats of a terrible bombardment had exasperated the people. The citizens murmured, and were much inclined to revolt against the authority of the commander-in-chief. Massena, however, was too determined a man to be trifled with. To prevent any attempt at a rising, he proclaimed that the soldiers had received orders to fire on any assemblage of the inhabitants which numbered more than four individuals. In addition to this he took other precautions. He made some arrests, caused whole regiments to bivouac on the squares and principal streets, and defended the approaches by guns loaded with canister.

It required a very determined mind to uphold authority under such dire circumstances. But Massena was firm, and at the same time that he stifled any attempt at a revolt he overawed the murmurs of the soldiers. He ate the same scanty fare as the troops,* and was foremost in braving the enemy's fire.

Notwithstanding all the horrors and the hopelessness of the situation, Massena remained impassible and calm. He clung

* The repast set before the commander-in-chief and his staff on the 15th Prairial (4th of June) consisted of a soup of herbs, some boiled horseflesh, and a dish of boiled French beans.

obstinately to the defence of Genova, having heard from Bonaparte that he was busy collecting an Army of Reserve, at the head of which he intended to descend from the Alps; how he purposed to surprise the Austrians by falling on their rear whilst they were busily occupied with their operations in Liguria. This stubbornness was partly in keeping with Massena's character, and partly in compliance with the First Consul's orders, which were to hold the city as long as possible, since to do so was at that moment of immense importance to France.

Massena had opposed to the largely superior forces of the enemy the most brilliant tactics. He had turned to account all the defensive positions of the mountains in his front. He was always ready to resume the offensive as far as he could, whilst defending the ground inch by inch; following, in short, the proper principles of the art which enjoin that when a general is in command of inferior forces his ability lies in imposing on the enemy and in gaining time.

Firmly resolved to give Bonaparte time to arrive, he made the most ingenious dispositions. He determined that the resistance should be maintained as long as possible, and resolved in any case to save the honour of the Army of Italy, by sacrificing the very last soldier, and by dying himself, if that proved necessary.

The credit due to Massena for his gallant defence of Genova is enhanced when we reflect how his gallant bearing was seconded by half-starved and sickly troops.

Not only was there a great scarcity of provisions in the beleaguered city, but the ammunition also was running alarmingly short. Massena took great pains to have some manufactured. But during the blockade no more than 12,000 lbs. of gunpowder in all were obtained in that manner. When the troops evacuated the city there were only 4000 lbs. of good and bad powder in the arsenals. For the field guns and the guns of position there remained not more than ten rounds per gun.

Massena's greatest talent lay in finding in a city, where before the blockade there never was more food than was sufficient for three days' consumption, enough to last for sixty days, and that notwithstanding a most rigorous blockade. He gave further evidence of his ability by discovering warriors, and even

heroes, amongst soldiers who seemed to be incapable of withstanding the hardships of a single march. By his talent, example, and pluck, he had secured general admiration, which gave him a moral force of immense value. During the sixty days' blockade he gave unremitting attention to every matter, and his personality made up for everything else. The respect which he inspired was shared by all alike. He was a model commander. He asked for no more than the scanty fare of his men. He shared their fatigues and their dangers, and had at all moments to be on his guard against discontent and treachery. He alone, in short, was the individual who retained the Austrians such a long time before the walls of Genova.

Outside the walls scarcely a day passed without a fight. The French, highly disciplined and judiciously posted, did much harm to the assailants. Some well-directed red-hot shot compelled the English fleet to draw further back from the shore.

There were battles without number, sorties, assaults, and repulses; desperate fighting, in which brave men lost their lives. To these were added other horrors, hunger and pestilence. The food grew less and less, till at length there was left next to nothing. It came very nearly to what the soldiers had predicted, that, before giving in, their general would make them eat their boots.

All the horrors of famine and pestilence were not enough, for the French could not secure an instant of repose. They were harassed on the land side by the Austrians throughout the day, and battered by the guns of the English, Turkish, and Neapolitan fleets all through the night.*

Massena had sent Major (Chef d'escadron) Franceschi, Soult's aide-de-camp, to Paris to report on the state of affairs at Genova. This daring officer succeeded both on going and returning in passing through the enemy's fleet. Suchet in his report states that Franceschi quitted Genova in the evening of the 8th Floreal (28th of April) in a rowing-boat. Befriended by darkness, the boat succeeded in passing through the British fleet, but at break of day was descried and chased by a corvette. When on the point

* For, as Holy Writ declares, "The sins of the fathers are visited on the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Him." Who can say that all the gallant blood shed and misery endured in this and in the rest of the Napoleonic wars may not have been a punishment for all the barbarities committed by the French in the frenzy of the Revolution? What made it even more poignant was that these heartrending sacrifices were in the long run all in vain.

of being captured, Franceschi tore up most of his despatches, placed his sword between his teeth, threw himself into the sea, and was fortunate in being able to land safely near Finale, which point was then occupied by some of Suchet's troops.*

De Cugnac relates that, having quitted Genova on the 27th of April, he arrived the same day at La Pietra, still occupied by Suchet's troops, and informed that general how the commander-in-chief had resolved to shut himself up in Genova, where provisions sufficient for a month existed, and that the inhabitants were animated by the best dispositions.

Franceschi pursued his route, and reported himself to Berthier, then at Chalons, on the 3rd of May. Berthier sent him to Paris. He arrived on the 5th, and delivered to the First Consul a letter from Massena.†

Bonaparte writes to Massena on the 5th of May: "Your aide-de-camp has arrived, and I have received your letter."

The following day a courier sent by Suchet arrived in Paris with a despatch, written from La Pietra some hours after Franceschi's departure.

From Franceschi Bonaparte learnt all about Massena, and how he had provisions only enough to last him till the 25th or 26th of May.

On his side the First Consul, on the 1st of May, had directed the war minister to send a very intelligent staff officer of engineers on a mission to General Suchet, and who was afterwards to pass on to General Massena.

This officer was to inform them that the Army of Reserve was in full march, and about to issue from the Alps, that it would be in Piedmont by the 11th of May.

No letter was to be given to him lest by chance it might come in possession of the enemy. But the officer was to be made familiar with all the details of the march of the Army of Reserve. He was, moreover, to instruct both generals that when the enemy was weakened by having to make head against the Army of Reserve, it was expected of them to regain the lost ground.

The officer intrusted with this task was Brigadier Vallongue, of the corps of engineers. He joined General Suchet, and remained with him during the operations on the Var.

* Gachot, "La Deuxième Campagne d'Italie," p. 31.

† De Cugnac, "Campagne de l'Armée de Reserve en 1800," vol. i. p. 280.

Franceschi left Bonaparte at Lausanne on the 14th of May, and returned to Genova with a letter from the First Consul. He had seen something of the Army of Reserve, and was instructed to tell Massena that he would be relieved in the first decade of the month Prairial (21st to 30th of May), according to what the First Consul had written to the other consuls on the 13th of May.

On the 1st of May, Bonaparte wrote to the minister of war. He directed him to order Saint-Hilaire, who was commanding the 8th Military Division at Marseilles, to push all the available cavalry towards Nice,* in order that, when the arrival of the Army of Reserve in Piedmont released Massena, he might at once undertake the pursuit of the enemy.

Embarking at Antibes, Franceschi succeeded in steering through the British fleet at night in an open boat worked by three oarsmen. At dawn he was sighted, when he was about a mile from the shore. The cruiser's guns opened fire, and wounded some of the boatmen. The daring aide-de-camp saw no other way of saving his despatches than by taking to the water. He promptly removed his clothes, took his sabre in his teeth, and swam towards the harbour, reaching land in a state of exhaustion. The soldiers received with joy the news brought by Franceschi of Moreau's successes in Germany, and of the passage of the Army of Reserve over the Alps.†

Massena made the following communication to the Army of Italy and to the Ligurian Government:—

“One of the officers that I have despatched to the First Consul in Paris returned this night.

“He quitted General Bonaparte as he was descending the Grand Saint Bernard, having with him General Carnot, minister of war.

“General Bonaparte intimates that from the 28th to the 30th Floréal he will have arrived with all his army at Ivrea, and from there he will proceed by lengthy marches to Genova.

“At the same time, General Lecourbe accomplishes his movement on Milan by the Valtellina.

“The Army of the Rhine has scored fresh successes on the enemy. It has gained a decisive victory at Biberach; it has captured many prisoners, and has directed its march on Ulm.

* De Cugnac, vol. i. p. 240.

† “Mémoires de Masséna,” tom. iv. p. 204.

“General Bonaparte, whom I have made acquainted with the behaviour of the inhabitants of Genova, assures me of all the confidence he reposes in them, and writes thus: ‘You are in a difficult position, but what puts me at my ease is that you are in Genova. That city, led by an excellent spirit, fully cognizant of its own interests, will soon find in its deliverance the reward for all the sacrifices which it has made.’

“MASSENA.”

The friendly part of the population was cheered by such news, and followed on maps, which were exposed in the shop windows, the movements of an army on which it reposed full confidence, led, moreover, as it was, by a beloved general. From the experience of the preceding campaigns it was well known all that might be expected from this army.

Massena endeavoured to take advantage of the momentary enthusiasm of the troops. A rumour having gained ground to the effect that the enemy was falling back, anxious not to lose a single moment, he ordered for the 28th of May a reconnoissance to be made in the direction of Nervi, Monte Faccio, Monte Ratti, and Bisagno. This reconnoissance led to serious fighting. The effort, however, was far beyond the strength of the men. The French, as is their wont, advanced gallantly enough, but were received at the foot of the redoubts by a tremendous fire of grape and musketry. They became broken and dispirited, and were easily driven within the walls of the city. The French lost heavily, but the Austrians more heavily still. It was ascertained by this sortie that the Austrians round Genova were as strong as ever.

Notwithstanding the vigorous searches already made for eatables, provisions were still hidden in the city. About this time the report that Bonaparte had gained a great victory ran through the place. This rumour brought out again some articles of food, for which covetous dealers asked an excessive price, but even these signs of abundance did not prevent several individuals from falling down in the streets to die of starvation.

A couple of days later (the 30th of May) a small sail laden with sixty sacks of grain contrived to enter the port. The owner declared that he was followed by fourteen more, but none of these ever arrived.

“We were reduced,” writes Oudinot, in describing the horrible

situation of the city, "to such a state of distress that our soldiers were too glad to eat the straw of the hospitals. Soon this last resource gave out, and we were only able to keep up our strength by drinking the generous wines which we discovered in quantities in the cellars of the town. One saw sentinels, unable to hold themselves erect, mounting guard seated in gilt armchairs, and drinking claret in their misery."

General Gazan's aide-de-camp reported to the commander-in-chief on this same 30th of May, that the sound of guns had been heard in the direction of the Bocchetta and of small arms on the side of Monte Freddo. The excitement caused by this news soon became intense. All Genova was in a delirium of exultation. The troops were all under arms, keen to see if the enemy made any movement. The report, however, was not true, the thunder of a distant storm was evidently the sound which had been heard. The hopes revived were soon abandoned, and discouragement again seized hold of the population.

Can there be a more pitiable sight than that of brave soldiers, eager to sally and meet the foe, day after day miserably succumbing to famine and disease? The conditions had grown rapidly worse. The garrison had made its last effort; but this very day the end of their misery commenced, inasmuch as Massena received an invitation to a parley with Lord Keith, Generals Ott and Saint Julien. Andrieux, one of the adjutant-generals, was sent to ascertain the object for such a demand, and he returned to Genova bearing a letter from Melas to the Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Italy, in which he renewed his offers of a most honourable capitulation.

At first Massena thought of refusing such a proposal. But he reasoned that all hope of being relieved had already gone, that the moment had arrived when Bonaparte knew that the place must inevitably fall. He judged that possibly all that he expected from the defence of Genova was to facilitate for the Army of Reserve an easy issue from the Alps and an undisputed advance into Piedmont. Besides these considerations, there remained not one complete ration per head of the substitute for bread, bad as it was. All the horses had been eaten, and it was high time to attempt something for the relief of troops which had done their duty so well. All their efforts, all the unheard-of sufferings, were sufficient to show that it was not weakness which made him give in.

Massena was in such dire straits that he could not remain deaf to any proposals. Though he made a semblance of rejecting it with disdain, this offer of Melas was in the actual circumstances very opportune. Nevertheless, there was also a chance that this humane desire of the enemy might be intended to veil his ambiguous position. No spies, no emissaries, had been able to come to him, to cross the enemy's lines, and of Bonaparte's actual position, beyond the capture of Ivrea, nothing was known.* But what aggravated the state of affairs, and possibly decided Massena more than anything else, was the suffering of the troops, and that the helplessness of the situation was causing many good soldiers to desert. A report had become current that several regiments had determined to put an end to their sufferings, and had arranged to quit the city and to give themselves up to the Austrians.

The English, wishing to add pressure to the Austrian proposals, bombarded the city on the night of the 30-31st of May. Their fire was more appalling than injurious; for all that, it caused considerable commotion amongst the people.

Massena had formed a project of leaving Miollis in Genova with the sick, and of opening himself a passage into Tuscany at the head of 7000 or 8000 men. To this forlorn hope he gave the name of *colonne d'affamés* (column of the famished). He had prepared all the details of the march, but when he proposed to his officers to cut their way through the enemy he was dissuaded by their unanimous voice. All declared that though they were only too ready to follow him, the soldiers were not in a physical condition to undertake either a combat or an ordinary march. This last resort, which the gallant general had cherished so fondly, being denied to him, he addressed a proclamation to his troops. He advised patience, and a few days more of endurance, and urged that they should not lose in one moment of despair the fruit of all their efforts, of all their glorious sacrifices.

But the soldier does not exist who can continue a hero for ever, animated always by the same spirit of daring, revelling in the dangers of personal encounter, and despising death. Such

* "On croyait généralement à Gênes que le premier Consul, profitant de l'entêtement du Général Melas à couvrir le blocus, tâcherait de surprendre Mantoue, se jeterait de là dans le Tirol ferait en continuant son mouvement sa jonction avec le Général Moreau, et à la tête des deux armées irait à Vienne dicter les conditions de la paix. Mais il portait des coups plus surs et plus rapides."—Thiébault, "Journal des Operations Militaires," footnote, p. 199.

enthusiasm cannot last for an indefinite period. When the soldier has to fight almost every day, when he is unceasingly exposed to danger and privations, when he has to pass the nights watching or reposing in miserable bivouacs, he begins to get sore tired of war; he begins to long for some rest, for some comfort.

There is nothing finer in the history of sieges than this defence of Genova, in which most of the sorties had been victories. But by this time many of Massena's boldest soldiers had fallen, many were in hospital incapacitated by wounds, many had succumbed victims to epidemics and want. As he gave battle after battle, the worth of his army gradually lessened, for as it is always the most enterprising and bold who lead in an attack, the Army of Italy had left many of its bravest officers and soldiers in front of the Austrian redoubts and strong positions which surrounded the city of Genova.

Whilst matters were in this unsettled state, on the evening of the 31st of May, Melas despatched two letters to Ott, who was ignorant of what was occurring in Piedmont, directing him to raise the blockade. Of these letters one was a positive order to march during the night, whilst the other simply desired him to make ready to march, but to await more positive instructions before setting out. Singularly enough, there was nothing in the tenor of these letters to indicate which of the two was the one to be acted upon.

The messenger who brought these letters had crossed in his way a messenger sent by Ott bearing despatches for the commander-in-chief, in which Ott announced the impending surrender of the city, asking at the same time if he should be severe or lenient in the negotiations, and not unnaturally, for he was not well posted on the exact situation of the Austrian army.

Melas, in a letter to Count de Tige at Vienna, states that Ott had written to him to the effect that at the moment he received, at Sestri on the 2nd of June, his despatch with the order to raise the blockade, Massena appeared inclined to capitulate; that the conferences had began that very day, and that Ott thought that he should delay his departure for a few days to see the end of the negotiations.*

Prince Sulkowsky, who arrived before Genova on the 3rd of

* De Cugnac, "Campagne de l'Armée de Reserve en 1800," vol. ii. p. 229.

June, was the bearer of Melas's reply to Ott's letter. In his letter Melas depicted the positions occupied by the Army of Reserve, and frankly confessed that only a battle could re-establish the affairs of the Austrian army, but that there was no time to lose. Sulkowsky on his way thither had gathered the first news of the disasters which had overtaken the Austrian forces in the Riviera di Ponente. These he communicated to Ott, who became alarmed lest the negotiations should be broken. This appeared likely, for on the morning of the 3rd Massena had not decided on anything, and had even sent word that pressing business would prevent him from attending the conference at the hour agreed upon. Ott began to fear that on arriving at Savona Suchet might, by a brisk cannonade, intimate to the right wing that he was within reach and could render assistance—an event that might induce Massena to break off all negotiations.

Ott had been greatly upset by the receipt of the order to raise the blockade. It was distracting, coming just at a moment when he was about to reap the fruit of so much bloodshed, of fatigues, dangers, and privations undergone with such unheard-of fortitude. He reflected that when Melas had indited the order he had not contemplated the possibility of an early surrender, such as he now saw every prospect of realizing. This disparity in the conditions of the two letters he received from Melas he took to mean that there was no real urgency. As the report he had sent to the commander-in-chief might lead to a counter-order, it was, he considered, proper to wait for more positive injunctions.

The noble and unfortunate Army of Italy was to pay dearly for the success of the Army of Reserve. All its privations, all its sufferings, all its losses, were not enough; to all these was to be added a painful evacuation. Massena thoroughly understood the rôle which had been assigned to his army, but there is a limit to all resistance, more so in a case like this, when the army believed that it had done all that could be expected of it.

Notwithstanding all Massena's efforts to support the drooping spirits of his soldiers, the fact that there remained nothing beyond the last morsel of food stared him in the face; and that all hope of being relieved was gone. The rapid progress of the epidemic, the number of the dead, the dreadful misery of the

living,* the general discouragement and discontent at last prevailed. Alive to these dire facts, he commissioned Andrieux, under pretext of treating about an exchange of prisoners, to ascertain what the terms the enemy was minded to propose would be. He was authorized to lend a willing ear to all such as would be made to him as long as they did not contemplate a capitulation. As the negotiations went on, fearing that Andrieux was not sufficiently able to safeguard the interests of the army, Massena gave him as an aide Morin, his secretary, an astute and clever man, on whom he conferred full powers of debating. His concise instructions were, "Demand that the army may be free to return to France with arms and baggage; if not, tell them it will make its way through with the bayonet."

Massena agreed to an evacuation at the very moment that Ott had received the order to raise the blockade. No doubt, if he could have held out two or three days longer things would have taken a different turn. Massena would have seen the enemy in his front diminishing in numbers, he could have made some sort of a sortie, effected a junction with Suchet, and have caused the Austrians serious trouble. An army, however, cannot undertake anything without provisions. The French were *absolutely starving* when Massena agreed to an evacuation, and it would have puzzled the critics who suggest such brisk operations to indicate where the French were to obtain the provisions required for a march to Savona and onward.

The soldier has a tender point—he has a jealous regard for his reputation; and who will reproach Massena for having resented his being entirely abandoned by the First Consul, and having been consequently forced to evacuate the city?

Ott could hardly conceal his joy when Andrieux proposed such a thing, for he was in dire straits. The news he had received from Melas was sufficiently alarming. There was not a moment to lose. He already knew that the Army of Reserve had crossed the Ticino and was on its way to Milan, that it was time for him to march in the direction of the Po. To prevent a junction between Massena's forces and those of Suchet, which would have been sure to operate against him, he proposed that the former should convey his troops to Antibes by sea. This

* The mortality amongst the Austrian prisoners amounted to from 45 to 50 per cent. per day. Massena had begged Ott to supply them with bread; he refused, alleging that these provisions might be consumed by their captors.

proposition was disdainfully rejected. Massena held firm, and declared he much preferred cutting his way out. At last it was arranged that all who were strong enough to carry their arms should go by land. These amounted to between 8000 and 8500 men. The rest, being convalescents, were sent by sea.

Massena delayed ratifying the convention as long as he could. Up to the very last moment he hoped he would be relieved, but when any further delay would have made him break his word he agreed to the terms proposed.

The principal clauses of the evacuation signed on the 4th of June were the following :—

“The French garrison marches out of Genova with arms and baggage to rejoin the Army of Italy.

“8110 men proceed by the land route, and march in the direction of Nice.* The rest of the troops, effective or convalescents, will be transported by the English fleet to Antibes, and fed on the way.

“The artillery and munitions belonging to the French will be conveyed in the same manner to Antibes or to Golfe Jouan.

“All the Austrian prisoners captured by the French are released.

“The population of Genova will be provisioned with the least possible delay.

“The artillery and the munitions belonging to the city of Genova will be surrendered to the allies.”

Massena has been reproached for not having detected by the extremely favourable terms they offered him, and by their fulsome adulation, what straits the allies were in, and how anxious they were to bring the blockade to an end. The acquiescence of General Ott and Admiral Keith—under pretence of rendering the greatest possible honour to the brave defenders of Genova—to allow the garrison to march out with arms and baggage without being prisoners of war, was unusual. Napoleon argues in his “*Mémoires*” that this fact alone should have put Massena on his guard. It was an indication of the critical position the allies were in. Massena thereupon should have instantly broken off all negotiations, sure enough that he would have been relieved in four or five days. When he wrote this the

* On the 6th the troops marched out with arms and baggage, but with no cannon. Massena embarked for Antibes with 1500 men and 20 guns. The sick and wounded remained in the city, cared for by the French medical officers.

emperor entirely overlooked the fact that there was barely food—and such food too—for one day more when Massena agreed to march out.

Napoleon's strictures on the evacuation of Genova were written in after-years. Immediately after the event he uttered no reproaches, no complaint; on the contrary, he was lavish in his praise, full of gratitude.

Massena took ship for Antibes, but for a good reason; for, being ignorant of the details of Suchet's pursuit of Elsnitz, what could be more natural for him than to believe that Suchet was still on the Var? With that idea in his mind he conceived that by repairing quickly to Antibes he would soonest be able to resume operations.

The memoirs accuse him of having sent 8500 men by land, but without guns, and of having embarked with twenty field-guns and 1500 men, and landed at Antibes. *Son devoir était de partager le sort de ses troupes, et il devait bien comprendre l'intérêt que mettait l'ennemi à l'en séparer.* After the treatment Massena received from Bonaparte, this stricture seems more than uncalled for. It is well known how reluctant he was to descend into the plains of Monferrato without artillery and cavalry. And where was he to find horses for drawing his twenty field-guns when all his horses had been slaughtered for food? And where was he most likely to find teams for his guns but at Antibes or at Nice? Massena, with his stubborn defence of Genova, did much towards helping the progress of the Army of Reserve. When his troops evacuated Genova, they were not in a condition to undertake anything. The sufferings of hunger, the influence of disease, the depression caused by numerous losses, by the terrible sights which had been constantly under their eyes, cannot but have seriously lowered the *morale* of the troops. Bonaparte expected from them further efforts without allowing them any time to recuperate. He demanded what was impossible.

The occupation of Genova, after all, was far from being an advantage for the Austrians, for it compelled them to leave a strong garrison to hold the city, whilst it freed several thousand tried soldiers who, under the terms of the treaty, were at liberty to take the field once outside the city walls. Jomini states that the Austrians left 16 battalions in Genova and 6 in Savona, or 22 in all. In his report to Massena, June 24, 1800,

Suchet states that when he took over the city from Hohenzollern three brigades, infantry and cavalry, forming a total of about 8500 men, marched past him.

Jomini also states that Lord Keith had been solicited by Hohenzollern to call up the British corps from Minorca to relieve his troops, but that Keith replied that he had no authority to control its movements, and could do nothing till Abercromby arrived and assumed command. This, as we have seen in Chapter IV., only took place on the 22nd of June.

It has often been said of the Great Emperor's marshals that when left to themselves at the head of an army they found their task too great for them. This cannot be said of Massena, after his spirited defence of Genova. With regard to most of Napoleon's generals, can we wonder that they were not always up to the mark, when we reflect how, in most cases, their professional education had been purely practical, how they lacked that knowledge which a long study of history imparts, and without which their master declared it to be impossible for any one to become a great commander? How assiduous was Bonaparte can be gathered from the following anecdote. Being at Marseilles, and in company with a party of young people, he had retired into a corner of the room with a book, while the rest were dancing and amusing themselves. In vain they solicited him to join in their youthful sports; his reply to their entreaties was: "*Jouer et danser, ce n'est pas là la manière de former un homme*" ("Playing and dancing is not the way to form a man").

How thoroughly it is known that Bonaparte spent the best years of his youth in storing knowledge by studious and attentive reading! It was his genius, backed by deep study and reflection, that made him the incomparable general he was.

CHAPTER VI.

SUCHET'S DEFENCE OF THE VAR.

Suchet separated from Massena and opposed to Elsnitz—Attacks the Austrians at Melongo—Unsuccessful attack of Monte San Giacomo—Oudinot sails through the blockading fleet—According to Massena's orders, Suchet attacks Monte San Giacomo, but is beaten back—Melas reinforces Elsnitz—Reaches Savona on the 29th of April—Attacks Suchet on the 2nd of May—Suchet retires during the night—Melas attacks the French again on the 7th, outnumbers them at all points, and compels them to retire—Being outflanked, Suchet retires to the Var—Melas enters Nice—The Austrians make a feeble attack on the 13th—Melas receives alarming news, and quits Nice on the 18th—Austrians attack the bridge of Saint Laurent on the 22nd of May—Make a second attack on the 27th—After this last failure they retire—Suchet cuts them off at Coldi Tenda—Pursues them up to Ormea—Elsnitz makes a hasty retreat, suffers heavy losses, and finally reaches Ceva on the 7th of June—Suchet and Gazan join forces.

IN 1800, another brilliant commander was wielding the sword in defence of the Republic on the Western Riviera. This officer was Suchet, one of the three Napoleon classed as the best of the French generals.* His military talent was of the highest order; he had served as chief of the staff to Joubert and Championnet, and when Moreau was about to quit Italy to assume the command of the Army of the Rhine, he said of him that Suchet was one of the best chiefs of the staff the French army possessed.

When Massena arrived from Switzerland to take up the command of the Army of Italy, he brought with him Oudinot as his chief of the staff. On his way to Genova, Massena fell in with Suchet at Fréjus, and as he had known him for a long time

* "I then asked Napoleon," writes O'Meara, in his "Memoirs," "which of the French generals was in his opinion the most skilful? 'I should find it difficult,' he replied, 'to decide; but I am inclined to name Suchet. Massena was formerly the most skilful, but we may now consider him as no longer in existence. Suchet, Clausel, and Gérard are, I think, the best French generals.'" What great soldiers fought with the Army of Italy in 1800! There were Massena, Suchet, Soult, Clausel, Oudinot, Mouton, and others.

and appreciated his abilities, he was anxious to retain him, and so conferred on him the command of his left wing. In this manner Suchet found himself at the head of two or three divisions; but so weak in numbers that the whole did not approach in strength a really complete division.

In Melas's successful operations of the 6th of April, Suchet had some encounters with Elsnitz's command. Threatened as he was by very considerable forces, and hearing of the capture of Savona, he determined to retire from the Apennines, to concentrate at Borghetto. Gorupp had harassed his left in the valley of the Tanaro; Ulm had occupied Sette Pani; Fort San Stefano had fallen into the hands of the Austrians, and Elsnitz, with Morzin's division, occupied Monte San Giacomo. Separated from Massena, Suchet was now left to contend against greatly superior numbers. For a month he had to fight against Elsnitz's corps, and later also against Melas, when, advancing from Vado, the latter combined his forces with those of Elsnitz.

The Court of Vienna, alarmed at the great superiority of the French army on the Rhine, and by the immense preparations the First Consul was making to carry the war to the Danube, was urging Melas to make a powerful diversion in Provence. Melas judged that the so-much-wished-for moment had arrived for entering France, and moved his forces towards the Var. He advanced at the head of 30,000 men against Suchet.

Massena fully recognized the great importance of re-establishing his connection with Suchet, and determined to effect this by assuming a vigorous offensive. His orders to Suchet were to co-operate as much as it lay in his power with the efforts he was about to make on the 10th at Montenotte, with the object of reuniting the two wings which had been driven asunder by Melas's attack on the 6th.

Suchet thereupon took the following steps. Leaving Pouget to protect Borghetto, he moved on Bardinetto and Calissano on the evening of the 9th, and with little trouble dislodged the Austrian posts. Séras's brigade was left to guard the issues of the Bormida, and Clausel was directed to march on Melongo.

Elsnitz occupied a favourable position; his left rested on Finale, the Austrians occupying the small fort there. With the centre he held Monte San Giacomo. On his right at Sette Pani lay the camp of Ulm's brigade.

Under cover of a dense fog, Clausel sent General Compans to carry Melongo, separated Ulm from the rest of the Austrian forces, and attacked him with vigour. Elsnitz, made aware of Clausel's attack, reinforced the garrison of Fort Finale, and gathered the bulk of his forces round San Giacomo with the object of supporting Ulm in case the latter should be seriously attacked. Suchet, who had come up during the night with reinforcements, reanimated the spirits of the troops. On the following day General Compans led the 7th Light up the mountain before daybreak, and, favoured by a fog, totally surprised Ulm's troops. Ably seconded by Clausel's forces, he hurled the enemy on Biestre with a loss of between 1300 and 1400 prisoners.

* * The whole of that day, Suchet heard a heavy cannonade in the direction of Sassello, and having by demonstrations before San Giacomo riveted the attention of the Austrians to that point, might during the night have moved thither, and thus have effected a junction with the right wing. Such a masterly movement, notwithstanding the important results which might have accrued from it, might, looking at the lassitude of his troops and at the great dearth of provisions, have placed him in a highly dangerous situation. Suchet considered it preferable to attack Monte San Giacomo, and after carrying it to descend on Savona.

Suchet ordered Monte San Giacomo to be attacked on the 12th. The attack was carried out by three columns, commanded by Generals Compans, Solignac, and Séras. Elsnitz, however, was in a state to meet the attack; his defence was brisk, and the French were soon compelled to retire with heavy loss. During the night Suchet withdrew his forces to Melongo and Sette Pani. On the following day he extended his right by coming down to Finale. The left he pushed towards Garessio, so that the enemy might not be tempted to turn his position by advancing along the valley of the Tanaro.

The uncertainty as to how Massena's attacks had fared kept Suchet inactive for two or three days. Massena, on his side, after his check at Albissola on the 15th of April, was disturbed at not hearing from Suchet. Seeing how impatient his chief was to learn the result of Suchet's operations, Oudinot volunteered to go and confer with him and to be the bearer of any fresh instructions.

Oudinot, conducted by a certain Bavastro, captain of a

privateer, and accompanied by his aide-de-camp, left Varaggio on the 16th, passed through the blockading fleet, and, after having a hundred times risked capture or destruction from the enemy's fire, succeeded in landing at Loano in safety. Writing to Bonaparte on the 17th of April, Oudinot confesses how Massena was fully alive to the danger which encompassed the enterprise, and how it was simply owing to the darkness of the night that he was able to carry it into effect. He reached Suchet's headquarters at Melongo. Having given him his orders to attack the enemy and to make a brave attempt to reach Savona, Oudinot faced the same risks, and returned to Genova, bringing to Massena a detailed account of the position occupied by Suchet, and of the total of his effective forces.*

Acting on the orders Oudinot had brought with him, Suchet called in all his posts from Murialto, Ronchi, and the heights in the neighbourhood of Monte San Giacomo, and on the evening of the 19th took post about the village of Bormida.

The mountain was to be carried during the night. He formed three columns; one under the orders of Brigadier-General Mazas was to take the right, General Jablonowsky was to lead the centre one, and Compans and Clausel had charge of the main attack on the left. Séras and Blondeau commanded two small reserve columns marching in the interval of the other columns.

After the combat at Voltri, Melas had, on the 18th, sent the brigades of Bellegarde, Brentano, and Lattermann to reinforce Elsnitz. These brigades had not yet arrived, but knowing that he was about to be reinforced, and warned by what had occurred the previous day, Elsnitz got before daybreak sufficient troops under arms to overcome the French. Suchet's columns quitted Bormida at one o'clock in the morning, and took the directions assigned to them. Jablonowsky, however, in place of waiting until the lateral columns had reached the foot of the mountain, pushed beyond Mallere and showed himself to the Austrians. Elsnitz then sent down a mass of men which overthrew the

* Oudinot, the commander of Napoleon's grenadiers, was always to be found in the front rank in a fight, and wherever danger was thickest, risking his life in the *mêlée*. His body was covered with scars and wounds received in hand-to-hand conflicts. Of all Napoleon's marshals few could boast of so marvellous a military career, of such frequent and narrow escapes from death, of so much blood spilt for the honour of his country. Justly proud of being commanded by such a brave man, the Grenadiers called him their father.

brigade and drove it back on Mallere, where Séras's forces were just arriving; then, profiting by the time the French took to rally, Elsnitz charged in succession Mazas's and Clausel's columns, and routed them completely. Had Elsnitz shown more enterprise he might have captured one-half of the French forces. The thing was not difficult. He had only to direct a column between Mallere and Bormida.

When all hope of forming a junction with Soult came to an end, Suchet realized that to relieve the strain on Genova it behoved him to find work for as large a number of Austrian troops as possible. As he had become a thorn in the side of the Austrian general, Melas decided to get rid of him definitely. Having left Ott with a body of 25,000 men to undertake the blockade of Genova, he marched, on the 27th of April, with Lattermann's brigade to join Saint Julien somewhere about Savona, and to assume supreme command of Elsnitz's column.

At that period Kaim was holding Piedmont with 25,000 men. Melas considered that at a season when the snows had not melted such a large force was wasted in Piedmont, and could be more advantageously employed elsewhere than keeping watch on Turreau's division. What the French had at that period were some 6000 men of General Turreau's division on the Mont Cenis, and a small detachment under Lesuire encamped on the Col di Tenda. There was no reason to be anxious on their account. So Kaim was ordered to send some of his troops to reinforce Melas. He sent some troops and Piedmontese militia to reinforce Gorupp's force, then operating on the Tanaro before Ceva. Knesevich's brigade, moving by Vernante, had to threaten the Col di Tenda, while detachments were to show themselves towards the passes of Finestre and Vinadio.

Suchet was holding a dangerous position about Borghetto, and had decided to defend it, and, if beaten, to retire behind the Roya. He had a very small force, quite insufficient to occupy a line six leagues in extent. Clausel's division had its right on the sea in front of Borghetto, and the left at Castel-Bianco. His outposts held Loano and the heights of Bardinetto and Rocca-Barbena. Pouget occupied Castel-Bianco, Caprauna, and Ponte di Nave in the Tanaro valley. Blondeau, with two half-brigades, was in reserve at Lecco. Suchet's headquarters were moved to Albenga on the 27th.

In commenting on Suchet's activity, Mathieu Dumas remarks

how that general remained faithful to the following precept: that when one is engaged in mountain warfare he should not consider himself bound to observe a strictly passive defensive; but, on the contrary, should increase his movements and attacks, because, even given that their issue is not always favourable, their effect at least is certain, inasmuch as the adversary is everywhere harassed, everywhere discovered, and is often disconcerted at the very moment when he believes he is about to deliver the most telling strokes.

Melas had arrived at Savona* on the 29th of April, with the troops intended to reinforce Elsnitz, and his presence imparted fresh vigour to the operations. The Austrians quitted Monte San Giacomo, and occupied Melongo and Sette Pani. On the 1st of May, General Lattermann drove the French advanced posts out of Loano, whilst Morzin, at the head of three brigades, moved on Monte Calvo. Elsnitz, with two more brigades, marched by Bardinetto so as to assail Monte Lingo, as soon as Gorupp was seen to be advancing on Monte Galera; then he was to menace the French left.

The general attack was fixed for the 2nd. Séras, threatened by Elsnitz on the side of Monte Lingo, and overpowered by Morzin, who had issued smartly from Monte Calvo, could not hold out long against such superior forces, and deemed himself fortunate in being able to reach Sambucco in fair order. As Gorupp arrived at Galera, Elsnitz hastened to join him. On the side of the sea Lattermann, assisted by the fire of some British frigates, carried Borghetto, but could not quite overthrow the French right beyond it. The day had gone against the French, and Suchet, fearing lest he might be turned, ordered the retreat, which was carried out during the night.

After this the French took post: Pouget at Rezzo and Mezza-Luna, with his right resting on Monte di Toria; Clausel, with four half-brigades, occupied the ground between Mezza-Luna and Diano in front of Oneglia. A thousand men, under Séras, were posted at Triola, to cover the Col Ardente and to connect Pouget's troops with those under Lesuire.

By this time Suchet had heard of the advance of the Army of Reserve on Geneva, and how Turreau had captured Mont Genis. He hoped that the news would compel Melas to lead a

* On the 17th of April, the citadel of Savona held a French garrison of 750 men and supplies for ten days.

portion of his troops back into Piedmont, allowing the French some rest in the valley of Oneglia, as long, at least, as the Col di Tenda remained in their hands.

The Austrians remained inactive for four days. Very early on the morning of the 7th of May, all their columns moved simultaneously. Gorupp led for Col Ardente. A portion of Morzin's division and Lattermann's brigade under Zach attacked the French right. Elsnitz was told off to carry Monte di Toria and the heights of Cessio, while Knesevich had to carry the Col di Tenda.

Melas had gathered together from 15,000 to 18,000 men, and the French were outnumbered at all points. Zach drove Clausel's division back as far as San Lorenzo. Elsnitz was even more fortunate, for he defeated Pouget, enveloped his right on the Monte di Toria and Cessio, and captured 1400 prisoners. Pouget was fortunate in being able to effect his retreat from Monte Calvo by Borgo Mario and Carpasio. Gorupp occupied Col Ardente and Mezza-Luna, and Knesevich's column drove Lesuire from the Col di Tenda and joined Gorupp's force at Saint Dalmazio.

The Austrian dispositions were faulty. Situated as the enemy was, with a flank resting on the sea, and that flank exposed to attack by the British men-of-war, the most sound process would have been to have brought all weight to bear on the French left. In the combats of the 2nd and 7th no attempt whatever was made to seize the French line of communications. It was an error simply to drive them back on their natural line of retreat, when the longer they remained on the coast the more certain became their capture; whereas the further Suchet was driven back and the nearer he approached the French frontier, the more likely he was to obtain reinforcements. Nothing demonstrates better how wrong Melas had been throughout not to operate strongly on the French communications than Suchet's speedy retreat the moment he learnt that Knesevich had got possession of the Col di Tenda.

Suchet in his retreat was not only molested by the Austrians, but also by the inhabitants of the valleys, who had risen and made common cause with their would-be deliverers.

The combat of the 7th of May did great honour to the French troops. The Austrians displayed great vigour and combination in their attacks, and the French would have been

surrounded and destroyed, had not all the troops during this bloody contest fought with the courage of despair. But what redounds still more to their credit was that they had been seriously enfeebled by want and privations. Such was the dearth of provisions that a ration loaf was divided amongst fifteen men.

Nothing does so much honour to the soldier as when he fights hard and strives to do his duty gallantly with scanty nourishment, with barely enough bread to keep body and soul together.

When Suchet became aware of the capture of the Col di Tenda, and how Knesevich had advanced beyond Saorgio, he owned that the line of the Roya was no longer capable of being disputed, and that no time was to be lost in regaining the frontier. He had fought stubbornly, but with the principal positions in the hands of the enemy, and outflanked on his left, he determined, and with ample reason, to fall back behind the line of the Var. Time was precious, consequently the retreat had to be carried out as speedily as possible. The troops, which after the combat on the previous day had retired behind the Taggia, continued to fall back on Ventimiglia on the night of the 8th. Having destroyed the bridge on the Roya, placed a garrison in the fort, and sent Coussaud with 800 men to reinforce Lesuire, Suchet continued to retire by Mentone, Villafranca, and Nice.

Lesuire, after abandoning Sospello, had taken post at St. Pons on the 10th of May, so that the French forces were now all on the left bank of the Var. On the 11th, they abandoned Nice, and crossed the Var.

Suchet set at once to reorganize his forces, to which were now being added some reinforcements. He divided the troops into four divisions. One, commanded by Clausel, was posted on the left bank of the river, to protect the completion of the bridge-head; the second, under the orders of Rochambeau, lined the Var from its mouth as far as Pujet; General Ménard, with the third, took post by Le Broc; Garnier commanded the fourth, located between Le Broc and Malaursène beyond the Esteron, connecting by small detachments with Entrevaux, then held by part of Turreau's division. General Quesnel commanded the reserve, composed of some squadrons of cavalry and stationed at Saint Laurent, in rear of the bridge on the Var.

Having made a resolution to defend the bridge over that river to the very last, Suchet despatched his aide-de-camp Ricard to Paris with despatches for the First Consul, asking for adequate reinforcements. Ricard had to follow Bonaparte to Dijon, Geneva, and Lausanne. In the last of these towns he overtook the First Consul, and strove to picture to him the dismal situation of the small corps which was left to protect the department of Provence. But Bonaparte relied on Suchet's energy and mettle, and was pleased to hear that Melas was dipping more and more into the territory of the Maritime Alps, leaving to him the plains of Lombardy uncovered. He folded the despatch, and listened to what the aide-de-camp had to say with the greatest complacence. At that moment he was interrupted by the entrance of one of his ministers. Bonaparte advanced to meet him with a mirthful look, exclaiming, "I hold Melas in my pocket" ("*Je tiens Melas dans ma poche*").

Suchet did the best he could with the forces he had. His corps barely amounted to 8000 combatants, nevertheless these troops were inured to war, and were led by zealous and able commanders.

General Saint Hilaire, who commanded the 8th Military Division, hastened to the Var, collecting on his way at Marseilles and Toulon all the available troops. Several companies of National Guards placed themselves under his orders. Soon the troops concentrated on the Var were raised by conscripts and National Guards to 14,000 men.

The Austrians closely followed the French. On the 11th of May, the same day that Suchet crossed the Var, Melas made his entry into the city of Nice. We can well picture to ourselves the feeling of pride which filled the troops, both officers and men. At last they had set foot on the territory of the Republic, after having suffered humiliating defeats by her armies, and seen them victorious at the gates of Vienna. An English man-of-war had brought the welcome intelligence that the English troops had embarked at Mahon, and were on their way to invest Toulon. This report, however, turned out untrue.

The Austrians took post parallel to the river, their line extending from the sea as far as Aspromonte. They took the precaution of covering their camps with intrenchments and abatis.

On retiring before Melas, Suchet had left garrisons in the

fort at Ventimiglia, in the castle of Villafranca, and in Fort Montalban. The last of these was situated on a height which separated the bay of Villafranca from the roadstead of Nice, and dominated both towns and the course of the Paglione. On the fort was mounted a semaphore, and in this way Suchet managed to have in rear of the Austrians an instrument which reported all their movements, either on the side of Genova by way of the Turbia, or on the road to Turin by the valley of the Paglione.

The position on the Var first of all demanded attention. The Var is a mountain stream generally fordable, but which by heavy rains becomes swollen into an impetuous torrent in a few hours. The fords consequently are not safe. Suchet's line of defence was short: the left rested on some rugged hills; the right, some 1300 yards beyond them, on the sea. The position which it was Suchet's purpose to defend had been always considered a weak one, for it could only be made safe by extending the defences as far as the French Alps, which at that point are ten or twelve leagues from the sea. The French generals, however, had for four years after their entry into the country of Nice spent considerable attention in protecting the approaches to the bridge by the construction of a number of batteries on the right bank of the river. A bridge-head was now hastily constructed on the left bank, and armed with some heavy ordnance, which had been brought up from Antibes; these pieces were manned by some gunners belonging to the coast artillery. The bridge-head was by this and other measures made the centre of the defence. Batteries were run up and armed on the right bank of the stream, and mortars placed near the river mouth, to keep British ships from approaching the shore and bearing upon the French position. Having by these and other measures rendered the position tenable, Suchet confidently awaited Melas's attack.

He had not long to wait. On the 13th of May, Elsnitz, Lattermann, and Bellegarde attacked the bridge-head, but, though the new defensive works had been not more than traced, the Austrians were driven back. This first success inspired confidence in the defenders, who pushed on their works with great energy.

The post continually brought from Paris news of the progress of the Army of Reserve, from which the *morale* of the troops

and the spirits of the population were raised; both had become very hopeful.

On the 18th of May, on the receipt of alarming information from Kaim, Melas decided on quitting Nice and repairing to Turin. He left Nice on the 20th of May, and by the 26th was at Turin. Elsnitz, with 18,000 men, was left to confront Suchet. His men were divided into five brigades. Lattermann and Weidenfeld were on the left towards the Bridge of Saint Laurent; Ulm and Bellegarde in the centre towards Aspromonte; Gorupp on the right, on the Tinea. A sixth brigade, commanded by Saint Julien, joined Elsnitz's force after the capitulation of Savona.

Elsnitz did not dare undertake anything against the bridge-head on the Var, as his artillery had not been able to come by the Corniche road. He had consequently to rest satisfied with some paltry demonstrations. The time was not wasted by Suchet. Aided by General Campredon, an officer of great ability and energy, he completed the defensive works, and made them strong enough to resist a determined attack.

The apparent necessity of soon having to call Elsnitz's troops back to Piedmont to confront the French columns which were descending from the Alps, decided Melas to attempt an attack of the bridge on the Var, in the hope that the capture of that important post would thoroughly paralyze Suchet's forces.

The Austrian heavy artillery had at last been landed at Nice. It was drawn hence, and placed in batteries, which had already been prepared. At the break of day on the 22nd of May the guns suddenly opened fire. The brigades of Lattermann and of Bellegarde, six battalions of infantry and eleven of grenadiers, advanced in three columns against the French works defended by Rochambeau. These columns were protected on their right by a powerful battery of twelve guns, and on the left by the fire of several frigates and smaller British ships, armed with heavy guns. Thus, with both flanks well protected, the Austrians delivered two vigorous attacks, but unsuccessfully; for the French, informed of the assailants' proceedings by the semaphore of Fort Montalban, made suitable dispositions, and met each attack with great courage.

The attack was stubborn, the defence brilliant. The assailants were mown down by grape and canister, and were received by a heavy and well-directed musketry fire. The

bravest of them fell, the rest were severely shaken and disheartened. After a time the impossibility of carrying the position was recognized; the troops were withdrawn, and fell back on their camp, having suffered very sensible losses.

The Austrian commander after this check decided to try to cross the Var further up, and had he succeeded in turning the French position, there would have remained nothing for Suchet to do but to fall back on Cannes and the defiles of the Esterelles. However, from this he was saved by the news which reached Melas at Coni. On the 22nd, he heard there of Turreau's attack on Susa, how Bonaparte had crossed the Great Saint Bernard at the head of an imposing army, and how his advanced guard under Lannes had captured Ivrea.

A strong French column had made its way down the valley of Aosta, and at this date Melas simply conjectured that it was a powerful diversion intended to let him relinquish his hold on Genova and relieve the pressure on Suchet. In support of this, we find him on the 23rd of May writing to Lord Keith from Sevigliano: "The enemy has encompassed the fort of Bard, and has advanced up to the castle of Ivrea. It is very clear that his aim is to release Massena." Even Turreau's advance by Mont Cenis was explicable enough, for were the French Government bent on relieving Genova, what would be more natural than for them to send a force from Lyons by that route? In fact, this column so thoroughly showed its object that Kaim went to Avigliano to reconnoitre Turreau's real strength. Zach, led into error, had Kaim's corps, which was already stronger than Turreau's, reinforced by Knesevich's brigade.

When Melas started from Nice with his reserve, he ordered Elsnitz, in case he was threatened by superior forces, to withdraw the remaining troops and to take up a position in rear of the line of the Roya with the right resting on the Col di Tenda, the centre on the heights of Breglio, and the left on Ventimiglia. A number of Engineer officers and a detachment of sappers had been already sent there to prepare intrenchments for covering the retirement from the Var.

The instructions given to Elsnitz had reference to two distinct contingencies. If threatened by a superior force, he was to withdraw his troops beyond the Roya. Should he be forced from that line of defence, and Genova still held out, he was enjoined to dispute the ground stubbornly up to Savona, and

there he was to defend himself up to the very last. In case, however, Genova should have fallen, he was ordered to leave 2000 men in Liguria, and with the remaining 16,000 men to follow the road of the Col di Tenda.

Elsnitz, like Ott at Genova, could not resist the desire of scoring a victory. This may have been thought quite a natural ambition after so much brave blood spilt, still it showed that neither of them had a proper military insight nor the ability to appreciate the situation to a nicety. The Austrian generals did not recognize how imperative it had become, when an able and daring general had descended into Italy with a fresh army, to concentrate their forces, which were mostly scattered at that time along the Riviera di Ponente.

Elsnitz did not comply with the instructions he had received from Melas. He had arranged with the English a plan of attack against the position held by Suchet, and did not at all relish having to abandon the undertaking without making an effort. He longed to burn the bridge, and to destroy the intrenchments lining the right bank of the Var. Suchet, nevertheless, made him pay dear for his attempt, which was not crowned with success. Elsnitz decided, before breaking up his camp and complying with the orders he had received, to deliver a fresh attack, as the best way for carrying out the intentions of the commander-in-chief. Considerable forces took part in this attack on the French position on the 27th of May, but the Austrians were no more successful on this than they had been on the former occasion.

They opened fire at about three in the afternoon with twenty guns, mostly of heavy calibre. The cannonade was kept up till ten in the evening, when the assault was delivered. The French, informed betimes by the semaphore of Montalban, were ready to receive the enemy. The Austrian grenadiers moved to the attack with great resolution, but were stopped by a heavy fire of musketry and artillery. The assault, suspended for an hour, was resumed with greater fury. The Austrian columns advanced, preceded by 200 pioneers furnished with fire-balls, fascines, and hatchets to cut down and demolish the abatis, but all in vain: these brave men never got beyond the foot of the intrenchments, their supports were swept away by the artillery; all their gallant endeavours failed, and they had to be recalled from their dangerous position.

The next day Elsnitz, afraid lest the French should forestall him at the Col di Braus and at Sospello, ordered a general retreat. First, however, he caused two brigades of grenadiers to attack Clause's troops, which had advanced beyond the bridge-head of Saint Laurent. That same day, the 28th, Ménard attacked the brigades of Ulm and Saint Julien close by Aspromonte.

At 11 p.m. that same day, the whole of Elsnitz's forces set out for the Col di Braus, covered by Lattermann's brigade, which had been directed to occupy Monte Grosso to the north of Nice, and afterwards to fall back on the heights of La Turbia overlooking Monaco. Elsnitz had shipped his heavy ordnance, and sent it direct to Leghorn. The heavier of the field-guns had marched for the Col di Tenda, and he did not keep with the troops more than ten or twelve very light pieces.

Suchet followed to the letter the instructions he had received from Bonaparte; these were "to keep in check a body equal to your own," and it was this and more that Suchet did.

The reinforcements brought by General Saint Hilaire had raised his force to 13,465 men of all arms. This was divided as follows:—

	Men.	
Brigade Quesnel ...	640	; cavalry advanced guard.
„ Séras ...	942	
„ Brunet ...	1451	} Clause's division, right.
„ Jablonowsky ...	1305	
„ Solignac ...	1525	} Rochambeau's division, centre.
„ Lesuire ...	1441	
„ Delaunay ...	1600	} Mengaud's division
„ Calvin ...	1420	
„ Jonais-Laviolais	780	} Garnier's division
„ Beaumont ...	1611	
Artillery and Engineers	750	} Left wing under Ménard.
	<hr/>	
Total ...	13,465	

The bridge on the Var and the communications with France had necessarily to be guarded, and in resuming the offensive Suchet was not able to mobilize much more than 9000 men. Elsnitz had still with him 15,000 men, all fine infantry. To the superiority in numbers on the Austrian side should be added superior quality, for many of Suchet's men were young soldiers

and National Guards inexperienced in war. Rose* quotes a report from Lord W. Bentinck to the Admiralty dated Alesandria, June 15th: "I am sorry to say that General Elsnitz's corps, which was composed of the grenadiers of the finest regiments in the (Austrian) army, arrived here in a most deplorable condition. His men had already suffered much from want of provisions and hardships. He was pursued in his retreat by General Suchet, who had with him about 7000 men. There was an action at Ponte di Nave, in which the French failed; and it will appear scarcely credible, when I tell your lordship, that the Austrians lost in this retreat, from fatigue only, nearly 5000 men; and I have no doubt that General Suchet will notify this to the world as a great victory." †

The moment the semaphore at Fort Montalban announced that the Austrians were retiring, Suchet issued from his intrenchments and took up the pursuit. He may possibly not have known the exact reason for their withdrawal, but he justly surmised that if they were retiring it was a clear sign that grave events had taken place in Piedmont or in Lombardy. Every consideration demanded that he should follow on their track, drive them back, and inflict on them considerable losses.

Suchet did not repeat Melas's error when driving back the French a few weeks before. He quickly detected how the best plan consisted in manœuvring by his left, so as to deprive the enemy of the important communications with the rest of their army by way of the Col di Tenda. By doing so, he would menace Elsnitz's retreat, would compel him to withdraw from the Riviera di Ponente, and rid Massena of him. By acting in this manner he would also more readily join the First Consul, should his army be operating in Piedmont.

When Suchet issued his orders to his divisions, those on his left, 4000 men under Ménard, were directed to advance on Duranus and Lucerame; those of Rochambeau, with Brunet's brigade, marched in the direction of Sospello. Clausel led Séras's weak brigade on Monaco, following the coast route; at a distance of half a day's march came Beaumont's reserve. To Clausel

* Rose, "Napoleon Bonaparte," vol. i. p. 253.

† The date of this report appears somewhat strange, for the events of the previous day—the total defeat of the Austrian army—hardly made the above facts worthy of being reported.

had been assigned the task of moving along the seashore with the object of molesting the Austrian left.

When Elsnitz quitted the Var he took position on the line of the Roya, which from the Col di Tenda stretches to Ventimiglia and the sea, a total distance of twenty-five leagues.

To turn the right of the Austrians and to gain possession of the main road leading through the Col di Tenda, Suchet engaged in a series of combats which the nature of the country more than the relative situation of the two sides necessitated.

Suchet's left, under Ménard, was divided into two columns. One of these moved up the valley of the Vesubia, the other went by Col de la Pietra in the direction of the camp of Milleforche to Monte Lauthione. The object of the manœuvre was to turn the Colle di Brouis, which the Austrians seemed intent on defending obstinately. General Rochambeau in the mean while was reconnoitring the valley of the Bevera, keeping touch with the scouts of the right wing.

The intention was to seize Tenda, and with this object in view Suchet ordered Ménard to carry the position of Col di Braus, whilst Rochambeau advanced on Baolet and La Penna, so as to surround the Austrian rear-guard, which held the Colle di Brouis, and so cut off its retreat.

The manœuvre was quite successful. Ménard carried the Col di Braus and captured 400 prisoners; the enemy's rear-guard was cut off and captured almost to a man. Bellegarde and Gorupp, who were at Breglio, just escaped, but with the loss of their baggage.

The position of Saorgio had lost much of its importance since the fort had been razed. Nevertheless, the difficulties of the ground rendered that locality, with those of Milleforche, of Monte Lauthione, and of Col di Braus, formidable positions only, however, when sufficiently manned. The Austrians had overlooked this last condition, and had disseminated their force injudiciously.

The capture of the Col di Braus led to that of the redoubts on Monte Lauthione, and on the camp at Milleforche, where the Austrians lost 600 prisoners. The posts of Saorgio and Fontana had been evacuated. Ménard occupied the road to Tenda, closing the way to such of the Austrians as were moving in that direction.

On the 3rd, the French occupied the Col di Tenda, which

had been turned by way of the Col Sabione; it was feebly contested. Rochambeau's two columns advanced rapidly, one by the Colle Ardente, the other in rear of Ventimiglia by the left bank of the Roya. Elsnitz was compelled to beat a hasty retreat, abandoning some prisoners, his baggage, and artillery, which could not quit the Roya valley in time.

Suchet, who was keen to draw Elsnitz away from the coast road, pushed forward three brigades to Pieve, a point of great importance for the Austrians in the communications between the valleys of Oneglia and the Tanaro. Their retreat to the north or south of the Apennines depended at that moment on news arriving from Genova.

About that time Melas had despatched a courier to Elsnitz, bearing orders to fall back at once on Alessandria. The courier found himself at Tenda at the moment of Gorupp's defeat; his progress was stopped, and he was only able to reach Elsnitz's headquarters by making a considerable *détour*.

Suchet marched by the Colle Ardente to the valley of the Taggia. On the 4th, he occupied Badelucco, Andagna, and Mendalica on the parting of the waters of the Arosia and Tanaro. Ménard came down the Col di Tenda by the sources of the Tanaro, and occupied Ormea, thus menacing Elsnitz's new line of operations had he chosen to march north of the Apennines.

Having left 200 men in the fort at Ventimiglia, Elsnitz marched rapidly on Pieve. There he concentrated his forces, and awaited the entire evacuation of the posts on the Riviera di Genova, and of an immense convoy of baggage and ammunition, which employed about 5000 mules, and which was already wending its way slowly to Ceva. The appearance of Ménard's advance-guard making for Ormea, and the rapidity of Rochambeau's and Clausel's movements, which were directed on Pieve, made the Austrians accelerate their retreat. On the 5th they still had a rear-guard at Pieve; this was attacked and overcome by the columns of Ménard, Mengaud, and Clausel. The French captured 1500 prisoners and six standards, pursuing the rest up to the valley of the Tanaro.

Suchet had no enemy now before him, and only very few marches more remained to be made, and then Massena could hear the sound of his guns. Elsnitz had been pretty well cut up in his retreat from Nice; he reached Ceva on the 7th of

June with 8000 men. Reckoning that he had quitted the Var with 15,000 men, this disastrous retreat had cost him nearly one-half of his force, or 7000 men.

In his report to the Archduke Charles, dated Piacenza, 19th June, 1800, Melas admitted that the 19,000 men Elsnitz had at Nice and on the Var had been reduced to 6000. He thus admits a loss of 13,000 men.* Jomini sets down the loss of the Austrians at 10,000 men.

Whatever may have been the exact figure of Elsnitz's losses, the result cannot be measured from that alone. His hasty retreat and the inability of the Austrian officers to stay Suchet's vigorous pursuit must have told on the entire column. The self-respect of the troops and the confidence in their officers received a rude shock from which Elsnitz's troops certainly did not recover by the 14th of June.

Suchet surmised that the reasons which had made Elsnitz beat a hasty retreat would also put an end to the blockade of Genova, and that the two parts of the Army of Italy would soon be able to effect their junction. Convinced that henceforth there would be no obstacle to bar the road to Genova, Suchet, who had advanced between Albenga and Garessio, marched for Monte San Giacomo, but was soon apprised of the fall of Genova and of Gazan's march to Voltri. The two forces came together on the 6th of June between Finale and Savona, and the French at once established their outposts on Montenotte.

When he recovered the ground lost in May, Suchet astonished the inhabitants by his forbearance. They were already surprised by the very rapid change of fortune of the French, and expected to be punished for having risen in arms against them, but Suchet conciliated them by mild treatment, got them to lay down their arms and keep the communications unmolested.

If Suchet's retreat to the Var in the face of very superior numbers was considered a very creditable achievement, how much more praise does he not deserve for his operations after he resumed the offensive? In less than a week he reconquered every inch of ground he had been compelled to abandon to the Austrians since the 1st of May, and he did this acting in a very difficult country, defeating time after time an enemy whose strength was nearly double that of his own, and driving them with very considerable loss from positions naturally strong.

* De Cugnac, vol. ii. p. 437.

After being joined by Gazan's division, Suchet proposed to Massena to cross the Apennines, to throw themselves on the rear of the Austrians, and to strive to co-operate with the First Consul in the battles which he foresaw to be imminent. Massena, however, had injured himself when landing at Finale; besides, at that time he was very wroth with Bonaparte for not having at once, after entering Italy, proceeded to his help when so sorely pressed at Genova.

Massena had some good grounds for discontent. Bonaparte had deceived him, for he had promised by the despatches sent by Franceschi to proceed after his arrival at Ivrea, from the 28th to the 30th Floréal, by lengthy marches to Genova. More than sufficient time had elapsed, still he did not put in an appearance; and when he did move from Ivrea, he marched in the opposite direction, leaving the beleaguered city to its fate.

Massena's part in the campaign was to detain the Austrians in the Riviera of Genova till Bonaparte had time to cross the Alps and strike them in rear. Owing, however, to his march on Milan, that much-to-be-hoped-for event, their defeat in battle, had been put off for twenty days.

His troops, as well as those of Suchet, had experienced hardships untold, had suffered heavy losses both during the siege and blockade, and in the retreat to the Var and pursuit of the Austrians. They needed rest, and possibly were not equal to any very great exertion.

Of all the French generals, Suchet was the most upright and honest. He was keen to take part in the decisive operations which Bonaparte was about to carry out, and it was with some difficulty that he prevailed on Massena to allow him to take the road to Acqui. His first orders had been to march to the Col di Tenda, and to bring up the artillery which could not come by the Corniche road. The presence of some of his troops at Acqui had an important effect on the battle of the 14th of June, as we shall see in Chapter XIII.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ARMY OF RESERVE.

Bonaparte desires to blot out all the misfortunes which had lately befallen the French arms in Italy—Weak state of the Army of Italy—An Army of Reserve decreed on the 7th of January, 1800—Raised with great rapidity—Berthier appointed to its command—Berthier's ability—Bonaparte deceives the spies at Dijon—All preparations studiously concealed—Strength and distribution of the Army of Reserve—Marmont dislikes to command the artillery—The transport service—Berthier's instructions for the supply of biscuit—The First Consul quits Paris for the army.

By the end of 1799 France had two armies in the field, one of about 120,000 men on the Rhine, the other of something between 25,000 and 30,000 men in Liguria. In the interior of the Republic most of the available troops were occupied in the Vendée.

Bonaparte was devoured by an eager desire to see the Austrians out of the fair provinces which had been the cradle of his first renown. Shortly after his elevation to the Consulate, when his overtures for peace had been rejected by England and Austria, he began to put his plans into execution. In the winter of 1799–1800 he had avowed that he would wrest Italy from the Austrians. He did what he had promised, and in less time than it seemed possible for any one else to do it. What he said was not an empty boast, for he knew the extent of his genius and the wideness of his power.

His great design was to obliterate all the misfortunes which had befallen the French army in Italy, and to restore to it all the prestige of past glories. To do this, to carry his plan into effect, a third army was needed, and this he set about raising. His design, which for any one else would have been rightly considered absolute folly and temerity, was for Bonaparte a real stroke of genius. And these soldiers, which he seemed to have raised from nothing, were the conquerors of Marengo.

In the early days of the year 1800, France had an army in Italy not only numerically inferior to that of the Austrians, but dispirited from the defeats sustained during the past year. A very narrow strip of country on the Riviera di Genova was all that remained to her of her former conquests. How to render prompt and effective assistance to the Army of Italy was a problem bristling with difficulties. That army needed very large reinforcements, but the troops could only arrive after long and painful marches. Once in Liguria there was nothing for their subsistence. There was not even enough to feed and pay the troops that were already there.

The difficulty was even greater for the cavalry, of which a large number was needed. Such was the dearth of forage, that the little of it procurable was not more than was required for feeding the horses of the generals and their staffs.

How could the army be reinforced in artillery when there were no roads fit for its passage? Besides, here again cropped up the question of forage.

The sea, the only way of getting large cargoes into port, was in every direction patrolled by the enemy's ships of war; and it was out of the question to think of establishing large magazines in a country devastated by sickness.

The actual state of the Army of Italy was so deplorable, that with great difficulty could the *morale* of a reinforcing army be kept from being undermined. The troops marching along would hear nothing but bad news and horrible details, which could not but have an extremely lowering effect.

We may well imagine that all these points did not escape the perspicuous mind of the First Consul, who was familiar with the territory occupied by the Army of Italy. In contrast to all this there were the special advantages presented by an advance on the central positions occupied by the enemy's army, by an irruption from the side of Switzerland into Upper Piedmont, which the configuration of the frontier permitted.

With all the semblance of wishing to maintain a purely defensive attitude, Bonaparte prepared in secret to assume a vigorous offensive. He succeeded in this, and deceived every one. For whilst pretending that he was neglecting the interest of the army, he was in reality studiously working and paving the way to attain its well-being and glory. His forces were, however, to be studiously kept hidden from sight, and to come

in view only at the moment when they would for the second time be descending from the slopes of the Alps into the plains of Italy.

With consummate foresight the documents which referred to his preparations were carefully removed from the War Office. Plans shared, the saying goes, are easily spread; and plans spread are easily baulked. Bonaparte desired nothing so much as to conceal his plans. The secret was in the keeping of a very few trusty officers, on whose discretion the First Consul could fully count. In 1796, he had failed in surprising the Austrians in their winter quarters; now he trusted he would be more fortunate, and be able to appear in their midst when least expected. Bonaparte thus writes on the 25th of January to the minister of war: "You will keep thoroughly secret the formation of the said army, even amongst your office staff, from whom you will ask nothing beyond the absolutely necessary information."

At that moment there were in Holland, in the Vendée, and in other parts of France, enough men to form a third army, and this is what Bonaparte set all his energy and talents to create. A reserve army was silently and unostentatiously formed from selected veterans, skilfully blended with young and promising conscripts. The divisions could attract no special observation, mobilized as they were in different places, and to all intents forming part of no special unit.

Bonaparte's unrivalled power of administration was straining every nerve to raise the French forces from the state of disorganization into which they had been allowed to fall by the incompetence and neglect of the past Government.

As long as Genova held out and Massena was there, he did not despair of being able to meet the Austrians in Italy.

To operate against them with any prospect of success it was necessary to have a respectable army, an army capable of doing great things. It was, moreover, prudent to raise this army in such a manner that no one would ever credit its existence.

Brune had succeeded in pacifying the Vendée. The French in that province had been brought to terms, so that the Army of the West could be reduced in numbers. In the Vendée and elsewhere Bonaparte found the men he so much needed to weld into an army, which, when suddenly transferred by a master hand to the theatre of war, would thoroughly make amends for

the disasters of the past campaign, and bring back laurels for France.

The patriotic enthusiasm of 1792, alas! was no more. It had disappeared with the circumstances which had brought it into existence. It was no longer possible to create an army out of nothing, to work on the feelings of the masses until thousands and thousands of brave volunteers rushed suddenly to arms and proceeded to the threatened frontier.

Besides the troops to be drawn from the Vendée, much also could be demanded from the Army of Holland, since the disposition of the Batavian Republic had become extraordinarily conciliating.

Whilst bent on carrying out military operations in Italy, the First Consul was bound also to protect the coast of France from invasion. To that end he left Augereau in Holland with a force half French and half Dutch. Once it was placed beyond doubt that no hostile movements were to be dreaded in that country, Augereau's force was to ascend the Rhine and cover the rear of Moreau's army in Germany.

The Army of Reserve had been decreed by the Consuls on the 7th of January, 1800, on the 16th Ventose, an VIII. It was to be formed at Dijon, and an order went out for 30,000 conscripts to concentrate about that city. This army was destined to support either the Army of Italy or the Army of the Rhine, just as circumstances might require.

The first class of the conscription of the year VIII. was called out, without exception of rank or fortune. By this measure 120,000 men came to be put at the disposal of the Government. All the men who had been paid off or discharged during the last eight years were called to submit their papers to a rigid scrutiny; * 30,000 men were thus secured, the majority being broken to the hardships of war. By the offer of advancement and other rewards, men on the retired list and veterans were induced to resume active service.

The First Consul then detailed the most wasted half-brigades †

* In the preceding months the army had been largely reduced by desertions. Twelve thousand discharges had been granted to the soldiers, but discipline had become very slack, and more than ten times that number had left their colours and lived without concealment at their homes. The number had become so considerable as to render it neither prudent nor practicable to attempt enforcing their return to duty. They had to be won back gently.

† The term "demi-brigade" replaced in 1793 that of "regiment." At that time

to perform garrison duty in the unsettled provinces. Even from these half-brigades he withdrew the most efficient soldiers, which he replaced by conscripts who were to learn their duties whilst performing garrison work. These troops, cavalry, artillery, and infantry, commanded by able officers, he gathered into five camps, with instructions that they should be prepared to march at the shortest notice. Of these camps two were left in Belgium, one at Liège, the other at Maestricht; the other three were at Lille, Saint Lo, and Rennes. The camp at Rennes was the largest, and numbered from 7000 to 8000 men. The remaining did not muster more than 4000 or 5000 men. The whole force, which originally constituted a body of troops 30,000 strong, was to be doubled on the arrival of conscripts.

From the troops left in the Vendée Bonaparte drew 30,000 excellent soldiers. From these he formed three splendid divisions, two in Brittany, one at Rennes, the other at Nantes. The third was formed in Paris. The vigilance of the British cruisers had kept the dépôts of the army in Egypt from fulfilling their intended purpose, viz. repairing the waste of their respective corps in that country. Out of these a fourth division was ordered to be formed at Lyons. The troops were drawn from Toulon, Marseilles, and Avignon, and formed fourteen excellent battalions.

To gain the good will of the Italians, Bonaparte decided to avail himself of an Italian contingent. To escape from the fury and persecution of the Austrians which followed Scherer's defeat, Lechi had fled to France. There he had soon collected a brave and soldier-like body of his countrymen, and this was to be employed with the Army of Reserve.

The rapidity with which this Army of Reserve was raised and put on a war-footing appears almost miraculous. It is easy, nevertheless, to conceive that this army would never have been organized in such a short time without the intervention of two very rare circumstances. First, that the army was raised by an individual of extraordinary talent—the greatest organizer the world has ever seen—and secondly, that this man of transcendent genius found himself at the time at the head of the Government.

a demi-brigade was formed of an old regiment and two battalions of volunteers. It was not till the 24th of September, 1803, that, by an order of the Consuls, the name of regiment was restored in the French army.

The very title "the Army of Reserve" was calculated to deceive the enemy. It appeared to indicate that it was an army which had been raised with the sole object of reinforcing the Army of Italy, then in the field on the Riviera of Geneva. There was nothing to suggest that it would enter Italy as a complete army, and engage independently of the Army of Italy.

Whilst driving Suchet back and narrowing the grip round Massena at Geneva, Melas was mystified and deceived, for no movement was made in the valley of the Maurienne nor in that of the Tarantaise. The frontiers of the Dauphiné gave no indications whatever of any military preparations.

Nevertheless, Bonaparte had set about destroying the Austrian army in Upper Italy. By an article of the Constitution of the year VIII., none of the Consuls could command an army in the field beyond the frontiers of France. Bonaparte overcame this difficulty, for there was nothing in the enactment against one of the Consuls being present with one. He collected from all parts numerous soldiers and distinguished generals, and formed them into an Army of Reserve, at the head of which he placed Berthier, who was styled *General-in-Chief of the Army of Reserve*. In this manner he solved the difficulty; Berthier by all appearance commanded, whilst he himself directed the operations. As Marmont observes, by this arrangement Bonaparte retained Berthier as his chief of the staff, though under another denomination.

Berthier, the faithful depositary of the secrets and projects of his chief, was not well pleased with his appointment. Whether he disliked to part from Bonaparte, who was detained in Paris, or to give up the influential post of minister of war, or that he did not consider himself fit to direct the undertaking, he did not conceal his vexation. However, Bonaparte soon appeased his bad humour, and he quickly came to understand the exact rôle he was to play. For whilst Bonaparte made a show of considering him and representing him as the *de facto* commander-in-chief, Berthier studiously abstained from assuming powers to which he knew he could claim no real right. The letters from one were letters from a superior to a subordinate, and the style of the other that of a subordinate when corresponding with his chief.

Carnot, the conqueror of Wattignies, the organizer of victory, a man of extraordinary talent and resolute character, replaced

Berthier in the ministry of war. As a suspected Loyalist, he had been sentenced by the *coup d'état* of the 18th Fructidor, an V. (4th of September, 1797), with Barthélemy and others, to deportation. But he escaped to Germany, and the 18th Brumaire brought him back to Paris. He was greatly feared by the enemies of France, and his return to the direction of military affairs produced a great effect in Europe. His energy, skill, and fertility of administrative resource, helped to achieve the brilliant results in the Italian and Rhenish campaigns.

In his "Précis de l'Art de la Guerre," Jomini, referring to the orders issued for the campaigns of 1806 and 1815, writes: "It was for a long time believed that Berthier* was the craftsman of these instructions conceived with so much precision, and ordinarily transmitted with so great lucidity. I have had a hundred opportunities to assure myself of the incorrectness of this assertion. The emperor was himself the real chief of his staff; armed with a compass open to a scale of seven or eight leagues in a direct line (which on account of the windings of the roads always means nine or ten), leaning, sometimes lying, on his maps, on which the positions of his army corps and those presumed of the enemy were marked by pins of different colours, turning his compass quickly, he ordered his movements with a certainty of which it would be difficult to form a correct idea. Moving his compass briskly over this map, he judged in the twinkle of the eye the number of marches necessary to be made by each of his corps to arrive at the point where he wished it to be on a given day; after which, placing his pins in these new localities, and combining the speed of the march which was necessary to assign to each of these columns, with the date of their possible departure, he dictated his instructions, which of themselves alone would form a claim to glory."

Baron Lejeune, who for many years served on Berthier's staff, wrote in a different strain. This is what he says on the subject of the Marengo campaign: "It was the First Consul who inaugurated every plan, improvised the means for carrying it out, and by imbuing all with his own zeal made everything possible. It was General Berthier who identified himself thoroughly with the plans of his chief; divided and subdivided the work to be done, assigning to each one his particular task by fulfilling which he was to co-operate with every other member

* For Berthier's character, see "Houssaye, 1815," p. 56, 19th edition.

of the army; he strove to remove obstructions and provide for every contingency. His anxious solicitude, which kept him ever on the alert, his undaunted co-operation, were never relaxed until success was achieved."

It is commonly understood that Berthier was incapable of comprehending the great designs and views of his brilliant master, and that he was absolutely nothing without Napoleon. Nevertheless, he was capable of undertaking endless work. He was as indefatigable in the field as at his desk, expert in all the details of the mechanism of an army. Bonaparte generally issued his orders by brief directions, which Berthier took down there and then. He often had to trust to his memory for what had fallen in conversation; from this he detailed, developed, and transmitted to the general officers the whole of the necessary directions.

The Army of Reserve, about which there was so much talk and clamour, was supposed to be assembling at Dijon. Bonaparte knew that that city was full of emissaries from other Governments, and all these he was determined to deceive. He consequently gave out his intention of reviewing the Army of Reserve. He proceeded to Dijon for this purpose, and there he was followed by a number of foreign spies. At this review some 3000 or 4000 men, and not in the best condition for campaigning, were present. The very want of caution in making the enemy free with his designs threw Austria and England off their guard. So very insignificant was the show, that it cast ridicule on the First Consul, and the absurdity of the whole thing soon found its way abroad. It was but natural that information so positive, coming from many sources, as to the non-existence of the much-vaunted Army of Reserve and of the limited preparations, should have deceived the Court of Vienna and General Melas. Carrion de Nisas declares, "There was not a single diplomatic correspondent who did not indulge in ciphering daily to his court, that the First Consul made a great fuss about his Army of Reserve, but that there was nothing else at Dijon but a handful of men badly armed, badly equipped, and undrilled; and that in whatever direction a similar reinforcement might proceed, it would to a certainty be of very feeble help to the army which received it." *

These reports were exact, but the real object of the Army of

* De Nisas, "Mémorial du Dépôt de la Guerre, Campagne de 1800," p. 42.

Reserve was so studiously concealed, that Moreau himself believed for some time that the corps which were said to be assembling at Dijon were in a great part destined for the immediate reinforcement of his own army.

In January, 1800, Bonaparte issued an order prohibiting journalists to print anything in their newspapers which had the slightest reference to movements of the army and of the navy. The existence of the Army of Reserve was steadily denied even at the war department, and for good reasons. First, because the war department had been diligently kept out of the secret; secondly, because all orders were sent to the commanders of corps direct from the office of the First Consul.

In our days, with telegraphs, railways, and the increased habit of travelling, the secret could not have been kept. To keep such a large number of men and such stupendous preparations from prying eyes would be next to impossible. We have only to bring to mind the performances of some of our special correspondents, how, for instance, in 1877, Archibald Forbes rode sixty miles for three consecutive days to get at the wires and to send his news home; we have only to recollect how the better and more educated classes are now commissioned to gather items of intelligence for the public press, and how no money is spared in getting news, to realize the present impossibility of imitating Bonaparte's concealment of his design.

Bonaparte's plan was a daring one, and it was this very daring that kept it from being divulged; for who but a genius would have ever dreamt of carrying an army, with its artillery, cavalry, and materials, across the Alps in the middle of May? What spy or emissary could have fathomed the conception of the First Consul?

With the rude way of travelling which obtained at that period, no spy or emissary would have dreamt of crossing the passes at that very early season of the year.

*“L'homme médioere regarde comme chimérique ce que l'homme supérieur regarde comme un moyen assuré de triompher.”** Melas could well imagine that all the news which reached him was merely loud talk intended to make him abandon the siege of Genova. Even when some few weeks later the French troops were signalled on the snow-clad crests of the Saint Bernard, the Austrian general was confirmed in his error, and believed

* Bulow, “Histoire de la Campagne de 1800.”

them to be the 3000 or 4000 men who had been passed in review by the First Consul at Dijon.

The ridicule thrown on the Army of Reserve by the Austrian authorities was unparalleled. They broke out in jests and caricatures. The cavalry were represented as mounted on asses, the infantry composed of old men, invalids and infants, armed with sticks bearing a bayonet at one end. The artillery were furnished with pop-guns. In fact, the success the Austrians had quite lately obtained over the French had made them haughty. There was no extravagance in which they did not indulge. The French troops, they said, were imbeciles, their generals totally void of military talent.

From the moment that Bonaparte quitted Paris, every one, and all the newspapers, declared that by the end of the month he would appear on the plains of Lombardy, and possibly be in Milan. On hearing such predictions, the Austrians smiled; they persisted in remaining blind to all warnings.

This general report did not much please Bonaparte, as can be gathered from his letter to the Consuls of the 19th of May. In that letter he complains that the journals have made him write a letter to his mother declaring that he would be in Milan short of a month. Bonaparte desires them to publish a denial in the *Moniteur*. He reminds them that such avowals were not in keeping with his character. "Very frequently," he remarks, "I do not say what I know; but it never happens that I say what will be."

Though beset by numerous occupations, Bonaparte worked unremittingly at the organization of the Army of Reserve. The preparations were growing apace. Hardly a day passed that he did not write one or more letters to Berthier, entering into the most minute details. His letters show what a thorough master of organization he was. His purpose was very clearly laid down, nothing was omitted. He thought of everything, he provided everything. He never ceased to urge on and to stimulate every one. As an incentive to gallant deeds in the field, he decreed the distinction of swords of honour, which were to be conferred on conspicuously brave soldiers.

The strength of the Army of Reserve was summed up by the First Consul in a despatch he wrote to Berthier on the 26th of April—

"Loison's division, composed of the 13th Light, the 58th and 60th of the line: 6000 to 7000 men.

“Chambarlhac’s division, composed of the 24th Light, 43rd and 96th of the line : 9000 men.

“Boudet’s division, composed of the 9th Light, 30th and 59th of the line : 7000 to 8000 men.

“Watrin’s division, composed of the 6th Light, 22nd and 40th of the line : 6000 to 7000 men.

“These four divisions were available and ready to march by the 30th of April.

“The 5th division, that of General Chabran, to be formed of nine of the battalions belonging to the Army of the East, which you will form into brigades as I had already projected. That will give you a division of 6000 men, which should be able to march soon after the first four divisions.

“The 6th division, which may set out from Dijon between the 15th to the 20th of May, will be composed of the 19th Light, 70th and 72nd of the line : 6000 to 7000 men.

“The 7th division will be composed of the 17th Light, and of the six remaining battalions out of the fifteen of the Army of the East.

“Finally your 4000 Italians, leaving a depôt, as a point of formation for the 3000 or 4000 Italians which are still in different parts of France, and will congregate at Dijon the moment the movement is unmasked.

“It thus appears to me that on or about the 5th of May you may reckon on having at Geneva ready to go wherever it may be necessary—

1. The first four divisions	... 28,000 to 30,000	} 40,000 men.
2. The 5th division, Chabran’s	5,000 to 6,000	
3. A few days later, the Italians	... 4,000	

“On the 20th of May you might have at Geneva—

“The 6th division : 6000 to 7000 men.

“And towards the 4th of June the 7th division : 6000 men.

“General Turreau might aid you with 3000 men.

“The troops of the Army of the Rhine, who are now in the Valais (Béthencourt) : 3000 men.

“In this way you might arrive at Aosta and at Susa from the 10th to the 20th of May with 44,000 infantry, being followed within ten days by a complete division of 8000 men ; and within twenty days 6000 more men ; independently of the *detachment from the Army of the Rhine* proportionate to the circumstances

in which the said army will find itself, which may vary from 30,000 to 10,000 men according to events.

“In this way I see you firmly established, having at your disposal from 50,000 to 60,000 infantry.

“In so far as the cavalry is concerned, you have—

The 11th and 12th Hussars	}	4000 men.
The 2nd, 7th, 15th, and 21st Chasseurs		
The 8th and 9th Dragoons		
The 2nd, 3rd, and 20th Heavy Cavalry		

“This is sufficient cavalry for your first ten or fifteen days’ operations.

