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THE CONSULATE AND EMPIRE  
OF FRANCE

VOL. VIII.









Paul Girardet sc.

MARSHAL NEY

HISTORY OF THE  
CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE  
OF FRANCE  
UNDER NAPOLEON

BY LOUIS ADOLPHE THIERS

TRANSLATED, WITH THE SANCTION AND APPROVAL  
OF THE AUTHOR, BY  
D. FORBES CAMPBELL AND JOHN STEBBING

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## BOOK XLVIII.

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Results of Prince Schwarzenberg's mission—He quits Paris, after having attempted to say to the Empress and to M. de Bassano what he had not ventured to say to Napoleon himself—The course of events at Vienna since the defection of Prussia—The Austrian court maintains more firmly than ever its project of an armed mediation, and desires to impose upon the belligerent powers a peace which should be in all respects favourable to the interests of Germany—Efforts made by this court to procure adherents to its policy—Steps taken by it with respect to the King of Saxony, now withdrawn to Ratisbon, for the purpose of inducing him to place at its disposal the Saxon troops and the fortresses on the Elbe, and of obtaining from him the renunciation of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw—Austria having obtained of King Frederick Augustus permission to dispose of his military forces, takes advantage of it to free itself from the presence of the Polish corps at Cracow—Being unwilling to enter into a contest with the Russians, she enters into a secret arrangement with them, by which she agrees to withdraw the Austrian auxiliary corps, together with the troops under Prince Poniatowski, to the Austrian territory without a contest—Negotiations of Austria with Bavaria—M. de Narbonne arrives at Vienna—Meets with a cordial reception from the Emperor and M. de Metternich—M. de Metternich endeavours to persuade him that it is necessary to make peace, and intimates that at that price only can France expect to obtain the real support of Austria—He hints again what should be the outline of the peace—M. de Narbonne having received from Paris his final instructions, submits to the Austrian cabinet the important communications with which he is charged—According to these communications Austria was to summon Russia, Prussia, and England to lay down their arms, then to offer them the conditions of peace named by Napoleon, and in the next place, should they refuse to accept them, to enter Silesia with a hundred thousand men, to effect its conquest for herself—The manner in which M. de Metternich receives these communications—M. de Narbonne demands of M. de Metternich, whether, should France refuse to accept peace on the conditions proposed by the Austrian court, it would turn its arms against her—M. de Metternich endeavours at first to elude this question, but eventually replies that Austria would declare against whatever Power should refuse equitable conditions of peace, but at the same time was strongly disposed in favour of France—Evidence of the fault that Napoleon had committed in leading Austria to become mediator between the belligerent powers—Information is suddenly received that Prince Schwarzenberg's corps had re-entered

Bohemia instead of preparing to renew hostilities, that the Polish corps was to pass through the Austrian territory without its arms, and that the King of Saxony had withdrawn from Ratisbon to Prague for the purpose of definitively throwing himself into the arms of Austria—M. de Narbonne insists that the Austrian corps shall remain at the disposal of France, in accordance with the treaty of alliance, and formally demands to be informed whether this treaty still exists—M. de Metternich refuses to reply to this question—M. de Narbonne awaits, before insisting further, fresh instructions from his court—Napoleon's surprise and irritation when, arrived at Mayence, he learns the retreat of the Austrian corps, and the projected disarming of the Polish corps—He orders Prince Poniatowski to refrain from resigning his arms for any consideration, and directs M. de Narbonne to compel the Austrian court as quietly as possible to explain its conduct, and at the same time to endeavour to penetrate the secret of the course adopted by the King of Saxony—At the same time he promises to put a speedy end to all these complications by the immediate commencement of the campaign—His military arrangements at Mayence—Although he had prepared materials for an active army of three hundred thousand men, and a reserve of two hundred thousand, he is able at the commencement of hostilities to bring into the field no more than a hundred and ninety thousand or two hundred thousand—His plan of campaign—Position of the coalition forces—Austria being unwilling to join them before all means of negotiation should have been exhausted, they number no more than a hundred thousand or a hundred and ten thousand combatants actually in line—Composition of their staff—Death of Prince Kutusof on the 28th of April at Bunzlau—March of the allies upon the Elster, and of Napoleon upon the Saale—Skillful manœuvres made by Napoleon for the purpose of joining Prince Eugène—Arrival of Ney at Naumburg, of Prince Eugène at Merseburg—Ney encounters the enemy at Weissenfels, and marches upon the Lutzen on the 1st of May—Death of Bessières, Duke of Istria—Projects of Napoleon in the presence of the enemy—He proposes to march upon Leipsic, to cross the Elster there, and then to fall back upon the flank of the coalition forces—Position assigned to Marshal Ney near the village of Kaja for the purpose of covering the army during the movement upon Leipsic—Whilst Napoleon endeavours to turn the forces of the allies, they are planning in a similar manœuvre against him, and prepare to attack him at Kaja—Plan of battle proposed by General Diebitch and adopted by the allied sovereigns—Ney's corps suddenly attacked—Napoleon's marvellous promptitude in changing his plans and falling back upon Lutzen—Memorable battle of Lutzen—Importance and consequences of this battle—Napoleon pursues the coalition forces towards Dresden, and directs Ney upon Berlin—Marches towards the Elbe—Enters Dresden—Passage of the Elbe—In possession of the capital of Saxony, he summons Frederick Augustus to return to it under pain of forfeiture of his kingdom—The course of events at Vienna at the period of the battle of Lutzen—M. de Narbonne having been ordered to compel Austria to come to an explanation with respect to the auxiliary and Polish corps, lays before M. de Metternich a categorical note on the subject—M. de Metternich endeavours to persuade M. de Narbonne to desist from taking this step—M. de Narbonne persisting, the Austrian cabinet replies that the treaty of the 14th of March 1812 is no longer applicable to the actual state of affairs—News from the theatre of war arrives at Vienna—Although the allies boast of having obtained a victory, events soon prove that they have been vanquished—Apparent satisfaction of M. de Metternich—Eagerness of the cabinet of Vienna to assume at this moment its office of mediator—It despatches M. de Bubna to Dresden for the purpose of communicating the conditions which it considers itself capable of inducing the belli-

gerent Powers to accept, or in support of which at least it would be ready, should they reject them, to ally itself with France—Napoleon, on learning what had been done by M. de Narbonne, regrets that he has driven the Austrian court so hastily to a decision, but on learning the precise conditions of peace laid down by this Power, is irritated to the last degree—He resolves to enter into direct communication with Russia and England, to annul thus the position assumed by Austria, and to prepare such military measures against her as would reduce her to obey the law, instead of imposing it—In the meantime, he orders M. de Narbonne to refrain from any active proceedings, and to adopt an air of the most extreme reserve—Napoleon sends Prince Eugène to Italy to organise the army of Italy there, and prepares new armaments under the impression that he may have to carry on war with the whole of Europe—Reception of the King of Saxony at Dresden—Napoleon prepares to depart from Dresden, for the purpose of driving the coalition forces from the Elbe to the Oder, at the same time engaging in another battle—Their plan of stopping at Bautzen and fighting there a decisive battle being well known, Napoleon, in place of sending Marshal Ney to Berlin, directs him upon Bautzen—Arrival of M. de Bubna at Dresden at the moment of Napoleon's departure—M. de Bubna well fitted to encounter Napoleon's first burst of irritation and to soften it—His explanation of the conditions of peace proposed by Austria—Modifications with which Napoleon would perhaps accept them—Napoleon pretends to be appeased that he may gain time for the completion of his new armaments—He consents to a congress to which even the Spaniards should be summoned to be present, and to an armistice of which he intends to take advantage to enter into direct communication with Russia—M. de Bubna departs with Napoleon's reply—M. de Bubna has scarcely departed when Napoleon sends M. de Caulaincourt to the Russian headquarters on pretence of negotiating an armistice—Napoleon sets out for Bautzen—Distribution of his *corps d'armée*, and march of Marshal Ney with sixty thousand men upon the rear of Bautzen—Description of the position of Bautzen—Battle of the 20th of May—Second battle of the 21st, in which the formidable positions of the Russians and Prussians are carried after having been valiantly defended—On the following day, the 22nd, Napoleon drives the coalition forces upon the Oder—Engagement at Reichenbach, and death of Duroc—Arrival on the banks of the Oder, and occupation of Breslau—Distressed state of the allies, and their necessity of concluding an armistice—After having refused to receive M. de Caulaincourt from the fear of inspiring Austria with distrust, they send commissioners to the advanced posts for the purpose of concluding an armistice—These commissioners enter into communication with M. de Caulaincourt—Their pretensions—Refused peremptorily by Napoleon—M. de Bubna having arrived at Vienna during the progress of the late military events, excites a species of joy by giving rise to a hope that Napoleon's objections to the proposed conditions of peace may be overcome, certain modifications of them being consented to, and he returns to the French headquarters—Napoleon, finding himself hard pressed by Austria, alleges his military duties as an excuse for not immediately receiving M. de Bubna, and sends him to M. de Bassano—Perceiving, however, that he shall be compelled to declare himself within a few days, and that in case he refused their conditions he should have the Austrians added to his enemies, he consents to an armistice, which saves the forces of the Coalition from total destruction, and signs this fatal armistice, not with the intention of negotiating, but for the purpose of gaining two months' time in which to complete his armaments—The conditions of this armistice, and the conclusion of the first campaign of Saxony, called the Spring Campaign . . . . .