“The 11th Hussars, the 15th Chasseurs, 9th Dragoons, and 3rd Heavy Cavalry are ready to start at the commencement of the decade; these four will form 1000 men, who will join you in good time.

“The 1st Hussars, 1st and 5th Heavy Cavalry, and the 5th Dragoons will set out during the month; they will have with them six guns, and the four will make up 1800 men well mounted and equipped.

“Thus you will have at once 4000 men, and 3000 more which will join you in good time.

“Do not attach to your divisions aught but chasseurs and hussars, and keep all your dragoons together.

“I have issued orders for the 19th Light, the 70th and 72nd half-brigades, and the 20th Heavy Cavalry to expedite their march.

“SUMMARY.

Infantry at immediate disposal	44,000	}	50,000 men.
Cavalry ,, ,, ,,	4,000		
Artillery ,, ,, ,,	2,000		

“In your rear—

Infantry	8,000	}	11,000 ,,
Cavalry	3,000		

Total 61,000 ,,

“7th division, to be kept in account.

“Behold 60,000 men who, after the follies which the Austrians are committing in shutting themselves up in the Riviera of Genova, place you in condition to act without having to recur to anybody.

“As for the artillery, you have forty-eight pieces; this makes eight guns for each of your first five divisions, and a small park.

“Reduce the number of your howitzers and increase the number of your 4-prs. as you have them at Auxonne. That will render you good service, and will make the transport more easy.

“General Turreau’s column may bring five or six pieces from Briançon.

“There will be time to prepare at Auxonne the guns necessary for your sixth division.

“Yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow, 600 horses have been started, or will start, from Versailles.

“The six pieces belonging to the Guard are very well horsed. You can attach them to the cavalry, and utilize the spare teams for the other divisions.

“With regard to cartridges, Briançon can well supply you; let all those now at Grenoble and at Briançon be conveyed to Geneva. Have a manufactory established at Geneva. By being a little enterprising, and with a little money, one should be able to find in a city like Geneva enough lead for a million cartridges.

“Leave all the depôts at Dijon and on the Saône, so that as the conscripts arrive they may receive a first training, and thence feed the army.

“Leave the cadres of six battalions of the Army of Reserve; they will be completed by conscripts as they arrive, so that in the course of June (Prairial), the 17th Light and the two half-brigades formed by these six battalions may form for you a seventh division.

“I shall be at Geneva, where I will make all the substitutions in the troops which the events that may occur in the Army of the Rhine may render necessary, leaving Chabran’s division on the defensive in Switzerland, and directing some of the better-organized half-brigades to march.

“The divisions are sufficiently strong with three half-brigades. You should have on hand at least five or six divisions. Two 4-prs., three 8-prs., and a howitzer seem to me, in all fairness, sufficient to make up the artillery for a division; and, if you have not sufficient draught animals in a division, reduce the number to three 4-prs. and two 8-prs.

“Let General Marmont (commander of the artillery) send

a superior officer to Besançon, and another to Grenoble, to put in movement all that is possible. General Marmont should be furnished with a return showing the cartridges and artillery munitions which are to be found at Besançon and in the strongholds of the Dauphiné.

“To-morrow I will order 200 of my Guard to start.

“Send General Marescot (commander of the engineers) to the Saint Bernard, so that he may be back in Geneva by the 5th of May, with some exact surveys of the road. Should he have any pioneers, let him take them with him.

“If nothing prevents it, I expect to be at Dijon on the 30th of April or 1st of May.”

The Consular Guard, under the orders of General Bessières, was composed of two battalions, two squadrons, and six guns.

The cavalry was organized by brigades under the supreme command of Murat. To Rivaud was given the light cavalry brigade, which was to cross the Alps with the advanced guard. Champeaux commanded the dragoon, Kellermann the heavy cavalry brigade. These two brigades were to bring up the rear when crossing the Alps, and to take the lead under Murat as soon as they came out on the plain.

In the infantry, the first arrangement by division was subsequently changed, and the divisions were grouped by two, each two being placed under the command of a lieutenant-general. After Montebello, Desaix was given the command of Boudet's and Monnier's divisions, Victor those of Gardanne's and Chambarlhac's.

The artillery was organized at Auxonne, Besançon, and Briançon.

General Saint Remy was to have had command of it, but he fell ill. Marmont relates in his “*Mémoires*” how Bonaparte offered him the direction of the artillery, how he had conceived certain prejudices against that arm, and would have preferred to command a body of troops, as being the only means for acquiring renown. What he might have looked to, according to his rank, was the command of a brigade; but, as Marmont goes on to explain, the command of a brigade leads, later on, to the command of a division, and the command of a division is the school of high tactics. One is then in a good position to judge of the total of the operations; by directing 8000 or 10,000 men one learns to handle troops with skill.

Bonaparte overcame Marmont's repugnance, and assured him that the work about to be undertaken, the transport of the artillery across the Alps,* was a difficult task; that he had confidence in his activity, in his resources, that he appreciated his imagination and force of will, and that he desired he would accept. For Marmont there was nothing left but to comply.

Being himself young and active, Marmont was already convinced that in most cases the word "impossible" is only an excuse for want of enterprise; all working with a will, he had no reason to anticipate a failure.

In the beginning of the year 1800, Bonaparte introduced a very important change in the field artillery. The pieces and the ammunition-waggons had hitherto been drawn by animals and drivers taken from the transport companies. The drivers, not having the least interest in the fate of the batteries, could, at the first signal of danger, cut the traces and decamp with the horses. Bonaparte arrived at the conclusion that it was very desirable to turn the drivers into a constituent part of each battery, to dress the men in the uniform worn by the gunners, and to imbue them with the same *esprit de corps*. He thus made it clear to the men that the drivers not only ran the same risk as the gunners, but rendered just the same services, that it was incumbent on them to display the same zeal in running the guns up within range of the enemy and in withdrawing them as the gunners had in loading and aiming them.

The Army of Reserve crossed France in fine order, with drums beating and colours flying. Their martial appearance inspired confidence; and after the disasters of the preceding year's campaign, the people were in need of this reanimating sight to rouse them from their state of despondency.

An army can seldom dispense with the resources of the country through which it marches, be it in provisions, manual labour, or transport. Active operations are impossible without a sufficiency of the latter; and, as a large mass of troops cannot move nor operate creditably without transport, the transport service has been justly called the soul of an army. Lasting success cannot be obtained without transport; never-

* On the 28th of April, the park comprised 24 four-prs., horsed, 12 eight-prs., sledges and munition-boxes holding 7000 muskets, 2 howitzers, 10 bullet-moulds, 6000 shot, 400,000 cartridges for infantry, and a complete transport train.—*Gachot*, p. 23.

theless, the raising of an efficient transport is a matter which presents much difficulty. Generally speaking, most of it is obtained from the country which constitutes the theatre of operations, and by requisition. In any case, the transport should be organized before the actual commencement of the operations, for the transport service is undoubtedly a question of time. In the crossing of the Alps there was little prospect of finding overmuch transport to requisition, whilst collecting it had necessarily to be left to the last moment for fear of putting the enemy on the *qui vive*.

Bonaparte, being well aware how ready money was the surest way to allure the assistance of the hardy mountaineers of the Alps, had sent forward considerable remittances in the shape of cash. Baron Lejeune, in his "Memoirs," relates how he was instructed to take several bags of gold to the *curés* of the Valais, with which to pay the peasants who were to help in dragging the artillery over the Alps, and in other cognate work.

In this way, but only on the last days, all the transport of the country, all the mules, and all the peasants were made to converge to Martigny. Bread, biscuit, forage, wine, and spirits, had been transported from Villeneuve to Martigny, and had now to be forwarded from Martigny as far as Saint Pierre, at the foot of the final ascent.* A sufficient number of live cattle had also been conveyed there. This accumulation of stores was indispensable, for the crossing of the Alps involved a march of several days, without any possibility of finding resources on the way. With a good deal of foresight, Bonaparte had also won to himself the monks of Mount Saint Bernard, and had got them to collect a certain quantity of provisions for his troops.

On the 6th of May, 1800, Berthier issued the following instructions to the chief controller :—

"Procure all possible means of transport, be they by water or by land, so that by the evening of the 18th there may be at Villeneuve 400,000 or 500,000 rations of biscuit, and double that amount on the 20th.

"You should hire mules at once in the Valais, taking them by requisition if they cannot be had in any other way, for conveying 30,000 rations to the village of Saint Pierre; you can also take local chars-à-bancs. It is urgent that these 30,000

* Several villages of the Valais put in large claims for damage done, and principally for mules requisitioned to carry firewood, provisions, etc.

rations be at Saint Pierre by the 20th or 22nd; the transport to return to Villeneuve to take up a fresh load, which should arrive at Saint Pierre on the 25th. If you can command transport to this extent, our provisioning will be well assured.

“Afterwards it will be desirable to establish a depôt of biscuit in some village between Saint Pierre and the foot of Mount Saint Bernard. In this same village you will set up a hospital, from which the patients will be transferred to others established at Saint Maurice or Villeneuve. There is not a moment to lose in organizing these three hospitals. My plan is to concentrate four divisions at Villeneuve. About the 19th the troops will take over from that place biscuit to last them for four days; at Saint Pierre for three, which should suffice up to Aosta. In the meanwhile we shall continue to fill the depôt at Saint Pierre, to provide for transmission or against a retrograde movement, should such a step be forced on us. The cavalry, the drivers, the staff—in short, all who are mounted—will be made to pick up biscuit for eight days’ consumption. Oats must be conveyed to the foot of the Saint Bernard, as well as to the convent.

“You will easily perceive that you have not an instant to lose in having the extraordinary supplies carried to the depôts of Villeneuve and Saint Pierre.

“I recommend to your attention especially the boots, for which we have a most pressing need. Independently of the dispositions you are about to make, and of the orders you are going to issue, take such steps as will make the execution of your measures perfectly sure.”

It was a strange oversight not to have used as a line of supply the road leading from Savoy over the Little Saint Bernard into the valley of Aosta, which was fit for wheel traffic. As an alternative and a supplementary line to the one passing over the Great Saint Bernard, it would have been of great assistance; more so had a retrograde movement forced the French to retire behind their frontier.

In spite of all the trouble taken, the transport fell short. When the first real piece of engineering had to be done, at Fort Bard, we find the chief engineer of the army, General Marescot, complaining that he had no tools, as all those drawn from Besançon, or bought at Geneva and at Martigny, had been ordered to be left at Villeneuve and Sembrancher for want of

transport. What transport there was available had been entirely given up for the use of the artillery and supplies.

In the wars of the Revolution the French had considerably reduced the number of waggons and carriages in rear of their armies, which always constitute one of the greatest impediments in war. This made their forces much more free in their movements, above all in retreats. On the other hand, it necessitated a greater appropriation of the resources of the theatre of war, and, very frequently, led to pillaging. The soldier must be fed, and, when he is starving, will lay his hands on such articles of food as he finds within reach.

Bonaparte remained in Paris till everything was in readiness for the advance of the army. Berthier wrote to him from Geneva: "I wish to see you here. There are orders to be given by which the three armies may act in concert, and you alone can give them on the spot. Measures decided on in Paris are too late." On the evening of the 5th of May, a council was summoned at the Tuileries, at which the consuls and ministers were present. It was at this council that Bonaparte notified his intention of joining the army. "A grand stroke," he said, "is contemplated, but the campaign will be short." He had it given out that he might go as far as Geneva, declaring at the same time as his resolve to be back within fifteen days.

When, later on, his intention of assuming the military command became patent to all, there was no audible discontent. Some of the leading men, however, discussed the consequences should the First Consul happen to be killed.

At two o'clock in the morning of the 6th, Bonaparte quitted Paris. The magnificent hopes which he cherished made the dangers he was about to encounter seem insignificant. As he journeyed towards Dijon, he talked all the way of the great warriors of antiquity with all the ardent enthusiasm of boyhood.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CROSSING OF THE ALPS.

France to be dazzled by a stupendous deed—Moreau's distaste for acting under Bonaparte's guidance—The road over the Great Saint Bernard selected for crossing into Italy—Routes for the other armies—Survey of the Great Saint Bernard route—Bonaparte receives Marescot's report, and decides to advance—Lannes marches with the advanced guard on the 15th of May—Arrangements for the conveyance of the artillery—The soldiers entertained by the monks at the Hospice—The crossing favoured by fine weather—Austrians abandon Aosta, and are driven away from Châtillon—The French are stopped by Fort Bard—Description of the fort—Difficulties of the French—They find a way over the Albaredo—Bonaparte crosses the Great Saint Bernard—Capture of the village of Bard—Passage of the artillery through Bard—Assault of the fort—Ill success of the French—The Austrian commander finally surrenders.

BONAPARTE had come into power, but had not yet obtained absolute power; and no one knew better than he did that to be able to impose his will on the French people, after the feelings and aspirations which the events of the Republic had evoked, it was absolutely necessary to dazzle France by some superb and entrancing deed. As it was only to an extraordinarily great man that the multitudes would be disposed to submit, a warlike feat was needed which would at the same time amaze the French by its lustre, and show to the whole of Europe the surpassing brilliancy of his genius.

To a man like Bonaparte, who had so recently been dreaming of an empire in the East, of revolutionizing all Asia, and seating himself on the throne of Constantine, it was not a difficult matter to conceive a superb achievement, some exploit that bordered on the marvellous.

His thoughts very naturally reverted to Italy, the theatre of his first exploits, to the fertile provinces which his talent had wrested from Austria, but which the incapable rulers of his country had not been able to retain for the Republic. To conquer them for a second time in a short campaign, to lead

the French colours again to victory, was a worthy conception, and pregnant with results of the weightiest moment.

The Austrians and Russians in 1799 had expelled the French from Italy. All that remained in their hands was Genova and a narrow strip of territory along the Ligurian shore. All Northern Italy up to the summit of the Alps was occupied by the Austrians.

In the condition in which affairs were in Italy, it was necessary to re-enter the country, otherwise to cross over into Germany, and deliver such a decisive blow on the Danube as would make it possible to recover the Italian provinces by dictating peace to Austria. It was possible for France to recover Alessandria and Milan at Vienna, and such had been Bonaparte's original intention. Moreau, however, had plainly shown a distaste for commanding under the guidance of the First Consul, and it was generally believed that had Bonaparte gone to the Army of the Rhine, the troops would have positively refused to countenance his plans. It was this difficulty which decided him to leave Moreau to act against Austria with the best army France could dispose of, whilst he led a mass of conscripts over the Alps into Lombardy.

Bourrienne, who was privileged to be the first to hear the exposition of Bonaparte's plan, as he fixed black and red tipped pins in Chauchard's large map of Italy, failed to grasp the full import of his design. Melas and his staff did not realize to what measures a man of genius could resort.

Bonaparte's plan for the reconquest of Italy was stupendous. The march over the Alps astonished even Desaix, who on reading an account of it exclaimed, "He will leave us nothing to do." It embraced the whole section of the Alpine region which extends from Mount Genevre to the Saint Gothard, and threatened the plains of Piedmont and Lombardy with invasion. He trusted that Massena and Suchet would hold out in Genova and on the Var, and by doing so would keep Melas occupied till he could come himself to attack him both in flank and in rear. Bold and wonderful was this conception, but had Melas been more prudent, more active, and, above all, better informed, it might have miscarried.

In a long mountain chain there are scores of passes over which a small party of travellers on foot and laden animals can make their way. Folard remarks that a man can pass where

a goat does, and that a corps can pass where a man can. But armies which include infantry, cavalry, artillery, and trains cannot use most of these passes, owing principally to the narrowness and abruptness of the track.

As far back as the time of Hannibal it was shown that there was no really insuperable difficulty in conveying an army with its impedimenta across a great mountain range. The arduousness of the operation in this instance was great, but it was nothing compared with the difficulty of keeping the preparations concealed; for the least suspicion aroused was likely to lead to a failure.

Bonaparte could select for the march of his army any of the passes which lead from France, Savoy, and Switzerland into Italy. His troops could cross by the Cottian Alps, Mont Genevre, and Mont Cenis; by the Graian Alps, Little Saint Bernard; by the Pennine Alps, Great Saint Bernard; and by the Lepontine Alps, Simplon, and Saint Gothard.

There was, therefore, the choice of several ways for crossing the Alps and descending into Italy. Mainoni, writing to Berthier, indicated eleven points of passage between the Saint Gothard and Courmayeur, and states that there were still others leading to Piedmont and to Italy. As a preliminary, all the advantages of the different routes across the Alps had to be carefully thought out. It was on the strength of Marescot's report that the First Consul decided to adopt that of the Saint Bernard.

Bonaparte recognized the necessity of appearing in Italy from the side where he would be the least expected. The execution of his plan demanded most profound secrecy, the utmost possible celerity, and unusual boldness.

It was obviously his interest to take the shortest way to Geneva, and it was the impending fall of that city, and the limited time at his disposal for giving effective succour to Massena, that made him accord the preference to the Saint Bernard route. At one time he had thought of the Simplon, so as to turn the whole of Piedmont, but an operation from that point would necessarily have been too long, and the first effect would have been felt by the Austrian army too late to be of any use in relieving Geneva. It was then that he determined to cross the Saint Bernard, that route having the advantage of giving him an entry into the very centre of Piedmont. Besides which, it had an important advantage over the Simplon route, inasmuch

as it had only five leagues of road impracticable for artillery, whereas in the other there were nearly double that number.

The most direct route from the lake of Geneva to Milan runs over the Great Saint Bernard. At the Hospice the road is 8120 feet above the level of the sea.

Not far from where the Hospice buildings now stand once rose a temple to Jupiter Poeninus, from which the mountain derived the name of Monte Joux or Monte Giove, and the range is called the Pennine Alps. The Roman consul Varo erected a statue of Jupiter at the top of the pass. At this point, which marks the boundary between the Valais and the valley of Aosta, in the year 962, Saint Bernard de Menthon founded a hospice, with the very charitable object of affording assistance to travellers overtaken by storms and foul weather. This is the most elevated point in Europe which is inhabited all the year through.

Most travellers consider the Great Saint Bernard less attractive than most of the other Alpine passes. The track over the mountain was used in 1800 by the people of the Lower Valais going to Piedmont and Italy by the valley of Aosta, and *vice versâ*; all merchandise and goods being carried by pack horses and mules. Armies have likewise crossed the Alps at this point. A Roman army did so in the midst of winter during the wars between Otho and Vitellius. The Lombards crossed over in 547, the French under Charlemagne in 773, and the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa in the twelfth century. What made Bonaparte's undertaking more remarkable was that his army was accompanied by cavalry and artillery.

In the Middle Ages this was the main route for pilgrims and other travellers coming from the north-west of Europe, being the most direct way to Rome. Its height renders it more dangerous in winter than the other passes.

In the Alps, the snowy season is reckoned to last nearly nine months. On the mountain the cold is excessive, even in the middle of summer. The prospect is monotonous and cheerless. Of vegetation there is none, not a tree or shrub exists to gladden the eye, no herb, no green leaf of any kind. Precipitous heights, dashing torrents, sloping valleys, succeed each other with disheartening frequency. All is wild and barren, rocks of a grayish tint, and great heaps of ice. The birds never haunt those regions, nor do they alight there for rest in their flight. Solemn

silence reigns supreme, and even in the fairest season of the year the sun brightens up the valleys for the shortest possible time during the day.

It was across these inhospitable regions that Bonaparte decided to carry an army, and, by a masterly strategy, to regain all the fruits of his celebrated campaign of 1796 in Italy. Always a great reader of history and an ardent admirer of the deeds of the renowned captains of antiquity, what was more natural than for him to take as his model Hannibal's famous crossing of the Alps?

No one seems to have explained in a really satisfactory manner what made Bonaparte set little value on the Little Saint Bernard route, which just as much as the route over the Great Saint Bernard leads to Aosta, but with less difficulties and with a road good enough for artillery and supplies. De Cugnac observes that there were special advantages on the route selected by the First Consul which evidently recommended its adoption. These were the transport of provisions by water through Lake Lemman, and the central position of Lausanne, which permitted the Army of Reserve to march north or south, leaving the Austrians in a state of tormenting uncertainty.

Four more columns were to descend into the valley of the Po by treading other passes, none, however, so lofty as the Saint Bernard.

The route allotted to Chabran, who had to come from Montmelian in Savoy, was by way of the Little Saint Bernard.* This pass is 7176 feet in height, situated between Savoy and the valley of Aosta, to the south-west of the Great Saint Bernard, on a road which goes from the valley of the Isère to that of the Dora.

Béthencourt, with 3000 men, was to descend to Domo d'Ossola, on the shores of Lago Maggiore, where, narrowing its expanse, the lake permits the waters of the Ticino to flow from it. He was to pass over the Simplon, which is 6590 feet above sea-level, and lies between the Valais and Lombardy, 53 kilometres south-west of the Saint Gothard.

The height of the Saint Gothard pass is 6935 feet. The

* Which of the passes Hannibal used to descend into Italy is a matter of dispute. May not the fact of Scipio having waited for him on the Ticino point to the Carthaginian having crossed by the Little Saint Bernard, and entered Italy by the valley of Aosta? See De Cugnac, p. 363.

Saint Gothard gives rise to the Reuss on the north and the Ticino on the south; in its neighbourhood are also the sources of the Rhone and the Rhine. It was by this route that the division drawn from Moreau's army was to wend its way and descend from Switzerland into Lombardy.

Turreau, coming from Briançon, was to lead a column over the Mont Cenis, advance to Susa, and threaten Turin. His column consisted of some 4000 men, and was to constitute the right of the Army of Reserve. This small division of Turreau, borrowed from the Army of Italy, exercised a very useful diversion.

The campaign of Marengo was very short. Bonaparte, as we have said, quitted Paris after midnight on the 6th of May. In this and in other instances he did not leave the capital until all the preparations for taking the field were in a very forward state. In this manner he was able to impose on his adversary.

Bonaparte, who had conceived the whole plan of campaign, who had organized the army, who had rearranged matters in the interior of France, proceeded to Dijon, there he inspected a mass of conscripts and some isolated companies of regulars, with the object of creating a firm disbelief in the existence of an Army of Reserve. This done, he started from Dijon, leaving France ignorant of his immense projects. In the early morning of the 9th of May, he was in Geneva.*

Well aware that nothing could disclose his plans so much as his presence, Bonaparte did all in his power to foster the idea that he purposed remaining in Geneva for a time. He himself inspected several residences, and found every owner only too anxious to put his property at his disposal. Rumours of this were too eagerly believed in Switzerland. He spread a report that an insurrection which had broken out in Paris had compelled him to return to the capital, when in reality he was already on the southern side of the Saint Bernard.

By Bonaparte's directions Berthier availed himself of the local knowledge of Colombini, a road-contractor, and of Major Pavetti, an officer of the Italian Legion well acquainted with the

* At Nyon, where he arrived at five in the evening, he heard of the grand preparations made at Geneva for his reception. He did not relish all this fuss, so he supped and went to bed. At three in the morning he suddenly appeared before the Cornavin gate. He resided from the 9th to the 11th of May in the house of one Defaussure, professor of meteorology and chemistry.

roads in the Valais. Writing to Berthier on the 28th of April, the First Consul had bidden him, "Call to your side an individual named Colombini, who resides at Vienne in the Dauphiné, a contractor for roads, who knows the Great and Little Saint Bernard and all their issues perfectly. Call likewise to you citizen Pavetti, major in the Italian Legion, who is at present at the depôt, and knows this neighbourhood thoroughly." Pavetti hailed from Romano in the Canavese province. He was a young man of a generous nature, who exerted himself with zeal in the cause of liberty.

Pavetti had warned Berthier that the passage of the Saint Bernard was not yet practicable. It was on this warning that the First Consul caused the demonstrations ordered in the direction of Aosta to be suspended.

At that season the falling of avalanches is common. When the snow begins to melt in the spring, the soil beneath becomes loose and slippery. By its own weight the snow slides down the declivities, carrying with it soil, rocks, and trees.

General Marescot, who commanded the engineers, and General Mainoni, an officer of Italian origin, who had paid great attention to the military topography of the Higher Alps, had been directed to undertake a reconnoissance of the mountains on the left bank of the Rhone.

At Geneva, Bonaparte received General Marescot's report of the reconnoissance made of the Saint Bernard. Marescot had with great difficulty climbed the mountain as far as the Hospice, and had taken into account all the hardships of the ascent. After he had completed his narrative, Bonaparte asked but one question, "Is it possible to pass?" "Yes," replied Marescot, "it is possible." "Well, then, let us start." Bonaparte was a man of strong resolution, and not likely to be turned by anything. The simple possibility of being overtaken by bad weather in the passes was not enough to divert him from his purpose. It was necessary, after all, to hasten, for Massena was known to be in a dire condition.

On the 12th of May, the First Consul reviewed the divisions of Loison and Chambarlhac, on the following day Boudet's division at Vevey, and at Villeneuve the artillery of the three divisions of the main body.

Writing to Moreau on the 14th of May from Lausanne, Bonaparte states: "The Army of Reserve commences to pass

the Saint Bernard. The army is weak, and there will be some obstacles to overcome; it is this which decides me to pass myself into Italy for a fortnight."

In the Upper Valais, situated on the river Drance, at the turning of the splendid Rhone valley, 32 miles from the Hospice of Mount Saint Bernard, lies the village of Martigny, which recent excavations prove to have been in olden days a Roman city. It is dominated by the imposing ruins of the ancient castle of "the Batiáz." On account of its proximity to the mountains, Bonaparte chose this village as a suitable place for completing his preparations and for superintending the advance of his army. On the 17th of May, he came from Lausanne, and took up his abode in the house of convalescence belonging to the good monks of Mount Saint Bernard, where the aged and sick of that community, or those whose constitution has been injured by the rigorous climate of the mountain-tops, are sent to recover their health.

Before his departure from Lausanne, Bonaparte had received a report of Massena's dire condition in Genova, the gist of which was the hope that some one would speedily march to his relief.

On the 29th of April, Monsieur Lescuyer, sent by General Massena to the First Consul, succeeded in getting out of Genova, though, by the contents of his letter, he appears to have become incapacitated by a wound.

From Marseilles on the 8th of May he writes to the First Consul:—

“GENERAL CONSUL,

“I got out of Genova at midnight of the 9th instant (29th of April).

“Here is what Massena's situation was at that time: he enjoined me to set it forth to the First Consul. A despatch which I handed, as I was passing through, to General Oudinot, whom I found at Alessio,* made him acquainted with everything. He will doubtlessly have communicated every particular to you, General, also of the verbal instructions with which the General-in-Chief had charged me, of which the most pressing

* It is not quite clear how Lescuyer could have come across Oudinot at Alessio. Oudinot was Massena's chief of the staff, serving at that date in Genova with his chief. Possibly it was Suchet, and not Oudinot.

and the one to be most often repeated was : ‘ That he may come to set me free ; say that some one may come to set me free.’

“ As my way through was encompassed by risks, he entrusted me with no despatches for the First Consul ; but he recommended me to speak in strong terms to him, as well as to any generals of divisions with whom I might fall in on my way.

“ After all, he concluded, everything would be summed up in this : ‘ That some one may come to relieve me ; the city is blockaded by land and by sea ; I fight almost every day, and every day I beat the enemy, but his resources are immense : as for me, I have everything to conquer.

“ ‘ I have 12,000 men ; their state is too well known. I have provisions for thirty days, and up to this moment the Genovese have kept quiet.’

“ The hope of an army which is about to effect a diversion keeps up the spirit of the French, intimidates the agitators, and serves to contain the multitude, whom the dearness of the provisions, the vicinity and the insinuations of the enemy tend to excite into rebellion.

“ At the break of day Massena is seen passing through the town to inspect the posts ; his presence is equal to an army.”

The contemplated operation was risky, and demanded the greatest daring in the general who conceived it. To cross a high snow-covered mountain at a season of the year ill adapted for the passage of the Higher Alps, in the perilous period of avalanches ; to carry over nearly inaccessible summits all the materials which an army ready to take the field must have ; to step ten leagues over tracks bordered by precipices, and more than forty without finding either bread for the soldiers or forage for the animals, was an uncommon undertaking.

Bonaparte’s accomplishment of this stupendous enterprise of crossing the Alps must command admiration alike as a whole and in all its details. The mere conception of swooping down on the rear of Melas’s victorious army with a force borrowed and compounded from fractions of various others could have emanated only from the brain of a great captain. In no way inferior to the conception was the personal attention with which all the details necessary to a happy result were planned and carried into execution, nor the genius that succeeded in wringing resources so great from a country apparently exhausted by war

and internal dissensions ; and last, but by no means least, our wonder is commanded by the art that successfully concealed up to the critical moment all this movement of the invading host.

The success of the operation depended entirely on celerity, for the Alpine regions were noted for their sterility. The valley of Aosta was poor, and unequal to supporting an army for which no adequate supplies had been prepared. On this account it was necessary to descend at once to the plains ; for this there was besides a more important reason, viz. not to afford Melas time to anticipate the arrival of the Army of Reserve.

At the time when Bonaparte was preparing to swoop down upon Italy, all the outlets of the Alps were being watched by small detachments of Austrians, and these were deemed quite sufficient to prevent a surprise. In the direction of the Great Saint Bernard a body of 2000 men guarded the valley of Aosta, with an outpost at Saint Rémy, only about two hours' marching from the Hospice on the mountain.

After alighting at Martigny on the 18th of May, we find Bonaparte writing to Berthier as follows : " All the cavalry are here. I delay their march for a while, so as not to clog you on the other side until I hear of the capture of that vile castle of Bard." It was on that very same evening that Lannes' advanced guard halted a league from the walls of Bard.

The advanced guard of the Army of Reserve remained some days about Martigny, and that small place was crowded with troops of all arms. All the available horses and mules in the neighbourhood had been requisitioned, and the country people came in crowds to assist the army in its passage over the Alps, either by carrying loads or by repairing the roads, which were in anything but good condition.

Half a league beyond the village of Martigny, the ascent begins. Even at the end of the eighteenth century, the road as far as the little hamlet of Saint Pierre, 13 kilometres (8 miles) below the Hospice, was fairly good and practicable for vehicles.* General Malher, who commanded one of Watrin's brigades, had ordered the municipality of Martigny to repair and strengthen all the bridges up to Sembrancher. The authorities of Orsières were similarly enjoined to do the same to all the bridges up

* De Cugnac puts the height of the Hospice at 2472 metres, and that of Saint Pierre at 1630, giving a difference of 842 metres.

to Saint Pierre, so that they might be in a state to bear the passage of the artillery.

From the 13th of May of the previous year, when Suwarroff had moved forward to besiege Alessandria, three companies of the 3rd battalion of the 28th half-brigade and two small guns, under the command of Major Vivenot, had occupied the summit of the pass. The Austrians had a detachment at Saint Rémy, and this detachment on the 13th of April, 1800, had moved to attack the French, being bent on driving them entirely from the pass. But the Austrians advanced in a careless manner, and were belaboured by the fire of canister and musketry of the French, who were carefully concealed. The attackers were dismayed and disconcerted, and speedily compelled to beat an ignominious retreat.

Malher now suggested making some attempt on the garrison of Saint Rémy, but, rightly enough, he was directed to abstain from doing so, for fear the attention of the enemy should be aroused.

Lannes, owing to his well-established boldness and ardour, had been chosen by the First Consul to lead the enterprise—an honourable distinction which he anxiously sought.

Lannes was born on the 11th of April, 1769, in the same year as Wellington, Ney, and other distinguished commanders. He was one of the greatest generals the Revolution produced. He was one of the first to rush to the frontier in 1792, and owed his advancement and renown simply to his talent and bravery. Whatever may have been his private character, no one has ever denied him the brilliant military qualities with which nature had endowed him. Like Bonaparte and Massena, he was deprived of his command owing to his intimacy with the younger Robespierre. At Dego Bonaparte had been struck by the gallantry of young Lannes, and he promoted him colonel on the spot.

From Geneva, on the 10th of May, Dupont, Chief of the Staff of the Army of Reserve, issued his instructions to Lannes:—

“In conformity with the orders of the General-in-Chief, Citizen General, with the advanced guard which you will command, you will proceed on the 13th of May to Saint Maurice and Villeneuve. At Villeneuve, you will order the troops to furnish themselves with bread for the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th of May. During the day on the 14th, you will find

yourself six leagues on the further side of Saint Maurice, and on the 15th you will be at the foot of the Great Saint Bernard. In passing by Saint Pierre you will pick up biscuit for three days—17th, 18th, and 19th inclusive.

“General Mainoni will bring together on the 14th, at the Hospice of the Saint Bernard, the three battalions of the 28th, the Swiss and the Italian battalions, and will have them provided with biscuit for four days. You will accordingly give him his orders.

“You will take every necessary precaution for hastening the transport of your artillery up to the Saint Bernard, and you will cause the sleighs for the gun-carriages which are destined for you to move forward with the greatest speed, so that they may reach the foot of the mountain before the head of the column.

“You will calculate your march with sufficient precision so that you may have passed the Saint Bernard an hour before daybreak on the 16th, and that you will find yourself approaching the enemy’s advanced posts, which you will overpower.

“You will order the 12th Regiment of Hussars and the 21st Regiment of Chasseurs to be at Vevey by the 13th.

“The movements of the army will conform to those of the advanced guard, and on this you will receive further instructions.”

Lannes issued his orders :—

“The advanced guard will pass the Great Saint Bernard on the night of the 15–16th of May, whatever may be the difficulties encountered on the mountain. The head of the column will set out from the little valley of Proz at midnight, and will follow in rear of the last boxes of ammunition sent to the Hospice by the arrangements of General Marmont.

“The men will be marshalled in two ranks : mounted officers will go on foot, leading their horses by the bridle, or having them led.

“No shouts or loud calls will be uttered, because such may bring down avalanches. In localities difficult to surmount, the soldiers are authorized to lean on their muskets. No one will be permitted to quit the road indicated.

“Fifty lanterns will be distributed through the half-brigades to light up the march of the troops up to the Hospice buildings. General Marescot will locate some pontoniers between the battalions—pontoniers who may have to throw bridges over

the Drance should it become necessary. Every man will carry a thousand grammes of biscuit. Peasants from Saint Pierre and mules will carry supplies.

“On arriving at the Hospice the 6th Light will receive some refreshments from the monks, will deposit the ordnance, and will advance rapidly on the Austrian posts. The enemy driven out of its positions, the half-brigade will march with all possible speed on Aosta, which must be taken at any price.

“The general commanding in chief of the advanced guard appeals to the devotedness of the soldiers of the Republic, to get over a passage looked upon by our enemies as inaccessible.

“It is twenty centuries ago that the Carthaginian soldiers overcame it to go and fight the Roman legions.

“Europe will be astonished in hearing that you have marched with cannon and baggage on the footsteps of these heroes.

“Officers and soldiers of France! without hesitation the First Consul has placed confidence in your courage. And at the moment of marching on the enemy do not forget that our brothers-in-arms are waiting in Genova, in the midst of the most cruel sufferings of famine, the deliverance which you are about to bring them, after having at a run crossed Piedmont and Lombardy.”

Bonaparte was always bent on deceiving and mystifying his enemies. He wrote to the Consuls about this time to have inserted in the *Journal Officiel* how he had gone through Switzerland and on to Bâle, when in reality he was at Lausanne. With the same purpose, evidently, when about to ascend the Alps, Berthier wrote to Lannes to recommend that Major Pavetti be made to circulate some proclamations giving out the coming of an army of 100,000 men.

According to the records kept at the Hospice of the Grand Saint Bernard, the French staff had established three rest-camps on the road between Liddes and the village of Saint Pierre. The principal object for this arrangement was to enable the troops to commence the ascension of the mountain at an early hour in the morning; that they might recover their vigour was only a secondary consideration.

The track being so narrow as to compel the troops to advance in file, only a certain number were detailed to march each day—from 5000 to 6000 men. In this way the rear-guard could always reach Etroubles before nightfall.

Of these camps one was at Pratz about halfway between Liddes and Saint Pierre, close to the bank of a torrent which fell into the Drance. Another was just below the village of Liddes.

The advance-guard placed under Lannes's command was composed of the 6th Light, the 28th, 22nd, and 40th of the line—in all about 6648 men—to which was added Rivaud's cavalry brigade, the 12th Hussars, and 21st Chasseurs, some 700 sabres. Lannes set out from Saint Pierre at 2 a.m. on the 15th of May. This early hour for a start had been chosen for the simple reason of avoiding as much as possible the danger from avalanches, as they fall less frequently in the cool hours of the day.

The novelty and the hardihood of the enterprise appealed to the imagination of the troops. Animated to great exertions, they vied with each other in their efforts, and the activity of the officers was well seconded by the willingness of the men. Berthier issued the following proclamation to the army:—

“The soldiers of the Rhine have signalized themselves by glorious triumphs; those of the Army of Italy struggle with invincible perseverance against a superior enemy. Emulating their virtues, go forth and reconquer the plains beyond the Alps which were the first theatre of French glory. Conscripts! you behold the emblems of victory: march and emulate the veterans who have won so many triumphs; learn from them how to bear and overcome the fatigues inseparable from war. Bonaparte is with you; he has come to witness your first triumph. Prove to him that you are the same men whom he formerly led in these regions of immortal renown.”

The French accounts relate how the soldiers were in high spirits, how they were pleased in being led by such a chief as Bonaparte, and how confident they were of success. The majority of the writers are quite silent on the absence of discipline and mutinous behaviour of some of the troops. The 9th Light, which so distinguished themselves at Marengo as to receive the designation of the *incomparable*, had been recruited in Paris, and was in a high state of insubordination. Rivaud's cavalry had also shown signs of insubordination, so much so that for a while they were put out of orders, and it was only by their protesting their devotion to the Republic and to Bonaparte that they were allowed to take part in the campaign. What

caused them to break out was the want of provisions and forage. In passing through Martigny-bourg, Sembrancher, and Orsières the closed doors of the houses added to their discontent, and a voice was heard calling, "At least give us a village to pillage." The brigadier recommended a little patience, declaring that in the evening the supplies would arrive. The brigade halted at Saint Pierre, and whilst Rivaud was away conferring with General Lannes, the soldiers having heard that the biscuit would not start from Villeneuve before the morrow, ransacked the houses for provisions. They carried bread and cheese to the officers, who accepted these simple provisions without making any remonstrance. In one cellar a large supply of spirits was found; an immense punch was improvised, and many of the soldiers partook too freely of it.

The pillage had been going on for two hours when Rivaud galloped back and entered Saint Pierre. The disorder was too great to be stayed by his voice, so the general sounded the boot and saddle. The troops were speedily recalled to their sense of duty, and having got some way out of Saint Pierre, Rivaud halted them and abused them for having violated the sacred laws of hospitality. An old soldier replied, "Citizen General, you were always promising us provisions; we were as hungry as wolves. Now that we are full you may conduct us into the snows and to the enemy. We shall go gaily. Forward, and long live the Republic!"

Berthier ordered Rivaud to punish the squadron commanders severely. This he refused to do, alleging that they had done more than their duty, and that he would rather resign. His words conveyed conviction to Berthier when he told him that if at any time his men were entitled to make a good meal it was on the eve of crossing the Alps, and this they had made.

The discipline of the troops evidently left much to be desired. Coignet relates how General Chambarlhac tried to make the men quicken their pace as they were dragging the guns up the mountain. The gunner who was in command of the detachment told him, "It is not you who command my gun; I am the responsible person. So please move on. At this moment these grenadiers do not belong to you; it is only I who command them." The general stepped towards the gunner, but the latter called a halt. "If you," he then said, "do not move away from my piece I will knock you down with a blow from my

lever. Move on, or I will cast you over the precipice." This seems insubordinate language enough, and evidently the general had to comply, for there Coignet's story ends.

In the first editions of Coignet there is a passage to the effect that at the battle of Montebello the 24th Regiment, as they came under fire, shot all their officers but one. Also that, with a view to punish them for this deed, the First Consul placed the regiment in a very exposed position at Marengo. It may have been so, but such heavy mortality in officers in one regiment would surely have drawn comments.

Bonaparte had, amongst other elements of success, soldiers eager to undertake what he might wish, and generals brave, enterprising, and expert. Of the troops he says, "We were all young in those days, soldiers as well as generals. We disdained fatigues as much as dangers. We were careless of everything except glory." Courage and daring often make up for want of caution, and that fortune favours the brave is, after all, in nowise an empty boast.

Lannes commenced his march on the 15th of May with the 22nd and 40th of the line. He set out from Saint Maurice with the intention of reaching Saint Pierre the same day. The troops advanced in the following order. The 22nd opened the march. At their head were the drums of its three battalions. Following that regiment came twenty waggons loaded with hospital equipment and baggage appertaining to the staff and to sutlers. The 40th brought up the rear.

The column, having crossed the Drance by a wooden bridge, entered Martigny-ville, where it halted in the main square. The inhabitants offered some wine to the men of the 22nd, but of this the 40th, being too far in the rear, could not partake. A kilometre further on is the village of Martigny-bourg. Lannes, wishing that the 40th should in their turn partake of the hospitality of the place, made the 22nd double through the village and halted the 40th, but his object was frustrated, as all the doors remained closed. Coignet speaks of these villages as being the most pitiful that one could behold.

The ascent to be surmounted was considerable. In the windings of the tortuous path which led to the summit, the troops were lost to sight, and now and again came in view. Those who were below were cheered and animated by those who had first surmounted the steeps. They answered in turn, and in this

manner they encouraged each other in their laborious task ; the valleys on every side re-echoed their voices.

The soldiers gazed in wonderment at the snow-clad summits of the lofty mountains. Extraordinary was their ardour, wonderful their gaiety of spirits, astonishing their activity and energy. Laughter and song lightened their toil, good humour and raillery sped from mouth to mouth, and bitter sarcasm was levelled against the unsuspecting Austrians. The silence of those solitary and deserted regions was replaced by many sounds and voices gay and warlike, sounds which were given back from hill to hill. The more the troops laboured the more did the merriment of their jests and the wit of their repartee increase. Often the roll of the war-drum was added to this, beating a charge when the difficulties of the road presented greater obstacles to the advance.

Beyond Saint Pierre skill or courage seemed as nothing against the potency of nature ; for up to the summit there was no beaten road whatever, only narrow and winding paths over steep and rugged mountains succeeded each other. A determination to conquer all obstacles, however, prevailed. The artillery and baggage were dragged, were drawn, were pushed up by main force until the difficult ascent was accomplished. The officers roused the courage of the men, and all working with a will made what seemed at first sight impossible a comparatively easy matter.

The loftiest pinnacle being within reach, the soldiers hailed the extreme point, the termination of their labours, with shouts of transport, and were soon congratulating each other. Their labours found a reward in the good cheer which by the care of the First Consul awaited them, for the good self-sacrificing monks of the Hospice had spread tables on which were bread, cheese, and wine.*

All the artillery had been directed *viâ* Lausanne, Villeneuve, and Martigny on Saint Pierre. At this last place commenced all the heavy work for moving the guns. This was carried out

* The records of the Great Saint Bernard show that from the 13th of May, 1799, when three companies of the 21st half-brigade took up their quarters at the Hospice, to the 9th of July, 1800, 27,703 bottles of wine, 1758 lbs. of meat, and 495 lbs. of bread were distributed.

In conversing with the monks, Bonaparte, it is stated, showed himself desirous of peace.

under the direction of Marmont, who was accompanied by a number of able and promising artillery officers.

To draw the artillery up and down the broken and narrow paths, choked up with snow and ice, the guns and carriages were taken to pieces. This was done at Saint Pierre, where a company of artificers dismantled the guns, the ammunition-waggons, the forges, etc., into suitable parts so as to be easily dragged or carried by hand. Every regiment as it passed received a given quantity of ordnance material in proportion to its strength. Artillery officers were distributed along the column, and were to superintend its transport and prevent any wilful damage being done to the materials on the way.

Gassendi, inspector of ordnance, caused a number of sledges on rollers to be constructed at Auxonne for the carriage of the pieces. In the most narrow parts of the route these sledges were not quite under control, and were found too dangerous. They had, therefore, to be given up, being replaced by fir trees hollowed out so as to form a trough, or receptacle, for the guns. The bottom had been levelled and the front part rounded off so that the trunk might slide without sticking into the ground. A lever inserted into the mouth of the piece and held by a gunner prevented it from turning upside down.

The guns were placed in these hollowed trunks and dragged up by 500 or 600 men according to the weight of the metal. The wheels were rolled on poles. Sledges had been purposely contrived at Auxonne by order of Gassendi for the conveyance of the axle-trees and ammunition-boxes. These latter were emptied and the ammunition transferred to special chests which were carried by men or by mules. The gun-carriages were carried by mules, except the more heavy ones, which men carried on hand-barrows. The transport of the ammunition-waggons gave more trouble than that of the guns, whilst they also suffered greater deterioration.

By order of the First Consul, General Marmont, who was the chief commander of the artillery, had by beat of drum notified at Saint Pierre and in all the surrounding villages that each gun with its carriage and gun-waggons conveyed up the mountain and down the southern side as far as Etroubles would be paid for at the rate of 600, 800, or 1000 francs according to the calibre and weight of the piece. Thereupon a crowd of peasants at once came forward with their horses and mules.

Some thousand soldiers joined them, and thus in less than two days 20 pieces were taken to Etroubles.*

The labour was so tiring that after a first haul all the peasants withdrew, not one was found willing to come forward for a second trip. Marmont on the 19th of May tells the First Consul, "The peasants have abandoned us, disgusted with the severity of the work."

When an entire battalion undertook to transport a field-piece with its ammunition, one-half of the battalion was employed in that work, the other half carried the knapsacks, firelocks, cartridge-cases, canteens, kettles and provisions of their comrades. It was computed that the whole of these necessaries did not weigh less than from 30 to 35 kilogrammes (from 60 to 70 lbs.).

One of the greatest difficulties was to get the artillery over the mountain. It was not easy to drag the weighty ordnance for several leagues over a track practicable only for pedestrians and mules, which in many places did not measure in breadth above $1\frac{1}{2}$ foot, with nothing to prevent a false step to be followed by a fall down a precipice. †

* "Passage of the Artillery:" see p. 339 of "Extraits des Mémoires inédits de feu Claude Victor Pierion, Duc de Belluno."

† Charles VIII. was the first who led artillery on their waggons into Italy. Later Trivulzio passed the artillery of Francis I. through the Cottian Alps to Saluzzo by way of the valley of Barcelonette, Rocca Sparviera, St. Paolo, and L'Argentiera. During a lengthy stay at Embrun, that expert leader had discovered a route for passing an army from France into Italy. The difficulties met on the way were such as would have discouraged any captain less daring than Trivulzio. The rocks had to be broken or moved by the pick and lever, and the guns were carried by soldiers on their shoulders where horses could not draw them. Machines for raising weights were also used, and in this manner the guns were passed from rock to rock. With great ability on the part of the artificers, and with singular toil on the part of the soldiers, all the artillery and baggage was carried over the Val d'Argentiera.

When a general is determined he can make his artillery pass anywhere. The march of Wellington's artillery, when descending the mountainous district where the Ebro takes its rise, and making for the great road of Bilbao in 1813, as described by Napier, was a fine illustration of this fact. "Neither the winter gullies or the ravines, nor the precipitous passes amongst the rocks, retarded even the march of the artillery. Where horses could not draw, men hauled; when the wheels would not roll, the guns were let down or lifted up with ropes, and strongly did the rough veteran infantry work their way through those wild but beautiful regions. Six days they toiled unceasingly; on the seventh, swelled by the junction of Longa's division, and all the small bands which came trickling from the mountains, they burst like raging streams from every defile, and went foaming into the basin of Vitoria."—Napier's "Peninsular War," Book XX. chap. vii.

Prompt efforts were every instant demanded from the soldiers to save the various contrivances which held the artillery from rolling over the precipitous sides; and now supporting, now heaving and dragging their load, they laboured unceasingly. The ascent of the mountain is hard enough for pedestrians free from encumbrances. What must it have been for men heavily weighted, tugging away at a load on ground often covered with snow and ice? Add to this that the majority of the men were not accustomed to hill-climbing.

Coignet describes the labour of drawing the guns, in which he took a share. He states that their three guns, for each half-brigade had its own artillery, were placed in a trough; at one extremity of the trough was inserted a stout bar, to control the movements of the piece, held by a very intelligent gunner who was in command of forty grenadiers. With absolute silence these were bound to obey him, conforming to all the movements which the pieces might make. If the leader called out "Halt!" all were obliged to remain still and not to budge; when he commanded "Forward!" the march had to be instantly resumed. On every point he was absolute master. The soldiers were ranged by twenty, ten on each side; two more carried the gun-carriage; two were detailed to each of the wheels; four were allotted to the upper part of the gun-waggon, eight to the body; eight more carried the muskets of the rest. Every one had his work cut out for him—every one was at his post.

When the snow was reached the work became trying. The track was covered with ice, which destroyed the shoes, and the master-gunner could with great difficulty control his gun, which slid at every turn. It had then to be brought back, and it demanded all the strength and pluck of the men to keep it in the track.

All was sent over in this manner. On the south side of the mountain the ordnance had to be put together, but it was much deteriorated; as, notwithstanding the closest supervision, it had been impossible to prevent a considerable amount of injury.

Much to their credit, several regiments refused to accept the money they were entitled to for drawing the guns.

The troops marched in single file, ascending and descending one by one; no one attempted to outstrip his comrade, for to have done so would have been highly dangerous. There was

indeed enough in this novel experience to awe the soldier, but he was made of hard stuff, and was not easily deterred.

Below Liddes the Drance stream was crossed by two trunks of trees, a rapid rushing torrent flowed 300 feet below. The cavalry had to make a *détour* to reach a better point of passage, which, by the care of General Marescot, who commanded the engineers, had been improved and made practicable. It took five hours to climb from Saint Pierre to the Hospice; then followed a descent of six leagues, or eighteen miles.

Saint Pierre is not quite at the foot of the mountain, as Petit puts it, it is at the foot of the last portion of the ascent. Two-thirds of the way from Martigny, the starting-point of the ascent, have been done before getting there. The altitude at Bourg Saint Pierre is 5348 feet, at the Hospice 8109 feet, at Aosta 1165 feet. The distance by road from Saint Pierre to the Hospice is $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles—which could be walked with a good deal of labour in about three hours—from the Hospice to Aosta nearly 22 miles, from Aosta on to Bard $23\frac{1}{2}$ miles. In 1800, there existed a carriage-road only as far as Saint Pierre, but even this was not fit for the passage of anything beyond ordinary country carts.*

Though an excellent country road now exists between Bourg Saint Pierre and the summit of the Great Saint Bernard, judging by the configuration of the ground and the remains of the old road, it does not seem to me that on the Valais side of the mountain the difficulty of the ascent could have been very great. Mount Saint Bernard has its glaciers and some precipices, like all the rest of the Alps; but there is nothing which can prevent an army full of ardour and devotion from ascending in good order and crossing its summit, above all when there is no enemy to dispute the passage. With a little experience of hill-climbing most difficulties disappear. On the Italian side the hills are much more steep and rough, and the tracks for two-thirds of the way to Saint Rémy are now pretty much in the same condition as they were in 1800. This section is very trying, and must have been more so at the end of May, when there was still much snow on the ground.

The soldiers, as they arrived at the Hospice, received a glass of wine, a ration of bread, and one of cheese. Professor Rolando

* The old road has disappeared in many places. At Orsières it has been made more easy for carriages, though much more winding.

states that Bonaparte had sent 24,000 francs to the monks of the Hospice to collect provisions. This is denied by Silvan Lucat, though he acknowledges that after the victory of Marengo the good fathers were reimbursed for what they had laid out. Rolando could not have been correct when he wrote that the monks got most of the food from Aosta, for the purchase of such unusually large quantities of provisions would have put the Austrians on their guard, and given them some warning of what was about to happen. This was not the case in the Valais, where there was no fear of arousing suspicion of any kind.

The troops, having had a slight rest and partaken of their food, resumed the march. The descent to Saint Rémy was steep and rough, so it is not at all surprising to find Petit recording that the officers arrived at Aosta without boots.

In crossing the Alps, Bonaparte had no other opponent to contend with beyond the obstacles of nature. The difficulties of the ascent and of the descent, together with the roughness of the road, constituted the only serious impediments to the march. But it is not always so, for often in May storms of snow and sleet rage about the Hospice and on the higher reaches of the path. De Cayrol,* who crossed the Alps with the headquarters of the Army of Reserve, states that magnificent weather favoured the undertaking throughout. Bonaparte, writing to Berthier from Martigny on the 19th of May, declares that the day was superb, which would facilitate very much the transport of the artillery. As a proof of the mildness of the weather, the ice on the little lake in front of the Hospice was broken, and it was stated by one of the monks that such a thing at that early season had not been known for forty years.† At the time the French crossed, there was a bright moon, which was a very fortunate circumstance, as it assisted in marching by night.

For a fortnight, commencing from the 14th of May, the day when General Mainoni with a portion of the troops of the advanced guard set out for the Saint Bernard, to the 25th of that month, the Saint Bernard route was the main route of

* De Cayrol had the organizing of the hospitals and the enrolling of wardsmen and sick-bearers.

† Bonaparte's guide, Dorsaz, told him that long habit and old experience had taught the inhabitants to foretell the good and bad weather so accurately that they rarely made a mistake.—Bourrienne.

communication between Italy and France. Fortune gave Bonaparte sufficiently fine weather for several days, and for some really splendid.* A hurricane, a severe storm, a heavy fall of snow, might have turned the enterprise into a huge disaster. Nothing of the kind, however, occurred, and the weather for the ten days from the 15th to the 25th of May, in which 35,000 men, 3000 and more horses and mules, and 40 guns filed over the Great Saint Bernard, was uniformly fair and all that could be desired.†

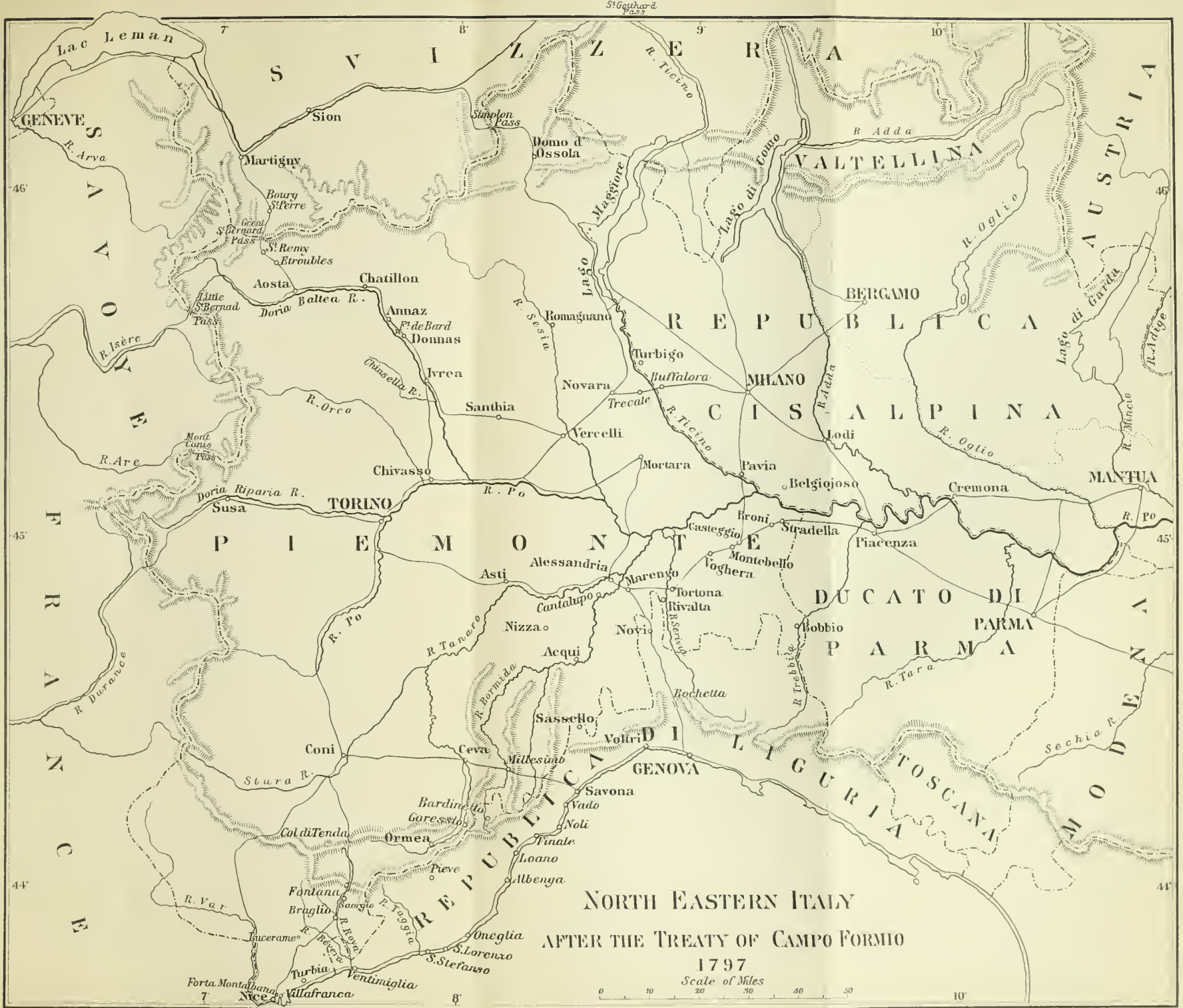
An avalanche, which fell on the artillery of the advanced guard, buried and carried away an 8-pr. gun with three men. This unfortunate accident instantly gave rise to a number of reports, which were naturally grossly exaggerated. Scared by the report of this mishap, the troops moved forward taking excessive precautions. Lannes, alive to the fact that if this were countenanced it would very likely retard the advance, strove thereupon to reassure the troops, and reminded them that up to that moment no other accident had marred the march, and very possibly this would be the only one.

Soon the snow-clad Alps, which had so lately rung with the merry voices and rude oaths of the passing army, were to lie silent and forbidding. On the 16th, Lannes's vanguard reached the beautiful valley of Aosta, then delightful in its spring greenness, offering a marked contrast to the ice and snow of the Saint Bernard. The difficulty in the descent on the Italian side of the Alps was greater than the distress experienced in the ascent, for the slope of the mountain on that side, as we have said, is considerably steeper than it is on the Swiss side. However, notwithstanding all the difficulties experienced, very few accidents occurred. The horses, mules, and guns had to be carefully let down one slippery step after another. Where the slope was steepest some of the soldiers, sitting down, allowed themselves to slide for a long way. Some of the chiefs performed the descent *en ramasse*—that is, sliding on a sort of sledge down the snow-covered hill.‡

* "*Le temps enfin est devenu beau, ce qui nous était bien nécessaire pour activer le passage de notre artillerie par le Saint-Bernard.*"—Bonaparte to the Consuls, Martigny, le 29 Floréal, an 8.

† In a discourse which Bonaparte delivered at the French National Institute in the month of August he stated, "The monks of the Saint Bernard assured me that the snows had melted this year twenty days sooner than usual."

‡ To the tourist who now makes the ascent of the Great Saint Bernard from



On the 17th, the advanced guard halted at Aosta to pull itself together and to complete in all necessaries. Its advanced posts were pushed well forward towards Villefranche. On the 18th, it quitted Aosta and marched for Châtillon. The Austrians under Colonel Rakitkovich had quitted Villefranche on the previous day, and taken up a position at Châtillon, leaving advanced posts at Chambave.

In the afternoon of the 18th (Berthier says at 6 p.m., and, in the same despatch, one hour before night—the Austrian account makes it 2 p.m.), Lannes was confronted by 1500 Austrians with two guns, intrenched at Châtillon and the neighbouring heights. Though unprovided with guns to prepare an attack, he assailed them with the bayonet in front and in flank, routed them and captured 250 prisoners and two guns. Commandant Brossier says that three guns and three ammunition-waggons were captured. The prisoners belonged to the regiment Deutschbanat. The contest hardly lasted one hour, and the enemy retired in great haste, pursued by 100 men of the 12th Hussars.

The Austrians made a very poor defence of the valley of Aosta. In rear of Châtillon by Saint Vincent lies the Montjovet defile, a very difficult piece of ground, which might have been easily contested. The exit of the pass is commanded by the ruined castle of Montjovet, or Saint Germain, showing that the aptitude of the locality for defence had been recognized many years before. No steps whatsoever were taken to defend La Chiusa della Dora, possibly because the Austrians were too much alarmed to undertake a vigorous resistance.

There were from 1000 to 1500 Austrians at Châtillon, and of these it is stated that those who escaped first made for Bard, and afterwards marched on to Ivrea. One may well ask why this precipitate retreat? Would they not have made a better show at Bard, or by being posted at Donnaz as a reserve, where they might have attacked any of the French who might have tried to turn the position of Bard?

On the morning of the 19th, General Watrin, with the brigades of Gency and Rivaud, marched for Ivrea. Up to that moment, neither the difficulties of nature nor the resistance of the enemy

the Valais side, it may appear an easy matter to march an army that way up. It is only when he begins to descend into the valley of Aosta, between the Hospice and Saint Rémy, that he will begin to appreciate the difficulty.

had been able to arrest the progress of the French. Now, however, they came face to face with a still greater obstacle, for the fort of Bard, garrisoned by some 400 Austrians, barred the way. This fort lies eleven leagues from Aosta and four from Ivrea.

In a narrow gorge, where two lofty mountains approach very near to each other, lies the pyramidal rock of Bard. This isolated rock was planted seemingly by a slipping down of a part of Mount Albaredo, which one might suppose had been purposely precipitated into the valley with the intent of closing it hermetically. Situated between the Dora and the village of Bard, it fills with its bulk almost the entire space of the gorge. In its longitudinal construction it leaves on one of its sides nothing else but the narrow bed of the river, from the right bank of which rise the steep slopes of the mountains of Porcil. On the opposite side lies the village.

The village of Bard is formed of a double range of houses, and between this defile runs the main road from Aosta to Ivrea.* The houses on the south side rest on the steep rocky slopes of the Albaredo. The ingress to the village was through four drawbridges commanded by the guns of the defences.

The rock was crowned with military works, which, though of inferior construction, commanded the walled village and closed to an army the main thoroughfare leading into Piedmont. The rushing waters of the Dora form a semicircle at the base of the rock, and in a certain manner constitute a natural line of defence. From its position and the strength of the works, the fort could not be carried by assault; it needed artillery to batter down the walls and open a passage.

The general idea is that the French had only a most vague notion about the fort. Some have even called it an unforeseen obstacle. Nothing, however, is less exact, and everything tends to show that Bard, after all, did not come quite as a surprise to the French, as many suppose. In January, 1800, a committee had gone round inspecting the frontier, and with regard to Bard had reported that the fort appeared difficult to be carried.† It was only by turning it by the valley of Champorcher that the enemy could be induced to abandon it.

* The new road, avoiding the village, runs round the base of the rock and on to Donnaz.

† On the 11th of February, an inspector-general, Lacombe Saint Michel, received an order to ascertain personally the state of all the strong places on the frontier of the Alps and of the Jura from Barcelonnette above Nice to Besançon.

Writing on the 10th of May to General Lacuée, councillor of state, Dupont, chief of the staff of the Army of Reserve, states: "We shall be at Ivrea on the 28th, if the fort of Bard does not detain us." In the report of the reconnaissance of the Saint Bernard by Generals Marescot and Watrin occurs the following passage: "You will find enclosed a return of the troops which the enemy has on the reverse slope of the Alps. . . . He appears inclined to make a display of resistance at the castle of Bard, but this obstacle cannot be but a slight one."

Writing to Dupont on the 15th of May, Berthier informs him that the question of supplies has given him considerable thought. That as nothing may possibly be found in the valley of Aosta, being arrested by the fort of Bard would be very embarrassing.

On the same day, writing from Lausanne to General Berthier, then at Villeneuve, Bonaparte observes: "Lauriston has just arrived; he informs me that all the artillery of General Lannes' division has crossed the Great Saint Bernard. Bid General Duhesme's corps (Boudet and Loison's divisions) cross one after the other, and proceed as quickly as they can to the fort of Bard. Should General Chabran have been able to bring the 12-prs., have them taken there. You will understand that the fort of Bard cannot be taken too soon.

"I imagine that Lannes has to-day occupied Aosta. I hope that at the latest you will be master of Bard by the 17th of May."

Berthier, writing to Lannes from Saint Pierre on the 16th of May, tells him how he will essentially need artillery for an attack of Fort Bard.

General Olivero gave it as his opinion that Bonaparte knew too well the obstacles which the fort of Bard presented to the march of the Army of Reserve, but that evidently they did not appear to his mind to be sufficiently formidable to stop him in his designs.*

* In his "Mémoires" Napoleon writes: "The First Consul knew too well of the existence of the fort of Bard; but all the plans and all the information on this subject fostered the supposition that it would be captured with ease."

Botta relates that Pavetti had represented the reduction of Bard as an easy undertaking, so sanguine was he to see his native district once more restored to liberty.

General Marescot submitted to Bonaparte a report and description of Fort Bard. De Cugnac states there are very good grounds to believe that this report had been prepared by General Herbin, one of Chambarlhac's brigadiers.

In the face of what has been said of the foreknowledge concerning the fort of Bard, it is strange that Marmont could write in his "Mémoires," "He (Bonaparte) came across an obstacle on the way which certainly had not been foreseen, because the First Consul had never said a word to me about it; consequently no preparations had been made to overcome it." This statement appears incredible, that no preparations should have been made when there was every prospect of having to attack a fort.

Marescot ends his report on the fort of Bard by the following sentence: "It is not in the least astonishing that the fort of Bard has not been known; this being the first time it has had an occasion of making itself appreciated. Never had an army passed over the col of the Great Saint Bernard. The engineer who has planned it and constructed it has fully grasped the natural strength of its position, and has applied to it the kind of fortification best adapted to it." This sounds very strange, for how could the general overlook the fact that after their conquest of Italy in 1796 the French had occupied the fort, and that in 1798 many thousands of men were sent into Italy by the way of the Great Saint Bernard? De Cugnac has gathered from the records of the Great Saint Bernard that, from the 24th of May to the 12th of November, 1798, no less than 43,000 men had passed the Hospice, going to Italy. The French, on the 1st of September, 1799, made an irruption into the valley of Aosta by the Col de Mont. Their force consisted of 3000 men, under the command of General Mallet. They overcame the defenders of the Valgrisanche, and occupied Aosta, pushing after as far as Bard, which fort, for want of materials, they were unable to capture.

The fort followed the general conformation of the rock. It was not of any great extent, but several towers and batteries had been added to the original works. These works were carried some way down the slope, and were sheltered by splinter-proofs and bomb-proofs from the commanding height of the Albaredo. Vaulted galleries afforded safe communication between the more advanced batteries and the upper reaches of the fort.

The real strength of Bard lay in its position, for the works in themselves were nothing in particular. The three main ramparts encircling the fort were simple walls, not strengthened

at the back by any terreplein ; nevertheless, on every side the fort was bounded by steep rocks, which promised to be very unfavourable in any attempt made at escalading.

The rock being so shut in between two mountains very near to each other and very high, the fort was commanded at a close distance. Nevertheless, from these very circumstances, any action taken against it was not likely to prove of serious consequence, for on the Albaredo and Porcil mountains it was difficult to find a suitable locality for establishing a battery. Even then the guns would have had to fire at a too-depressed angle of inclination, which would render the firing too plunging and uncertain, and of little effect against masonry.

Bard commanded the road from Aosta to Turin, which runs under its ramparts between the fort and inaccessible rocks. The fort was well armed, and defended by a garrison of about 400 men. The *Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift* states that the garrison was furnished by two companies of grenadiers belonging to the Kinsky regiment. Chabran reports that, when Bernkopf capitulated, 18 guns and 400 prisoners fell into the hands of the French.

General Olivero states that, far from foreseeing the coming of a French army by the valley of Aosta, Melas had some time before their irruption caused a large quantity of artillery and provisions to be removed from Bard and from Ivrea, and to be conveyed to Turin.

What an immense consequence a small obstacle is capable of exercising ! Had the road in this instance gone through, and not by the fort, nothing, not a gun, not a waggon, not a cart, could have passed along the road until the fort had been captured.

The gravity of the obstacle which the fort of Bard presented had not been entirely provided for. There was more to be done than *marcher sur Bard au pas de course*. The passage of the artillery onwards to Ivrea was what constituted the main difficulty. It seemed next to impossible to let it go by without having first command of the fort.

In a letter written to Berthier on the 21st of May, Bonaparte says : "The best-informed people here (at Aosta) believe that if some thirty shells were fired into the fort, if the Albaredo battery opened with some degree of activity, and there were ladders to attempt an assault, especially on the

San Martino side, the fort of Bard could be carried." All conspired to make the capture of the fort appear an easy undertaking.

Berthier's letter to the First Consul, written from Verrès on the 24th of May, gives a good idea of the strength of Fort Bard. "The fort of Bard seems to me likely to hold out for a long time. . . . The castle of Bard is a very provoking obstacle for our operations. The ammunition we spend is wasted, seeing the little injury which we do to it. A direct attack seems to me doubtful in its result." The previous day he had written: "If I saw a chance of succeeding in an assault, I would not hesitate."

"The coming face to face with an obstacle of which little account had been taken went very near to upsetting the brilliant projects of the modern Hannibal. All the reconnaissances revealed that this fort, of which so little notice had been taken, constructed of masonry on a pointed mamelon, and armed with twenty guns, could not be carried by assault, and that it was impossible to hoist cannon up to a sufficiently high point to batter it." *

The little fort of Bard accordingly stopped the advance of the Army of Reserve, and pent it up, as it were, in a narrow neck. The French found themselves in a critical position, for, as the provisions they had with them were calculated to last only for four more days, the danger of the situation from a commissariat point of view will be readily understood. But not only with regard to provisions was this stoppage awkward and unfortunate; it was likewise calculated to give warning to Melas, and by rousing him to the danger which threatened him, would afford him time to come and oppose the French as they tried to issue out into the open country.

In this serious predicament, Bonaparte's steadfastness of character stood forth pre-eminently. Embarked in his glorious enterprise, he stubbornly refused to move a single step backward; nothing could induce him even to entertain such a thought. Bard must either be carried or turned, and the army must march onwards to Ivrea on the border of the plain. Even if the fort held back the artillery, the French could find guns by capturing those of the enemy. Faith in their bravery suggested to him this course as not at all difficult. In a few

* Jomini, "Histoire des Guerres de la Révolution," vol. xiii. p. 185.

days he wrote many able and foreseeing letters to Berthier, through all of which runs the same idea, not to stay the forward movement of the army, to study closely the ground round Bard, to bid Lannes proceed to Ivrea across the Albaredo, to hold the gate of the plain, and to defend that post with all his might against any troops that the enemy might send to confront the Army of Reserve.

Joseph Stockard Bernkopf, who held the place with 400 Austrians, was summoned to surrender, but, like a gallant soldier, he replied that he would never consent to do so. He was told how the infantry were already marching on Ivrea, how Bard was invested on every side, and how part of the artillery was already in position to batter the fort. Resistance, he was assured, would be of no avail, and could only lead to useless blood-shedding. Berthier declares that Bernkopf had been summoned twice, and appeared determined to defend the place up to the very last.

There remained nothing else to be done but either to carry the fort by assault or to seek for some other route by which the fort could be avoided. Either of these measures, at first, appeared almost hopeless.

An army which commences a campaign without provisions and ammunition stands a very good chance of being beaten. The situation of the French, in consequence of the unexpected resistance of the fort of Bard, was really a very serious matter. The question of supply was a difficult one; for what had been collected by the forethought of the First Consul was not much. To obtain the provisions they needed, the French were compelled to keep on the move, and any enforced halt would have placed them in a serious predicament. We find Watrin writing to Dupont, "All this country does not absolutely contain any means of subsistence. The greatest part of the inhabitants have taken to flight." Berthier, in communicating his first impressions on Fort Bard, writes to the First Consul: "You cannot form an idea of the poverty of the people." And it was not surprising, for, as ever since 1792 the valley of Aosta had been compelled to provide supplies for several armies, in 1800 it was in a deplorable condition. The forests had been destroyed by fire or by the axe, the cottages had been burnt, the cattle had been almost swept away, the fields were uncultivated, and the people were subjected to

heavy and fatiguing toil. Sickness, poverty, and want were at every door.

Requisitions beyond measure had been levied on Aosta, and other decrees were threatened; the municipality did its best, and in this was helped by the most wealthy citizens. Sub-committees, of three individuals each, were constituted, and these were enjoined to search a certain number of houses and lay hands on all articles of food, leaving to the people only what they considered absolutely necessary.

As a rule, the valleys at the foot of the Alps do not produce much beyond what is required for feeding the inhabitants. In any case what there was left around Aosta could not have been much, as the Austro-Russians had occupied the valley the previous year, and the records show how very heavily their rule had pressed on the population.

Fresh needs incessantly arise to hamper an army in the field. The army must be always at its best as a fighting machine. It must renew its men to repair the waste brought about by battle and disease. It needs horses to replace such as are killed, get maimed or disabled, or fall into low condition. Its arms, its equipment, its clothing, its boots, get destroyed, damaged, or lost. The ammunition must be constantly replenished, for such is the expenditure of it that an army has seldom present much beyond what will suffice for one single battle. To secure the life of an army it is imperative to accumulate in its rear a mass of provisions and forage to last for a fair number of days.

To secure all possible calls being readily met, and to prevent the presence of a too large accumulation of things about the troops, which would interfere with their freedom of action, a chain of large and small magazines, or depôts, is formed in rear of an army. These magazines, or depôts, are located at convenient distances in places of security, and guarded against any attempt by the enemy, by partisan corps, or by the armed population. All these places of storage naturally enough require proper shelter and an adequate garrison. Besides all this, the army must be master of the country to be in a position to draw from it all the resources it contains.

The connection between these magazines must never be interrupted, so that the convoys may never cease to arrive. The roads by which this connection is kept up, and which lead

back towards the resources of the *base*, are termed the *lines of communication*. These roads ultimately would in most cases constitute the principal lines of retreat of an army.

Let us suppose that the Austrians had been in sufficient strength to occupy the already prepared entrenchments on Mount Albaredo and the Col de la Cou, or that Bernkopf, reinforced by the troops which had retired from Châtillon, could have adequately occupied the outer defences of Bard, the guard-house, etc. Let us imagine that, instead of being so easily driven into the fort, the Austrians had held the village for three or four days longer, and absolutely barred the passage; what incalculable consequences might not have been the result! Already at Verrès on the 23rd it had been found necessary to place the troops upon half rations. Berthier declared to Bonaparte that the resistance of Bard kept him without provisions and ammunition. He pithily summed up the situation when he wrote, "But the provisions are for the moment a terrible obstacle to overcome." "If this letter," he added, "reaches you in some place where you can issue orders for some biscuit to be sent us, nothing is more urgent, for the valley is destitute of everything, above all in the immediate neighbourhood of Bard, where it is very narrow and uncultivated."

Berthier made a careful examination of the mountains. The result showed that, of four possible ways of turning the obstacle, one which left the village of Arnaz and passed by the Col de la Cou, regaining the main road near Donnaz, was the best. The people of the country did not dare to send their mules by this track; but the French improved it, and made it passable even for cavalry and artillery horses.

What very little faith can be placed in much of what Montholon and Gourgaud have written, can be judged from this incident. According to the "*Mémoires de Sainte Hélène*," the credit for having discovered the Albaredo path is assigned to Bonaparte. Nevertheless, the documents existing in the Bureau de la Guerre show that it was the work of Berthier. We are inclined to think that it was not even Berthier who discovered the way over the Albaredo, but the impetuous Lannes.

The Albaredo track would not have been long undiscovered, for the first action of the advanced guard on the 19th was to

send four companies of the 40th to Hone for the purpose of locating skirmishers on the mountain on the right, while another detachment also established skirmishers on the mountain on the left, overlooking the village.

It is so true that where a goat can pass a man can, and where a man can so can an entire corps. Though the path had hitherto only been trodden by single hunters and mountaineers, it was decided that an army which had overcome the difficulties of the Saint Bernard might, by the display of a somewhat similar effort, make its way here also. The order was given, and the troops began the difficult ascent. Marmont states that a track over the mountain to turn the fort, and out of reach of its guns, was made, and that Lannes took his cavalry and infantry that way.

“The route which I have employed to turn the castle of Bard,” writes Berthier, “is a track just practicable for men on foot, across rocks and precipices. The first part, about 1200 yards from the place, is climbed in about two hours, in order to reach Albaredo, from whence the fort is commanded. The descent is by a pretty fair road to reach Donnaz in two hours, when the main road from Bard to Ivrea is again struck.”

On the 19th and 20th of May, 1500 men worked with zeal to ameliorate the path on the Albaredo. In less than two days steps were cut in the steepest and hardest rocks, at points where the slope was too abrupt. Where the track was very narrow, bordered by precipices, parapet walls were constructed to protect the soldiers from a fall. Small bridges were thrown across chasms and points where the rocks were separated by dips and hollows. This was a really astonishing work, worthy of finding a record in the history of this stupendous campaign.

In this manner, over a mountain which had hitherto been regarded by the inhabitants as almost inaccessible, the infantry, cavalry, and baggage of an army effected their passage. By order of General Berthier, the path over the Albaredo was to be repaired daily, and maintained in good order.

If the infantry found it arduous to clamber up the side of the Albaredo, what must it have been for the cavalry, when the horses in many places had to leap from stone to stone? For all that, very few animals were lost. The path, nevertheless, was considered too narrow for the artillery—some other

way for overcoming the difficulty of getting it past Fort Bard had, therefore, to be devised.

On the whole, there was little time lost. Writing to Bonaparte on the 20th, Berthier states that the infantry and cavalry can turn the obstacle by following a mule-track which went from Arnaz to Perloz. In point of fact, Lannes' infantry had already gone past Bard, and that day was at Carema, $1\frac{1}{4}$ mile beyond Saint Martin. The advanced guard had not been spared, it had marched quickly. It had an affair on the 15th of May at Etroubles, one on the 16th at Aosta; it fought on the 18th at Châtillon, and on the 20th at Donnaz and Saint Martin. On the 21st it drove the Austrians out of Montestrutto, and it captured Ivrea on the 22nd.

Guns were hauled up the Albaredo to batter the defences of the fort. On the 20th, Marescot had a strong battery ready to receive the guns, and, as the transport of the ordnance could be done better by manual labour than by mules, Dupont issued orders for collecting a body of peasants to be employed in helping the soldiers to carry the guns up the mountain. To do this required immense labour. Berthier wrote to the First Consul: "It is impossible to form an idea of the acclivities across which the soldiers have succeeded in dragging the pieces for sixty hours." Possibly there was some exaggeration in this, for in his report, written subsequently, on the 28th of May, he states that it took the soldiers thirty hours to carry the two 4-prs. to the Col de la Cou.

Nothing, however, came out of all this fatigue. The firing of the guns placed on the mountain did not produce the result that was expected. It produced little effect on the bomb-proof batteries and vaulted casements which sheltered the garrison.

The First Consul was still at Martigny; he was very uneasy, anxious for the arrival of news of the fall of Bard, and of the arrival of the advance-guard at Ivrea. Restless on account of the non-arrival of the couriers, he decided to start and meet them on the way. At two o'clock on the morning of the 20th, he set out. With him were his aide-de-camp, Duroc; his secretary, Bourrienne; two monks of the Great Saint Bernard—the Rev. Fathers Murith and Ferretaz—one the prior, the other the procurator, of the house of the order at Martigny.

Most of us are familiar with the picture by the eminent

painter David, in which the First Consul is represented riding a fiery steed, which is in the act of rearing on the border of a precipice. The artist was very far from the truth, which was by no means so sensational, for Bonaparte, enveloped in his cloak, slowly ascended to the summit of the Saint Bernard, partly on foot and partly astride of a very sure-footed mule. The mule was led by a youthful guide, Pierre Nicholas Dorsaz, a native of Bourg Saint Pierre, with whom Bonaparte entertained himself by inquiring into his family affairs.

The romantic part of the story is that young Dorsaz, totally unaware who the officer he was guiding might be, informed the First Consul how his poverty prevented his marrying the girl of his choice, one Leonora Geneoud, and was made happy by a *cadeau* of 1200 francs. The story is quite true, the fact being corroborated by documents, and by the traditions handed down from father to son in the Dorsaz family.

As he gradually advanced up the mountain and overtook detachments of troops, Bonaparte kept turning his eyes on the soldiers, who were toiling and combating against the difficulties of the ascent. A look, a smile, a word would suffice to make them forget their fatigues, to make them laugh at their difficulties and double their exertions.

Conversing with the fathers, he inquired what was the general opinion regarding Fort Bard. The reply he received was that it was considered by every one as impregnable. This was indeed cheerless news, for what would it avail him to have, at the cost of such extraordinary exertions, brought his army to the crest of the Alps, if it were only to plunge it into a narrow valley which was utterly depleted of provisions?

A short halt was made at Liddes, at the house of the parish priest; a frugal breakfast was eaten some miles further on, at the village of Saint Pierre. In the afternoon, the First Consul arrived at the Hospice, where he was welcomed by the head of the establishment, Father D'Allèves. It was there that Bonaparte received Berthier's letter relative to the serious obstacle that Fort Bard was found to be.