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MARSHAL NEY . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
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HISTORY OF THE  
CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE OF FRANCE  
UNDER NAPOLEON.

BOOK XLIV.

MOSCOW.

THE Niemen was crossed on the 24th of June, without any opposition on the part of the Russians, and every circumstance proclaimed that the same motives which had prevented them from offering any resistance in the environs of Kowno had also had a similar effect with regard to the other portions of their frontier. Having no doubt but that Marshal Macdonald on his left, directed to effect the passage of the Niemen near Tilsit, and that Prince Eugène on his right, directed to cross it in the neighbourhood of Prenn, had met with the same facility in the execution of their orders, Napoleon was only anxious to advance upon Wilna, in order to seize the capital of Lithuania, and to place himself between the two hostile armies in such a manner as to prevent their future union. However, before quitting Kowno, he was anxious, whilst his corps should march upon Wilna, to devote his attention to various points which his rare forethought never neglected. To secure his line of communication when he should advance had always been one of his first cares, and it was a subject of more than ordinary importance when such immense and difficult tracts of country had to be traversed, through the midst of a hostile cavalry the most perfectly suited to harass the march of an invading army.

With this view he had the materials of the bridges which had been thrown across the river above Kowno replaced on the waggons, and consigned to the train of Marshal Davout; and directed the indefatigable General Eblé to construct at Kowno itself a bridge upon piles, so as to secure an uninterrupted passage across the Niemen. At the same time he ordered him to construct a similar one across the Wilia, in order to render

the communications of the army in every way secure. The country afforded an abundant supply of wood for the construction of these works, and the engineer corps was well provided with all the other necessary materials, such as ironwork, cordage, and tools. In the next place, Napoleon took care to surround Kowno with defensive works, that the vast mass of material there collected might be secured from the enemy's attack. When these objects had received sufficient attention, he bestowed a care equally zealous on the construction of hospitals, bakeries, magazines for all sorts of stores, and of boats suitable for the navigation of the Wilia as far as Wilna; and gave orders with the object of arranging that by a single transit the convoys which had come from Dantzic by the Vistula, the Frische-haff, the Pregel, the Deime, the Canal de Frederic, and the Niemen, should ascend from Kowno as far as Wilna. Unfortunately the Wilia, much shallower than the Niemen, and having a much more sinuous course, afforded a means of transport scarcely less difficult than that by land. It was estimated that not less than twenty days would be occupied in effecting the passage of the Wilia from Kowno to Wilna, and this was almost the time occupied in the journey from Dantzic to Kowno.

Whilst bestowing his usual zealous attention upon these various objects, Napoleon set his troops in motion. The reports received respecting the enemy's position (reports which would have been unintelligible to any one but Napoleon) represented the army of Barclay de Tolly as forming a species of semicircle around Wilna, and connected by a chain of Cossacks with that of Bagration, which was much lower on our right in the environs of Grodno. According to these reports, the army of Barclay de Tolly, which was more particularly opposed to the main body of our troops, was distributed around us in the following manner. Between Tilsit and Kowno, towards Rossiena, and consequently on our left, was said to be stationed the Wittgenstein corps, supposed to number some twenty and odd thousand men, whilst the Bagowouth corps, which, including the Ouvaroff corps of cavalry, amounted to 19,000 men, was at Wilkomir; and at Wilna itself was encamped the imperial guard, with the reserves, amounting altogether, inclusive of the heavy cavalry, under General Korff, to 24,000 men. Moreover, in front of us, on the Wilna route, but somewhat to our right, were spread other troops, of which the number was unknown, but which could not be inferior to that of the detachments already enumerated. These were Touczkoff's corps, encamped at Nowoi-Troki, numbering about 19,000 troops; that of Schouvaloff, encamped at Olkeniki, and numbering about 14,000; and finally, on the extreme right, that of Doctoroff, containing about 20,000 troops, posted at Lida, and connected by 8000 Cossacks with the army of Prince Bagration.

This distribution of the 130,000 troops under Barclay de Tolly was but imperfectly known; but the fact of its distribution in a semicircle around Wilna, in masses somewhat stronger on our left and front than on our right, and connected by Cossacks with the troops under Bagration, was sufficiently certain to enable Napoleon to order the march of his army upon Wilna with sufficient knowledge of the state of existing circumstances.

Marshal Macdonald, on our extreme left, succeeded in crossing without difficulty the Niemen at Tilsit. He had under his command 11,000 Poles and 17,000 Prussians, and received orders to advance upon Rossiena, without precipitation, in such a manner as to cover the navigation of the Niemen, and to invade Courland in proportion as the Russians should fall back upon the Dwina. Napoleon directed Marshal Oudinot's corps, numbering 36,000 men, upon Janowo, and commanded the marshal to pass the Wilia for the purpose of advancing upon Wilkomir. It was probable that this corps would encounter that of Wittgenstein, which would traverse Wilkomir in its retreat from Rossiena, and Napoleon reinforced it, therefore, with a division of cuirassiers belonging to the third corps of the cavalry of reserve. He was anxious also to transport beyond the Wilia, but at a point somewhat nearer Wilna, Ney's corps, which also consisted of 36,000 men; for Oudinot and Ney, marching parallel to each other, would be sufficiently strong to keep the enemy in check until aid could be afforded them, even if, contrary to all probability, they were to fall in with the main body of the Russian army. They would have nothing to fear, therefore, with respect to Wittgenstein or Bagowouth, either separate or united, and by acting in unison would be able to overwhelm them.

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

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

The execution of these orders, given on the day succeeding

the passage of the Niemen, was carried out, whilst Napoleon, established at Kowno, devoted himself to the various subjects demanding his attention, which we have already mentioned; only advancing with the troops in person when the advanced posts gave information of the presence of the enemy. On the 25th, Murat and Davout advanced, the one at the head of his cavalry, the other at the head of his infantry, as far as Zismary, after having traversed a difficult tract of country in which the Russians could easily have stopped their progress; for their course had lain, in fact, along the side of the wooded hills which separate the bed of the Wilia from that of the Niemen, confined between these hills and the steep banks of the Niemen, and having but little space in case of an attack in which to deploy. On the evening of the 25th, they halted at Zismary, in a far more favourable country, the angle formed by the Wilia and the Niemen being infinitely more open. On the following day, the 26th, they passed the night on the Jewe road, having met in their march but a few Cossacks, who fled at their approach, after having first set fire, when there was time, to the farms and chateaux. The weather remained clear and serene, but the villages were already only met with at distant intervals, and the opportunities of obtaining supplies had become very rare. The soldiers of Marshal Davout's corps, carrying their bread on their backs, and being accompanied by a troop of cattle, were well provided with provisions; but they were somewhat fatigued with the length of their marches, and some of the younger of them, especially of the Illyrians and Dutch, remained on the road exhausted. The horses especially suffered much, and for want of oats were driven every evening to feed in the field on the green rye, which gratified whilst it failed to nourish them. The reserve artillery and the waggons loaded with munitions and provisions were in the rear. Murat's cavalry, which, unfortunately, he wore out with useless movements, was already very much fatigued.

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

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

The news of this event, brought by a domestic of Count Romanzoff's, was a source of considerable consternation, and added to the confusion which already existed in the staff.