He was very tired, but after having warmed himself at a fire and partaken of a modest repast, he started again and made for Etroubles. In all, the party did not stop more than two hours at the Hospice.

To commemorate Bonaparte's passage of the Alps, a stone

was erected in the Hospice by the Republic of the Valais some years later, on the day of the emperor's coronation. It bears the following inscription :—

“ NAPOLEONI PRIMO FRANCORUM IMPERATORI
SEMPER AUGUSTO
REIPUBLICÆ VALESIANÆ RESTAURATORI SEMPER
OPTIMO
ÆGYPTIACO, BIS ITALICO SEMPER INVICTO,
IN MONTE JOVIS ET SEMPRONII SEMPER MEMORANDO
RESPUBLICA VALESIÆ GRATA II DECEMBRIS,
ANNI MDCCCIV.”

At Etroubles, where he arrived on the evening of the 20th, he took up his abode in the house of the Rev. Vesendaz, which was the best in the country at that time.* There he received the two letters which Berthier had written to him on the evening of the 19th and the morning of the 20th. The First Consul sent pressing instructions for the siege of Bard, for the reparations of the track by which the army was to pass, and for the positions at the opening of the valley which would have to be held.

The next day, the 21st, he moved on to Aosta. The syndic, Signor D. Bianco, went as far as Bibian to meet him, and presented to him the keys of the city. Bonaparte was well received in Aosta, and there was a general illumination at night in his honour.

Bonaparte was always remarkable for the correctness with which he grasped the situation, even when at a distance from the theatre of war. The fertility of his brain can be judged from the letter which he despatched to Berthier from Aosta on the 21st. This epistle of itself gives us an insight into his immense forethought, his talent for forming a just estimate of the situation, and his great care in pointing out to his subordinates every precaution that prudence demands. Certainly Bonaparte shows in the same letter that he had formed a wrong conception of the resistance he might expect from Bard. Still, the opinion he expressed had been gathered by consulting the best-informed individuals in Aosta.

Bernkopf's resistance was very galling to the French. As

* The house no longer exists, having been destroyed by fire.

a first preliminary it was considered necessary to gain possession of the village of Bard, through which ran the main road. This was effected on the night of the 21st and 22nd of May.

Four companies of grenadiers belonging to the 58th Regiment (a regiment which formed part of Loison's division), accompanied by a small squad of engineers and led by General Gobert, descended into the village of Bard by letting themselves down from the rocks and by a narrow cleft in which lay the waterpipe. These troops burst in the Aosta gate, lowered the drawbridge, and opened communication with the valley. They then chased the Austrians out of the village, and made for the gate on the Ivrea side. There, also, they forced the gate open and lowered the drawbridge. By their action a through communication was opened between Arnaz and Donnaz. Though the main road had thus been secured, it still remained exposed to the fire of the fort batteries.* The Austrian garrison, driven out of the village, withdrew into the fort, from which it opened a murderous fire. As to the French, they made good their footing in Bard by taking shelter in the houses, the walls of which were speedily loopholed.

There were some forty guns and about a hundred vehicles to be got through Bard. Berthier several times recommended that the guns should be dismounted. In his letter of the 24th of May, he urges the dismounting of the artillery and dragging it up by the new road he had caused to be constructed. He states it would take but an hour and a half to ascend, and one to descend. Marmont, however, was strongly opposed to the artillery being again taken to pieces. He declared it had suffered very much by being so treated once, in coming over the Saint Bernard, and that the guns and waggons would be rendered totally useless were they to be again dismounted.†

Marmont takes credit to himself for the happy idea by which the difficulty of the artillery was surmounted. His remonstrances against dismounting the guns a second time having prevailed, arrangements were made for passing them stealthily during the night past the walls of the fort. The wheels of the guns and waggons were covered with twisted hay, and

* Some of the attacking party in their eagerness pushed on as far as Donnaz, and were fired upon by Boudet's troops, as nothing was known there of this intended night operation.

† Marmont, "*Mémoires*," book ii. p. 118.

every jingling or rattling part was made fast or covered to deaden the sound. The road itself was covered with mattresses and thickly strewn with manure.

Men replaced the horses, for it was considered that not only would the horses make greater noise, but that if any were struck, killed, or wounded, the whole convoy would be brought to a standstill; whereas the men would go on, careful not to make a sound of any kind, and, not being in harness, if killed or wounded would simply drop out without thereby delaying the march of the rest.

An artillery officer was to be in command of each gun, and 10 louis were promised to the soldiers for each gun taken beyond sight of the fort. This was anything but an easy matter, for Bernkopf was on the alert, and as night came on let off some fire-balls in the village so as to discover the doings of the enemy. Then as soon as the French got into motion he opened on them with grape and canister, rolled on them hand-grenades, and plied them with musketry.

Thiers relates that the first gun sent through Bard was discovered by the noise it made, that the Austrians opened a brisk fire, and that of thirteen artillerymen who were drawing it seven were killed or wounded. He states that it was after this failure that litter and straw were strewn on the roadway and straw wound round the wheels. De Cugnac does not hide the fact that the first and second attempts ended in failure.

Berthier, in fact, admits these two failures, for he writes on the 24th, "To-night, for the third time, an attempt will be made to pass the guns under the cannon of the fort; however, it is an operation which always presents serious difficulties."

From a report written by Berthier to the First Consul, we learn that on the night of the 24-25th of May two guns, 4-prs., and a gun-waggon had passed under the fire of the defenders of Bard without any of the men being hit. Two 8-prs. and two howitzers passed through the town of Bard on the night of the 25-26th of May, and reached Ivrea on the evening of the 26th.

All the horses, and the gun-ammunition, carried on mules, went over the Albaredo. Dampierre writes: "The artillery convoys pass by night under the guns of the fort, but not without losing many men. Marmont sets down the loss at five or six men killed or wounded for each vehicle. The report of the

transport of the artillery through Bard sent for insertion in the *Moniteur* was not a true version, for it was silent respecting the difficulties, the hesitations, and the losses incurred.

The passage was carried out with great prudence. The most favourable moment was chosen; the march was conducted in profound silence; and a few guns only were sent across at every attempt. It was also in favour of the French that the noise of the rush of water in the Dora drowned the sound of the guns moving, and that the Austrians could not depress their pieces sufficiently. Trucco states that in moving their guns the French profited by a terrible storm; the noise of the thunder and a sudden rise of the Dora, all assisted to deaden the sound. The storm, however, appears to have occurred on the night of the first failure. The staff officer sent by Berthier to report on the passage of the guns, Captain Menou of the artillery, complained, amongst other difficulties, of very heavy rain and a very dark night.

The operation of passing the guns through the village of Bard was dangerous, nevertheless the Austrians were unable to prevent a certain amount of success.

In the mean while, the infantry and cavalry were moving steadily onwards by the Albaredo route. First went Lannes, then Boudet, then Champeaux, Monnier, Murat, Loison, and Chambarlhac.

Bonaparte, writing to General Lacombe Saint Michel, testifies to the ease with which the artillery had passed over the Little Saint Bernard. Somehow he does not appear to have been fully aware of the practicability of this pass. Mainoni, however, had written in favour of it as follows:—

“If you desire to cross the Saint Bernard, which is not at all impossible, you will have to climb for eight hours (from Orsières) to reach the Hospice, and to allow two hours to descend to Saint Rémy. The road by the Saint Bernard to my mind is the easiest and above all others preferable if conjointly with it a column is directed to march over the Little Saint Bernard, furnished with cannon and howitzers, so that the two together may attack the fort of Bard and subdue it, thus overcoming at once all obstacles which might retard the combination and the completeness of the operations. I venture to assure you, General, that if there is actually going to be an expedition, that it is well seconded from the side of the Saint Gothard

and pushed on at every point, it cannot but meet with complete success."

Marmont remarks that, had special guns been prepared for attacking Fort Bard, it would have surrendered in one day, and all the trouble would have been at an end. He also believes that all the labour of dismounting and remounting the artillery might have been avoided by a diligent reconnaissance, for the Little Saint Bernard was practicable for carriages, and six 12-prs. sent later from Chambery crossed by that pass on their carriages.

In reality the Little Saint Bernard had been insufficiently reconnoitred. Marescot had only four or five days allowed him for reconnoitring all the Alpine passes, and we may take it for certain that he had not sufficient time to perform his duty in a thorough manner.

Generals Marescot and Loison having made a careful survey of the fort of Bard, an assault was ordered by General Berthier to take place on the 26th of May at 2.30 in the morning. The direction of the attack was committed to the care of General Loison, the troops being divided into three columns.

One column, composed of 300 men of the 13th Light, led by an officer of known bravery, was to attack the first enclosure from the side of Donnaz. This column was to be accompanied by an officer of engineers with fifteen men, all carrying hatchets, who were to collect all the ladders procurable in Donnaz. After escalading the walls, this column was to move in two directions, one part going to the right to take possession of the gate of the fort, the other to the left to turn the heights.

Brigadier Dufour, with the three grenadier companies of the 58th, and three of the 60th, was directed to assault the entrance of the fort, break through the barriers, escalate the first wall, ascend the rock which commanded the gate, lower the drawbridge, burst open the gates, and penetrate by the rear into the lower battery, and into the upper either by climbing through the embrasures or by turning it by its left.

The third column was to consist of three companies which were at that time on the right bank of the Dora. They were to make a false attack, threatening to cross the river, and thus drawing the enemy's attention to that side.

Mathieu Dumas states that Bonaparte, having explained to a superior officer, chosen amongst the bravest to lead the

principal attack, how he had to carry out his orders, took General Marescot aside and told him, "This officer does not understand at all what he will have to do, and the assault will consequently fail." It seems strange that the assault should still have been carried into effect notwithstanding such a hopeless forecast, and that many gallant lives should have been uselessly sacrificed.

As the signal was given, the grenadiers advanced in the most complete silence, and reached the walls. They broke down some palisades, and even began penetrating into the fort; but the alarm was given, Bernkopf directed all his batteries to open fire with case-shot, whilst hand-grenades and a murderous fire of musketry met the assailants at all points. The French were soon in disorder and forced to abandon the attack. The attempt had failed; the enemy, who had not been sufficiently harassed by the labour of the defence, was very much on the alert, and offered a vigorous resistance. The ladders also were found too short, for there had been no opportunity for measuring the depth of the ditch.

This failure proved the correctness of General Marescot's estimate. For, when called for to furnish a report on Fort Bard, he had expressed a conviction that an escalade offered a very slight prospect of success.

Bonaparte, who was present at the assault, tried to minimize this repulse, or otherwise to leave a vague idea that the attack had succeeded. The Austrian sources relate that the French retired in disorder with a total loss of 270 in killed and wounded. At any rate, on the same day (the 26th) Berthier issued an order for General Chabran to assume command of the valley of Aosta* and of the siege of Bard. As long as the fort remained in the hands of the Austrians, it constituted an obstruction in the lines of communication with France. Chabran's corps was consequently left to blockade it. This had been done in succession by the divisions of Watrin, Boudet, and Loison. It was not a pleasant prospect for General Chabran. His corps was composed principally of conscripts, and many of these, frightened by the look of the fort, deserted.

The attack, at first delayed on account of a scarcity of ammunition, was ordered to take place on the 1st of June.

* Chabran calls the valley of Aosta, "cette chétive vallée" (this pitiful valley).—De Cugnac, vol. i. pp. 525, 527, 533.

Everything had been done to insure success. Two 12-prs. placed by the village church opened fire at very short distance, and succeeded in demolishing the palisades, the works about the main entrance, and the lower lines; the place could hold out no longer, and capitulated that evening.

General Olivero makes the Austrian officer capitulate on an order sent to him by Melas through a spy (Giuseppe Cornaglia), when it became too evident that a prolonged defence would be of no further avail. He really capitulated—whether under orders or not—when the object of his resistance had passed, when the whole of the French army had gone by.

Professor Rolando seems to infer that since the French artillery managed to pass through Bard, a suspicion attaches to Bernkopf of having connived at the enterprise. We may more than doubt the insinuation that there was any collusion on his part. His defence was very spirited, and has met with a well-merited reward by the prominent place given to his name in all the narratives of the campaign.

The historians, who have always deep admiration for the conquerors alone, have tried to lower the reputation of the brave captain by contesting his fidelity. With a small number of men Bernkopf had for a fortnight offered a stubborn resistance, and placed the French army within an inch of destruction.

The bombardment had every day increased in intensity. Small breaches had been opened, and the walls had been so pounded that in places it was not practicable to put them into a state of repair. Nothing remained to do but to lower the flag.

The Austrian account would certainly have attributed the surrender to treachery had there been the slightest suspicion on that score. But as on this point the Austrians are absolutely silent, historians and other writers have no warrant for bringing such a cruel accusation against a brave soldier.

CHAPTER IX.

FROM IVREA TO MILAN.

Lannes attacks and carries Ivrea—The Austrians defeated on the Chiusella—They withdraw behind the Oreo—Turreau advances on Susa, but is driven back at Avigliana—Three alternatives open to Bonaparte—Determines to march on Milan—Expected that the news of his arrival would have extricated Massena—Murat advances to the Sesia—Monecy's troops commence to cross the Saint Gothard—Crossing of the Ticino—Capture of Turbigo—Some deficiencies of the French army—The French enter Milan—Bonaparte receives an enthusiastic reception—Unfortunate condition of Lombardy—Plan proposed by some Austrian officers.

THE small town of Ivrea, situated on the Dora Baltea, at its issue from the mountains, is, by the fertility of the soil, purposely made for an army to recover after the severe toil of crossing the Alps. In years gone by it was of considerable strength, but it had been gradually allowed to fall into decay. In 1800, the walls were in ruins, and the defences but partially armed. As the Austrians were far from believing that Italy could be invaded from that side, they had made no adequate preparation for its defence. Nor did they attempt a combat in front of the city, by reason of the ground being hilly and broken, which would have necessitated a great expansion of their forces, so that, had things not gone well, a complete rout would have speedily followed.

Watrin was ordered to march from his position at Montestrutto on the 22nd of May, and to carry Ivrea; for this city, situated as it is at the opening of the valley of Aosta, was a most important position to secure.

Ivrea is picturesquely situated on the edge of a hill crowned by an extensive old castle with three lofty towers. It was the ancient Eporedia, which the Romans colonized 100 B.C., in order to command the Alpine routes over the Great and Little Saint Bernard. For the last century it had not seen an enemy; that was since it had been captured by the Duc de Vendôme in

1704. The Austrians had only thought of re-victualling it when the French were at the gates. They held the town and citadel with some 6000 men, infantry and cavalry.*

Such had been the result of the obstruction offered by Fort Bard, that when Lannes might justly have expected to meet with imposing forces, he had to attack a walled town without having a single cannon.

The attack was very brisk, and after two hours' fighting, notwithstanding a vigorous resistance, a battalion of the 22nd, led by Captain Cochet, escaladed the citadel and carried it by a bold dash with the bayonet. Its fall led to the capture of the town. Attacked in three points, the defences were soon broken down and the gates blown open. The 22nd and 40th Regiments rushed in *en masse* from all sides, and captured 300 prisoners. Lannes himself carried the gate on the right. All the Austrian guns, fourteen in number by their own account, remained in the hands of the French.

The operation lasted one day. Ivrea fell on the 22nd of May, in proof of which can be cited the fact that Hulin addressed a letter to the municipality of Ivrea that day, stating that the war commissary, Barmal, alone was authorized to serve requisitions.

The town of Ivrea was surrounded by a rampart and ditch. The citadel, situated on a height, defended the bridge over the Dora Baltea. The French found it in a tolerable state of repair. The Austrians had taken some slight steps towards placing Ivrea in a state of defence, for the loopholes showed that they had been repaired, and a large quantity of gabions and fascines were found in the citadel. There were fourteen cast guns, mounted on serviceable carriages, many rounds of gun ammunition, and a considerable quantity of powder and artillery materials. Dupont, in his report to the minister of war, states that the captured guns had been spiked by the Austrians previous to their retreat.

The citadel needed only provisions, and had Lannes arrived before the town one day later the enemy would have strongly occupied it, and nothing then but a regular siege would have put the French in possession of it.

It must naturally strike the reader with astonishment that no means were adopted by the Austrian commanders to obstruct

* General Watrin's report to General Lannes, Ivrea, 22nd of May, 1800.

the progress of the French and stop their issue from the valley of Aosta. To this supineness they owed their defeat; for it dispirited their soldiers, while it inspired the enemy with courage, and gave the French time to recover from their fatigues and complete the re-organization of their forces.

The many complaints Lannes received from the inhabitants made him issue some very stringent orders against pillaging, as it only estranged the friendship of the people, which it was so desirable to cultivate. Every delinquent was to be brought before a drumhead court-martial and sentenced to death.

Subsequent to its capture, and as the French army concentrated at Ivrea, the French detailed a field officer to command the place, to whom were attached a captain of engineers and a captain of artillery. On the 25th of May, Bonaparte named Brigadier Vignolles to assume the command of the town and district. The citadel was to be garrisoned by a battalion of Chabran's division; the 12th of the line occupied the town. A hospital for the sick and wounded was established in the citadel, where a fifteen-days' supply of provisions for 500 men was collected.

It was laid down that, should Ivrea be attacked by considerable forces, the troops in the town were to withdraw and fall back on Bard, after having placed the necessary reinforcements in the citadel.

When driven out of Ivrea, the Austrians retired on the Chiusella, where General Haddick, who had been ordered to cover Turin, met them. The general had a large force at his disposal, with a strong contingent of cavalry under the orders of Pilatti and Count Palfy. Haddick had hitherto shown himself particularly prudent; his patrols had been scouring the country, still taking great care not to be drawn into an engagement. Lannes was impatient to act, but he was restrained by the peremptory orders which he had received from Berthier.

In war, to make a good beginning is all-important. From the 22nd of May, the advanced guard of the Army of Reserve was in occupation of Ivrea, and the entry of the army into the plains of Piedmont was now secure. The First Consul was still at Aosta, and the little fort of Bard continued to offer an energetic resistance, and barred the way to the artillery.

On the morning of the 25th of May, an order was sent to Lannes to assume the offensive to the south of Ivrea, and to

drive the enemy beyond Chivasso. The French troops at Ivrea were at the time disposed as follows: The advanced guard was beyond the bridge of Ivrea, its right holding the heights of Fiorano, and the left resting on the Dora. Boudet's division was on the left bank of the Dora Baltea on the road to Vercelli. All that Lannes had been able to gather about the enemy was that Haddick and De Briey were posted on the heights of Mersenasco, about two leagues beyond Ivrea, with some 5000 infantry and 4000 cavalry. Bonaparte calculated that the Austrians had at the most from 7000 to 8000 men in that direction. He hoped that by beating them it would be possible for Lannes to gather some precise news of Turreau.

Watrin's division—supported by Boudet's division with the 12th Hussars and 21st Chasseurs—set out at break of day on the 26th of May to attack the enemy strongly intrenched on the right bank of the Chiusella. To cover Turin, Haddick had occupied a very good position along the Chiusella; his right resting on the Dora, the left—passing by San Martino—went as far as Baldissero. He had established a battery of four guns to sweep the bridge, whilst other guns were placed here and there along the front. The position was also strengthened with redoubts. The Austrian troops were under De Briey, Pilatti, and Palfy, Haddick being in chief command. The regiments of Kinsky, Bannats, Tuscany, Wallis, and the King of Sardinia's guards were present in the field. The cavalry consisted of De la Tour's dragoons, several regiments of hussars, and some heavy cavalry.

The stone bridge over the Chiusella was very long and narrow; to obtain possession of it was no easy matter. Lannes ordered his bravest men to capture it. The 6th Light attacked it boldly, but the enemy defended it with the greatest determination. Their four guns plied the attacking column with shot, whilst a musketry fire belaboured it on the flanks. The 6th got possession of it, when the regiments of Franz-Kinsky and of the Bannats rushed on them and compelled the French to abandon the bridge for a short period.

In his corps Lannes had an officer, Pavetti, already mentioned in the previous chapter. His home was at Romano, and he was consequently intimately acquainted with the locality. This officer informed Lannes that to the left of the bridge there existed a very practicable ford, and offered to lead the troops across.

After having attempted several times, but in vain, to cross the bridge under the deadly fire of the enemy's guns, the French crossed by this ford. Macon's brigade with the 6th Light rushed into the river, the water reaching nearly up to their necks, and, notwithstanding the grape and musketry which poured thick on all sides, gained the opposite shore, attacked the right of the Austrian position, and opened a heavy fire. At the same time the 28th, led by General Gency, charged the bridge in close column and compelled the Austrians to give way. Palfy, who was close to the bridge charging with some squadrons of cavalry, received a mortal wound. He was carried to Romano, where he died.

Haddick possibly believed it dangerous to bring on a general action against what he imagined a superior enemy; so he ordered a retreat. The French followed up their first advantage, and pursued the Austrians up to Romano, where the latter had taken post on the heights. The Austrians, who had found the ground close to the Chiusella very unsuited for cavalry, as it was covered with bushes and underwood, had withdrawn to a better position in the plain, which extends between Romano and the hills of Montalengo. It was there that 4000 cavalry rushed at the French. The Austrians executed several brilliant charges, but all void of results. The 40th under Malher, and the 22nd directed by Brigadier-General Schreiber, having forded the river on the right of the original position and some way below the bridge, came up in time, and met the several charges with the bayonet, until the arrival of the 12th Hussars and the 21st Chasseurs, who rushed on the enemy and put an end to the combat.

Boudet, who with his division had supported Watrin, and had moved up to Romano, was ordered to pursue, which he did up to the top of the mountains near Foglizzo. The Austrians retired very speedily, and it was found impossible to come up with them.

A point worth noticing in this engagement is the diversity of statements regarding the losses sustained by the French. Watrin, who regrets that the troops suffered heavily, sets down the number of killed and wounded at 300. Hulin estimates the casualties in killed and wounded at 400. Berthier reduces the figures to 250, and Bonaparte to 200! The Austrian account makes out the loss on their side to have been 348 men and

216 horses, against a loss of 1700 men on the French side. A staff officer of the Austrian army, who simply signs himself W., in a narrative, "La Campagne des Français en Italie en 1800," published at Leipzig in 1801, goes further. He gives 400 men as the losses of the Austrians, and makes the French casualties amount to 2500 men, 300 prisoners, and 300 horses.

Troops which retire precipitately, as Boudet relates that the Austrians did, rarely inflict such a heavy loss on their opponents. On the other hand, had the Austrians so maltreated the French, they had no excuse for hurrying away from the battlefield. If we assume that their figures are correct, they show that the Austrians lacked that spirit of tenacity which is the highest quality in fighting men, whilst the French marched on to victory, entirely heedless of its cost.

An indirect proof that the French losses were nothing like the Austrian accounts would make us believe, is that Lannes, who made such a fuss about his losses at Montebello, was silent on this point. Surely he would have said something had they been extraordinarily heavy.

Haddick could not be made to believe that he had had to contend only with Bonaparte's advanced guard. He thought he had before him at least 20,000 men, so he sent word to Melas that, if he did not come to his assistance, Piedmont and Lombardy would fall into the hands of the French. This was on the 26th of May, and on this very day Melas arrived in Turin, where he was greeted with the announcement of Haddick's defeat at Chiusella.

In the narratives of this memorable campaign, the dates are very contradictory. The extract of the *Oesterreichische Militärische Zeitschrift*, quoted by De Cugnac, vol. ii. p. 27, states that Bonaparte and Berthier had arrived at Ivrea, and that the battle of the Chiusella commenced at four in the morning of the 26th of May. Gachot goes even further, for he states on page 200, "Behind the 40th, Bonaparte, Berthier, Duhesme, Boudet, and the staffs of these generals, at one moment threatened, drew their swords and prepared to charge the enemy, who, being fired upon at point blank, and sabred on the left by the Chasseurs, retired." * He also states that the First Consul re-entered Ivrea at six in the evening, . . . that an officer of La Tour's dragoons had recognized Bonaparte,

* Edouard Gachot, "La Deuxième Campagne d'Italie," pp. 220, 222, 221.

having been very close to him in the neighbourhood of Romano.

In opposition to all this, we find Bonaparte writing a letter to the Consuls from Ivrea on the 27th of May, in which he informs them, "I arrived yesterday evening at Ivrea." Statements from other officers fix the same date. On the 26th of May, the day of the engagement on the Chiusella, an attempt was made to carry Fort Bard by assault, at which the First Consul and Berthier were present. It was after this attempt had failed that the two officers left for Ivrea, where the headquarters of the army were only established on the evening of the 26th. General Marescot, in his order-book, writes from d'Arnaz, under date of the 26th of May, "The Headquarters left this morning."

It appears very strange that Marmont, in his "Mémoires," should pass over in silence the engagements at the Chiusella or at Turbigo. He states: "We entered Milan without striking a blow" ("Et nous entrâmes à Milan sans coup férir").—*Livre v. p. 122.*

Bonaparte ordered Lannes to remain in observation in front of Chivasso. Lannes appears to have been keen to occupy Turin and to push on as far as Asti; the object of such a move being evidently to effect Massena's deliverance. It had, nevertheless, the great inconvenience of leaving the Austrians masters of Lombardy and of abandoning Moncey, Béthencourt, and Lechi, who might be attacked and overpowered by superior forces. This Bonaparte was loth to do. He had resolved first to occupy the left bank of the Po, to sweep the enemy out of the north of Italy, then to concentrate four or five divisions at Piacenza, and to hasten to Genova.

Lannes on the 27th heard the thunder of cannon in the rear of Turin; it was the combat at Avigliano.

Haddick had retired to the right bank of the Orco, leaving Lobkowitz's regiment of dragoons on the left bank. Melas had given him orders to dispute every inch of ground, and to fall back on Turin as slowly as possible; always keeping up close communication with Field-Marshal Kaim.

On the 28th Lannes descended from Foglizzo and made for the banks of the Orco; under a brisk cannonade, he approached closer and closer to the bridge on that river. The Austrian dragoons withdrew across the bridge, to which they set fire as they abandoned it. This move of the French added strength

to the already-formed opinion that Bonaparte intended to advance in the direction of Turin, with a view of effecting a junction with Turreau. The Austrians expected to be attacked by the French the following day; but Lannes made no move on the 29th, and remained quietly at Chivasso. On the Po he found a very large number of boats loaded with rice and corn, and these he appropriated.

Bonaparte himself proceeded to Chivasso, where he held a review of the advanced guard, and praised the troops for all the services they had rendered. He told them how the French cavalry was about to be concentrated; how it would attack the Austrian cavalry, so as to wrench from it its pretended superiority in bravery and in manœuvring. By his presence at Chivasso he evidently sought to lead Melas astray, and to strengthen more and more the idea that the French were bent on marching on Turin. The Austrians were to be mystified; the veritable project was to be concealed from them. Appearances were to lead them to believe that the French army intended to act in the direction of Turin—a belief which gained strength from Turreau's operations on the 22nd and on the 24th of May.

According to the bulletin of the 30th of August, the Austrians were led to conceive that the French intended to cross the Po in the neighbourhood of Chivasso, so as to get to Asti and intercept the troops retiring from Nice. To frustrate this object their troops at Chivasso had been strongly reinforced from Turin. One can form a good idea of the embarrassment of the Austrian general, and also his astonishment when the impending attack was not delivered.

Melas, however, was not as easily led into error as Napoleon in his correspondence would wish us to believe. He had sent reconnaissances in various quarters, and made use of reliable spies, by which measures he had on the 28th come to learn of the evacuation of the country round Ivrea and the march of the French on Vercelli.

Whilst Lannes with the advanced guard was directed to threaten Turin, Murat was receiving orders to send reconnaissances in the direction of Biella and Santhia, being supported by Monnier, who was to take post on the main road to Santhia, at a point three leagues from Ivrea.

Berthier, when he was at Ivrea, looking at the many rivers

which water the plains of Piedmont and Lombardy, and disturbed by the absence of a bridging equipage—for it had been considered impracticable to bring the pontoons over the Alps—devised the formation of a corps of pontoniers, to be under the command of the chief engineer. For this service every division was made to contribute fifty men, taken from those who in ordinary life had been accustomed to the navigation of rivers.

All Bonaparte's generals were contributing their share towards the success of the campaign. Turreau, advancing from Savoy by the Mont Cenis route, opened a way for his column to Susa.*

He attacked the Austrians under Lamarsaille at the village of Gravière on the 22nd of May. A very spirited combat ensued, and victory for a time was uncertain. Led by Adjutant-General Liebault, the French, after several attempts, at last turned in a very able manner the Fort Saint François, carried all the positions by assault, and remained masters of the village of Gravière. The same evening at ten o'clock the garrison of Fort la Brunette capitulated.

Bonaparte had sent to inform Turreau that he expected to be at Ivrea on the 18th of May; that should the Austrians concentrate their forces they would necessarily reduce the troops in his front; and that he should then gather as many men as possible and push on to Susa. Turreau was to place himself in communication with the Army of Reserve by way of Largo and Ponte, to which towns reconnaissances would be sent to seek news of his column.

The intention was to call up Turreau's column to Ivrea, and unite it with the rest of the army. Turreau was to march by his left, keeping as clear as possible of Turin, still selecting a road practicable for artillery. On the 22nd of May, Bonaparte, writing to Berthier, enjoins him to send country people forward to ascertain if there was any news of General Turreau.

The general had planted his column between Susa and Turin, watching the Austrians, who occupied that corner of Piedmont.

* In p. 27 of his narrative of the battle of Marengo, Berthier states that Turreau had 2500 men, which he had gathered from the garrisons of the Dauphiné, and with whom he had gone in the direction of Susa, after having forced the pass of Cabrières.

On the 24th, he made a forward movement as far as Avigliano, but he had to contend against superior numbers, and was beaten. After this he took up a defensive position some few miles to the east of Susa.

Turreau's force by the nature of the country was separated from the main army throughout the campaign. Nevertheless, it rendered important services in leading the enemy to a false conclusion.

When, on the 22nd of May, the head of Turreau's column showed itself descending from the Mont Cenis, it was but natural that the Austrians would have considered it to be the advanced guard of the main French army, which was advancing by one of the most practicable passes—that of Mont Cenis. Lannes's party they would regard only as a detachment intended for the purpose of effecting a diversion. In this they were naturally led by the fact that the Mont Cenis road was more direct for troops intended for the relief of Genova than the one which led over the Saint Bernard. Being more practicable for artillery, they believed it was the one Bonaparte would have selected above all others for the passage of his main army.

The Austrians had sufficient troops round Turin to check Turreau and crush Lannes, thus laying bare the rear of the French army. It may, however, be even more than doubted if Bonaparte at any time intended to retire by the way of the Great Saint Bernard. He certainly left a small garrison at the Hospice, but that did not mean anything, for he had the Simplon and the Saint Gothard routes open to him, and occupied by B ethencourt and Monecy.

As to the future of Bard, the First Consul had written to Berthier: "When you will have mastered it, do not suffer the supplies to be wasted; they should be placed under guard with an able commander. You understand that should we change our line of operations, it will be extremely important to have this small fort, which closes the valley and assures us the means of resuming when we like the line of communications by Aosta. When the campaign will have taken a different character, then we may get rid of it by having it razed."

What Bonaparte had most to fear was a rapid concentration of the Austrian army. The danger, however, was not great. The Austrians were pretty well scattered, and, Genova being at the last gasps, the Austrians were evidently loth to raise the

siege. The orders for the concentration were issued on the 31st of May. Ott probably received his on the 2nd of June, and had he obeyed at once without waiting for the capitulation, he might have been at Montebello on the 7th, instead of on the 9th. On the latter day Lannes was already across the Po. Ott's delay was disastrous.

The Austrian staff at Turin had shown little enterprise in gathering information, and had readily come to believe that the strength of the French in the valley of Aosta did not exceed 6000 men. When Melas returned from Nice he was dissatisfied with their sluggishness, and it is stated that he reprimanded them severely.

The French army was at Ivrea, the Alps had been surmounted, and Bonaparte had left behind him only the fort of Bard, which Chabran, with his 5000 men, was directed to blockade and reduce. It remained now for Bonaparte to decide as to his future movements. Three plans were open to him. The first was to move to his right, to form a junction with Turreau and attack the Austrians. The second plan was to cross the Po by means of the boats which Lannes had secured, and to advance to the relief of Massena, who was still holding out at Genova. The third was to march eastward across the Ticino, to form a junction with Monecy, and to capture Milan and all the stores and reserve parks of the Austrians.

The first plan was rejected because Bonaparte had somehow or other come to the conclusion that he was not strong enough to cope with Melas, and that it was hazardous to expose himself to a defeat with no safe line of retreat as long as Fort Bard continued to hold out. Bonaparte knew, nevertheless, that a large Austrian force was blockading Genova, and that another was in front of Suchet, on the Var; consequently, that if he made a junction with Turreau he would be stronger than Melas, having besides a line of retreat by the Mont Cenis open to him; a line easier by far than that of the Saint Bernard.

On the 24th of May, Bonaparte wrote a letter to General Brune, who was then at Dijon, which shows how utterly unfounded was the opinion that Melas could bring larger numbers against him, and how by rapid movements, of which no one was a greater master than himself, he could have beaten in detail the various parties of the Austrian army as they retired from Genova and the Var.

“You will find enclosed,” wrote Bonaparte, “the bulletin of the army.

“The enemy appears surprised by our progress. He barely believes it. He hardly knows where he is. You can judge for yourself. Look at the enemy’s situation on the 18th of May: 12,000 men at Nice; 6000 at Savona and along the Genovese Riviera; 25,000 in front of Genova; 8000 at Susa, Pinerolo, etc.; 3000 in the valley of Aosta; 8000 opposite the Simplon and the Saint Gothard—all that are infantry; two regiments of hussars at Genova and at Nice; four regiments close to Turin; the remainder cantoned at Acqui and in the interior of Lombardy.

“He has remained thus up to the moment when we arrived at Ivrea.

“The 3000 men who were in the valley have been beaten and scattered. All the corps which were on the side of Susa and of Pinerolo have moved to between Turin and Ivrea. Nice, therefore, has in all probability been evacuated at the present moment. They even write to me that Melas must have arrived at Turin; but that is not certain.*

“I calculate on having all the army concentrated at Ivrea by the 26th or the 27th, forming altogether about 33,000 men. I shall be master of the whole country from the Dora Baltea up to the Sesia.

“The same day Moncey will cross the Saint Gothard with 15,000 men.

“Suchet and Massena, who have been apprised of the movement, will follow the enemy as soon as they see him getting weak in front of them.

“The castle and the town of Ivrea are ours, as much as the outer fort of Bard. The Hungarian captain, with his 400 Croats, has retired into a keep, where he has a dozen guns which defend the road; we are going to bombard him.

“Should we have some success, this will only be a beginning. You are going to organize an efficient army corps, with which at the beginning of July you will have to play a fine rôle.

* Bonaparte was well informed. On the 24th of May, from Aosta, we find him writing to the Consuls, “A despatch which I have received from Nice and the news which comes to me from Ivrea show me that on the 19th Melas was at Nice, not alarmed by anything. . . . I am assured that he arrived by diligence at Turin yesterday in all haste.”

“Push forward without remissness the arming and clothing of the conscripts as they arrive.

“You will find yourself commanding the Army of Reserve the moment it effects its junction with the Army of Italy.”

It is well to look at Melas's movements in consequence of an intercepted despatch of Massena's, which spoke of expecting to be delivered by Berthier's army. On this information Melas, who was on the Var, ordered three brigades to reascend the Col di Tenda and march on Turin—an order which was cancelled the following day on the receipt of a contradictory letter, which stated that Berthier was marching on the Var with the object of reinforcing Suchet. On the 18th, however, all doubt was removed by reason of a report sent by Kaim. This announced the approach of a considerable corps coming from the Valais. On the receipt of this news, Melas returned to his original project; he sent Knesevich's brigade to reinforce Kaim, and directed Zach to repair to Turin. He himself quitted Nice for Turin, and was to be followed there by Auersberg's brigade. O'Reilly's cavalry division, composed of Palfy's and Nobile's brigades, was also attached to Kaim.

It would be hard to explain why Bonaparte, who was so quick to discern the right move in a campaign, neglected to take advantage of his initiative and abstained from falling on the Austrians whilst they were occupied in effecting their concentration. Of the state of dispersion of the enemy he must have been fully aware, and the best proof is the above letter to Brune. Without counting Turreau's forces, he would have had 33,000 men with whom to meet about 11,000 of the enemy.

In what Napoleon wrote at Saint Helena, he argues that, of the three alternatives open to him, the first was contrary to the real principles of war because it amounted to attacking Melas, who had with him considerable forces. But by his own showing, by his letter to General Brune, Melas had no more than from 11,000 to 15,000 men, who could have been easily dealt with by Bonaparte's army before they had time to be reinforced by any troops coming up from Nice or Geneva.

When making a study of the alternative roads leading from Switzerland into Italy, Bonaparte had given up the Simplon and Saint Gothard routes simply with the object of shortening his line of operations. This was because the dire condition of Massena's forces called for a speedy arrival of the Army of

Reserve. The great parade made to hasten to Massena's assistance seems to have been all of a sudden forgotten; possibly owing to the risk of dipping into Piedmontese territory, where all the strong places were held by Austrian garrisons, without having any safe line of communications. This may have been deemed a risk hardly worth incurring, considering Bonaparte's uncertainty whether Massena could hold out for a sufficient time or not.

Massena agreed to evacuate Genova on the 4th of June. So, as it eventually turned out, Bonaparte would have had plenty of time had he adopted the second alternative open to him, and might have saved his lieutenant from the humiliation of an evacuation. Seeing that, as it was, Melas, though not imminently threatened, sent orders to Ott to raise the siege, it is fair to believe that the order would have been despatched sooner had the French made any move in the direction of the Maritime Alps.

The second alternative was dangerous because of the uncertainty whether Massena still held out at Genova, and of the ignorance of the enemy's movements.

The two first projects having been rejected, the third remained. This Bonaparte evidently considered the most promising—the junction of his army with the corps Monecy was bringing from the Rhine, which was calculated to raise the Army of Reserve to over 50,000 effective men. It was on this that he had so much calculated from the very beginning of the campaign.

Bonaparte's aim was more vast than the simple raising of the blockade of Genova—the rescue of a few thousand starving troops—it was to make the Army of Reserve strong by uniting the two main forces—those he had brought over the Great Saint Bernard and those that Monecy was bringing from the Army of the Rhine; to capture the enemy's magazines and sources of supply, and to cut off Melas entirely from his base and the Austrian empire.

The strategic aim of Bonaparte's operations was to gain possession of the enemy's line of communications. The great danger in such a manœuvre, generally speaking, is that the assailant lays himself open to lose his own. It was this consideration, possibly, which prevented Bonaparte from operating against Melas when he got to Chivasso.

He has been reproached for having gone to Milan, and thus deserted Massena and left Genova to its fate. But he may have calculated that he would have effected the raising of the blockade indirectly by threatening the rear of the Austrians, and that Melas would have withdrawn his troops from Genova the moment the Army of Reserve appeared in Lombardy and threatened his line of communications. This withdrawal would have enabled Massena to gather together all his disposable forces, and pass from the defensive to the offensive.

The First Consul's great aim was to sever the Austrian communications with the Mincio. This he was resolved to do, and then to compel his adversary to fight at a disadvantage when he had no longer a secure line of retreat. He thought there was little to be gained by saving Genova, whereas by beating Melas he could at one single stroke recover the greater portion of his former conquests in Italy.

Up to the 24th of May, it was fair to imagine that Bonaparte intended to concentrate his army at Ivrea; and that, having effected this, he would assail the Austrian forces nearest to him in Piedmont, and then the rest in succession. All at once, he altered his plans; the Army of Reserve was made to march on Milan. Acting in concert with Moncey and B ethencourt, the army was to clear the Milanese provinces of the enemy, capture his magazines, besiege his fortresses, and then attend on the Po till Melas came to recover his communications.*

When at Saint Helena, the fallen emperor, who knew well how his strategy in the Marengo campaign had been criticized, pleaded hard in favour of his march to Milan. It is interesting to examine these arguments.†

“The headquarters of the Austrian army were at Turin. But half of the enemy's forces were in front of Genova, and the other half was supposed to be, and was, indeed, on the march, coming by way of the Col di Tenda to reinforce such as were at Turin. Under this circumstance, what action will the First Consul take? Will he march on Turin to drive Melas out of it, combine with Turreau, and in this manner find safe communications with France and its arsenals of Grenoble and Briançon?

* “M emoires de Napol eon—Correspondence de Napol eon,” cxxx. pp. 375-377.

† Melas did not dream of a French march on Milan. Writing to Lord Keith on the 23rd of May, he states: “The enemy has surrounded the fort of Bard, and has advanced as far as Ivrea. It is pretty clear that his aim is to deliver Massena.”

Or will he construct a bridge at Chivasso, profiting by the boats which fortune has thrown into his hands, and make direct for Geneva to raise the blockade of that important place? Or else, leaving Melas in his rear, will he cross the Sesia and the Ticino, go to Milan, and on the Adda make his junction with Moncey's corps, amounting to 15,000 men, which was then coming from the Army of the Rhine and had descended from the Saint Gothard?

“Of these three alternatives, the first was contrary to the real principles of war, because Melas had with him very considerable forces. Consequently the French army ran the risk of giving battle, having no safe retreat, inasmuch as the fort of Bard had not yet been captured. Besides, supposing that Melas had abandoned Turin and fallen back on Alessandria, the campaign had failed; either army would have found itself in a natural position, the French army resting on Mont Blanc and the Dauphiné, whilst that of Melas would have had its left at Geneva and in her rear the important places of Mantua, Piacenza, and Milan.

“The second alternative did not appear practicable. How venture in the midst of an army as powerful as the Austrian was, between the Po and Geneva, without having any line of operation, any safe line of retreat?

“The third alternative, on the contrary, offered every advantage. The French army, mistress of Milan, could lay hands on all the magazines, on all the depôts, on all the hospitals of the hostile army; * it formed a junction with the left, which was commanded by General Moncey; there was a safe line of retreat by the Simplon and the Saint Gothard. The Simplon led through the Valais and on to Sion, where all the depôts of supplies for the army had been directed. The Saint Gothard led to Switzerland, of which we had been in possession for the last two years, and which covered the Army of the Rhine, at that moment on the Iller. In such a position the French general could act according to his will. Were Melas with his united army to march from Turin on the Sesia and on

* Bonaparte always counted on the supplies accumulated by his adversary. He acted in accordance with his answer given as a boy at an examination, when he was proposed the following question: “What measures would you adopt, in case you were besieged in a fortified place and destitute of provisions?” “As long,” he replied, “as there were any in the enemy's camp, I should never be at a loss for a supply.”

the Ticino, the French army could deliver battle with the immense advantage that, should it come off victorious, Melas, without retreat, would be pursued and thrown back on Savoy, and, in the case of the French army being beaten, it would retire by the Simplon and the Saint Gothard. Should Melas, as it was natural to suppose, move in the direction of Alessandria to combine there with the army coming from Genova, it was to be expected, in advancing to meet him, and in crossing the Po, to anticipate him and to deliver battle, the French army having its rear safe on the river and Milan, the Simplon and the Saint Gothard; whilst the Austrian army, having its retreat cut off and having no communication with Mantua and Austria, would be exposed to be hurled back on the mountains of the Riviera di Ponente, and to be totally destroyed or captured at the foot of the Alps, at the Col di Tenda or in the neighbourhood of Nice.

“Lastly, by adopting the third alternative, if, once master of Milan, it suited the French general to let Melas go by, and to remain between the Po, the Adda, and the Ticino, he had in this way, without fighting a battle, reconquered Lombardy and Piedmont, the Maritime Alps, the Riviera di Genova, and caused the blockade of this latter city to be raised: these were very important results.”

An ordinary general would most probably have taken the first alternative. Bonaparte selected the third, and in this he was greatly favoured by the slowness of his adversary.

The Duc de Valmy, in his “*Histoire de la Campagne de 1800*,” offers the following observations: Arrived on Italian soil, and at two or three marches at most from the enemy, the First Consul began to entertain doubts; he was tormented by anxieties. Where was the Army of Italy? What were Massena and Suchet about? Where was Melas? What plans was he likely to adopt? Nothing was absolutely certain; the only thing that appeared most probable was that the Austrian commander-in-chief would manœuvre so as to escape from the Army of Reserve, and evade fighting a general engagement which would restore Italy to Bonaparte.

In this state of uncertainty, Bonaparte determined to guard at the same time all the passages of which Melas might avail himself in order to regain the line of the Mincio and Mantua, and to observe the left of the Po, towards which Melas must work back. He adopted the plan of capturing Milan, of watching

the main road from Genova by which the Austrian army was bound to come, placing himself at Stradella in the centre of the communications which he intended to close.

Some writers have admired these dispositions of General Bonaparte, others have blamed this unusual dispersion of his forces when the moment was fast approaching when he would need all the troops at his disposal. If it was certain that Melas sought to avoid a battle, no objection perhaps could be raised to Bonaparte's plan. But this dispersal was very risky in the opposite alternative; if the Austrian general, intending to offer battle, gathered all his forces around him.

The possession of Milan could not fail to produce a great moral impression both on the Italians and the Imperialists, and to renew and add fresh lustre to the halo of glory which encircled the brow of the First Consul.* The junction with Monecy would raise the French forces to full 50,000 men on one hand, and on the other open a safe retreat over the Saint Gothard and the Simplon in case of disaster. The magazines and reserve parks established by the Austrians lay exposed to immediate capture in the unprotected cities of Lombardy.

It is all very well to applaud Bonaparte's manœuvres, and to approve of his having closed every line of communication the Austrians had before he delivered battle. We should not lose sight, however, of the fact that the occupation of Milan was only a minor operation; that the bulk of the Austrian forces were in Piedmont, and still remained to be beaten; that by his march eastward Bonaparte gave Melas time to concentrate his forces, whereas he should have taken advantage of their state of dispersion to beat them in detail. The march on Milan was time lost, and in effecting that move he was not true to his principles, which were to seek for the main body of the enemy and to beat it in a general action.

A campaign can only be rapidly brought to a conclusion by the complete destruction of the organized forces of the enemy, and, where the circumstances are particularly favourable, it is a grave professional error to undertake unnecessary operations. The question naturally arises: Would a battle fought in the end of May with superior forces have had better ulterior results than the one Bonaparte fought on the 14th of June?

A commentator holds, with good reason, that, had the First

* Rose calls the march on Milan a dramatic stroke.

Consul waited for Moncey so as to operate with one compact body of 50,000 men, the plan he followed might have seemed the most preferable. But if he had afterwards to cross the Po with only 29,000 men, as he did on the 7th of June, he could have done that just as well in May, whilst Elsnitz and Ott, being busy in Liguria, were not to be feared. There was nothing then to prevent his crossing the Po with 35,000 men about Cambio, and directing Moncey to come down by forced marches by Varese to Milan and Pavia, to cover the communications by the bridges and to support the army, had such a measure been necessary. In fact, Moncey had nothing to fear from Vukassevich and Laudon, who were both inferior to his two divisions.*

If there is possibly a sound principle in the art of war, it is in the concentration of superior forces at the decisive point. This principle Bonaparte neglected, and it nearly cost him dear.

In 1805, he wrote to Murat, "*On ne doit rien risquer, et la première de toutes les règles est d'avoir la supériorité numérique.*" The Army of Reserve being very badly off with regard to resources, the prospect of appropriating the resources of the enemy was very tempting. The price, however, paid for this—that is to say, the delay in attacking, a delay which Melas could turn to profitable account by concentrating his forces—was very great.

Bonaparte's march on Milan may be described, as some writers have described it, as a stroke of genius, which would not have been conceived by an ordinary general. Still, no ordinary general would have ever come in for any blame had he followed a different course, and sought the enemy's army after the occupation of Ivrea, to beat it before its concentration had been completed.

Gachot makes the new plan of operations by Milan to have been settled at a conference held in the Royal College of Ivrea, on the evening of the 26th of May, at which Bonaparte, Berthier, and Murat were present.† Campana makes Bonaparte take that

* See footnote p. 195, vol. xiii., Jomini, "Histoire des Guerres de la Révolution."

† "Il tient, au collège royal, avec Berthier et Murat, une longue conférence. À onze heures, une nouvelle marche de l'armée de réserve est copiée par Bourrienne, et Murat s'éloigne dans la nuit."—Gachot, "La Deuxième Campagne d'Italie," p. 222.

resolution on the 24th of May, and this is borne out by the following paragraph of a letter which Bonaparte wrote to Moncey from Aosta on the 24th of May, 1800: "Attack the 7th or the 8th; go on to Belinzona, to Locarno and Lugano. It is very possible that we shall be on the Ticino by the 9th."

The idea of undertaking a march on Milan can be traced further back, even before the route to be followed had been settled. The intention of doing so is contained in some indications issued to the nominal commander-in-chief of the Army of Reserve. Bonaparte writes from Paris, under date of the 27th of April: "Besides, it is possible that it may be no longer Milan where it will be necessary to go, but we may be compelled to go with all possible speed to Tortona, so as to free Massena, who, in case he should be beaten, will be shut up in Genova, where he has provisions for thirty days. It is consequently by the Saint Bernard that I desire that they shall pass."

The march on Milan was in contemplation when Bonaparte predicted to Bourrienne, before the commencement of the campaign, where he would beat Melas.

As we have already seen, the First Consul made a great point of drawing a body of troops from Moreau's army with which to complete his own. It was only natural, therefore, that he should wish to effect a junction with this force. This he could only do by going before it, and meeting it as it descended into Lombardy.

In a letter of instructions issued by Berthier to General Dupont, his chief of the staff, dated the 14th of May, Berthier says: "You will instruct the general officer commanding at the Simplon that the army now at Ivrea will probably march by its left on the Ticino, when he must impose on the enemy with regard to the number of his forces, and harass him by attacking his posts, though all this should be done without imprudence. Moncey will likewise have to be informed that the army will go direct from Ivrea to Milan by the shortest route."

All this and more appears to show that the movement on Milan was part of a settled purpose, and had been decided before the troops actually began to climb the slopes of the Alps.

Bonaparte's march on Milan has been very severely criticized by some writers. Bulow, on the other hand, calls it one of the most able manœuvres which have ever been made.

Jomini writes: "Leaving an observing screen before Chivasso

and Trino, Bonaparte determined to cross the Ticino, to inundate Lombardy like a torrent, to drive back up to the guns of Mantua the corps which held it, so as to facilitate a junction with Monecy, who, on the 27th of May, was already descending from the Saint Gothard. This daring plan, calculated with rare precision of the time needed for its execution, met with a complete success, notwithstanding the divergent marches which it led to afterwards."

Rocquancourt holds that a march through Piedmont, with the avowed object of proceeding to the relief of Massena, overcoming all the troops Bonaparte might come across on the way, could only lead to moderate results, by no means commensurate with the greatness of the enterprise and the difficulties already overcome. It was for this reason that the First Consul, in place of manœuvring by his right, and approaching Turin, accorded the preference to an advance on Milan and Piacenza, which would place him on the most direct communications of his adversary, whilst at the same time it was calculated to hasten his much-desired junction with Monecy. By following this course he would acquire a large base and all sorts of resources and means.*

Thiers believes that the march on Milan was conceived with the principal object of concentrating the French forces before blocking Melas's communications.†

Hamley views the flank march on Milan in this guise. Bonaparte's intention was to drive back that portion of the Austrian army which lay north of the Po, and to effect a junction with Monecy's corps. He hoped to be able to keep his design from the enemy till he had thrown a force across the Po at Piacenza. Then the Austrians would be cut off entirely from the Mincio, and any concentration of their forces, which must ensue for the recovery of their communications, would go towards relieving Genova, and at the same time would enable Suchet to form a junction with Massena. Genova, however, was known to be *in extremis*; it might have fallen any day, thus rendering the last part of the plan of no avail.

Humanity and gratitude, if nothing else, should have made Bonaparte, one would think, overcome every difficulty, and get

* J. Rocquancourt, "Cours Complet d'Art et Histoire Militaires," tome ii. p. 160.

† Thiers, "Consulat et Empire," vol. ii. p. 386.

to Genova. But he turned to his left, and thus put off for eight or ten days the relief of that city.

A man like Bonaparte, who was endowed with such extraordinary insight, whose calculations were so far-reaching, whose intentions were so distinct, and whose intellect was so clear, cannot be judged on the same lines as ordinary men. The object he had in view was to interpose between Melas and Vienna, and to cut him from his base on the Mincio. This was the real scope of his move to Milan.

If he exaggerated anything it was Massena's power of resistance. He would not, otherwise, have sent repeated instructions to him as well as to Suchet, urging them to pursue the Austrians vigorously on the first indication of a backward movement.

The recall of the Austrian troops from Genova as part of the general concentration of the Austrian army was what Bonaparte calculated upon for the relief of Massena. What more natural than for him to believe that the Austrians would have been withdrawn from Genova as soon as they found that their rear was dangerously threatened? This withdrawal did come, but it came too late.

In war, what has to be looked for is an adequate result. Bonaparte's aim was not to relieve the troops of the Army of Italy blockaded in Genova, it was a much higher one: to recover as quickly as possible all the possessions in Italy secured to France by the Treaty of Campo Formio.

It was just the difference between genius and mediocrity. Genius will often overlook small results when it beholds greater ones further ahead. The relief of the Army of Italy, desirable as it was, was for him an object of only secondary consideration. If we look at the campaign carried out in 1800 in this light, we are bound to admit that the march to Milan was in conformity with the dictates of war. It aimed not only at cutting Melas from his base of operations, but in placing him in a dire position between the Army of Italy and the Army of Reserve.

The magnitude of the enterprise justified, we think, Bonaparte's neglect of his gallant comrade struggling against all kinds of difficulties at Genova, and the non-fulfilment of the promise which he had made to him. There can be no doubt that he trusted too much to the news of his arrival in Italy alone sufficing to liberate Massena, in consequence of the scare

produced by the sudden apparition of the derided Army of Reserve. And this it would have done, if Melas had not delayed too long the concentration of his army.

Bonaparte never for a moment realized the pitiable state to which famine and the horrors of the siege had reduced Massena's troops. Were such troops capable of undertaking fresh efforts? Granted that their courage was still unimpaired when they proudly marched out of the city they had so gallantly held, they were nevertheless in a state of destitution. Where could the commissariat officers obtain the necessary provisions and forage for a forward movement in a country which had been denuded of everything?

As for Suchet, what effort could he make, considering the exhausted state of the country through which he had to move?—a narrow belt of land, with the mountains on one side and the sea on the other. This is fully exposed by the statement made by Massena to the First Consul in the early part of February—

“The army is absolutely bare and shoeless. . . . We have not a grain of forage, nor provisions of any description, no means of transport whatever. . . . Liguria has no provisions of any kind, everything has gone (*est eperissé*). I have placed the troops on half rations; I myself have set the example.”* Saint Cyr, addressing the mutinous soldiers at the gates of Genova, in the previous December, told them, “Have you forgotten that you have made a desert between your present position and France?”—a fact which of itself alone brought them back to a sense of duty.

If Bonaparte was very keen to keep his communications secure, why should not Suchet have been equally careful? For all that, he has been reproached for having undertaken the siege of Savona. But could he well leave 1000 Austrians there masters of his communications with France? After all, were Gazan's men, the starved garrison of Genova, troops fit for any great exertion?

The presence of Suchet's advanced guard at Acqui, as will be shown hereafter, had a very important effect on the issue of the battle of Marengo; an effect which must be justly estimated, for to the reduction of the Austrian cavalry on the 14th of June Melas could with good reason attribute part of his defeat.

Bonaparte remained insensible to Massena's earnest appeal.

* De Cugnac, vol. i. p. 9.

The general had written on the 23rd of April: "I implore you, Citizen Consul, come to our assistance! The handful of brave men that I command here, by its constancy and its devotedness, well deserves all your solicitude." *

Henri Martin writes on this point: "He had imposed untold sacrifices on the Army of Liguria, which had been accepted with an admirable abnegation. But these sacrifices and this devotedness imposed on him in turn an absolute obligation—the obligation of saving the defenders of Genova. He was pretty sure of being able to trample over Melas, and afterwards to overpower the general who directed the siege of Genova. He had already done something even more difficult.

"Bonaparte, however, did nothing of the kind. He abandoned Massena and his soldiers. He immolated them to the success of a more grandiose and hazardous plan which he had conceived. He desired no longer only to beat the Austrian army, but to annihilate it at a single blow by cutting off every possible retreat." †

Who can say but that the idea contained in the following words, uttered by Bonaparte, may not have been a reason for marching on Milan: "But it is necessary to be in force before going to provoke (*d'aller provoquer*) M. de Melas" ?

The scarcity of artillery and ammunition may have been another of the principal causes which decided him to march into Lombardy. We find, in fact, on the 24th of May, Berthier demanding instructions, and soliciting to be informed whether it was to be a march to the right to join Turreau, or by the left to join Monecy, so as to get reinforced in guns from the Saint Gothard or from Susa.

On the same day it was decided to march on Milan. In conjunction with Monecy's and B ethencourt's troops, which constituted the left of the French forces, Bonaparte's army was to sweep the enemy out of Milanese territory, capture his magazines, besiege his fortresses, and wait on the Po till Melas should come with his army to recover his lost communications.

There certainly appears some inconsistency between the march on Milan and the line of route over the Alps chosen for the Army of Reserve. What decided Bonaparte to select the

* De Cugnac, "Campagne de l'Arm e de R serve en 1800," vol. i. p. 275.

† Henri Martin, "Histoire de France depuis 1789 jusqu'  nos jours," tome iii. p. 115.

Great Saint Bernard was that, had the choice of the route been allowed to fall on the Simplon or on the Saint Gothard, it would have entailed a longer march and taken more time to go to Massena's aid. Having purposely adopted the shorter route, the object held in view when the selection was made seems, after the Alps had been surmounted, to have been thought no longer of any material consequence.

Bonaparte, at the head of 33,000 men, could have destroyed the force Melas had about Turin, which just came up to one-third of the Army of Reserve—about 11,000 men—and have afterwards dealt with the corps coming up in succession from Nice, 12,000; from Savona, 6000; from Genova, 25,000. By his move eastwards on Milan, he allowed Melas time to concentrate a force round Alessandria numerically superior to his own; owing to which he very nearly suffered a defeat.

Nor was there any reasonable excuse for coming to Moncey's aid. For the information which he had received from Lombardy, as can be seen from a letter written to Bernadotte from Aosta on the 24th of May, proved that the enemy had there only 10,000 men. These Moncey and B ethencourt could easily have disposed of, whilst Bonaparte was free with his centre and right to devote his entire attention to Melas.

By his march on Milan Bonaparte lost the advantage of his first situation; for to accomplish what he intended it became necessary to spread his troops, whilst Melas gained time for concentrating his. The argument is that by an advance from Ivrea he would have very easily beaten the Austrians, at that time in a thorough state of dispersion, though possibly some small corps might have been fortunate enough to escape. But from the very beginning we have stated how Bonaparte craved to do something very brilliant, extraordinarily uncommon; he wished most anxiously, and with good reason, as the events proved, for a battle, a brilliant battle, with which to end the campaign with one stroke.

A series of small defeats inflicted on the Austrians by marching through Piedmont would have dimmed the brilliancy of his great strategic march over the Alps. It would have been a very tame conclusion of a grand operation. The astounding effect of that exploit needed a corresponding *finale*—a pitched, a decisive battle against the entire Austrian army; something that would show to the French nation the full extent of his

genius. This is what he so ardently desired, and risked much to obtain. Nevertheless, it was worth risking. He was mindful of the proverb, "Nothing venture, nothing have."

Bonaparte had calculated that he would beat the Austrians on the plain of Marengo, and so he had foretold; but they were not there when he emerged from the valley of Aosta. They had plunged into the Ligurian littoral. Was he, then, not to make an attempt to bar all the roads open to them for regaining the Lombard provinces? was he to keep his army united, when he was so very uncertain of what course Melas was likely to pursue?

Bonaparte deemed it a grander plan to draw round the Austrians a net formed by all his divisions, and so close the way that not one of their detachments should escape him. Had he marched on Turin, the Austrians from Nice, Savona, and Genova might have found the roads leading from Genova free. Had he moved in the direction of Genova, in that case the Austrians occupying Turin, Pinerolo, and Susa would have been free to move. In either case a portion of the Austrian army would have been able to escape. He consequently deemed it absolutely necessary to extend the Army of Reserve on one side from Pavia to Piacenza (because this part of the Po, which runs obliquely from west to east, closes the road to Milan), on the other side from Pavia to the Ticino. Thus, advancing with clever manœuvres, he would spread out his army in a semicircle, through which the Austrians had to break.

The move to Milan was so unexpected that all were taken by surprise when Bonaparte discontinued his advance on Genova.

If Massena was sacrificed by this manœuvre, as Lanfry and Michelet hold, none the less was Bonaparte surprised in finding Melas so obstinate as to leave 25,000 men idle before the walls of Genova. This was one of the calculations which miscarried.

It may be questioned if the Army of Reserve did arrive in Italy too late to save Genova. We now know General Ott's hesitation to comply with Melas's orders; had he complied with them at once Massena would have been saved the disgrace of marching his troops out of Genova. In reality, it resolved itself in the end into a question of a few hours.

The drawback of Bonaparte's plan lay in the extension of the network. The wide dispersion of his forces, so as to guard

many points at the same time, made his net dangerously weak. No one, however, knew better than Bonaparte how to make troops march ; no commander could have appeared more speedily at any threatened point.

By the move on Milan, the rear of the French army became the advanced guard.

On the 26th of May, Murat advanced on the road to Vercelli, at the head of 1500 cavalry, commanded by Duvignan and Champeaux, and of the 70th regiment, commanded by Monnier. On the 27th, he occupied Vercelli, where he found that the Austrians had burnt the bridge over the Sesia. On the following day, in company with General Duhesme, Murat reconnoitred the fords of the Sesia, and made his dispositions for crossing the river.

During the night of the 28th, two batteries were constructed on the right bank of the Sesia, opposite to the position held by the Austrians. This was done to rivet their attention to that point, whilst Murat attempted to cross the river at a point two leagues further down. Early on the morning of the 29th, at about three o'clock, the Austrians, having discovered that a battery was in course of construction, and that some boats had already been collected under its protection, opened fire from four guns. Detecting a body of infantry concealed in a dike, and believing that these measures indicated an intended crossing, the Austrians opened a heavy fire of musketry, which lasted three hours.

Murat had decided to ford the river close to Palestro, and to turn the Austrian left ; whilst Boudet would effect a crossing on the left of Vercelli, with the object of marching on Borgo Vercelli. The current of the Sesia was strong, and Murat experienced some difficulty in crossing, losing a few men, who were drowned. Boudet experienced the same difficulty, and likewise lost some men.

General Festenberg, with between 2000 and 3000 men, was guarding the Sesia ; and as soon as it was reported to him by his cavalry patrols that Murat had crossed the river on his left, and Boudet on his right, he ordered a retreat. It was then about 8 a.m. This retreat was molested by Duhesme, who had sent across, in boats, a couple of companies of grenadiers. Festenberg managed to reach the Ticino before the enemy. He was vigorously pursued up to Novara.

Immediately after General Festenberg's retreat, Murat had the bridge re-established, and advanced the same day to Novara. Boudet was directed to take post the following day behind the Agogna, and to extend on the right, whilst Loison's division took post between Palestro and Bobbio. These measures were necessary, considering the fact that the Austrians, who occupied all the right bank of the Po, might suddenly cross to the left bank and harass the French right. Loison was consequently enjoined to guard himself well on the side of Mortara, and at the same time to keep a careful watch on Casale.

Santhia, Crescentino, Biella, Trino, and Masserano, were all occupied by the French, and orders were issued for the rearmost section of the Army of Reserve to close on Vercelli on the 30th.

The bulletin issued on the 29th of May relates that two special couriers had been intercepted during these operations. From them it was ascertained that Melas still remained at Turin, where he had arrived from Nice, travelling by post; that he reproached the generals who had supplied him from Turin with news of the valley of Aosta, and who had insisted that there were not more than 6000 Frenchmen there. The largest portion of his army, which had been operating near Nice, was approaching the Po by forced marches.

On the 30th of May, Murat and Duhesme occupied the right bank of the Ticino. The rest of the army was at that moment crossing the Sesia. Lannes retained his position facing the Austrians at Chivasso. On the same day, Murat wrote a letter to Moncey, informing him that he was striving to throw a bridge over the Ticino at Novara, so as to turn the enemy and facilitate Moncey's junction with the rest of the army. He also informed him that the Austrians appeared to be in full retreat at all points.

Whilst the above movements were in progress, Brigadier-General Lechi, who commanded the Cisalpine Legion, had been directed to cover the left of the army, which had wended its way down the valley of Aosta, coming from the Great Saint Bernard. Quitting Aosta on the 24th of May, the legion marched to Châtillon, where it passed the night. On the 26th it crossed Mount Ranzola and took post at Gressoney. On the 27th it passed the Valdobbia and reached Riva, where it crossed the Sesia. On the 28th it was at Varallo. There, where the Val-Sesia commences to be practicable for vehicles, Prince

Victor de Rohan stopped the way. He was in position with his legion and a gun. Lechi attacked him; the Italians boldly stormed his intrenchments, captured the gun, and made 350 prisoners. After this, Lechi, who was near Romagnano, was ordered to move on the Ticino towards Sesto Calende, at the southern end of the Lago Maggiore, and to lay hands on all available boats.

In the early part of May, Moreau drafted the men who were intended to compose Moncey's corps. By the middle of the month, these were brought together in the valley of the Reuss and in the valley of Unseren, between Lucerne and the northern slopes of the Saint Gothard. At that time, the corps was composed of two divisions, one commanded by Lapoype, the other by Lorge, with a reserve of cavalry. It amounted to 11,510 men. Moncey, writing on the 24th of May on the subject of the strength of his corps, says: "Dont l'effectif n'est encore que de 11,510 hommes;" by which it may be inferred that it was not complete at that date. It was very weak in artillery, which consisted of two 4-prs., 2 howitzers, and five small guns of lesser calibre than 4-prs.

According to a return furnished by Dupont, Moncey brought from the Rhine 12,092 infantry and 1851 cavalry, a total of 13,943 men.*

The Saint Gothard route had been surveyed quite recently by Dessoles, chief of Moreau's staff, and by Boutin, a captain in the corps of engineers. The troops commenced to cross the Saint Gothard on the 28th of May, Chabert's brigade of Lapoype's division leading. Chabert occupied Airolo on the morning of the 28th. He met with no difficulty on the march beyond what arose from the bad condition of the roads.

The corps which Melas had left to guard the issues from Switzerland, and two divisions of cavalry and artillery which he had not taken with him to Liguria, were gathered together to defend the passage of the Ticino. On the 31st of May, Murat forced the passage of that river and chased the Austrians out of Turbigio. In the mean while Duhesme had commenced to cross the river at Porto di Buffalora. The Ticino was very broad, deep, and rapid, with steep banks. Bonaparte's words were, "Il est extrêmement large et rapide."

On that day part of Boudet's troops took post opposite the

* De Cugnac, "Campagne de l'Armée de Réserve en 1800," vol. ii. p. 545.

bridge over the Ticino in front of Ponte Buffalora, whilst the other portion followed Murat's advance-guard, which had moved from Novara on to Galliate to effect the passage of the river. General Schilt was to march northwards to draw the enemy's attention to his right flank, as if the French contemplated crossing at Oleggio.

At Galliate the river was defended by intrenchments armed with several pieces of artillery. But the Austrians were principally strong in cavalry. The passage of the river at that point was effected slowly, for the enemy had destroyed the bridge, and there were few boats to be procured on the spot. The French had only two 4-prs. for overcoming the fire of the Austrian battery. These guns, supported later in the day by two pieces of Boudet's division, an 8-pr. and a howitzer, succeeded in silencing the enemy's guns.

Vukassevich had received orders to defend the Ticino as far as lay in his power. The cavalry brigades of Festenberg and Doller were assigned to him. If not able to withstand superior forces, he was instructed to fall back on Pavia, and to cross the Po there. Of Vukassevich's force, a brigade under Dedovich was at Bellinzona striving to hinder Moncey's foremost troops. Laudon, retiring before Béthencourt, had crossed the Lago Maggiore and landed at Angera. This brigade had orders to march on Buffalora. Festenberg's cavalry was nearly all that there was to oppose Murat on the Ticino. The Austrian line of defence from Sesto Calende to Pavia was a very lengthy one, and there were only 5600 men to hold the ground and restrain 30,000 French.

The enemy had withdrawn to the left bank all the boats but a few which the inhabitants of Galliate had hidden in the smaller branch of the Ticino. These four or five boats were offered to the French, and were carried on the shoulder by the infantry to the main branch of the river under fire of the enemy's guns.* By this means some companies of grenadiers were ferried over to a wooded island, whence they could bring an effective fire to bear on the enemy. Murat caused his artillery to move forward so as to take the enemy's in flank. Under the protection of this fire, and availing himself of two

* The Austrian account makes Murat carry on carts all the boats he had been able to find on the Agogna and the Sesia. The French general's reports are silent on this point.

boats, he crossed the river by main strength and compelled the enemy to withdraw his guns. Several small boats found on the left bank provided the means for ferrying a battalion across. Under cover of the bush this body, led by Adjutant-General Girard, who had crossed in the first boat, charged the enemy's cavalry and protected the crossing of the remainder of the corps.

As the French gradually grew stronger on the left bank, they drove the Austrians before them. The latter were weak in infantry; and, as the banks of the Ticino were covered with scrub and brushwood, it was not difficult for the French to gain a firm footing on that side of the river. Festenberg's guns were moved to several positions, from which they strove in vain to hinder the crossing; and were ultimately withdrawn to the village of Turbigo. This village was protected by the Naviglio, of which Festenberg determined to contest the crossing. This canal goes from Oleggio to Milan, and through it flows a great portion of the water of the river.

At Turbigo the Austrians received a considerable reinforcement brought up by General Loudon. Loudon marched to the sound of the guns, and hastened from Gallarate on Castano. With the main body of his troops, he entered the village of Turbigo, and at once charged Girard's foremost troops. Girard, taking advantage of all the accidents of ground, defended the Ponte di Naviglio, and thus gained time for Monnier to come to his assistance. The French crossed the Ticino slowly. The official bulletin stated that in six hours not more than 1500 men and two guns had crossed. Girard had carried the bridge over the Naviglio Grande, where he intrenched himself and cannonaded Turbigo with a 4-pr. gun. Murat saw all the importance of driving the enemy from his position, and night was fast approaching. Monnier at last, having gathered a portion of his troops, crossed the bridge at 8 o'clock, plunged into Turbigo, and attacked it at the point of the bayonet. The village was occupied by a large force, and was obstinately defended, for Loudon had sworn that he would compel the French to recross the Ticino. Monnier, however, carried the position by storm. General Schilt arrived at that moment, turned the village, and surrounded it. By ten that night Turbigo was in the hands of the French.

On the side of Buffalora little could be effected, for the bridges over the two branches of the river had been removed.

Duhesme contrived to secure a small boat, by means of which a few companies of Boudet's division were pushed across.

The crossing of the Ticino was an important operation, and a difficult one to boot. The attack on Turbigio was carried out with considerable vigour, as the possession of that point was necessary to facilitate the passage at Buffalora on the main road. On the left bank of the river were some materials; these were quickly seized by the engineers, and a bridge was constructed. The bridge was re-established on the 1st of June, and the Army of Reserve was at once pushed across the river with its artillery and baggage. The whole of it was on the left bank of the Ticino by the 2nd.

On the last days of May, a junction was made in the north with Lechi and Béthencourt. The former with the Italian legion was at Romagnano, as we have seen, on the 30th, and had on the following day resumed his march on Sesto Calende. Béthencourt had occupied Domodossola on the 29th. These moves opened a fresh line of communication for the Army of Reserve by the way of the Simplon, for at that date the garrison of Fort Bard was still holding out.

The Army of Reserve had now crossed the Ticino, and was on the march for Milan, the capital of Lombardy. At this point it seems desirable to make a few observations on some deficiencies which the march over the Alps and the advance into Lombardy had shown to exist.

Notwithstanding all the pains taken to complete the organization of the Army of Reserve, and in spite of Bonaparte's exceptional mastery of details, the organization of his forces in some important matters was far from thorough. The most essential article, ammunition, was lacking. There was a constant demand for cartridges, of which the soldiers, before coming in contact with the enemy, were reported to be wanting.

Berthier writes to the First Consul on the 20th of May: "What perplexes me most is the question of cartridges; should we have one or two engagements by Ivrea, we should have no way to replace them." On the following day Lannes writes: "I am waiting for cartridges and cavalry." General Watrin asks for some on the 20th, and again on the 25th of May; Lannes does so again on the 27th at Romano. Paulet does so urgently after the first skirmishes which his general, Duhesme, had about Cremona.

Transport for the ammunition seems to have been scarce; for we learn that the troops marching on Ivrea were made to carry ninety rounds apiece, half of which number each soldier was to hand over at Ivrea with the object of forming a small magazine at that place. On the 27th of May, the chief of the staff is ordered by Berthier to see that the 3rd battalion of the 28th takes eighty rounds per man, with the object of handing over a portion of these cartridges to the advanced guard.

The medical arrangements left much to be desired. De Paulet de la Bastide, adjutant-general on the staff of General Duhesme, writes to the chief of the staff on the 29th of May, that the divisions of Boudet and Loison needed everything that was necessary for the dressing of wounds; that the surgeons were too few in number; that there was a dearth of medicines and of lint for bandages; that the attendants were too few, and that in consequence it was difficult to prevent many soldiers from quitting the ranks under pretence of assisting their wounded comrades.

Later still, on the 11th of June, Cæsar Berthier, adjutant-general of Murat's cavalry, reported to the chief of the staff that the cavalry had no hospital.

In this campaign, as in the campaign of 1796, the French were inferior to the Austrians in guns. The artillery for Loison's division was made up of guns captured at Ivrea. This was not the only case in which the retard at Fort Bard made itself felt. Throughout the campaign a dearth of artillery was experienced. Seeing that Bonaparte himself was an artillery officer, this inferiority in guns appears strange.

A regular body of engineers does not seem to have been allotted to each division of infantry, for we find De Paulet asking the chief of the staff, in the name of his general, for one or two officers of engineers and a few sappers to be attached to General Duhesme's division, as none were forthcoming when required.

In an anonymous pamphlet attributed to Kellermann ("Réfutation de M. le duc de Rovigo, ou La vérité sur la bataille de Marengo"), it is stated that Bonaparte harassed Melas with an incomplete fighting equipment.

Notwithstanding that the French army had reached the fertile provinces of Piedmont, still on the 28th of May General Berthier complains to the chief of the staff that Loison's division had been without provisions for three days.

What was at the bottom of all these wants, was neglect and poverty. The Directory, ignorant of all that was needed for the due maintenance of an army in the field, had systematically neglected to look after the wants of their armies in a continuous manner. To do this requires care, forethought, and, above all, money; and of money there was none. Bonaparte had taken the field too soon after having assumed the reins of government for some of his measures of organization to have reached their necessary development.

The difficulty of crossing the Alps with a large animal transport, of itself compelled the French to descend into the plains of Italy accompanied by a modest train; and their supply difficulties would have been very great had not the Austrians been careless in the location of their magazines. The French, excepting those established in Switzerland, had none. They easily obtained possession of those of the enemy, which had been located in open towns instead of being formed in the many fortresses the Austrians held in Lombardy and Piedmont. In all this the Austrians showed the grossest carelessness, for invaluable stores were allowed to fall intact into the enemy's hands, and no steps were taken to set fire to them or otherwise to destroy them.

The very incomplete state of the Army of Reserve is revealed by a letter despatched by the First Consul on the 29th of May to Carnot, minister of war. In this communication, Bonaparte complains that many of the infantry regiments were incomplete, and had at that moment detachments and even battalions in France; some formed part of, and did duty with, the fleet at Brest. Several regiments of cavalry were hardly represented in the army, and the cavalry was much below strength. He adds that the army was most in need of horses for the artillery. Bridge equipment it had none, and trusted to capturing it from the enemy. The total number of artillery artificers required was 200, but there were only thirty of these present with the army. There were no pontoniers, and a battalion of sappers was much needed.

Murat won much honour in leading the bold and swift march on Milan, passing through a country intersected by many rivers, and defended by an enemy brave and well supplied, whereas his own troops were often without bread and ammunition, armed with guns of small calibre, and badly served. He

had not as yet given a proof of what he would do a few years hence, of the daring enterprise and relentless pursuit of the enemy which so distinguished him in the campaigns of 1805, 1806, and 1812, nor of the impetuosity which saved the fortune of the emperor on the bloodstained field of Eylau.

Murat, with the advanced guard, had pushed on to Corbetta, three leagues only from Milan. At four o'clock on the evening of the 2nd of June, whilst thunder was rolling in the distance, he entered Milan by the Vercelli gate at the head of six cavalry regiments. Berthier, with Monnier's division, followed the cavalry. Steps were at once taken to blockade the citadel.*

Gachot, writing on the subject of Bonaparte's entry into Milan, declares that he was disappointed with the reception he met on entering that city. When he expected to be received with open arms, and to be welcomed with great enthusiasm, he was received in profound silence; the people remained dumb before the future conqueror of Europe. A dense crowd filled the streets, but it was not demonstrative. Bonaparte was furious. However, the people were afraid lest the Austrians should return speedily into power, as had occurred before, and might inflict on them cruel reprisals; for the Austrians had certainly given proof of little conciliating spirit.†

Nevertheless, it is strange that most of the writers of those events should state quite the reverse. Gachot says that the First Consul caused Bourrienne to write to his colleagues—men who, after all, had a right to know the truth—"Milan has given him a spontaneous and touching reception." Some of his immediate suite are said to have organized the ovation made to Bonaparte at the Scala Theatre, so as to make him forget the cold reception accorded to him on the 2nd of June, for they well knew how eager the general was for acclamation.

Trolard, who bases his narrative on ocular evidence contained in the local papers of the period, states that there were no cheers. The population, astonished at the sudden change of scenery, abstained from clapping their hands and shouting "*Viva!*" Many of the Milanese simply doffed their hats. The crowd at the Scala on the night of the reception was less than usual.‡ Again, in another place, he states that, notwith-

* This was held by General Nicoletti with 2800 men.

† Edouard Gachot, "*La Deuxième Campagne d'Italie*," chap. xvii. p. 244.

‡ Trolard Eugène, "*De Rivoli à Marengo et à Solferino*," vol. ii. p. 84

standing the message Bonaparte had sent to the Consuls that he had been received by a population stirred by the greatest enthusiasm, there was on the part of the inhabitants a good deal of deference, but nothing more.

The bulletin issued on the 3rd of June runs as follows: "General Murat entered Milan on the 13th (2nd of June). He caused the citadel to be surrounded at once. Three hours later, the First Consul and all his staff made their entry, passing through a multitude of people animated by the greatest enthusiasm." *

Brossier writes in the diary of the campaign of the Army of Reserve: "13th Prairial (2nd of June).—Triumphant entry of the French into Milan. By all these measures the occupation of Milan had been rendered safe, the army headquarters went there the same day in the midst of proofs of general joy. The inhabitants, of all ages, of both sexes, bowed before him who for the second time brought them liberty and happiness."

Alison records that Bonaparte made "his triumphant entry into Milan on the 2nd of June, when he was received with transports of joy by the democratic party, and by the inconstant populace with the same applause which they had lavished the year before on Suwarroff." †

Guizot writes in the same sense: "The Lombard populace received the First Consul with transport, happy to see themselves delivered from the Austrian yoke, and beguiled in anticipation with the hope of liberty." ‡

We read in the "Campagne de Bonaparte en Italie en l'an VIII. de la République" an account published the same year: "The First Consul and all his staff made their entry into the city in the midst of an immense crowd, animated by the greatest enthusiasm." § The same is recorded by the Duc de Valmy: "The First Consul was received with unanimous and sincere enthusiasm." ||

Dampierre, writing the same day to Mathieu Dumas, states: "The First Consul has been everywhere received with enthusiasm by the people, but with coldness by the upper class."

* "Correspondence de Napoléon," No. 4854.

† Alison, "History of Europe," chap. xxxi. p. 365.

‡ Guizot, vol. vii. p. 16.

§ Alexandre Foudras, "Campagne de Bonaparte en Italie en l'an VIII. de la République," p. 30.

|| Duc de Valmy, "Histoire de la Campagne de 1800," p. 128.

Bonaparte's entry into Milan took place in the midst of an immense crowd, which shouted from every side in its semi-Oriental style, "*Ecco il sole, il liberatore della nostra Italia. Viva! viva!*" ("Behold the sun, the liberator of our Italy. Hail! hail!")*

Joseph Petit, the Horse Grenadier of the Consular Guard, could certainly have had no special object in giving too vivid a colouring to Bonaparte's entry into the capital of Lombardy. His words are: "But the finest *coup-d'œil*, the instant most flattering to us as spectators, was when we had reached the Place du Dome, and the hero who had led us enjoyed the supreme gratification which the gratitude of a numerous people exhibited. The vast space was made to ring with reiterated shouts of '*Vive General Bonaparte! Vive l'armée Française!*'" †

A warm reception went to the hearts of the French, for at that period they were more covetous of glory than of pleasure.