Wishing to have the advantage of much advice, Alexander had carried with him a crowd of personages of very various character, rank, and station. Independently of General Barclay de Tolly, who did not give his orders as general-in-chief of the army, but as minister of war, Alexander had with him General Benningsen, the Grand Duke Constantine, an old minister of war named Araktchejef, the ministers of police and the interior, MM. de Balachoff and Kotchoubey, and Prince Walkouski; this last personage performing the functions of chief of the emperor's staff. To these Russians, who were for the most part animated with violent sentiments, were added a number of foreigners who had fled to Alexander from the persecutions of Napoleon, or from his influence and his glory, which they detested. Amongst these were an officer of engineers named Michaux, of Piedmontese origin, and in high consideration with Alexander; a Swede, the Count of Armfeld, who had been compelled by the political events of Sweden to fly to Russia, a man of some mind, but nevertheless held in little esteem; an Italian named Paulucci, very imaginative and very petulant; several Germans, of whom may be more particularly mentioned the Baron de Stein, whom Napoleon had excluded from the Prussian government, who was the idol in Germany of all the enemies of France, and whose character presented a strange mixture of liberalism and aristocratic sentiment blended with the most ardent patriotism; an active, intelligent, and well-informed officer of the staff, ever eager to put himself forward, Colonel Walzogen; and lastly, a Prussian general, Pfuhl, who was more a savant than a military man, who exercised great influence over Alexander, for which reason he was detested by all the *habitués* of the court, and who was regarded by some persons as possessed of superior genius, whilst others considered him as incapable of rendering the least real service, and only capable of influencing for a certain time by his very singularity of character the mobile and dreamy imagination of the Emperor Alexander.

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

Amongst the various above-named personages two ideas had been constant subjects of debate. The men of impetuous spirit, and who, as is usually the case, were not the most enlightened, were averse to the plan of awaiting Napoleon's advance, and were desirous that the Russian armies should, on the contrary, be marched upon Old Prussia and Poland,

for the purpose of ravaging these countries, which were either the allies or the accomplices of France, and that they should retreat only after having increased by two hundred leagues the desert in which it was hoped that Napoleon would be lost. Calm and sensible men, however, regarded this project as dangerous, and maintained, with reason, that to advance to meet Napoleon was to shorten for him the road over which he had to pass, to relieve him consequently from the most serious difficulties of the war, which were those arising from the immense distances he had to traverse, and to afford him on the very borders of his own territory the opportunity, which he so much desired, of fighting a new battle of Austerlitz, of Friedland, a battle which he would doubtless gain, and the result of which in his favour would decide the whole question, or at least place him in the ascendant during the remainder of the war. They added that, instead of diminishing the distances which Napoleon's troops had to traverse, it was absolutely necessary, on the other hand, to increase them by retreating before them, and leaving them to continue their mission unchecked, so that when they should have advanced into the very heart of Russia, and become exhausted by hunger and fatigue, it would be possible to overwhelm them and drive them back, half destroyed, across the Russian frontier. The inconvenience of this plan was, indeed, that instead of giving up Old Prussia and Poland to ravage, it demanded the devastation of Russia itself; but nevertheless the prospect of almost certain success was an argument of such weight that no consideration deserved to be placed in the balance with it.

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

This course of conduct was very simple, and dictated by sound reason. But a desire had existed for the construction



of an entire system of conducting the war, and General Pfuhl was the author of such a system, which he propounded to Alexander with an appearance of profundity which was well calculated to fascinate the emperor's imagination.

Whenever a great man, drawing his inspiration not from theories but from circumstances, has performed great actions, it invariably happens that he is succeeded by imitators who substitute systems for the great deeds which have been the offspring of true genius. In the eighteenth century there was a general proneness to imitate the military manœuvres of Frederick, and after the battle of Leuthen to propound systems founded on the *ordre oblique*, to which was attributed all the Prussian monarch's success. In like manner after the year 1800, and the campaigns of General Bonaparte, who had known how to manœuvre so skilfully on his adversary's wings and lines of communication, nothing was spoken of but turning the enemy; and at Austerlitz, accordingly, Alexander's advisers had endeavoured to turn Napoleon, with what result we know. In 1810 a man of clear intelligence and decided character, Lord Wellington, aided by an extraordinarily fortunate conjunction of circumstances, accomplished a brilliant campaign in Portugal, and his manœuvres were everywhere quoted throughout Europe as those which it would be henceforth necessary to follow. To fall back before the enemy, destroying everything in the line of retreat, to withdraw into an impregnable camp, to remain there until the enemy should be exhausted, and then to sally forth to overwhelm him, composed, in the estimation of some persons, since Torres Vedras, the whole science of war; and of this new science General Pfuhl had constituted himself the chief master in the midst of the Russian staff. With the exception of the czar, who found deep satisfaction in his pretended profundities, the general had worn out and disgusted every one with his dogmatism, his pretence, and his pride; but Alexander regarded him as an unappreciated genius, and entrusted him with the task of drawing up the plan of the impending war.

General Pfuhl, after having studied the map of Russia, had remarked, as indeed any one might at the first glance, that the long transverse line of the Dwina and the Dnieper forms from the north-west to the south-east a vast and excellent line of interior defence. He desired, therefore, that the Russian armies should fall back upon this line, form there a species of impregnable Torres Vedras, and pursue then a course similar to that which had been pursued by the English and Spanish armies in Portugal. Having, moreover, in the course of his attentive study of the map of Russia, remarked at Drissa on the Dwina a place which seemed suitable for the establishment

of an entrenched camp, he had proposed to form one at this place; and Alexander, adopting this proposition, had sent the engineer Michaux to trace out and superintend the execution of the works. In addition also to this camp of Drissa, General Pfuhl determined to effect a distribution of the Russian forces according to a system which he had deduced from the operations of Lord Wellington in Portugal; and accordingly he demanded two armies, a principal one and a secondary one; the one, on the Dwina, falling back before the French, and retreating from them into the camp at Drissa; the other, on the Dnieper, also falling back before the French, but destined to assail them in flank and rear when the time should come for the Russian troops to act on the offensive. In accordance with this plan, therefore, had been formed the two armies of Barclay de Tolly and Bagration.

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

There could be no objection to this arrangement of the troops, for it was very natural that the two principal bodies of the Russian troops should assemble behind these two rivers.

But the more prudent members of the staff fully expected that these two armies were to be speedily united, and to fall back before the enemy, delaying to attack him until worn out and exhausted, and enticed sufficiently far into the Russian territory. This was particularly the advice of Barclay de Tolly, a cold, firm, intelligent officer, a scion of a Scotch family established in Courland, and on account of his foreign origin regarded with little favour by the Russians, the fermentation of whose national passions made them regard all strangers with dislike. This advice, however, as we have already seen, was distasteful to many; for the men of impetuous character, whether Russians, Germans, Swedes, or Italians, detesting France, her Revolution, and her glory, were excessively averse to the idea of granting to France the honour of seeing the Russian armies retreat before her troops, and declared that it would be far better to invade Prussia and Poland, to ravage a vast extent of territory, and afford Germany the opportunity she desired of throwing off Napoleon's yoke. This latter opinion was the one which was chiefly maintained at the headquarters of the Prince Bagration; a prince of Georgian origin, courageous, and skilful in the management of troops, but wanting in the talents of a commander-in-chief, and whose real wish at this time was to advance and make a furious attack upon the French. Jealous of Barclay, distrustful of the military savants, he favoured the expression amongst the persons around him of exclamations against the strangers who advised Alexander, and endeavoured to persuade him, they declared, to adopt a timid course of action.

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

Alexander had been inclined to convoke a council of war, composed of councillors of all nations, and to submit to its consideration the plan propounded by General Pfuhl, not indeed by the general's own mouth, for he was a man quite incapable of defending his system against adverse objections, but by that of Colonel Wolzogen, his usual interpreter, and a man whose mind was at once clear and subtle. Colonel

Wolzogen, however, had shown him that such a course would but lead to the brink of a fresh chaos, and that it would be far better simply to select at once a commander-in-chief, and to confide to him the execution of the plan which should be selected. For such a post General Barclay de Tolly was manifestly the most fitted, both on account of his obedience, his firmness, his practical talents, and his position as minister of war. Besides, the approach of the enemy with a crushing mass of about two hundred thousand men, when Russia had but one hundred and thirty thousand with which to meet them, had to a great degree quelled the eagerness of the partisans of an offensive system of action; and there was no reason, therefore, to fear that a retrograde movement, which had become inevitable, would meet with any great degree of blame. Alexander consequently adopted the advice of Colonel Wolzogen, the course pointed out by it being indeed the only one left open in the existing state of circumstances, and confided to General Barclay de Tolly, not as general-in-chief, but as minister of war, the conduct of the retreat of the principal army upon the Dwina, in the direction of the camp of Drissa. These arrangements having been made, he set forth with a crowd of his councillors, following the road which leads to Drissa by Swenziany and Vidzouy.

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

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

and thirty thousand men of the army at the Dwina, was near Grodno.

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

Before quitting Wilna, the Emperor Alexander, though regarding the war as inevitable, and resolved to maintain it energetically, determined to attempt a last measure which, whilst failing to put a stop to hostilities, would throw the responsibility of the consequences upon Napoleon. Learning that M. de Lauriston had founded the demand for his passports on the demand made by Prince Kourakin for his, and on the pretence that a condition had been attempted to be imposed on the French relative to the evacuation of Prussia, he took pains to answer these two objections so as to place his adversary entirely in the wrong. He directed, therefore, M. de Balachoff, minister of police, a man of spirit and tact, to carry to Napoleon a message expressing his, Alexander's, extreme surprise at Napoleon's sudden rupture of the peace between the two nations without any previous declaration of war; declaring Prince Kourakin's demand for his passports as a most insufficient reason, since the prince had not been authorised to take the course he had, and that the pretended condition of the evacuation of Prussia could not fairly be a serious cause of complaint, since it had been proposed, not as a necessary preliminary to negotiation, but only as a consequence to be promised and certain, of any pacific arrangement which might be made. Alexander even authorised M. de Balachoff to declare that this evacuation of Prussia was so little an absolute condition, that if the French desired to halt on the Niemen, he would consent to negotiate immediately, on the basis indicated in the course of the various preceding communications. These orders having been given, Alexander set out on the 26th of June, at the same

time addressing a spirited proclamation to his people, in which he pledged himself solemnly never to treat with the enemy so long as he should remain on the Russian territory.

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

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

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

Thus the capital of Lithuania was taken almost without a

blow, and after only four days of hostilities; and Napoleon entered it in the midst of the assembled crowds of the inhabitants, who gradually caught a spirit of enthusiasm from contact with our soldiers, especially the Polish soldiers, and the remembrance of that liberty which they had formerly enjoyed, but which the most aged of them alone had actually known. The Lithuanian nobles who were the partisans of Russia had already fled, and those which were not had awaited the approach of our troops, and readily assisted in the creation of new means for the administration of the country in the interest of the French army, which was at that moment the interest of Poland also. At the same time their zeal was checked by the terrible fear that this attempt to effect the reconstitution of Poland would not be a genuine one, and that in less than a month the Russian couriers would re-enter Wilna, bearing orders of sequestration and exile.

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

Whilst Napoleon was devoting his attention to these preliminary matters, the various corps of the army were executing their prescribed movements without any misadventures beyond the inconveniences which were to be expected as the result of over-fatigue and unfavourable weather. Marshal Ney, as we have already seen, had passed the Wilia nearer Wilna than Marshal Oudinot, namely, in the environs of Riconti, and had marched in the direction of Maliatouy, perceiving in the distance Bagowouth's corps, which was at first at Wilkomir, but which, in accordance with the retrograde movement made by the Russian corps, had marched from this point in the direction of Swenziany and Drissa. Ney, however, only fell in with the rearguard, which, composed of Cossacks, was eager in devastating with fire everything which lay in the path of the

French troops; but they had not always time to complete this operation, and were compelled, fortunately, to leave some resources at our disposal. In the meantime Marshal Oudinot, having passed the Wilia below, at Janowo, for the purpose of marching upon Wilkomir, had encountered there the troops commanded by Wittgenstein, who had marched from Rossiena to Wilkomir, and who, on the morning of the 28th, at the moment when the main body of the French army was entering Wilna, being in position at Deweltowo, at the head of twenty-four thousand men, displayed to Marshal Oudinot a line of about twenty thousand infantry slowly retreating under cover of a numerous artillery and a numerous body of cavalry. But the Russian general had encountered in Marshal Oudinot a man who would not allow himself to be braved with impunity; and although the latter had at his immediate command only his light cavalry, foot artillery, Verdier's infantry division, and Doumerc's cuirassiers, he did not hesitate to attack the Russians, and having speedily driven their cavalry behind the lines of their infantry, he attacked the latter with Verdier's division, and forced it to retreat with a loss in killed and wounded of about four hundred men.

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

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



the army of Italy. The difficulties, therefore, which were to be feared by Prince Eugène did not arise from the operations of the enemy, but from natural obstacles on the route he had to traverse.

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

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

Prince Eugène's corps succeeded at length, however, in crossing

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

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

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

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

The entrance of the troops into Wilna, which took place on the 29th of June, had scarcely been effected, when the reports of the light cavalry announced that many thousand Russian troops were on their march around Wilna, and were advancing in a curved line from our right to our left, doubtless with the purpose of joining Barclay de Tolly on the Dwina. In any

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

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

Macdonald, who had at first been directed upon Rössiena, had been since ordered to proceed to the right upon Poniewiez, for the purpose of joining Oudinot; whilst the latter was in like manner ordered to take a direction to the right between Avanta and Widzouy, for the purpose of approaching close to Ney; and Ney himself was ordered to march towards Swenziany, close to Murat, who with all his cavalry was pursuing by Gloubokoé the Russian army on its retreat upon the Dwina. In the next place these commanders, whose troops might have amounted altogether since the last march to about one hundred and seven or one hundred and eight thousand men, to remain in observation to mark the operations of the rest of the army, to rally their stragglers, to collect grain, and to convert it into flour, to repair the mills which had been destroyed by the Russians, to construct ovens, to bring up their heavy artillery

and baggage trains, and to employ themselves, in short, in concentrating and reorganising their strength, in guarding against the attacks of the enemy, and carefully watching his least movements.

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

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

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

Marshal Davout, it must be observed, could not with the two

divisions Compans and Dessaix, which were the only troops at his command on his departure from Wilna, envelop Bagration's army, which amounted to about sixty thousand men, and which some flying rumours had even raised to one hundred thousand; but there remained on the extreme right the twenty-five thousand men under King Jerome, which debouching from Grodno and following Bagration in the rear, would assist in surrounding him or driving him into the Pinsk marshes.

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

At this moment, in fact, the greatest agitation prevailed at Warsaw; and on the arrival of the news of the passage of the Niemen by four hundred thousand men under the great man of the age, the reconstitution of Poland was proclaimed, the concentration of all its provinces into a single State was decreed, and finally, one of those general confederations was determined on by which the Poles had formerly defended their soil and their independence. Since Napoleon was compelled, therefore, when advancing into the very heart of Russia, to raise the grave question respecting the reconstitution of Poland, whose territory he was traversing, and whose aid he required, he would have acted judiciously perhaps had he adopted a decided course of action, and attempted to effect its complete reconstitution. In this case he would have placed at his disposal the whole body of the Polish army, to the number of seventy or eighty thousand men, have been able to form his right wing with it, and marched it towards Volhynia and Podolia. A right wing thus formed would have guarded his flanks more faithfully than the Austrian troops, and have been better calculated to rouse Volhynia to his aid; and the adoption of this course would also have enabled him, instead of forming a separate government for Lithuania, to have immediately incorporated that territory with the general kingdom of Poland. He would thus have restored to Poland the sentiment of national existence, and would most probably

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

Napoleon gave, therefore, to Lithuania a distinct and independent government, and thus offered a severe menace against Russia, while he still refrained from any action which might be regarded as a declaration of implacable hostility. He formed a commission of seven members, selected from the most considerable of the Lithuanian nobles whom Russia had been unable to gain, or had neglected to attach to her interests; and persisting in connecting Poland with Saxony, he selected as a member of this commission, and at the same time governor of the province, Count Hogendorp, a Saxon officer, whom he had made his aide-de-camp. He divided Lithuania into four secondary governments, namely, Wilna, Grodno, Minsk, and Bialystok, each of which was to be governed by a commission consisting of three members and an intendant, who was to be subordinate to the governor-general. Executive agents were, moreover, established in each district under the title of sous-préfets. The government of Lithuania thus organised was charged with the care of the public property, with the collection of the taxes, the levying of troops, the maintenance and re-establishment of order throughout the country, the erection of magazines and hospitals, and in short, with the duty of contributing that most efficacious means towards the reconstitution of Poland, which consisted in energetically aiding the French army. At the same time, this

Lithuanian government was authorised to join the great Polish confederation decreed at Warsaw.

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

Besides regiments of the line, the Lithuanian government also raised national guards and *gardes-chasse*, a species of mounted national guards, whose purpose was to keep the country in order, and who were of effectual service as guides to the French cavalry sent in pursuit of bandits and marauders, who had unfortunately become very numerous, amounting to twenty-five or thirty thousand, and increased rather than lessened by the forced marches made by many of the corps of the French army. In fact, so great had this evil become, that one whole regiment of the first corps, the 33rd *leger* (a Dutch regiment), had, notwithstanding the good discipline enforced by Marshal Davout, almost entirely disbanded itself, and pitilessly pillaged the canton of Lida, one of the most fertile in the country.

Another great inconvenience which had to be removed consisted in the dead bodies of men and horses which covered the



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

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

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

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

The intervention of Napoleon's active will was also demanded to procure the supply of the means of transport necessary to the execution of these various plans. The first convoys, under the direction of Colonel Baste, had succeeded to Napoleon's great delight in traversing the distance from Dantzic to Kowno; but there still remained to be traversed the sinuous course of the Wilia from Kowno to Wilna, which would occupy twenty days, although it was a fifth or a sixth shorter than the distance from Dantzic to Kowno, which had occupied no longer. Napo-

leon, therefore, determined to attempt to abridge this navigation, and if he could not succeed in that, to renounce it for a great land transport enterprise, which he proposed to entrust to a company of Polish Jews.