Botta, the Italian historian, writes: "I am not able to describe the rejoicings that took place." He says nothing to show that the First Consul met with an enthusiastic reception; but subsequently he declares that "the French were received with pleasure in the districts of Lodi, Cremona, Bergamo, and Crema, in which districts they were welcomed with considerable joy." ‡

Bonaparte had hastened his march and entered Milan when the inhabitants had barely heard that he had left Dijon. Nothing could exceed their wonderment, for none were aware that he had so recently crossed the Alps.

The astonishment of the Milanese was nothing more than natural, for Europe had endeavoured to make it believed that Bonaparte was either dead or held in captivity. Just a little more than a year before, the *Foglio Lombardo*, in its issue of the 22nd of June, 1799, published the following item of news: "General Bonaparte, with the whole of his staff, was compelled to surrender to Admiral Smith. He has been interned for a long time." §

Milan still echoed with the success of Melas on the Var, and

* *La Revue de Paris*, June 15, 1900, No. 12, p. 800.

† Joseph Petit, "Marengo ou Campagne d'Italie par l'Armée de Reserve," p. 32.

‡ Botta, "Storia d'Italia," tom. iv. p. 15.

§ "Il Generale Bonaparte fù forzato a consegnarsi con tutto il suo stato maggiore nelle mani dell' Ammiraglio Smith. Egli é stato internato per lungo tempo."

the capture of Nice, when behold, like a clap of thunder, Bonaparte appears and rides at the head of his troops into Milan. "The entry of the First Consul," writes Jomini, "into Milan, which was for the Lombards a real *coup de théâtre*, excited amongst them an enthusiasm difficult to express." *

We read in Marelli's *Giornale Storico*, "The population, surprised at this sudden change of scene, did not clap hands, nor shout 'Hurrah!' Many doffed their hats in sign of respect, and he graciously responded." †

The Lombards were more interested in Bonaparte's success than the French themselves, for the behaviour of the Austrians on their return into Lombardy had been immeasurably arbitrary and harsh. A large number of individuals and of families had become compromised, and such as had not thought it prudent to emigrate had been deported to Austria, or were subject to a very vexatious police supervision. Others were even languishing in prison. The Austrians, in short, had occasioned so many vexations in Lombardy that their expulsion from the country came to be regarded as another benefit conferred on the people by the French. Of a host of Lombards, who had been compelled by the rigorous system introduced by the Austrians to cross the frontier and seek a refuge in France, many returned, bearing arms under the First Consul.

The previous year, the news of the arrival of the Austro-Russian army had created great enthusiasm amongst the population of Northern Italy. On their entry into Milan, on the 29th of April, the new-comers were hailed as liberators, for the French and the democrats had disgusted a large section of the population. The illusion, however, soon vanished. The departure of the French did anything but make matters more pleasant; and the so-styled liberators, the harbingers of Providence, were found to be much worse than the former occupiers of Lombardy.

The Italians had soon come to understand all the meaning of the Austrian rule, and, in comparing it with the French, they were not slow in detecting the very marked difference which existed between the two. The contempt with which they had

* Jomini, "Histoire des Guerres de la Révolution," liv. xvi. chap. cii.

† "Il popolo, attonito per tale improvviso mutamento di scena, non batteva le mani né gridava evviva. Molti rispettosamente levavansi il cappello, ed egli graziosamente rispondeva."

welcomed the cessation of the Republican rule thereupon vanished; and the Gallophobe attacks and libels, of which their Press in the preceding months had been so prolific, from that moment ceased to appear.

The unfortunate country was desolated by all kinds of vexations and of most arbitrary proceedings. The allies came to be dreaded. At the cry, "Behold! here are the Russians!" every one fled for dear life, all the doors were made fast, and all the animals were securely shut up in their stables. The boldest of the men would take up arms and gather together in some building, determined to defend themselves, and did not venture out till after dark. Speaking of the valley of Aosta, the Abbé Fenoil declares that the heavy domination of the Austrians has left a more painful record than that of the soldiers of the Terror.

Lombardy had been made to provide for the allies, as it had previously been made to maintain the French. It was not Bonaparte alone who followed the principle of feeding and maintaining his armies on foreign ground. In eight months alone, the Austrians consumed 30,000,000 of lire worth of victuals and fodder, most of which remained unpaid. The consequence was that wheat rose to 86 lire the sack, and Indian corn to 45. The French had irritated the Lombards by imposing a capitation tax of 7 lire. But during the thirteen months which the Austrians had held the country, since the expulsion of the French, this tax had risen from 7 to 30 lire. From the month of May to the end of 1799, 30,187,280 lire of fundable property were appropriated, besides 13,346,460 for military expenses. Under such circumstances it is not surprising if very great dissatisfaction existed. Nor could the Austrians plead ignorance of the cause of all this discontent. Thugut acknowledges it in a letter to Count Colloredo. He writes: "There is not a shadow of doubt that our army, and the men connected with it, have borne themselves in Italy in such a way that there is not a single Italian who would not prefer the French *régime* or that of the Cisalpine Republic to the vaunted Austrian despotism."

Bonaparte feared lest the Republican party in Italy would resort to reprisals, would break out into acts of revenge, after having been kept down, as it had been, by the Austrians with such a strong hand. He had, therefore, to take measures to

provide for the general security. He invited the Milanese to re-establish the National Guard, which should be employed in the defence of their city against attack from small bodies of the enemy.

He declared that as soon as the Italian soil was free from the Austrians, he would reconstitute the republic on the firm basis of religion, liberty, equality, and order. Knowing that the clergy were the class most opposed to the French rule and ideas, he strove to dissipate every shadow of suspicion that the religious worship and other practices of the people would be interfered with. He convened an assembly of parish priests, and boldly disowned all the events which had occurred in 1796. "All the changes which occurred then," he said, "above all in the discipline, were against my way of thinking. I, a humble representative of a Government which had no care whatever for the Catholic religion, was not able to prevent in those days the disorders which had been incited purposely with the object of overthrowing it. To-day, furnished with far greater powers, I am firmly resolved to use all the means necessary to guarantee it."

After the enthusiastic reception reported in the bulletin and referred to by many writers of those events, the following letter, written by Monsieur Petiet—who had been intrusted with the new organization of the Lombard territory—to the municipality of Milan reads strangely:—

"Plusieurs officiers français se plaignent, Citoyens, du peu d'égards qu'ils éprouvent de la part des habitants chez lesquels ils sont logés. L'intention du Premier Consul n'est point sans doute d'autoriser des demandes indiscrettes ou exagérées, mais il ne peut pas tolérer que les officiers de son armée soient reçus des Cisalpins avec indifférence et souvent avec mépris. Je vous engage, Citoyens, à faire sentir aux habitants de Milan combien leur conduite vis-à-vis des Français pourrait devenir dangereuse pour eux, et que leur intérêt comme leur devoir est de traiter avec plus d'amitié et d'égards les officiers et autres militaires de l'armée auxquels ils donnent l'hospitalité.

"PETIET."

Master of Lombardy, Bonaparte had secured his communications with Switzerland by the Saint Gothard, from which

Moncey, with about 14,000 men taken from the Army of the Rhine, was descending. At the same time he had interposed between Melas's army and its base of operations on the Mincio and Adige.

On entering Milan, he instantly dismissed the Austrian authorities, and one of his very first acts was to seize all letters found lying at the post-office. Amongst the mass of letters thus captured he found information of some value. But the situation of Bonaparte, reading at Milan the intercepted despatches that had been written by the Austrian Government to the general commanding their army, and the reports made by this general to his Government, was a singular one.

From the letters that came from Vienna for the Austrian commander, and those from the army directed to Vienna, the First Consul gathered a quantity of useful details. He became aware of the amount of the reinforcements which were *en route* for the Austrian army, of the actual situation of the army which was blockading Genova, with the positions it occupied, and of the situation of the parks and of the hospitals. The Austrian minister of war could hardly have furnished a more complete report than that which Bonaparte found at his disposal from the intercepted documents.

In a few hours he had learnt all that he required to know on the moral and material condition of the Austrian forces in Italy.

A letter coming from Genova revealed to him other items. From it he learnt that the city still held out, but that it was at its last gasp, that Massena was still resisting, but that in all probability he would soon be compelled to capitulate.

A courier on his way from Vienna was captured. He was the bearer of orders for the various depôts, parks of artillery and equipments in the Austrian rear. This information was turned to good account, and on the knowledge thus acquired orders were issued to lay hands on all the war materials stored in the neighbourhood.

As Bonaparte gained possession of the Milanese, his first care was to lay hands on all objects useful to his army which his rapid advance had compelled the Austrians to abandon. Orders went forth that everything serviceable which the Austrians had left in their magazines or in their manufacturing establishments should be seized.

Beyond the great moral impression caused by the occupation of the capital of Lombardy, the march to Milan secured no positive advantages, for it did not lead to a concentration of the French forces. On the contrary, it was followed by a dangerous dispersion, for to carry out Bonaparte's plan a large number of troops were required. How otherwise could a line of at least thirty leagues in extent be effectively closed to the enemy?

Melas did not penetrate Bonaparte's design, and strongly believed that the relief of Genova was the principal object of his enterprise. Only when he heard that the French had entered Milan he began to realize how critical was his position.

The Austrian generals had been warned that a large army was concentrating at Dijon. They at first scorned to believe this, and all other rumours that had reached them. When at last these were referred to the Aulic Council, all the answer they received was that the subject was not worthy of consideration.

Melas persisted in disbelieving. On the 28th of May, he had issued orders to his subordinates to rejoin him. Nevertheless, he persisted in refusing to accord credence to what he heard of the doings of the Army of Reserve.

The Austrians might very easily have stopped the French in the valley of Aosta, in the position of Bard, which had already been marked out, and where there existed intrenchments and barracons in a good state. The staff, however, were confident, and the cry was, "Let them come down into the plains, and we shall beat them."

When at last the French columns appeared, having crossed the Alps and traversed the district of Aosta, the Austrians abandoned Ivrea and the Canavesan. As the French marched along the left bank of the Po, the Austrians endeavoured to assemble around Turin all the forces at that time scattered throughout Piedmont. But when they had gathered a goodly number, and offered battle in the direction of Volpian on the left of the Po, the French were too alert to fall into this snare, and followed the course of the Po on the left bank of the river. Zack, when questioned on the situation, is said to have replied, "I have them in a sack." Chevalier Cavour states that from that moment the Austrians lost their head and committed many errors, one greater than the other.

At a council of war it was decided to defend the right bank

of the river. This unfortunate decision allowed the enemy complete freedom on the left bank, and plenty of time to be joined by reinforcements. In the end the plan brought about the loss of Italy to the Austrians. There were, nevertheless, at this council of war officers who objected, and who held that it was derogatory for a numerous army to observe a strictly defensive attitude in the face of an army which could not number more than 20,000 combatants, and had to defend the crossing of a river for a very considerable extent—from Turin to Piacenza—which could not have been less than forty leagues. These officers argued that it was preferable to place the heavy artillery in safety in the fortified places, to abandon the heavy baggage, and to follow the enemy on the left bank of the Po, always offering battle, which, by reason of his inferiority as much in point of numbers as in cavalry and artillery, the French commander-in-chief would be precluded from accepting. Once on a level with Vercelli, the army should abandon this manner of proceeding, move on Novara, cross the Ticino at Turbigo, and, leaving Milan on the right, march so as to effect a junction with Vukassevich and the reinforcements coming from Austria. Then it would be time for them to retrace their steps.

The conception was good. The distance from Turin to Vercelli could have been got over in three moderate marches, one march more would have taken the army to Novara, and a longer one have brought it level with Milan. In two or three other marches it could have been within Gallarate and Varese, where Vukassevich's corps was at that time. Possibly Lannes with the advanced guard of the Army of Reserve would have harassed the left flank of the Austrian columns marching towards Vukassevich, still the Austrians had superiority of numbers on their side, and if well handled could have swept Lannes away.

The Austrians did their scouting very badly not to get an idea of the weakness of Lannes's force at Chivasso—this in a country where the feeling was much in their favour. Chabran bears witness, for, writing from Sartirana on the 16th of June, he remarks, "*L'habitant n'est pas pour nous*" ("The people are not in our favour").

The reason given, and very possibly the true one, for Melas having abstained from threatening his adversary's communications by a move on Vercelli, is the sudden news he

received of all the disasters on the valley of the Danube. How Kray had suffered several defeats and had taken refuge in the intrenched camp at Ulm; how Moncey had arrived at Bellinzona, and Vukassevich had retreated towards the Adda. All these circumstances demanded, he thought, more cautious measures, such as a concentration of his army under the cannon of Alessandria.

Melas had the choice of three roads by which to regain the Mincio. One leading from Alessandria to Piacenza; a second by Casale, Mortara, and Milan; the third, and most difficult, of Alessandria, Colle della Scoffera, Bobbio, and Piacenza. His dilatoriness and his state of uncertainty allowed Bonaparte to close all three against him.

At the end of May, Melas found himself exposed to be attacked by Bonaparte, and to be beaten in detail while his army was in a thorough state of dispersion. What else could he expect? Nevertheless, there was still time to do something. To concentrate his army he was bound to bow to necessity, to make great sacrifices, to withdraw at once from Genova, to draw back from the Var; in fact, to give up a great part of Piedmont. Melas, however, for a second time fell a victim to Bonaparte's craftiness. He failed to penetrate his adversary's intentions; he believed that with some 30,000 men he could easily dispute the passage of the Po, and prevent a junction with Turreau. He was imposed upon by Lannes's bold attitude, and believed that the necessity had not yet arisen for a complete withdrawal of his troops from Genova and the Var.

When he became actually convinced of the appearance of a formidable army in Italy, he despatched couriers in all directions bearing orders for the concentration of his army. The date given by Campana for the orders sent to Ott and to Elsnitz to march on Alessandria was the 28th of May. Jomini says that the orders sent to Ott were despatched on the 31st of May, and reached him on the 1st of June. Hamley, possibly, is still more correct, for he states that Melas issued his orders for the concentration on the 31st of May, and that Ott probably received them on the 2nd of June. This appears to accord with the date given by General Melas in his letter to Count de Tige.*

It is hard to believe that all the Austrians were badly informed. Amongst the correspondence seized by Murat at

* See De Cugnac, "Campagne de l'Armée de Réserve en 1800," vol. ii. p. 229.

Piacenza was a letter signed "Marqui," evidently written by a superior officer of the Austrian army, and dated Coni, 3rd of June. This letter contained the following passages:—

"My suspicions, with regard to the Army of Reserve, were not without good grounds, notwithstanding that no one would pay attention to them. Berthier has come from the valley of Aosta, and by the valley of the Rhone into that of Domodossola, and from thence to Lago Maggiore.

"General Flavigny, who was in front of me at Barcelonnette, has descended on the side of Susa. He has not more than 3000 men, and cannot undertake anything of serious importance.

"But at this moment I am told that Lecourbe, with a corps coming from Germany, is descending by the Saint Gothard on Bellinzona, so that if Genova does not surrender, it is impossible to foresee how things will turn out."*

* See De Cugnac, "Campagne de l'Armée de Réserve en 1800," vol. ii. p. 232.

CHAPTER X.

PASSAGE OF THE PO AND BATTLE OF MONTEBELLO.

Lannes seizes Pavia and the Austrian magazines—Intercepted correspondence—Strategical importance of Piacenza—Attack of the bridge-head on the Po—Piacenza captured by Murat—Lannes crosses the Po at Belgiojoso—O'Reilly saves the reserve artillery park—Lannes ordered to march on Stradella—Ott quits Genova and marches for Piacenza—Bonaparte receives the news of the evacuation of Genova—The French come into contact with the Austrians near Casteggio—Battle of Montebello—Bonaparte leaves Milan, and arrives on the battlefield.

WHILST the First Consul was leading his army across the Ticino, and making Vukassevich clear for him the way into Milan, the advanced guard of the Army of Reserve was to undertake a bold march to its left. Lannes had gained his object, and his attitude had, to a certain extent, deceived Melas with regard to Bonaparte's intentions. His preparations at Chivasso, and the bridge he had thrown over the Po, could only be interpreted in one sense, viz. an early advance of the French army on Turin, there to form a junction with Turreau.

To hide the First Consul's vast designs on Lombardy, and to cover the march of the army on the Ticino effectively, Lannes, at the head of 3000 infantry and 400 horsemen, descended from Foglizzo on the 28th of May, attacked the Austrians, and drove them beyond the Orco. The Austrian dragoons, after having withdrawn beyond that stream, burnt the bridge. Now the progress of the French army towards Milan was sufficiently advanced for the original advance-guard to be employed in a more useful manner.

On the night of the 30-31st of May, having left General Gency with the 6th Light and a squadron of the 12th Hussars to guard the bridge over the Dora Baltea at Rondissone, Lannes quitted Chivasso and marched to his left on Crescentino and Trino, in front of Casale, driving away such small parties of Austrians as had ventured across the Po. These he compelled to withdraw to the right bank of that river. He then marched

to Vercelli and by Mortara on Pavia,* where he forestalled the Austrians, who were on the march to occupy it. In this manner, in the forenoon of the 2nd, Lannes, at the head of his cavalry, entered the city, and a great accumulation of arms, ammunition, grain, forage, and stores fell into the hands of the French. They also captured some bridging equipment, of which they were sadly in want for crossing the Po.

It seems strange that the Austrians should have left such an important magazine without an adequate garrison. What they were about is not quite clear. Berthier, in his report to the First Consul, says, "The enemy has abandoned the town, leaving it in our hands." But Dupont expresses himself otherwise. He writes of Lannes, that he went "on the 13th, by way of Mortara, to Pavia, where he forestalled the enemy then marching to occupy it." Brossier's words are: "He forestalled the enemy that was marching to occupy it (Pavia), and enters therein as conqueror." Dumas states that the Austrian troops detached by General Ott to occupy Pavia were anticipated by General Lannes' troops, which surprised the place after two days of forced marching. As Ott was busy before Genova, these troops, like those sent to occupy Piacenza, possibly belonged to some other command.

At Pavia Lannes, according to his report of the 2nd of June, found 300 or 400 pieces of ordnance, field and siege guns, on their carriages; shells and shot in large quantities, 1000 barrels of gunpowder, and a goodly number of cartridges. Also muskets, large stores of stuff for sheets, blankets, corn and flour in abundance, with many quintals of candles.

The number of guns found at Pavia is differently given. In the official bulletin of the 3rd of June, Bonaparte reports

* The marches were Chivasso by Rondissone to Crescentino, 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ miles; Crescentino to Vercelli, 21 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles; Vercelli to Mortara, 16 $\frac{2}{5}$ miles. The cavalry, Rivaud's brigade, 12th Hussars, and 21st Chasseurs, marched right through from Vercelli to Pavia, 38 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

The city of Pesinum was founded by the Gauls. It was afterwards taken by the Romans, who in their turn were in the fifth century driven forth by the Goths. In 568, it fell into the hands of the Lombards, and it was for some time the capital of Lombardy. In 774, it came into Charlemagne's possession, and he founded its university. About 1477, the town, being little better than a mass of ruins, was rebuilt, when its name was changed to Pavia. Whilst besieging it in 1525, Francis I. was taken prisoner. Pavia was sacked by the French general Lautree in 1527, for three days, as a punishment for the peasants cutting his communications, and has never recovered its former grandeur.

the capture of 500 bronze cannon, though he admits that the inventory from Pavia was not expected to arrive before the following day. Brossier, in his diary of the Army of Reserve, sets the guns captured at 200, of which number 30 were field-guns on their carriages. Dupont, reporting to the minister of war, says the same.

Dampierre shows that it was not a great catch, after all. In a letter he wrote to Mathieu Dumas he states: "Pavia has fallen into the hands of the French; they have found there munitions and from fifty to sixty cannons, a real find for an army which has only just crossed the Alps." Writing a few days later (on the 16th of June) he reviles the eight guns found at Ivrea, which he declares to have been in a worthless condition. Almost all those captured at Pavia were found spiked, and in the few days which elapsed between the capture of that town and the battle of the 25th Prairial (14th of June) only five could be rendered serviceable!

The passage of the artillery through the streets of Bard had not proved a thorough success. The greater part only passed through on the 2nd of June, after the fort had capitulated. On the 3rd or 4th of June, the guns arrived at Ivrea, and could not pass through Vercelli, as that town had been surprised by the Austrians on the 4th.

When he occupied Pavia, Lannes, by good fortune, came into possession of two letters addressed to an Austrian general (one of which had been written on the 2nd of June by Prince de Hohenzollern, then before Genova). Lannes could not gather any valuable information from their contents, as unfortunately there was no one who could read German. Evidently the necessity for having interpreters or officers acquainted with the German language attached to the various parts of the army had been overlooked. In those days, when information of the enemy's doings was so eagerly sought, Lannes, to find out the contents of these letters, had to send them to army headquarters to be read. Murat, who seized at Piacenza some of Melas's letters, had to pursue the same course, there being no one with him proficient in reading German.

From the action taken by the various chiefs, it would appear that neither Murat nor Berthier had qualified interpreters at their side, for Murat sends the intercepted letters to Berthier without having fully mastered their contents, and Berthier

sends them on to the First Consul, with a footnote in his forwarding letter stating that Murat reports having intercepted a letter written by Melas, in which there is some mention of the capitulation of Genova. The letters were retransmitted by Bourrienne* after having been duly translated.

Dampierre, who was at Voghera on the 11th of June with the foremost troops of Gardanne's division, earnestly asks the chief of the staff for an assistant well acquainted with the language of the country—a person able to gather all the information that could be got from the peasantry.

What an amount of useful tidings will be wasted when there are no competent interpreters! Without them, or without officers acquainted with the enemy's language, how will it be possible to question prisoners, deserters, and the inhabitants? to gather the information contained in foreign newspapers and intercepted letters? or to master the contents of despatches found on the enemy's couriers?

Lannes possessed a very loyal spirit; his eyes were always turned in the direction of Genova. Writing from Pavia to the First Consul on the 2nd of June, he urges: "The enemy is still before Genova, which it cannonades and bombards without intermission. If you desire to march against him, there is not a moment to lose. According to the information I have acquired the place cannot hold out very long."

Melas was still at Turin. He little expected that the French would march into Lombardy, for it was on all grounds more reasonable to believe that they would speed to Genova direct through Piedmont.

The Austrians could command the waters of the Po from their source up to Valenza. It was open to them to cross that river at Turin, Chivasso, Casale, or Valenza; but having done so, Melas's army was now liable to be stopped on the Ticino, which was already in Bonaparte's hands. There was little prospect of regaining Lombardy from that side, so the Austrian commander turned his attention to the lower course of the Po, so as to hold the road to Mantua by way of Piacenza and Cremona.

At this period Piacenza assumed a very important strategical value in the operations. For Bonaparte it was the real key to Piedmont, for by its possession alone could he hope to close

* Bourrienne, "Mémoires," tom. iv. p. 111.

effectively to the Austrian commander his communications with Lombardy and the empire. Melas also, as soon as he heard that the French had occupied Milan, became alive to all the importance of Piacenza. He fully realized how absolutely necessary its possession was for him; how, since the French were posted behind the Ticino and occupied Milan, the road from Alessandria leading through Piacenza to Mantua was the true line of retreat for the Austrian army.

Consequently, he ordered O'Reilly not to await the concentration of the rest of the army, but to push on for Piacenza as fast as his horses would go. He was to assume command of the city, and with it of all the troops that had been directed to march thereto.

Melas's orders were just. But opposed to him was the best leader of the time, the man most renowned in the art of moving troops. Bonaparte had perceived before Melas that Piacenza was the key to Piedmont, necessary alike for any one who desired to enter that country as for any one who wished to issue forth from it. Bonaparte understood likewise that, if he had let Melas escape him, he would have lost all the fruit of his bold march over the Alps.

The Austrian troops ordered to repair to Piacenza were Lobkowitz's dragoons and a battalion of Ottochan; the first sent from Turin, the second from Casale, which set out on the 1st of June. From a small corps of observation, stationed between Turin and Valenza, were detached in the same direction two squadrons of hussars and three infantry battalions of the Reisky regiment. The infantry regiment of Klébeck belonging to Gottesheim's brigade quitted Genova, and took the shortest road to Piacenza by way of Bobbio. The fourth battalion of the Bannats had been previously sent from Genova to patrol the Po from its confluence with the Ticino to its confluence with the Tanaro. Mosel, the senior officer in Piacenza, had with him two companies of the Neugebau regiment, two companies of Tyrolese riflemen, and fifty horsemen of De Bussy.

Ott, with the troops drawn from the siege of Genova, was to follow O'Reilly, marching by way of Bocchetta and Tortona. The rest of the Austrian troops garrisoning strong places in Piedmont, and those under Elsnitz on the Var, amounting to about 30,000 men, were to concentrate at Alessandria, and

afterwards to proceed in the direction of Mantua by way of the Stradella pass. The object was to reach the Mincio, effect a junction with Vukassevich, and take up a strong position, with one flank resting on the lake of Garda, and the other on the fortress of Mantua.

Bonaparte was equally, if not more, eager to secure for his army the passages of the Po. From the very beginning of the war, his plan contemplated seizing the communications of the Austrian army in Italy. As the campaign progressed, the most important part of his design was thoroughly to close against the enemy the road leading from Alessandria to Piacenza and Mantua. At the same time he was bound to keep in view the possibility of the Austrians using as a line of retreat either the road leading across the Ticino to Milan or those on the lower Po which lead from Alessandria to Cremona. As long as the Austrians had the choice of three lines of retreat, he was compelled to dispose his forces in such a manner as to be ready at any moment to face any contingency.

The way in which he tried to solve the problem led to a reduction of his main force for battle. But this was unavoidable. What he had set himself to do was to close entirely the line of retreat against the Austrians, and to offer Melas no point of escape whatsoever. It was not merely a question of locating small detachments to watch and give warning of the enemy's approach, nor detachments which might easily be brushed aside; what was needed were bodies strong enough to contend against superior forces, and able to fight a retaining action till the arrival of reinforcements.

Whilst he himself was to cross the Po and advance on Stradella, occupying a central position with a force which he roughly calculated at 30,000 men, the other divisions were ordered to take post as follows. Chabran was directed on Vercelli, with injunctions to fall back on the Ticino should the enemy attempt to make for that river. Lapoype was posted on the Ticino river itself, near Pavia. These two divisions, which numbered in all from 9000 to 10,000 men, were to fall back on each other, stubbornly disputing all the while the crossing of the river. Bonaparte from his central position at Stradella could in one day come to their aid.

Lorge was to take post at Lodi on the Adda; Gilly to contain the Austrian garrison shut up in the citadel of Milan;

Lechi was at Brescia. Duhesme, with Loison's division, was to hold Piacenza and Cremona.

Thiers, in giving a sketch of Bonaparte's dispositions, says : "Such was the distribution of the fifty and few more thousand soldiers of whom Bonaparte could dispose of at that moment : 32,000 were in the central post of Stradella ; 9000 to 10,000 on the Ticino ; 3000 or 4000 more at Milan and Arona ; and lastly, 10,000 to 11,000 on the lower Po and the Adda, all stationed in such a way as to support each other reciprocally with great promptitude. Indeed, on a report coming from the Ticino, General Bonaparte could in one day fly to the help of the 10,000 Frenchmen who were guarding it. On an advice coming from the lower Po he could in the same space of time descend on Piacenza and Cremona, whilst General Loison, defending the passage of the river, gained him time to arrive. One and the other, on their side, could fall back on Stradella, and reinforce General Bonaparte in as short a time as he would take to go to their aid."

Bonaparte's orders sent to Lannes were to cross the Po at Belgiojoso, a little below the confluence of the Ticino and Po. Murat, with Boudet's division and some regiments of cavalry, was to seize the crossing at Piacenza.

On the 5th of June, Murat appeared before Piacenza. The city was garrisoned by a very small number of troops ; nevertheless the officer in command of the place, General Mosel, when danger threatened, made some hurried preparations. He caused twelve guns to be mounted on the bridge-head on the left bank of the Po. Other guns he had posted on the opposite bank of the river to sweep with their fire the flanks of that work.

This done, he awaited the arrival of supports, for, according to the Austrian account, he had for the defence of the bridge-head and citadel in all about 400 men.* The Austrian account describes the bridge-head as dilapidated, being much damaged by inundations, by time and by rains. Steps for putting it in a state of defence were only taken on the 3rd of June. The garrison detailed to hold this work consisted of one company of infantry and thirty riflemen. De Bussy's cavalry had been pushed forward in the direction of Casalpusterlengo to reconnoitre, and fell back before the French, who by 2 p.m. on the 5th

* It was calculated that the citadel of Piacenza alone required a garrison of 600 men.

advanced to attack the bridge-head. Mosel made a good show of resistance.

Boudet's division had left Lodi at three in the morning of that day, marching on Piacenza. The 11th Hussars, who were leading, fell in with the Austrian outposts near Fombio, and these they drove back as far as the bridge-head on the Po. Boudet states in his report that this work was defended by 12 guns and 500 or 600 infantry; an equal number of guns having been posted on the right bank of the Po, swept with their fire the flanks of the bridge-head, and every point from which troops could approach it. The French advanced in three columns; one on either side of the work, whilst the third was intended to make a frontal attack, but only when the action was well engaged. The French, who had imagined that they were about to attack a post which was not likely to be stubbornly defended, soon found that they were mistaken. The two flanking columns came under a heavy fire from the guns on the bridge-head and the pieces on the right bank, the fire being so heavy that they had to suspend the action. This was to be renewed at a more promising moment, at night.

Some of the French troops had rushed forward quite close to the enemy's works. Then, taking advantage of what natural cover there was, they opened a brisk musketry fire on the Austrians, so well directed that, as Boudet reports, they acknowledge to having had 330 casualties.*

The several Austrian columns which had been directed to proceed to Piacenza had not yet arrived, and the troops Mosel had available for the defence of the bridge-head and citadel were quite insufficient. Those which had defended the bridge-head had held that post for eight hours, and lost heavily, so the commandant, under the protection of the guns on the right bank, caused his ordnance to be removed to the opposite shore, ordered the withdrawal of his feeble force, and lastly destroyed the communication with the Lombard provinces by removing some of the boats of the bridge.

The withdrawal of the guns was effected under cover of a brisk fire from the guns in battery on the right bank. But when the guns on the bridge-head suddenly ceased firing the French became suspicious, and made some reconnaissances.

* They appear to have set down their losses only at 120 between killed and wounded. This is more likely, as being in keeping with their numbers.

One, conducted by Major Caseau, got into the works, and found some 80 Austrians, who were ultimately persuaded to surrender. The Austrians had broken the bridge too soon, preferring to sacrifice a portion of the defenders of the bridge-head to seeing the French crossing along with them. Boudet sets down the loss for his division to have amounted to 500 between killed and wounded, most of the casualties being the result of the enemy's artillery fire.

The *Austrian Military Review* states that ten pontoons were removed from the middle of the bridge, and that it was intended to ferry the garrison to the right bank in small boats. It adds that General Mosel's force, on account of the 120 men killed and wounded in the defence of the bridge-head, was reduced to 280 men.

On the 6th of June, Murat remained facing Piacenza and searching for means wherewith to cross the Po. Dalton, having succeeded in collecting a dozen or more boats, had them brought to the village of Nocetto, situated about a league below the bridge-head of Piacenza, and little by little from that point, on the 7th, Musnier's brigade was carried across to Roncarolo on the right bank.

It had come to Musnier's ears that the enemy had received a considerable reinforcement, and was expecting a still larger one. Without waiting for the entire division to cross, he moved speedily towards Piacenza, and took post two miles from the city, on the main road to Cremona. A reconnaissance sent a mile further on ascertained that a convoy of 1500 vehicles was moving along the Parma road, protected by a weak cavalry escort. From several sources Musnier learnt also that one of Ott's regiments was approaching by the same road.

The general made up his mind to march at once on the city, detaching one battalion to his left on the Parma road to attack the convoy. As he was advancing on the San Lazzaro gate, he was threatened by two squadrons of cavalry, but he showed a bold countenance, and the enemy did not dare to attack him. He entered the city at the heels of the Austrians, for he pressed forward with such rapidity that they were not able to keep him out. Musnier had profited by a favourable moment, and by his promptness saved the lives of many men who would have fallen in assaulting the place.

Once within the walls, he sent a detachment to secure the

Sant' Antonio gate at the other extremity of the city. As this detachment arrived at the gate, the Austrian regiment of Klébeck, forming part of Gottesheim's brigade, appeared before it, coming along the Stradella road. The battalion sent by Musnier to attack the convoy, despairing of being able to overtake it, and having caught sight of this Austrian battalion, retraced its steps, and skirting the walls took it in flank, whilst the detachment at the gate charged it at the same time in front. The Austrians were either taken or dispersed; a part retired on the Trebbia, to San Nicoló, and another part towards Bobbio. The Austrian account states that the Parma gate was carried by assault, lost, and retaken.

The crossing of the Po was evidently a difficult operation, and we find Murat complaining to Berthier that he had not the pontoniers, the sappers and the engineers necessary for bridging rivers. When steps were taken to re-establish the broken bridge, a rise in the waters made the operation extremely difficult. As the waters kept steadily rising, the work had to be abandoned, and Murat had to content himself with two flying bridges.

The city of Piacenza remained in the hands of the French, but the Austrians still continued to occupy the citadel. Writing to the First Consul on the 8th of June, Berthier informs him that he had ordered Murat to join him with all his forces, minus what he might deem necessary for blockading the citadel and guarding the bridge. Murat mentions that 80 of the enemy's cavalry had just time to take refuge in the citadel. The Austrian account states that the Tyrolese riflemen and two companies of Neugebau took refuge in the citadel, and that the whole did not number more than 250 men.

As Boudet's division entered Piacenza, it was employed partly in blockading the citadel, partly in observation at the San Lazzaro gate on the Parma road, by which the reinforcements expected by the enemy were said to be coming. A squadron of the 11th Hussars was placed further forward in observation, and enjoined to scout the road. At 5 p.m. the vedettes announced the advance of the enemy. A body of between 600 and 700 men had quitted Ancona, and were marching on Piacenza to garrison the citadel. It was this body which had attacked the outposts and driven back the hussars by the fire of its two guns. But, like the regiment of Klébeck, it arrived just too late.

Two companies of grenadiers of the 59th were placed in column on the road under Dalton, and a battalion of the same regiment divided into wings on the right and left of the road; the whole advanced covered by skirmishers. The grenadiers rushed at the enemy with the bayonet, and the Austrians, unable to withstand the shock, retired. They were then pursued with vigour, but, as night was fast approaching, Boudet called on the 11th Hussars and such cavalry as he was able to collect to charge, when most of the enemy laid down their arms.

The several attempts made to wrest from Murat the road leading through Piacenza ended in failure. The troops which had come with that intent from Tortona and from the Trebbia suffered severe losses, and had to beat a hasty retreat. We learn from General Boudet what were the results of the several contests which occurred between the 5th and the 7th: 2000 prisoners, 50 killed or wounded, the capture of 13 guns, two flags, considerable magazines, and 30 large barges full of provisions which had been intended for the supply of the enemy's army.*

Whilst Murat advanced on Piacenza, Lannes, who had collected in the Ticino all the boats he could lay hands on, had these floated down to the Po. General Watrin, with a large detachment (28th and 40th Regiments), crossed the river between Belgiojoso and San Cipriano on the 6th of June, and took post in rear of San Cipriano. No sooner, however, was Watrin over than he was attacked by some 2000 Austrians, who, as we shall see later on, were marching on Piacenza to secure that important post. The danger of being driven back into the river was great, but Watrin showed a bold front, and though entirely without artillery, fought gallantly until the boats crossing backward and forward brought up sufficient reinforcements to hold his position securely. Subsequently Lannes brought across the rest of Watrin's division, and directed a battalion under the Adjutant-General Nogues to take the enemy in flank. This manœuvre stopped the Austrians and re-established confidence in the French. In their turn they charged the enemy, and chased him as far as Stradella.

It is at times extremely difficult to reconcile the different statements made. In this operation we have Lannes and Watrin,

* The French were short of ammunition. Berthier on the 6th brings this fact to Dupont's notice, and orders the despatch of 50,000 cartridges, and others for Murat's artillery, as all he had had been expended.

the two principal actors on the French side, greatly at variance. Lannes states that the Austrians had from 4000 to 5000 infantry engaged, 1500 cavalry, and 7 guns, and that they attacked at ten in the morning; Watrin, on the other hand, reports that he was attacked at 3 p.m. by 2000 men backed by 4 guns and 50 troopers of De Bussy, which were coming from Voghera. Lannes sets down the Austrian losses at 600 dead, 300 wounded, and as many prisoners. Watrin states that the enemy left 200 dead on the battlefield, and lost an equal number of prisoners. Of the two statements the reader will possibly accept the one of Watrin, who directed the fight.

On the receipt of the news that Lannes had crossed the Po, the divisions of Chambarlhac, Monnier, Gardanne, and Lepoype were directed to march as speedily as possible in that direction. Bonaparte intended to concentrate at Stradella all the forces that remained to him after having secured the line of the Ticino and of the Po, from Lago Maggiore to Cremona, so as to close every avenue of escape against Melas. But the effort to bar all the roads by which the Austrians could reach their base had so attenuated his line that a more skilful enemy might have succeeded in breaking through the toils.

Just before daybreak on the 7th of June, O'Reilly had entered Piacenza at the head of 280 infantry and three squadrons of hussars, trusting that the following day he would be in a position to collect other troops for the protection of the city; for O'Reilly had outdistanced a column of five battalions and five squadrons, which Melas had hurried off to Piacenza, fearing that Gottesheim might not arrive in time to save the place. O'Reilly soon discovered that it was not possible to undertake the defence of the city with the handful of troops he had with him, and only held his ground long enough to enable the artillery park to place itself in safety. This was a large reserve of artillery (60 pieces) escorted by 150 infantry and 60 cavalry, which was *en route* from Alessandria to Borgoforte, and had come by way of Tortona and Stradella as far as Piacenza. The Austrian account admits that there was great confusion on the Piacenza-Casteggio road, the result of the reported loss of Piacenza and the danger the artillery park was in, now that Lannes had crossed at another point and was in O'Reilly's rear.

The latter's hasty retreat from Piacenza was dictated by the necessity of saving the artillery park, which, if it got clear of

Murat, who had sent a detachment of cavalry in pursuit in the direction of Rivalta-Trebbia, was yet liable to fall into Lannes's hands. It was this danger which made the Austrians hold so tenaciously to San Cipriano. In fact, the Austrian cavalry had to charge and clear away the most advanced troops which Lannes had brought up from Belgiojoso. It was not without difficulty that O'Reilly managed to get clear of the French; but he eventually reached Broni, and found for the park a safe refuge in Tortona.

This convoy escaped capture in a most marvellous manner, for at seven in the evening it passed along the main road to Tortona at a distance of only three or four kilometres from Watrin's division, which was then settling down in its bivouacs near San Cipriano.

Apparently Lannes had no cavalry to explore in advance of his infantry, or it would have brought news of the heavy artillery column moving along the high-road. This we gather from his report on the affair of the 6th of June, which concludes with the following words: "Had I been able to take across two guns and the cavalry, I would have marched to Piacenza."

On the 8th, O'Reilly took up a position at Casteggio, where he was joined by Ott's advanced guard.

On the same day, Duhesme carried Cremona with Loison's division. The city held only a detachment which had been left behind when General Vukashevich withdrew from the place.

The French in these few days had got the control of the three main passages over the Po, and were more than ever masters of the Austrian line of communications with Mantua. They had, moreover, in Piacenza and Crema captured a considerable amount of provisions.

On the night of the 7th of June, Lannes' troops bivouacked about San Cipriano. At two in the morning of the 8th Watrin was ordered to march on Stradella. He started forthwith at the head of the 28th, and came across O'Reilly's rear-guard, which had protected the retreat of the Austrian reserve park. A battalion of the 28th attacked it and pursued it beyond Broni, making 200 prisoners. The whole of Watrin's division followed, and took post with the right on the Scuropasso brook, the centre at Vescovera, the left at Cigognola.

The first orders to abandon Genova left Melas's headquarters on the 31st of May, and reached Ott on the 2nd of June. No

sooner had Massena concluded the arrangements for the evacuation of Genova than Ott despatched a large portion of the investing army to Tortona and a brigade to Piacenza. Vogelsang's division started the moment the Republican forces had evacuated the city. It marched from Genova on the 5th of June, and consisted of nine battalions. It constituted the advanced guard, and marched on Tortona by way of the Bocchetta. The same night it rested at Novi. It then pushed on for Voghera, where it was joined by Ott. On that day General Gottesheim, with five battalions, marched on Piacenza by the way of Bobbio. Schellenberg's division followed Vogelsang the next day; it was sixteen battalions strong.

Ott, having crossed the Scrivia on the 8th of June, marched on Voghera. There he was joined by the troops under O'Reilly and others previously sent in the direction of Piacenza. The following day, at the head of some 13,000 infantry, 1400 cavalry, and a numerous artillery, he took possession of Casteggio.*

Fertility of resource is a great gift in an officer, and an illustration of it occurred in this march. The Scrivia is a torrent of which the bed, though very broad, is for the greater part of its course almost dry, and this is principally so at the season the operations were taking place. A storm, however, could easily swell its waters and render it impassable. On approaching the river, an Austrian staff officer, finding it in a very swollen state, was very much puzzled how to get the troops across. Whilst thus absorbed in thought, he descried a long line of carts belonging to the commissariat advancing in his direction, evidently making for Alessandria. The carts were on four wheels, with a broad platform. The officer halted them in the stream, connected the whole with the chains and ropes they carried, and in this way utilized the carts as a bridge for the passage of the infantry. The mounted troops alone forded the river. After a time the force of the stream broke this bridge, but this occurred when it had answered its purpose and almost every one had got over.

Ott had received instructions to take possession of the line of retreat into Lombardy leading through the city of Piacenza, which up to that moment did not appear to be compromised. Melas evidently did not dream that it was threatened, or he would not have ventured his reserve artillery park on the

* These are the figures given by Victor, other accounts make his force larger.

Piacenza road as he did. Had Ott complied with his instructions to the letter, and raised the blockade of Genova the moment he was ordered to do so by Melas, he would undoubtedly have forestalled the French at Piacenza; but he wasted three days in negotiating with Massena, and thus allowed Murat to render himself master of that important city.

At Voghera the Austrians had no news either of Bonaparte or of Melas. Bellerose, a captain in Bussy's regiment, went forward to reconnoitre. The night was dark, and he could discover neither the position nor the strength of the French. He rushed at what there was in front of him, and was killed; his lieutenant returned to report that the enemy was approaching. The next day, the French attacked the Austrian advanced posts.

Zach, who had reached Voghera, was for avoiding any serious engagement, now that the French were already across the Po. But Ott rejected his advice. "My advanced posts are attacked," he said; "I march to their assistance." In short, Ott, being more of a hussar than a general, insisted on fighting.

He had conceived an idea that the French troops which had lately shown themselves at Piacenza and at Stradella composed a small body which was intended to mask the Army of Reserve during its march on Mantua. Under this impression he imagined that he would have a small portion of the enemy to deal with.

Ott could not now prevent the crossing of the Po, for he must have well known from O'Reilly's report that the French had crossed the river at two points. A better plan open to him was to march speedily by his right for Parma by way of Bobbio. Instead, he preferred to fight, and was defeated.

He had under his command a decent force, to which were added O'Reilly's troops—the troops which Melas had intended to be employed in defending the Po. Appreciating the great consequence to his army of having a free passage over that river at Piacenza, and knowing how eager Melas was to forestall the French at that point, Ott was strongly induced to fight. Considering how small a force he believed the French could bring to meet his 26 battalions and 15 squadrons, he not unnaturally felt confident of success.

Having made his dispositions, Ott, on the 9th of June, awaited the French, who were known to be advancing by the Stradella road from Broni on Casteggio and Montebello.

From some intercepted correspondence Bonaparte had been apprised of Ott's intention. On the night of the 7-8th, Murat forwarded some intercepted letters to Berthier, then at Pavia. On the morning of the 8th Berthier passed them on to the First Consul. One of the letters was addressed to Count Tige, vice-president of the supreme Aulic Council, and dated Turin, 5th of June.

Bourrienne relates that he awoke Bonaparte at 11 p.m. on the 7th of June to inform him that Murat had intercepted Melas's couriers, and that Genova had fallen. Bonaparte appeared much agitated, for he had hoped that the Army of Italy would display marvellous valour, and in that way make the task of the Army of Reserve more easy. Bonaparte exclaimed, "It is impossible! The letter is in German; you are not able to translate German." Well could he be disturbed by such news, for now the blockading corps would be able to join forces with Melas, whilst on the other side the troops of Massena and Suchet had been so severely tried by all that they had gone through that for another couple of weeks they would not be in a state to undertake vigorous operations.

On the morning of the 8th of June, Bonaparte wrote to Berthier the following letter:—

"I have received, citizen general, during the night your several letters.

"General Murat has forwarded to me at Milan the despatches captured from the enemy. I am occupied in getting them examined; they contain some very interesting details.

"A letter from Melas to the Aulic Council, dated the 5th of June, from Turin, makes known to me that Massena capitulated on the 4th. His troops are not prisoners of war; they are on the march to join General Suchet. It appears, nevertheless, that Massena has embarked on a frigate so as to arrive more promptly at Nice.

"General Melas owns at the same time in his letters that Baron Elsnitz has been unable to effect his retreat by the Col di Tenda, because one of his brigadier-generals has been overthrown at the Col di Braus, and on that line his march has been cut off. He has conducted his retreat on Oneglia. General Melas states that he hopes that Elsnitz will arrive at Ormea on the 18th Prairial (7th of June).

"Elsnitz has with him 6000 men of his division and 3400

men of Morzin's division, total 9400 men; of which he will have to leave 1000 men at Coni, 1000 men at Savona, and 300 at Ceva.

“General Hohenzollern will remain at Genova.

“General Ott, with 9000 men, will return by the Bochetta and Ovada to Alessandria.

“Thus, it appears that it will not be before the 12th or 13th of June that the enemy will be able to assemble his forces at Alessandria, and that then it will have only the following forces:—

Elsnitz's division	...	...	...	7,000 men.
Ott's division	...	...	...	9,000 „
Haddick's division, which is on the				
Orco at the present moment		...		6,000 „
				<hr/>
Total	...	...		22,000 „

“Move forward some parties boldly, and crush all the troops you may chance to meet.

“The advanced guard may push on as far as Voghera.

“Let the cavalry and artillery cross in such a manner that all the divisions may be complete, having their cartridges and everything in proper order.

“Though my carriage is ready and one-half of my guides have left, I will delay my departure till the return of your post.”

This was only one of the letters Bonaparte despatched from Milan on the 8th day of June, for he also sent a letter with instructions for Suchet.

It is an anomaly that whilst Bonaparte was leaving in his rear several divisions of those he had near at hand, Loison, Chabran, and Lepoype, he should have counted on Suchet's co-operation. No one should have known better how precarious is the co-operation of a secondary army which does not form a junction with the principal army before the battle. And, considering the slow ways of travelling of those days, how could he count on these instructions reaching Suchet in good time?

The following is the text of the instructions sent to Suchet on the 8th of June:—

“CITIZEN GENERAL,

“You will find enclosed different printed papers which will acquaint you with the situation of the army.

“We have crossed the Po at Stradella and Piacenza. We are masters of Orzinovi, Crema, Brescia, Cremona. Melas is without any communications.* His parks, his magazines, his hospitals, his couriers,—everything has been captured.

“The despatches intercepted this morning at Piacenza inform us that Genova has capitulated. The garrison are in no wise prisoners of war; consequently they should have joined you by the time you receive this despatch.

“Elsnitz arrived yesterday, the 7th, at Ormea. I imagine that you are on his tracks.

“Only General Gorupp, whom you have thrust back at Braus, has been able to gain the Col di Tenda. ¶ He commands at Coni, of which place his corps composes the garrison.

“If the corps of General Massena has joined you, you should be strong. I am going to undertake the pursuit of the enemy, who intends to concentrate at Alessandria. It is possible that when I shall arrive he will not consider himself able to compete with me, and may have to retire, either on the side of the Ticino or on the side of the Riviera di Genova.

“It is difficult to give you positive instructions, because I am ignorant of your forces or of what has happened. But your only aim should be this: to hold in check a corps as strong as yours.

“When your leading party once reaches Ceva, you will have indirectly, through the people of the country, news of the army, and that will place you in a position to manœuvre in the best way to rejoin it.”

Writing to Carnot on the morning of the 9th of June, Bonaparte says: “You will have seen, through Melas’s letters, that the very day on which the order reached Ott to raise the blockade of Genova, Massena, compelled by absolute want of provisions, asked to capitulate. It seems that General Massena has 10,000 fighting men. General Suchet has 8000. If these two corps have, as I believe, come together between Oneglia and Savona, they may speedily be in Piedmont by way of the Tanaro, and be

* We saw in June, 1900, a bold advance to obtain possession of the enemy’s capital counterbalanced suddenly by De Wet’s attack on the communications of the British army. Bonaparte tried to close every outlet to the Austrians, and De Wet began by destroying the railway which the Royal Engineers had repaired with such labour. The disturbance on Lord Roberts’ communications lasted for a fortnight.

very useful in the period when the enemy will find himself compelled to leave a certain number of troops in Genova."

One of the stipulations made by Massena, when he agreed to the evacuation of Genova, was that two of his aides-de-camp were to be permitted to proceed by post to the First Consul, so that he might have timely notice of the treaty which had been just concluded. To avoid a long round-about journey, Massena stipulated that these officers should travel direct through Piedmont. Marbot states in his "Mémoires" that Major Graziani, a Piedmontese or Roman in the French service, was chosen as one, as it was desirable to send on this duty an officer who spoke Italian. But, with a view to making things doubly sure, it was arranged that he himself should travel with that officer. Graziani, not being a Frenchman, Massena feared lest he might possibly be tampered with by the Austrians, and induced to delay *en route*. The two started on the 16th Prairial (5th of June), and came up with Bonaparte the next evening at Milan.*

This version is quite different from that given by other writers. One declares that the two staff officers were directed by the Austrians on Casale, by way of Novi and Alessandria; that it was only on the 9th of June that they got leave to cross the Po, after which they made for Verceili, and thence to Milan; that it was owing to the circuitous route they were made to follow, and other delays, that they did not join Bonaparte at Stradella before the evening of the 10th. Another, the Duke of Rovigo, states that an Austrian officer, under cover of a flag of truce, brought up Massena's staff officer to the outposts; that from this officer Bonaparte learnt how the Austrians were still incredulous regarding the forces which he commanded and respecting his march; that they had taken possession of Genova with great pomp and the most rigorous formalities; that General Melas knew thoroughly that the French had descended into Italy by Ivrea, but still refused to believe that they were numerous; and that he had sent only a strong detachment to watch the banks of the river Po.

Massena's staff officer, having set out from Genova after the departure of the investing troops, had overtaken them on his

* "Nous partîmes le 16 Prairial de Gènes, où je laissai Colindo que je comptais y venir prendre sous peu de jours, car on savait que l'armée du Premier Consul était peu éloignée. M. Graziani et moi le joignîmes le lendemain soir à Milan."

way, and had been able to estimate their strength, which he gave to General Bonaparte, stating also how far in the rear he had left them. He likewise informed the First Consul that the Austrian army had not sent any considerable detachment to Parma nor to Piacenza.

Much of what the Duke of Rovigo writes on this subject we know to be untrue. What Marbot himself relates is that the two staff officers, having reported themselves to the First Consul at Milan, the latter did not tire in questioning them on all that had occurred at Genova during the siege, as also on the strength and march of the Austrian corps which they had passed on the way to Milan.

Massena wrote to the First Consul on the 7th of June in the following words: "I have the honour to inform you of the evacuation of Genova under the terms of the enclosed convention. I hope that you will find it worthy of the obstinate resistance of the brave garrison which was enclosed in the town. Up to the present moment we have not lost an inch of ground. Everywhere we have maintained a constant superiority, and, but for the want of provisions, we could have held Genova for eternity. To-day I have given to the soldiers the last three ounces of what we call bread, which was nothing more than a miserable mixture of bran, oat straw, and cacao, without wheat. We have eaten all our horses.

"The mortality, brought about by hunger, had reached the utmost limit, both amongst the population and amongst the troops. Hunger and the bombardment have given rise to insurrections, always stifled at their birth. It was in the hope of seeing you arrive to effect our deliverance that I pushed to so rigorous a length such measures as might have enabled us to await you. But the machine was breaking down, and we have been driven to retire so as not to lose everything, and to maintain for the Republic the remnants of a body of troops whose constancy has not been entirely shaken by hardships, fatigues, and privations up to this moment unheard of. Physical forces had entirely failed them, and all that remained of them was walking skeletons. The officer who brings you my despatches will be able to tell you on this point all that has been done and endured to keep Genova for you.

"I am proceeding with the garrison to join the centre of the army, there to act in accordance with the instructions which I

beg you to send me. It is from there that I will send you news of myself."

On account of the breaking of the bridge at Piacenza, the difficulty of ferrying the troops across the Po, and the possibility of an attack, Berthier asked if it was not deemed safer to retire on Piacenza. The news gathered in the intercepted letters, however, showed that there was little to fear from the enemy.

On the 8th of June, Berthier sent an order to Lannes, who was at Broni, to take post at Casteggio, to attack any of the enemy's troops he should find between Stradella and Casteggio, but not to advance further than the latter village.

On the morning of the following day the French troops were not yet all across the Po. A sudden rise of that river—a thing not at all unusual in streams fed from mountain sources—had broken the bridge, and had detained on the left bank a great portion of the infantry and nearly the whole of the cavalry. Some of the latter had been sent further down to cross at Piacenza. Lannes, nevertheless, complied with his orders to take post at Casteggio on the Coppo torrent, and moved thither with Watrin's division and Rivaud's cavalry brigade.

Berthier did not anticipate an engagement that day, for he calculated that the Austrians would not reach Voghera before the evening of the 9th, where Bonaparte, in fact, purposed to attack them on the 10th. However, he had issued orders for Victor to support Lannes, should the necessity arise. Monnier and Gardanne, with their divisions, were to expedite the crossing of the river.

The postal road between Stradella and Voghera runs along the lower slopes of the Apennines, where they descend towards the Po, and leads through Casteggio and Montebello. Casteggio is situated on this road, at the junction of the roads coming from Pavia and Belgiojoso, and lies about half a league north-east of the village of Montebello. The heights which flank Casteggio command the road, and are, so to say, the key of the defile, which goes on always narrowing between the Po and the Apennines up to Stradella. From this last village up to Piacenza is $21\frac{1}{2}$ miles. At that season of the year, the fields were covered with tall crops of rye and other grain, which hid the contending troops from each other until within easy reach of their bayonets.

Bonaparte and Berthier had miscalculated the strength of

the enemy, for Ott had under his command 18,000 men, and not about 10,000, as was estimated by the First Consul. This made Lannes' position at Broni somewhat hazardous. His orders, as we have said, were, that should the Austrians appear between Stradella and Casteggio, they were to be immediately attacked. These instructions from headquarters had been followed with due energy and rapidity. At six o'clock that morning (the 9th), Lannes had quitted Broni, where Watrin's division had passed the night, and moved on Casteggio. That village and the adjacent heights were already occupied by the Austrians, who were stronger in number. Lannes, who had only from 6000 to 8000 men, was not a man to consider the odds; still, he had to weigh the possibilities which a retrograde movement might have for an army with its back to the Po. However, warned that he would be speedily supported, he pushed ahead, and the battle ensued.

At about nine o'clock, the 6th Light, which was at the head of Watrin's column, and was led by General Gency, came into contact with the Austrian outposts at the villa San Giulietta, about a league from Casteggio, and drove them back as far as Rivetta Gandolfi, on the Zeno stream. O'Reilly was posted on the heights near Rivetta, with some battalions, but his troops did not offer a stubborn resistance, and seemingly were only intended to gain time for the rest of the troops to take up their positions. After a resistance of about half an hour, O'Reilly and Gottesheim, who had gone to his assistance, retired to the heights above Casteggio. This is a large village, containing about 2500 inhabitants, situated on the slope of a hill, at the foot of which runs the main road from Alessandria to Piacenza.

Ott, who had come up from Genova by forced marches, quickly grasped the advantages of the Casteggio position. He had posted the best portion of his infantry on the heights to his right, so as to flank the only available road. There, on the eminences south of Casteggio, he placed Vogelsberg's division. Schellenberg, with six battalions, held the village, the men being under cover in the houses and gardens of the same. Five more battalions of Schellenberg's division were kept in reserve at Montebello.* The cavalry protected the left, and was

* Montebello is a smaller village than Casteggio, about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles further back in the direction of Voghera. It is situated near the postal road, and contains about 1000 souls.

extended into the open country. Powerful batteries placed on the hills, on the right of the Austrian position, commanded the whole field of battle.

Against these able dispositions nothing could avail until the ground overlooking Casteggio and the road was carried.

Lannes determined to carry the heights and to capture Casteggio by an attack in front and rear. With that object, Watrin was ordered to deploy two battalions of the 6th Light on the right of the main road, and to direct them to turn the enemy's guns. The third battalion and the 40th, under General Malher, were to master the hills above Casteggio so as to turn that village. To this force was added a battalion of the 22nd.

Under a perfect shower of grape-shot and musketry the French infantry advanced with great gallantry in echelon to storm the heights, but the battalion of the 22nd, meeting with superior forces, had to give way. Fortunately, at that moment the 40th came up, attacked the Austrians with vigour, and drove them back. The position was well contested on both sides. As the 28th came up, Watrin, combining it with the 22nd and 40th, forced his way into Casteggio from the rear, and chased the Austrians from both village and heights. At about the same time, Lannes entered the village by the main road.

Ott, fully alive to the importance of the position south of Casteggio, having united his centre and right, managed to recover the heights and to reoccupy Casteggio. The village and the heights which commanded it were taken and lost several times. The Austrian soldiers, trained to war by the stiff combats they had quite recently engaged in under the walls of Genova, and stirred by the triumphs of the past year, disputed the ground inch by inch with indomitable determination. The French were led by Lannes, as undaunted a general as Bonaparte's army could boast of, an intrepid leader, impetuous and brave to excess, quick to seize any favourable opportunity which offered.

To support Lannes, Victor had marched to Broni. There the sound of the cannonade was distinctly heard; so, acting up to his orders, Victor lost no time in moving in the direction of Casteggio with his divisions.

Olivier Rivaud was the first to reach the battlefield. At 2 p.m. he arrived before Casteggio, where a fierce contest had

been raging for the last hour. He was enjoined by Victor to take the 43rd and attack a body of 3000 Austrians and some artillery posted on the hills to the south of Casteggio. Four battalions, belonging to the 22nd, 28th, and 40th, were at that moment being driven back, and the Austrians were preparing a general attack on the French forces, and by a turning movement threatening to occupy the Casteggio-Broni road, thus to cut the French off from Stradella, which was Lannes' line of retreat, and hem them in about Casteggio.

Nothing could have been more opportune than Victor's arrival on the field of action. Rivaud deployed two of his battalions in skirmishing order; one on the right, and one on the left. The third, formed in column, acted as a support to the other two. In this order he marched on the left wing of the line of battle. Having rallied the four battalions that were contending on the heights, and using them as a support, he attacked the enemy, and pressed him back till eight in the evening, three miles in front of Montebello, when all resistance on that side came to an end.

Another of Rivaud's regiments, the 96th, had been ordered to advance by the main road of Voghera through Casteggio. These troops, under a perfect hail of grape, charged with great intrepidity up the main road, and drove back the enemy's artillery and cavalry. Then, spreading out in skirmishing order on both sides of the road, they drove back the enemy at all points.

Lannes met with unbending resistance, for the Austrian general made desperate efforts to reopen the road to Piacenza. The contest had lasted over eight hours. Lannes occupied Casteggio, but Ott still held firm in his second position at Montebello. All the valour displayed by Lannes, Watrin, Malher, De Gency, De Nogues, and the brigadiers Schreiber, Macon, and Legendre, appeared to be of no avail. The obstinacy of the infantry, the daring of the cavalry, could make no impression on the enemy. It was five o'clock, and the event was still doubtful, when suddenly, enveloped in clouds of dust, Chambarlhac's division of Victor's corps arrived on the battlefield.

The arrival of these fresh troops was most opportune. They forced their way to the scene of action, overcoming every obstacle, checked the progress of the enemy, and infused new spirit in Watrin's tired men. Lannes took advantage of this moment

to order the troops to make a general charge. He rushed impetuously at the enemy, forced him to yield, drove him from the neighbourhood of Casteggio, and pressed him back on Montebello. There Ott steadily maintained his ground, and the combat raged more fiercely than ever; but Victor came up with seven fresh battalions and charged the main body of the enemy. The Austrians defended the bridge with a strong force of artillery, which swept all access to it, whilst the French strove to drive them from it at the point of the bayonet. Ott found himself nearly hemmed in on every side, and retired on Voghera. The battle, which began at 9 a.m., was not over before eight in the evening.*

Trolard states that on the 9th two battles were fought by Lannes, one at Casteggio, the other at Montebello. He gathers from the *Corriere Milanese* that the fields round Montebello were covered with corpses, and adds that the curé of Montebello showed him, at a little distance from the church, a place called *Via dei Morti* (Street of the Dead) where immense graves were dug for the interment of the dead of both sides. Coignet tells us that he captured his gun at the entrance of the village of Montebello; and relates how after that there was still fighting going on.

The result of a combat shows how badly it has gone against the vanquished. At Montebello the Austrians suffered heavy losses. They had 2104 officers and men killed and wounded; 2171 officers and men and two guns captured. This was the first serious combat of the campaign, the first shock the Army of Reserve had to sustain. For many hours, French gallantry and efforts went unrewarded; but the tide turned in the evening, and the Austrians were unable longer to withstand their impetuosity. Their defeat was complete.

The casualties on the French side in killed and wounded was not much below that of the Austrians. In describing the battle, Lannes was wont to say, "The bones cracked in my division like glass in a hailstorm." He had no other words to express the fury of the combatants.

The Austrians did not tarry long at Voghera; and though their loss in the battle had been great, only one portion of

* The reports of this battle are very brief. Watrin barely goes beyond the first capture of Casteggio; Rivaud describes the part he took in clearing the heights on the south of the village; the official bulletin is most meagre.

their troops had been engaged. The French had, lastly, the advantage in numbers. Nevertheless, the chances were, in the early part of the day, so often in favour of the Austrians, that had they better known the numbers against which they were actually contending, they might have deployed more forces and have unfailingly remained victorious.

At the conclusion of a long day's struggle, the victors are ordinarily exhausted and little prepared for reconnoitring. Baron de Crossard, in his narrative of the course of the battle, relates that he was ordered by General Vogelsang to take two companies of Colloredo's regiment, about 300 men, and with them to seize some advantageous position which would cover the Austrian right. Crossard established himself on a mamelon between the main road from Voghera to Tortona and the spur on which the latter fortress is built. The orders Crossard received were that he should hold this position, but when the Austrians retreated his party was entirely forgotten. The next morning he set out to rejoin the rest of Ott's forces. By that time the French were in possession of Voghera, and, had they diligently explored to their left, the detachment would have been discovered and very possibly captured.

The field had been very hotly contested, and at one time Lannes despaired of gaining the victory. Nor would he have done so had not Victor reached the scene of action at a most opportune moment. Some years later, when the emperor conferred on Lannes the title of Duke of Montebello for his share in that gallant deed of arms, he ran to Victor and embraced him, saying, "It is to you that I owe my name."

The honours of the day remained with these companions in arms, Lannes and Victor. Some very fine charges were delivered; and the generals were compelled to fight like simple soldiers, so as to set an example to the battalions of conscripts and young troops which seconded the old half-brigades. Prodiges of valour were witnessed on all sides. The troops acquired great renown, and the success was a glorious one.

The supposition that the French had only insignificant parties on the right of the Po had made Ott decide on fighting. This being the case, it seems that the Austrians erred in not making a greater effort in the first phase of the battle. O'Reilly's force amounted to six battalions and four squadrons, but Watrin did not have much trouble in driving him out of the

Villa San Giulietta. At the commencement of the battle, the superiority in numbers rested with the Austrians.

The news of the combat at Montebello spread dread and discouragement amongst the adherents of Austria. They foresaw that what was about to follow was not so much a question of the preservation of Italy as of the retreat of the Austrian army. Nevertheless, the news of Ott's defeat did not dishearten the Court of Vienna; the foreshadow of a defeat on a larger scale did not receive adequate attention. On the very day that the news of Montebello reached Vienna, on the 20th of June, two days before the courier brought the distracting news of the defeat at Marengo, the Cabinet concluded a treaty with England. The representatives of the two Powers—Baron Thugut and Lord Minto—among other conditions, agreed that neither party should conclude a separate peace with France. The treaty was to be binding for both contracting parties up to the month of February, 1801.

The battle of Montebello had been fought, and the Austrians could reckon it a real disaster. Not only was their army weakened by the loss of several thousand brave men and the *morale* of the survivors lowered as a natural effect of the defeat, but they had lost also all hope of securing their main line of retreat. The consequence of this event was that the Austrian army was completely hemmed in and surrounded by the French forces.

At that moment, the line of the Ticino from Vercelli to Pavia was held by Chabran's and Lapoype's divisions, the two forming a corps of from 9000 to 10,000 men. B ethencourt's division, reinforced by a portion of Moncey's troops, closed the road of the Saint Gothard. Gilly's division held Milan and blockaded the Austrian garrison in the citadel. Lorge and Loison, with about 10,000 men, held Lodi and Cremona, and kept Vukassevich at a distance. On the west side Suchet and Massena could rush on the Austrian flank, should the latter attempt to avail themselves of the line of retreat leading to Genova.

Many writers, German, French, and Italian, mindful of the old maxim that the general who can bring against his opponent a crushing superiority of force will win, have severely criticized Bonaparte's dispositions and found fault with the undue dispersion of his troops. It is, however, a common saying that to know your adversary is half the battle. And it is in these

circumstances that a commander is almost justified in overstepping the bounds of prudence. Bonaparte had by his talent surrounded his enemy with an iron grip, from which there was little hope of escape. Melas could barely dream of bursting through the surrounding forces. He would not have succeeded if he had tried, for on whichever side he turned he would have been held in check by the French divisions, until Bonaparte could come to their aid with the rest.

On the 9th of June Bonaparte quitted Milan to rejoin the army. The sound of the cannonade was plainly heard during the best part of the journey. In the evening he reached Stradella. The small town was full of wounded brought from the battlefield of Montebello. The First Consul did not tarry long, but pushed on for Casteggio.

When he reached the battlefield, victory had already sided with the French. Worn with fatigue, the troops were not equal to a relentless pursuit; they were exhausted, but proud of the manner in which they had borne themselves in the contest, and satisfied with the proof they had given of their valour.

Bonaparte remained at Stradella for three days after the battle of Montebello. The time he spent there has been interpreted as a regret for the fault he had committed in leaving some 25,000 men in the Milanese provinces. Some writers pretend to have detected in this a sign that he dreaded to advance into the plain of Marengo with such a small army; and that he infinitely preferred awaiting the enemy at Stradella, where the nature of the country, being so much in his favour, would add to his strength.

Some say that at Stradella Bonaparte began to perceive that he had spread out his forces too much. As the enemy made no move on Stradella, he became very impatient, and after three days abandoned his almost impregnable position.

At Saint Helena, Bonaparte endeavoured to argue in favour of this delay at Stradella. He advances that he employed his time in constructing two bridges on the Po which would make his retreat into Lombardy safe. He directed attention to the enemy's army as possessing a formidable cavalry and a numerous artillery, neither of which arms had suffered in the late engagement. With cavalry and artillery so much inferior, the First Consul did not deem it safe to venture into the plain. The enemy, besides, could only regain its communications with Mantua

by Stradella, and the position there seemed to have been made purposely for the French army. The enemy's cavalry would be impotent, and the great superiority in artillery would be much reduced. The right of the French would lie on the Po and on the marshy plains which border its bank. The centre would be on the road, resting on substantial villages, having large and solid houses built of brick; and, finally, the left would be posted on commanding heights.

CHAPTER XI.

DESAIX JOINS THE ARMY OF RESERVE.

Unpromising early years—Joins the Revolution—Gallantry at the battle of Lauterbourg—Denounced to the Committee of Public Safety—Crosses the Rhine and defeats Starray—Defence of Kehl—Sails for Egypt—Attacks the Mamelukes, and defeats them at Sediman—Operations in Upper Egypt—Kléber dissatisfied with his position in Egypt—Negotiations for withdrawing from the country—The convention of El-Arish—The British Government objects—Desaix sails from Egypt—His ship captured on the coast of France—Allowed to sail from Leghorn—Lands, and proceeds to join Bonaparte in Italy.

THE columns under B ethencourt and Moncey had descended from the peaks of the Alps, and were steadily advancing to swell the numbers of the French in Lombardy. Still one more important reinforcement the French army was to receive, and its importance did not consist in numbers, but in the personality of the man who came to take part in their battles and victories. This individual was none other than the brave Desaix.

Louis Charles Antoine Desaix de Veygoux was born at Saint Hilaire d'Ayat, close to Riom, in Auvergne, on the 17th of August, 1768. His parents were of old-standing nobility, and at that period had fallen into a state of comparative poverty. The military burdens, added to the necessity for upholding their position, had been for a long time a great source of impoverishment for many families in France. Desaix's mother, with her strained resources, experienced great difficulty in educating and maintaining her four sons.

Chevalier de Veygoux, as Desaix was styled up to the time of the Revolution, made his studies at the military school at Effiat. His chroniclers have not much to say in his praise during his early days. He was very far from being a diligent scholar; was idle and insubordinate, and showed more taste for botany than for any of the other sciences. At the completion of his studies in 1783, at the age of fifteen, he was appointed sub-lieutenant in the infantry regiment of Bretagne.

Once he had got into the army a sudden change came over him. He became a very studious, grave, and austere officer. The unpromising pupil of Effiat was no longer to be recognized. His companions soon came to call him *le sage Desaix* (the wise Desaix).

Though belonging to a noble family, imbued with all the prerogatives and spirit of the old feudal society, Desaix adopted frankly the reforming ideas of the French Revolution. The urgent supplications of his parents and of his friends could not shake him in this, and when two of his brothers emigrated he stoutly refused to follow their example.

Desaix's very short life was passed in the midst of camps. From the commencement of the wars of the Revolution, he was constantly employed in the field, mostly in the higher grades. A man must get his chance, and in the piping times of peace many a brilliant soldier has passed away without having done anything worthy of being recorded in the pages of history. At the close of the eighteenth century, there were plenty of occasions for any soldier who wished to seize them.

Desaix loved war as an art. He warmed up as he held forth on any of the actions in which he had taken part, and his eyes then would sparkle with the fire of genius. All who were familiar with him were, however, agreeably surprised at hearing him all of a sudden turn the conversation from the stirring accounts of a battle to some question of natural history.

Desaix never mixed himself up with those intrigues which brought such a lasting disgrace on the Revolution. He fought, but only for the glory of the French name, with the object of doing his duty. He ignored the denominations of those numerous epochs of which every party was wont to boast so much. He smiled pitifully at the pretensions of those sects, every one of which made the safety of the Republic dependent on its temporary triumph. On the other hand, he was acquainted with all the battlefields, with all the brilliant manœuvres, all the acts of heroism which had made the first years of the Republic so illustrious.

After the 10th of August, 1792, and the fall of the monarchy, Prince de Broglie and many officers protested against the Legislative Assembly. Desaix, who was the prince's aide-de-camp, protested like the rest, and was destituted by Carnot. On his way to join the prince, when passing through a village in the

Vosges, he was arrested by the municipality, and on examining his baggage De Broglie's letters were found. He was then imprisoned at Epinal for two months, and when he was released, because declared innocent, Carnot appointed him to the staff of the Army of the Rhine.

In August, 1793, at the battle of Lauterbourg, Desaix, noticing that the soldiers were hanging back, rushed forward to encourage them, and a bullet perforated both his cheeks. Covered with blood, and unable to speak, he made a signal to his men to resume the combat, refusing until after some hours of desperate fighting to have any dressing applied to his wounds. For his conspicuous gallantry at Lauterbourg, he was promoted to the rank of general of brigade. He was then barely twenty-five years of age.

Desaix next served under the ill-fated Custine. But at that time to be fighting and shedding one's blood for France was not sufficient to silence all calumnies. Like Bonaparte and Moreau, he was denounced to the Committee of Public Safety. Some low politicians of Riom, having constituted themselves into a committee under the presidency of the infamous Georges Couthon, the representative of the people in that department, denounced him, and held that, as he possessed so few of the good things of this world, he was liable to be seduced by the gold of Pitt and Coburg. It is worthy of notice that at that very time Desaix was contracting debts to provide for the maintenance of his mother and sister, who were in prison.* He certainly was poor, he fed just like his soldiers on the ordinary rations, and refused his share of the spoils.

Pichegru objected strongly to his arrest, and when the commissioners of the Convention came purposely with the object of seizing him, the troops revolted. "It is no use," said the soldiers to the commissioners, "to make war if you will not leave us the general who has always led us to victory." The matter was allowed to drop, but principally because the soldiers threatened, should Desaix surrender, to shoot him, not alone, but in company with the representatives of the people.†

Strange enough that the same representatives of the people

* They were very soon released, owing to the reports of Desaix's gallantry in the field.

† Marceau, another of the heroic soldiers the Revolution produced, narrowly escaped the guillotine at Tours and again at Mans.

who had wished to arrest him a few weeks before should have named him general of division in November, 1793, for the distinguished part he played in the fighting in Alsace, especially in the engagement at Hagenau. Desaix's promotion was unusually rapid.

No one appreciated so much the importance of the intelligence service. He always kept himself well informed of all that passed in the other armies in the field; and no one was better posted up in all that had taken place.

True soldier as he was, Desaix, writing to his sister, tells her how he longs for this terrible and fearful war, which devastates and consumes, and keeps friends apart, to come to an end; how happy he would be with the restoration of peace, when he would be simply ignored, tranquil in mind, but content in having contributed to it, and in having helped to drive back the cruel enemies, the barbarous strangers, whose sole ambition it was to impose laws on the French.

Desaix belonged to the heroic age; he was a practical officer, shrewdly observant, chivalrous, perfectly brave and modest. He was not only without fear, but without reproach. He served under Pichegru, then under Hoche and Kléber. In France he was looked upon as one of the best officers in the army. He was a model general. He lived amongst his men familiarly, partook of the same fare, and shared evenly in their work. He talked in a simple way with them, offering them advice, instructing them in a thousand details of camp life.

In the present self-interested and pushing age, some words of Desaix might sound strange, and possibly might be disbelieved, but they are recorded by trustworthy evidence. In an assembly of superior officers, a question had arisen of distributing certain rewards for the campaign just concluded. The representatives of the people solicited Desaix's views. "We ask for nothing," replied Desaix. "We have done our duty, nothing beyond our duty. This intimate conviction is the sweetest and the most glorious recompense. My comrades and I desire no other." Fine actions always appear quite commonplace to those who perform them.*

* We may well question if all the lavishness in C.B.'s, D.S.O.'s, honourable mention in despatches, have been a move in the right direction. Certainly Napoleon's officers and soldiers who fought and bled in many brilliant battles, returned to their homes without ever receiving distinction of any sort. To have been able to

Desaix, nevertheless, knew thoroughly that bestowing unstinted praise for gallant deeds was the readiest way to conciliate the friendship and devotion of his subalterns. By his talents and high qualities he had succeeded in gaining the esteem and love of both officers and soldiers.

In the terrible winter of 1794-1795, his troops alone, though dying of starvation and without clothing or blankets, maintained their discipline. Then followed Pichegru's treason; and with all the talents of Jourdan and Desaix, the war became disastrous.

In 1796-1797, Desaix was serving under Moreau's orders with the Army of the Rhine, deeply moved by the news which came from time to time of the successes of the Army of Italy. In this campaign, Desaix crossed the Rhine on the 23rd of June with 2000 men, followed up by 2000 more. He then carried with the bayonet the Cimetière and the Trous-de-loups redoubts at Kehl, and defeated the Austrian general Starray, who commanded on the right bank. The passage of the Rhine at Kehl was an exploit of the most glorious character.

In consequence of a false manœuvre, the troops commanded by Moreau and by Jourdan could not combine. Jourdan had been routed, and Moreau could not continue his advance. Operating in a country a prey to open insurrection, the people exasperated by most enormous exactions, and being without secure communications with France, there remained nothing else for Moreau to do but to retire.

Desaix was besieged in Kehl, and made a glorious defence; but for want of means further resistance soon became impossible, and he was forced to capitulate. He did so on the 9th of January, 1797, was allowed the honours of war, and conducted his troops to Strasbourg.

In the month of April of the same year, during the absence of Moreau in Paris, he made all preparations for crossing the speak of having belonged to the Army of Italy, to the Army of Egypt, to the Grande Armée, was generally considered a sufficient reward. The cross of the Legion of Honour was very highly prized, and justly so, for it was distributed sparingly. How many of our officers who have their breast covered with orders and medals like a messenger-boy, have been present at a battle worthy of the name? This is not written in a spirit of criticism, but simply to call attention to the fact that rewards distributed broadcast lose very much of their value, and are, in fact, no longer a distinction. To the eagerness of our officers and men to have their behaviour noticed and reported home, to the undue craving for rewards, we believe we owe the loss of many a gallant fellow in the Boer War.

Rhine. This operation was carried out on the 20th, during which his example contributed in a special manner to its success. His former chief, Hoche, was at the same time crossing the river with the Army of the Sambre et Meuse. These movements, however, were made too late, for Bonaparte had been able to dictate peace to Austria without needing the co-operation of the French forces in Germany.

During the armistice of Leoben, Desaix left Moreau's camp to visit the headquarters of the Army of Italy. He was very warmly received by Bonaparte, and from that moment was seized with a warm admiration for him. Bonaparte, on the other hand, formed a high opinion of Desaix's talents and powers, and soon learnt to appreciate the wisdom of his views. An intimacy sprang up between the two generals; Desaix loved and emulated Bonaparte, but without desiring in any way to become his rival. At Passeriano, Bonaparte was surrounded by a brilliant court, and there Desaix enjoyed the society of Massena, Augereau, Bernadotte, Lannes, Murat, Marmont, Clarke, Monge, Larrey, and others.

When Bonaparte sailed for Egypt, Desaix joined him with a division which set out from Civita Vecchia. This division formed the advanced guard of the French on their march to Cairo, and had the first encounter with the Mamelukes at Ramanieh. Three weeks after the French army had landed at Alexandria, the victory of the Pyramids sealed the fate of Egypt. The beaten Mamelukes retired split in two parties: one, under Ibrahim Bey, withdrew in the direction of the Isthmus of Suez; but the main portion, with Mourad Bey at their head, made for Upper Egypt. Desaix was charged by Bonaparte with the subjugation of Middle and Upper Egypt, and this he accomplished very creditably at the cost of eight months of difficult marching and tough contests. Desaix's campaign in Upper Egypt was one of the most brilliant achievements of the French army.

In the latter part of August, 1798, Desaix left Cairo to attack Mourad Bey. This operation was brought to an end on the 7th of October, when the Mameluke chief was defeated at Sediman—a glorious battle, in which 3000 French defeated an enemy three times that number.

The results of the battle of Sediman were incomplete through want of cavalry, without which it was impossible to follow the

Mamelukes in Upper Egypt. However, some 1000 cavalry reinforced Desaix in the middle of December, and this enabled him to undertake a second campaign. During five months he had to fight the Mamelukes, the Arabs, the mutinous fellahs, and the fanatic hordes from Mecca which had landed at Kosseir.* By the end of May, 1799, his task was completed, the pacification of the country had been accomplished.

In a letter to General Dumas, Desaix wrote: "I am not in the least surprised that you have not all that you need to understand the laborious campaign of Upper Egypt. The operations in the Delta and in Syria were of an ordinary character; in the other sphere they bore resemblance to nothing which is known. It was not a war, it was an arduous chase, consisting in overcoming, with infantry alone, a bold cavalry which fought entirely according to its own liking, seldom liable to be taken unawares, still always forced to fight. Recruited at any moment from its numerous partisans and by some Arab tribes who were guided by greed of plunder and the facility with which they could withdraw from danger; hidden in an immense desert where a few springs and some grazing allowed them to subsist out of sight of the enemy; to obtain decisive success was well-nigh impossible.

"It was only by dint of continual marches and a great display of activity; it was only by organizing dromedary companies, that we have succeeded in destroying an enemy always remarkable for his persistence. Often surprised, beaten, and driven out of Egyptian territory, terrible hunger soon brought him back to some spot thirty or forty leagues below the place where he might have been expected. Never has his pursuit been less than 500 leagues; and of them we have made more than one. A hundred times we have surprised Mourad Bey at night, and have taken from him arms, horses, and transport; having lost everything, he has succeeded, in the immensity of the desert, in pulling himself together. There remained to him at last but a hundred horsemen out of the 4000 Mamelukes which composed his special body-guard at the battle of Samhoud. The narrative of our campaign will only be that of our excessive patience, of our sufferings, but never of our combinations."

When Bonaparte suddenly resolved to leave for France,

* The Arabs of Yambo and Mecca, incited by a firman of the Grand Seignior, crossed the Red Sea and landed at Kosseir to help Mourad Bey on the Nile.