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

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

Napoleon received M. de Balachoff at first with much politeness, and listened to him with gracious attention when he declared his master's astonishment at finding his territory invaded without any previous declaration of war, on the twofold and disingenuous pretext of the demand made for his passports by Prince Kourakin, and that the evacuation of the Prussian territory had been demanded as an indispensable preliminary to all negotiation. Napoleon listened to all that was advanced by the envoy with the patience of a man who is perfectly reliant on his strength, and is thoroughly determined on his course

of actions; but he replied that it was now too late to enter upon negotiations, and that it was impossible that he should recross the Niemen. He repeated his usual arguments, that he had only armed in reply to armaments previously made by Russia, and that through the whole course of his preparations for war he had remained willing to negotiate; and complained that the demand made for his passports by M. de Kourakin, and the attempt to impose upon the French a dishonourable preliminary condition, and the refusal of M. de Lauriston's demand for the honour of an interview with the Emperor Alexander, had destroyed the last chance of an amicable arrangement of the differences between the two nations, and induced him, Napoleon, to carry the French army beyond the Niemen.

M. de Balachoff was not sufficiently well acquainted with the actual facts to attempt to reply to these assertions by the utterance of the simple truth, and contented himself, therefore, with repeating that his master was earnestly desirous for peace, and being free as yet from any engagement with other powers, was always ready to conclude it on the conditions which had since 1807 rendered the relations between the two countries so entirely satisfactory. "You are free as yet, I believe," said Napoleon, in reply to these assertions, "from any alliance with the English, but the union will speedily take place; a single courier will suffice to bring about a good understanding between you, and tie the knots of a new alliance. Your emperor has long displayed a leaning towards England, and I have long observed it. But oh! how glorious would have been his reign had he only consented to remain on good terms with me! I had given him Finland, and the promise I had made to him of Moldavia and Wallachia was speedily about to be realised, when suddenly he placed himself amidst the ranks of my enemies, turning against me the arms which he had intended to employ against the Turks, and gaining only the certainty that he will never possess either Moldavia or Wallachia. . . . It is even said," added Napoleon, in the manner of an interrogation, "that you have signed a peace with the Turks, the terms of which do not grant you these provinces?" M. de Balachoff replied in the affirmative; and under the influence of deep but concealed emotion Napoleon continued, "Your master does not possess, then, those fine provinces which he might so readily have added to his empire, and which would have extended it in the course of a single reign from the Gulf of Bothnia to the mouths of the Danube! An alliance with me would have been more fruitful in great results than the reign of Catherine the Great, and would have enabled Russia to share with me the glory of vanquishing the English, already reduced to the last extremities. And ah! how glorious in that case would Alexander's reign have

been! But he has preferred to ally himself with my enemies, and to associate himself with a Stein, an Armfeld, a Wintzingerode, and a Benningsen! The first, a fugitive from his country; the second, an intriguing debauché; the third, a rebellious French subject; and the fourth, although possessed of rather greater military qualifications than the others, still very incapable, having shown himself thoroughly incompetent in 1807, and inevitably recalling to his master's mind the most horrible recollections. Barclay de Tolly, indeed, is said to be possessed of higher talents than these men, but it is difficult to believe it after having witnessed the first movements of your troops. Bagration is your only true soldier, and is, in fact, experienced, keen-sighted, and decided in action. . . . But what course can your master pursue in the midst of this mob, which will compromise him and lay upon him the blame of all their own errors? A sovereign should never be present with his army save when acting as its general, but should, on the contrary, keep at such a distance as to leave the responsible general at liberty to pursue his own measures. You perceive what have been the results of your operations during the eight days which the campaign has now lasted? You have lost Wilna, your army has been cut in two, and chased from the Polish provinces. Your troops murmur at these things, and have good reason to do so. Again, I know the exact amount of your strength; I have taken an exact account of your battalions as of my own, and I know that you have only two hundred thousand men with which to oppose me, who come at the head of three times as many. As for your allies—the Turks will be of no use to you, for they are good for nothing, and they have shown that this is so in signing a peace with you; and the Swedes, on their side, are destined to be at the will of extravagant men. They have got rid of one foolish king and taken another still more foolish; and indeed, it is necessary to be a fool before one can be at the same time a Swede and a Russian ally. And what, at the most, do all your allies amount to? What can they do for you? And how great is the difference between them and my allies the Poles, who are eighty thousand strong, fight for me with ardour, and will speedily form an army of two hundred thousand men! I am about to snatch from you the Polish provinces; I will deprive the kinsmen of your family of all that remains in their possession in Germany, and send them back to you discrowned and kingdomless. If Prussia become involved with you, I will blot her from the map of Germany, and give you a sworn enemy in her place. I will drive you back beyond the Dwina and the Dnieper, and re-establish against you a barrier which Europe has blindly and culpably permitted to be broken down. These are the things

which you will have gained by deserting my alliance, in the place of the glorious reign your master might have enjoyed by remaining faithful to it."

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

At his table the Emperor Napoleon behaved towards M. de Balachoff with much kindness, but at the same time treated him with a familiarity which was somewhat distressing, and frequently compelled the envoy to defend his sovereign and his nation. At length, in the course of conversation, Napoleon spoke of the large number of convents to be found in Poland and Russia, and declared that they were melancholy symptoms of a low state of civilisation; and M. de Balachoff replied that every country has its peculiar institutions, and that what is very suitable for one is ill adapted to another. But when Napoleon persisted that the prosperity of convents was not so much a question of place as time, and that they were wholly unsuited to the present age, M. de Balachoff, hardly pushed, replied that indeed the religious spirit had disappeared from almost the whole of Europe, but that it still existed in two countries—Spain and Russia. This was an allusion to the resistance he encountered in the Peninsula, and to the resistance he might possibly meet with elsewhere, which somewhat disconcerted Napoleon, although he was usually as ready in conversation as in war, and he was at a loss for an answer. All the sensible persons who were present at this interview much regretted the tone adopted towards the Russian envoy, and Napoleon himself became at length so far sensible of its injudicious nature, that at the conclusion of the repast he took M. de Balachoff aside, and addressed him in a more serious and worthy manner, declaring that he was ready to halt and to negotiate, on condition that he should be permitted to retain possession of Lithuania, at least during the negotiations, and that he was ready to make peace on condition that Russia should sincerely and unreservedly co-operate with him against England; but that it would be simply folly for him, under any

other circumstances, to halt and lose the two months which still remained to him for the execution of the plans from which he hoped to obtain such great results. At the same time, he assured M. de Balachoff of his personal regard for the Emperor Alexander, and dismissed him with the utmost graciousness.

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

Whilst Napoleon was at Wilna occupied with the numerous cares which we have enumerated, the Russian and French armies continued their movements. The six corps of infantry and the two corps of reserve cavalry of General Barclay de Tolly, which were marching upon the Dwina, were the most advanced, and opposite our left were pursuing a direct course, whilst the others, situated on our right, and having to execute a circular movement around Wilna, were compelled to use the utmost expedition to avoid being cut off by Marshal Davout. The outcry against the plans attributed to General Pfuhl, and the division of the Russian troops into two armies, had increased in violence amongst the Russian staff; and as General Pfuhl could only meet it with outbursts of chagrin, or an assumption of the dissatisfied silence of an unrecognised genius, the Emperor Alexander had been compelled to yield to the spirit of opposition which had arisen against his views, and to send directions to Prince Bagration to march in all haste upon Minsk, so as to be in a position to join the principal army as soon as it should be considered necessary.

The three corps of Barclay de Tolly, which were situated on our left, those under Wittgenstein and Bagowouth and the guard, which had originally been at Rossiena, at Wilkomir, and at Wilna, had withdrawn in the direction of Drissa without encountering any obstacle, and followed only by Marshals Macdonald, Oudinot, and Ney. The corps of Touczkoff and Schouvaloff, posted at Nowoi-Troki and Olkeniky respectively, and both, as regarded us, on the right of the Wilna, having commenced their march on the 27th of June, on the eve of the

day of our entrance into Wilna, had had time to retreat and to escape from the pursuit of our troops, with the exception, however, of the rearguard of Schouvaloff's corps, which having been unable to pass in time the Ochmiana route, which was that followed by Marshal Davout, had remained between Davout's corps and the Niemen, wandering here and there, and endeavouring to join the Hetman Platow in order to escape with him to Bagration. Finally, the sixth corps, under General Doctoroff, and the second of General Korff's cavalry, which were advanced further than the others on the right, being posted at Lida, and had a longer circuit to traverse so as to reach the other side of Wilna, had commenced their march immediately on the receipt of the orders above mentioned, and proceeded without pause to Ochmiana and Smorgoni. On the 29th they passed the Wilna route at Minsk, on the 30th arrived at Donachewo, and on the 1st of July resumed their march to join the great army under Barclay de Tolly.

Such was the state of affairs on the 1st of July, when there only remained on our right some detachments of Doctoroff's corps, the rearguard of Schouvaloff's corps, and the eight or ten thousand Cossacks under the Hetman Platow, all of which had only the one course open to them, namely, to fall back upon Bagration, following the course of the Niemen.

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

In so thickly wooded a country, so great a master of defensive tactics as Marshal Davout did not fear to meet forty thousand Russian infantry with the twenty thousand at his disposal, consisting of the division Compans, which were under his own immediate command on the Ochmiana route, and the division Dessaix, which was on the Lida route, and which he could at any time bring to his side by a transverse movement. In addition to these twenty thousand infantry, he had ten thousand cavalry, consisting of the hussars and chasseurs of Generals Pajol and Bordessoulle, the Valentian cuirassiers detached from the corps of Nansouty, and Grouchy's entire corps, temporarily

separated from Prince Eugène's troops, and thrown by Napoleon in the direction of Grodno, for the purpose of establishing a communication with King Jerome. But in such a country as that in which he now had to operate, Marshal Davout would certainly have preferred three or four thousand infantry to the most splendid cavalry.

Marshal Davout advanced, therefore, upon Minsk without any fear of Bagration, and even determined, on the contrary, to interrupt his march, and prevent him from gaining the Dnieper, although he could not indulge in the idea that he should be able to envelop and take him with so few troops. To interrupt his march, however, was a matter of great importance, since it would force him to redescend towards the marshes of Pinsk, and there would be a chance, should King Jerome, who had succeeded in passing the Niemen at Grodno, advance rapidly with his seventy or seventy-five thousand men, of making prisoners of the second Russian army. Marshal Davout informed Napoleon of the circumstances of his position, and of his resolution to advance straight to Minsk, and demanded such support as he could afford him. At the same time he wrote to King Jerome to hasten his advance in the direction of Ivié, or Volosjin, points at which it would effect the junction from which such happy results were to be expected.

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

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

Napoleon, whose attention was, however, unfortunately



occupied by too many combinations, neglected these considerations, and considering that the junction of Marshal Davout with the King of Westphalia was certain, and would as certainly result in the envelopment or overthrow of Bagration's troops, devoted his attention to a combination worthy of his gigantic intellect, and which, forcing Barclay de Tolly to succumb, whilst Bagration was vanquished by Davout and Jerome, would at once put an end to the whole war. Halting ten days at Wilna for the purpose of rallying his troops and reorganising his baggage train, he planned to set out on the 9th of July, directing his march upon the Dwina, and whilst Oudinot and Ney should occupy the attention of Barclay de Tolly with about sixty thousand men, to manœuvre behind them, advancing to the right with Davout's three remaining divisions, the guard, the troops under Prince Eugène, and Murat's cavalry, with the purpose of suddenly crossing the Dwina on the enemy's left, and surrounding the great Russian army in the Drissa camp; cutting off simultaneously the St. Petersburg and Moscow routes, and leaving to the Russians no alternative but to lay down their arms. No wiser nor more formidable plan could have been devised to meet the Russian indefinite plan of retreat, and considering Napoleon's skill in manœuvring in front of the enemy, all the chances of success were in his favour.

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

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

Marshal Davout, whose troops, including the reinforcements,

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

These circumstances were of the greatest advantage to Marshal Davout, whose corps had marched without halting from Kowno to Wilna, from Wilna to Minsk, without having had two whole days of repose since the 24th of June, and which had fallen into a state of the greatest disorder, a third of the troops having fallen out of the ranks, the horses being exhausted, and the 33rd leger, a Dutch regiment, having disbanded and devoted itself to pillage. The marshal took immediate measures to remedy this state of things, addressed the troops, distributed prizes and rewards to those who deserved them, threatened to disband the 33rd should it not behave better in future, and had shot a certain number of men who had pillaged shops in Minsk. He procured ten days' rations from the flour which he found in the town, provided the horses with oats, placed his troops in proper order to undertake new marches, and after having been only two days in the town, was in a position to have continued his operations, had not his position become one of greater uncertainty, and rendered it necessary that he should obtain more precise information before advancing any further. When once he had arrived at Minsk, it was open to him to have reached by a slight further advance the Beresina, and by inclining a little to the right to have arrived under the walls of Bobruisk, a strong place commanding the passage of that river, or by advancing straight forward to have reached the banks of the Dnieper at Mohilew. Which of these courses it would be the best to pursue depended upon the movements which should have been made by Prince Bagration, who, according to the confused rumours which could be collected, appeared to have advanced as far as the Niemen towards Nikolajef, and then, after having rallied the troops of Dorokoff and Platow, to have retreated towards the little town of Neswij, on the road from

Grodno to Bobruisk, which was naturally the road to be followed by the army of the Dnieper. In this state of circumstances a junction with King Jerome would enable our troops to stop Bagration at Bobruisk itself; and should this prince be checked by Davout at the passage of the Beresina, whilst Jerome should assail him in the rear, he might be surrounded in such a manner that he would only be able to retreat into the Pinsk marshes. By advancing, on the other hand, as far as the Dnieper, to intercept his march at Mohilew, the uncertainty of success increased with the distance; since, indeed, the circle within which it would then be attempted to surround him would be increased, and there would be left open more points for his escape. Marshal Davout determined, therefore, to halt a day or two for the purpose of obtaining information, and making preparations for his march upon Ighoumen, a point at which he would be equally near to Mohilew and Bobruisk.

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

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

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

proceeded by the Lida route in conformity with the orders of the staff general, which directed them to form a junction with Prince Eugène, who, as we have already seen, had effected the passage of the stream at Prenn.

On the following day, the 30th of June, King Jerome arrived, and immediately devoted his attention to making preparations for provisioning his troops, who were much harassed, and had not been able to bring up their baggage train, since the great storm of the 29th of June, which had burst over almost the whole of Poland, had rendered the roads impracticable, and slain many of the horses. Refusing to allow his exertions to be interrupted by the demonstrations of joy and homage which the inhabitants, delighted at the news of the independence of Poland and the presence of a brother of Napoleon, lavished upon him, he made the greatest exertions to procure the bread rations for his troops, of which they stood in so much need.

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

through Nowogrodek, was almost fifty-six leagues; and the King of Westphalia, should he even march seven leagues a day during eight days, which would be excessive toil for such roads and in the midst of the heats of July, could not arrive at Neswij before the 12th.

Harassed by his brother's letters, the King of Westphalia arrived at Nowogrodek on the 10th of July, and was then fourteen leagues from Bagration, who was at Neswij, and twenty from Davout, who was at Minsk. As he had advanced, the less enormous had become the proportions ascribed to Bagration's army, which was now said to amount only to sixty thousand men; but this was still a very large force to have to meet with the forty-five thousand Polish and Westphalian troops who alone were at his command, the Saxons being too far off to be of immediate service.

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

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

In fact, without any change of command, had his generals acted in zealous concert with each other, Napoleon's combinations might have been thoroughly executed; for Jerome, who on the 13th reached Neswij, from whence he could easily arrive at Bobruisk on the 17th, learning that Bagration, who was on the road to Bobruisk, could not reach it before the 16th, and would then require two days in which to effect the passage of

the Beresina with all his materiél; and that Davout, whose advanced guard was near Ighoumen, could reach Bobruisk in three days, in which case, Marshal Davout debouching upon Bobruisk by the left of the Beresina with thirty-five thousand troops, and Jerome presenting himself on the right bank with forty-five thousand, it would be very possible to inflict a most severe blow on Bagration's army;—becoming acquainted with these circumstances, King Jerome communicated them to Marshal Davout, urging him to march upon Bobruisk, as the means of obtaining the most splendid results.

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

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

An officer bearing information of this resolution of the young prince reached Marshal Davout on the 15th, at Ighoumen; and the marshal failed on this occasion to act with his usual firmness, for instead of using the command—which he had seized somewhat prematurely—with the vigour demanded by circumstances, he was frightened at the idea of having offended a king, brother

of the emperor, and wrote to him a letter earnestly persuading him to remain at the head of the Polish and Westphalian troops under his, Davout's, superior command, declaring that the adoption of this course was necessary for the emperor's welfare. In the meantime, keeping his eye on Bobruisk, he also extended his observations beyond it, watching the course of events on the other side of the Beresina, and making himself certain that the enemy was not preparing to cross it, in which case he would have hastened to advance upon Mohilew. He had already sent Grouchy's cavalry to Borisow to seize this town, its bridge across the Beresina, and its magazines; but they had only succeeded in securing the bridge. He had also thrown several bridges across the Beresina, especially in the neighbourhood of Iakzitycy, and had marched his forces thither, so as to be at the same time nearer to both Bobruisk and Mohilew.