Desaix was in Upper Egypt, by the ruins of Thebes, and there instructions to follow his general to France reached him.

In Bonaparte's despatch to Kléber—Alexandria, 22nd of August, 1799—he wrote: "It is the present intention of the Government that General Desaix should set out for Europe in November next, unless something should arise here to detain him."*

In announcing the resolution he had taken and the political reasons which had induced him to abandon the army and return to France, Bonaparte declared to Desaix that only the hope of soon seeing him where his intelligence and devotion were certain to be needed had made him hand over the command of the Army of Egypt to General Kléber. It is well known that Desaix highly approved of Bonaparte's step, convinced as he was that he would not delay in avenging the humiliations which had been cast on his country, and that he would succeed in establishing a stable Government in France.

Desaix had not unbounded ambition, and would never have contended with any one for the first place. It was this trait that Bonaparte so admired. From his headquarters in Cairo he wrote him on the 27th Thermidor, an VII., the following letter:—

"CITIZEN GENERAL,

"I am sending you a sword of rare workmanship, on the blade of which I have had engraved *Conquest of Upper Egypt*—an event which may be put down to your wise dispositions and to your constance in hardships. Accept it, I beseech you, as a proof of my regard and of the sincere friendship which I have devoted to you."

Independently of this gift, Bonaparte had already notified his satisfaction to General Desaix by presenting him with a rich dagger of rare workmanship and encrusted with diamonds. On the blade of the dagger was engraved, "Capture of Malta, Battle of Chebr-Kheis, Battle of the Pyramids."

Kléber wrote a long letter to the Directory, giving a full account of the state of affairs in Egypt, and bringing serious charges against Bonaparte. Citizen Barras, cousin to Barras, one of the Directory, sailed from Alexandria on the *Marianne*, bearing

* "Copies of Original Letters from the French Army in Egypt," p. 11.

this letter. The *Marianne* was chased by the English sloop *El Vincejo* and captured off the coast of France. James writes: "The despatches, as is customary on such occasions, were thrown overboard, but not with the customary carefulness. They were wrapped up in an old silk handkerchief, through which the cannon-shot intended to sink them immediately pierced, and one of the British sailors picked them up as they were floating by the side of the vessel. The captain of the sloop of war carried the important papers to the commander-in-chief: and Vice-Admiral Lord Keith, who had returned to Gibraltar from England on the 6th of December, after making himself acquainted with their contents, transmitted the despatches to his Government."* The British Ministers, after reading them, sent the packet to Bonaparte, who by that time had become First Consul.

Kléber, no doubt, exaggerated the difficulties by which he was surrounded. His accusations, however, were long a source of annoyance to Bonaparte. It was his interest to keep the contents of Kléber's letter a profound secret, and in this he succeeded; for neither his colleagues nor the public heard aught of it.

In his letter from Alexandria, of the 22nd of August, 1799, Bonaparte authorized Kléber to make terms with the Ottoman Government should he receive no reinforcements from France by the month of May, 1800, or should the plague break out and carry off 1500 Frenchmen.

Kléber, dissatisfied with his position in Egypt and eager to quit the country, had commenced treating with Sir Sidney Smith for the evacuation of Egypt. Desaix, having advanced the subjugation of Upper Egypt, and left to some flying column the pursuit of Mourad Bey—to whom he had held out proposals of peace on condition of his becoming a vassal of France—returned to Cairo. Kléber desired much to gain his influential support in the negotiations in which he was on the point of engaging; but Desaix held contrary views.

Kléber never regarded the Egyptian expedition with a favourable eye. He thought it too costly and utterly useless to France. He was eager to take part in the expedition, but once in Egypt equally eager to return. Under the conditions then existing, he considered that the withdrawal of the French army from Egypt

* James, "Naval History," vol. ii. p. 304.

was the best thing that could be done. Menou, Davout, and Desaix contended that it was still possible to resist, independently of the question whether this resistance in the long run would eventually be of any use or not.

Desaix had just brought to a satisfactory conclusion a very difficult campaign in Upper Egypt against a most determined enemy. He had subdued the Mamelukes, so brave, so well armed, so powerful, so active, and as hardy as their steeds. It was natural, therefore, for him to believe that it was feasible to hold on longer in Lower Egypt, where resistance could never be anything like as great. He therefore opposed the idea of treating for an evacuation, and made every effort to reanimate his comrades. If he eventually undertook to carry on the negotiations, he did so simply with a view of gaining time. The absurd conditions demanded by Kléber made this quite possible.

As early as the 17th of August, 1799, Bonaparte, in a letter written to the Grand Vizier, had made some proposals for an accommodation with Turkey. He had come to believe that the cause of France without reinforcements was hopeless, and as long as the British fleet remained in command of the Mediterranean it was certain that no reinforcements could arrive. In this opinion Bonaparte and Kléber agreed; for Kléber was not slow to recognize that to hold Egypt the French needed a navy, and that without one, retaining the country was an enterprise no longer capable of attainment.

As far as the new commander-in-chief was concerned, the situation had grown even worse than it was under his predecessor. Kléber was threatened by a powerful Turkish army, whilst his own troops were in a very despondent condition. On the subject of the last battle of Aboukir, Kléber wrote: "As a proof of what I say, this victory has not retarded for a single instant either the preparations or the march of the Grand Vizier." Without waiting, therefore, for the contingencies specified in Bonaparte's letter of instructions, Kléber took up the negotiations which had been started some months before. The Grand Vizier, who had just received a check at Bogaz, was not at that moment ill-disposed to listen to his proposals.

On the 29th of December, the garrison of El-Arish capitulated. The fall of the place was hastened by the insubordination of the garrison, and showed to what extent the spirit of the troops had been shaken.

After the massacre of the garrison of El-Arish, Desaix wished to break off the negotiations, as the Turks demanded an unconditional surrender. But Sidney Smith proposed more honourable conditions; nevertheless, Desaix sent Savary to Salahieh to inform Kléber that he would not sign the convention unless he received a formal order to that effect.

A council of war was called, and all present but Davout expressed themselves in favour of an evacuation. Davout, though strongly opposed to the step, against which he had argued warmly, had the weakness to add his signature with the rest, and Desaix, rather than disobey, signed the Convention of El-Arish.

Davout sent a message by Savary to inform Desaix that if he felt inclined to break off the convention he could count on the support of the army. To this Desaix paid not the least attention; for, in his opinion, by signing the proceedings of the council of war Davout had given a clear proof that he did not dare to uphold the advice he was offering.

This very unsatisfactory state of things made Desaix more than ever eager to quit Egypt. Kléber, however, would not consent to his departure, and, unwilling though he was, made him conclude the Convention of El-Arish.

The convention was signed on board Sir Sidney Smith's ship on the 24th of January, 1800. It was stipulated that the French in Egypt should be permitted to return to France unmolested, free to take the field at once against the enemies of their country. Lord Elgin, who had been appointed British Ambassador at Constantinople in the autumn of 1799, shared with Smith the belief that considerable sacrifices should be made to rid Egypt of the French forces. Nelson wrote to his lordship on the 21st of December, disapproving his views in very strong terms, and expressing a very uncharitable hope that every Frenchman might perish in Egypt.

Admiral Lord Keith, who had relieved Nelson of the chief command in the Mediterranean, though personally in favour of this measure, had arrived bearing instructions from his Government not to allow anything of the kind. Keith felt himself bound to make this known to Kléber, and wrote to him on the 8th of January, and therefore a full fortnight before the convention was signed: "I have positive orders not to consent to any capitulation with the French troops, at least unless they

lay down their arms, surrender themselves prisoners of war, and deliver up all the ships and stores in the port of Alexandria to the allied powers." Consequently Kléber was informed that any person attempting to return would be made a prisoner of war.

Had the convention been carried out, it would have restored to France, at a very critical moment, some 20,000 hardened soldiers. Bonaparte's object in authorizing Kléber to enter into a convention with the Turks was, of course, to save the army from capitulating.

Before Keith's return, Nelson, *ad interim* commander-in-chief, had given to Sidney Smith, who was commanding in the Levant, strict injunctions not to give any French ship or man leave to quit Egypt, and further, to oppose any such permission being given by any foreigner.

Desaix, availing himself of Bonaparte's hint for his return to France, and anxious to take no part in this dishonourable evacuation, arranged for leaving Egypt with Davout.

Davout could no longer remain with Kléber; and, though the latter offered to promote him general of division, refused to stay, alleging that it was very disagreeable to him for his advancement to date from such a deplorable event. Just at that moment Mons. de Latour-Maubourg arrived in the *Osiris*, bearing despatches from the First Consul, announcing the revolution of the 18th Brumaire, and the elevation of Bonaparte to the supreme power.

The news from France produced a great effect on the mind of Desaix and his suite. Such thorough trust had all in Bonaparte's genius, that they one and all foresaw that marvellous events were sure to follow from his elevation to the Consulate. Desaix became more impatient than ever to be off, and sent Savary, his aide-de-camp, on board the *Theseus* to interview Sidney Smith and to remind him of the promise he had made him of a passport.

Desaix left Alexandria on the 3rd of March in a ship from Ragusa, *Madone de grâce de Saint Antoine de Padoue*. He was provided with a passport furnished him by the Grand Vizier, and with a pass signed by the English commander then blockading Alexandria. For greater security, Sidney Smith had detailed a British naval officer to sail on the same ship.

On board, the captain of the ship and others were not free

from alarm, as it was well known from the latest despatches that Admiral Keith was not favourably disposed towards the clauses of the pending treaty of El-Arish. In what light, then, would he look upon the passport given by Sir Sidney Smith? Besides, the King of the Two Sicilies had declared war against France. There was a good prospect of their all being captured as prisoners of war. On its way, driven by a tempestuous sea, the brig had to anchor at Sciacca in Sicily, but the anchor had no sooner dropped than a rumour went about that a French general was on board the ship. Immediately a multitude of savage men and women, armed with hatchets and other implements, and shouting defiant cries, rushed to the harbour. Many stones were hurled, and a few shots were fired. The ship had barely time to make sail and get away. The tempestuous sea was less inhospitable than the savage inhabitants of Sicily had shown themselves to be.

Always haunted by the fear of capture, the crew and passengers had nearly reached the islands of Hyères, and just as every heart was in a delirium of excitement, looking forward to stepping ashore, a deep fog settled about the ship. Out of this rose the outlines of a man-of-war. It was the *Dorothy*, a British warship, which had been cruising about the coast of Provence. Neither the passport nor the presence of the British officer proved of any avail. The captain's orders were to capture any ship sailing for France, so the brig had to be conveyed to Leghorn, where Lord Keith had his headquarters at that time.

Lord Keith refused to take any notice of the passport, and was deaf to the reclamations of the British officer who had sailed with Desaix. He ordered the general and his companions to be taken to the Lazaretto and confined in a kind of a prison. He is said to have insulted the general by granting him an allowance of twenty sous per day for his maintenance, the same sum as was allowed to the rank-and-file, alleging that evidently with the rules about equality proclaimed in France no difference should be made between officers and soldiers. Later on Desaix was deprived of books and newspapers.

If all this is true, Keith's treatment of Desaix was undignified. It was akin to the humiliating story of Napoleon's captivity,* and showed a mean, vindictive spirit, unbecoming an

* Count Balmain, in his "Mémoires," makes some excuse for Napoleon's custodians.

officer of Lord Keith's social standing. How much more dignified, how much more noble, it would have been to have treated an enemy with proper decorum, with the respect due to a gallant soldier! It is always befitting a great nation to be generous and magnanimous.

Much fuss has been made by French writers with reference to the disregard paid to the passport granted to Desaix. Still, all the evidence bears out the fact that both Nelson and Keith had given full injunctions to Sidney Smith not to furnish any person whatsoever with a passport, and a warning that it would be held valueless. Keith wrote, "Any persons attempting to return pursuant to an arrangement with one of the allies exclusive of the others, as the El-Arish Convention was, would be made prisoners of war." Could anything be plainer? Nor could the French headquarters plead ignorance of the views of the British Government, since a letter written at Minorca by Lord Keith to Kléber on the 8th of January on this very subject, and containing the above words, was received in Egypt in February, consequently before Desaix's departure.

For some time the French and Turks maintained a kind of armed neutrality. The Grand Vizier released a soldier of the 25th demi-brigade, who had been made a prisoner in the neighbourhood of El-Arish. He ordered that he should be taken round his camp, after which he enjoined him to acquaint his comrades with all that he had seen, and bid their commander to tremble.

Kléber evidently played fast and loose with the convention. Desaix was permitted to sail on the 3rd of March under the provisions of that treaty, at a time when it was known that it had been disavowed by the British naval commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean. Only a little more than a fortnight after his departure Kléber attacked the Turks and defeated them on the 20th, at the battle of Heliopolis. Two months had barely elapsed since the signing of the convention. In the following May he consented to a renewal of the negotiations.

The injunctions sent by Nelson to Smith (and nothing could have been more explicit) were, in fact, distinctly disregarded by

He writes: "Though it was impossible to satisfy his (Napoleon's) whims, and there was no sort of annoyance that the prisoner has not inflicted on the Governor." Balmain's own instructions were framed in a more generous spirit. He states that they contained the following words underlined by the Emperor Alexander himself "while not forgetting the consideration due to him (Napoleon) personally."

Sidney Smith, who plainly disobeyed his chief in letting Desaix depart, and in detailing a naval officer to go with him. On the other hand, there can be no doubt that, being on the spot, Sidney Smith considered himself as being a better judge of the actual condition of affairs at the time being, and that he could do what was needed with a sounder judgment than an officer who was at a distance, and only partially acquainted with the events.

In detaining Desaix, Lord Keith was apparently doing nothing beyond complying with the orders he had received. But when Pitt came to learn how a British officer had pledged his faith to a French general, he had orders sent out to the Mediterranean to execute the provisions of the treaty, and it was possibly under these instructions that Desaix was allowed to sail from Leghorn.

Desaix quitted Leghorn on board a Spanish ship, and sailed for Toulon, where he arrived on the 4th of May. But his troubles were not at an end, for he was compelled to undergo quarantine. When this was over, he crossed the Little Saint Bernard on his way to Bonaparte's headquarters. His bad luck followed him. On the morning of the 9th of June he was attacked by a party of bandits at San Germano, between Ivrea and Vercelli. The ruffians killed one man and wounded three more of his retinue, and made off with his baggage. The general's party comprised several officers, three of whom, Rapp, Savary, and Auguste Colbert, were his aides-de-camp. With them was a servant and two negro boys, who had been sent as a gift to Bonaparte by the King of Darfoor.

Desaix was one of the most distinguished officers of his time. In military talents he equalled Moreau, Massena, Kléber, and Lannes; but he surpassed them all by the perfection of his character. He was one of those generals who knew best how, by his talents and virtues, to gain the esteem of his officers and men. But his power did not stop there, for he was able to win the respect of the Arabs of Upper Egypt, who called him *the just sultan*.*

To a bravery which nothing could subdue, Desaix joined a rigid probity and complete disinterestedness. His character, as a writer tersely puts it, partook of the antique. De Brossier writes: "His campaigns on the Rhine and in Egypt render all

* Bonaparte was called by the Egyptians *Sultan Keber* (Father of the Fire).

praise superfluous. But his death robs the Republic of a rare support, deprives the soldiers of a father, and social virtues of a model." Burning with indignation at the unwarrantable treatment he had recently received from England, on joining the Army of Reserve Desaix demanded nothing better than to be allowed to take his revenge.

Whilst Bonaparte was at Martigny, he received a letter from Suchet, in which, amongst other matters, he reported the arrival of Desaix at Toulon. In reply, the First Consul issued orders for Desaix to come and join the headquarters of the Army of Reserve as quickly as possible. From Lausanne he had written to him on the 14th of May: "At last you have arrived—a good piece of news for the entire Republic, but above all for me who have consecrated to you all the esteem due to a man of your talent, combined with a friendship which my heart, to-day sufficiently old, and having a very profound knowledge of men, has for no other person."

Bonaparte was jealous of some generals, the rivalry of whose ambition he feared. He nourished no such feeling towards Desaix, who had an unassuming disposition. He never loved, esteemed, or regretted any man so much. An exception might be made for Duroc, who, as aide-de-camp, served in the Marengo campaign. Napoleon said of him, "He was a pure and virtuous man, totally disinterested and very generous. Throughout my career, he was the only person who possessed my unreserved confidence, and to whom I could unburthen my mind. His talents were not brilliant; but he had an excellent judgment, and his services were of the most useful kind."

Desaix arrived at Bonaparte's headquarters near Montebello on the 11th of June. The two generals had much to say to each other, and the night was spent in a long conversation regarding all which had occurred in Egypt since the departure of the First Consul.

The two divisions of Boudet and Monnier were formed into a corps, and their command was assigned to Desaix.

How greatly Bonaparte appreciated the talent and military virtues of his lieutenant will be readily understood by an episode which occurred fifteen years later. After the irreparable defeat at Waterloo, one of his generals remarked to the emperor, "What we needed was a Desaix;" to which, with a deep sigh, the dejected monarch replied, "There are no more Desaixs in our days."

CHAPTER XII.

THE BATTLEFIELD OF MARENGO.

Deficient scouting of the French cavalry—The French march to the Scrivia—Description of the battlefield—Bonaparte reconnoitres the plain of Marengo—Attack of the village of Marengo on the 13th of June—The Austrians make no effort to hold it—It convinces Bonaparte that Melas intends to evade him—Desaix, with Boudet's division, sent to reconnoitre in the direction of Novi—The question of the destruction of the bridge on the Bormida—Apparently no clear orders were issued on this point.

AFTER the battle of Montebello, Bonaparte remained at Stradella the 10th, 11th, and 12th of June up to noon. He was eager to obtain some reliable news of the Austrians, but in this he was singularly unsuccessful. His cavalry had only gathered vague information, for it had not been pushed far enough ahead.

With all the uncertainty of the Austrian plans, which so puzzled the First Consul, it is surprising to find that he did not make the best use of his cavalry to clear the situation. He was certainly weak in that arm; nevertheless, he had 3600 sabres, a sufficient number, one would think, to conduct a thorough exploration of the country lying between the Scrivia and the Bormida, a tract of country which from east to west does not measure much more than from thirteen to sixteen miles.

The bulk of the French cavalry remained with the infantry, and when the army moved forward on the 12th, it took post on the left of Desaix's divisions at Viguzzolo, between Ponte Curone and Tortona. It was not pushed forward far in advance of the rest of the army to explore and to gather the exact information which the commander-in-chief so much needed for arranging his measures. It may possibly have been that the established superiority of the Austrian cavalry, both in numbers and in tactical excellence, may have counselled Bonaparte not to risk the little he had and might very shortly greatly need.

Up to the day of Marengo, the Austrian cavalry was held to be the best in Europe in every respect. Nothing, however, could

have equalled the bravery and enterprise of the French cavalry on the field of Marengo. Its capacities were a sudden revelation, and there it acquired a prestige which was afterwards admitted by all the armies of Europe. The French cavalry was very eager to be employed, and, if sent forward to explore in front of the army, it would have brought back as early as the night of the 12th the news of Ott's withdrawal into Alessandria, and the occupation of Marengo by his rear-guard.

The battle of Montebello was fought on the 9th of June, and, as we have said, up to noon of the 12th Bonaparte made no move. After Montebello there had been no pursuit, possibly for no other reason than because the victorious troops were thoroughly exhausted. Ott was not molested in his retreat. The contact with his troops had been lost on the 9th, and nothing had been done to regain it.

Bonaparte had begun to fear either that Melas might make for the Ticino, working round by Valenza, or that he would place his army behind the Apennines, and take advantage of Genova and the help of the British fleet.

The supposition that Melas would retire on Genova first shows itself in a letter Bonaparte wrote to Suchet on the 8th of June. In this letter, he declares that the Austrians had formed the intention of concentrating at Alessandria. But he adds, "It is possible that when I arrive Melas will not deem himself competent to fight, and that he will retire either on the side of Turin or on the side of the Riviera di Genova." Bonaparte was much worried by the dread of seeing the enemy escape him after all the trouble he had taken.

As some vague rumours indicated that the Austrians were concentrating round Alessandria, Bonaparte, in order to obtain some idea of the situation and to penetrate their intentions, ordered on the 12th a move of the main body up to the Scrivia. On the march to that river, as it was expected that the enemy might be found inclined to deliver battle, orders were issued for all the disposable forces to be near at hand.

Lapoye's division was directed to advance by the left of the Po, keeping abreast of the main body; nevertheless he had orders to retire should the Austrians have succeeded in crossing that river. In such an eventuality, he was to hold the line of the Ticino till the rest of the forces could come to his assistance.

On the night of the 12-13th, the French army was disposed

on the right bank of the Scrivia in the following manner: *Right wing*, Lannes, with Watrin's division, at Castelnuovo; *Centre*, Desaix, with the divisions of Monnier and Boudet, in front of Ponte Curone, astride of the Piacenza-Tortona high-road; *Left wing*, Victor, divisions of Chambarlhac and Gardanne, in the neighbourhood of Tortona, ready to cross the Scrivia. On Desaix's left, close to Viguzzolo, was posted Murat's cavalry division. An advanced guard composed of two regiments of hussars and one of dragoons, commanded by Kellermann, was pushed forward in the direction of Tortona. The headquarters of the army were at Voghera.

So much for the dispositions of the French army. On the Austrian side on the same day Melas, having been informed that the French forces were about to march from Stradella towards Tortona, ordered General Ott to retire from Tortona and to fall back on Alessandria, to cross the Bormida, and to leave only a strong rear-guard between Marengo and Spinetta. Haddick's and Kaim's divisions, coming from Turin, from which city they had been withdrawn after the battle of Montebello, had arrived under the walls of Alessandria by the afternoon of the 12th of June, as also had Elsnitz's troops coming from Ceva. Melas consequently had concentrated round Alessandria a large portion of his army. On the right of the Bormida, between Spinetta and Marengo, remained O'Reilly with Rousseau's brigade, a few squadrons of cavalry, and four guns.

Melas did not understand the full advantages of concentration. Why should he have thought it necessary to guard all points when by concentrating his whole army and beating the enemy in the field he could have guarded them indirectly? The evacuation of any strong places would have been only very temporary, as their subsequent fall would have been certain, as the necessary result of a decisive battle gained over the French.

It is remarkably strange that, if Melas had determined on giving battle in the plain, he should have made no effort to hold Marengo on the 13th, or that he should have permitted the French to capture it so easily. The position of Marengo derives its importance from the fact that many roads centre about the village, and there is the only good passage across the Fontanone brook. For a large army issuing from Alessandria and intending to debouch on to the plain, the possession of that position was indispensable.

It is likewise surprising that in expectation of a battle the Austrian commander-in-chief should not have kept a large portion of his army on the right bank of the river during the 13th, so as to avoid the loss of time in crossing the bridges on the following morning. Had a corps been detached on the left flank of the French between the Bormida and the Scrivia, to cooperate with a brisk frontal attack by the other corps, it would have turned the enemy and thrown him back on the Po.

Ott's withdrawal behind the Bormida strengthened Bonaparte's belief that Melas had marched, or was about to march, on Genova. On the 12th, he had not succeeded in getting news of the enemy. He examined the several courses open to the Austrian commander-in-chief. There were three principal ones. He might make for the Ticino, marching by way of Valenza. He might march against Suchet, leaving a corps in the neighbourhood of Alessandria to hold the Army of Reserve in check; and, after having destroyed Suchet, he could retrace his steps and meet Bonaparte's forces with soldiers inspired by a recent victory. Lastly, he might march across the Apennines and enter Genova, where he would find Hohenzollern, and would have the support of the British fleet.

Now let us look at the vast plain of Marengo on which the eventful battle between the Austrians and French was to be fought—a battle which had immense consequences over the future of Europe.

In the centre of the vast plain of the Po lies the city of Alessandria. It was founded in 1168 to offer a refuge to the inhabitants of Milan whom Frederick II. had expelled from the latter city as the place fell into his hands.

At that period Pope Alexander III. was the recognized leader of the Lombard League, and in his honour the new city received the name of Alessandria. It was at first known as Alessandria della Paglia, by reason of the roofs of the houses, which were of thatch.

Alessandria is so situated as to guard the road which leads from Piacenza to Turin. The city stands not far from the point where the waters of the Tanaro and Bormida rivers mingle. A little to the south-east of the walls the main road branches off due east, leading by Tortona into Lombardy; another road continues in a south-easterly direction, crosses the Apennines, and goes to Genova.

The plain of Marengo—so called after the famous battle which has acquired a well-merited place in history—commences at the bridge over the Bormida in front of Alessandria. It lies between the Scrivia and the Bormida, and in length measures from Salé to Novi approximately fourteen miles, and ten from the Scrivia to the Bormida (22 kilometres by 16). It is crossed by three main roads, the roads of Pavia, Piacenza, and Genova. These roads converge, then unite near the Bormida, and lead on to Alessandria.

The plain on the north is bounded by the Po, on the west by the Bormida and Tanaro, and is enclosed on the east and south by the Scrivia and by a circular chain of hills, which are the lower spurs of the Apennine mountains.

To the east of Alessandria, and, at the period of the battle half a mile from the gate of the city, meandered placidly the Bormida.* That river has its source far away in the mountains, above Carcare and Millesimo. It swells by degrees, turns from east to north, and describes a semicircle around the country it waters to the south of the city of Alessandria. In its winding course the Bormida makes two bends in the direction of the village of Marengo.

At one end of the plain, on the side of Alessandria, lie three villages—Castel Ceriolo, Marengo, and Spinetta, where the principal events of that memorable day in June, 1800, occurred. In the middle of the plain, two leagues beyond Marengo on the Tortona road, and about a league from that town, lies the village of San Giuliano Vecchio. At its eastern extremity, on the same road, not far from the road from Salé to Novi, stands the village of Torre di Garofoli. On the road from Castel Ceriolo to Salé we come first to San Giuliano Nuovo and next to the property La Ghilina. At Spinetta two roads branch off, that on the left leads to San Giuliano Vecchio and Tortona, and that on the right to Novi and Genova. Two other roads lead to the latter place from Spinetta, one by way of Frugarolo and Basaluzzo, the other by Pozzolo Formigaro.

It would have been difficult to find at that time a more magnificent manœuvring-ground for cavalry. In the narrative by General Danican † of the battle of Alessandria and Marengo

* The river has changed its bed since 1800. It now flows much further from the city walls, and is not so tortuous.

† Danican served in the French navy and army in many capacities. He was

it is stated that Desaix's division briskly repulsed the Austrian cavalry, which found it almost impossible to act in such a broken country. This statement is flatly contradicted by Chevalier Cavour, a gentleman who found himself in Alessandria at the time of the battle. He states that he cannot conceive how any one who had been over the ground could assert that the plain between Alessandria and Tortona could be reckoned as broken ground, inasmuch as from Spinetta to the Scrivia there are no ditches, no hedges, and only a small number of barns. The country is level and clear of impediments. This is corroborated by General Duvignan's report. In this he writes: "At three o'clock we found ourselves on the fine plains of San Giuliano, the only ones which we had met in the whole of Italy in which cavalry could be employed with advantage." Jomini writes: "The plain of Marengo is almost the only one in Italy where masses of cavalry can charge at full speed."*

Count Cavour admits that the country from the Bormida as far as Spinetta alone is much cut up and strewn with vineyards, cottages, and farm buildings. This is also mentioned by General Duvignan, who alludes to the difficult nature of the ground between the Bormida and Marengo, where there were broad ditches full of water, which followed each other in rapid succession. The plate forming the frontispiece of Holmes's "Précis of Modern Tactics"—taken, no doubt, from a print struck about the time of the battle—evidently conveys the impression that it was a fair battlefield. It shows the ground where Desaix advanced with Boudet's division as being good for manœuvring, quite open, and clear of obstacles.

The student should abstain from forming an opinion on the nature of the ground from what it is in our days. From the belfry of San Giuliano Vecchio, looking in the direction of Alessandria, the plain of Marengo now appears as if covered with dense scrub. This effect is produced by the rows of mulberry trees which have been planted in continuous parallel lines. In every direction houses and small villages have sprung up, so that it is impossible to form an approximate idea of how

a Royalist at heart, and betrayed the Republican troops when he served with them as an officer. He was suspended several times, and fought against Bonaparte on the 13th Vendémiaire in command of the Royalist sections. Hoche despised him as a bad character.

* Jomini, "Histoire des Guerres de la Révolution," Livre XVI. chap. cii. p. 271.

the ground lay in 1800. Now, a retiring army would certainly find any number of points of support. The ground is cultivated with wheat and Indian corn, long rows of mulberry trees dividing the fields, but there are no vines festooned on the trees as in other parts of Piedmont. Cavalry could now manœuvre parallel to the trees, which generally run north and south, and in June the Indian corn must have been low. Near San Giuliano there are more vines. The ground being very flat, it would have been difficult to get a fair view of how the action was going on. The plain at the 18th kilometre slopes towards Alessandria; but there is nothing more than a gentle dip towards the city. As there had been much fighting in Piedmont quite recently, and as two other battles of Marengo had been fought in the previous year, one on the 16th of May, the other on the 20th of June, it is more than likely that the cultivation was of poor order.

The principal efforts on the 14th of June, 1800, were made round the small hamlet of Marengo. Marengo owes its name and origin to the Marici, a warlike tribe of the ancient Ligurians, which pitched its camp between the Orba and the Scrivia. In former times it had been a place of note, for the Longobard kings had made of it a summer residence, and Berengario, Guido, and Lamberto used to indulge there in the pleasures of the chase. With time, however, all the ancient glories of Marengo had faded away.

The village at that time had fallen into decay, and was of very little importance. The tower which commands the small cluster of remaining houses is the tower of Theodoric, King of the Goths. Tradition has it that the king made of Marengo a place of delight, and that he constructed there a magnificent palace, surrounded by woods and gardens. The tower is now old and dismantled; it overlooks the plain for some distance on all sides. This is all that now remains of the magnificence of the Lombard and Gothic kings.

Marengo, which in 1800 did not number more than half a dozen houses, the principal building being a modest inn, stands on the banks of the deep and sluggish Fontanone brook, and commands the bridge over it. Close by the garden of the inn is a wide brook, in the bed of which flows a fresh and limpid stream, scarcely four and a half feet deep. Verdant trees and aquatic rushes rise from the bottom of the water, which is supplied from several sources that gush forth without

interruption, and rise to the surface of the brook bubbling unceasingly. It was round this humble brook, known at that period as *Il Fontanone* or *il Cervo di Fontanone*, and now called *Bolla Regia Russia*, that the fiercest fighting took place on the day of Marengo.

Some writers have much exaggerated the importance of this brook, have made of it a natural obstacle of the greatest consequence in a tactical point of view, and have depicted it as filled with the corpses of the combatants on both sides. Berthier and some other French generals in their reports make mention of a stream, which was undoubtedly the Fontanone; nevertheless, none of them represent it as an obstacle of great magnitude. Whatever may have been its importance, there is no doubt that on that bright day of June, 1800, the destinies of France and of its future ruler were decided on the banks of the Fontanone.

Some writers describe it as a brook, others only call it a deep ditch. At first it flows in a direction almost parallel to the Bormida; it deviates from that river, then again approaches it, and, lastly, finishes by resuming its original direction before falling into the marshes on the verge of the Tanaro. The Fontanone comes close to the village of Marengo, as it makes its great bend to the west in drawing away from the Bormida.

It must be admitted that the deep and muddy stream which covered the position of Marengo on the west helped the French greatly on the 14th. One is consequently struck by the neglect of the Austrians, who, looking forward to a deployment of their whole army on the plain, did not provide means for crossing it at various points. As will be seen further on, it was only at about noon that the staff thought of spanning the Fontanone with a light bridge in front of Marengo.

Bonaparte, burning with impatience to learn his adversary's movements, ventured into a plain studded with strong places and watered by many rivers and streams. Such, nevertheless, was the power of his name and the dread which his talents inspired, that he alone was sufficient to paralyze the movements of an enemy superior to him in numbers, and above all, in cavalry and artillery.

It has been stated, and many historians believed it, that Bonaparte was deceived by a spy who was in the pay of both

sides, and that he was by this spy's statement strengthened in the belief that Melas had really decided to fall back on Genova. The story of this spy seems to come principally from Austrian sources.* Whether true or not, Bonaparte should have learnt by that time to mistrust spies, for in Egypt the Arabian spies had proved far more serviceable to his enemies than to him.

Taking no notice of the Austrian garrison in Tortona, at daybreak on the morning of the 13th Bonaparte carried his army across the Scrivia. His advanced guard reached San Giuliano Vecchio without finding the least trace of the enemy. All the information he could gather was that the Austrians had retired on Marengo.

Dupont, Berthier's chief of the staff, writing on the 13th, says: "The enemy is concentrating round Alessandria. It is uncertain if he will accept battle. But we are going to force him to declare himself."

On the afternoon of that day, Bonaparte ordered two reconnaissances to be made: one by Victor and Kellermann's cavalry brigade astride of the Marengo-San Giuliano road; the other, which comprised all the cavalry under Murat, in the direction of Castel Nuovo, by Salé and Piovera on Castel Ceriolo.

The result of the exploration of the enemy's position revealed very little indeed. On every side the information was the same. The villagers, the prisoners, the deserters, all alike reported that the Austrians were only to be seen about Marengo. The reconnaissances had one result, and divulged that the village of Marengo was occupied by the enemy, the general opinion being that apparently the Austrians had no more than 3000 or 4000 men there.

Petit states, "We were joined by several deserters, and by some prisoners who had strayed and been taken; amongst others, an officer of De Bussy's legion, who wore the cross of St. Louis. The general questioned them with considerable earnestness. All the prisoners were astonished when they found that the person they had just been speaking to was Bonaparte.†

* See *Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift*, tom. xxix. pp. 137-139.

† The name of Bonaparte, and later on of Napoleon, filled the imagination, and had a magical effect. During the battle of Essling, as Lannes, covered with blood and fainting, was carried past Napoleon, the emperor addressed him: "Lannes, my friend, do you know me? It is the emperor; it is Bonaparte, your friend." Only the utterance of that name revived Lannes's spirits and made him attempt to speak.

The hypothesis Bonaparte had formed was strengthened by the cavalry exploration and the movements of the army, which had made it certain that the Austrian army was not in the plain between the Scrivia and the Bormida. More and more convinced that the enemy had escaped to Genova, the First Consul sent Desaix with Boudet's division to his left to reconnoitre the road which, starting from Alessandria, goes to Novi. Desaix was to march from Ponte Curone towards Novi, giving a wide berth to Tortona, and taking the road over the Tortonese hills. His instructions were to cut off the retreat of the Austrian army on Genova, and to endeavour to effect a junction with Suchet, who was expected to be advancing from the direction of Acqui.

We can well imagine Bonaparte's astonishment in not finding the plain of Marengo occupied, and how he recognized that were the enemy retiring on Genova there was not a moment to lose if he wished to overtake them.

On the little information gained, Victor was ordered to attack the village of Marengo, to drive the enemy out of it, force him back, and strive to cross the Bormida at his heels.

Gardanne, who commanded the advanced guard of Victor's division, was instructed to do this. He divided his force into two columns, and with the larger one marched by the old Alessandria-Tortona road, bent on attacking the village in front, whilst Colonel Dampierre, his adjutant-general, and to whom he had confided the command of the lesser column, was enjoined to advance by the new road, and to work round the village of Marengo from the side of Spinetta. Victor's second division (Chambarlhac's) followed the other along the plain. Duvignan was ordered to cover the left of Victor's troops with his cavalry brigade.

Amongst the troops Monecy had brought from Germany were the 44th and 101st. These, numbering 3697 men, were formed into a division under the command of Gardanne, an officer who had served at Genova under Marbot.

In the returns Gardanne's division is shown as having a strength of 3697 men. But Dampierre, in a letter to General Mathieu Dumas, written on the 16th of June, 1800, states that this division, of which he was adjutant-general, was more correctly speaking a strong brigade.* It numbered about 2000

* "*La division Gardanne où l'on m'envoya adjutant général, ne forme pas, à bien dire, une bonne brigade ; elle ne compte qu'environ deux mille hommes.*"

men.* Rivaud calls it *la petite division de Gardanne*. One battalion of the 44th half-brigade, the 2nd, had not more than 120 men with the colours. Dampierre says that his command amounted to 300 or 400 men, and that his column carried the village of Marengo before the frontal attack had commenced.

Towards five in the evening—Melas calls it “*vers la fin de l’après midi*”—the French, with Gardanne, marching astride of the old Tortona road, came into contact with the Austrians, who were deployed in front of Marengo. The latter numbered a little over 3000 men, with four guns. A sharp artillery and musketry fire was opened,† and just as the left column of the French was beginning to appear from the direction of Spinetta the main column advanced to the charge, and drove the Austrians out of Marengo. The French attacked Marengo with such vigour that O’Reilly, not wishing himself to be drawn into a serious combat, displayed no great resistance. The combat was at one moment interrupted by a heavy fall of rain. When the action was resumed, the Austrians were completely driven back, and sought refuge behind the ramparts of the bridge-head on the right bank of the Bormida. In this engagement the Austrians left in the hands of the French two guns, some weapons, and about one hundred prisoners.

Gardanne’s troops followed up their success at the village of Marengo, and pursued the Austrian rear-guard. They were brought to a standstill by the fire of fourteen guns which the enemy had mounted on the works of the bridge-head, and by the more brisk fire of three field-batteries which General Zach had placed in position on the left bank of the river.‡

Danican describes the attack on the 13th as being insignificant enough. He mentions that the French craftily attacked under cover of a storm; whereas the real fact is that a severe storm interrupted the contest for a time. He asserts that at about seven in the evening disorder pervaded the whole of the right wing of the Austrian army, which retired on Alessandria, and owed its safety only to the very great superiority of its

* Gardanne, in his report to Dupont, says the advanced guard, about 2000 strong, received the order to attack Marengo at 6 p.m., and that the fight lasted one hour.

† The *Revue Militaire Autrichienne* sets down 5 p.m. as the hour when the cannonade commenced on the 13th.

‡ Zach also sent the infantry regiment of Spleny beyond the bridge-head to execute a sortie; but Gardanne had already withdrawn from the attack.

artillery, which had been posted on the left bank of the Bormida, and kept up a brisk fire until ten o'clock at night.

The Austrians made no exertion whatever to hold the village of Marengo, and soon lost that important position. It has always seemed incredible that when Melas had fully made up his mind to deliver battle on the plain on the following day, he should not have made an effort to hold Marengo in the evening of the 13th. Victor writes: "The position of Marengo was of the utmost importance, because, as it formed an acute angle in the plain, it offered the adversary the advantage of overlooking us without disclosing himself, thus enabling him to throw upon us as much of his forces as he might have deemed necessary to overcome us in any weak point.

"Had the enemy, therefore, held possession of the village, it would have been an indication that they meant to deliver battle on the morrow. If, on the contrary, they abandoned it, it would have afforded some sort of a proof that they purposed to evade us without giving battle."

The fault Melas committed, of so easily letting go his hold on the village of Marengo on the evening of the 13th, had a balancing advantage for him, inasmuch as it strengthened Bonaparte in his opinion that the Austrians were bent on a retreat on Genova. It caused him to persevere in a wrong forecast. He consequently subdivided his army still more, and of 25,000 men he had brought to the field of Marengo, two divisions of infantry and the Consular Guard were sent a day's march away, leaving available for battle 15,000 men; three divisions of infantry, and two brigades of cavalry.

But had Melas even adopted the plan of retiring on Genova, the position of Marengo was important, as the most direct route to that city from Alessandria passes by the village; consequently in either case it should have been held.

That Bonaparte was *assailli ici à l'improviste*, as Jomini puts it, may be impossible to contradict. Nevertheless, there was a reasonable excuse—if there ever can be any excuse for being surprised—and that lay in what he conceived as the most favourable plan open to Melas, and that the surrender of the position of Marengo had strengthened this supposition and made it almost a certainty. His customary success made him sometimes deaf to the promptings of prudence. Had the Austrians held Marengo on the 13th, in the next day's battle Bonaparte

would have had in the field both Lapoype's and Desaix's divisions. It was the very feeble defence of that village on the evening of the 13th that threw him entirely off the scent.

It has already been said how, on seeing Melas's inexplicable inactivity, the First Consul had begun to believe thoroughly that the Austrian commander-in-chief was bent on avoiding a battle, and contemplated a retreat in the direction of Genova or of Valenza. This idea, for a few days prevalent in his mind, became strengthened by the ease with which Gardanne carried the village of Marengo. The vast plain of Marengo, so favourable for the action of a numerous cavalry, appeared made purposely for the Austrian battlefield. It was there that Bonaparte had fully expected to encounter the Austrian army on the 13th of June, unless it had decamped. Melas not having taken advantage of such a fair field, made the First Consul distrustful. In this uncertainty as to the measures to which the enemy, finding himself in such dire difficulties, would resort, he did as he had always done; he credited the enemy with having taken the most reasonable course, and made his own dispositions accordingly.

Every consideration enjoined that, with the intention of delivering battle on the plain on the 14th, the Austrian army should have been on the right bank of the Bormida by the evening of the 13th, ready by daybreak on the following morning to march in the directions fixed by the Austrian staff.

The easy capture of Marengo had the most natural effect on the mind of the First Consul of confirming the idea that Melas intended to evade giving battle. Consequently Bonaparte echeloned his forces on the plain of Marengo, and issued no special orders for the morrow.

At sunset on the evening of the 13th of June, Victor held Marengo, and Bonaparte, instead of forming line on this corps, and issuing orders for a battle which might seem probable, left the other corps in echelon. Lannes and Murat at San Giuliano Vecchio, five miles in rear of Victor; Desaix was on his way to Rivalta to keep an eye on the road to Genova. Monnier and the Consular Guard were at Torre di Garofoli, seven and a half miles in rear of Marengo. Rivaud's cavalry brigade was at Salé. Bonaparte himself decided to retrace his steps to Voghera, and there to await news from the different corps—from Desaix, from Chabran, and from Suchet. Having seen the troops established

in their bivouacs,* he set out, but at Torre di Garofoli news awaited him from Rivalta and from the Po that no movement had taken place in those directions, and, as the Scrivia was reported to be rising rapidly, he established his headquarters for the night in that hamlet.

With regard to the battle of Marengo, it has always been said that Bonaparte was lulled into a sense of security by the negligence of one of his staff officers, who reported that there existed no bridge on the Bormida. Much hinges on this question of the bridge, for had Bonaparte really believed the statement made to him that it had been destroyed, he would have been correct in his belief that he had nothing to fear from an enemy on the left bank of the Bormida. He would not have thought it possible that an attack would have come from the direction of Alessandria.

The destruction of the bridge, or bridges, over the Bormida was, no doubt, a very important matter for the French, as such an operation would have prevented their being taken in flank had Bonaparte found it necessary to follow Desaix's movement in the direction of Novi to arrest Melas's retreat on Genova.

As the whole of the evidence on this mooted point is of a most confused and contradictory nature, we consider it desirable to give it so that the reader may draw his own conclusions.

The Bormida, as we have seen, was crossed by two bridges, one of which was only laid down on the night of the 13-14th June. Marmont relates that the river made a bend, and that, contrary to all military engineering principles, the bridge-head had been placed at the salient of the bend, so that it was possible for him to take it in reverse by effecting a lodgment in the re-entering bend—*dans le rentrant*. This is but one of the many mis-statements which make this battle so puzzling. Captain Pittaluga, a living author who has paid considerable attention to the topography of the battlefield, describes the bridge-head as situated in a re-entering bend

* In the narrative of the battle of Marengo, compiled in 1805, the version is different. The words are, "This order given, Bonaparte starts to go to the headquarters at Voghera." The order was for the burning of the bridges of the Bormida. In the bulletin of the battle there is no allusion to the information given that the Austrians had no bridges on the Bormida.

of the Bormida; the bridges stood between high banks, the approaches being covered with hasty intrenchments and abatis.

It is a most remarkable fact that none of the principal officers concerned make any allusion to their having received any command to destroy a bridge or bridges. In the official narratives of the battle prepared in 1803 and in 1805, Berthier states: "The advance-guard receives orders to drive the enemy's posts over to the other side of the Bormida, and, if it should be possible, to burn the bridges."*

It is much to be deplored that no reliable documents have been found in the Bureau de la Guerre with regard to the order for the destruction of the bridge. Let us now see how the above instructions were carried out.

Victor states that Gardanne (one of his division generals) marched from "San Giuliano on Marengo to attack the enemy concentrated in that village . . . forced them to retire in disorder as far as the bridge on the Bormida." Gardanne in his report, written on the 15th of June, simply mentions having received an order to attack the village of Marengo. Dampierre, who attacked with Gardanne's left column, writes: "*Nous fûmes chargés d'attaquer le village de Marengo le Soir du 24 Prairial*" ("We were ordered to carry the village of Marengo on the evening of the 24th Prairial").

Neither of the three officers principally concerned alludes to the fact of their having received an order to destroy the bridge over the Bormida, or of having received a check whilst attempting to do so, or of having found it impossible to comply with the orders of the First Consul.

The three above-mentioned officers report in the following words what followed the attack of the village. Victor says: "Our battalions, advancing at the charge, broke the enemy, and forced him back in disorder up to the bridge of the Bormida, leaving in our hands two guns, their waggons, and about 100 prisoners." Gardanne reports: "We pursued the enemy up to within firing distance of the intrenchments of the Bormida and of the bridge-head of Alessandria, where the contest ceased at ten o'clock of the evening." Dampierre says nothing about any attempt to destroy the bridges having been made. He deplores too much dash in the pursuit, and says that the

* "*L'avant-garde reçoit l'ordre de repousser les postes ennemis au delà de la Bormida, et, s'il est possible, d'en brûler les ponts.*"

little daylight still remaining—for the attack on Marengo was only made at half-past seven in the evening—was almost fatal to them. “We advanced up to the foot of the intrenchments of the Bormida. The day, which was waning, did not permit the other divisions to combine an attack capable of carrying the intrenchments, which had more the appearance of a town than of a field work.”* After having approached to within pistol-shot of the works, the advanced guard, exposed to a regular downpour of bullets and case-shot, retired to establish its bivouacs within cannon-shot distance of the intrenchments; it was ten o'clock when all firing ceased. The left rested on the Bormida. The right stretched out as far as some cottages which stood on the left of the road leading from Alessandria to Marengo.†

There was still a fourth officer present with the advanced guard, Marmont, the commander of the artillery. As the account he gives of the events was not written immediately after the occurrences, like those we have given above, it cannot be received with the same amount of confidence. This is what he writes: “Arrived close to the Bormida, I discovered a bridge-head constructed on the right bank, and occupied by the enemy. At this point the river made a bend, and, against all principles, the bridge-head being situated on the salient of the river, I could attack it in reverse by taking position in the re-entering bend. I imagined that we would soon be making an attack of this bridge-head, and to prepare it I took eight guns, so as to bring an oblique fire to bear on the gorge. This drew, however, the fire of an embrasured battery constructed on the left bank, which compelled me to withdraw, after having lost several men and having had several pieces dismantled. Having taken post somewhat in rear, I went in search of General Gardanne to learn what he proposed doing. I found him in a ditch, having taken no steps either for attacking the bridge-head or for preventing the enemy issuing out and going forth. Thereupon I left him, having no orders to give him, and night being near.”‡

* The Austrian account calls it a *vaste tête de pont*, in which fourteen guns were mounted.

† Petit, in narrating the events of the 13th of June, states: “We found the enemy at the bridge on the Bormida, whence a feeble attempt was made to dislodge him.”

‡ “Mémoires du Duc de Raguse,” tom. ii. p. 127.

Marmont's words help to establish that neither he nor Gardanne had received any orders about the destruction of the bridge. Besides, as O'Reilly's command passed the night, 13-14th of June, on the right bank of the Bormida, this of itself would have prevented the French getting anywhere near the bridge.

There were other officers who knew of the existence of the bridge-head on the night of the 13th, and consequently, one would imagine, of the existence of the bridge. Rivaud's brigade, 43rd and 96th, about 4000 strong, marched for Marengo and Spinetta, and reached those places at about 10 p.m., and established its bivouacs. The brigadier reported as follows: "The enemy on the night of the 24th Prairial not only retained a bridge-head on the Bormida, but also had the advanced posts between the Bormida and our advanced guard very close to the Bormida."*

We find Dupont, Berthier's chief of the staff, writing to Carnot: "The enemy has sustained there (at Marengo) a very brisk fight; but soon hemmed in from all sides, he has precipitately gained the bridge of the Bormida, in front of Alessandria."

From Marmont's testimony it would seem that there was much carelessness with respect to the bridge and bridge-head. No one appears to have been especially intrusted with the operations at this point; no general, no superior staff officer, to have been detailed to see them carried into effect.

The lateness of the hour may have rendered it difficult to initiate arrangements for dislodging the enemy. Prudence, in any case, should have counselled the egress from the bridge-head being watched with extra care, so as to guard against every possibility of being taken by surprise.

Marmont relates that on the 14th of June, after the arrival of Victor's messenger with the news of the threatening attitude of the Austrians, the First Consul, astonished at this news, said that it seemed to him impossible. "General Gardanne has reported to me his arrival on the Bormida, of which he has broken the bridge." † "General Gardanne," I replied, "has

* "*L'ennemi a conservé le soir du 24, non seulement une tête de pont sur la Bormida, mais a maintenue les avant-postes entre la Bormida et notre avant-garde très près de la Bormida.*"

† Would not Bonaparte have said anything of Lauriston's report that there was no bridge?

made a false report. I was yesterday evening nearer than he was to the bridge-head, and proposed to him to render ourselves masters of it. But he refused, though I had some cannon to support him; and the bridge-head not having been captured or blockaded by our troops, the enemy has been able to issue at his pleasure during the night, without being observed; therefore, you can really believe in the battle."

In all that relates to Marengo, these "Mémoires" contain some radical mistakes. It was by no means, as Marmont states, on Gardanne's false report that the First Consul arrived at the conclusion that the Austrians were in full retreat on Genova. Desaix, with Boudet's division, had been started in the direction of Novi at noon of the 13th, several hours before Gardanne attacked the Austrian rear-guard at Marengo. By the time Gardanne could have made any report of his having reached the Bormida, Desaix's advance-guard was already trying to cross the Scrivia by Rivalta.

Marmont says: "The enemy has been able to issue at his pleasure during the night, without being observed," when, by the Austrian account, owing to the action on the previous evening, they did not cross the Bormida in the night, but waited till morning.

Napoleon writes in his "Mémoires:" "The scouts arrived on the Bormida at the fall of night; they sent word that the enemy had no bridge, and that there was only an ordinary garrison in Alessandria; they gave no news of Melas's army. . . . The First Consul was much disturbed." Who were these scouts? They could have been no other than some of Gardanne's men—men belonging to the division which chased the Austrians out of Marengo, and pursued them towards Alessandria. Now, was it possible for these scouts to reach the banks of the Bormida and reconnoitre, when O'Reilly's rear-guard remained on the right bank of the river that night, guarding the approaches to the bridge-head?

The last part of Napoleon's assertion, besides, is quite contrary to Berthier's statement contained in the account of the battle drawn up in 1803. His words were (and they bear considerable importance on Bonaparte's uncertainty as to the whereabouts of the enemy): "We knew through prisoners captured in the fight (of the 13th) that in the morning Melas had despatched a detachment towards Acqui, but that the army

corps were still round Alessandria." What adds to the embarrassment is that the emperor's and Berthier's accounts evidently do not tally on this point. Nor can we put much faith in what Berthier states about the detachment sent to Acqui, for the Austrian account gives nine o'clock in the morning of the 14th as the time when Captain Ceiwrary brought intelligence that he had been attacked at Acqui by a large column of cavalry, supported by infantry. Captain V. Pittaluga writes on this incident: "It was a little after 8 a.m. . . . At the same hour a false report was made to the Austrian commander-in-chief to the effect that a short while before a numerous corps of French cavalry had compelled the Austrian squadron stationed at Acqui to fall back on Alessandria. Melas, imagining it might be the cavalry of Suchet's reconnoitring column coming from Genova, recalled at once Nimptsch's brigade of Elsnitz's cavalry division to the left of the Bormida, and directed it on Cantalupo."

This is what some of the historians write on the subject of the destruction of the bridge. The Duke of Valmy states with regard to the events of the 13th of June: "He ordered General Victor, strengthened by Kellermann's cavalry, to march on that village (Marengo), to overthrow the enemy's posts, and to push up to the bridge-head which rested on the Bormida in front of Alessandria."* The same words had been used by Jomini, but up to a certain point only, for he adds, "and to try to seize the bridge, if there existed one on the Bormida."

General Comte Mathieu Dumas gives a somewhat different version; he relates: "Bonaparte had ordered General Gardanne to throw himself therein pell-mell with them, and, if he could, to burn the bridges on the Bormida. But, notwithstanding the disorder of the Austrian retreat, night was approaching, and the French were stopped by the reserves which held the bridge-head, and by the fire of thirty pieces of artillery." Now, one would imagine that either Gardanne or Victor, under whose command he was, was bound to report to the commander-in-chief that a very important part of their instructions could not be carried out. There is nothing, however, to show that either Victor or Gardanne did so. What seems strange is that at the conclusion of the fight on the evening of the 13th no report should have been made to the First Consul, and that he should not have been informed of the strongly armed bridge-

* Duc de Valmy, "Histoire de la Campagne de 1800," p. 98.

head, nor of the warm reception Gardanne had met as he approached it. It is said that Bonaparte remained on the field till the bivouacs were established, to judge of the amount of the Austrian forces by the extent of their fires. If so, it was easy for Victor or Berthier to enlighten him on the subject of the bridge.

Gachot relates that whilst Bonaparte was reconnoitring from the tower of Marengo, he detected a second bridge; that he sent Lauriston with a squadron of the Consular Guard and some cannon to break it up; but that on arriving at the spot, Lauriston found the enemy in the act of removing it, so he did not molest them, and retired to Torre di Garofoli to convey the news to Bonaparte.* This version does not tally with the Duke of Rovigo's statement or with Bourrienne's account.

Trucco says: "The bridge constructed over the Bormida on a level with Castel Ceriolo would have been taken away from that locality and placed alongside of the existing one during the night of the 13-14th of June, to replace a bridge of boats which had already been removed." Pittaluga considers it possible that this second bridge was not completed in sufficient time to enable the simultaneous passage of the two columns early enough on the 14th.

Hooper's words are: "But night was fast coming on; the staff officer intrusted with the task of reconnoitring the Bormida did not do his duty; and he returned to headquarters with the report that the enemy had no bridge on the Bormida."

Nothing, possibly, marks in a more distinct manner the necessity for having all orders and instructions set down in writing, restricting verbal injunctions to the smallest possible number. *Verba volant scripta manent.* It is to avoid errors and ambiguities, to serve for future reference, to solve dubious points, and to refute wrong accusations, that writing is needed. But it is not sufficient to have orders committed to writing. The advantages of clearness and certainty afforded by written documents are lost when the injunctions are badly worded or unintelligibly written. Amongst the orders emanating from Soult at Ligny was an important one to D'Erlon, who with his corps was bringing up Ney's rear, enjoining him to attack

* Trucco explains that the idea seems to have been that Bonaparte dreaded a possible night attack, the Austrians crossing the Bormida by a bridge existing lower down near the confluence of the Tanaro.

Blucher's right flank. This order was scribbled with a lead pencil, and badly worded. The staff officer handed the order to D'Erlon, but he, not being sharp enough to interpret correctly an obscure despatch, hastily written with a pencil, directed his corps towards Fleurus—that is, on the flank of Napoleon, and not on Saint Amand or Brye, on the flank or rear of the Prussians.*

It could hardly have been the main bridge which was ordered to be destroyed, for Victor, Gardanne, Dampierre, and Rivaud would not have remained silent on the impossibility of fulfilling their orders in the reports rendered by them of the action on the evening of the 13th. Bonaparte himself in his bulletin makes no mention whatever of the failure in burning the bridge. Besides, the French troops approached the Bormida so late that it would have been very difficult to carry out the order.

The Duke of Rovigo, who as one of Desaix's aides-de-camp had been present at the battle of Marengo, states with regard to this subject that Bonaparte reconnoitred the banks of the Bormida on the 14th (evidently an error, for he did so on the 13th, and not on the 14th). He persuaded himself that, independently of the bridge on the river in front of Alessandria, the enemy must have had another a good deal lower down; that is to say, on the right flank of the French.

“He had ordered that all who had crossed over should be driven back to the other side of the river, and that at any price whatever a bridge which might be fatal to us should be destroyed. He declared himself ready to go should circumstances demand it. One of his aides-de-camp, Colonel Lauriston, was instructed to follow the operations, and not to return until it had been accomplished.

“The combat began; the two sides cannonaded each other the whole day; but the enemy held firm: it was impossible to force him to remove the bridge. Lauriston came to report on the state of affairs. The First Consul, worn out by fatigue, either did not understand him, or understood badly what the aide-de-camp reported; because Lauriston, whom he afterwards reproached for the false security he had given to his army, invariably replied that, instead of having committed such a grave fault, he had hastened to inform him how it had not been possible to execute his orders. Lauriston understood too

* William O'Connor Morris, “The Campaign of 1815,” p. 122.

well all the importance which attached to the bridge to make a statement to him without having first made himself personally sure that it had been destroyed."*

Unfortunately, the duke's statements are full of inaccuracies. Here, for example, he declares that the two sides cannonaded each other the whole day, whereas the French, by all accounts, only got engaged between 4 and 5 p.m.

Bourrienne does not throw much light on this point. His account is: "The First Consul slept on the 13th at Torre di Garofoli. In the evening he issued an order to send a staff officer to ascertain if the Austrians had a bridge on the Bormida." In all this there is nothing about destroying the bridge, and his having given this order would tend to show that none had been given to the officers commanding the advanced guard. Bourrienne continues: "I was present when, very late, some one came to make him a report to the effect that there was none. This information reassured the First Consul, and he retired to rest very contented. But when very early on the morrow the guns were heard, and he learnt that the Austrians had issued on the plain and the troops were engaged, he showed the greatest discontent on the falseness of the staff officer's report; he accused him of being a coward and of not having advanced far enough; he even spoke of having him tried."†

The Duke of Rovigo's vindication of Lauriston is plausible

* James Alexander Bernard Law, Marquis de Lauriston, was born at Pondichéry on the 1st of February, 1768. He came from a family originally Scotch. His father, known as Chevalier Law, took the name of Law de Lauriston.

Lauriston entered the artillery in 1793, and soon brought himself before Bonaparte's notice. He it was who, in 1802, brought the written articles of the treaty of peace to London for ratification, and received an enthusiastic reception. He was given command of the troops embarked in the fleet which Villeneuve took to the West Indies in 1804, and was present at the battle of Trafalgar. After that he served in many capacities both civil and military. At Wagram he commanded the battery of 100 guns which contributed so much to the victory. After Wagram he was commissioned to conduct the Archduchess Marie Louise, the future wife of Napoleon, to Paris. He took part in the Russian campaign, and after that commanded at the Katzbach, at Wachau, and at Leipzig, in the latter of which battles he was made prisoner. Much to his honour, it is recorded that he highly disapproved of the arrest of the Duc d'Enghien, and had an angry dispute with Caulaincourt on the subject; also that, having in 1814 gone over to the Bourbons, he refused to take an active part in the Hundred Days, and remained in retirement at his possession of Richemont.

† "Mémoires de Bourrienne," tom. iv. p. 120.

enough, nevertheless Bourrienne distinctly states that he was present at a late hour when they came to report to the First Consul that a bridge did not exist. The report, therefore, was made before a third person, and though it is very possible that Bonaparte might have misunderstood its tenor, it is not so likely that Bonaparte and Bourrienne should both have done so. They were not likely to misconstrue the words on a point to which the First Consul naturally attached much importance.

Bonaparte cannot have borne any ill will towards Lauriston, or he would not, after what had occurred in 1800, have intrusted him with most important missions, *les plus speciales*. Amongst others may be cited the command of the expedition to Batavia, the defence of Ragusa, the siege of Raab, and the massing of the famous battery of 100 guns at Wagram, which gave the Emperor Napoleon the victory.

The Duke of Rovigo's description of the battle differs from most others: "General Bonaparte, believing that the lower bridge over the Bormida had been cut, refrained from changing the position of his army, which passed the night of the 13-14th astride the road from Tortona to Alessandria; the right in front of Castel Ceriolo, the left on the plain of Marengo. General Desaix was in reserve at Rivalta, and the headquarters were at Garofoli.

"The 14th of June our right was assailed at daybreak by a mass of cavalry, which crossed by the bridge which should have been cut the previous day; the irruption was so impetuous and so rapid that in an instant we experienced an immense loss in men, horses, and materials."

In no other account have we found this attack at the break of day so unfortunate for the French. All make the battle commence between 8 and 9 a.m.; and this charge, pushed home by a mass of cavalry, finds no place in any of the narratives. The first act on that part of the field, the right, was the advance of Lannes with Watrin's division, which moved forward in aid of Victor, after Haddick's and Kaim's attacks had failed.

The duke's account, which, coming from a staff officer who had been present during the battle, should have been very valuable, cannot be accepted as accurate. Another point to which the duke makes no allusion is the difficulty Desaix

experienced in getting Boudet's division across the Scrivia. He speaks of Boudet's troops commencing to march on Novi, apparently without any difficulty, and says that the cannonade was heard only just as the day was breaking. This does not tally with the reports submitted by Rivaud, Lannes, Berthier, and Victor, all of whom agree in stating that the battle really began about nine o'clock.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BATTLE.

Melas decides to give battle—His troops begin crossing the Bormida at about 8 a.m.—Strength of the Austrian army—Inaction of the British troops at Mahon—Strength of the French army—The Austrians advanced in three columns—Did Victor report in time the attitude of the Austrian army?—The principal officers engaged state that the battle commenced about 9 a.m.—Bonaparte ignored the full extent of Melas's attack—Nimptsch's cavalry brigade detached to Cantalupo—Formation of the Republican forces at the commencement of the battle—Gardanne withdraws behind the Fontanone brook—Dampierre's action on the extreme left—Haddick takes nearly two hours to deploy his division—Advances on Marengo—His troops ordered to withdraw—Kaim attacks, and is also forced to withdraw—Lannes joins in the battle—Kellermann defeats Pilatti's cavalry—Kaim returns to the attack—The Austrians cross the Fontanone—Rivaud's last effort to drive them back—The Austrians drive Victor's troops into the plain—Kellermann protects the retreat—Ott reaches Castel Ceriolo, executes a change of front to his right—Lannes, uncovered on his left by Victor's retreat, thinks of retiring—Bonaparte hears of Desaix—Monnier's division reaches the battlefield at 2 p.m.—Carra Saint Cyr ordered to carry Castel Ceriolo—This village recaptured by Vogelsang—The Consular Guard sent to relieve the pressure on Lannes—Gallant conduct of the Guard—Retreat of Carra Saint Cyr.

MELAS had been in Alessandria since the 10th of June, but sorely perplexed by the course of events. In this state of indecision he assembled a special council of war.*

At this council he exposed to his generals the critical situation in which his army found itself, having lost its communications with the base, being surrounded by the enemy, and having been decimated in the past encounters. After

* Trucco states that this extraordinary council was held at 10 p.m. on the 13th of June, in a house, No. 1 Via Faa di Bruno, where Melas had his headquarters. Jomini and Pittaluga give the 12th of June as the date; the latter stating that the council was held in the palace of Count Aulari. We are inclined to accept the latter date as correct, seeing how little time for arrangements a council called for a ten on the night of the 13th would have left.

The *Revue Militaire Autrichienne* declares that all through the day of the 13th preparations were being made for the battle on the following day.

having considered the various alternatives open to him, he gave it as his opinion that the only and creditable way out of the difficulty was to lead all the forces he had gathered together out of the city, and to fight a decisive battle on the plain of Marengo. Should the result of the contest, he added, be fortunate, and victory side with them, this would open a road for his forces to Piacenza before the Army of Reserve would have time to form a junction with the Army of Italy.

Melas greatly dreaded a junction, and an imminent one, of the Army of Reserve with the Army of Italy. He argued against a retreat on Genova, where he ran the risk of falling in with Massena's army in the defiles of the Apennines, of being pursued by Bonaparte, and thus caught between two fires.

The same did not hold good with the alternative referred to in Chapter IX., a retreat in the direction of Milan by Valenza and the left bank of the Po. This retreat avoided both Bonaparte and Massena. The Austrian army was concentrated about Alessandria by the 12th of June, and, had Melas manœuvred briskly by the left of the Po, he might have hoped, and with good reason, to have broken through Moncey's feeble cordon and have reached Milan, whilst Bonaparte was still seeking him on the Bormida. Melas never conceived how difficult Bonaparte found it to obtain information, and how to close him every avenue of escape he had been compelled to divide and scatter his forces. He might also have thought the price to be paid for recovering his communications too dear, if he had to leave the French masters of the whole of the country south of the Po.

The Austrian commander-in-chief laid considerable stress on the superiority of his army, both in cavalry and artillery, to the Republican forces; likewise on the nature of the ground comprised between the Bormida and the Scrivia, which was so eminently adapted for the employment of those two arms.

Melas's decision to fight had been really settled some days before, as can be seen by his letter to Lord Keith, in which he mentions that he intended to deliver battle, and, if beaten, to retire on Genova. He no sooner heard of Ott's defeat at Montebello than he decided to try the chance of a general engagement.

Retreat either on Genova or on Milan held to his mind very slender prospect of safety. It was better, he expounded, to

march boldly against the French coming by the Piacenza road, to deliver battle, and to fray himself a way to Mantua, and in this manner to re-establish the communications with the Austrian empire.

Montebello had been fought on the 9th, and after three days of indecision Melas adopted a heroic resolution to fight. He decided on a rough trial of arms, trusting on the valour of his troops. This spirited plan proposed by the aged commander-in-chief was unanimously accepted by all who attended the council of war,* for the Austrian generals were desirous to follow the dictates of honour, to open by strength of arms a way to Piacenza and Mantua, or to die in the attempt, as it behoved gallant soldiers.

Ordinarily the Bormida is fordable in most places, but, as the banks rise a good many feet above its bed and are somewhat steep, one or more bridges had to be laid to facilitate the passage of numerous troops.

From the beginning of June the Austrians had been steadily working and improving the bridge-head which existed on the right bank of the Bormida, where the road from Alessandria to Tortona crosses the river. After the battle of Montebello the works were armed with fourteen guns. This intrenchment covered two floating bridges, and in the dispositions for the battle the principal attacking column was to cross the river by the right bridge; the other, or General Ott's column, was to cross by the left one.†

All sources agree in declaring that Saturday, the 14th of June, 1800, was an exceptionally fine day, and a great improvement on the stormy weather which made the months of May and June of that year so remarkable. The day was magnificent, as splendid, indeed, as could well be found, even in lovely Italy. The sun rose in all its glory, and its dazzling

* Napoleon says in his "Mémoires" that the whole of the 13th and the night of the 13-14th were spent by the Austrians in deliberating.

† In the first and fifth paragraphs of the bulletin of the 26th Prairial, an VIII., dictated by Bonaparte, he makes out that there were three bridges over the Bormida, when in point of fact there were only two. In Melas's report the words are: "On the 14th, all the army crossed by two bridges to the right bank of that river." Not only in this point, but in others as well, many expert critics have declared that this official account of the battle was not thoroughly accurate. Impatient that the news of the victory should speedily reach France, Bonaparte evidently did not wait to compile his narrative on the detailed reports of his subordinate generals.

rays brightened up all the country around Alessandria. It was blazing as it had not done for weeks past, and there was a hum of many insects in the air.

*“ Non fu mai l'aria si serena e bella,
Come all'uscir del memorabil giorno.”*

The Austrians, except O'Reilly's advanced guard, had passed the night on the left of the Bormida, uncheered by bivouac fires, and, though under arms before the break of day, did not commence to cross the Bormida much before 8 a.m.* The movement, as we have said, was executed over two bridges,† one of which had been brought from further down stream, and had been established alongside of the other during the past night. The advantage of having a second bridge over the Bormida was, nevertheless, rendered fruitless, inasmuch as the bridge-head beyond had only one outlet. Here was a most glaring mistake, for which the staff officers who prepared the details of the movement appear to have been directly answerable. It may be urged that, as the second bridge had only been completed during the night, there may not have been time to open a second safe passage in the bridge-head. Whatever was at the bottom of the omission, that single outlet leading into the plain beyond delayed the deployment of the Austrian forces very considerably. General Ott, who had to march in the direction of Salé, was ordered to keep the way clear for General Kaim's column, which was one of the two principal columns, and intended to support General Haddick's attack on Marengo.

The oversight in having a single point of egress in the bridge-head had fatal consequences for the Austrians. But for this Ott would have come into line at an earlier hour, before Lannes could have had time to come up, and the French would have been driven off the field before Desaix's arrival.

At Marengo the Austrians had nearly 31,000 men in line, and the French a little over 28,000. It was a small army that held the fate of Europe in its hands.

* The Austrian account states that the crossing of the river Bormida had been fixed for 8 a.m., because the French had the previous night driven back the advanced posts up to the bridge-head on the Bormida. In any case, O'Reilly commenced to advance at about 8 a.m.

† In the first official account of the battle Berthier states that the Austrians crossed by the bridges and fords of the Bormida.

STATE OF THE IMPERIAL ARMY AT THE BATTLE OF MARENGO*
(1800).

Corps.	Divisions.	Brigades.	Strength.	Remarks.
Right column	O'Reilly Advanced guard	Rousseau	3,000	800 of whom were cavalry
		Frimont	1,300	450 of whom were cavalry
	Haddick	Pilatz	1,400	
		Bellegarde	1,500	
		Saint Julien	2,200	
Main column	Kaim	De Brier	1,650	
		Knesevich	2,200	
		Lamarsaille	1,100	
	Morzin, grenadiers	Lattermann	2,100	
		Weidenfeld	2,200	
	Elsnitz, cavalry	Pionniers	400	
Left column (Ott)	Advanced guard	(Nobili	1,900	cavalry
		(Nimptsch	2,300	
	Schellenberg (Vogelsang)	Gottesheim	800	250 of whom were cavalry
		(Retz	2,000	
		(Sticker	2,600	
	Ulm	2,200	500 of whom were cavalry	
Total present at Marengo			30,850	7000 of whom were cavalry

DETACHMENTS AND GARRISONS.

	Strength.
At Casale, 2650; at Feliciano, 1000; at Acqui, 115; at Bobbio, 1000 ...	4,765
At Alessandria, 3000; at Tortona, 1200; at Turin, 3800; at Coni, 4400	12,400
At Genova, 6000; at Savona, 1200; blockade of Gavi, 1200; Riviera di Levante, 1000	9,400
At Mantua, 3500; at Peschiera, 500; Castle of Milan, 2800	6,800
Castle of Piacenza, 300; of Pizzighettone, 800; of Parma, 350	1,450
In Tuscany	3,000
In Venice, Verona, and Istria	6,350
Total	44,165

The Imperial army, showing a total of 75,000 men, had, since the opening of the campaign on the 6th of April, lost nearly 30,000 men.

By gathering together all the troops of Elsnitz, Haddick, Ott, and Kaim, Melas could have concentrated a much larger force than he did, but this meant leaving the places in Piedmont without a garrison.

Melas in his report computes the force he had concentrated about Alessandria at 27,000 infantry and 8000 cavalry. From the total should be deducted the garrison of Alessandria, and

* Jomini, "Histoire des Guerres de la Révolution," Livre XVI. chap. cii.

seventeen squadrons of cavalry sent to Cantalupo, which took no part in the battle.

The *Revue Militaire Autrichienne* states that the effective of the Austrian army collected for the decisive contest can be set down at 30,837 men, of whom 7543 were cavalry.

Olivier Rivaud gives to the Austrians 28,000 infantry and 7000 cavalry, making the whole of their army 35,000 strong. Many writers think Jomini's estimate too low. Possibly Rivaud was nearer the mark. Some compute the Austrians at 30,000, the French till Boudet's arrival at 22,000, and at about 28,000 after his arrival on the battlefield.

With an army about 31,000 strong, with numerous and well-horsed artillery, with a fine and well-mounted force of cavalry, with tried and disciplined infantry, Melas was in every respect well furnished for a combat on which hung important results. Though advanced in age, for he was seventy-one years old, the record of his services showed that he was not deficient in skill and valour; besides, he was inspired by his recent successes.

Melas should have striven to bring together every man he could lay hands on, for the simple reason that he was not quite sure of the strength of Bonaparte's army. Whilst at Milan, according to Bourrienne, the First Consul had sent him through a double spy a misleading return showing the French army to be double what it really was.

The Austrians must have experienced considerable difficulty in provisioning their troops, when we recall how the north of Italy had been the scene of a long conflict between the Austro-Russians and the French the previous year. The local resources must have been well-nigh exhausted, a fact which of itself would make open communications with the base ever more valuable.

It has never been explained, except under the excuse of jealousy, why the Austrians so determinedly refused to accede to the solicitations of the English to take charge of Genova. By letting the English hold that city, the garrison left there under Hohenzollern would have been free either to reinforce Melas or to arrest Suchet's progress. This would have given the Austrians a superiority of numbers on the battlefield.

There appears to have been something unexplained beyond British unreadiness with regard to the British troops at Mahon.

Jomini states that, in order to replace Hohenzollern at Genova, Melas sent an officer to Lord Keith with a request that he would bring over in all haste a portion of the 12,000 British soldiers then lying inactive in Minorca; also that Melas sent a second officer to Keith to depict the embarrassing situation he was in, and urge him to comply with the above demand. Keith is said to have replied that he had not the disposal of Abercromby's corps, and must wait till Abercromby arrived to replace Stuart. This possibly was the case, seeing how in our country the army and the navy are two quite independent services. Moreover, Lord Keith, being a very methodical, attentive, and correct personage, and not an officer of extraordinary talents, may not have relished assuming any responsibility in the matter, not knowing what instructions Abercromby might have received; or it is possible that he may have known that the Government destined the troops for important operations on the shores of Provence. With regard to this demand of General Melas, Dundas stated in Parliament that Melas's aide-de-camp came to make the request on the 22nd of June, the very day Abercromby reached Mahon and assumed command. Nor does the general appear to have lost any time, for with 8000 men he arrived before Genova on the 25th of June, the day after Suchet had marched in and taken possession of the city. If Dundas's statement was correct, and Keith was only asked for troops on the 22nd, the demand was strange, as by that time the fate of Genova had been sealed on the field of Marengo.

The troops at Mahon might in any case have been brought over to Genova, where they would have relieved 5800 Austrians who had been left to garrison the place and 1192 more who were investing Gavi. In this manner nearly 7000 men would have been able to join Melas on the day of battle.

Bulow shows undisguised contempt for the abilities of the British generals and for the discipline of their soldiers.* Nevertheless, a few months after the victory of Marengo the very troops that were at Mahon under Sir R. Abercromby defeated Bonaparte's famous troops in Egypt, and Sir Ralph's successor entirely cleared the country of them.

The troops the Austrian general retained to garrison the strong places in Piedmont proved simply a cause of weakness. No advantage whatsoever was to be gained by them.

* Bulow, "*Histoire de la Campagne de 1800*," p. 139.

The following was the strength of the Army of Reserve on the 14th of June, as given by the Duke of Belluno (Victor):—

	At Marengo.	Before the forts.	On the march.	Total.
Infantry	22,938	21,339	3,468	47,745
Cavalry	3,220	2,382	1,424	7,026
Consular Guard	1,232	—	—	1,232
Artillery and engineers ...	618	1,400	—	2,018
	28,008	25,121	4,892	58,021

In his "Relation de la Bataille de Marengo," Berthier gives a table of the French forces in Italy at the time. The totals are very nearly the same as Victor's:—

In line at Marengo—

Infantry	23,791
Cavalry	3,688
Artillery	690
Total	28,169

Guarding the communications and holding strong places—

Infantry	24,964
Cavalry	3,312
Artillery	1,400
Total	29,676

The artillery of the troops which crossed the Po made a total of 41 guns. Of these 36 were divided amongst the division and 5 formed a reserve. On the day of the battle Bonaparte had not more than 15 to 20 guns.

The returns of the battle, as given by Berthier and Victor, show that more than one-half of Bonaparte's force was absent from the field of Marengo. Wishing to close every point of passage open to the enemy, he had been induced to forget one of his soundest maxims, which was to concentrate all his forces in view of an impending battle.

Bonaparte, whose avowed object in marching to Milan had been to form a junction with Monecy's forces, after quitting Milan was always scattering his troops. To such an extent did he do this that his own subordinates became surprised at it.*

* Marmont, "Mémoires," tom. ii. p. 126.

Conversing amongst themselves, they remarked how thoroughly contrary such action was to his habits, that it seemed as if he were bent on capturing his enemy by mastering all his communications before having beaten him; whereas it would have seemed more prudent to insure first all possible means for subduing him, leaving his capture to a future moment.

Bonaparte could well be reproached with the large dissemination of his forces. But Melas committed the same error. He had left 25,000 men to garrison Cuneo, Turin, Genova, Acqui, Gavi, Tortona, and Alessandria. Number is a factor which counts for much in a battle, but both commanders in 1800 appear to have taken little account of it.

Goldsmith wrote of Frederick the Great that his manly acknowledgment of a lost battle made him win others. For political reasons, Bonaparte could not afford to confess that he had made serious blunders at Marengo. Nevertheless, no one understood better than he did to what dangers he had been exposed. The lesson sank deep into his mind, and he did not commit the same mistakes again.

Bonaparte's officers were young, confident, and brave; ready to uphold the glorious destinies of France. The career of arms, freely opened to personal courage and talent, had in a short period given to the army from its ranks an excellent number of generals. These leaders, though young, had been formed in battlefields. They had risen, step by step, in the hard contests the Republic had to sustain to exist, in the Italian campaign of 1796, and in Egypt. Their reputation was solidly established; it had not been cheaply acquired in Egypt fighting against an inferior enemy, nor were they in any way afraid to lose it. Bonaparte's artillery and cavalry, however, bore no comparison with that of the enemy; his guns were few in number and poor in quality. From 14 to 15 guns were all that the French had in the battle up to five in the evening, when Boudet arrived, bringing eight more. The ranks of the infantry were full of conscripts—a marked difference to the German infantry, which was composed of men well inured to war.

On the 14th of June, a complete army fell suddenly on Bonaparte's corps and surprised them. The Austrians advanced in three columns. O'Reilly, who had remained on the right bank of the Bormida, led the way. He commanded the right column, composed of 4 battalions (2228 men) and 6 squadrons (796

sabres). This column attacked Gardanne's outposts at Pedrabona, and afterwards inclined to the right, and moved up the Bormida towards Stortigliona and Frugarolo. The centre column was composed of the troops of Haddick, Kaim, and Elsnitz, 28 battalions (14,204 men) and 22 squadrons (3694 sabres). With this column, which took the road to Marengo, marched the general-in-chief. General Ott commanded the left column, which counted 16 battalions (6862 men) and 6 squadrons (740 sabres). It marched on Castel Ceriolo, making for Salé. All the three columns marched with their artillery; the baggage and impedimenta had been collected and parked to the north of Alessandria.

Able military writers have expressed their opinion that the plan of battle, as conceived by Melas for the 14th of June, had been well thought out, that his forces had been well distributed, and that, if defeat overtook him, the fault could not be laid on the commander-in-chief. But plans, however good, when their execution is not in capable hands are apt to miscarry. General Danican, who was a spectator of the operations on the Austrian side, states, in his version of the events of that day, that the Austrian soldiers were sad and dejected, and that many of their officers were tired of war. Other writers do not confirm this statement; on the contrary, they say that everything had been done to put the troops in good cheer.

The defiling of the Austrian columns through the one opening in the bridge-head had been long and laborious. Victor, though in a manner surprised—a fact admitted by the words used in the official bulletin—*surprit notre avant-garde*—had time to make his preliminary dispositions, for Quiot, who was his aide-de-camp at the battle, tells us that throughout the still summer night of the 13–14th of June, Victor's men heard the unmistakable sounds of a large force standing under arms. The general, expecting to be attacked at daybreak, posted the troops himself, and established his headquarters at the presbytery of Spinetta.

Coignet, who was in Chambarlhac's division, states that his division was under arms all night. Also, that at four o'clock in the morning all the troops were made to take up their positions (p. 102).

Jomini reproaches Bonaparte with having been assailed unexpectedly. But such was hardly the case. And this is pretty

clearly demonstrated by Victor's evidence: "The night (13-14th of June) was so calm and peaceful," he writes, "that an attentive ear could catch from quite a distance and distinguish the slightest sounds which happened to break the calm. Then, about one o'clock in the morning, whilst everything was hushed in silence, there arose in the plain, on the left bank of the Bormida, intense and confused sounds, as of a multitude which stirs and assembles; many sounds rang out clearly—the murmur of voices, the roll of drums, the calls of trumpets, the pawing of hoofs, a grinding noise of chariots and of cannons. It was impossible to doubt that the enemy was preparing to deliver battle, and the day was longed for with impatience.

"The dawn at last lighted up the horizon, and soon one of the most brilliant suns of Italy illuminated the scene. All the Austrian army stood there revealed under arms. . . .