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

In the meantime Marshal Davout, having received certain information respecting some of the enemy's movements beyond the Beresina, resolved, without waiting for Jerome's reply, to give up the plan of a combined movement upon Bobruisk, and to march upon Mohilew, in order to secure, at least, some of the expected results. Having marched on the 16th some of his troops by Iakzitycy, beyond the Beresina, he himself, on the 17th, followed with the remainder of his *corps d'armé*, and advanced by Pogost on the Dnieper, in the direction of Mohilew. He received on his road the letters by which King Jerome

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Napoleon resolved to set out on the night of the 16th of July; but before his departure he could not fail to receive the representations of the Polish Diet, of which there had been an extraordinary assembly at Warsaw. It will be remembered that M. de Pradt, Archbishop of Malines, was sent to Warsaw, in the place of M. de Talleyrand, for the purpose of exciting and directing Polish enthusiasm. He was a man quite incapable of judicious action in the midst of a popular commotion, and finding himself, on arriving at his post, in the midst of a population intensely excited by the idea of the speedy reconstitution of

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

The Diet had separated after having appointed a commission entrusted with the duty of representing it and in some degree the office of a national sovereignty, whilst the ministers of the Grand Duchy should fill that of the executive power—an arrangement of which one of the difficulties was that each of these bodies desired to exercise its own authority, and that of the others also. But this was not the greatest of the inconveniences resulting from it. In the meantime it was necessary, without loss of time, to direct their ardour towards those two essential objects, the levy of troops and the propagation of the insurrection in Lithuania, Volhynia, and Podolia; and if the Abbé de Pradt now had money at his command, extensive authority to act, and a genius for such undertakings as that in which he was now engaged, he might have succeeded in extracting from the fermenting elements around him an organised force capable of raising Volhynia and Podolia, whilst Napoleon was organising Lithuania, already raised by his presence. But Napoleon had neither given him money nor extended authority of action, and his operations had been limited to assisting the Poles in drawing up the manifesto which announced the re-establishment of the Polish kingdom, and which, when drawn up, was sent to Napoleon by the hands of a deputation, which was also charged to endeavour to persuade him to make some solemn declaration of adhesion to the step which had been taken.

The deputation arrived at Wilna shortly before Napoleon's

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

many claims upon my esteem and protection, upon which, in all circumstances, you may always rely."

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

Napoleon set out from Wilna on the evening of the 16th, after a sojourn there of eighteen days. On the morning of the 18th he arrived at Gloubokoé, a little town constructed of wood, and having taken up his quarters in its principal building, a large convent, hastened, as was his wont, to prepare an establishment which might serve as a general depôt for the use of the troops.

In the meantime the various corps continued their movements and defiled successively in front of the Drissa camp, as though they were about to attack it; being under orders, however, to make no such attempt. Murat having halted for a few days in advance of Swenziany, at Opsa, with the cavalry under Generals Nansouty and Montbrun, and Marshal Davout's three divisions, had defiled before the Drissa camp, and taken up a position opposite Polotsk, near to Gloubokoé, and at Napoleon's immediate disposal. During this march General Sebastiani had permitted himself to be surprised by the Russian cavalry, which, having crossed the Dwina to observe our movements, took

advantage of some carelessness on our side to attack General St. Geniés, who defended himself most valiantly, but was taken prisoner with some hundreds of his men. On receipt of information of this appearance of the Russian cavalry, however, our cavalry hastened up, threw themselves on the enemy, took General Koulnieff, who commanded them, and forced them to repass the Dwina.

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

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

The movements which had been ordered on Napoleon's right had been executed with equal punctuality. Prince Eugène occupied this portion of the line forming the link of connection with Marshal Davout on the Dnieper, and after having rallied his troops and baggage train at Nowoi-Troki, he had followed the Minsk route as far as Smorgoni, from which point he had marched upon Wileika, from whence he had continued his route by Dolghinow as far as Beresina, at which place there is a canal called the Lepel Canal, which unites the Beresina, which is a tributary of the Dnieper, with the Oula, which is a tributary of the Dwina, and which may be regarded, therefore, as the connecting link between the Black Sea and the Baltic. On the 21st he would reach Kowno, and would have but a few steps to take to reach the Dwina, at a place between Oula and Beschenkowicz, where it may be easily forded.

A force of almost 200,000 men were thus posted within a space of a few leagues, and at Napoleon's immediate command; and as this was a force quite sufficient to overwhelm Bagration's army, he made immediate preparations to cross the Dwina on his left, to turn and surround him, according to his previously

formed plan. Everything as yet had proceeded according to his wishes, and he only awaited the arrival of his heavy artillery, which would probably arrive about the 22nd or 23rd of July, to execute his grand designs. In the meantime he devoted himself with his usual activity to preparations conducive to the welfare of his army.

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

In the meantime Prince Bagration, having crossed the Berecina at Bobruisk, without having been overwhelmed by the united armies of Davout and Jerome, considered himself in safety, for he had the strong fortress in his rear as a protection against Jerome, and he hoped to reach the Dnieper at Mohilew without encountering any obstacle. On the evening of the 21st, in fact, he approached this place, having 60,000 effective troops at his command.

Marshal Davout, as we have already said, occupied Mohilew with the divisions Compans, Dessaix, and Claparède. His forces, reduced by the fatigues of their march, were still further weakened by the withdrawal of detachments which he was compelled to place at numerous points, and the effective force at his command with which to meet the 60,000 troops of the enemy amounted only to 22,000 infantry and 6000 cavalry.

On the evening of the 21st a skirmish which took place between one of our advanced posts, consisting of a squadron of Bordessoulle's light cavalry, and Platow's Cossacks, announced the approach of the army of the Dnieper; and on the following morning Marshal Davout, accompanied by General Haxo, made a careful reconnoissance of the field of battle. The Staroi-Bychow road, on which had taken place the skirmish of the

previous evening, was also identical with the Bobruisk road which, after having run directly from the Beresina to the Dnieper, turned almost at right angles towards Staroi-Bychow, and followed the right bank of the Dnieper as far as Mohilew. The marshal and General Haxo, setting out from Mohilew, descended this road, which, bordered by a double row of birch-trees, like all the roads of the country, extended between the Dnieper, which was on its left, and a streamlet named the Mischowska, on its right. After having advanced between the Mischowska and the Dnieper about three leagues, they saw that the Mischowska suddenly turned to the left towards the Dnieper, at a point at which was situated a mill, called the Fatowa mill, and which was provided with a mill-dam. The Mischowska thus cut the road, passing under a bridge on which was a great building called the Auberge de Saltanowka, and losing itself in the Dnieper. The space of ground which was thus circumscribed at once suggested itself to Marshal Davout and General Haxo as most suitable for a battlefield, and as a position on which there would be the greatest chance of holding the enemy in check, whatever might be their numbers or determination. Ordering such works, therefore, at the bridge and the mill as would prevent the enemy from crossing the Mischowska, and entrusting the defence of these two posts to five battalions of the 85th of the line, under General Friederichs (the 108th being posted in the rear under General Dessaix, as a reserve), and a portion of his artillery, Marshal Davout proceeded towards Mohilew for the purpose of observing whether the enemy would endeavour to cross the Mischowska on his right, which would have rendered useless any resistance at the Saltanowka bridge and the Fatowa mill; and having advanced in that direction about a league, he reached a place on the bank of the Mischowska at the little village of Seletz, at which the enemy might have crossed it. Marshal Davout therefore posted at this spot one of the four regiments of the division; and a little in the rear, a reserve of two other regiments of the division Compans—the 57th and 111th of the line—together with Valence's cuirassiers. Finally, as an additional precaution, he ranged the Polish division Claparède behind the division Compans, to form a line of communication between Mohilew and the troops on the Staroi-Bychow route; and directed General Pajol, with his light cavalry and the 25th of the line (the 4th regiment of the division Compans), to watch the Ighoumen route by Pogost, as it was possible that a portion of the Russian army might attempt to advance by it to turn our position at Mohilew.

On the following day, the 23rd of July, as soon as morning dawned, Prince Bagration, after having left the 8th corps on the



Bobruisk route, as a protection against the possible but improbable pursuit of King Jerome, advanced the 7th corps against the Saltanowka bridge and the Fatowa mill, with orders to take them at any cost.