"Mons. de Melas had the intention of marching against the Republicans at the break of day, and on the previous day he had issued orders to his generals to that effect. It is unknown what caused him to alter his mind. Some German accounts, and Melas by his own words, pretend that the loss of the village of Marengo, and the fact that the Austrian advanced guard had been driven back to the bridge-head on the Bormida, decided him to postpone the attack. But this reason does not appear quite satisfactory. Possibly he desired to await more positive news of the strength and disposition of the French army. It may be, after all, that he hoped that Bonaparte might be imprudent enough to come and attack him in the strong position he occupied by Alessandria. Whatever the reason may have been, more than four hours elapsed before he gave the order to his troops to march to the attack."

Pittaluga states that it was 6 a.m. when the two columns moved towards the bridges and commenced crossing.

That the French army was surprised, seeing that Melas adopted a course quite contrary to Bonaparte's expectations, we grant. But, in the real sense of the term, there was no surprise; for Victor had sufficient warning of an impending attack. The morning sun had revealed him the dense masses of Austrian infantry and glittering squadrons of cavalry, and from afar many sounds rung out clearly in the morning air—the murmur of voices, the pawing of hoofs, the clatter of arms.

One of the most important obligations when detecting a

marked change in the situation is to hasten to call the attention of the responsible officer to it. Considering the position that Victor held in the Army of Reserve, he must have been aware of Bonaparte's idea that the enemy was striving to elude him and slip away. The noise in the very early morning, and the appearance of the Austrians under arms at daybreak, were circumstances which should have been speedily reported to Berthier and to the First Consul. There can be little doubt that it was the thunder of the artillery that gave Bonaparte the first intimation of the battle. If he was in a manner surprised at Marengo, it was owing to one of his lieutenants, who did not hasten to dispel from his mind the idea that the Austrians were escaping from him, when, in the very early hour of the morning the Austrian army stood revealed to his gaze—even if we ignore the fact that the tumult at an earlier hour, in the dark, could but have indicated the assembly of a large body of troops on the banks of the Bormida.

Victor, who recognized all the importance of the hamlet of Marengo and of the Fontanone brook for the defence, failed in giving to his superiors a sufficiently early warning of what might be expected. That the enemy was about to do something else than retire can be gathered from Coignet's declaration that his regiment was under arms the whole night. And his regiment did not form part of the advanced guard.

Olivier Rivaud, in his report on the battle, expresses the same opinion as Victor, namely, that Melas delayed attacking in the hope that Bonaparte would assume the initiative. This, nevertheless, does not quite accord with the bold decision arrived at at the council of war that was held in Alessandria.

The *Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift*, quoted by De Cugnac, vol. ii. p. 447, states that the passage of the Bormida was fixed for eight o'clock on the 14th.

General Victor, who commanded the French advanced forces, having made a rough estimate of the enemy's strength, arrived at a conclusion that the whole of the Austrian army was in the act of crossing the Bormida, intending to attack. He thereupon despatched Captain De Blou, or Deblou, one of Murat's staff officers, to Torre di Garofoli, to warn the First Consul that the enemy was evidently bent on bringing about a decisive battle on the plain.

We should here note that when Victor acknowledges having,

from the very early morning no doubt that a battle was impending, and after his having confessed to having beheld the Austrian army in battle array, the warning sent to the commander-in-chief of what was threatening should have been sent off at an earlier hour. The sun rises at 4.36 on the 14th of June, and Victor acknowledges that with the return of light he saw the Austrian forces under arms.

Victor declares that De Blou made his report to Bonaparte at eight o'clock; if so, his message had so little effect that between nine and ten o'clock that morning we find Bonaparte despatching orders to Lapoype and to Desaix to manœuvre in such a way as to stop any attempt the Austrians might make to reach Milan or Genova. Lapoype's division being at Ponte Curone at ten o'clock on the morning of the 14th of June, received an order to march on Valenza. The bearer of this order most likely quitted Torre di Garofoli at about 9 a.m., showing, we might well imagine, that no intimation of the coming battle had reached Bonaparte by that hour. The issue of these orders to the two divisional commanders seems strange, for Victor is quite positive that De Blou informed the First Consul precisely at eight o'clock of the enemy's preparations, and warned him that he would have a big and decisive affair during the day.

Bonaparte, who did not dream of a battle for the 14th, seems to have attached little consequence to De Blou's report. He evidently remained in that state of mind for some time, persisting in considering the hypothesis of a retreat on Genova as the most probable contingency. It is always hard to discredit one's sagacity; had he entertained the slightest suspicion of what was really about to happen, we can well imagine how he would have hastened to recall the orders he had just sent to Lapoype and Desaix.

General O'Reilly's column, which had bivouacked on the right bank of the Bormida, commenced at about 8 a.m. to advance on Cascina Pedrabona—at times called Perbona or Pietrabona. Shortly after, it attacked Gardanne's outposts.

The Marquis of Faverges, in his "*Extrait de l'Histoire des Guerres Européennes*," writes: "We find nowhere set down at what hour the battle commenced; one is led to believe that it was about nine o'clock." This agrees with the hour given in their reports by Victor, Gardanne, Dampierre, and Olivier

Rivaud—all officers who were foremost at the commencement of the battle. Gardanne's report is very short and modest, as becomes a brave man. He states that the previous night the advanced guard bivouacked within cannon-shot distance of the intrenchment, and in that position was attacked on the 14th at nine o'clock.

Kellermann says that it was nine o'clock when his brigade arrived at Marengo, and took post in front and on the left of the village. Pittaluga and Fontana make him bivouac at San Giuliano Vecchio, from which place Murat sent him off to reinforce Victor as the first guns were heard. This would lead us to suppose that the battle began before nine, as Kellermann had to make ready and march from San Giuliano to Marengo. Possibly the order to move to the front had been given before nine, when Victor was making his preparations to meet the impending attack. If he called on Lannes to come to his aid, why should he not have also called up the cavalry?

Moreno says that, having only one issue from the bridge-head, the Austrians took three hours in coming out and forming line of battle. As they set out at about 6 a.m., the attack would not have commenced much before 9 a.m.

Various hours have been given by the generals and principal officers engaged. Lauriston and the Duke of Rovigo say it was at the break of day; Marmont at 6 a.m., Berthier at 7 a.m.; Lannes and Watrin, who were together at Giuliano, at 8 a.m.; Dupont, chief of the staff, gives no hour. The unanimous evidence of Victor and his officers may be taken as coming very near the truth. In the face of this the statement of the Duke of Rovigo is strange reading. He writes: "*Nous quittâmes la position de Rivalta; nous marchâmes sur Novi; mais à peine le jour commençait à poindre que nous entendîmes une cannonade redoublée s'ouvrir au loin en arriere de notre droite*" ("We quitted the position of Rivalta; we marched on Novi; but day had barely commenced to break than we heard the sound of a fierce cannonade in the distance, in rear of our right").

Little reliance can be placed on the evidence of some of the principal eye-witnesses of this important battle. Marmont, for one, states that after his conversation with Gardanne near the bridge-head on the evening of the 13th, as given in the previous chapter, he wended his way towards army headquarters; but that a storm and the bad state of the roads prevented his

Scrivia, commenced its march on Pozzolo Formigaro at about noon. It had got a mile beyond Rivalta when the order of recall arrived. Now, from Torre di Garofoli to Rivalta is not more than eleven or twelve miles, which distance a rider going at his best pace, and, as the Duke of Rovigo relates, across country, could well cover in an hour. The aide-de-camp bearing the order would, under these circumstances, have quitted Bonaparte's headquarters at somewhere about 11 a.m.

In determining the hour at which the Austrians attacked there is a retarding circumstance which has not received sufficient attention. This was the counter-march of Nimptsch's cavalry brigade, the brigade detailed to proceed to Cantalupo. This brigade had already crossed over to the right bank of the Bormida, and when recalled to the left bank must have checked the progress of the troops then in the act of crossing, and thereby caused a certain loss of time in the deployment of the Austrian army.

Up to the moment when they were attacked by O'Reilly, the French outposts had remained concealed and silent. It would appear that in this initial phase of the battle the French were to blame for having displayed a lack of enterprise, and for not having fallen on the Austrians when in the act of filing out of the bridge-head. The distance between Pedrabona and the Bormida is very short, and it may well be asked, why did Gardanne abstain from punishing the Austrians when they were in a critical position streaming out to assume an attacking formation?

Let us return to Melas. It was about nine in the morning when an unfounded report reached him. This was to the effect that his rear was threatened by a large body of French cavalry which had driven an Austrian squadron out of Acqui. Uneasy for his rear, which Melas believed might have been seriously molested whilst he was engaged with Bonaparte, and not relishing being taken between two fires, he recalled the brigade Nimptsch, which formed part of Elsnitz's cavalry division, made it recross the Bormida and move through Alessandria in the direction of Cantalupo.

By this false move the Austrian commander deprived himself of seventeen squadrons of cavalry. Thus 2340 men of the very arm of the service on which he counted so much, looking at the

level and open nature of the country in which he purposed to give battle, were withdrawn from the field.* In his report of the battle, Melas states that Suchet, who had been advancing at the head of 12,000 men towards Savona and Voltri, had sent detachments in the direction of Acqui in the valley of the Bormida, and that Massena, at the head of 10,000 men, had advanced likewise in that direction on the 13th.

This was one of the many errors made on that memorable day. Melas did not reflect that he could very well have neglected to look after Suchet, and that it was on the field of Marengo that it behoved him to be strong. It was there where the fate of his army was about to be decided. Acqui was sufficiently far off, being twenty miles from Alessandria.

Melas was alarmed without cause, for the forces of Massena and Suchet were still on the Littoral, unable to move for want of bare necessaries.

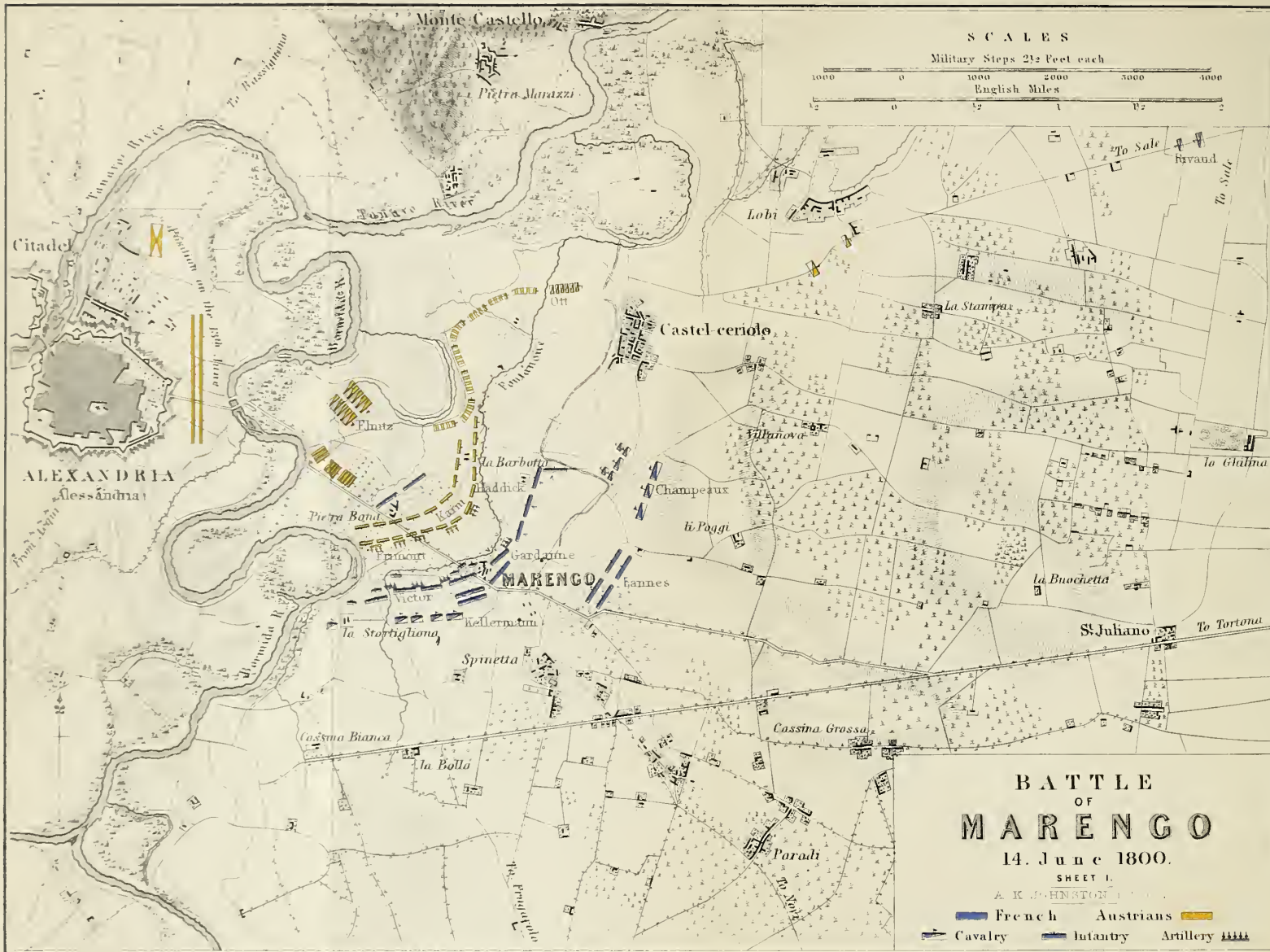
The situation Massena was in is fully explained by his letter to the First Consul from Finale, 13th of June: "Had I on my arrival here found some little artillery and some ammunition, I would have at once set out marching. My position is more difficult than it has yet ever been. I am in want of everything, of absolutely everything.

"I reckon on having within seven or eight days the little artillery and ammunition which are indispensably necessary to me. Then I will march on Asti to join you as soon as possible. I shall have from ten to eleven thousand infantry.

"At this moment I occupy the heights of Savona, Montenotte, Carcare, and Dégo."

In war the commander who neglects to avail himself of the people of the country to bring him information lays himself open to miscalculations and erroneous conceptions. The Austrians, who entertained a great dread of Suchet's column, appear to have made no effort whatever to surround him with emissaries, so as to be able to be thoroughly well informed with regard to his numbers and movements. It may be observed that there was a strong party in Piedmont and Liguria opposed to the French Republic and to the innovations which followed the footsteps of the Revolution. With a little skill and enterprise there should consequently have been very little difficulty in

* On the previous day the hussar regiment of the Archduke Rodolph had been detached to Casale.



acquiring accurate intelligence of the movements of the French forces.*

What really did occur was this: The cavalry of Suchet's advanced guard, having reached Acqui, the 13th Dragoons attacked a squadron of the Emperor's Dragoons commanded by Captain Ceiwrany, which had been detached to watch Suchet, and compelled the squadron to beat a hasty retreat, leaving in their hands forty of their number. This insignificant encounter was badly reported; for Ceiwrany stated that he had been attacked by a large cavalry force followed by infantry. It was on this exaggerated report that Melas was induced to weaken his army at a most inopportune moment.

On the evening of the 13th, Berthier had established his headquarters on the high ground to the west of Cascina Buzana.† From that point he had a good view of the movements of both armies.

When the Austrian attack commenced he had sent word to Victor to offer a stubborn resistance; at the same time he sent a report to the First Consul at Torre di Garofoli of what was likely to occur.

It is desirable to form a just idea of the formation of the Republican forces at the commencement of the action. The Austrians had a bridge-head resting on the Bormida, but their advanced posts had passed the night between the Bormida and the French advanced guard, which lay not far from the river-bank. In the early morning Gardanne, with most of the 44th and the 101st half-brigades, was in position at Pedrabona, strengthened by the few guns Victor could dispose of. His orders were to resist as long as possible, and to gain time for the other divisions to get into line.

On Gardanne's left, resting on the Bormida, was Colonel Dampierre with a portion (two or three hundred men) of the

* After the defeats which had overtaken the French the Legitimists and enemies of Liberal ideas in Piedmont began to look up. Under the name of religion they committed many excesses. The Bishop of Asti became a cruel persecutor of the patriots, sacked the municipal palace and the houses of the Jacobins. At Alba, too, the reactionary bands grouped themselves round their bishop, and committed many acts of cruelty. Mondovi and Ceva became the headquarters of several bands; arson and sack were frequent in Fossano, Cherasco, and Ceva.

† This locality is now known as *Regione Trono*, on account of a throne which was erected there for the Empress Josephine when she witnessed the sham fight held on the field of Marengo in 1805, to give her a representation of the actual battle.

44th half-brigade, and a platoon of riflemen. This detachment had a gun; however, it was useless, there being no ammunition for it.

Ismert, with a squadron of the 11th Hussars, was sent further still to the left, to the Orba and Lemme, to cover the French army, to watch the enemy's movements, and to harass him.

The second division of Victor's corps, Chambarlhac's, 24th, 43rd, and 96th, had its right resting on Marengo, the centre in front of Spinetta, and the left on the Fontanone brook. Chambarlhac had instructions not to join in the battle without first receiving some definite order. In rear of him and towards the extreme left were the 8th Dragoons and Kellermann's cavalry brigade, which had been sent forward by Murat from San Giuliano Vecchio, possibly before the sound of the first guns was heard. Lannes's corps and part of Murat's cavalry division were still at San Giuliano Vecchio.

John Rivaud's cavalry brigade had marched that morning to Salé. The general had orders to watch the road going to Castel Ceriolo, and to cover the line of retreat leading to Pavia.

A little later Champeaux's cavalry brigade came up from San Giuliano to protect Victor's right flank, and deployed on the plain to the north-west of Marengo.

Gardanne, with the advanced guard, had bivouacked within cannon-shot of the Austrian intrenchment. According to his report he was attacked at nine in the morning. This is fully corroborated by Dampierre, whose words are: "The enemy attacked the right at about nine o'clock, and half an hour later fire was opened all along the line."

Gardanne's division, holding Pedrabona, was exposed to a heavy artillery fire. A most terrible fusilade followed, and was kept up with fury by both sides for two hours. O'Reilly, in conformity with the general plan, cleared the front for the troops that were following him, and inclined in the direction of Cascina Stortigliona, to make room for the advanced guard of the central column. This gave the French a breathing time; but it was very short, for soon Haddick's division came in view and commenced to deploy.

Gardanne endeavoured to obstruct this deployment, and with that object brought a very heavy musketry fire to bear on the enemy, but all to no purpose. Soon attacked in front by many Austrian battalions covered by a battery of sixteen

guns, by O'Reilly's brigade on the left, and on the right flank by some squadrons of cavalry, his six battalions had to give way before such greatly superior forces. Victor ordered him to get behind the Fontanone brook, under the protection of some of Chambarlhac's battalions, which he had ordered to move forward.

The Fontanone was an obstacle in itself sufficient to arrest the first efforts of the enemy, and calculated to gain time for the arrival of the other divisions of the French army.

On Gardanne's left was Adjutant-General Dampierre, to whose detachment had been intrusted the defence of the extreme left. Taking advantage of the configuration of the ground, Dampierre had posted one half of his men in a kind of intrenchment formed by the ditches running round a small cottage that stood on the banks of the Bormida, the remaining half being extended to the right, hidden away in some ravines which protected the soldiers up to their heads.

The Austrians tried to form within musketry range of this detachment, and suffered severely. Dampierre held his ground stoutly during the retreat of the rest of his corps, which took place at about three o'clock, and was not overpowered by the Austrians until seven o'clock in the evening. It was when bombarded by six guns firing case, and surrounded by Nauendorf's hussars and several regiments of infantry, that he found himself compelled to lay down his arms. The detachment was without ammunition or artillery, and all sound of firing in the neighbourhood had died away. The last cartridge having been expended, all further resistance in face of such overwhelming numbers was profitless.

In a letter to General Mathieu Dumas, written on the 16th of June, 1800, Dampierre states that the troops on his right had retreated in the greatest disorder, and that his men when carried away as prisoners had no sooner entered Alessandria than they perceived that fortune was again siding with the French, and that the latter had resumed the mastery.

Early that morning Melas had become alive to all the importance of the position of Marengo, which had been so heedlessly abandoned to the enemy. He recognized how great an error he had committed in not supporting O'Reilly the previous evening. He had simply given away the key of the plain of Marengo, the main issue to the country beyond. The

first object, and doubtlessly the most important for the success of the day, was to recover that village, so as to make it a pivot of operations. Accordingly, to repair his mistake of the previous day, Melas issued orders to Haddick to recapture Marengo at all costs.

Notwithstanding the first success gained over Gardanne's division, the Austrians lost the opportunity of getting to the other side of the Fontanone by crossing that marshy stream at the heels of the French. Their remaining on the other side for a deployment, carried out according to all rules, was soon to cost them dear.

It took nearly two hours for Haddick to deploy, form up his division, and post his batteries, and Kaim, who was to support him, was not much smarter. In this manner much precious time was wasted.

When the slow and pedantic deployment of the central Austrian column was completed, the Austrian army stood in the following order: In first line, on their extreme right, resting on the Bormida, came O'Reilly's brigade; then, on its left, stood Frimont's detachment, which had furnished the advanced guard of the central column; next in order came Haddick's division, which stood opposite to the village of Marengo. Kaim's division was in second line; in reserve were Morzin's grenadier division and the greater portion of Elsnitz's cavalry division. Ott was at that time crossing the Bormida.

Bonaparte had sent orders to Lannes and to Murat to proceed from San Giuliano Vecchio to the assistance of Victor, an order which had already been anticipated. Lannes was at that time marching across the plain, making for Cascina Barbotta, where the right of Victor's corps stood, which was seriously menaced.

Shortly after 10 a.m., the first line of the Austrian army, under the protection of five batteries, advanced against Gardanne's division. Haddick was keen to make up for lost time, and attacked as soon as the deployment was completed. At the head of Bellegarde's brigade he advanced on Marengo, but he was received by the French, who were posted around the village and in rear of the Fontanone brook, with a most violent musketry fire and some rounds of case. Rivaud, who had been posted on the left of the village, in a bend of the brook, took

the Austrians in reverse. Undaunted, they continued to advance up to the Fontanone, and Haddick was on the point of crossing the brook when a small reserve came to the aid of the French. This support arrived very opportunely, for Gardanne's men were hard pressed. Haddick several times tried to get across the Fontanone, but that insignificant and muddy stream, swollen by the previous day's rain, which art itself could never have designed, continued to shelter the French position. Forming as it did a re-entering bend in front of Marengo, it enabled the French posted in the village and on either flank of it to pour a converging fire on the attacking columns. Recognizing the futility of his efforts, Haddick had just given the order for his troops to withdraw when he fell mortally wounded. Deprived of their chief, the troops fell into disorder.

Kaim with his division was following close on Haddick. Having protected the retreat of the troops of the first line, which their defeat had put into confusion, he renewed the attack, but with no better result. His battalions, smitten at point-blank range, suffered severely without being able to gain ground. At about eleven o'clock Kaim found it necessary to withdraw his men.

Reinforced by Melas, he returned to the attack, his well-served artillery playing great havoc amongst the French. Chambarlhac's division, which was posted on Victor's right, was already giving way, when, at about eleven o'clock, Lannes was seen approaching with Watrin's division.

Fighting is dreadfully uphill work when there is an insufficiency of men, and it is discouraging in the extreme for the soldier to find himself overmatched and outnumbered. When Lannes came up on Victor's right rear, the battle was continued under more even conditions. Still the French had in line Victor's and Lannes's troops, at the most from 15,000 to 16,000 men, with which to keep 30,000 Austrians in check, and these had to bear the brunt of the battle until the reserves could arrive from Torre di Garofoli and Rivalta. French pluck made up for deficiency in numbers. So obstinate was the resistance, that for a long time the Austrians, notwithstanding all their efforts, could not dislodge them from Marengo.

Lannes, with Watrin's division, had bivouacked in front of San Giuliano. On the morning of the 14th, as has been said, the division marched two leagues across the plain to come and

reinforce Victor's right. Watrin states that he deployed his division between Spinetta and Marengo, the right extending in the direction of Castel Ceriolo, and the left being a little to the left of the Alessandria-Tortona road. The 28th and 40th were kept in reserve on the left of Spinetta.

As to the 6th Light and the 22nd, deployed between Marengo and Castel Ceriolo, these two corps drove back impetuously a numerous body of the enemy, infantry and cavalry, which had already made rapid progress on that side. They rushed at the enemy, threw him into great disorder, and pushed him back behind the Fontanone—Lannes says as far the banks of the Bormida, where the cannon from the bridge-head compelled his troops to fall back out of range.* These two regiments, though exposed to a murderous fire, continued to hold their ground for a considerable time. As the enemy in great strength moved on Castel Ceriolo and deployed a deep column on Watrin's right, Watrin moved up a battalion of the 22nd in that direction, so as to support the 6th Light, then on the point of being turned by the enemy, who were outflanking the French right. General Lannes had brought up the 28th Regiment with the same intent. At that time the 40th, on the main road of Marengo, was making head against several charges of cavalry.

It has been said by eye-witnesses that the Austrians attacked feebly and slowly, and that it was this that enabled Victor to hold his ground as long as he did. For the French it was, of the highest moment to defend the mean brook on their front, for on that alone depended the timely arrival of Monnier's and Boudet's divisions, and the bringing together of the scattered divisions for a combined effort. Though suffering severe losses, the Republicans made a vigorous resistance, which reflected great honour on the troops. Of the Austrians Victor says that the enemies, drunk with *eau de vie* and despairing in their position, fought like lions.

Fully to realize the nature of the contest, we should not overlook the description of the weapons with which the troops were armed a century ago. The arm of the infantry at that time was the flint-lock muzzle-loading musket, an arm which was not only very poorly sighted, and of very limited range, but which from the materials of the cartridges after a certain use became

* Lannes states that this occurred after Victor had been fighting for two hours. It must, therefore, have been 11 a.m.

difficult to load. In this very battle we have the evidence of Captain Coignet, who states that from constant firing the muskets fouled to such an extent that the cartridges could not be rammed home. He adds that the soldiers were compelled to make water in the barrels to free them of deposit from combustion.

Soldiers in the old days were enjoined to trust to the bayonet rather than to powder, and when the bayonet could be used it was strongly recommended that not a shot should be fired.

Not only were the range and accuracy of the firearms very poor in those days; but the troops were trained to move with rigid precision in close formation, and did not turn cover to profitable advantage. Troops attacking under such conditions were liable to suffer serious losses.

Disquieted by the stubbornness of the defence, Melas determined to attempt a further effort. At about noon he ordered Pilatti with his cavalry brigade to find a passage across the Fontanone between Marengo and Stortigliona, so as to attack and turn the French left. Pilatti was in this manner to draw the attention of the French to their left, whilst Bellegarde and Kaim made a fresh effort to carry Marengo. With the greatest difficulty Pilatti got some squadrons to tread their way across the marshy brook above Marengo.

Kellermann had been posted in the morning not far from Marengo village and on its left. His brigade consisted of the—

2nd Cavalry Regiment	...	...	182 sabres.
6th " "	...	...	340 "
20th " "	...	...	280 "
			802 "

With him, and to the right of his brigade, were the 8th Dragoons.

The Austrian horsemen, under cover of a small wood which partially concealed their movements, crossed the Fontanone one by one and deployed in two lines in a field. Kellermann was quick in detecting Pilatti's intention. Without losing time he sent the dragoons forward, and made ready to support them with his brigade, which was drawn up in line. The dragoons swooped down on the Austrian squadrons, which they overthrew; when in their turn they were assailed by the Austrian

supports and driven back. Kellermann gave them time to clear his front and rally behind his line; he then went headlong with his brigade, charged the Austrian cavalry, and drove it back to the Fontanone, where many found their death. Others were captured, and only a very small number were able to effect their escape.

This charge took place near La Stortigliona, to the south of a small house which bears the name of Cavalla Rotta. Tradition has it that the house derives its denomination from the defeat of the Austrian cavalry—*rotta della cavalleria Austriaca*.

An Austrian account says: "These dragoons once broken, in disarray and at a fast gallop, made for the brook, which was very deep. Men and horses fell into it pell-mell. Those who did not perish in this frightful disorder were sabred or taken prisoners. Only a very small number of men were sufficiently fortunate to be able to regain the opposite bank."

The two regiments, the Emperor's and Karaczay's dragoons, suffered heavily.

Kellermann's bold counter-attack succeeded for the moment in holding the enemy in check on the French left. The position in which Pilatti placed his cavalry was extremely risky. Formed with a deep brook in rear, one which had allowed the horsemen to cross only one by one, the slightest reverse would inevitably bring about a disaster; and so it did.

The retreat of Haddick's line, Kaim's vain efforts to carry Marengo, and the orders to Pilatti to attack the French left occurred at about the same time. It was nearly at that time that Lannes arrived on the battlefield. The defeat of Pilatti's cavalry and the arrival of Lannes inspired the French with confidence.

Melas has been credited with having thrown nearly the whole of his army upon the head of Bonaparte's echelon so as to strive to crush his divisions in detail. There is nothing, however, to support this intention of his, for on the morning of the 14th he was not a bit better informed than his adversary; the want of compactness in the French forces was totally unknown to him.

Moreno* declares that the plan arranged by the Austrian staff was for the Austrians to outstrip the French right wing, to attack it with vigour, to drive it back in the direction of Stortigliona, and in that manner to render themselves masters of the

* Gennaro Moreno, "Trattato di Storia Militare," vol. ii. p. 82.

Tortona road. He states that this plan had to be abandoned owing to the late arrival of Ott's corps on the battlefield; and that on that account it was changed into an attack of the French left. There is, however, nothing to support these statements. For, had it been Melas's intention to commence by attacking the French right, he would have made Ott's force much stronger than it was; and that corps would have been sent across the Bormida and through the single egress of the bridge-head first, having the longest way to march. In fact, the course of the contest gives no evidence of this intention to attack the French right.

The thunder of the guns and the rattle of the musketry went on without intermittence, and awakened echoes all along the banks of the Fontanone. Though exposed to the murderous fire of forty guns, the French still held their position, and showed no sign of giving way.

It was now about noon, and up to that moment the French had not lost a foot of ground. The Austrians were taking steps for delivering a fresh attack, and for one hour there was a cessation of fire. At 1 p.m. their artillery reopened fire, if possible with more energy, and Gardanne's division was attacked by O'Reilly. The French strove to stem the torrent which was about to burst through their line, but the ammunition began to fail, and the division was driven back on Marengo. Kaim, covered by the fire of eighty guns, now directed a third attack, supported by five battalions of Lattermann's grenadiers. The troops were directed to carry the Fontanone under cover of a very heavy artillery fire. A small portion of the Archduke Joseph's regiment waded across the brook and reached the further side. Chambarlhac's division, posted on the left of Marengo, took them in flank, but the Austrians succeeded in making their footing good. Their engineers with great difficulty managed to throw over some small trestle bridges, and Lamarsaille with great promptitude posted his guns so as to command the locality and by canister fire to sweep the approaches and pave the way for the passage of the other troops.

Rivaud, who commanded Victor's last reserves, marched against the assailants, and was on the point of precipitating them into the brook, when he and many of his men were smitten by the heavy fire of the Austrian guns. The French having been checked, Lattermann's grenadiers profited by this advantage, rushed forward, and carried Marengo.

Rivaud, covered with blood, hereupon put himself at the head of the 43rd half-brigade, charged the grenadiers, and drove them clean out of the village. He could do no more; for, after leaving the shelter of the village and coming into the open, he was stopped by the enemy's artillery and musketry, and soon the grenadiers were again masters of Marengo.

Of all natural fortifications villages are the most difficult to carry. To commence with, to deprive the enemy of their protection the assailant tries to set them on fire with a few shells, a process which very seldom meets with the desired success. Round shot do not succeed any better in driving the defenders out, for they soon find shelter behind the ruins of the houses. A fusillade can even do less damage. These kinds of attack are very deadly. It is well known that it requires the fire of artillery, much time and much blood to carry a well-defended village which has baffled all attempts to set it on fire.

In his report Rivaud makes it 2 p.m. when he led his last charge. After this the Austrians, now masters of Marengo, crossed the Fontanone in many places, and deployed to the left of the village under the protecting fire of eighty guns. Kellermann states that, at about the same time, being exposed to a murderous fire without the support of infantry, and threatened by a column of 3000 cavalry preceded by numerous artillery, he felt himself compelled to retire.

Marengo and its few buildings, as well as the Fontanone brook, were important points on which the Austrians had concentrated their efforts, with the object of dislodging the French, and thus opening a way for the recovery of their communications. The village of Marengo had been taken and retaken several times in succession; the victors and the vanquished disputed this ensanguined post hand-to-hand. The defence was stout; the men beheld their ranks thinning without any emotion of terror; they closed in as fast as their comrades fell, and still dared the death that menaced them. The continuance and length of the attacks, however, exhausted both the means and the forces of the French soldiers.

It has been mentioned that the brook, which covered the front of the French army, had presented a very serious obstacle to the deployment of the Austrians. Possibly, deeming it a very trifling impediment, or not expecting to fight on their side of it, they had not prepared anything to facilitate its

crossing, and for a certain time found themselves massed in the ground between the brook and the Bormida. Once a temporary bridge was thrown athwart the Fontanone, the Austrian grenadiers crossed over and drove Victor back in great disorder into the plain, when they made first for Spinetta and afterwards for San Giuliano.

This would have been the moment for launching the Austrian cavalry forward, so as to turn to full account the disorder which reigned amongst the French, and by a general charge to scatter them completely over the plain. The Austrian staff, however, had not employed the cavalry economically, and at the most propitious moment it was not forthcoming.

By this time O'Reilly, having crossed the Stortigliona, had advanced by La Bolla on the Tortona road. Nevertheless, Kellermann, who was posted in that part of the field, maintained a bold front. By his attitude he imposed on the enemy, who dreaded to display too much enterprise.

The village of Marengo may well be considered as the centre of the battle-ground, for the whole of the Austrian efforts were directed, as we have already seen, to oust the French from that point. This, by facilitating the forward movement of the two wings of the Austrian army, contributed to dislodging the French entirely. The several attacks on the village, nevertheless, held the troops on the wings in suspense, when they might have come into play at an earlier hour. They would have been better employed in pushing forward to attack beyond Marengo the troops which were destined by the French to support those engaged in holding the village. These supports should have been attacked and destroyed by cavalry and artillery.

The remnants of Victor's corps, the divisions of Gardanne and Chambarlhac, exposed to the fire of fifty guns, could barely hold out any longer. For two hours Victor's corps had resisted single-handed the repeated and dashing onsets of the Austrians, who were continually bringing up fresh troops to the attack. His divisions had fought the longest, and he had lost twice as many men as Lannes. Rivaud's brigade alone had suffered as much as the whole of Watrin's division. Unable to resist any longer the efforts of Haddick's and Kaim's troops, supported as they were by their reserves, Victor was obliged to abandon the village after it had been several times lost and retaken. The

Austrians then issuing from Marengo took a firm footing on the plain.

Victor had to go nearly to San Giuliano, for a distance of two leagues or thereabout, before he could find a point of support. The Austrians brought such a powerful artillery fire to bear on the retreating troops that one might have expected to see at every moment the retreat degenerating into a flight.

Kellermann, however, withdrew his cavalry by alternate troops, and kept the Austrian horsemen from charging Victor's disordered divisions. Retiring in this manner, Kellermann's cavalry brigade covered the retreat until threatened by a large column of 2000 or 3000 cavalry preceded by a numerous artillery. The brigade suffered heavily, and on reaching the extremity of the plain did not muster more than 150 troopers. To it afterwards were added a platoon of the 1st Dragoons and two squadrons of the 8th.

Kellermann states: "My brigade formed line, extended to the right and left of the main road. Always exposed to a deadly artillery fire, covering the infantry, finding for it opportunities for rallying, it withdrew by platoons at a walk, turning about from time to time, and not suffering the enemy to capture a single prisoner in this part of the field. Under trying circumstances it displayed a cool courage which, whilst recognizing danger and death, meets them with firmness."

Victor's extreme left was protected by a squadron of the 11th Hussars, which was likewise compelled to fall back before the superior numbers of the enemy. The Austrians assailed this squadron on all sides, but were never able to break it. After a while it became incapacitated for rendering any further service to the infantry, and had to retire to San Giuliano. The 12th Chasseurs were also in this part of the field, and charged the enemy several times, to prevent their cavalry pressing and attacking the flank of Victor's retiring columns.

General Baron Quot, who was Victor's aide-de-camp at Marengo, wrote: "The French carried out their movement of retreat with all the order which it was possible to maintain in such a critical moment, the corps which were in the centre chequerwise being supported by close columns in mass ready to form squares if needed: our feeble cavalry, likewise, on the wings, seconded by the infantry columns, drove off such corps as pressed on too close, and compelled them to follow at a slow

pace. The Austrians consequently contented themselves by pounding us with their artillery."

Crossard states: "We continued to push the enemy before us, and we saw him evacuate Marengo as its wings were turned." It was possibly at that time that Murat told the First Consul, "General, it is time for us to retire; there is the Austrian cavalry turning our flanks." All agree that the defeat would have been irretrievable had the Austrian cavalry taken up the pursuit.

The French losses on their left were heavy, for the Austrians pressed the Republicans steadily back, halting from time to time to open fire with a battery of fifteen guns. After a time the squares moved down by this artillery fire broke up, and the plain was covered with fugitives. The French had not far to go, for they rallied at San Giuliano.

On the Austrian left, Ott, who had been sent by Melas towards Salé, arrived at Castel Ceriolo, and formed his troops between that village and Barbotta. Astonished to find no French in the direction of Castel Ceriolo, but hearing the thunder of fierce cannonade on his right, he conceived, notwithstanding the orders he had received, that it was his duty to turn in the direction of the firing. He therefore made a change of front to his right, came into contact with Lannes, and threatened to sweep his line from end to end.

Lannes made head against the attacks delivered by Ott. But, as his numbers did not permit him to extend as far as Castel Ceriolo, he wheeled back a portion on his right so as to confront the enemy. To stay the advance of the Austrians, Champeaux delivered two charges. The enemy's cavalry was driven back, but the Austrian infantry continued to press forward, menacing to outflank Lannes and take his line in reverse.

Dense smoke obscured the glitter of bayonet and lance, and the groans of the wounded were silenced by the roar of the many guns.

The French still held their ground, but all the reserves Victor and Lannes could count upon had joined the fighting line, and by this time the ammunition had begun to run short.

Counting from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., the battle had by this time lasted some five hours. During the first two hours

Gardanne's division alone, barely 3000 strong, with Kellermann's cavalry, had borne the brunt. Afterwards, by degrees, all of Victor's and Lannes's troops had come into line, and these 13,000 men had repulsed repeated attacks made by 16,000 infantry, supported by more than 4000 horsemen. Ott also was pressing on the French right with 7000 infantry and some six squadrons.

On the French right their troops took and retook several positions under a heavy fire, until Lannes, finding his forces almost surrounded by the enemy's troops (which had broken the centre and compelled the left to give way entirely), felt compelled to order the retreat. The troops were to retire, keeping in line with the left of the army.

The Austrians continued to assert their superiority with a terrible artillery fire, their line being steadily strengthened by fresh batteries and battalions. Lannes acknowledges that after a five-hours' cannonade and heavy musketry fire the enemy broke the centre and thus compelled Victor to retire. Also that at this moment, seeing himself nearly surrounded by the troops which had overcome the centre, and with the whole of the left in full retreat, he ordered his division to retire.

Uncovered on his left by Victor's retreat, there was nothing left for him to do but to fall back. Though his corps was without guns, and he had only a few squadrons of cavalry for protecting his right, Lannes manœuvred with great deliberation under a most murderous fire. He withdrew slowly by echelon; he repelled every charge; and kept his troops from being broken. The courage and the devotion of their leaders were beyond praise. The division lost ground at the rate of a quarter of a league per hour, but this admirable retreat cost Lannes cruel losses.

Danican, though showing great animosity against Bonaparte, does not deny that the French retired methodically, disputing every inch of the ground.

Early on the forenoon of the 14th, Bonaparte, as has been already mentioned, heard from Berthier and Victor that a battle was imminent. The sound of artillery also soon bore out this intimation. Entertaining no longer any doubts about what was happening, he sent aides-de-camp and other officers towards Rivalta to search for Desaix, and to convey him orders for the immediate return of Boudet's division, which was to march by the shortest way to the battlefield. Bonaparte himself

remained at Torre di Garofoli, anxious not to miss an early reply. Late in the forenoon one of his aides-de-camp returning from Rivalta brought the welcome news that Desaix had been found, but that various circumstances made it probable that Boudet's division would not reach the battlefield much before 5 p.m.

This news reassured Bonaparte. The Consular Guard and Monnier's division had already marched in the direction of San Giuliano Vecchio, and, mounting his horse, he hastened after them.* The last news he had from Victor, sent a little before 11 a.m., stated that the enemy was continually deploying fresh forces.

In his narrative of the campaign of Marengo, trooper Petit states that the enemy's dispositions were not fully known at headquarters till towards the latter part of the morning; aide-de-camp after aide-de-camp had been apprising the Consul of the enemy's steps; that Bonaparte mounted his horse at eleven o'clock. Apparently the Guard followed him, for he remarks: "Both cannon and musketry, on certain points, began by this time to be heard. . . . By twelve o'clock we were well convinced we had the whole of the Austrian forces against us." †

Evidently it was only at about eleven o'clock that Bonaparte detected the seriousness of the attack. Monnier's departure from Torre di Garofoli shows this; for it was at about that hour that he ordered Monnier to march, and that he sent messengers to recall the detached divisions of Lapoye on the north and of Boudet on the south. Desaix was reached at about 1 p.m., but the messengers did not come up with Lapoye before 6 p.m.

Monnier's division was one of the two assigned to Desaix after Montebello; but it did not proceed to Rivalta on the 13th, for it passed the night at Torre di Garofoli. Monnier set out from his bivouac at Torre di Garofoli between 11 a.m. and noon, and had to march eight kilometres (five miles) to the spot where the French and Austrians were contending. He reached this, according to his report, at 2 p.m.

* Petit states that the First Consul mounted his horse at 11 a.m.

† Petit's account is somewhat incongruous; he narrates how the Consular Guard he belonged to slept at San Giuliano on the 13th; further on he shows it was with the headquarters on the morning of the 14th. Bonaparte on the night of the 13th had rested at Torre di Garofoli and not at San Giuliano; we imagine that his Guard bivouacked where the headquarters were.

Bonaparte appeared on the battlefield at the commencement of the retreat, and consequently at the most critical moment. On arriving he found his left wing broken, and his right, though seriously menaced, still withdrawing in good order and showing a bold front to the enemy.

With his infallible intuition he judged in an instant what was the state of the battle. The point was to prevent the Austrians from overreaching the French position on the Tortona road, and fraying for themselves a passage to the Mincio. This could be secured in two ways, either by offering a stout resistance on the Tortona road itself, or by taking such a position on the right as would threaten to take any advancing Austrian troops in flank. The First Consul judged that the first plan was hopeless, but that the second was by no means so. From the course of the contest the majority of Melas's troops had gathered in the direction of Spinetta. On the other flank the opposition was by no means so strong, and Lannes could almost hold his own. Consequently the right was the best side to reinforce, and the one where the greatest hope lay of doing something effective. It was not a case of abandoning the line of retreat, but of adopting an alternative one.

Bonaparte feared lest Ott, by extending on the French right, should take the whole of his line of battle in reverse, and cut off his communications with Salé, which place was only guarded by Rivaud with 600 sabres. It was on this account that Monnier was directed to proceed to Castel Ceriolo, with orders to seize the village and to hold it. The occupation of that post the First Consul believed would disengage Lannes, might oblige the enemy to halt, prevent his pressing vigorously against the retiring left, and might give rise to some favourable chance of resuming the offensive, or, at all events, might gain time for Desaix's arrival.

Monnier's division arrived on the field about the time when Bellegarde and Ott were on the point of overpowering Watrin. It advanced in the unoccupied space between Lannes's right and Castel Ceriolo. Carra Saint Cyr, at the head of 700 men of the 19th Light, formed in column of attack, moved on Castel Ceriolo, and carried that village with little opposition. Schilt, at the same time, with the 70th half-brigade, threatened to take the Austrian line in reverse.* The French pressed forward

* The 72nd belonging to this division was held back in reserve.

with vigour, and the Austrians, unable to withstand their onset, were driven back on to the swamps in front of the Bormida. At that time the French left was already in retreat.

Dupont describes this phase of the battle thus: "But on our right, finding ourselves threatened by a corps which was extending on the side of Castel Ceriolo, we abandoned Marengo and took up a position in rear of that village. . . . Monnier's division, which had been encamped at Garofoli, then reached the battlefield. The 19th Light and the 78th half-brigade, under the orders of Carra Saint Cyr and Schilt, marched on the right, and recaptured a portion of the ground which we had abandoned."

This attack reduced the pressure on Lannes's right. But Ott sent Vogelsang with five battalions of his second line to recapture the village. The two French regiments, surrounded both in the village and on the plain, after fighting lustily for an hour, being unsupported, and finding themselves the last on the battlefield, retired in good order on Torre di Garofoli. They moved across vineyards, the vines protecting them from the action of the cavalry.

According to the Austrian account, it was the regiment of Stuart which attacked Castel Ceriolo, and drove the French out of it.

Jomini questions the expediency of sending Monnier's reserve division to occupy Castel Ceriolo. On this point he is not in accordance with Mathieu Dumas, and the greatest portion of the historians. Lannes was not strong enough to occupy that important post as he deployed, and when Monnier received his orders to move on Castel Ceriolo, Victor was hard pressed. In this critical state of affairs any other officer might have reinforced the left wing, and not the right, arguing that to protect Lannes's retreat was not so important a matter as to arrest the flight of Victor's troops. The occupation of Castel Ceriolo proved indeed, fortunate, whether it was the result of insight or of luck. By reinforcing his right, Bonaparte stayed the pursuit of his left wing, and, what was of far greater importance, he gained by this measure time for Desaix to arrive on the battlefield.

The battle at that time resolved itself into a purely defensive action. It was necessary to gain time and to prevent the Austrians from overlapping the French position, with the object

of opening themselves a way to Piacenza. All offensive action had already become impossible by reason of the inferiority of the French and the disorder reigning in their ranks; nothing remained to be done but to draw the enemy's attention to their left flank, indirectly preventing any brisk action on their right. The course of the contest and Victor's vigorous resistance at Marengo had drawn a very large portion of the Austrian troops towards La Stortigliona. On the opposite flank, about Castel Ceriolo, they were not so numerous that Lannes could not keep them in countenance and still offer a stout resistance. Every consideration, therefore, showed that it was the Austrian left against which the reserves could act with the greatest effect.

It was at about this time (2 p.m.), when Watrin had been instructed to drive Bellegarde back, Victor to prevent Kaim from debouching from Marengo, and Monnier to carry Castel Ceriolo, that Bonaparte, in the hope of arresting Ott's advance, and of relieving the pressure on Lannes, flung forward the 800 or 900 grenadiers of the Consular Guard.

These orders only partially attained their object. The Consular Guard formed in column at deploying distance, and, preceded by a line of skirmishers, advanced along the plain between Li Poggi and Villanova. Ott made Lobkowitz's dragoons charge it, but the Guard speedily formed square, planted its guns, poured several rounds of canister on the dragoons, and made them turn about. A portion of Champeaux's brigade pursued the dragoons to clear the way for the Guard, which then continued its forward movement. Champeaux's brigade in its turn was attacked in flank by Spleny, and obliged to beat a hasty retreat. Gottesheim then advanced against the Guard, and attacked it with Spleny's Hungarian regiment and a battalion of Froelich's, supported by a formidable artillery. The Guard had deployed and held out for forty minutes, and was only shaken and broken by Frimont, who charged it in rear at the head of a few squadrons of hussars. But though their formation was broken, and they had left 258 of their number on the ground, the Consular Guard held together, and, fighting all the time, managed to gain Poggi. Providence always watches over the brave, and all that Frimont could secure was a few unserviceable guns. The Austrian account states that this occurred at 1 p.m., but, as it relates that the advance of the Consular Guard occurred subsequently to the

arrival of Monnier's division on the scene of action, which the latter general fixes at 2 p.m., there must be some error in this. The hour given in the bulletin of the 15th of June, 3 p.m., appears much more correct. According to the same narrative the Consular Guard was broken and almost destroyed. It is very unfortunate in this conflict of opinion that De Cugnac has not been able to discover any report made by the officer who commanded the Guard.

The foot grenadiers of the Consular Guard advanced against the enemy, marching with the same steadiness and precision with which they had been previously beheld on the parade-ground. Without the support of cavalry they were left to experience the brunt of a victorious army. Charged repeatedly by cavalry, fusilladed by infantry at fifty paces' distance, they remained undaunted; formed in a hollow square, they surrounded their colours and their wounded, and after having exhausted all their ammunition fell back slowly. Many brave men had fallen, mown down by the Austrian guns and musketry, meeting death with rare stolidity in the blinding heat of that June day. Patiently they had endured all things, and failed to reach the goal.

Marmont, who should have known, writes all that has been said and written of a change of front left back, of this post of Castel Ceriolo, held during the whole of the battle, with the object of issuing therefrom on the enemy's rear at the moment of the retreat, is pure supposition and invention conceived after the events: "In retiring the army kept the same direction as it had followed in the advance—that of the main road, withdrawing in good order."

It was owing to the heroic conduct of the Consular Guard that Monnier's troops had time to arrive at Castel Ceriolo. With regard to the tenacity displayed by the Consular Guard on this occasion, the illustrious Italian historian Botta remarks: "I know not whether I ought most to laud their prowess or condemn Elsnitz's incapacity. But certain it is that the German general, although he had hemmed them in on every side, was never able to break them; for either he did not do all that he ought to have done, or the nine hundred did more than could be deemed possible."

A matter which gave rise to a good deal of discussion was the best formation to be adopted by the infantry to withstand

cavalry. Two of Monnier's battalions, of the 72nd, surrounded by a large body of cavalry, received it in line; the two front ranks firing to their front, whilst the third, having faced about, fired directly to their rear. After having executed several charges, the enemy's cavalry cleared off, not having succeeded in breaking the French infantry.

To save the troops from the swarms of Mamelukes, they had been formed in squares at the battle of the Pyramids, and other actions in Egypt, and Bonaparte had brought back from Egypt a sort of predilection for squares. This formation has two radical defects. One defect, and the principal one, is that it seriously diminishes the firing front. The other is the difficulty experienced in marching in square. At Marengo the Consular Guard was formed into a large square. The men behaved with great courage, and repelled many attacks delivered by the Austrian cavalry. The square, Jomini states, was eventually broken, and no wonder, for it was attacked by all the three arms. The merits of the two formations for withstanding cavalry do not appear to have been settled by the events of that day. What is certain is that during the greater part of the nineteenth century the rule was for infantry to receive cavalry drawn up in square and not in line. Possibly preference was given to the square on account of the Consular Guard having changed its formation to resist the Austrian infantry. It was after they had deployed that General Frimont charged them in rear with a body of hussars, managed to get the best of them, and compelled the corps to commence its retreat on Poggi.

At Waterloo, in the last of his battles, at the close of the struggle, Napoleon formed four battalions of the Guard in four squares, and made them fall back slowly in the same formation which the Consular Guard had assumed at Marengo. Behind these four squares he hoped to rally his army; but it was then too late. When the French were rapidly breaking up, these four living redoubts of brave soldiers alone maintained a hopeless struggle, and stood at bay against two victorious armies. They were charged over and over again, but they repulsed more than one fierce attack of cavalry. Their heroic bravery was no proof against overwhelming numbers; and, hemmed in on all sides, they were at last overpowered. It was with such noble efforts that that sanguinary battle was brought

to a close. Much heroism had been displayed by the French on that ill-fated 18th of June, but possibly none outshone that of the old veterans of the Guard.

Not sufficient importance has been accorded to the position assigned by Bonaparte to the Consular Guard, and to the effect resulting from the bravery displayed by that corps, to the time it gained for the arrival of reinforcements and, in short, to the share it could claim in the day's glory. The intrepidity of the Guard stopped the intended wheel of the Austrian left wing, and allowed the troops of Monnier's division to arrive from Torre di Garofoli and to cover Lannes's right, already outflanked by Kaim. Monnier's division was for a time surrounded by the enemy; but leaning on the unshaken square of the Guards, Carra Saint Cyr and Schilt approached Castel Ceriolo and took part in the battle.

This occupation of Castel Ceriolo had considerable influence on the future course of the action. As had happened with Marengo the previous night, the Austrians became alive to the importance of Castel Ceriolo only after they had lost it. Their losing it and having to recapture it was a gain of time for the French.

Melas in his report states: "A fresh and decisive assault by Marshal Lieutenant Ott was sufficient to recapture from the enemy the lost place. The enemy showed but little resistance, and retired in haste and disorder all along the line."

With regard to what happened there it must be confessed that the accounts given by Bonaparte, by the Austrians, and by Carra Saint Cyr, are very contradictory. Bonaparte had an object in denying the French retreat: that was to foster the belief that the retreat formed part of a settled plan with Castel Ceriolo as a pivot of manœuvre. Carra Saint Cyr, writing to the minister of war on the 21st of October, 1800, states: "At the battle of Marengo, at the head of 700 men of the 19th Light, I carried the village of Ceriolo in face of the enemy's army, at a moment when our army was effecting its retreat; I carried out mine in good order, supported only by the 70th of the line."

The officers of Carra Saint Cyr's brigade wrote that "they had started in the morning for Torre di Garofoli, where they had spent the night. On their reaching the battlefield they had been directed on Castel Ceriolo. After having captured the village and defended it for some time against the Austrian Light

Infantry, seeing that the plain on their left had been entirely abandoned by the French, and finding themselves the last left on the battlefield, they quitted Castel Ceriolo, and went back to Torre di Garofoli."

Monnier's account is as follows: "Our attack disengaged the right, but the enemy, which had reinforced its centre, having obliged the troops who supported our left to retire, our two columns found themselves surrounded in the village and in the plain. They defended themselves with vigour, and the enemy could never overcome them. After having so resisted for an hour, not having been reinforced, they disengaged themselves, and effected their retreat in the very best order on San Giuliano, where the army was rallying."

De Brossier writes: "General Monnier's division succeeded in breaking through the Austrian line, and, under the protection of the brigade under General Champeaux's orders, in effecting its retreat on San Giuliano, when the entire army was joining Boudet's division, which, led by General Desaix, was arriving at that point.

Mathieu Dumas makes out that all the attacks of the Austrians were unsuccessful, that they could not recapture the village. The above evidence, however, is sufficiently convincing. It shows that Carra Saint Cyr complied with the movement of the rest of the army, and retired in the direction of San Giuliano. Jomini states that Bonaparte purposely left Carra Saint Cyr in Castel Ceriolo, but this is evidently contrary to the Austrian account.

Notwithstanding the discordant statements of the operations of Monnier's division at Marengo, the evidence goes far to prove that a part of the division (Carra Saint Cyr's brigade) resisted for a certain time the attacks delivered by Ott's light infantry against Castel Ceriolo, and that it afterwards followed the movement of retreat of the French left and centre. The abandonment of this village appears to have taken place at about 3 p.m.

According to Monnier's report, Carra Saint Cyr reached the battlefield at 2 p.m., and retired from Castel Ceriolo after an hour's fighting, therefore at 3 p.m. According to the brigadier's statement that he found himself alone on the battlefield, which fact induced him to retire, the action of the Consular Guard must have come to an end before 3 p.m. Dampierre

sets down the rout of the right at 3 p.m., which in a way agrees with Saint Cyr. Pittaluga speaks of Carra Saint Cyr's half-brigade (evidently the 19th Light) at four o'clock to the east of Castel Ceriolo, intrenched in the vineyards close to the village; this, however, does not tally with the statement made by the officers of the 19th.

A writer states that Monnier's division did not do all it could have done, especially in the evening, when Ott's corps were falling back on the bridges of the Bormida. He adds that the displeasure of the First Consul was evinced by the fact that shortly after the battle General Monnier was shelved, and that no reward whatsoever was decreed to any of the troops of his division.*

Somewhere about this period the Austrians directed their efforts in outstripping the left flank of the French army, with evident intention of driving it on its centre clear of the Tortona road. In this manœuvre, however, they neutralized the efforts of their cavalry, which was mostly posted with the left wing.

* De Castres, *maréchal de camp*, in his notes on the account of the battle, issued in 1803 and 1805, relates that, so annoyed was Napoleon with General Monnier for having remained with the 72nd, which was held in reserve, instead of keeping with the other two half-brigades of his division at Castel Ceriolo, that he would not mention his name in the narrative. He substituted the name of Carra Saint Cyr, the senior brigadier-general, who had commanded the two half-brigades in the advance and attack of the village.

CHAPTER XIV.

DESAIX TAKES PART IN THE BATTLE.

Alternatives open to Melas—Absence of information—Bonaparte credits Melas with adopting the most advisable course—His army too weak to detach an entire division to reconnoitre—The Austrians light no fires—The march of Desaix's division to Rivalta—Difficulty in crossing the Scrivia—Desaix does not halt Boudet's division, nor does he march to the sound of the guns—The narrative of the Duke of Rovigo not accurate enough to serve as a guide—Boudet quits his position beyond Rivalta at 1 p.m.—The French reduced to a passive defence—Bonaparte's demcanour—Melas quits the battlefield—Sends to announce the victory to the Austrian Court—State of the French army at 4 p.m.—Formation of Zach's pursuing column—Bonaparte discovers the march of Desaix's column—The French recover their spirits—Conference held on Desaix's arrival—New disposition of the French forces—The Austrians come under the fire of Marmont's battery—Advance of Desaix—Kellermann takes the Austrian column in flank—He attacks the Austrian cavalry—The whole French army dashes forward to the charge—Flight of the Austrian cavalry—Precipitate retreat of the Austrian army—Wcidenfeld and O'Reilly defend the Fontanone brook—Ott withdraws to the bridge-head of the Bormida.

AMONGST the alternatives that were open to Melas was a withdrawal to Novi. By taking post there, and resting on Genova and Admiral Keith's fleet, he might have awaited the arrival of Abercromby's force, which was at that moment concentrating at Mahon. By following this course, the Austrian army ran no chance of falling short of supplies or munitions, and would have even been in a position to receive reinforcements, inasmuch as its communications with Florence and Bologna were open, and a Neapolitan army occupied the Tuscan provinces. Her communications by sea were also open, by which means the Austrian commander might, if he deemed it desirable, march by the Corniche on Tuscany, and attain Parma or Modena, having a considerable portion of his artillery and war materials conveyed to Lerici, in the gulf of Spezia, by sea.

Melas had accorded full consideration to this plan. On the 10th of June, a few hours after hearing the results of the battle of Montebello, he had written to Lord Keith that it was his

intention to give battle, and that, should fortune go against him, he would retire to Genova. He therefore begged the admiral to collect all the necessary provisions. Prince Hohenzollern likewise had received instructions to collect supplies at Genova as a precaution in case the Austrian army should, owing to the unfortunate issue of the battle, find itself compelled to retire on Genova by way of Novi.

In the afternoon of the 12th of June, Bonaparte was tormented by the utter absence of information. He feared lest the Austrian army should have retired either on Genova or on the Ticino, if it had not marched against Suchet, with the object of crushing him, and of afterwards returning to confront the Army of Reserve. It was this uncertainty that made Bonaparte quit the excellent position of Stradella, which he had carefully prepared, and where he had counted on awaiting Melas's attack.

Stradella was a strong position, formed by a lower ridge of the Apennines which juts out towards the Po, where the intersected and broken nature of the ground promised to render the numerous cavalry of the enemy ineffective. In this position Bonaparte had remained for three days, fortifying and intrenching himself more and more, and covering with bridge-heads the two bridges over the Po in his rear.* But, becoming impatient under the influence of the suspense which the utter dearth of information brought about, he resolved to quit such a favourable position, and to approach the plain of Marengo.

The importance of being adequately informed in war has been admitted by all great commanders, and possibly no one devoted keener attention to this point than Napoleon; for he well knew how timely and reliable information is indispensable for success. Here we have an instance in which the absence of information induced Bonaparte to order a portion of his troops to make a false movement, and caused him to remain up to the last moment in the dark as to his adversary's projects.

The scarcity of news may truly be imputed to the cavalry, which had not been able to gather anything beyond the most vague scraps of information, and this because it had not reconnoitred far enough to the front. In justice to that arm, it must be stated that it had been studiously held back and kept

* "*Je ne vois pas encore comment M. Melas s'en tirera : ou il viendra attaquer à Stradella, et il sera battu et perdu.*"—From the First Consul to the Minister of War. Milan, 20 Prairial (9th June).

with the infantry. Kellermann's brigade was the foremost one, but this brigade was employed as an advanced guard, more with the object of screening the French army than of discovering what was passing in front of it. Its action, as Commandant Picard puts it, "*Avait plus pour mission de couvrir que de découvrir.*"* At that period the exploration service, so eminently necessary to enable a commander-in-chief to make his dispositions, was still in a rudimentary state. It was not then fully recognized that the rôle of the cavalry before the battle is more important even than its rôle during the battle and after it. Neither was a cavalry general accorded all the liberty of action necessary to conduct a thoroughly effective exploration.

The opposite side was not a whit better informed. Melas's cavalry was far superior in numbers to the French, and enjoyed the reputation of being the best in Europe. Nevertheless, in the way of exploration, it did nothing.

We have before us Bonaparte's feeling of uncertainty as to his adversary's plans. On the morning of the 13th, this was augmented by the statement made by a peasant who had been brought before him at eleven o'clock. This peasant informed the First Consul that Melas was actually preparing for a retreat on Genova; that Elsnitz's cavalry, in fact, was already on the march. Bonaparte was disturbed by this report, made, as it appears, by a man in the pay of the Austrian staff. This caused him to send an order to Desaix to march on Novi.†

An able general will move detachments of his troops in different directions, so as to puzzle his adversary, and drive him to weaken the point where he intends to strike. But Melas did not resort to any clever manœuvre of this kind, and what puzzled Bonaparte so much was that the Austrian forces seemed to have quite vanished, leaving no trace of themselves anywhere.

Frederick the Great maintained the ancient adage that he who separates his forces will be beaten in detail. Napoleon laid it down as a rule that "no force should be detached on the eve of battle; because circumstances may change during the night, either by the retreat of the enemy, or by his being joined by large reinforcements, which might enable him to resume the offensive, and render all premature dispositions disastrous." It was a maxim ever on his lips to prepare for a decisive action

* Commandant Picard, "*La Cavalerie à Marengo,*" p. 9.

† Gachot, "*La Deuxième Campagne d'Italie,*" p. 267.

by bringing in every available man, for no one could tell when the result might turn on the presence of a few men more or less.

Those being his convictions, how was it that, on the eve of the battle of Marengo, we find Bonaparte acting in contradiction to them? Evidently everything originated from his fixed idea that Melas was endeavouring to escape from him. The only way still open to Melas was that of Genova. It may be presumed that Bonaparte felt thoroughly convinced that the Austrians were ready to march to Novi, if they had not already shown themselves on the road, towards the important city which was to place them in connection with the sea and the British fleet. His surprise in not finding the Austrian army drawn up ready to give him battle on so fair a field as the plain of Marengo must have raised in his mind a strange doubt as to their forces being still in the neighbourhood of Alessandria.

Another circumstance also tended to indicate that Melas contemplated a retreat. That was his having despatched the reserve artillery park towards Mantua. He was evidently desirous to free his army of its cumbersome impedimenta.

A commander with a deep intuition in all the intricacies of war would most naturally expect his adversary to follow what he himself believed to be the best alternative under the existing conditions. Of an officer like Melas, who had shown so very little enterprise, the last thing Bonaparte was likely to expect was that he would have attacked him on the 14th of June.

He himself proceeded to Castel Novo di Scrivia on the 13th of June, from where he enjoined Murat to cause the whole ground between the Scrivia and the Bormida to be explored in every direction by the light cavalry. The movement of that day was nothing less than a reconnoissance of the plain of Marengo, performed by nearly the whole of his army.

The information which the cavalry gathered—at a time when the true principles of cavalry exploration were insufficiently understood—being found very scanty, the First Consul himself traversed the plain in every part. Both the cavalry and the scouts failed to explore sufficiently ahead to discover the main body of the Austrians concentrated under the walls of Alessandria. Everything was against the reconnoitring party. It was difficult to obtain a fair view, for the Austrian army was located in rear of a broad and winding river, with wooded banks,

the crossing being protected by a well-armed and defended bridge-head. Certainly had any of the French patrols shown themselves on the right bank of the Bormida, they would have been received with musketry, which, possibly, would have indicated the extent of ground occupied by the enemy's army.

When Marengo was carried on the evening of the 13th, Gardanne made about a hundred prisoners. Probably little information was extracted from them, for these troops had come from the field of Montebello, and had been halted outside Alessandria, at the village of Marengo. Besides, we know now, what was not known then, that most of the Austrian troops had crossed the Tanaro only that very day.

The enemy's retreat across the Bormida in the evening of the 13th gave good grounds for forming a fair opinion of Melas's intentions. Who would have ever believed it possible that an army of over 30,000 men would have left the important position of Marengo to the enemy, with hardly any opposition, when its chief fully intended to deliver battle on the right bank of the Bormida the next day, with the object of opening itself a passage through the French army?

An anterior prepossession existed in Bonaparte's mind—he strongly believed that the enemy would avoid the battle, and withdraw to Genova. All that had hitherto occurred he interpreted in the same sense, and we all know how very difficult it is to shake off an idea once it has been allowed to take firm root in the mind.

There is much excuse, after all, to be made for Bonaparte, when we consider that a retreat behind the Apennines was the best move Melas could make, therefore the most likely one to be made.

Everything considered, it was prudent to take steps for preventing his escape. This appears to justify the detachment sent to Rivalta on the 13th. Special circumstances and the peculiar aspect of affairs seemed to demand it. Bonaparte, who had quite lately given the following advice to Massena, "*Gardez vous d'avoir une ligne trop étendue,*" was not likely to fall into the same error without some very good reason. The great dispersion of his forces was in a certain way imposed on him from not knowing precisely the place where the enemy's forces were going to concentrate.

If Boudet's division was to form an advanced guard for

offensive operations in the direction of Novi on the 14th, so as to interfere with any movement of the Austrian army, there is nothing to censure. If, on the other hand, Bonaparte simply desired to ascertain the truth of the reported retreat of the Austrians on Genova, it appears to us that a detachment of cavalry sent direct from the plain of Marengo on the 13th would have sufficiently answered the purpose, and would have obtained the information more speedily. The cavalry, having sent in their report, would have remained in observation.

Bonaparte's army, already weakened by many detachments left to close the way to the Austrians, was not sufficiently strong to dispense with a division to reconnoitre in the direction of Novi. His numbers did not sanction such an extension of his forces as he ordered on the 13th, and but for the timely swelling of the Scrivia, Desaix, on the 14th, would have been much further from the battlefield.

Moltke, in his "Franco-German War," remarks: "In war it is for the most part with probabilities only that the strategist can reckon; and the probability, as a rule, is that the enemy will do the right thing." In this case the total absence of information, the abandonment of a fair battlefield, the false news purposely given by a peasant, and the scarcity of the bivouac fires, were all circumstances tending to show that the enemy was bent on doing the best thing in his power, viz. to withdraw in the direction of Genova.

Bonaparte always formed his plans and manœuvres on the capacity and system of his opponent. In this instance he calculated on the little initiative and enterprise hitherto shown by the Austrian general, and was fully convinced that he would be all for effecting a retreat. He left out of account entirely that Melas might take heart at the last moment, and might resolve on cutting his way through to Piacenza, and so recover his communications. It is so true that the unexpected very often occurs in war.

The position of an army at night can be best gauged by the bivouac fires. The reflection of these fires on the sky is a very good indication of the size of an army, possibly a more accurate indication than what can be obtained by day. Before returning to his headquarters on the night of the 13th, Bonaparte had beheld so few of the enemy's fires that he was more than ever strengthened in his conviction that the Austrian

commander-in-chief contemplated a retreat. In this frame of mind he sent orders to Desaix to push on to Novi in the early morning with Boudet's division.

A very heavy storm had broken out in the afternoon of the 13th; nevertheless, the Austrians lighted no fires, lest these should betray their presence.

The Duke of Rovigo writes that the Austrian army had lighted no fires;* but he falls into error when he states that Melas had led the whole of his army across the Bormida. It was only his advanced guard that passed the night on the right bank of that river.

Historians have allowed their imagination to run wild regarding Desaix—the reasons which caused him to retrace his steps on the eventful 14th of June, his pithy words to Bonaparte, and the hour of his arrival on the battlefield. The statements about the hour he reached the battlefield are, above all, very conflicting. Dupont says: “*Il était alors 5 heures du soir.*” It was then five o'clock in the evening. And Boudet's journal shows that his division did reach San Giuliano at about that hour. The Austrian account runs: “It might have been about five o'clock when this general arrived from Rivalta” (“*Il pouvait être 5 heures environ, lors que ce général arriva de Rivalta*”). Crossard likewise states that the division from Novi reached the field at about five o'clock: “*Il pouvait être alors cinq heures du soir.*” †

Let us go back to the previous day, and see what had happened to Desaix's command. We may reasonably do this, as the various incidents had a marked influence on the events of the 14th.

It was already noon on the 13th when Desaix gave the orders for Boudet's division to march from Ponte Curone, to proceed by way of Sarrezano to Rivalta, and thence to Serravalle.

* The duke states that Bonaparte had remained on horseback by his vedettes for a good part of the night, and had beheld a very small number of the enemy's fires. This does not tally with Berthier's narrative, for his words are: “As soon as night had come on and the divisions had settled in their bivouacs, Bonaparte left in all haste to return to the headquarters at Voghera, and to receive news from all the points occupied by the army.”

† “*Il Buonaparte poco prima di mezzo giorno viene alfine informato da uno dei suoi aiutanti, giunto dalla parte di Rivalta, che il Desaix è stato trovato, ma che la divisione Boudet non potrà essere sul luogo dell'azione prima delle 5 di sera.*”—Capitano V. Pittaluga, “La Battaglia di Marengo.”

The division set out at once. As Tortona, however, was occupied by an Austrian garrison, Boudet's division kept the fortress well on its right, and marched along the right bank of the Grua rivulet as far as Sarrezano to the south-east of Tortona, and thence by the hills of the Tortonese. Under ordinary circumstances, the division should have reached Rivalta the same evening; but it had been overtaken by very heavy rain, which had rendered its march extremely arduous. The rain had also swollen the Scrivia to such an extent that its passage by a large body of troops had become an excessively difficult undertaking.

The same swelling of the Scrivia, which was to detain Bonaparte at Torre di Garofoli on the evening of the 13th, when bent on returning to Voghera, was to keep Boudet's division from crossing over to the left bank of that stream.

At about 5 p.m., the 1st Hussars and the 9th Light Infantry, which were leading, approached the banks of the river. The few foot-soldiers who tried to get across by holding by the horses' tails were swept away by the impetus of the current, and their lives were saved with great difficulty. An attempt was made to effect a passage elsewhere, at Valvernia. This met with less success, for three of the men were drowned. The general tried next, with not much better success, at Castellar Ponzano. During the night, by the aid of a boat, a small part of the 9th Light Infantry was ferried across; the bulk of that corps bivouacked on the right bank of the Scrivia opposite Rivalta. The 30th and 59th of the line, under the command of Brigadier-General Guénand, spent the night on the hills of Sarrezano to guard the artillery. It was only by the assistance of twenty pairs of oxen that the guns could be brought to the banks of the Scrivia, and then not before nine o'clock the following morning.

Desaix, with his customary energy, made every effort, and tried every possible expedient for getting his troops across to the left bank of the swollen river. But the enterprise was full of difficulty, and the crossing took much time. Fortunately, when Desaix was about driven to despair, a priest, one Guasone, a very ardent partisan of the French, stepped forward and volunteered to aid him. The good man soon gathered all the country folks, peasants, boatmen, and fishermen; boats, carts, and materials were everywhere sought, and by all this combined

aid the French were soon ferried to the left bank of the Scrivia.*

We consider it best to follow General Boudet's version, which was written when the events were quite recent. As De Cugnae justly observes, Boudet's journal was written with great candour; his story, therefore, should be accepted as very trustworthy. Boudet reports: "At the break of day (on the 14th of June) the water did not yet permit us to ford, but a boat had been secured by the help of some boatmen, whom a detachment had carried off from Tortona during the night. The troops crossed speedily, and went to take post at Rivalta. Towards ten o'clock in the morning the waters had fallen, and the artillery was able to ford the river."

This report shows in a very clear way the locality and manner in which the division got across the river. "Desaix had despatched to headquarters to know what dispositions were to follow the occurrences of the previous evening. He received the order (fortunately too late) to march on Pozzolo Formigaro, an intermediate position, from which he could have proceeded certainly, but with a good deal of time, to Alessandria, or to the Genova road, in case the enemy should have attempted to effect its retreat that way.

"My division had not got a mile beyond Rivalta, when one of the commander-in-chief's aides-de-camp came in hot haste to bring me the order to march to San Giuliano, and thence on Marengo, where the two hostile armies had been fighting from the break of day." The last paragraph contains an exaggeration, inasmuch as Gardanne was only attacked at about nine o'clock—"à 9 heures du matin."

Boudet makes no mention of any sound of heavy firing; neither does Dalton in his report to Dupont, chief of the staff. This last report is understood to have been sent from Rivalta at 9 a.m. on the 14th. Savary, on the contrary, writes that hardly had the day broken when a powerful cannonade was heard in the distance in rear of their right.

Marmont in his "Mémoires," as Savary in his, states that Desaix, on hearing the clamour of the battle, had stopped his movement in the direction of Novi, and waited for orders; which

* This is what Captain V. Pittaluga writes with regard to Boudet's division, gathered from local tradition. Nothing of what is reported to have been done by the priest is contrary to Boudet's report.

probably would be sent him, as the enemy was not effecting a retreat as it had been supposed he intended to do. In the face of what Boudet writes in his "Rapport des Marches et Opérations," we can dismiss this story of halting for orders. Boudet distinctly states that the division was marching on Pozzolo Formigaro when the order of recall arrived.

According to Savary, Bonaparte never so much as dreamt that Melas would advance to attack him, though two emissaries from the enemy, who appeared at Voghera, seemed sent especially for the purpose of finding out if the French army intended to advance against the Austrians. His fear was lest Melas should escape him to avoid a battle which held little prospect of success. Novi was the place through which he expected the enemy's troops would pass in making their way to Genova.

Desaix had been directed on the evening of the 13th of June to push a reconnaissance as far as that town. Savary was ordered to undertake the duty. He went to Novi, but could find no trace of the enemy, and returned to Rivalta; and his report was forwarded to the First Consul. Trucco states that Bonaparte was having supper with Baron di Garofoli, when at a late hour he received Savary's report giving the result of his reconnaissance at Novi, and stating that the town was not occupied.

Dalton speaks of reconnaissances pushed as far as Serravalle on the evening and night of the 13th along both banks of the Scrivia, when it was found that the enemy occupied that post. The explorations showed also that some Republican troops were occupying Novi. To what corps these troops belonged he does not say. They may possibly have been Savary's party.

Even Savary's report does not seem to have reassured Bonaparte. It was difficult to persuade him that the Austrians would not have tried to evade him by using a road which was yet sufficiently safe and not watched.

But if Melas had any intention of using this road it was high time to be moving, for shortly it could no longer have been considered safe. He must have known that Suchet was advancing on Acqui, if he was not there already, and the chances were in favour of his crossing the Bormida, leaving Alessandria well to his left, and making for Novi and Tortona.

Desaix, by what has been stated, and by the very trustworthy

report of General Boudet, the next officer in seniority to him, neither marched to the sound of the guns, as some writers pretend, nor did he do the next best thing to it—halt on hearing the cannonade on his right and send for orders. He received orders to proceed to Pozzolo Formigaro. These orders were possibly despatched at about ten in the morning—when the real extent of the Austrian attack was not fully known at headquarters—and may have reached him at about noon of the 14th. The order of recall did not reach him till later, at about 1 p.m. This, alas! destroys the happy inspiration which Thiers attributes to Desaix, “to that Desaix who, guessing before having received them the orders of his chief, came to bring him victory and his life.”* “*Magna est veritas, et prevalebit.*”

Savary, by his own account, when heavy firing was heard on the right rear, was again sent to Novi to reconnoitre. He states that he set out early in the morning, taking with him fifty horsemen, and lost no time in getting to his destination. On reaching the town, he found things there exactly as he had left them on the previous afternoon. Everything was quiet, and there was not a vestige of the enemy.

Savary returned as quickly as he had gone, and in two hours was back by the side of his general. He states that he went to make his report in person to the First Consul, and to inform him how Desaix had stopped his movement and was waiting for fresh orders. This does not coincide with the statements contained in the diary of Boudet's division, according to which orders were solicited from headquarters before the waters of the Scrivia had fallen, which did not occur before ten o'clock.

Savary states that, being quite alive to the importance of his mission, he wended his way across country, taking for his direction the sound of the fire and the smoke. As luck would have it, he crossed Bruyère, one of the First Consul's aides-de-camp,† who was likewise galloping across country in search of Desaix, to deliver an order for his immediate march to the

* One is distressed at having to say anything that may deduct from Desaix's reputation; but in the interest of history the truth must be told. He was the soul of honour, and would have been the first to discredit all the legends. His glory, after all, is so great that it cannot in any way be lessened by exposing fictions.

† Bruyère's name is inscribed on the Arc de Triomphe. He was a light cavalry officer, and died of his wounds at Görlitz on the 5th of June, 1813.

battlefield, where a reinforcement was greatly needed.* The two aides-de-camp by this fortunate meeting found out the whereabouts of the general officers they were respectively in quest of.

Bonaparte was pleased to hear what Savary had to report about Desaix's division. He was very anxious for his arrival, and put some questions to the aide-de-camp, evidently imagining from the replies that he was very close at hand. "Go," he said, "and tell him to form up there" (pointing to the locality with his hand); "to quit the high-road, to allow all those wounded to pass on, as they would only obstruct him and possibly sweep away his men."

We have remarked on some inaccuracies and errors in Marmont's accounts, and we have the same complaint to make against another eye-witness. In the Duke of Rovigo's narrative there are several points almost impossible to explain. He says absolutely nothing about the difficulty experienced in crossing the swollen Scrivia, which was an important point. His narrative would seem to convey the idea that at daybreak on the 14th Boudet's troops were all concentrated at Rivalta, so that nothing remained but to set them in motion; whereas we have Dalton's report, in which he distinctly states that early that morning only a small portion of Boudet's division was on the left bank of the Scrivia, and that the best part of the said division, the 30th and 59th of the line, and the artillery, were still at Sarrezano. The whole, in fact, were not really concentrated on the left bank of the Scrivia much before noon on the 14th.

If Desaix, as Savary states, heard the sound of the guns as day was breaking—and the day breaks very early in the month of June—and, as Gachot puts it more definitely, at seven o'clock in the morning, and it took Savary two hours to ride to Novi and back, he would have left Rivalta at 9 a.m. to go and make his report to the First Consul. Gachot makes Desaix receive his orders of recall—"à 8 heures et demie, il reçut la dépêche de Bonaparte;" and this does not quite tally with Savary's account of his accidental meeting with Bruyère.

* Lockhart states that Desaix was already half a day's journey from headquarters when Bonaparte received intelligence which made him recall all his detachments. Berthier, in giving a recapitulation of the French forces, places Desaix's troops in the reserve, being on the march from Rivalta, from whence they had been summoned as soon as the enemy's designs had been penetrated.

The narrative of the Duke of Rovigo is very disappointing. As he was one of Desaix's aides-de-camp, one might have expected him to elucidate many points regarding the battle of Marengo of which history was deprived by the unfortunate death of his chief. However, what he writes is very brief, and his statements do not tally with those of Boudet and Dalton, who took a more conspicuous part in the battle.

The dates of certain memorable events sink into men's minds, besides which it is easy for a careful writer to look them up. But even here Savary errs, though he admits that, possibly, the exact dates may have slipped from his memory.*

It detracts much from the interest of the duke's narrative that no statement is made of the time when he reported having left Desaix at Rivalta. "Bonaparte, taking out his watch, asked, 'At what hour did you quit him?' 'At such and such an hour,' I replied" ("A telle heure, lui répondis-je"). In war precision with regard to time is essential. To give an indefinite hour would imply that the duke attached no importance to this point. These "Mémoires" were published some years after the events, for they first appeared in 1828, and are evidently too incorrect to serve as a guide. We may note the following passage to show how unreliable the "Mémoires" are. Referring to the passage of the guns over the Alps, the duke writes: "The ardour was such that the First Consul found the next day at the foot of the mountain, on the Italian side, fifty guns on their carriages. They were accompanied by their waggons filled with ammunition, which had been sent over on the backs of mules. The guns and carriages were horsed and ready to march." †

The duke says that it was three o'clock on the 14th when Desaix came up with Boudet's division. But Marmont, who also took a more prominent part in the battle, writes: "It was nearly five o'clock, and Boudet's division, on which our safety and our hopes depended, had not yet arrived. At last, shortly after, it rejoined us."

Alison states that the vehemence of the cannonade convinced Bonaparte that a general battle was at hand; and that he instantly despatched orders to Desaix to retrace his steps from Novi, and to hasten to the scene of action. This idea Bonaparte apparently formed at about eleven o'clock. It was then evident

* See note, p. 203, of "Mémoires du Duc de Rovigo."

† "Mémoires du Duc de Rovigo," tom. i. p. 255.

to him that the Austrians had not retired along the Novi road, as he had all along imagined that they might possibly have done. This clearing of the doubt may have been the result of Savary's report. In any case, however it came about, he became convinced that the storm was on the point of bursting in the direction of Marengo, and accordingly sent orders to hasten Desaix's return. Some writers have given the exact words of the order: "I have always anticipated attacking the enemy. He has forestalled me. In the name of God come back, if you are able to do so." V. Pittaluga, in his narrative of the battle of Marengo, refutes the authenticity of this order. It is the Duke of Valmy who gives it in his "Histoire de la Campagne de 1800." In a footnote the duke explains that the letter, *billet*, was seen in General Desaix's hands, as he received it, by a young Hungarian, attached to the general as orderly officer; that it was General de Faverges who gathered this fact from the mouth of the ocular witness. Pittaluga questions the genuineness of the message on account of the style being so unmilitary. He declares that Bonaparte was not given to make use of such despairing exclamations, or to giving ambiguous orders to his generals. He often enjoined them to do things seemingly impossible, never to do *if they could*.

This order, whether verbal or in writing, was despatched from the Torre di Garofoli, where the headquarters were. Rivalta being about twelve kilometres away, it would have been in Desaix's hands by noon or thereabouts, and allowing for the necessary dispositions and the time employed in marching, the division might have been expected at San Giuliano between four and five o'clock in the afternoon.

Boudet's division, quitting its position a mile beyond Rivalta at about 1 p.m., and marching at the rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles per hour, would not have reached San Giuliano much before 5 p.m. Boudet says truly that the march was accelerated, but it was carried out in the early hours of a very hot afternoon, so that $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles per hour would have been considered good marching for a division. The distance and the late hour at which the order was received would account for the division not appearing on the battlefield much before five o'clock.

Let us return to the battlefield. It was now about four o'clock in the afternoon, and by all appearance victory seemed fully inclined to side with the Austrians. The French army

was in full retreat, and on the plain of Marengo no other position remained in their hands but the one of San Giuliano. To the advance of the Austrian columns the French in certain parts of the field made hardly any show of resistance. And even the few troops of Monnier's division which hung yet about the vineyards of Castel Ceriolo, after having for some time made head against the attacks of Ott's troops, had ended, as we have said, by retiring in the direction of Torre di Garofoli.

Coignet states that at 2 p.m. the officers already looked upon the battle as lost. The state of the contest at 2.30 p.m. was, the French left routed, the centre and right in disorder. Lannes in his report says that, after a cannonade and fusillade which had lasted eight hours, Victor had to beat a retreat. This might lead one to believe that Victor only withdrew his forces at 4 p.m., when by that time his men had already gained the neighbourhood of San Giuliano. All that the French could do at that hour (4 p.m.) was to offer a passive resistance.

Whilst matters were in this distracting plight, there were some in the ranks of the French army who studied the demeanour of their commander-in-chief. On that day and at that dreadful hour, Bonaparte remained perfectly unmoved, encouraging his men. His perfect self-possession and the sudden inspiration so thoroughly peculiar to him never deserted him. Watching every turn of the contest and grasping the importance of every movement, his assurance never gave way for an instant. He gave his orders with his accustomed coolness; he beheld the tempest increasing without fear; while the shot flew incessantly around him, some of his attendants falling every minute by his side, he remained quite oblivious to all personal danger. His voice and his traits were not altered in the least. His generals, the officers, and even the soldiers, showed more concern. Voices were heard on all sides calling that his proper post was not in the midst of the fire.* Victory, however, was not far distant, and, faithful to him, came heralded by the gallant Desaix, his friend, the model of great men.

Melas had been in the saddle from a very early hour that day. He had several times ridden over the battlefield. He had received a slight wound in the left forearm, and had had two horses killed under him. He had lost the alertness and eagerness

* He remained untouched. Fortune disappointed the speculations of those Frenchmen who hoped that he might have fallen in battle.

of youth, and the heavy responsibilities of the latter weeks had preyed on his constitution. Shortly after 2 p.m., convinced that Bonaparte was drawing off the field, that the battle had been gained, and that the French were irretrievably beaten, he left the battlefield and wended his way back to Alessandria. He not only desired to take the rest of which he was much in need, but also to forward to the Austrian Court a message announcing the victory.

Crossard relates that as Melas was about to quit the battlefield, he told General Saint Julien: "It is now an accomplished thing. They are retiring at all points. You will not proceed beyond San Giuliano, where you will post the right of the infantry. You will see that the enemy is pursued by your cavalry and light artillery, which must kill as many of their men as possible whilst in the act of crossing the Scrivia. As for myself, I am old; I have been in the saddle since midnight, therefore I will go and lie down." *

As long as a battle lasts, a commander can only look for a probability of success, and on nothing positive. So many things may occur, so many accidents come to grasp victory out of his hands. An aide-de-camp carrying an order is killed, injured, or taken prisoner; one of the generals misconceives his rôle; a column kept back by bad roads arrives too late; reinforcements may come up for the enemy. One or more of such mishaps may make the most promising battle fail.

Many generals are clever enough to win a battle, but are quite incapable of drawing any advantage from the victory. Melas was here a case in point. As soon as the aged chief was back in Alessandria, he hastened to inform his imperial master of the splendid victory he had obtained over the French. It was Colonel Radetsky who was commanded to convey the announcement, which was couched in the following words: "After a lengthy and bloody battle on the plains of Marengo, the troops of His Majesty the Emperor have thoroughly beaten the French army which was led into Italy and directed in the fight by General Bonaparte. A subsequent despatch will descend into particulars, giving the results of the victory, which Zach's lieutenant-generals are now collecting on the battlefield." †

* Crossard, "Mémoires Militaires et Historiques pour servir à l'Histoire de la Guerre depuis 1792 jusqu'en 1815," tom. iii. p. 298.

† At the time that Radetsky was charged to execute this mission he was simply

There have been other battles in which the troops on both sides fought with great determination, and with fluctuating success during the day, and in which a vigorous effort towards the close of the day, after so many hours of hard struggling, accorded victory to the side that made it. So it was at Marengo.

Melas came to a very hasty conclusion, and committed an egregious blunder. Had he reflected that the adversary he was contending against was a general of brilliant talent and endless resources, he might have deemed it possible, or even probable, that the day would not be allowed to close without his making some unexpected effort.

The commander-in-chief's abandonment of the battlefield was found to have a bad effect. On one side was a leader who quitted the battlefield before the battle was actually over, on the other an alert general, who was doing his best to restore the supremacy of his troops. The change of commanders on the Austrian side led to hesitation and want of unity.

At four in the afternoon, or thereabouts, Lannes, then in position between Valmagra and La Buschetta, was skirmishing with Ott's and Frimont's advanced guards. Victor, less fortunate, taking advantage of the defile of San Giuliano and under the protection of Kellermann's and Champeaux's horsemen, had succeeded in getting some 2000 or 3000 men together. Carra Saint Cyr, almost cut off in Castel Ceriolo, had not been able to prevent Ott's advance on Villanova. The head of Rivaud's brigade, which was intact, had marched up from Salé; it was showing itself at Piovera and threatening Ott's left, then advancing on Villanova.

The French were in full retreat. The retreat of one corps had entailed the retreat of the others. It began on the left more in the guise of a flight than of a retreat; on the right it was conducted with more steadiness, still only two of Lannes's regiments adhered to the orders he had issued for the good result of the manœuvre. In falling back, the right withdrew steadily and slowly, showing a bold front to the enemy from time to time. The left was completely broken; confusion, terror, and indescribable disorder prevailed on that side of the battlefield.

a staff officer, a young colonel thirty-four years old. More than possibly, it never entered his head that, close on half a century later, he would, as commander-in-chief of an Austrian army, become renowned for his brilliant campaigns in Italy.

There was no intentional change of front such as Napoleon endeavoured to make people believe in his various accounts of the battle.

De Cugnac dubs Napoleon as the inventor of a premeditated retreat pivoting on Castel Ceriolo. He shows that the battle was fought without any settled plan. He states that it was fought "by a natural succession of unforeseen episodes: attack and defence of the Fontanone and of Marengo; reinforcements of troops of the first line; critical position of the French, whose artillery was much inferior in number and whose ammunition had become expended; retreat towards the localities in which they had camped on the eve; lastly, appearance on the scene of Boudet's division, which, seeming at first only capable of staying the pursuit, attacks with such vigour, is assisted to such purpose by Kellermann's cavalry, that the enemy's advanced guard is dispersed, and the entire Austrian army, seized by a panic, flies in disorder, quitting the battlefield."

An ocular witness, Petit of the Consular Guard, declares that at 4 p.m., in a line of five miles or more, there were not more than 6000 men standing with the colours, 1000 cavalry and six serviceable cannons. He shows that fully a third of the army had been rendered ineffective, and that, owing to a want of transport, more than another third was occupied in removing the wounded. He adds that fatigue and thirst had driven a large number of officers from the field, and with bad consequences. Against these discouraged troops was advancing an enormous mass of infantry protected by a most powerful artillery.

At that moment, the French were in a sad predicament, the demeanour of the troops in every part of the field alike showed most clearly that the battle was lost. The French at that hour could only offer a mild resistance. The bad plight they were in is no secret, for even the official bulletin issued on the 14th of June admits it. "The enemy," so it runs, "was advancing all along the line, over a hundred guns were firing case-shot. The roads were crowded with fugitives, wounded, and abandoned materials. To all appearance the battle was lost." The right wing of the Austrian army, whilst pushing back the remnants of Victor's and Lannes's corps, was slowly advancing by the road which goes from Marengo to San Giuliano.

Zach, in whose hands Melas had left the completion of the defeat, instead of following the French in hot pursuit, satisfied himself by occupying the Marengo-Tortona road with the object of cutting the French from their proper line of retreat. To this effect he formed a deep column to be preceded by an advance-guard.

This advance-guard was composed of Saint Julien's and Lattermann's brigades, flanked on the left by Lichtenstein's regiment of dragoons. A mile or so in the rear followed Kaim, with the brigades of Bellegarde, Knesevich, and Lamarsaille. With a like interval Weidenfeld's grenadier brigade brought up the rear.

On the left of this main column rode the cavalry in two lines, a regiment of the Archduke John's dragoons, and what remained of Pilatti's brigade.

Flanking the main column on the right, and marching along the Lungafame-Cascina Grossa road were three battalions of De Briey's regiment. Frimont with some troops marched on Poggi, to keep the connection with Sticker's regiment of Ott's corps. O'Reilly, from Frugarolo, moved on Cascina Grossa, having found no trace of Suchet in the direction of Novi or on the Orba.

Zach marched with the advance-guard, at the head of which was Wallis's regiment.

The Austrians were drawn up more in order of march than in suitable attack formation. They had been under arms from the earliest morning of a very oppressive day, overcoming an obstinate resistance. Before launching this column forth in pursuit, no steps whatever had been taken to restore order or anything like a regular array. Crossard remarks on the disorder amongst the Austrian troops when they saw the French defence becoming so feeble. Elated by the prospect of victory, which seemed thoroughly within their grasp, the Austrians imagined that by this time all resistance was at an end, and advanced in a loose and disorderly style. Experience seldom fails to show that negligence of this kind is rarely allowed to pass unpunished.

In Chevalier de Cavour's notes on the "*Mémoires du Général Danican sur la Bataille d'Alexandrie ou Marengo*," the writer refers to this point, and alludes to a warning which Zach received. "In vain," writes Cavour, "did the talented Lieutenant-Colonel Ielkman remind him that the army was completely

tired out, and several battalions in disorder, prostrated on the ground by weariness; that there was no longer a line, some regiments being too far forward, and others having remained too far behind; that it was expedient to give breathing-time to the troops, to reform the line, to get up some guns, and afterwards to carry the said village.* He would hear no reason, and ordered the attack, which had a thorough success, but it was the last."

Something quite similar is what Baron Crossard writes in his "Mémoires." He was a French emigrant attached to General Vogelsang, who commanded a division on the left wing of the Austrian army. He writes that disorder pervaded the ranks; that the troops marched on the high-road, without feelers, with bands playing; that the soldiers, unchecked, quitted the ranks to strip the dead; and that the officers, much elated, were leaving their places to join in mutual congratulations. Troubled by seeing these irregularities, he brought them to the notice of his general. Vogelsang, apparently, did not receive these observations in good part. Crossard's strictures were allowed to pass unnoticed, and he was told not to make himself unpleasant.†

As Zach's formidable column was advancing, the French had received a reinforcement in that part of the field, and this was to decide the fate of the day. It has been shown how, as soon as it had been definitely made clear that the entire Austrian army had crossed the Bormida to give battle in the plain of Marengo, the First Consul had hastened to recall the troops under Desaix's command.

At about 4 p.m., Bonaparte, having charged Berthier to superintend the retreat—which was to be directed on San Giuliano Vecchio, but as slowly as possible—repaired to the Villa Ghilina. He was extremely impatient regarding Desaix's arrival, on whom he greatly relied; and it is said that from the top of the villa, where he was with the Marquis Ghilini, he first caught sight of Boudet's approaching division. At last this so-much-looked-for reinforcement was at hand. It would give him a fresh body with which, if nothing else, to cover his

* The village alluded to evidently was San Giuliano, though the Austrians never reached it; for they were met by Boudet's division before getting up to it.

† S. Crossard, "Mémoires Militaires et Historiques pour servir à l'Histoire de la Guerre depuis 1792 jusqu'en 1815," tom. ii. 296.

retreat, for little hope there was of accomplishing anything more. Bold would have been the man who could have dreamt, as things were going, of anything beside it. Possibly Bonaparte might have conceived turning an incipient defeat into a victory, but it was a thing that no one else would have thought of at that supreme moment. Bourrienne writes: "*On ne parlait à San Giuliano que de la retraite à laquelle, disait-on, Bonaparte seul s'opposait avec fermeté.*" Quiot was alongside of General Victor when Bonaparte accosted him. "The latter," he declares, "was not moved, but had the appearance of being much ruffled, I believe, on account of the retiring movement. I cannot recall any of his words."

So anxious was the First Consul that he hastened to meet Desaix. It was about five o'clock in the evening. The French army, almost entirely disorganized, was retiring to the right and left of San Giuliano in the direction of Torre di Garofoli. Bonaparte, who had pinned his hopes on Boudet's division, decided that it was adequate to re-establish the balance, and to give another air to the battle. He was not likely to let the first pitched battle of the campaign go against him without one more desperate attempt to retrieve the fortunes of the day. It is often so that battles are won.

At the sight of Desaix's troops, full of enthusiasm, and eager to take part in the battle, he stopped the retreat. Victor's and Lannes's corps had suffered very severely. For all that, the soldiers were not entirely devoid of ardour, and when Boudet's division came level with San Giuliano, Bonaparte, from whose perspicacious eye nothing escaped, seized the favourable opportunity; orders flew everywhere in a moment. Lannes, Monnier, and Watrin were bidden to suspend their movement to the rear. To reform, however, a proper order of battle, with troops fatigued by heat and the toil of the contest, required a certain amount of time, and this Zach had given to the French by staying his advance to form his deep column of attack.

Jomini states that what made Bonaparte reject the idea of a retreat was the spirit of the troops, and their eagerness to attack the enemy. This fixed the resolution of the First Consul. It was after he had stayed the retreat that he addressed a few inspiring words to his men—words which had the effect of increasing the ardour of the troops a hundredfold. "We have gone back enough to-day. You know that my custom is always

to sleep on the battlefield." The army replied to this appeal by one loud shout—a fair promise of victory.

With the troops in so high a state of tension, a spark only was needed to fire their enthusiasm into action. The slightest favourable incident sufficed, and it was forthcoming. Nevertheless, the credit belongs to the man who had the power to work them up to such a pitch.

Desaix preceded Boudet's division, and reached San Giuliano. At a hundred yards from the village he met the First Consul, and learnt from his mouth the principal events of the day. The conversation which followed is given in various words; the most common version is that Desaix, having pulled out his watch, exclaimed, "Ah! the battle is lost; still, it is but four o'clock, and we have time enough to win one."

It is Walter Scott who states that as Bonaparte and Desaix met, the latter said, "The battle is lost. I suppose I can do no more for you than secure your retreat?" to which Bonaparte replied, "By no means. The battle is, I trust, gained. The disordered troops whom you see are my centre and left, whom I will rally in your rear. Push forward your column."*

Here is another point where imagination has been allowed to triumph over reality. We take the evidence of an eye-witness, of Marmont. His eulogy of Desaix leaves no doubt that he entertained friendly regard for his personal and military qualities, consequently that he was not likely to suppress anything to his advantage. Now, Marmont writes that General Desaix preceded by a few minutes the arrival of Boudet's division, and overtook the First Consul. He found the business in a deplorable state, and had formed a bad opinion of it. "A kind of council, in which I assisted, was held on horseback. He (Desaix) said to the First Consul, 'Before attempting a fresh charge, it will be necessary to disconcert the enemy by a brisk fire; without this it will not succeed. It is thus, General, that battles are lost. We need absolutely a vigorous artillery fire.' To Marmont, who was explaining to him how he was going to establish a battery with the pieces that still remained, to which he would add the guns of Boudet's division, Desaix replied, 'Very good. Look here, my dear Marmont, some cannons, some cannons, and make the best possible use of them.'"

* Walter Scott errs when he says that Desaix was shot through the head.

It is unfortunate that we have no reliable record of all that occurred during this brief conference held on Desaix's arrival. Marmont was present; but he mentions only the few words spoken by Desaix which are recorded above. Respecting all the rest of the discussion he is silent. We are ignorant whether there were or were not voices in favour of a retreat. All our information on that point comes from Bourrienne, who relates that Bonaparte himself was strongly opposed to it.

Most people seem altogether to ignore the presence of the commander-in-chief at this discussion, and accept without questioning General Desaix's spurious words. The legend, in short, makes Desaix settle what fresh turn the action was to take. It is forgotten that Bonaparte naturally presided at the conference, and it is on that account that it is much to be regretted that Marmont did not give the exact words used. It would then have been seen that the idea of resuming the offensive emanated from Bonaparte himself, and from no one else. Marmont simply narrates what referred to himself, the disposition of the artillery.

Marmont took five guns, which still remained in a serviceable condition, five which had been left on the Scrivia, and had only just come on the ground, and eight of Boudet's division—in all eighteen guns, making altogether a very respectable battery.

The reserve always plays a very important rôle in a battle. It is the reserve that confronts the enemy and checks his advance, whilst it gives prompt aid to the troops which, already hard pressed on some point, are beginning to give way. The reserve rallies the runaways, stays the enemy's pursuit, and, profiting by the enemy's faults, strives to re-establish the contest. It was thus at Marengo, when late in the afternoon all the French line was in retreat. A reserve division, aided by a few regiments of heavy cavalry, stayed the pursuit of the Austrians, attacked their principal column in front and in flank, overlapped it, and compelled most of the troops to lay down their arms.

The arrival of Boudet's division re-established somewhat the equilibrium of the forces. It was the turning-point of the contest, and from that moment the fate of the battle changed. The retreat of the French ceased as if by enchantment, and the troops, which were downcast and all too ready to seek safety in a speedy retreat, turned about and faced the foe. A sudden joy

spread over the countenance of every soldier. The stragglers took heart, and, coming back with Desaix, rejoined their regiments.

Desaix took post with the centre on the main road between San Giuliano and Cascina Grossa. Boudet's division was deployed, being partly concealed from view by hedges and a thick belt of vines. The 9th Light occupied the left of the road under General Musnier. The other brigade, consisting of the 30th and 56th Regiments, under General Guénand, was on the right.

Gardanne took part on Desaix's left, facing Cascina Grossa. On the right of Desaix, on a slight elevation, were Marmont and his eighteen guns; next came Kellermann's cavalry, and the little there was of it with Boudet's division. To the right, and a little in the rear of Kellermann's cavalry, was the cavalry of the Consular Guard. Lannes was in the middle of the plain, having the grenadiers of the Consular Guard, led by Major Goulez, on his right: then came Monnier's corps extending towards the Castel Ceriolo-Salé road. Champeaux's brigade and the rest of the cavalry formed the reserve.

Two battalions of the 72nd, which had been held in reserve, co-operated with Desaix's troops in the final advance, though Boudet does not mention the fact. Monnier is loud in their praise.

By this time the head of the Austrian main column was on a level with Cascina Grossa.

With regard to the actual formation of the troops, we cannot do better than accept Boudet's statement. His words are: "I placed on the left of the main road my first brigade, of which a portion was deployed, the other in close column. I likewise ordered my second brigade to assume the same disposition on the right of the road." The 9th Light Infantry was moved forward to inspire courage to the rest of the troops, and to give time to the other brigade to take post. The artillery was placed in front of Boudet's right brigade to the north of the road. Marmont indicates its position on the right of the road. The eighteen-gun battery occupied one-half of the front of the army.

Desaix led the left brigade; Boudet, by his direction, superintended the action of the right one. Boudet speaks of a retirement by echelon of the left brigade, ordered by Desaix to bring

it more abreast with the right, which induced the Austrians to advance with greater confidence, and so caused them great surprise when the French turned and charged. This retirement, at the utmost of 200 paces, ceased, and a general advance then took place.

The left brigade, the 9th Light, had to contend against Zach's first line, composed of Wallis's regiment and the Hungarian grenadiers, who were advancing full of confidence as if victory was already theirs.

Just before resuming the offensive, the French force could not have amounted to very much more than 11,000 infantry, 1200 cavalry, and 18 guns. The reinforcement Boudet brought up consisted of 4850 infantry, 120 hussars, 123 cuirassiers, and 110 gunners. Bonaparte rode along the front of the troops, speaking encouraging words and spurring them to another effort.

Shortly after 5 p.m., the leading Austrian troops, which Zach had deployed into two lines on approaching Cascina Grossa, unconscious of the danger which menaced them, arrived within range of Marmont's guns. Zach, who had advanced with them, fully convinced that he had only to gather the trophies of victory, and that he was on the point of closing every avenue of retreat to the foe, found himself suddenly received by a powerful discharge of artillery. It was Marmont, who with his guns opened with canister-shot. A thick shower of death-dealing metal fell on the head of the Austrian column; it took the Austrians aback, for they did not anticipate a fresh resistance, being fully convinced that the French were only bent on retiring. This sudden and unlooked-for opposition startled Wallis's men, who, dreading an ambush, fell back.*

If the French were surprised in the morning, the Austrians got a surprise in the evening, when the French thus unexpectedly

* In his report on the battle, Boudet makes some remarks on the fire of the great battery: "A cannonade then opened, in which the enemy by the number of his guns had too marked a superiority over us to make the contest equal. Every instant one saw files of our troops cut down, which increased their impatience to get to close quarters." Marmont is silent on this point. After stating the position the battery occupied on the right of the San Giuliano road, his words are: "A smart and rapid fire made the enemy first hesitate, and then brought him to a standstill. . . . After about twenty minutes of this artillery fire, the army moved forward." Lauriston says the artillery opened to good purpose and with the greatest effect. When the French resumed the offensive, the Austrian artillery drew back, for fear of their guns being taken and turned against themselves.

resumed the offensive. A surprise is ever more fatal when one side allows itself to make perfectly sure of success.

Zach, however, soon succeeded in restoring order and in checking the advance of the French. The Austrians had by this time recovered from their surprise; the Hungarian grenadiers, having allowed the fugitives to get through their line, advanced slowly, firing on the French, who, in their turn, hesitated and broke. Victory was more doubtful than ever.

Most writers have made the last phase of the battle, the advance of Desaix with Boudet's division, to have been a very speedy affair; but in reality it was not so. Marmont states that the artillery prepared the action by firing on the Austrians for fully twenty minutes. Then followed the advance of the infantry. Petit states that it took an hour to form up for attack—a terrible hour to pass, he says, seeing how the Austrian artillery was bearing cruelly on the French. But Desaix's men needed a short rest after their hurried march from Rivalta.

On the point of the advance, Boudet writes in his report: "All the line got into movement, and advanced at the double; my division was foremost. My left brigade, composed of the 9th Light, had on its front to contend against the Hungarian grenadiers who had been brought together by General Melas so that this chosen corps might pursue with advantage the victory which he considered already as his own. This body of grenadiers was supported by a very large mass of cavalry, which overlapped the wing of my leading brigade; their resistance was obstinate, but rendered void by the valour of the 9th Light. A fortunate charge of our cavalry crowned this attack. . . .

"Several times the enemy's cavalry attempted to turn and surround the 9th Light; but it was received in a very discouraging manner.

"My second brigade, consisting of the 30th and 59th half-brigades (which I led in person), with really astonishing boldness, strength, and rapidity, pierced the centre of the enemy's army and cut it asunder. This brigade had constantly to defend its front flanks and rear against artillery, musketry, and various bodies of cavalry. The last especially came to the charge several times, with intent of attacking in rear. But the

perfect order of the close columns in which our battalions had kept, notwithstanding having to march across vineyards and other obstacles of ground, rendered the attempts of the cavalry not only useless, but also caused them a considerable loss."

The critical moment of the battle had arrived. In their advance the infantry had left some of the guns behind. Marmont, in trying to get two of them and a howitzer forward near the high-road, was about to limber up, when through the clouds of smoke he beheld a French regiment—the 30th—breaking up, followed by a heavy column of the enemy. Thereupon he speedily poured four rounds of canister on the head of the advancing Austrians; when just at that moment Kellermann and his horsemen dashed forward in front of the guns and made a vigorous charge. Marmont, in his "Mémoires," states that, having noticed the French battalion waver, he had advanced his guns to avert the impending disaster. This was at the very moment when the Austrians, having fired a last volley, broke into a double to attack the French infantry.

That a regiment gave way, overwhelmed by numbers, and was pursued by the Austrians is a disputed point. Victor makes no mention of any check in the advance of Desaix's column, neither does Boudet. Kellermann, in his report, made on the 15th of June, the day after the battle, writes: "I observed that the infantry, which was marching on the left of the Marengo road on a level with Cascina Grossa, was beginning to give way, and that the enemy's grenadiers were charging it at the double." Marmont writes: "All at once, I saw in front of me and to the left the 30th half-brigade in disorder and in flight. . . . I perceived, fifty paces from the 30th, in the midst of a mass of thick smoke and dust, a mass in good order. At first I thought them French, but soon detected that this was the head of a deep column of Austrian grenadiers." Marmont and Kellermann do not agree; for the 30th was not marching on the left of the Marengo road; as we have seen that the regiment on that side was the 9th. Rocquancourt deplures that such a thing should have been as much as mentioned; nevertheless, here is the evidence of two of the principal actors, and it seems plain that some corps did so retire.

A combat which commenced with such spirit was bound to reach a point in which the least circumstance was likely to be

decisive, and this circumstance occurred in Kellermann's timely charge.

Desaix had sent one of his aides-de-camp, Savary, to the First Consul to ask that Kellermann with his cavalry might be ordered to support him in his coming attack. Kellermann's brigade was advancing in one line on the right and abreast of Desaix's infantry, his advance being partly concealed by the vines which were trained on the trees. He was on the alert, and anxiously looking for any opening which might present itself. A glance showed him what aid he might render to the infantry, then beginning to give way in the neighbourhood of Cascina Grossa, were he to charge the advancing Austrians. He seized the favourable moment, wheeled the 2nd and 20th Regiments into column, broke into a gallop, and rushed at the enemy. He thus fell suddenly on the left flank and rear of the Austrians at a moment when their muskets were unloaded, and by this brilliant manœuvre captured General Zach and 2000 men.

De Brossier writes: "*Kellermann met sa troupe au galop, dépasse rapidement l'ennemi et le charge impétueusement de revers.*" Melas states: "*La cavalerie ennemie apparut, les contourna, et mit en désordre complet nôtre cavalerie.*"

The 2nd Regiment of Cavalry, followed by the 20th, burst through the massive Austrian column; the two regiments then turned about and rode through it a second time. The charge annihilated in a moment three battalions of grenadiers and the whole regiment of Wallis; all were sabred, trampled over, or broken. In this charge, the 2nd Regiment had, out of eleven officers, seven killed or wounded. The regiment captured two standards. It was a trooper of this same regiment, Riche by name, who made Zach prisoner.

Kellermann explains this encounter in the following words: "I detected that the infantry which marched on the left of the Marengo road, abreast of the Cascina Grossa, was beginning to waver, and that the enemy's grenadiers were charging it at the double. I reflected that there was not a moment to lose, and that a rapid movement might bring victory back to our flag. I halted my line of battle; I ordered platoons to the left and forward. The 2nd and 20th Cavalry found themselves at the head of the column which hurled itself headlong with impetuosity on the flank of the Austrian grenadiers at the moment when they had delivered their fire."

Zach had pushed too far forward; his column having outstripped the rest of the troops, these latter were unable to come to his aid. The grenadiers, attacked in front and on the flanks, heaped together in one mass, were more easily hemmed in, and forced to lay down their arms.

But Kellermann had no sooner directed his charge against the infantry than his eyes fell on Lichtenstein's cavalry, which was marching on the flank of the Austrian infantry to the north of the road about Guasca. He at once halted the rear of his column by ordering platoons to the right; in this way he formed again some 200 troopers into line, and with these he rushed forward to attack the Austrian cavalry and prevent their helping the grenadiers. The enemy's cavalry, stupefied by this resumption of the offensive, had remained rooted to the ground as if paralyzed, witnesses of a disaster which it was in their power to stop at once.* "I took the situation in at once," writes Kellermann, "and halting half of my column, wheeled it again into line before it had had time to enter into the midst of the enemy, and carried it in the direction of the cavalry which had been checked by this manœuvre."

À propos of his famous charge against the Austrian column at Marengo, Kellermann was wont to say, "I made it alone and by inspiration."

It would be difficult to seek in history for a parallel to the audacity of Kellermann's double manœuvre, to his scorn in weighing the odds, and to the happy inspiration which led him to dare the bold attempt.

Marmont and Kellermann declare the first step taken, when Desaix resumed the offensive, to have been unpromising. The French drew back, and, without the intervention of Kellermann's horsemen, the Austrians might have resumed their march. The instantaneous collapse of Zach's column, due to the charge of the French dragoons, had in it something of the miraculous.

Kellermann's double manœuvre marks him as a real cavalry leader. The Austrian column on his left he attacks by wheeling into column of troops, hiding the smallness of his numbers by his daring onset. But he espies another enemy on his front.

* Marmont writes *à propos* of Kellermann's charge, that a body of 2000 of the Austrian cavalry only half a cannon-shot away witnessed his attack of Zach's column without taking the slightest step to go in aid of their comrades.

He suddenly changes the formation of the rear half of his small column by wheeling it into line, and charging to the front. There was not a moment to lose. The opportunity would have swiftly passed away; and it was the celerity of the conception and execution which gained the victory for both charges.

A fact difficult to explain is how Kellermann was able to upset a column of 6000 men with such a handful of cavalry, and at such a small cost. He himself remarks, "This astonishing success has not cost me more than twenty men killed and wounded." Were the Austrians spell-bound, that they could not use their bayonets? However, of all who surrendered, only a small portion were made prisoners, for a very large part melted away in the confusion which ensued.

The Austrians were completely taken aback at seeing their career of victory arrested and the battle renewed.

The defeat of the advanced guard of the principal Austrian column infused fresh courage into the French. Their divisions, which only a few moments before had been beaten and driven back, turned about and advanced in the best of order. The whole of the French, in short, rushed forward like one man to the charge, and moved against the enemy, stirred by the inspiring sounds of bugles and drums.

Gardanne's division, which was advancing on Cascina Grossa to drive out O'Reilly's troops, received an unexpected reinforcement as it moved to the attack. A battalion of the 44th half-brigade, which had crossed the Simplon after Béthen-court, reached the field and joined their comrades.

Kellermann rallied his horsemen, still heated by the very lucky charge they had just made, and went in pursuit of Lichtenstein's dragoons. These had thrown themselves on to Pilatti's brigade, bringing with them the inseparable disorder of a flight. Pilatti's brigade, already shaken by the severe handling it had received in the forenoon, seeing Lichtenstein's dragoons withdrawing in disorder, imitated their bad example; the greater part fled to find safety behind Ott's column, some sought protection in rear of the main column.

Lichtenstein's dragoons in their flight fell over the Austrian centre when in progress of deploying, and put it into disorder, thus enabling Lannes, the Consular Guard, and Monnier's troops to dash against it with vigour. The main body of the Austrian army, overthrown by the cavalry which was to protect it, began

to give way; a new group of fugitives, like a rushing torrent, helped to sweep it away. At this same moment Kellermann came up with his cavalry, and began cutting the Austrians up. The disorder increased, and soon reached its maximum; many men fled, and went to seek refuge in the rear. The mass of fugitives made for Marengo, to get a safe shelter in the village. The confusion became extreme. The officers tried in vain to rally their men behind the Fontanone; but all to no purpose. The men were deaf to their voice, and the mass threw itself tumultuously on the bridge-head. Horsemen, infantry, guns, waggons, in a disordered mob made for the two bridges on the Bormida, all trying as soon as possible to place the river between them and their pursuers.

The rout of Zach's column became a disaster for the whole of the Austrian army. Well does Lanfrey say of Kellermann's charge: "This prodigious and crushing blow changed, in an instant, the whole face of things. Never was a more sudden or complete subversion ever witnessed."* It was amazement which made the Austrians first give way; they were then seized by an extraordinary panic, and this soon spread to their cavalry, which rode over its infantry till the whole army became a mass of inextricable confusion. Melas's words are: "This sudden and terrible change of fortune ended in completely destroying the courage of the troops."

No one was able to account for the flight of the cavalry. Most of the men did not even know for what reason they were flying so precipitately. In their wild career, they went through their principal column, and caused it to waver. Not a few, but a mass of horsemen, overturned Kaim's battalions when in the act of deploying, and before that manœuvre was completed, carried the men off in their flight. Soon all, cavalry and infantry, were rushing pell-mell along the high-road.

Nothing could stop the fugitives; and though Kellermann had been compelled to slacken the pursuit, to give the infantry time to push forward, the flight continued in disorder in the direction of Marengo. The sight of Weidenfeld's grenadiers, formed up at Spinetta and holding firm, had no effect in restoring confidence. The fugitives had passed them a long way, and still they were flying. Every one hurried on. The only thought in every mind was to escape the imagined danger.

* Lanfrey, "Histoire de Napoléon I^{er}," vol. ii. p. 38.

Fear, whether arising from an adequate or inadequate cause, speedily obtains the mastery over every other consideration. The best of troops are liable to a panic; this spreads from one individual to another, and quickly ends in a dishonourable flight. Troops like the Austrians, which had fought with great gallantry all the forenoon and far into the afternoon, notwithstanding the heavy losses they had sustained, cannot have been seized with panic without good cause. Possibly they became demoralized by the toil and fatigue they had endured fighting for hours in the overpowering heat of that brilliant summer day, by the losses caused by the concentrated fire of Marmont's battery, by the resistance they met when making too sure of victory, by the good array in which they found the troops they believed to be in flight. The last of these causes came on them as a surprise, and, as we all know, a surprise has a most unfavourable effect on the *morale* of soldiers. Terror, first of all, paralyzes the moral and physical faculties, gives rise to hesitation, followed by confusion, and the loss of that well-tempered courage which keeps the ranks together; then a need for looking after one's own safety overcomes everything else.

Kellermann delivered a last charge at the head of 360 mounted Consular Guard and 200 men the remnants of his own brigade and of the dragoons attached to it. He attacked and dispersed the enemy's cavalry.*

The battle was not over yet, for Weidenfeld and O'Reilly undertook to defend the Fontanone brook, in order to give time to the fugitives to escape. Boudet and Lannes, however, were pressing on with vigour. At dusk, the French carried the village of Marengo, when the Austrians retired to Pedrabona, where they were joined by Ott's corps.

Crossard laments the retreat of the entire Austrian army, when it was only its centre that had been defeated; he especially censures the left for retiring so placidly. Defeat, with a river on its rear, for the Austrian army would have been ruin. Fortunately, the return of victory on the French side came late in the evening, after the French troops had expended their strength by many hours of hard fighting.

* At the moment when the Consular Guard was rushing on the Austrian cavalry, an Austrian soldier, overthrown and bleeding, was seen supplicating the French cavalry not to crush him. "My friends," called out Bessières, "open your ranks and spare that unfortunate."

The retreat was effected with considerable confusion. An unreasonable panic had seized hold of the troops, and such was the general fear, that the drivers of the guns, alarmed lest they should not be able to gain the choked bridges leading to Alessandria quickly enough, plunged with their guns into the Bormida. The day after the battle, fully twenty pieces were brought out from the bed of the river.

Crossard mentions in his "Mémoires" that the first effects of the resumption of the offensive by the French was felt about the important post of Castel Ceriolo at about five in the evening. Of that village he says: "For some time held by the Austrians, it not only covered their flank, but was the most stable pivot for any manœuvres that the left of the Austrian army could undertake."

Ott, preceded by a numerous body of cavalry, had followed the retiring French in the direction of San Giuliano Novo and the Villa Ghilina. Whilst on the march some runaway cavalry apprised him of the misfortune which had overtaken the right wing, and how Zach and Kaim had been completely overthrown. On the receipt of the unexpected news, and dismayed by so complete a change of fortune, Ott sought how best he could repair the blow. He halted his column, and with his centre battalions formed line to his right, with the intention of falling on the flank of the French, who were advancing on Marengo. This manœuvre, which naturally would have suggested itself to any other commander, was no longer possible, for the main Austrian column had withdrawn with such rapidity that the opportune moment passed by very quickly. Besides, not only had Lannes and Monnier resumed the offensive, but the French cavalry was beginning to show itself on the Salé road. As Ott's mission was to hold in check a strong French column which the Austrian staff supposed to be advancing from that side, the presence of Rivaud's cavalry brigade about Piovera seemed to indicate its coming, and Ott, warned by the cannonade at Marengo, and the 9th Light being about to carry the village, had to look after his own safety.

Jean Rivaud's brigade consisted of the 12th Hussars and the 21st Chasseurs. These troops were eager to join in the fray; they marched along the Salé road and rushed at the Austrians.

Ott withdrew his forces in good order, making for Castel Ceriolo. Much to his astonishment, when nearing that village,

he found that it was already in possession of the enemy. This point has never been properly explained.* Everything tends to show that Castel Ceriolo was abandoned by Carra Saint Cyr's brigade late in the afternoon; possibly it was reoccupied by some stray parties of the French during Ott's retreat. This is not at all improbable, for any party of men might have during the retreat sought refuge in any houses or farms in the plain, and have sallied forth as soon as they found the ground around them was clear. The ease with which Ott apparently brushed the occupants of Castel Ceriolo aside would lead one to believe that they were only a small body.

Night was coming on when Ott ordered General Vogelsang to capture the village. A passage was thus opened by main force, and this obstacle being fortunately cleared away, Ott's column pushed on, and regained the bridge-head. In this attack General Vogelsang was severely wounded.

The day was rapidly closing, and the Austrian army, so unexpectedly defeated in the midst of its success, was hurrying in chaotic disorder to seek safety on the left bank of the Bormida. Galloping squadrons trampled over broken battalions without a thought save of precipitate flight. The infantry were not in a much better plight, as their *morale* was completely shaken by the desertion of the cavalry. The whole army presented a scene of wild terror and confusion.

Petit states that the clock at Marengo was striking ten as he and his comrades were returning slowly towards San Giuliano. At that hour, the sounds of the strife were silenced, and the exhausted French took up their cheerless bivouacs. The ground was thickly strewn with the corpses of the combatants. Gardanne was again at Pedrabona, holding the position from which he had been driven out in the morning by overpowering forces.

A deadly silence reigned over the plain, broken at intervals by the groans of the wounded who had not yet been removed, and for whose succour the means were none too plentiful.

During the night of the 14-15th of June, Bonaparte took

* The officers of Carra Saint Cyr's brigade stated that after the brigade had retired from Castel Ceriolo, from an hour and a quarter to an hour and a half, isolated from the rest of the army, it was met by an A.D.C. bearing an order for all the troops he fell in with to resume the offensive. The brigade accordingly faced about, and arrived at the village of Castel Ceriolo by sunset.

steps to follow the advantages he had obtained over the Austrians. At break of day, Gardanne's advanced guard moved on the bridge-head, driving back O'Reilly's advanced posts.

As Major Count de Neupperg appeared beyond the bridge-head, the firing ceased. The count was conducted to Torre di Garofoli to ask for forty-eight hours' armistice. Bonaparte agreed to this on condition that the Austrians should retire to the left bank of the Bormida, a point which Melas conceded. General Skal went later on, at noon, to the French headquarters, to open a negotiation with the First Consul.

Melas, having sought the advice of a council of war, after mature deliberation, adopted the alternative of evacuating Piedmont, all Genoese territory, and the largest portion of Lombardy. His army marched out with the honours of war, retaining its arms, cannon, and baggage, and retired by the shortest way behind the Mincio. The fortresses of Tortona, Alessandria, Turin, Coni, Ceva, Genova, Savona, Santa Maria, the Duchy of Parma, including Piacenza, and the citadels of Milan, Arona, and Pizzighettone, were handed over to the French.

One of the results of having scattered his forces broadcast all over Lombardy was that Bonaparte felt himself compelled to let the Austrian army go free after Marengo. Had he engaged with the greatest portion of his forces, there can be no doubt that a simple evacuation would not have satisfied him. With more troops he would have wrung a peace from the Emperor in the month of June.

The battle was no sooner over than Captain Viviaud, attached to General Dupont, chief of the staff, was hastening to Piacenza to call up part of the troops left in reserve on the Po. On the 15th of June, he writes from Piacenza to intimate that the object of his mission has been attained. By noon Loison had quitted his cantonments at San Giovanni, and would be at Voghera at a very early hour. Duhesme would set out with his division at night, due to arrive at Voghera the following day. But all fear of the Austrians resuming the offensive had been put an end to for the present, in virtue of the convention concluded.

On the 16th, two days after the battle, Dalton reports that Boudet's division was encamped on the battlefield, surrounded by the corpses of the dead, and had no picks or spades with

which to bury them. "Soon," he declares, "the place will not be fit for occupation. The air already smells of infection."

Berthier writes to the First Consul that he purposes establishing his headquarters at Torre di Garofoli, on account of the infection caused by the corpses which cover the entire plain of Marengo.

In a few days the French army was concentrated around Piacenza, with headquarters at Pavia. A division had been detached to Bologna. The total of the army was 48,932 men, with 5748 horses, 51 guns, and 13 howitzers.

CHAPTER XV.

OBSERVATIONS.

The combined action of Desaix, Kellermann, and Marmont decides the fate of the battle—Marmont's remarks—Superior fighting qualities of the French—Rapidly with which they resume the offensive—Austrians slow in taking advantage of their first successes—Bad employment of their cavalry—Manner of Desaix's death—Bonaparte's cool treatment of Kellermann—Bonaparte's critics—His great conception of the plan of campaign—All men dazzled by the event—Melas's reasons for capitulating—How Berthier presented the Emperor in 1805 with a descriptive narrative of the battle—Bonaparte's enthusiastic reception at Milan—He returns to Paris.

THE last phase of the battle was the happy combination of several fortunate circumstances. An ammunition-waggon blown up by the fire of Marmont's guns shakes the enemy. Desaix drives Boudet's division with great impetus on the head of the heavy Austrian column, which is being swept by the fire of Marmont's guns; and by this action gives to his soldiers that impulse which is so highly inspiring when in the height of a movement of attack. The amazed Austrian column hesitates and stops, and at that very moment Kellermann rushes on its left flank with a portion of his brigade, whilst with the rest he attacks the Austrian cavalry which is to protect it. The result of Kellermann's charge was that one half of the Austrian column was sabred or captured, whilst the other half was thrown into disorder by the fugitives, and, seized by panic, offered no resistance to the French.

This in itself was a signal success. But a more momentous one was the capture of the general who was at that moment commanding the Austrian army.

The enemy's column found itself cut off, and unable to take another step, either for advancing or for retiring. Having lost all hope of safety in flight, it submitted to dire necessity, and laid down its arms.

Thus it was the combined action of Desaix, Marmont, and Kellermann which decided the fate of the battle. But this attack on the left would not have been of half so much consequence had the rest of the troops, which for hours had contended against superior forces, not resumed the offensive, and rushed at the enemy. We must not forget who it was that restored confidence in these troops, fatigued by a lengthy and hopeless combat, and worn out by heat and exhaustion; that it was their general, Bonaparte, who restored confidence in these dejected soldiers; that it was his magnetic influence which urged them to renew the fight, and to secure victory.

On the Austrian side, the commander-in-chief had deserted his troops; and there can be no doubt that a change of direction had an injurious effect on the operations. The Austrian account admits this in the following words: "This sudden withdrawal of the general-in-chief certainly produced a bad effect; the change of leadership occasioned a certain amount of hesitation in the original dispositions." A great commander has generally been found at the post of the greatest danger. At Marengo, at the critical moment, there was no unity of command, and to this much of the Austrian defeat must undoubtedly be attributed.

Incidents that take but a moment to occur should take but a moment to relate. For all that, such was the consequence of Kellermann's charge that much has been said and written on the subject.

In his "Mémoires," Marmont observes regarding the attack of Zach's column by Kellermann: "If the charge had been delivered three minutes later, our guns would have been taken and withdrawn; and possibly, not being any longer under the influence of the surprise engendered by the volleys of case-shot, the enemy's column might have been better prepared to receive the cavalry. It might have been the same if the charge had preceded the discharge. Therefore, it needed this precise combination to insure such a complete and, it must be said, unhoped-for success. Never did fortune intervene in a more decisive manner. Never did any general show more insight, more vigour, and more apposite promptitude than Kellermann in this instance."

Writers have not paid sufficient attention to the happy combination of the three arms. The influence of the cavalry

charge on the result of the battle is incontestable. In extolling Kellermann's promptness, due credit has, however, been withheld from Marmont. He never demanded it. Still, his share in the final defeat is found in his own words—that, but for “the influence of the surprise engendered by the volley of case-shot, the enemy's column might have been better prepared to receive the cavalry.”

There is no question that Boudet's artillery and that of the reserve were the first to stay the advance of the Austrians, the first to have some effect on the pursuing columns.*

Kellermann's charge was a spontaneous movement. There was no time for any one to give the order for the charge. Such an order could only emanate from the officer who was in actual command of the cavalry. The idea of asking for the assistance of the cavalry would naturally have suggested itself to Desaix, and we have Kellermann's own testimony that Savary rode up to him near San Giuliano and delivered an order to that effect.† The order was to march on a level with General Desaix's corps, and to support him in the new conflict which was about to take place. Savary states that the First Consul's words were: “You will tell him to charge, without considering the cost, as soon as Desaix will unmask his attack.” ‡ This latter version is as fanciful as several other statements found in the “*Mémoires du Duc de Rovigo*.” It does not accord with Kellermann's own words: “This decisive and unforeseen onset was neither prepared nor combined. It took less time to perform than to tell.”

Kellermann did his best, but he could hardly have calculated on all the effect his charge would have. In any case, his success raised the spirits of the French. Lannes's and Victor's men, encouraged by the result of his charge, advanced, and the Austrian cavalry, fleeing from Kellermann's dragoons, rode over their own infantry, until the whole maddened and panic-stricken mass fled in wild disorder towards Marengo and the bridges

* Melas writes in his report, “After a violent and rapid fire which dismounted our artillery, the troops, which up to that moment had remained victorious, commenced to hesitate.”

† See “*Réfutation de M. le Duc de Rovigo, ou La Vérité sur la Bataille de Marengo*,” p. 10. Marmont also relates that Savary, who was bearing orders for Kellermann, rode up to the great battery and asked him where that general was likely to be found.

‡ “*Mémoires du Duc de Rovigo*,” tom. i. p. 275.

beyond it. The Austrians, who had fought bravely during the day, appear to have lost confidence in their leaders, and in the luck of their own side.

It may be pleaded for the Austrian soldiers that they had been under arms before daybreak, that they were oppressed by fatigue, and had fought through the great heat of the day. But what applies to the Austrians applies just as much to their opponents.

This battle brought forward prominently the marked superiority in fighting qualities of the French over the Austrians. Imagination plays a considerable part in French soldiers, and any idea of superiority and strength acts on them, and renders them blind to all horrors, odds, and danger. The superiority of the French had been already established during Massena's operations in the neighbourhood of Genova, and in Suchet's advance from the Var. Only at Marengo it stood out still more conspicuously. In Massena's operations to recover his lost communications with France in the past April, 1400 men kept 10,000 Austrians in countenance for eight hours. The idea that they were about to be supported by a second battalion of grenadiers, that Sacquelen's column was speeding to their aid, and that in the mean while Soult was turning the enemy, made the French soldiers on that occasion perform prodigies of valour.

The Austrians had shown conspicuous bravery and perseverance in the fighting on the banks of the Fontanone and in the capture of Marengo. But they were wanting in staying qualities. Their deportment in the evening was very different from what it had been in the forenoon. With all his good qualities, the Austrian soldier lacked the fire and the pertinacity of the French troops. All through the fighting in 1800, the same charges can be brought against the Austrian generals. They showed conspicuous lack of enterprise; and they did not seem to know how to turn to account the first advantages gained.

At Marengo, the French soldiers shone to great advantage. Their stubborn resistance against great odds, when mowed down by a powerful artillery fire, was equalled by their brilliant dash in the final phase of the contest. The French, who had been fighting ever since morning, exposed to cruel losses, tired, hungry, and thirsty, nevertheless resumed

the offensive as if by inspiration, and carried it out with extraordinary vigour.

“ *Le coq français est le coq de la gloire ;
Par les revers il n'est point abattu.*”

Favart.

The cavalry, which had missed its proper rôle of exploring and keeping touch with the enemy, fully made up for it by its gallant conduct during the battle ; especially when the enemy was driven back into Alessandria.

The artillery had rendered good service, but was overpowered by the greatly superior artillery of the enemy. Almost all the French pieces had been dismounted, and during the retreat there remained not more than five fit to fire.

Nothing was ever so remarkable as the rapidity with which the French resumed the offensive, and swept the Austrians clean off the plain. Mad with joy at seeing victory returning to their standards, they stepped boldly forward, their faces beaming with what the Romans called *gaudia certaminis*, the excitement of the contest. Such instantaneous outburst of *élan* was thoroughly in keeping with the national character, for no nation is so swift to pass from the depths of despair to the brightest of hopes, and *vice versâ*.

The disorder which reigned in the ranks of the Austrians was only too patent. The French dashed forward, and in less than an hour crossed the plain which it had taken the Austrians eight hours to conquer.* The charge of the French defies description. French impetuosity was opposed to the methodical tactics of the Austrians, and the latter were not allowed time to rally.

What told much in favour of the French was that, after they had once resumed the offensive, they did not waste any time in securing their prisoners ; they left them behind, and only occupied themselves in pressing back the adversary with vigour.

In the evening the Austrians defended Marengo with an obstinacy quite equal to what the French had shown in the forenoon. Nevertheless, they had to yield before the impetuosity of Boudet's, Victor's, and Lannes's troops, whose ardour so many hours of hard fighting had not been able to quench.

* Jomini, “ *Histoire des Guerres de la Révolution*,” tom. xiii. p. 291.

In his report, General Boudet states: "The enemy's resistance, in certain positions, was terrible. It would have been useless toying to have driven him off by musketry. Only bayonet charges were able to dislodge him, and these were executed with unexampled quickness and intrepidity. In truth, it is impossible to bestow sufficient praise on this brigade (Guénand's brigade), partly composed of conscripts, who in courage and firmness have rivalled the oldest soldiers."

Another, though an indirect cause of the victory, was the bearing of the French troops since the opening days of the campaign. Massena and Suchet certainly were not present at Marengo, nevertheless, they had prepared the way for victory by destroying much of the *morale* of the Austrian army. The tough daily combats under the walls of Genova, and in the retreat to the Var, cannot but have seriously shaken the self-confidence of the Austrian soldiers.

Bulow* attributes the loss of the battle to the slowness of the Austrian movements, and to the uncertainty which marked their resolutions. Their generals had neglected to make any dispositions which could insure victory, or, if not that, which could at all events render their defeat less disastrous.

The Austrians fought the battle of Marengo with a river at their back, and a river over which there was virtually but one point of passage. It was this last fact that brought about such a very long delay in getting their troops to the right bank of the Bormida and in deploying. In the incertitude of success, all the rules of prudence enjoin having several bridges laid down over the river, and employing simultaneously every road which is adapted for troops, so as to shorten the time required for reaching their ground and deploying. There was nothing to prevent the Austrians laying bridges above and below the existing bridge-head of Alessandria; had this been done their action against Victor's and Lannes's troops would have probably been decided before Bonaparte's arrival on the battlefield, and long before Desaix could have arrived from Rivalta.

Dampierre, writing to General Mathieu Dumas, 16th of June, states that Melas himself had given orders to the second line to fire on any one in the first line who should dare to forget his duty. This statement, if true, does not speak well for the

* Bulow offers many suggestions as to the plan the Austrians might have followed, but says very little indeed of the tactics of the battle.

Austrian army. The necessity for such an order would tend to show that it was not animated by the best spirit.* Others, however, say quite the reverse, and show what a thrilling effect the decision taken by Melas to cut his way through the French army had on the Austrian soldiery. The Austrian account expresses itself thus: "A very forcible order of the day explained to the Austrians the full gravity of the dangers by which they were surrounded; but likewise the glory which attended them should they conquer. The army was full of courage, and the words of the commander-in-chief had still further increased the excellent spirit by which these troops, accustomed to victory, were animated."

On this point we have the evidence of Crossard who relates how General Vogelsang on the 14th drew his attention to the gaiety of the troops.

Dampierre had already made an accusation against the spirit of the Austrian troops. Writing to General Gardanne on the 11th of June, he says: "The people of the country assert that it is difficult to form an adequate idea of the disorder in which the last (Austrian) troops retired on the night of the 20th (9th of June, the night of the battle of Montebello). There are very good grounds for believing that, if night and a few squadrons of cavalry had not concealed their disorder, we should have made from 2000 to 3000 prisoners—men belonging to disheartened corps who wished for nothing better than to surrender. On this point almost all the deserters and prisoners agree."

There were favourable chances for Melas, for the composition of Bonaparte's army was not of the best. The greater part of the troops he led to Marengo had no experience of the manœuvres performed in a pitched battle.

It was remarkable how very slow the Austrians were in turning their first advantages to account—a neglect which in the end told greatly against them, as it gave time to Desaix to appear on the field. All the chances of success in the battle were in their favour; and this Bonaparte himself conceded.

* In a letter from Suchet to Bonaparte, written from Nice on the 30th of May, occurs the following passage: "Amongst the enemy's troops is a corps of Hungarian grenadiers, the pick of the enemy's army. Ordinarily it attacks with impetuosity, but these columns are so disgusted that as soon as they are beaten by you, you will get quit of them cheaply. They march always united, and number from 3000 to 3500 men."—De Cugnac, "Campagne de l'Armée de Réserve en 1800," vol. ii. p. 174.

What must we think of the commanders and staff who were not able to turn these advantages to good profit? From noon up to three o'clock, and even later, victory went with the Austrians. But they did not overpower their adversaries by their fire, no more did they succeed in capturing a single battalion. During those hours, whilst the Austrians held the superiority over the French, they made only 1100 prisoners, of whom 25 belonged to the Consular Guard.

There were no brilliant movements to carry their efforts in gigantic strides from one part of the field to another. On the Fontanone they had experienced great losses because they had neglected to press on Gardanne as he was compelled to yield ground. And for what reason? To attend to their deployment—a manœuvre which might have been left to be executed as soon as they had got beyond Marengo. Here was a waste of time in performing a processional evolution, when they should have pressed the enemy sword in hand.

If Bonaparte had committed a fault in scattering his corps too much, Melas had made a greater one in unduly deploying his wings in the battle.

When Desaix and Kellermann attacked, the Austrian army was in a long deep column; a formation which is not only unwieldy, but also labours under the disadvantage of offering a wide mark to the fire of the enemy's artillery. A comparison of the efforts made by the two armies is remarkably instructive. The French grasped their opportunity, and turned to account the slowness and disunion which they discerned to be reigning amongst their opponents. Lannes, with some 8000 combatants, had for three hours kept in check from 18,000 to 20,000 of the enemy—a thing which could have never occurred had the Austrians attacked boldly at noon. Crossard was in the Austrian left flank; he states most distinctly that where he was there was no energy and no enterprise.

In the "Bulletin de l'Armée de Réserve" issued at Milan on the 17th of June, occurs the following passage: "*Un général autrichien de beaucoup de mérite disait au quartier général: ' Nous n'aurons de repos et de bonheur sur le continent que lorsque, d'un concours unanime, nous en interdirons l'accès à cette nation véule et mercantile, qui calcule sur notre sang pour l'accroissement de son commerce.'*" This officer and others may have said whatever they pleased against England, but they overlooked the fact that

the war had been undertaken against the advice of their best general, the Archduke Charles, and that England had nothing to do with the management of the campaign nor with the behaviour of the Austrian troops on the battlefield. Never, possibly, in any battle was a victorious army so quickly put to flight, nor did one so quickly abandon every advantage it had gained by hours of hard fighting. Nothing availed to re-establish order; nothing could bring the Austrian soldier back to his sense of duty. Had the Austrians displayed more staying power, their victory would have made the above observation unnecessary.

A favourite plea of the Austrians after a defeat was to throw all the blame on England. Mack did this after Ulm, and the Emperor Francis after his defeat at Austerlitz.

Chevalier Cavour accuses the Austrians of not having drawn full advantage from their superiority in artillery when attacking farm buildings and barns. Such buildings, he states, were carried by the infantry with musketry and bayonet, and this was the cause of much bloodshed.

Not only did the Austrian commander show little judgment and audacity, but his employment of the cavalry was faulty in every sense. His first false step was the withdrawing from the battlefield of one-third of it to go and observe Suchet, who was quite out of reach of taking part in the contest. That in itself was bad enough; for had the seventeen squadrons so detached been present to charge Victor's retiring troops, they might have completed their defeat early in the day. The remaining two-thirds of the cavalry were dispersed all over his line of battle in place of being kept in hand as a powerful reserve to be launched forth so as to strike a decisive blow at a propitious moment.

Pilatti's force was set to undertake a risky operation in which it suffered heavily, and the rest of the Austrian cavalry engaged in partial charges and in securing prisoners when it should have come irresistibly forward to crush the French. Commandant Picard very justly observes of the Austrian cavalry engaged, that after having bravely seconded the attack from the beginning and contributed largely in making the French withdraw, it did not know either how to push back the infantry, when very little was required to convert the retreat into a rout, nor how to resist the French cavalry when Bonaparte resumed the offensive. More than once it even declined to cross swords with the enemy.

The Austrian cavalry was admirably mounted, and skilled in all the manœuvres of war; but Melas evidently did not understand its employment in large masses. None of the Austrian cavalry leaders, when the battle was going all in favour of their side, showed a particle of the boldness and enterprise displayed by Kellermann when the day was going dead against the French, working with horses that had not partaken of oats for several days.*

Up to Marengo, if the Austrian cavalry had not exactly done all it should have done, nevertheless its prestige had not been lowered by defeat. It was feared by the French cavalry, and more so by their infantry, which had so often been disconcerted by its attacks.

The officers and men of the Austrian infantry, on the whole, did their duty manfully. It does not speak well for them, however, that they allowed the 200 men of Kellermann to capture some thousands of their number when they had their bayonets to rely upon. It has also been remarked that many more lives were lost during the advance than during the retreat—a fact which would be tantamount to a proof that the retirement was not carried out with all the stubbornness desired.

Wellington once declared that Napoleon had won most of his battles by the power of artillery. He certainly did not do so at Marengo, where that arm was meanly represented. De Cugnac, indeed, believes that the want of artillery was one of the reasons which made Bonaparte accept Melas's capitulation.

In Chapter IX., it has been seen that from the very commencement of the campaign the French officers were disturbed by the scarcity of ammunition, and that the limited number of rounds in the men's pouches formed a subject of constant complaint.†

On the French side, the battle of Marengo was conspicuous for the dearth of ammunition. According to Lauriston, the French had no more of it than was sufficient for five or six hours' fighting. Dampierre had a gun rendered useless, and incapable of firing a shot, simply for want of ammunition. Ismert complains that his people were without guns or ammunition. Victor and Lannes fell short of the latter. Victor

* Duvignan's report. See De Cugnac, vol. ii. p. 347.

† Just before the battle of Montebello, on the 6th of June, Victor wrote to the general-in-chief, adding the following postscript: "Los cartouches se brûleront bien tôt; nos soldats en ont bien peu."

states that the troops were compelled to retire through want of ammunition, after having lost a large number of men. Quiot adds that the artillery had fallen short of cartridges, and the infantry had expended all theirs.

The day following the battle, the soldiers of Boudet's division refilled their pouches out of those which the enemy had left on the ground.

The battle was won, but the heroic Desaix had gained the victory at the price of his life.

Marshal Victor, Duc de Bellune, begins a work, "*Extraits d'un Histoire inédite des Guerres de la Republique et de l'Empire,*" with the following exclamation:—

"Hoche died! . . .

"At the news, the whole of France uttered a piercing cry of anguish; and all Paris, in the midst of the whirlwind of its intrigues and of its pleasures, of a sudden paused to weep."*

With far greater reason the gay and restless capital could suspend its cares and its joys to shed bitter tears for the loss of the brave and gifted Desaix.

*"Pleurez, pleurez fils de la gloire,
Il n'est plus, le brave Desaix."*

M. Maury.

Thiers' eulogy was short but exact: "*Sa mort priva l'armée d'un excellent général, et la France d'un de ses plus vertueux citoyens.*"

Unfortunate Desaix! how many utterances historians and others discovered for your expiring lips! A writer has justly said that history, like love, is apt to surround her heroes with an atmosphere of imaginary brightness; and for many the romantic has a greater charm than truth. The words attributed to Desaix, that he died regretting that he had done nothing to deserve that his name should be handed down to posterity, are pure fiction. The words are given in the bulletin of the 15th of June, and sound grand. Nevertheless, Bonaparte in this

* *The peace-maker* died as they were celebrating in Paris the anniversary of the foundation of the Republic. Championnet, in his funeral oration at the grave, said: "A great man never dies. He may descend into the tomb; but there immortality begins."

To Hoche's honour it is related that he had been confined in the Conciergerie, by order of Saint Just, for some weeks. He was there when Saint Just entered that prison the day before his execution. Instead of heaping reproaches on his fallen enemy, Hoche, with true magnanimity, pressed his hand and made way to let him pass.



TOMB OF GENERAL DESAIX.

[To face p. 416.]

instance, evidently prompted by a desire to immortalize his friend's last moments, seems not to have been able to refrain from romancing. Thiers says that, hit in the chest, Desaix told General Boudet, who commanded the division which he was leading, to hide his fall from the troops, lest the news might tend to unsteady them. This is what Boudet writes in his report: "Death came and carried this great captain away from his comrades. In his last words he commanded that his fate might be hidden, lest the news should give rise to an alarm which might be detrimental to the army." A report, attributed to Lauriston, declares that Desaix uttered to Lefebvre-Desnouettes the single word, "*Dead;*"* that, as he had no distinctive uniform, his fall was not observed by the soldiers, and that Lefebvre had his body removed. By all accounts Desaix's fall was not noticed, and the statement of some writers (Mathieu Dumas, Jomini, etc.), that the troops were irritated by the death of their general, is without foundation.

That Lefebvre had the body removed cannot be reconciled with Savary's assertion. The latter is silent on Desaix's last moments, for the simple reason that he was not at the side of his general. Desaix was struck during the absence of Savary, who had been sent to ask Bonaparte that Kellermann might be ordered to co-operate in the forthcoming attack. Later in the evening Savary learnt from the colonel of the 9th that his general was no more. Looking all over the field for him amongst the heaps left by the battle's surges, he found his body near the place where he had last seen him, under a pile of slain, naked but for his shirt.† He could identify him only by his abundant hair, and by the wounds he had received at Lauterbourg and at the crossing of the Neus. The aide-de-camp had his general's body wrapped in the cloak of one of the hussars which he found at hand, placed it on his horse, and then conveyed it to headquarters at Torre di Garofoli.‡

* The writer states that Desaix fell at the commencement of the charge of the 9th Light; that he turned round and saw him fall.

† From Boudet's description of the battle formation assumed by his division, it results that Desaix must have fallen in the fields of Vigna Santa, on the left of the Tortona road.

‡ Through respect for Desaix, and owing to Bourrienne's solicitation, the First Consul took Savary and Rapp on his staff as aides-de-camp. They served him to the last with zeal and fidelity. Rapp had an Alsatian frankness which did not quite please his master.

In the "Mémorial du Dépôt Général de la Guerre," tom. iv., Desaix is stated to have died instantly—"Il est mort sur le coup." The narrative adds: "*Il n'a eu que le temps de dire au jeune Lebrun* qui était avec lui: 'Allez dire au Premier Consul que je meurs avec le regret de n'avoir pas assez fait pour vivre dans la postérité.'*" The two statements are quite at variance. Bourrienne gives the lie to the words contained in the famous bulletin, which he declares Bonaparte made him put down, when engaged in drafting it. He also denies that it was in the arms of Lebrun that Desaix died, or that he uttered one single word. According to him, Desaix fell a short distance from Lefebvre-Desnouettes. He adds: "After all, the onset in which he succumbed was so brief, the disorder so instantaneous, the change of fortune so sudden, that it is not in the least astonishing if, in the midst of such confusion, the circumstances of his death were not verified in a more positive manner."

Marmont is quite certain that Desaix never pronounced the fine words which have been placed in his mouth: he was pierced by a bullet through the heart, and fell down rigid, without uttering a single word.† Corréard, in his biography of Desaix, states: "He is no sooner in presence of the enemy than he is struck by a bullet, and falls without uttering a word."‡ Gourgaud writes: "*Mais comme il marchait à la tête de deux cent éclaireurs de la neuvième légère, il fut frappé d'une balle au cœur et tomba roide mort au moment où il venait d'ordonner la charge.*"§

Desaix was remarkably unostentatious; at Marengo he wore no distinctive mark of rank by which his body might be identified. Not like Nelson, who wore all his orders when he went into action at Trafalgar. ||

* Lebrun was the son of the Third Consul.

† "Mémoires du Duc de Raguse," livre v. p. 157.

‡ F. Corréard, "Biographie de Louis Charles Antoine Desaix."

§ Gourgaud, "Relation de la Bataille de Marengo, Extraite de Mémoires de Sainte Hélène," p. 283. See "Mémorial," tom. iv. p. 316.

|| The comparison between these two officers may be considered immoderate, but it is not so when looking at Desaix's age, for he was only thirty-two when he fell at Marengo. What might not a man of his talent have done had he been spared? Mahan declares that Nelson's page in history covers a little more than twelve years—from February, 1793, to October, 1805. He consequently did not begin to be eminent before he had attained the age of thirty-five.

A writer states that Desaix was struck in the back by an accidental shot from one of his own men, the bullet passing through the heart. De Cayrol, however, in his critique of Sir Walter Scott's "History of Napoleon," asserts that in his official capacity he had occasion to examine Desaix's body the day after the battle, and

At all times Napoleon, like even the greatest of mortals, was not devoid of a certain weakness. He would never acknowledge himself under an obligation to any one. He was not as ready as Jourdan, Hoche, Kléber, and Moreau in acknowledging the services of those who had fought under his orders. After Marengo he insisted that all the credit of the victory should be assigned to himself. In this and other instances, he displayed bitter jealousy of any general who appeared by his deeds to undermine his reputation. On this point he was meanness itself.

Much has been said about the cool remark with which Bonaparte greeted Kellermann when that officer appeared at his supper-table on the night of the battle.* “You made rather a good charge to-day.” We should bear in mind, however, that this meeting occurred very few hours after the event, when Bonaparte was elated by the good fortune which had befallen him, and when, possibly, the full importance of Kellermann’s charge had not been thoroughly estimated. Many officers who have taken part in a general action may have noticed how in the first flush of victory it is anything but easy to grasp the full extent of the various incidents of the contest. Some writers seem to believe that this is what actually happened to Bonaparte, that he had not at the moment when he spoke grasped all the importance of Kellermann’s charge. And what does Boudet write? “The cavalry has likewise contributed to it (the victory) with a good deal of promptitude and courage.” He also had not taken in all the result of the charge.

Bourrienne relates what Bonaparte told him, apparently when they were alone at a later hour of the night. “Little Kellermann made a lucky charge. He did it just at the right moment. We are much indebted to him. You see what trifling circumstances decide these affairs.” So he thought the charge decisive, though he attributes it to luck, and not to judgment in seizing the opportunity.

At Marengo the incidents were so confused, the events were so extraordinary, that it was impossible to write a clear narrative

that he could positively declare that the bullet had pierced the heart, coming out at the back.

* Bourrienne relates that Kellermann, from provisions acquired from the Convent del Boseo, furnished supper for Bonaparte and his staff, who were famishing. The army, he declares, was in a destitute state.

of the battle. Bonaparte tried in vain to give to his account a certain sequence and order which were far from being found in the events. The official reports do not credit Kellermann with the preponderating rôle of the victory.

Capefigue states on this point: "The account of the battle of Marengo was controverted (*defiguré*) by the *Moniteur*. Bonaparte has not given due credit to Kellermann, he has grasped all." * There are noted instances in which Napoleon was unjust to his officers. He was so to Kellermann, and he was so later to Montbrun; and thus two of his best cavalry officers, for diverse reasons, fell under his displeasure.

Evidently the officers were not unanimous in assigning the credit for the victory to Kellermann. Crossard, who writes with too evident animosity, tries to deprive Bonaparte of any credit. His words are: "Desaix prompted the action which decided the battle of Marengo, and Kellermann carried it into effect." The baron seems to have overlooked the fact that Desaix's action would not have been possible had Bonaparte withheld his consent, and how very impatient the First Consul had been for the arrival of the column from Rivalta.

The day following the battle, Crossard had an interview with Dupont, who, pointing to Boudet, said, "It was he who gave you the finishing blow." Lauriston, writing on the 19th of June, extols Boudet as having saved the army.† There were others, therefore, besides Bonaparte, who, very soon after the battle had been fought, did not accord the principal credit to Kellermann.

Boudet's words are quite worthy of notice. They are: "The remarkable advantages which were gained on the left, and above all the capture of the artillery and prisoners, were absolutely due to the bearing and acts of valour of this corps (9th Light). The cavalry has equally contributed to it by its timely action and courage."

Mathieu Dumas assigns to Kellermann a great share of the success in the second battle, but he credits Desaix with the most prominent part.

It was nothing but gross exaggeration to place Kellermann's name above that of Bonaparte in the events of Marengo.

* Kellermann's boast, "It is I who placed the crown on that man's head," was not in good taste. It showed singular want of tact.

† "Vous serez bien aise d'apprendre que la division Boudet à été regardée comme ayant sauvé l'armée."

Abroad this was done to lower Bonaparte's reputation, and by the Army of the Rhine out of pure jealousy. A few seconds of enterprise, an extremely able seizure of a fleeting opportunity, were set against all the incidents favourable and unfavourable of that eventful day. That Kellermann put the finishing stroke to the battle in a very brilliant exploit no one will ever deny. He followed the principle which should guide every cavalry leader, that the incidents of the fight should make them form their plans of action on the spot, almost intuitively. But to pretend that he could bring forward any exclusive claim to the honours of that day, in which the French on all sides had fought so bravely, is nothing but wilful exaggeration.

Possibly many writers have made Kellermann the saviour of the French army at Marengo as a reproach to Bonaparte for having said so little of Kellermann's exploit.

In Murat's report General Kellermann is mentioned three times: "General Kellermann, placed on the left, supported the retreat of General Victor's division with the greatest courage. . . .

"I must, above all, speak to you of General Kellermann, who by his timely charge has known how to clinch the victory, as yet wavering, and to capture for you 5000 or 6000 prisoners. . . .

"General Kellermann has particularly distinguished himself."

For all that, Kellermann's name does not figure amongst those proposed by Murat for promotion, nor was he promoted general of division on the battlefield. But he was promoted very soon after, on the 6th of the following month.

Might not Bonaparte's coolness towards Kellermann have had its origin in the ungenerous way in which the Directory tried in 1796 to impose the elder Kellermann on him as a colleague, so as to serve as a check to his already rising ambition? May not the name have carried with it some painful recollections?

War does not always reward a man according to his deserts. This poor appreciation of Kellermann's services is a very good illustration of the French saying, "*A moi la peine; aux illustres le profit.*" Many of us, in a much humbler sphere, have had a somewhat similar experience, in propping up an incapable chief, who enjoyed an unmerited reputation.

A well-contested battle is ordinarily lost two or three times

before it is over. The last moment is the supreme one; it is the end of the game, and at this instant the conqueror has almost always employed all his resources.

The Austrians seem to have wasted their troops. Dampierre, who at the commencement of the battle had not, by his own showing, more than 300 men, all told, succumbed in the evening to an attack from six guns or howitzers, a complete regiment of hussars, and several regiments of infantry. When he capitulated, of his 300 men 194 had been injured, and all his ammunition was expended.

The presence of Boudet's division on the field of Marengo from early morning would, possibly, not have had the same results as its appearance in the declining hours of the day. Then it possessed all the elements of a surprise, which told on the enemy because he had made too sure of victory, and was not in the least expecting a resumption of the offensive.

In every battle, certain episodes of the very greatest consequence occur—episodes which turn the scale in favour of one side when taken advantage of in a skilful manner. A well-directed and timely charge, the overwhelming fire from a number of batteries, a determined headlong advance, have often exercised a determining influence on the fate of the contest. Any such fortunate event cannot deprive the general of any credit in the general direction of the battle. It is absurd to say that Bonaparte was saved from a ruinous defeat by two of his generals acting without orders; for are generals in the field never to act on their own responsibility? Bonaparte's detractors—those who claim the victory for Desaix or for Kellermann—seem to ignore the fact that in war it is the bounden duty of all ranks alike to assist the commander-in-chief to the *fullest extent of their abilities*. A battle would be a very tame affair were every one to await a command, and were any of the fleeting opportunities which frequently occur to be allowed to pass for want of an order.

The return of Boudet's division was not an accident. It might have been thought providential, had not Bonaparte, as soon as he saw the extent of the Austrian attack, sent orders for its speedy return. No one has ever denied his great concern for the arrival of Desaix; and why did Bonaparte so long for his arrival on the battlefield, but because he had pinned his faith on Desaix's troops, and intended with them to retrieve the waning fortunes of the day?

General Boudet in his report on the battle, and Marmont in his "Mémoires," speak of a council held by Bonaparte, Desaix, and other generals under a brisk artillery fire, to make dispositions for a movement which should be capable of insuring victory. Taking into account Bonaparte's imperious nature, we should not be far wrong in assuming that he it was who issued the necessary orders to his subordinates.

Is no credit due to Bonaparte, who, knowing that Desaix could not appear on the battlefield before a late hour in the afternoon, bravely faced the situation, and not only fought a restraining action against superior numbers, but advanced boldly to attack the enemy at Castel Ceriolo? The efforts of Carra Saint Cyr and the Consular Guard were unsuccessful, but no one will assert that in the direction of the contest Bonaparte failed to show his high qualities as a general.

The action of those bodies, which occupied the enemy's attention on the right, was undertaken by his direction. And this manœuvre afforded Desaix time to arrive. The situation in which the French were placed made his coming up a matter of the supremest importance; and contriving to find time for it was the move that secured the victory. Bonaparte re-established the fight on the right, and by his good dispositions and proper employment of his reserves won the battle. He has been generally known to perform miracles in the battlefield.

It would appear absurd to believe that, had fortune gone against Bonaparte at Marengo, the fate of the entire campaign would have been sealed.

Had Desaix not come up, the Stradella road was open, and Bonaparte had bridges in rear covered by batteries, by which he could have crossed the Po. Besides, as we have seen, the Austrians were tired out, and were not in a condition to undertake a vigorous pursuit, so that the French would have soon pulled themselves together. A single victory does not decide a war, and in Lombardy Bonaparte had many thousand fresh troops,* which, added to his own, would have formed a respectable force, sufficient to destroy the Austrians as they attempted to cross the Po in pursuit.† Besides all this, the skill he had displayed

* At a late hour on the evening of the 14th, Lapoype's division reached Voghera. This would have been the first reserve Bonaparte would have met had he been compelled to retire.

† By drawing to himself the troops of Duhesme, Monecy, and Chabran, he would have had from 35,000 to 40,000 combatants on the line of the Ticino.

as a general in 1796 showed that he was quite capable of retrieving a lost battle, and in a most brilliant manner. He was a breaker of rules; but with his genius he could run the risk, for his genius made him revert to measures other than those in common use.

That the French army was saved from defeat by a series of extraordinary circumstances, possibly no one will dispute. The same, however, may be said of all great military events. But if the dispositions just before and during the battle are open to well-merited criticism, the same cannot be said of the campaign, which, on the whole, was a most brilliant one. Nor can we quite agree with the dictum that Fortune, being a woman, reserves her favour for the young, for the result here was due to something beyond pure luck.

The march across the Alps and his subsequent seizure of the Austrian communications was one of the greatest conceptions of Bonaparte's military genius, and well deserved the crowning triumph of Marengo.

Thiers, in summing up, so completely accords with our views that we cannot refrain from quoting him. "In this world, nevertheless, the voice of the people has always adjudged the glory; and this voice of the people has proclaimed as the conqueror of Marengo the man who discovered, with the glance of genius, the advantage to be derived from the high Alps to issue on the rear of the Austrians; who, for three months had deceived their vigilance; created an army which did not exist; rendered this creation incredible to the whole of Europe; crossed the Saint Bernard without a beaten road; dashed suddenly into the middle of Italy; bewildered with astonishment, and hemmed in his unfortunate adversary with a marvellous art; and gave him a decisive battle, lost in the morning, regained in the evening, and certainly to have been regained on the morrow if it had not been so that very day."

To show what the soldiers thought of Bonaparte, what implicit confidence they reposed on him, we have simply to turn to the battlefield, and to see how concerned they were, lest by heedlessly exposing himself to danger, as he did, he should meet his death.

Professor Seeley * says, with regard to Marengo, that Bonaparte was raised from the brink of absolute ignominious ruin to

* Professor Seeley, "A Short History of Napoleon the First," p. 89.

the very pinnacle of glory. This is a very poor conception of genius. Frederick the Great lost several battles, nevertheless he soon eclipsed these defeats by brilliant victories. And who will ever believe that Bonaparte was likely to be ruined by a single battle—that a defeat on the field of Marengo would have brought about the collapse of the entire campaign?

Though the Emperor always dwelt with pleasure on the recollection of the battle of Marengo, still he was outnumbered and nearly defeated. Of the battle Jomini writes: "*Cependant, de toutes les batailles gagnées par Bonaparte, il n'en est pas dont il doit moins s'enorgueillir que celle de Marengo. Assailli ici à l'improviste comme à Eylau, il fut sauvé dans l'une et l'autre de ces journées par un corps détaché à plusieurs lieus du champ de bataille.*" *

Bonaparte laid himself open to a reverse by the undue dispersion of his troops, and he conquered in the end more through the inaptitude of his adversaries than through his own dispositions. There can be no question that the same results might certainly have been gained without incurring anything like the same risks. It may appear an anomaly, still it is a fact, that it was just because Marengo was won after having been nearly lost that it attained such a dazzling fame.

The battle stands forth as a brilliant example of a commander intercepting his adversary's communications without compromising his own. Marengo was the old, old story of failure turned into success—a success so unexpected, so little looked for, that it made a man immortal.

The Austrians had persisted in disbelieving an invasion which the French announced with such clamour. They paid dearly for this excess of obstinacy and want of foresight. What meagre consolation it was to say that Bonaparte no doubt had won the battle, but that he had done so against all recognized rules of war!

The movements which place the aggressor in the rear of an army must commence from afar. The enemy must be surprised, all his suspicions must be lulled, and the manœuvre executed with great rapidity by forced marches well hidden from sight. Bonaparte brought his army to the rear of the Austrians in this campaign by very rapid marches and movements full of brilliant audacity and ability.

* Jomini, "Histoire des Guerres de la Révolution," tom. xiii. p. 302.

The difficulty in such operations lies in this, that the aggressor is very liable to lose his own communications. Here we have a case in point. Having entered Piedmont, Bonaparte recognized how the road he had followed in coming over the Alps was not adapted for a line of retreat or a line of supplies. He had consequently to proceed to Milan, join Monecy, and change his line of operations, adopting the better one of the Saint Gothard.

With a great and noble aim in view, a general must be prepared to run some risks. Besides, the danger of certain operations ceases when they are kept from coming to the knowledge of the adversary. They are then akin to a surprise, inasmuch as they leave no time to the enemy to prepare the proper dispositions for facing them.

Most writers appear to have overlooked an important point. This is that, if the weakening of his army by detaching one of his best divisions in the direction of Rivalta and Novi was imprudent—so imprudent that it has remained as the principal blot in that marvellous campaign—it is strange that such a capable leader as Desaix should have complied without any remonstrance.

Bonaparte had a great regard for Desaix and for his ability, and did not fear an ambitious competitor in him; and we may reasonably imagine that he would have freely discussed the situation with him.

Surely Rapp or Savary, who were Desaix's A.D.C.'s, would have mentioned in their "Mémoires" any objections Desaix might have raised against this dangerous dispersion of forces, if for no other purpose than to extol the glory and credit of their chief. Boudet, Auguste Colbert, and others who were by his side on the 13th and 14th of June, should have known the general's opinions. But on this point all have remained silent. Neither did anything come to light in the very free discussions which always follow a campaign.

Mathieu Dumas states that on reaching Torre di Garofoli Bonaparte received from Rivalta and from the side of the Po information which made him foresee the resolution taken by General Melas, and the impending battle; that it was this information (and not the swelling of the Scrivia, as stated in the account of the battle given by Berthier and by others) which decided him to spend the night there, so as to make his dispositions. What dispositions he made that night are not apparent,

for even Bruyère, who was sent to recall Desaix, only started late on the forenoon of the 14th. There is no record whatever of the dispositions the author says were made with regard to Lannes, Carra Saint Cyr, or the Consular Guard.

A good indication of what might be expected was to be found in the noise of movement the Austrians made in front of the French posts on the night of the 13th. If this warned Victor of an impending attack, surely he should not have neglected to have reported at once the fact either to Berthier or to Bonaparte.

Those who try to extol Desaix's or Kellermann's share in the victory have failed to look at a very important fact. Looking at the desperate state the French army was in at 5 p.m. on the 14th, at the considerable duration of the struggle, carried out as it had been under a powerful sun, and at the lateness of the hour, it was but natural that a commander would have used the division Desaix brought up from Rivalta to cover his retreat. Bonaparte, on the other hand, had detected that the only hope he had of saving himself from an ignominious defeat was by attacking with Desaix's troops, and he had the audacity to turn them to account to renew the contest and to overcome the enemy. This was, no doubt, a desperate venture. But Bonaparte had the courage to risk it, and in doing this he repaired several of his errors. It is in the last phase of the hard-fought field of Marengo that the conqueror of Italy showed his insight and the range of his military ability.

The principal merit which does so much honour to Bonaparte was the great conception of the plan of campaign, the very improbability of which misled his adversaries and made them blind to their danger. The plan was entirely his work, and has always been considered one of the most splendid that his brilliant master-mind ever conceived. Fortune helped him, no doubt; but, being a master of the art of war, he knew how best to turn fortune to account.*

The opening paragraph of Berthier's report to the First Consul, written on the evening of the 14th on the battlefield, runs thus: "I have to give you, Citizen Consul, an account of

* "An unexpected movement," writes Jomini, on the subject of the battle of Möskirch, "may change a defeat into a victory, like that of Desaix at Marengo; but it is only likely to produce great results when these are prepared by the original combinations of the general plan of operations."

the battle of San Giuliano, where you have fixed victory after it had remained undecided for thirteen hours of obstinate fighting." This was very fulsome flattery, only surpassed by a subsequent paragraph in which he describes Bonaparte as leading Desaix's troops to the attack!

Shortly after the battle, Bonaparte spoke his mind to Bourrienne: "Onwards, onwards, still some great events like this campaign, and I may go down to posterity."* Up to his last days Napoleon was proud of the battle of Marengo. Madame de Rémusat relates how on his return from Tilsit he said: "I am, and shall always be, for the French much more the man of Marengo than that of Jena and of Friedland."† In looking at all the results which followed the victory, and to the prestige he acquired from the campaign, he was right. It was only the military critic who did not set the same value on his dispositions for the great battle, and who could not hold him absolved for incurring the risks he ran in the event that made him—that put the imperial diadem on his brow.‡

The battle changed the fortunes of Europe and of the conqueror. The officers most deserving of praise were Victor, who had tenaciously defended Marengo and defeated Haddick's and Kaim's onslaught; Lannes, who with no more than 8000 combatants held from 18,000 to 20,000 victorious troops in check for three hours; Carra Saint Cyr, who captured Castel Ceriolo; Boudet, for having broken the impetus of the Hungarian column; and Kellermann, who dared to launch his slender body of horsemen against the formidable column of Austrian infantry—a column which from its very weight looked as if it would step over anything which would dare to stand in its way.

Indirectly, also, much was due to Massena and Suchet, who fought so bravely for the honour of the Army of Italy. Both had inflicted very severe losses on the Austrian army, which at the period of the battle was nothing in *morale* like what it had been at the beginning of the campaign.

Kellermann was not only conspicuous in the brilliancy and opportunity of his charge against Zach's column. All through

* Bourrienne, "Mémoires," tom. iv. p. 170.

† Mme. de Rémusat, "Mémoires," tom. iii. p. 65.

‡ On the 5th of May, 1821, Napoleon's body, dressed in the uniform of the Chasseurs de la Garde, was laid on a modest little bed, and his companions in captivity laid over all the blue cloth overcoat which the Emperor had worn at Marengo.

the day, he had borne down on the Austrians whenever an opportunity offered. His destruction of Pilatti's cavalry, the effective aid he gave to Victor by leading on charge after charge in ceaseless succession, and his masterly covering of the retreat by keeping up a menacing attitude, were admirable. That Berthier should not accord him a lion's share in the victory is not astonishing. A prepossessed officer like Berthier quickly perceives how any such acknowledgments are liable to detract from the glory of the commander-in-chief.

How noble was the spirit which fought only for glory, and was not animated by more sordid aims! In a battle which decided the fate of the world for many years, Murat mentions in his report a dozen officers, and no more.

One of the principal causes of the successes obtained during the Revolution was that the generals were full of youth and ambition, and were generously prodigal of their lives and blood to acquire fame. They were not restrained by that caution which creeps in with age, and they could give free scope to their daring. They may have often committed faults against the rules of strategy and tactics; but, as their impetuosity was generally crowned with success, no one took much notice of their errors.

Jomini states that the possession of the whole of Northern Italy as far as Mantua and the Mincio, the cession of twelve fortresses with 1500 cannon and immense stores of provisions, were the results of Desaix's attack and of Kellermann's daring charge delivered at a most opportune moment. "A few battalions and 600 cavalry decided the fate of the Peninsula." This is not fair to the gallant soldiers who, against great odds and heavy artillery fire, held the Fontanone brook; to the Consular Guard and Monnier's division, which stayed the advance of the Austrian left; nor to the men who held the ground for hours, thus gaining time for Desaix's battalions to reach the battlefield.

For a long spell of years fortune certainly befriended Bonaparte. But for the swelling of the Scrivia, on the 13th of June, Boudet's division would have been so far on its way to Novi as not to have been able to reach the field of Marengo even at as late an hour as it did.

The divisions of Boudet and Monnier were, on the 14th, to have been one at Novi, the other at Voghera. But the swelling of the Scrivia compelled them to bivouac half a day's march

from Marengo, and owing to this fortuitous accident both were able to reach the battlefield in time.

The complete success of his expedition, the conquest of one-half of Italy, a difficult enterprise brought to a most satisfactory conclusion in sixty days, was enough to dazzle, to fascinate all men.

Marengo raised Bonaparte to the pinnacle of power. The most clear-sighted people were not long in discovering what distance that victory had placed between Bonaparte and them. Before the battle, he was held in high estimation by the French, but an important result of that event was to increase this feeling to such an extent as to lead the French to deem it their bounden duty to obey him. Whilst this feeling grew and waxed strong at home, his enemies abroad learnt to fear and respect him.

Bonaparte could well exclaim, "In one day we have recovered Italy." The sudden victory of Marengo rendered useless all the work of a long time, and robbed the Austrians of all the conquests they had made in 1799. How much precious blood had been spilt in that and the few previous years to no purpose!

Fault has been found with Melas for agreeing to the armistice the day following the battle. He has been credited with having been strong enough to have been able to break through the French. Bulow particularly censures him on this point. We must, however, bear in mind the last phase of the battle of Marengo; that a panic had seized the cavalry, that no effort was made to meet the offensive return of the French, and how easily the advantages gained during the day had been surrendered. The Austrian army had lost heavily, its best men were strewn over the battlefield; for the bold men, the fighting cream, are those who lead the way, and they lose heavily. The *morale* of the Austrian army was undermined. Of late the troops had been beaten in every encounter. And this may have made Melas reluctant to have recourse so soon to another trial of strength. And that consideration may have suggested his regaining his communications at the price of the fortresses of Piedmont as the safest plan to pursue.

It might be pleaded in Melas's favour that his Government had obstinately assured him of the non-existence of the Army of Reserve. But when the facts showed him that he had been deceived on this point, he did not concentrate his troops sufficiently

soon, nor was his concentration sufficiently complete, for he had left many garrisons in Piedmont.

What decided Melas to capitulate was a desire to save the survivors of the battlefield and the garrisons in Piedmont, so as to concentrate a fine body of 60,000 men about Mantua with whom to continue the campaign. Jomini relates that he was pushed to it by the old generals, who had been separated from their stores and other property when the baggage of the army had been directed on Parma. All this was now at the mercy of the enemy, and the officers were keen to save their property. Jomini explains in a footnote how he obtained this information; but he evidently was not quite certain of the accusation he was bringing.

Crossard states that, on the evening of the battle, Prince Charles de Rohan arrived at Alessandria with 9000 men drawn from Mondovi, Coni, and Ceva; that there were besides 1500 men who had not taken any part in the battle, and had remained in Alessandria; and that 11,000 might in twenty-four hours have come from Genova, had the British sailors undertaken to hold that city till a further effort was made to decide the fate of Italy at Alessandria.*

These assertions of Crossard seem to show that on the third day after the battle of Marengo Melas would have been more formidable than the First Consul. Neupperg's words to him whilst treating were: "Do not believe that you have annihilated us; you will see us, if you like, reappear possibly stronger than when we began the battle. We have lead, powder, bayonets, and cannons; break off negotiations, attack us, and you will render us a service." †

Bonaparte showed his wisdom when he consented to accept the terms proposed by Melas. It was prudent to do so, for the Austrians were still very strong.

The surrender of Genova was the hardest condition of all, the same post as carried the news of its capture having taken those of its restitution.

Hohenzollern surrendered the city to Suchet, acting as he deemed loyally by the Convention of Alessandria. With regard to Genova, this convention did not quite cover the case, for the

* Crossard, "*Mémoires Militaires et Historiques pour servir à l'Histoire de la Guerre depuis 1792 jusqu'en 1815*," tom. ii. p. 304.

† Crossard, tom. ii. p. 311.

English had shared in the siege and by a vigorous blockade of the port had conduced largely to Massena's evacuation. They had, therefore, every right to hold a city which their allies were forced to give up, and Hohenzollern was not at liberty to dispose of it.

The English pointed to the terms stipulated in their convention with Austria, the second article of which ran thus: "The contracting parties agree not to make during the duration of this convention any separate peace with France without the reciprocal consent of each other; not to treat with the enemy, and not to receive overtures of a peace particular or general, without communicating mutually and to act in perfect harmony." The Austrian commander paid no attention to their protest.

Before the fate of the day had been decided, Melas, as we have related in Chapter XIV., had despatched a staff officer to Vienna to report prematurely to his imperial master how victory had sided with the Austrian army at Marengo. Something, but in the opposite sense, occurred in Paris. The first news which reached the city foretold a disaster. The bearer had quitted the field before Desaix's arrival turned the scale, and reported that at 5 p.m. the battle was going against the Consular army, which was retreating. This news, accepted too readily, overwhelmed the citizens with consternation. It was only on the following day that the express with the news of the victory arrived; then the gloom and despair of the people were turned into universal intoxication.

On his entry into Milan after Marengo, Bonaparte was received in triumph as befitted a mighty conqueror. Adulation had no limits; every term of praise was used. "Unico uomo!" "Eroe straordinario!" "Modello impareggiabile!" People went out of their way to invent a title which seemed to be sufficiently comprehensive.

A year after his accession to the empire, in 1805, Napoleon went to Italy in order to be crowned with the iron crown. He visited Marengo on the 14th of June, the anniversary of his famous victory, and commanded in a sham fight in which the various episodes of the battle were reproduced. On that occasion Berthier, then minister of war, presented His Majesty with a descriptive narrative of the battle. This brief sketch, for it only comprised some sixty pages, was afterwards printed in Paris for distribution.

In this narrative there are no details of the passage of the Alps nor of the check at Fort Bard. It should not surprise any one, considering the occasion on which it was presented and the position Bonaparte had then attained, to find Berthier attributing all the honour and glory of the eventful 14th of June to his imperial master. The arrival of Desaix and the effect of his advance does not receive all the *éclat* it deserves. One single paragraph disposes of Kellermann's brilliant charge, in which no mention whatever is made of that general's initiative. Nevertheless, coming from Bonaparte's chief of the staff, and written when the events were still fresh, it forms a valuable record.

The Duke of Ragusa adds a note to his "Mémoires," in which he relates that the official news of the battle of Marengo published in the bulletins was sufficiently true. Napoleon had given instructions to the War Department to amplify this narrative and to add to it some maps. Five years later he sent for the work. It did not please him; he erased it, and dictated a fresh one (of which hardly one-half was true), and ordered the *Depôt* to prepare for the "Mémorial" a narrative on these lines. Lastly, after three more years, the Emperor became again desirous to see this work. It displeased him, and experienced the same fate as the first. In the end he drew up a third, in which all the facts are false. A geographical engineer having put aside the first and second narratives, published them at the time of the *Restauration*; and all three are to be found in the same volume of the "Mémorial," with plans.*

Lieutenant J. Campana, "Marengo Étude Raisonnée des Opérations Militaires, etc.: d'après la Correspondance et les Mémoires de Napoléon," quotes long passages from the "Mémoires." The Emperor's evidence as to certain facts in his campaigns would be invaluable, were it not that he gave us the facts very much as he wished them to be believed, and this makes us very diffident in accepting them.

"Napoleon at Saint Helena was," says Lord Rosebery, "as it were, making the best case for himself, just as he was in the habit of doing in his bulletins. His bulletins represented what Napoleon desired to be believed. So did the 'Mémoires.'" † This want of veracity Lord Rosebery extends to others besides

* "Mémoires du Maréchal Marmont, Duc de Raguse," tom. ii. p. 156.

† Lord Rosebery, "Napoleon, the Last Phase," p. 4.

Napoleon. Of all the Longwood publications, he says, there are none wholly reliable. "There seems to have been something in the air of Saint Helena that blighted exact truth."*

The First Consul entered Milan on the 17th of June, and was received by the acclamations of the people. Though he had written a letter from the battlefield to the Emperor of Austria—a letter full of wisdom and amicable protestations, counselling Austria to break off with England and ally itself to the French Republic—still he had no sooner reached Milan than he took measures for the prosecution of the war.

On the 18th, he went in great ceremony to the Cathedral to assist at the solemn *Te Deum* of thanksgiving for the saving of the Republic and the glory of the French arms. The music was that of the best composers in Italy. The ceremony was superb and imposing.

Bonaparte did not tarry in the capital of Lombardy long, for he arrived in Paris on the 2nd of July. It was in the middle of the night that he alighted from his travelling carriage, but on the following day he was received with every demonstration of joy. On the 14th of that month, the victory of Marengo was celebrated in Paris by a festival. There was a surprise in store for the good people of Paris, for just as the games were about to commence, the *wall of granite*, the Consular Guard, marched into the field. They managed to keep their ranks while the parade lasted, but their presence had roused the enthusiasm of the people to such a pitch, that, as they marched away, parents, brothers, sisters, sweethearts, and friends rushed forward, and felt only happy in the embrace of these weather-beaten heroes.

It was after his return to Paris that Bonaparte received overtures from Louis XVIII. and other members of the royal family.

Thugut was strongly opposed to the breaking of the treaty recently and solemnly entered into with England; nevertheless, the Austrian Cabinet resolved to gain time, and, if they could not obtain tolerable terms of peace, run all the hazards of a renewal of the war. Count Saint Julien appeared in Paris as plenipotentiary on the part of Austria, and bearing a letter from the Emperor Francis. In this letter occurred the following passage: "You can rely in everything which Count Saint Julien will say on my behalf, and I shall ratify whatever he will do." The

* Lord Rosebery, "Napoleon, the Last Phase," p. 7.

preliminaries of peace were soon arranged; but the Cabinet of Vienna evaded the ratification of the preliminary articles, recalled Saint Julien, and intimated that it could only enter into negotiations with the concurrence of Great Britain.

Bonaparte was highly indignant at Austria's refusal to ratify the preliminaries, and immediately gave notice that the armistice would cease on the 10th of September. Macdonald,* with 15,000 men of the 2nd Army Reserve organized at Dijon, was sent to Switzerland to form a connecting link between the armies of Italy and of Germany, and to succour either according to necessity. Augereau, with 18,000 men, was to come from Holland and take up a position on the Lahn, so as to co-operate with the extreme left of Moreau's army.

By the month of September, France had more than 200,000 picked troops in the field.

Negotiations went on with England for a naval armistice, but the British would not be imposed on by Bonaparte and subscribe to his unfair demands. When the First Consul saw that England would not give in, he ordered Carnot to lose no time in putting the armies on a proper footing for resuming hostilities.

On quitting the field in Italy, Bonaparte did not leave all danger behind him, for soon conspiracies were set on foot with the intent of killing him. What had deeply offended a batch of desperate men was his assumption of power and the excessively vigorous measures he had put in force against the old Jacobin party. The police were very active, and some of the discovered conspiracies lay a good deal in the imagination and officiousness of the police-agents. A plot to assassinate him at the opera was discovered by the police. Ceracchi, the only one of the conspirators, was found in the saloon, but unarmed. According to

* Ranald, the Chief of Clanranald, had been out with the prince in 1745-46, with him was Neil MacEachim of the Uist branch of the family, who followed James II. to France. Ho was father of Stephen James Macdonald, Duke of Taranto. This distinguished soldier sided with the Revolution, entered the army, and rapidly rose to high rank. Though he rendered very important services to Bonaparte on the 18th Brumaire, he lost his favour by his honest support of the cause of Moreau. He was only reconciled with the Emperor on the field of Wagram, where he most highly distinguished himself. He held many commands in Spain, in Russia, in Germany, and made desperate efforts against the Allies in 1814. When he felt convinced that further resistance was hopeless, he advised Napoleon to abdicate. On the Emperor's return from Elba, he left Paris with Louis XVIII., and refused to serve during the Hundred Days. He lived till 1840, upholding in the Chamber of Peers the principles of constitutional liberty.

Lanfrey, the whole plot had been concocted by a blackguard, Harel, a police-agent. All that those accused at that time had been guilty of was loud and seditious talk at their clubs or workshops—an exaggerated freedom of speech often indulged in by men with excitable imaginations. Harel had done all, and his deposition, full of gross contradictions and improbabilities, was willingly accepted by a timid jury.

CHAPTER XVI.

HOHENLINDEN.

The intrenched camp of Ulm—Kray attacks Sainte Suzanne at Erbach—Moreau decides against an attack of the intrenched camp—Kray issues from Ulm, attacks Moreau's left, and is defeated—Moreau crosses the Danube—Victory of Höchststadt—Kray abandons Ulm, and marches to Nordlingen—Attacks General Montrichard, and is defeated at Oberhausen—Armistice of Parsdorf—Resumption of hostilities; redistribution of the two armies—The Austrians decide to cross the Inn—The French left attacked and driven back at Ampfing—Moreau takes post at Hohenlinden—Advance of the Austrians; attacked in front and in rear, they are totally defeated—The French march for Salzburg—Richepanse defeats the Austrians at Voklabruck—Archduke Charles reinstated as Commander-in-Chief of the Austrian Army—Proposes an armistice—The Peace of Luneville the result of the victories of Marengo and Hohenlinden.

It was only a fortnight since the opening of the campaign, and Kray had been compelled to seek refuge and protection behind the ramparts of Ulm. The Austrian army was disheartened by two lost battles and five or six excessive marches. This had undermined the *morale* of the troops; in Ulm, however, it would find the rest it needed, with ample supplies to satisfy its wants.

Notwithstanding the recent defeats, Kray was still in command of a powerful army. The Austrians alone numbered 56,000, of whom 13,000 were cavalry and 4000 artillery. He had besides 20,000 allies, which brought up the number of combatants to 76,200. The Prince of Reuss was in the Tyrol with 25,000 men, and there was also a division on the Main.

The intrenched camp of Ulm had been traced with great skill and forethought by the Archduke Charles. The works were of such an extent as to render all idea of a regular blockade out of the question. The camp occupied both banks of the Danube. The town and bridge-head were armed with 140 guns; the advanced works were also well armed with artillery. The

magazines were ample and well stocked. Ulm covered the Austrian line of retreat by Donauwörth and Ratisbon.*

There, in his own good time, Kray could wait for reinforcements, repair his losses, raise the spirits of his troops, and by a judicious employment of his immense resources, obliterate the last effects of Moreau's manœuvre.

The French experienced the greatest difficulty in ousting the Austrians from this formidable position, and employed six weeks in various attempts to dislodge Kray's army, but all in vain. Nor could Moreau dream of marching on, leaving 80,000 men in his rear: this would for certain have led to an attack on his communications with France.

On hearing that Moreau, by order of his Government, had detached Moncey's force to Italy, the Austrians seem to have persuaded themselves that he was going to be reduced to a purely defensive attitude. Nevertheless, it was at that very time that he contemplated his enterprise against Augsburg in Bavaria, conceived, no doubt, as much with the intention of drawing Kray from Ulm, as of profiting by the resources of that wealthy city.

After the departure of Moncey's contingent for Italy, on the 11th, 12th, and 13th of May, there remained to Moreau 72,000 combatants; there were besides the division in Switzerland, the several garrisons and the convalescents soon likely to come out of hospital.

Several of the senior officers had been strongly urging Moreau to carry Ulm by force; but he would not risk a direct attack, as in case of a defeat he would have had to retire, compromising not only the fate of his campaign in Germany, but also of that of the Army of Reserve in Italy. He much preferred getting what he desired by manœuvring, and hoped that by moving the bulk of his troops in the direction of Augsburg and Munich, he would ultimately succeed in enticing Kray out of Ulm.

His dispositions were not of the very best, and were calculated to invite an attack. On setting out, he left Sainte Suzanne alone on the left bank of the Danube, on which river he had no bridge. Saint Cyr was his nearest support, and he was

* When, in 1805, Ulm fell into Napoleon's hands, he ordered the fortifications to be levelled to the ground. He was anxious that the place might not in future afford a point of support to the Austrians.

stationed on the right bank, at the confluence of the Danube and the Iller. Such a disposition of the forces left to observe the intrenched camp of Ulm could not but tempt Kray to attack, and, had he done this with all his forces, Sainte Suzanne must have been thoroughly defeated.

Judging that the distance of the French right wing and centre from the left precluded Moreau from affording any effectual support to his left wing, Kray sallied forth on the 16th of May and attacked Sainte Suzanne at Erbach. The Austrians advanced with a very numerous body of cavalry, which was commanded by the Archduke Ferdinand. After the cavalry followed several columns of infantry.

The left attacked Legrand's division at Ringingen and Erbach; the centre attacked Papelau; and the right Souham, at Gerhausen and Asch, near Blaubeuren. In the combat which ensued Sainte Suzanne was hard pressed, and the French troops were driven back in disorder for several miles. Nothing but the presence of mind and brilliant valour of their general saved them.

Seriously alarmed by the violence of the cannonade, which showed how fast the French left wing was losing ground, Saint Cyr thought it necessary to come to the rescue. He sent aide-de-camp after aide-de-camp to recall the troops from the banks of the Iller to those of the Danube. To do this without wasting time, they were ordered not to wait for the outposts to be drawn in. Stationed on the bridge of Unterkirchberg on the Iller, Saint Cyr himself kept despatching the troops to the Danube as fast as they came up.

Fearing that Saint Cyr might be looking for a ford or a repairable bridge, the Austrians lined the left bank of the Danube, and opened a brisk cannonade, to which Saint Cyr replied. This cannonade across the mighty river had a strange result, for it alarmed the Austrians about their own line of retreat, and caused them to draw back. The first step back was a fortunate opportunity for the French. It inspired the soldiers with fresh ardour. The divisions of one accord rushed forward, and drove the Austrians back under the protection of the cannon of Ulm.

After the first engagements of the campaign, the Austrian soldiers were greatly depressed, and had given clear indications that they were quite incapable of sustaining any serious

encounter with the French. The warlike qualities of the latter were being demonstrated in almost every action. Legrand's division, in this instance, being the nearest one to the river, was severely handled by the enemy, who strove to prevent its being reinforced from the right bank. At one moment a numerous body of cavalry rushed on the French. Adjutant-General Levasseur, who had already been dismounted in a charge, seized hold of a riderless horse, and galloped up to the 10th Cavalry, then on the point of quitting the field. He brought the regiment back, charged the Austrian horsemen, though fully ten times as strong, and stayed their march. Nor did the rest of Sainte Suzanne's troops show less spirit; after many hours' hard fighting, all they demanded was to be led against the enemy.

What was about to happen at Marengo within a few days occurred in this fight at Erbach. The French, inferior in numbers, were driven back at all points; but a well-directed charge of cavalry and a harmless cannonade changed the situation entirely. French elasticity prevailed, and the French, who had been fighting since early morning, rushed forward and with unresisting force drove back their numerous foes.

Starray attacked without vigour, and showed considerable indecision. He allowed Prince Ferdinand to bear the entire weight of the attack. Had he supported him with the main body, even the stubborn resistance of the French would have been undoubtedly overcome.

Moreau, who was not thoroughly well informed, once believed that Kray contemplated retiring behind the Lech so as to form a junction with the Prince of Reuss. But the combat at Erbach showed him that the Austrian forces lay concentrated on the left bank of the Danube. Moreau then approached Ulm to see if Kray would quit it through fear of being attacked.

After the affair of the 16th of May, he made a demonstration to reconnoitre the strength of the new works.

The approach of the six French divisions between Erbach and Blaubeuren had no influence on the Austrian general's decisions. Whatever intentions of a retreat he may have at one time entertained with the object of drawing closer to the Prince of Reuss and covering Bavaria, he now dropped them and stuck to Ulm.

An attack of the intrenched camp was full of danger. Seeing

all the risks, Moreau decided to extend to his right, to manœuvre on the Austrian line of communications, and to obtain by means of demonstrations made on the enemy's line of retreat what he could not obtain by force. He determined to direct Lecourbe to march on Augsburg, hoping that Kray would lead his forces on the Iller to attack the French left; which would pave the way to a decisive battle on a field so favourable for the French infantry.

Lecourbe was simply to show himself on the Lech, and at once to fall back on the centre, when the French army would be in a favourable condition for fighting.

On the 20th, Moreau crossed to the right bank of the Danube with Saint Cyr's troops and the left wing, and took post between the Danube and the Iller. On the 22nd, Kray bid the Archduke Ferdinand to issue forth from the camp of Ulm with 10,000 men, to acquire positive news of the French army, and to crush, if he could, the corps which the French might have left to observe the place. This led to a partial combat at Achstellen and Dellmensingen, which served to give a further proof, if any were wanted, of the stubbornness of the Republican forces.

The French, however, at this time began to experience difficulties in providing for their subsistence. Their prolonged stay around Ulm had exhausted the local resources, and their difficulties increased from day to day. There had been glaring abuses, and Moreau had to remedy them by taking vigorous measures. The commissary Pommier was tried and shot; and two generals who had fallen under suspicion of having countenanced dilapidation were dismissed.

The Prince of Reuss now tried to do something to show enterprise on the Rhine valley, by pushing detachments in the direction of Ragaz and of Bregenz. But Molitor easily drove him out of the latter city on the 24th, and the Austrian troops fell back from Ragaz.

Moreau's mind was fixed on Augsburg, with the aim of enticing Kray away from his intrenchments and of obtaining a more ample supply for his army, which felt the pinch of want, being, as it was, denuded of magazines and confined in the narrow space between the lake of Constance and Ulm. Augsburg, being a wealthy city, promised to relieve his wants.

Supported by Hautpoul, Lecourbe crossed the Lech at Landsberg on the 27th of May. Gudin, with the advanced guard,

appeared before the bridge, and crossed over with the last of the enemy before the Austrians had time to break the bridge. The following day Montrichard and Hautpoul joined forces at Schwabmünchen, and without any obstacle entered Augsburg.

Kray, having become aware of the dispositions of the French, resolved to do something to attack the troops between the Danube and the Iller. During the night of the 5th of June he sent 30,000 men out of Ulm to concentrate on the right of the Danube, to assail these troops, whilst other 26,000 men, posted between the Iller and the Kamlach, were to hold the French army in countenance.

Moreau had foreseen such a movement. In fact, he had provoked it. Lecourbe had received, on the 3rd, orders to evacuate Augsburg, to return to the Wertach and to Buckloe. The centre and the reserve speedily approached the Iller, which Grenier crossed in all haste with Ney's division to come to Richepanse's aid.

Richepanse's troops were somewhat scattered, and the Austrians at first were able to score a success. Everything went in their favour till Ney came into action, and fell on the daring Austrians at the head of Bonnet's brigade on the plateau of Kirchberg. The Austrians gave way before this impetuous attack, and regained Roth, leaving many prisoners in the enemy's hands.

Emboldened by this success, Richepanse assumed the offensive, and, after a severe contest, chased Kray from Beuren. Ney's success at Kirchberg, and the arrival of Delmas's brigade which appeared on the field at the fall of the day, coming from Kelmuntz towards Guttzell, left Kray no chance of victory. Seeing every effort fruitless, he ordered his army to retire to Ulm.

It was towards the end of June that Moreau ordered an attack to be made on all the Austrian detachments that still remained on the right bank of the Danube. Grenier attacked what there was of Giulay's, or Gyulai's, and Starray's corps between Günzburg and Burgau. Lecourbe's advanced guard attacked those between Burgau and Dillingen. The result of these attacks was that Giulay took up a position between Albeck and Riedhausen; Starray withdrew beyond the Brenz, leaning on Gundelfingen. Grenier and Lecourbe were then ordered to make false attacks on Günzburg and Dillingen.

Starray, who had demanded and obtained from Kray reinforcements with which to watch the banks of the Danube between Günzburg and Donauwörth, had sent the greater portion of the troops back to Ulm, keeping eight battalions and five squadrons only round Gundelfingen. General Devaux had taken five battalions and three squadrons to Donauwörth. This was all that was employed to guard a line some twelve leagues in extent, which would have needed at the very least 10,000. Kray, with the rest of the army, remained inactive in Ulm.

Moreau had resolved to make a wide turning movement, so as to gain the Lower Danube and threaten Kray's communications. But the weather broke, and on account of the heavy rains his designs could not be put into effect till the 10th of June. Lecourbe then made himself master of Schöngau and Landsberg, and on the 12th he reoccupied Augsburg. The French centre and right conformed in this wheel of the army; the first descended the Kamlach and the Gunz, and made for Krumbach, driving Starray's posts before them; the left advanced in the valley of the Roth and of the Iller on Weissenhorn and Vohringen.

The crossing of the Danube by the French was rendered difficult by more than one impediment. The Austrians patrolled the left bank, and kept careful watch. They had besides broken all the bridges over the Danube up to Donauwörth—a serious embarrassment for the French, who had neither pontoon-trains nor barges for crossing rivers. However, fortune helped them, for some of the destructions had been carelessly carried out. The reports brought in by the advanced guards showed that the bridges of Kremheim and of Blemheim had suffered the least. It was on these reports that it was decided to cross at those points, and, with that object, a large number of stout planks and beams were collected.

Grenier and Lecourbe had been directed to make false attacks on Günzburg and Dillingen. Ney's attempt at Dillingen and Grenier's at Leipheim had failed. Still, these failures were not without advantage, inasmuch as they served to impose on the enemy. Starray was mystified as to the intended point of passage; he was perplexed, and kept his troops scattered.

Starray's action had helped Lecourbe greatly in crossing the Danube. He had turned to no account whatsoever the

reinforcements he had received from Kray after such earnest demands. Instead of watching the course of the river from some central point between Günzburg and Donauwörth, he had sent back to Ulm the greater portion of his troops. Kray, if possible, had done even worse, for he had kept the rest of his army in absolute inactivity.

Moreau, taking advantage of Kray's supineness, and having succeeded in distracting the attention of his troops, now made dispositions for crossing. On the night of the 18-19th, Lecourbe took the divisions of Montrichard and Gudin, with Hautpoul's cavalry reserve, and concealed them in rear of the woods which line the Danube opposite Blemheim and Kremheim—a locality selected with great skill.

These villages, between which the Danube makes a sudden *détour*, are only about a thousand yards from each other, and separated by a stream called the Nebel-Bach. The left bank of the river is here higher than the right, but the slope is very gentle, and the plain between Höchststadt and Schwenningen is very suitable for the deployment of cavalry and the manœuvring of troops.

At break of day on the 19th, Lecourbe opened with his guns on Kremheim and Blemheim, and cleared the Austrians from the banks of the river. After a while eighty expert swimmers, led by Captain Dogometry, swam across the Danube; they were followed by two boats conveying supports and loaded with clothing and arms. On setting foot on the left bank these intrepid soldiers seized their arms, and, naked as they were, fell upon the Austrians, who were simply astonished by such daring. This detachment captured two guns, and took possession of Kremheim. Some ladders placed across the ruins of the bridge enabled a few gunners to cross to serve the captured guns.

The pioneers set to and began at once to repair the bridge; this was done so speedily that soon one half-brigade got across and occupied the two villages with the intention of keeping the enemy at a distance till the repairs had got so far forward as to allow the crossing of all the arms.

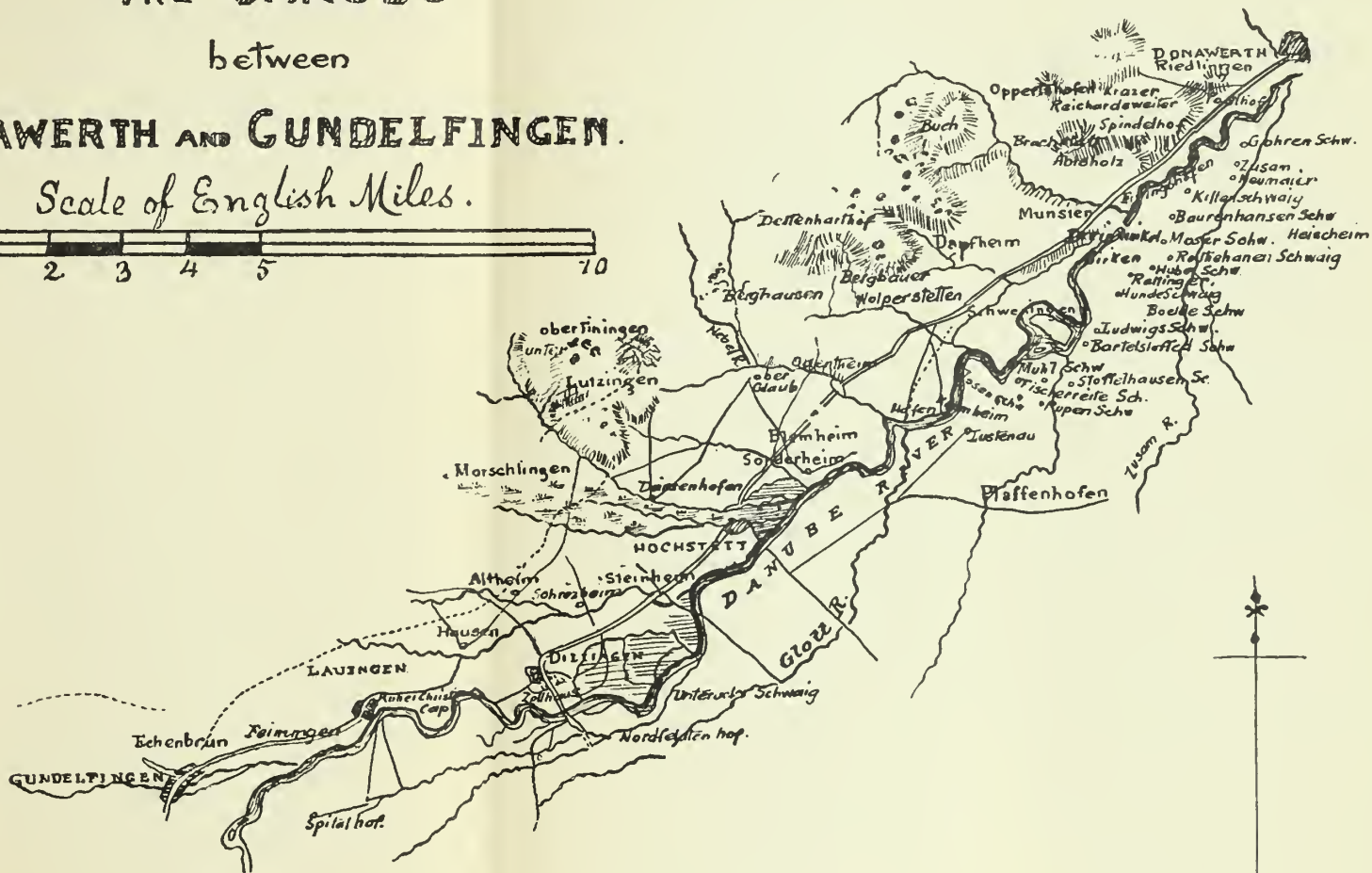
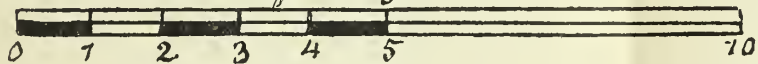
The alarm rapidly spread all along the Austrian posts; there was no longer any doubt as to where the veritable point of attack would be. The Austrians were gathering from all sides; their commanders at Dillingen and at Donauwörth were hurrying forward all the troops they could get together. These

THE DANUBE

between

DONAWERTH AND GUNDELFINGEN.

Scale of English Miles.



might have had time to overcome the leading French troops and destroy the hastily repaired bridge, had not Lecourbe taken steps to prevent a junction of such troops as were certain soon to appear on the field.

Lecourbe had foreseen that he might very soon expect the Austrians to come up from Donauwörth, and to descend the Danube from their positions of Gundelfingen, Günzburg, and Ulm. Having made a personal inspection of the neighbourhood, and having recognized that it was by Schwenningen on the Donauwörth road that any Austrian troops ascending the Danube would appear, he ordered his infantry and a few platoons of cavalry to occupy that village. The moment was critical, and on holding Schwenningen depended the success of this bold enterprise.

The wisdom of his dispositions was soon apparent, for it was not long before an Austrian force of 4000 infantry, 500 cavalry, and six guns appeared in sight. General Devaux, who commanded at Donauwörth, marched on Schwenningen as quickly as possible, and attacked it.

The village was attacked, captured, and recaptured several times in the space of two hours. The numerical superiority of the Austrians was on the point of telling, when Lecourbe brought a timely reinforcement to Puthod's brigade, some squadrons of carabineers, and his own escort of the 8th Hussars. All the available cavalry then rushed on the Austrian infantry, which was widespread in the open ground about the river. A vigorous and timely charge overthrew the Austrians, who abandoned the field, leaving their guns and 2000 prisoners in the enemy's hands. Two battalions of the Würtemberg contingent attempted to resist by forming square. They fought desperately, but nothing availed; they were broken, their colours were taken, and their colonel was captured. In fact, they did not fare any better than the rest.

Thus the Austrians marching up the Danube were disposed of and pursued by Laval's brigade along the Donauwörth road. Still, it was to be expected that others might be soon coming from the opposite direction—from Dillingen, Gundelfingen, and Ulm. By this time the bridges of Kremheim and Blemheim had been fortunately repaired, so that the other divisions were able to get across the river.

When Laval had been well started in Devaux's pursuit,

Lecourbe marched in the direction of Höchststadt with the divisions of Gudin and Montrichard's and d'Hautpoul's reserves.

Starray, warned by the distant cannonade, had collected some 3000 or 4000 men at Höchststadt, some five or six miles below Dillingen. He had besides asked for reinforcements, but deeming himself unequal to a contest with the French, kept falling back on Dillingen, where he had left three battalions in reserve. The 37th half-brigade and a squadron of the 9th Hussars followed him step by step.

Lecourbe came round the left of the village of Schrezheim at the head of two regiments of carabineers and cuirassiers, the 6th and 9th Cavalry and the 9th Hussars, sixteen squadrons in all. The French were in a plain, separated from the enemy only by the Egge, a small stream on the banks of which stood the village of Schrezheim. Lecourbe crossed the village at speed, and on emerging on the other side deployed into line and charged the Austrian cavalry. Surprised by such a determined onset, the Austrian horsemen retired in disorder, leaving uncovered the infantry they should have protected. The Austrian infantry just managed to enter Dillingen, where it only kept together for an instant, notwithstanding the cover afforded by the walls and ditches of the place. Attacked again from the side of Altheim, from which Lecourbe was issuing at a gallop, it had to cross the plain of Lauingen in serried masses, leaving to the enemy over a thousand prisoners—men who, to resist the attack of the French squadrons, were still holding to the protection afforded by the ditches and gardens of Dillingen.

On the previous evening 2000 cuirassiers under De Klinglin with De Kospoth's infantry brigade had arrived at Gundelfingen on the Brenz, sent by Kray to support Starray. These troops had remained inactive, and only served to rally the remnants of Starray's corps. They had some slight advantage over Lecourbe's cavalry at first, but they soon found that they could not hold their own against the ever-increasing forces of the French.

Moreau, informed that a considerable body of cavalry was approaching Medlingen, imagined, and with good reason, that the cavalry would be closely followed by Kray's main body. He consequently determined to overthrow these horsemen before there was any chance of their being supported. With this object he strengthened Lecourbe's cavalry by four regiments of light

cavalry, and by a portion of the cavalry of Decaen's division. These troops he launched against Klinglin's squadrons, whilst Montrichard was directed to lead the 37th on Gundelfingen.

The two combats of the morning had been decided by the dash of the French cavalry, and here was an occasion for gathering fresh laurels. Lecourbe had left his infantry in Lauingen whilst he deployed all his horsemen on the plain. The Austrian cavalry at that time enjoyed the highest reputation in Europe for general excellence and manœuvring qualities, and here was a fair opportunity for putting its mettle to the test.

Their first line advanced boldly at a gallop and drove before it the 2nd regiment of carabineers and a few squadrons of hussars which had joined it in the charge. The French cuirassiers, aided by the carabineers and hussars, who had quickly rallied, then fell on the Austrians and drove them back in their turn. It was now time for the second Austrian line to advance and close with the French, who had got rather scattered in their charge. Borne on with great impetus, they compelled the French to withdraw in hot haste. The latter had still the 9th Hussars in reserve; this regiment, adroitly led, boldly takes the enemy's cavalry in flank, surprises it by its dashing onset, overthrows it, and thus gains possession of the battlefield for the French.

The result of the fight was greater than could be gathered by the execution done. At Schwenningen, at Schrezheim, and at Lauingen, the French cavalry had incontestably established their superiority over the Austrians, and the same had occurred at Marengo a few days before. This ascendancy was not soon lost, and was to become a very formidable element in the coming wars.

A fresh battle followed the overthrow of the Austrian cavalry. A severe contest was maintained till eleven at night, when Montrichard, at the head of the 37th half-brigade, entered Gundelfingen, and all the positions on the plain remained in the hands of Moreau.

The result of this hard-fought contest was that 20 guns, 4000 prisoners, and four standards fell into the hands of the French. Beyond these trophies the day was glorious for Moreau and for Lecourbe. It had also raised the prestige of the French, and, above all, of the cavalry, which, up to that time, had been considered inferior to that of their adversaries.

The French were very much elated by their victory of Höchstadt, for it made amends for the great battle lost in the same locality on the 13th of August, 1704. Marlborough and Prince Eugene then defeated Tallard, Marsin, and the Elector of Bavaria. This second battle was not on the same scale, nevertheless it led to very important results.

On the field of Höchstadt a faulty employment of the Austrian cavalry was again seen. Where some 50 squadrons properly employed on the plains of Dillingen might have made the crossing of the Danube slow and very uncertain for the French, these troops were kept idling around an intrenched camp, where they could cause only embarrassment.

From the direction of the enemy's march, it was impossible for Kray not to have foreseen Moreau's intention. A little more enterprise on his part would have enabled him to fall on the French left; in default of which he might have quitted Ulm, and have concentrated some 50,000 combatants between Günzburg and Donauwörth.

It was on the 19th of June that the French found themselves securely established on the left bank of the Danube. Kray had detained Moreau in the neighbourhood of Ulm, and so prevented his striking a decisive blow at any vital part of the empire. The concentration of most of the enemy's troops on his line of retreat awoke him into activity, and no sooner had he gauged the danger which threatened him than he decided to march out of Ulm.

Having left Pétrasch in Ulm with 10,000 men for its protection, he started during the night for Aalen with his great artillery park of 160 guns with 800 waggons. His cavalry on the Brenz was to cover his movements. The troops set out in three columns, and marched on the 21st to Heidenheim by difficult roads. After two or three hours' rest, they continued the march to Neresheim, which was reached at midnight of the 22nd. Notwithstanding all the hardships of the previous day's march, the troops were again in motion for Nordlingen on the following day. Kray marched in very bad weather, and the heavy rains had made the roads almost impassable. Still, the rapidity of his retreat was such that he reached Neresheim in twenty-four hours. It was a rapid march that the Austrian army executed on the 21st and 22nd of June, and it got them out of their difficulties at a cost of a severe strain. The army was

extricated from a dangerous position by the ability of its commander, in whom the perils which surrounded him had infused singular energy.

Moreau, not informed in time of Kray's march, lost a fine opportunity. Though hampered by a convoy of nearly a thousand vehicles, the Austrians carried out their march with considerable expedition, and chiefly during the night. They moved in a semicircle of which the French occupied the base. Had Moreau executed a flank attack on the 21st and 22nd, there can be no doubt that he would have cut the Austrian army in two, and that a great portion of their park would, in that case, have fallen into his hands.

Bonaparte accused Moreau of having shown in this instance an excess of circumspection; but this criticism was not merited, for the circumstances were not at all favourable for vigorous action. To begin with, Moreau was not informed in good time of Kray's retreat—a most important point—for Richepanse only became aware of it as the last Austrian detachments were about quitting Ulm. Secondly, the rain had spoilt the roads, in a country entirely devoid of solid causeways, and to such an extent that moving an army had become a matter of very serious difficulty. Thirdly, Moreau was afraid lest he should be enticed too far from the river and from his communications on the right bank. His inaction, therefore, can justly be attributed to a wise consideration of circumstances.

Kray had halted on the 24th at Nordlingen, to give some rest to his troops after their excessive fatigues. Their dependency was so great that he dreaded the result of a serious engagement, judging by the ardour displayed the preceding day by Lecourbe's and Ney's columns.

Alive to the necessity for cheering his troops and rousing their flagging spirit, he spread a report to the effect that a suspension of hostilities was being signed in Italy, that it was evident that it would be soon extended to Germany, and that before long peace must ensue.

Moreau reached Nordlingen; but, unaware of the state of disarray reigning in the enemy's army, fearing that he might be led into an endless pursuit, and foreseeing that, on account of the wretched state of the roads, he was not at all likely to overtake the Austrians, he ordered a halt. What might not have followed a battle lost under such circumstances!

At this time, Kray sent him an envoy to announce that it had come to his knowledge that the French and Austrian armies in Italy had concluded an armistice. The news of the brilliant events which had led to this armistice he very carefully withheld; and this made Moreau suspicious. He saw in Kray's proposal only an artifice to gain time, and consequently refused to take any notice of it.

Moreau now resolved to recross the Danube, leaving Richepanse to carry out the investment of the principal strongholds on that river. Having reinforced Decaen's division, he ordered that general to proceed by forced marches by Augsburg and Dachau on Munich. The main body of the French army was directed on the capital of Bavaria. By this move it was intended to lay Bavaria under contribution, and to sever still further the communications between Kray's army and that of the Prince of Reuss in the Tyrol. Bavaria would be detached from the coalition, and the French would be able to subsist on the local resources.

Kray, having recrossed the Danube at Neuburg on the evening of the 26th, seriously threatened Decaen; but the danger had been foreseen betimes at the French headquarters, and on the same day Lecourbe, who had recrossed the Danube at Donauwörth and the Lech at Gonderkingen, arrived at Rain. He was followed by the rest of the army, and only Richepanse was left before Ulm.

On the 27th the French right wing continued its march on Neuburg, hoping to out-march the enemy. Gudin marched in the direction of Pottmes; Montrichard followed the road of Unterhausen; the centre was to replace him at Rain; lastly, the left, leaving Legrand's division at Donauwörth, pushed Ney's as far as Lopsingen and Wemdingen and Baraguay-d'Hilliers between Harburg and Monheim. The French evidently did not expect to be attacked, or they would not have occupied this disjointed position. Kray, informed of their approach, of the weakness of their forces, and allured by the prospect of overpowering a portion of the French in their scattered state, marched to meet them.

The right and centre of his first line were the first engaged, they fell on d'Espagne's brigade near Unterhausen; another Austrian corps held back Gudin about Holzkirch. Accustomed to victory, the French were not prepared to yield easily;

nevertheless, the disproportion between the two contending sides was too great. Montrichard called up Schiner's brigade to support d'Espagne, but with no good results; the troops were overpowered, and, being turned on the heights of Sinning, were vigorously pushed back. The Austrians, satisfied with this slight advantage, allowed them to rally behind Oberhausen, without striving to push them further back.

Warned by the sound of the guns, Lecourbe hurried to the scene of action. He had demanded to be supported by Grandjean's division, which was directed on Strass. The reinforcements arrived just in time to save Montrichard. The French resumed the offensive, and dashed at the enemy with rare bravery. At eight in the evening, Oberhausen and the heights were carried, notwithstanding all the efforts of the Austrian squadrons who dashed at the attacking columns the moment they showed. The combat ceased, and Kray, seeing no prospect of overwhelming a portion of the French army, profited by the night to evacuate Neuburg, after which he destroyed the bridge over the Danube.

Fatigue and continuous hard work had by this time reduced Kray's troops to a most deplorable state. Satisfied with having contended against a victorious adversary with some degree of equality, he continued, on the 28th, his march to Ingolstadt, where he left a garrison. His army crossed the Danube at Vohburg, and camped at Siegenburg. On the 1st of July, he took up a position at Landshut, his army being in a most pitiable state.

Decaen's division entered Munich on the 28th of June, after which Moreau, with his left, invested Ingolstadt.

In this part of the theatre of war, nothing of any real importance occurred during the rest of the summer. Moreau turned his attention to the Prince of Reuss; the principal event being the conquest of Feldkirch, which fell into the hands of the French on the 14th of July. Its fall brought about the occupation of the Grisons, and opened a fresh line of communication with the Army of Italy. It was at this time that the operations were suspended by the armistice of Parsdorf, which was signed on the 15th of July.

For four months several schemes of adjustment between Austria and France had been discussed, but to no purpose. Austria still possessed sufficient means of resistance, and

England was ready with her gold. The Emperor was not loth to temporize further, and to continue the armistice till the commencement of the rainy season would have rendered military operations impossible. This would have given him time to recruit his army. But Bonaparte, who detected his object, ordered his generals to resume hostilities. During these four months neither Austria nor France had been idle, and their preparations had been carried out with increased activity.

The Cabinet of Vienna conceived that to restore confidence in the army nothing could be better than to change the commander-in-chief, and Kray was at once relegated to his possessions. The general deserved all pity, for he was never left a free hand in the campaign. The Emperor had placed at his side M. de Lehrback, who overrode all his dispositions, every day reminding him that he was not to risk a decisive action.*

The Austrian army numbered 120,000 men, and was commanded by the Archduke John, a young officer, who was guided by Lauer, the grand master of the artillery. This army was divided as follows: Klenau, with about 25,000 men, held Ratisbon and the Palatinate. The main body, from 60,000 to 65,000 combatants, lined the course of the Inn from Braunau to Rosenheim. Of these, 9000 men garrisoned the bridge-heads of Mühldorf, Wasserburg, Rosenheim, and Braunau. General Hiller commanded the extreme left, the Austrian Tyrol corps. He had under him 20,000 men, with some Tyrolese rifle regiments.

Moreau had an army of 100,000 men, not including the garrisons of the places surrendered. Bonaparte had reinforced his army with a division under Macdonald, about 14,000 men, which left Dijon in July to take post on Lecourbe's right, between Coire and Feldkirch. Another division, commanded by Augereau, replaced Sainte Suzanne's corps on the Main, leaving this last to form the extreme left of Moreau's army.

Lecourbe commanded the right wing, and, with a portion of his army, watched the issues of the Vorarlberg and the Tyrol between Feldkirch and the Isar. Gudin's and Montrichard's divisions of his wing were on the Rosenheim road in front of Hoffendorf.

The centre, the divisions of Decaen, Richepanse, Grandjean,

* Kray had already foreseen all the ill-feeling he was likely to incur in replacing the Archduke Charles, and he had petitioned the Emperor to recall his nomination, but in vain, so he felt compelled to obey.

and d'Hautpoul's cavalry reserve, were concentrated between Munich and Haag.

The left, commanded by General Grenier, comprising the divisions of Ney, Hardy, and Legrand, extended from Hohenlinden towards Hoertkofen, watching the valley of the Isen and its issues.

Two divisions of the extreme left, under the orders of Sainte Suzanne, had been ordered to proceed from the borders of Altmühl to the right bank of the Danube.

Moreau had formulated an able plan. Whilst a Franco-Bavarian force covered his flank, he was to continue operating by the right bank of the Danube. The Army of Italy, reinforced by Macdonald's corps, which had now in reality become its left wing, was to cross the Adige above Verona, and then to advance on Vienna by the Noric Alps. For the execution of this plan, Macdonald had to cross the Rhetian Alps in the depth of winter, and this in the face of Hiller's superior forces.

No sooner had measures been taken to carry this plan into effect than more important events came to prevent its execution. The Austrian army, in its position behind the Inn, had every prospect of being able to withstand Moreau's efforts. Every consideration made it advisable that it should there await the enemy.

No other line could have afforded a greater resistance to the invader. This river, the most important Alpine affluent of the Danube, has a great volume of water, and flows with great impetuosity. In the Tyrol, as far as Kufstein, its waters run between inaccessible mountains, the sides of which are covered by pine forests. From Kufstein to Mühldorf it flows in a deep bed cut by the vehemence of its waters through solid rock. Both banks present a series of steep precipices, excepting only in a few places, and these were strongly fortified and held. This powerful line was supported, on the right, by the fortress of Braunau; on the left, by that of Kufstein. It was almost impossible to force the centre of this line, defended as it was by 80,000 good troops; and to attempt to turn it either by the Tyrol or by Bohemia would have been equally perilous. But whether it was distasteful to a young commander in his first opportunity, and with superior forces, to restrict himself to a purely defensive rôle, or whether his advisers deemed the initiative to offer a more sure and more brilliant prospect of success, it was decided

to abandon the defensive, and, by a swift march, to gain the left flank of the French army, its most vulnerable point.

Klenau was to issue from Ratisbon, and at the same time the principal part of the army was to cross the Inn at Braunau and Mühldorf, and to advance in echelon from the right between Erding and Landshut. When this operation was completed, the army, pivoting on its left, was to wheel to its left, on the important position of Dachau, and cut off the French from their principal line of communication.

This manœuvre to meet with success required more than ordinary speed in the execution. But this was impossible in the middle of winter on marshy ground which was crossed only by heavy and broken roads.

The French, who had during the armistice diligently studied the ground occupied by the Austrians, had come to recognize all the extent of the danger involved in a direct attack of the line of the Inn. They had accordingly arranged to simulate a certain timidity, which might induce the enemy to quit its strong position, and advance through the forest of Ebersberg, where their numerous cavalry would find it impossible to act. This plan was based on the supposition that the Austrians intended to remain on the defensive; for Moreau, alive to all the advantages the Austrians would derive by keeping strictly on the defensive, did not for a moment dream that they would take the initiative.

The resumption of hostilities was notified to take place on the 28th of November. On the previous day the Austrians, notwithstanding the heavy rains of the past days, had commenced the execution of their plan. The weather considerably retarded the march of their columns; their advanced guard reached Landshut only on the 29th. The wretched state of the roads already cast heavy doubts on the possibility of the undertaking. To this mischance was added the reported presence of Sainte Suzanne on the right bank of the Danube, as well as the news of Moreau's movement on Ampfing and Mühldorf. All the Austrian plans were thus upset, and their authors had to look for some practical alternative. The one they adopted was to stop the advance, and to fall back on their left towards Ampfing and Dorfen. This movement, performed amid torrents of rain, and on dreadful roads, completed the exhaustion of the Austrian troops.

On the 28th, the different French divisions had set out in the direction of the Inn. Grenier took the road leading to Haag and Dorfen : Richepanse and Decaen followed that of Wasserburg ; and Montrichard marched in the direction of Rosenheim. They were in utter ignorance as to the Archduke's designs. Informed of his danger by a reconnaissance made on the evening of the 30th, Moreau decided to fall back on his former positions.

The Austrian march in the first instance towards Landshut, and next in the direction of Ampfing (which was totally unknown to Moreau), had put the French left, 25,000 men under Grenier, in great danger ; for fully 60,000 of the enemy were ready to fall on them. The Austrians had crossed the Inn at Oetting. As Grenier was leisurely making for Ampfing, he was suddenly assailed by vast masses of the enemy which advanced against him in admirable order. He was speedily overcome and put to the rout. Ney, with his division and with Hardy's, came up in support, but after a brief resistance he also was driven back ; and a similar fate was shared by Grandjean when he hurried up to Ney's assistance. Legrand had a sharp conflict in the valley of the Isen ; but he likewise was beaten and compelled to retire to the neighbourhood of Dorfen.

The Austrians were everywhere successful ; the attack on Grenier had spread the alarm right through the whole of the French army. But the Austrian staff attached to their victory more importance than was due. On account of the extent of front occupied by the French, and of the presence in the field of the commander-in-chief and his staff, they hastily concluded that they had had to contend against the entire French army, whilst in reality only three divisions had been engaged. Their fatal confidence was still further augmented by the French continuing their retreat on the following day, the 2nd of December.

This brilliant commencement was highly encouraging. But, like other successes in war, this one demanded to be followed up with vigour ; and it was here that the Austrian commander-in-chief failed. Intoxicated by this first success, he was unable to appreciate the immense advantage of this combat, and how it behoved him to force the beaten French back without intermission on to the columns which would surely be coming up to their support. The Archduke, satisfied with his first result,

allowed Moreau a respite, and made no move on the following day. Consequently that skilful general was allowed time to retire through the forest of Hohenlinden, to the ground which he had quite lately occupied, and had carefully studied; for he had foreseen how it would be a very probable field for a decisive battle.

The forest of Hohenlinden lies between the Isar and the Inn. Parallel to the course of these two rivers, it measures from six to seven leagues in length, and from one league to a league and a half in depth. The thickness of the pine trees, which grow very close together, not only gives a gloomy appearance to the forest, but also obstructs the passage of cavalry and artillery. Two great roads traverse the forest; one leads from Munich by Hohenlinden to Mühldorf, the other also from Munich by Ebersberg to Wasserburg. On the Munich side of the principal defile lies the village of Hohenlinden. A stretch of open ground extends to some distance on the south of it; at the other extremity of the defile, on the Mühldorf side of the forest, lies Mattenpoet. Exception made of the two main roads leading to Mühldorf and Wasserburg, the forest, broken and uneven, is crossed only by country paths which, Alison states, are almost impracticable during the storms of winter even for foot-passengers.

Everything portended an approaching battle; and Moreau, who had carefully reconnoitred the ground, had determined, on the advice of Dessoles and Grenier, to arrest the Austrians in front of Hohenlinden. It happened that, during a discussion on the proper dispositions to be taken, a Bavarian officer of the engineers attached to the French staff remarked on the existence of a cross-road between the roads of Wasserburg and of Mühldorf, which led to Mattenpoet at the northern entrance of the Hohenlinden defile. Moreau determined to turn this information to advantage. He thereupon arranged to stop the Archduke at the opposite issue from the forest, and for the divisions of Decaen and of Richepanse, sent from Ebersberg and Zornotting, to fall on his rear.

On the 3rd of December, the Austrian army was to march on Ebersberg, Hohenlinden, Preisendorf, and Harthofen. It had been divided into four principal columns, besides which there was an advanced guard and two detached corps. The orders were for these columns to meet in the plain of Amzing, and to

close on Munich the same day; so little did the Austrian staff foresee any opposition.

The army comprised 50 battalions and 140 squadrons. Kienmayer was in command of the column on the right; next came Baillet Latour, who had command of the right wing, 25,000 strong; Kollowrath commanded the third column; and Riesch the fourth, about 10,000 strong. Of these columns the third, the one detailed to march on Hohenlinden, was the strongest. It numbered 40,000 men, and it was the only one that marched on a metalled road. It was under the personal direction of the Archduke. With this column also marched the greater portion of the artillery, for the columns on the flanks had to advance by inferior roads, principally used by woodcutters. In marching, the infantry came first, then followed a long train of artillery and waggons, and last came all the cavalry.

The success of the preceding days had raised the spirits of the Austrians. The enemy was deemed to be in full retreat, and no resistance was expected before the imperial forces would deploy in battle array in the clearing on the Munich side of the forest.

Moreau had made very able dispositions. He strove, as much as his plan and many obstacles of the theatre of operations permitted, to close up his troops, and to hold them in hand so that they should be thoroughly able to render each other mutual support. On the 3rd, at break of day, Richepanse and Decaen's divisions moved off. Montrichard was directed to replace them with his division, and to support them on the Wasserburg road. Grouchy, who had received the command of Grandjean's division, was posted at the opening of the defile in the clearing in front of Hohenlinden, his right resting on the forest, his left on the road. Ney occupied the border of the Krainacker wood, to the left of Hohenlinden. The remainder of Grenier's corps, composed of Bastoul's and Legrand's divisions, were extended as far as Hörlkofen, watching the defiles of Isen and of Langdorf. In rear of Hohenlinden, partly on the right and partly on the left of the road, was posted d'Hautpoul's cavalry.

Collaud, with that portion of Sainte Suzanne's corps which was on the right of the Danube, had been ordered to abandon the direction of Landshut, and to come by forced marches by Freising to Erding, where some companies of Legrand's division

and d'Espagne's brigade were awaiting him. But the Austrian attack was so unforeseen that one-third of Moreau's army could take no part in the action. Neither Lecourbe nor Sainte Suzanne could close up in time. The French were in the minority; with less than 60,000 men they fought against more than 70,000.

The Austrians were marching as fast as they could, as men who knew the value of time in a season when the day, either for marching or for fighting, was the shortest. The confidence imparted by the advantage gained at Ampfing, and the belief that the French army had beaten a retreat, made them negligent in the matter of scouting, and the centre column, marching on a good metalled road, outstripped the others. The Archduke was ignorant of the dispositions that Moreau had made, and was elated by his success of the 1st of December. He was young, and had seen in retreat this formidable Army of the Rhine—an army which, for a long time, the very best Austrian generals had appeared unable to stop.

The four Austrian columns had for rendezvous the open ground which lies between Hohenlinden and Harthofen, but there was little prospect of their arriving simultaneously. They were marching at a considerable distance from each other, and through a dense forest. The conditions were bad, but they were made worse by the weather, which was simply awful. The centre column alone approached the point of destination at the time when all four ought to have been ready for action. The flank columns lagged far behind.

During the night there was a change of wind, and the heavy rain of the preceding days turned into snow. Snow was falling in large flakes when the battle began at about nine o'clock in the morning. Soon the forest presented a uniform white surface on which it was impossible to distinguish the beaten track.

The first efforts of the Austrians were made against Grouchy. Eight choice battalions tried to turn his right, by stealing round the wood which served him as a support. Grouchy rushed on them, stopped them, and beat them back, capturing the general who commanded them. Other attacks directed on the front of the division did not meet with much better success. The conflict was as obstinate and bloody as any the French had sustained.

The action at this period simply consisted in holding the

central Austrian column in check, so as to gain time for Richepanse to complete his movement on Mattenpoet.

Baillet Latour's troops were already nearing the border of the wood of Krainacker; the battle was becoming more spirited, and extending towards the left. Moreau, in the mean while, had been able to detect signs of uneasiness and hesitation in the Austrian forces, which made him suppose that Richepanse was commencing to bear on the Austrian rear. Whether he was likely to be successful or not, it was desirable to deliver some master stroke, if for nothing else, to disengage him. Moreau ordered Ney's and Grouchy's divisions to move forward—an order for which the troops had been impatiently waiting. Ney fell on the enemy, overthrew him in the defile, and captured 1000 men and 10 guns.

Moreau had issued orders for Decaen's and Richepanse's divisions to move up along the forest as the Austrians came down, and once having reached Mattenpoet by way of Saint Christophe, to work back in the direction of Hohenlinden on the rear of the Archduke's principal column.

The manœuvre was bold and simple, and was, moreover, confided to an officer who possessed ample ability to carry it to a successful termination.

Richepanse, as we have already seen, had taken the direction of Mattenpoet before daybreak. But whilst his division, blinded by the snow, was labouring in the tortuous and difficult lanes indicated by the Bavarian staff officer, Riesch's column had reached Saint Christophe, and penetrated between his first and second brigades.

Any other officer would possibly have halted to re-establish the connection between the two brigades, and reunite his division. But Richepanse knew too well the full importance of the *rôle* which had been assigned to him to do so. He continued his march with all possible rapidity, and with only two half-brigades and the 1st Regiment of Chasseurs he boldly entered into Mattenpoet. He counted on Decaen to disentangle his second brigade and to come to his help.

Falling suddenly on the Nassau cuirassiers, which he found dismounted, he captured a large portion, and the rest he dispersed. A large body of cavalry was coming up from Haag; against this he directed Walther, whilst, turning to the left, he threw himself impetuously into the narrow defile. The

great park of the army was at that moment following on the traces of Kollowrath. In beholding such a rich prize the French forgot their fatigues, and discarded all thought of danger, and, attacking, spread terror and death in every direction. A battery and three battalions were sent back by Kollowrath to stop them; but in vain, for in spite of the canister, the French closed on them with the bayonet and put the Austrians to flight. This was the last effort of the Austrians; and after this Richepanse met Ney's victorious troops, which were bearing on the Austrians from the opposite direction.*

The confusion Richepanse's onset had occasioned in the rear spread rapidly to the van. This enormous column, the hope of the Austrians, was no more. For the French skirmishers had speedily extended along the flanks of the road, and caused the enemy severe losses. The road, not long before covered by thousands of soldiers moving in martial array, was now strewn with corpses, full of riderless horses, and clogged by an immense train of vehicles, gun-waggons, and guns.

But Richepanse, not forgetful of Walther whom he had left to deal with the cavalry coming from Haag, retraced his steps. Walther had been seriously wounded; but Montbrun, at the head of the chasseurs, was still holding his own against very superior forces. Richepanse arrived on the scene, threw his infantry right and left into the forest, and placed himself at the head of the cavalry. He led a charge along the road, and compelled the enemy to beat a hasty retreat. He was here rejoined by his second brigade, which Decaen had succeeded in disengaging.

The Austrian main column no longer existed. But the

* Michael Ney. In the year 1766 (17th of January) was born at Sarrelouis Michael Ney. At the age of sixteen, much against the desire of his father, he enlisted in a regiment of hussars, in which he was a non-commissioned officer at the outbreak of the Revolution. A man possessed of such extreme intrepidity and rare coolness in danger was bound to become conspicuous in those days of hard fighting. His comrades, soon recognizing his eminent talent in the field, voted for his advancement in their regiment. He was next appointed aide-de-camp to General de Lallemand, and was adjutant-general to Kléber. For the capture of Mannheim by a *coup de main* in 1799 he was promoted general of division.

It was only after the campaign of 1800 that Bonaparte, wishing to conciliate some of the Republican leaders of the Army of the Rhine, appointed Ney to be inspector-general of cavalry. He was afterwards created Marshal of France, Duke of Elchingen, and Prince de la Moskowa. But his greatest award was the title of *the bravest of the brave*, not an empty title when bestowed by the great Napoleon, who could count brave men by the thousand in his army.

wings had not yet taken part in the action, for the Archduke had omitted to take into calculation the bad nature and state of the roads. Owing to this oversight, the columns of Kienmayer and of Baillet Latour only reached the battlefield as the fate of the battle was being decided on the main road. As they appeared at Preisendorf and Buch, they were attacked by Grenier, who was ready to meet them with Bastoul's and Legrand's divisions supported by one of Ney's brigades and the cavalry reserve. The Austrians were twice as numerous; but, elated by the report of the success obtained in the centre, Grenier did not hesitate to assume the offensive. The fight was stubborn, the same positions were carried and retaken several times, and for a long while the result remained uncertain. At last Legrand drove the Austrians back on Langdorf, whilst Bonnet, at the head of one of Bastoul's brigades, drove the troops opposed to him back on Isen.

Baillet Latour still persevered in his efforts against Bastoul's centre. Bastoul was nearly overcome, and had had to fall back on his right, when d'Hautpoul came to his aid, and charged the Austrians. These, however, still held their ground firmly, until the arrival of Joba's brigade, which threatened their left at an opportune moment, and made Latour nervous about his retreat, which he hastened to effect.

On the Austrian left, Riesch, notwithstanding the fight in the morning, had not given up all hope of arriving at the rendezvous, and was marching in the direction of Hohenlinden. Decaen, keen to support Richepanse, who was marching on Mattenpœt, had not driven this column as far away as he should have done; so when, on his arrival at Mattenpœt, he heard from Grouchy of Richepanse's success in the defile, he turned about and, in all haste, marched the Polish legion of Kniasewicz back to Saint Christophe, whilst Durutte's brigade was directed on Albaching. The Poles at first had to sustain all the weight of the Austrian column, but Durutte soon appeared on the enemy's right and rear, and made them retire along the Wasserburg road.

The battle was over; Moreau had conquered. One hundred guns, many flags, and 11,000 prisoners were the harvest of the victors. An immediate advance into the valley of the Isen, where the whole of the enemy's right was crowded, would have made the victory still more complete.

Moreau's retreat with the object of getting the Austrians entangled in the forest of Hohenlinden, was a master-stroke. He has, however, been severely criticized for the risky manœuvre by which he bore on the enemy's rear. Critics remark that such a manœuvre, performed by an isolated corps without support, exposed to a thousand chances of miscarriage, must always be extremely hazardous. In this case, the general detailed to carry it out was remarkable for his intelligence and energy.* He weighed the safety of one of his brigades against the importance of the special task assigned to him, and he decided to attack with the small number of troops he had, trusting that Decaen would succeed in shaking the enemy off. But what might not have occurred had the Austrians been more numerous at Saint Christophe to bar the way to Richepanse—if they had hastened on the venturesome general's traces as he marched on Mattenpoet? The idea of intercepting the enemy was brilliant; but the plan might have failed for the simple reason that the troops detailed for this manœuvre were not sufficient. It would not have been too much if two divisions had been detailed for it. Napoleon said of Hohenlinden that "it was one of those great triumphs that are brought about by chance, and obtained without plan." In this he was not just to Moreau. Nor are those who hold that the march to Mattenpoet was a sudden inspiration of Richepanse; for the official report and other documents found at the *Depôt de la Guerre* prove most distinctly that it was not so.

Moreau's combinations were full of simplicity and greatness. He had foreseen all, and guarded against all possible surprise. His tact, his steadiness during the action, his calm, showed off his military genius, which developed into greater proportions every day.

Alison states: "The whole arrangements of the French general were defensive; he merely wished to gain time, in order to enable his right and left wings, under Lecourbe and Sainte Suzanne, to arrive and take part in the action." But the orders given to Richepanse, though only general ones, could but be interpreted in one sense, and Richepanse viewed them in the right sense.

* This matchless officer, after having rendered such distinguished services to the Republic, met with a miserable end in Guadeloupe. Attacked by yellow fever, he was soon laid in his grave.

Guided by a miserable and low hatred which is supposed to have originated in Moreau's too open disapproval of some of the measures which followed the 18th Brumaire, and more so in his rejection of the plan of campaign, Napoleon wrote some unworthy strictures on the battle of Hohenlinden, and principally on the action taken by Richepanse.* As in the case of Massena, these criticisms were penned after the events. When announcing the victory to the Corps Législatif, he made use of these words: "This victory has resounded over the whole of Europe; it will be classed in history among those memorable days which have been rendered illustrious by French valour." Writing to Moreau, he said: "I refrain from telling you all the interest that I have taken in your fine and skilful manœuvres; in this campaign you have surpassed yourself."

Bourrienne relates that when the First Consul received the intelligence of the victory of Hohenlinden, on Saturday, the 6th of December, he had just returned from the theatre; that he literally danced with joy, for he had not expected so important a result from the movements of the Army of the Rhine.

To secure all the advantages which the battle of Hohenlinden offered, it was indispensable to occupy Salzburg as soon as possible. From that point, the Austrian corps then occupying the upper valley of the Inn and the Tyrol could be taken in reverse. The direct road leading from Vienna to Italy could be menaced; and if the French, victorious on the banks of the Adige, pursued vigorously the enemies they had beaten on that river, there would be no refuge for them but in the depths of Hungary.

In the valley of the Danube the hereditary states were quite open, without any fortresses for their protection which might present a barrier and arrest the march of a successful invader. This constituted the real weakness on that side.

The French crossed the Inn without much opposition. The Austrian army, already considerably disorganized, became more so from the impression produced by this passage. In an excellent position in front of Salzburg, where the Saal and Salza meet, their staff had succeeded in rallying about 30,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry.

* Lanfrey directs attention to the "Mémorial du Dépôt de la Guerre," tom. iv., in which Moreau's orders to Richepanse were; "*Combattre l'ennemi après son débouché décidé sur Hohenlinden.*"

On the 14th of December, Lecourbe, under cover of a dense fog, plunged into the midst of the enemy's squadrons. Thanks to the distance at which the Austrian infantry were stationed, and to the mutual help eagerly given by the regiments engaged, no unfortunate result followed Lecourbe's rashness.

The centre crossed the Salza at Laufen. Moreau detached Decaen's division to go to the support of the engaged wing. It advanced against the right of the position, making a great noise with the artillery. The Austrians became alarmed for their communications, and hastily retired. Decaen was the first to enter into Salzburg, where he was speedily joined by Lecourbe.

Grenier and Sainte Suzanne were advancing on the left in echelon. Grenier crossed the Salza partly at Laufen and partly at Tittmoning, moving on the Traun by way of Ried. Ney's division was detailed to invest Burghausen. Sainte Suzanne scouted the course of the Danube, keeping a column on the left bank to keep up communications with Augereau.

The Austrians strove to turn to account the many excellent positions which exist in the country between the Salza and the Enns; but what could a disorganized army accomplish? Richepanse, with his division, had been thrown as an advanced guard on the Voklabruck road. The general did not lose sight of the enemy for a moment, and boldly attacked them without thinking of awaiting the coming up of Grouchy and Decaen, who followed in second line to support him. The Austrians endeavoured to hold the positions of Frankmarkt, of Voklabruck, and of Schwauenstadt, but they were speedily turned out and put to flight. In all these combats (all the glory of which belongs to Richepanse and his brave troops) the French captured 6000 prisoners, 25 guns, and several thousands of covered waggons and carriages.

On the evening of the 20th of December, the entire French army was deployed, the principal portion of it being on the far side of the Traun. Little troubled by the presence of Hiller on his right, or of Klenau on his left, Moreau was preparing to march on Vienna, and to dictate peace in the capital.

Austria paid dearly for not having followed the advice of the Archduke Charles. He had retired to Bohemia, and it was there that the news of the Austrian reverses reached him and caused him sore distress. Now when the reverses which his wisdom had foreseen had reduced the empire to dire extremities,

the Emperor, alarmed by the dread of a Franco-Russian alliance, restored him to the command of the army. But it was far too late. The Austrian army had been too severely beaten, and the Archduke saw no other way open for saving Vienna from the conqueror who was approaching, than to sue for peace. He forthwith sent to propose a suspension of arms.

“At no period in their history, not even in the early part of Maria Theresa’s reign, was the situation of the Austrian monarchy in a more critical juncture. The French, after the signal victory of Hohenlinden, had crossed the Inn and the Ipps, and, arriving at Steyer, in Upper Austria, were within seventeen leagues of Vienna. The Gallo-Batavian army at the same time were advancing along the Danube. Macdonald, in possession of the mountains of the Tyrol, had the option of descending into Italy or Germany, while Brune, after taking 15,000 prisoners in twenty days, was ready to penetrate into the mountains of Carinthia.”*

General Grune presented himself at Moreau’s headquarters with full powers to conclude an armistice. This demand was backed by an assurance from the Archduke to the French commander-in-chief that the Emperor of Austria was determined to make peace with or without the consent of his allies. A more ambitious general might have insisted on dictating his terms within the walls of Vienna; but Moreau disdained the empty honour of a triumphal entry into the Austrian capital. He had done, he thought, enough for his glory.

The resumption of hostilities dated only from the 28th of November, and in the course of about twenty days the French army had won a decisive battle, had conquered some eighty leagues of territory, had forced the Inn, the Salza, the Traun, and the Enns, one and all of them formidable barriers. It had reached a point not twenty leagues distant from the capital of the Austrian empire. Its trophies were immense. Of the Austrians more than 45,000 had fallen in battle, or had laid down their arms; 147 field-pieces, 400 waggons, and about 800 army vehicles had been captured. In Rocquancourt’s words, “The annals of war show few examples of a more extraordinary pursuit, more fruitful and better directed.” †

* V. Arnault, C. L. F. Panckoucke, and others, “Memoirs of the Public and Private Life of Napoleon Bonaparte,” vol. i. p. 123.

† J. Rocquancourt, “Cours Complet d’Art et d’Histoire Militaires,” tom. ii. p. 505.

In Chapter II., we have remarked how a victory obtained in Italy could never have had the same results as one gained on the Danube. The truth of this observation was proved by the different results which followed the battles of Marengo and Hohenlinden. Not only was the latter one of the finest battles fought in the eighteenth century, but it was decisive. Though the results of Marengo were not to be despised, that victory of itself was not sufficient to inspire terror in the minds of the Austrian Government; the battle had been fought too far from the centre of the empire. It was only after Hohenlinden, when the French were almost at the gates of the capital, that the Cabinet of Vienna seriously entertained overtures of peace.

The eighteenth century closed with two important battles—Marengo and Hohenlinden. These were the last battles of the First Republic, and in both French valour prevailed. In two distinct theatres of war, Germany and Italy, the French had established their reputation as the foremost soldiers on the continent of Europe—a reputation which they were to uphold in many hard-fought fields under Napoleon.

For some soldiers, Hohenlinden, the last of the Republican victories, eclipsed Marengo; but, though it led to greater results, for it forced Austria to sue for peace, and was richer in fine manœuvres and in trophies, it has not been accorded the same measure of renown. True enough, the victory of Marengo was not quite as momentous in its consequences, but the already brilliant career of the victor, his name already in everybody's mouth, his position as First Consul at the head of the nation, and, more than all, the boldness of his enterprise, had captivated the French.

During these last hundred years to most men the passage of the Great Saint Bernard, followed so quickly by the triumph of Marengo, has formed an object of the very highest interest. Moreau trusted for success more to skilful combinations and to methodical arrangements than to fortune, and his deeds lacked that daring which so easily captivates the minds of men.

Bonaparte had an *entourage*—men who had come to believe in his star, and were too ready to fall in adoration before him. These men took great care to magnify his deeds, and to rank them above all others.

When the First Consul assumed the reins of government, he had promised the people victory and peace. In less than a

year after that date, in the sunlit fields in front of Alessandria and in the dense forest of Hohenlinden, French arms had inflicted two severe defeats on the most determined of their antagonists. Now that these had been thoroughly humiliated, what remained to be done was to bind them by a solemn treaty of peace. On the 9th of February, 1801, this treaty was signed, and the news excited the most enthusiastic joy when it reached the French capital. Bonaparte announced it to the people of Paris in the following words: "A glorious peace has terminated the Continental War."

The Peace of Luneville was the fruit of Marengo and Hohenlinden. It restored France to the honourable position it had held before the disasters of 1799.

The First Consul, who did not relish having a competitor, above all a successful soldier, left Moreau unemployed, and the latter soon retired to his property of Grosbois.* Work in the field for the soldier was now over, for the whole of the Continent was at peace with France. She had leisure to breathe till 1805, by which time Moreau, accused of having conspired against the life of Bonaparte, had been arrested (15th of February, 1804), tried, and banished from France for two years.†

Bonaparte had delivered France from the domination of the sections, from the tyranny of the Directory, and from the attacks of foreign foes; his influence increased from day to day, until nothing could satisfy the people but that the government of the country should be made hereditary in the family of the First Consul. The happiness of France, her glory, her prosperity, all seemed to require it; and the nation would not be contented until the conqueror of Marengo became absolute master of its destinies as Emperor of the French people.

* The property of Grosbois had belonged to Barras. Moreau bought it from him, and the First Consul bought it from Moreau, when he was sent into exile, and bestowed it on Berthier.

† Every one must deeply regret that such an able and soldierly commander as Moreau should have fallen at Dresden bearing arms against his countrymen. He might have pleaded as an excuse for this, that he had yielded to his ambitious wife's counsel—that in fighting Napoleon he was not fighting France. But in what greater estimation his memory would now be held in his country, had he rejected, as he should, his wife's silly advice and the allurements of the Allies!

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