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

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

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

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

At this moment the marshal arrived from the rear, and immediately rallied the battalion which had just returned in disorder,

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

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

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

Thus terminated this glorious combat, in which the twenty-eight thousand men of the first corps had checked the sixty thousand troops under Bagration. Had Prince Bagration been better acquainted with the ground on which the battle was fought, he might have executed a dangerous attack on Marshal Davout's widely extended right with Borosdin's corps; but it would have had to encounter, and could not have easily vanquished, the infantry of Generals Compans and Claparède, and the cuirassiers of General Valence. We must also add that had Prince Poniatowski been able to appear, during this

battle of the 23rd by Iakzitsy, on the rear or flank of Prince Bagration's army, he might have inflicted upon it, even although the opportunity at Bobruisk had failed, a most serious disaster.

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

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

Barclay de Tolly had, as we have seen, fallen back upon the Drissa camp, and by this manœuvre had excited a strong feeling of disapprobation, the lower ranks of the army being indignant at the idea of retreating before the French troops at all, and those of a superior grade, who could comprehend the wisdom of a plan of indefinite retreat, regarding the establishment of the Drissa camp as perfectly irreconcilable with common sense. And indeed the establishment of a camp on the Dwina, on the very path of the French troops, and at the commencement, we might say, of their course, when their strength and resources must be still unimpaired, was scarcely in accordance with reason, since even if he did not force it he would be able to turn it, or to take advantage of the forced immobility of the principal army to penetrate by his right the opening which separates the sources of the Dwina from those of the Dnieper, and to divide for the remainder of the campaign the long line of the Russian armies.

Moreover, the Drissa camp was constructed in such a manner as to offer but very slight means of security. The plan generally pursued when it is intended to defend a river is, to cover the troops charged with the defence with the river itself; but here the camp had been placed in front of the river, and was covered by it only in the rear and on the sides; for at the instance of General Pfuhl the Russian engineers had selected a deep curve formed by the Dwina at Drissa for the position of the camp, and defended its front by two lines of defence extending from one bend of the river to the other, four bridges being provided for the retreat of the army should it be compelled to evacuate its position.

Although the camp was calculated to oppose great obstacles to the impetuosity of the French, it was at the same time well calculated to assist Napoleon's manœuvre, which consisted in turning the Russian position, and thus surrounding the troops under Barclay de Tolly. If, in fact, Napoleon had had time to pass the Dwina and thus advance on the rear of the Russian army, it cannot readily be imagined how it would have been able to defile by the above-mentioned four bridges in the presence of two hundred thousand French soldiers.

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

of itself see everything, and if, blinded by pride, it rejects counsel, it speedily falls into folly, and from folly into ruin.

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

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

The former minister of war, Araktchejef, a man of ordinary capacity but considerable energy, and Balachoff, the minister

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

Moved by these representations, Alexander summoned a council of war, which included not only his own staff but that also of Barclay de Tolly, together with Araktchejef, the engineer Michaux, and Colonel Walzogen, General Pfuhl's confidant. Having first given a general view of the scheme which he had adopted for the conduct of the campaign, Alexander entrusted its justification in detail to Colonel Walzogen, who, however, after attempting to defend by arguments more or less specious the position which had been chosen for the Drissa camp, yielded to the general feeling of the council, and admitted that it was necessary to quit this camp immediately and to advance upon Witebsk, whence it would be possible to afford support to Bagration. This view, in entire conformity with the general desire, met with no opposition, and was unanimously adopted.

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

Barclay de Tolly, who now remained at the head of the army with the position of minister of war, was of all the Russian generals the most capable of directing its operations judiciously. Skilful, thoroughly acquainted with all the duties of his profession, cool and resolute, the sole inconvenience

attending his command was, that he inspired his subordinates with a bitter feeling of jealousy which his acknowledged superiority could not quench, and that he was responsible in the eyes of the army for a system of retreat which, however judicious, deeply wounded its pride. For the moment he adhered thoroughly to the idea of evacuating the Drissa camp, following the course of the Dwina as far as Witebsk, and taking up a position opposite Smolensk, where it was hoped that Bagration would speedily arrive by ascending the course of the Dnieper, for the purpose of affording support to the latter, by advancing into the space between the sources of the Dwina and those of the Dnieper, as circumstances might render necessary. This movement, although closing against us the Moscow route, would leave that of St. Petersburg open, and therefore for the purpose of closing it as much as possible he resolved to leave in position on the Lower Dwina, between Polotsk and Riga, the corps under Wittgenstein, who with twenty-five thousand men, speedily to be reinforced by the troops from Finland and the reserves from the north of the empire, would cover the important place Riga, and threaten the left flank of the French, whilst the army of the Danube, should it return from Turkey in time, might threaten their right flank.

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

Napoleon speedily perceived, in spite of the efforts made by the Russian cavalry to cover the movement, that Barclay de Tolly was ascending the Dwina towards Witebsk for the purpose of supporting Bagration, who on his side was probably ascending the Dnieper as far as Smolensk, and this manœuvre of the enemy rather encouraged him in the prosecution of his grand design. Had the Russians retired from the Drissa camp for the purpose of plunging into the depths of Russia, he might have despaired of overtaking them, but as Barclay de Tolly was ascending the Dwina and Bagration

was ascending the Dnieper, each by a similar movement, it was always possible for him to interpose between them in pursuance of his original plan. Marshal Davout, after having compelled Prince Bagration to descend the Dnieper, would reach Smolensk before him, and Napoleon himself had but to ascend the Dwina, making a vigorous movement on his right to find an opportunity of accomplishing at Witebsk what he had not been able to accomplish at Polotsk, namely, the passage of the Dwina on the left of Barclay de Tolly, for the purpose of overlapping him and taking him in reverse.

In the meantime Prince Eugène was on the 22nd of July at Kamen, Murat with the cavalry and the three detached divisions of the 1st corps on the left of Prince Eugène, whilst Ney and Oudinot were behind these, and the guard followed by Gloubokoé. Napoleon marched all this mass of troops on Beschenkowiczzy, at the same time ordering Marshal Oudinot to cross the Dwina at Polotsk, to drive back any of the enemy's troops he might there meet with, and then remained at the head of about one hundred and fifty thousand men, having Marshal Davout on his right, at the head of his own three divisions and the troops which had composed Jerome's corps.

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

On the 24th Prince Eugène marched his corps to Beschenkowiczzy, and whilst General Nansouty's light cavalry was passing this place, advanced along the Ostrowno road, spread his voltigeurs along the Dwina to drive back the Russian troops which were observed on the other side, and brought up his artillery to keep them at a still greater distance. The pontonniers attached to this corps threw themselves boldly into the stream for the purpose of constructing a bridge, and within



a few hours completed it; but the Bavarian cavalry, impatient to effect the passage, dashed into the stream, and hastened to sweep the opposite bank, eliciting the approbation of the whole army by the precision and rapidity of their manœuvres.

Towards the middle of the afternoon a great tumult of horses announced the approach of Napoleon. The Italian troops, which had not yet seen him, received him with tremendous acclamations, which he only acknowledged, however, by a brief salute, so deeply engrossed were his thoughts by the plan with which they were occupied. He descended hastily from his horse for the purpose of addressing some observations to the chief of the pontonniers, and then remounting, traversed the bridge at a gallop, and following the Bavarian cavalry, proceeded some distance on the left bank of the Dwina for the purpose of observing the Russians on their march.

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

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

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

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

Murat immediately made arrangements for meeting the enemy. On his left, towards the Dwina, he arranged his

regiments of cuirassiers in three lines; in the centre he deployed the 8th leger, to reply to the fire of the Russian infantry, and supported them with a portion of the cavalry under General Bruyère. On his right he arranged the remainder of this cavalry, which consisted of the 6th Polish lancers, the 10th Polish hussars, and a regiment of Prussian uhlans, and sent a message to Prince Eugène to advance as speedily as possible with Delzons' division of infantry.

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

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

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

which he expected from a skilful manœuvre. He ordered, therefore, Prince Eugène and Murat to march their troops en masse upon Ostrowno on the following day, and even to pass this point for the purpose of approaching Witebsk as closely as possible.

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

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

Whilst the troops on the right proceeded to ascend the wooded heights under a vigorous fire, those on the left, conducted by General Huard, succeeded in crossing the ravine and establishing themselves on a plateau which had been evacuated by the enemy. This movement was followed by the troops in the centre, and the 8th leger, the artillery, and the cavalry proceeded successively to occupy the plateau which the enemy had abandoned. Whilst the troops forming the left, and composed of the Croatian regiment and the 84th, pursued their own success without taking into consideration the fortunes of their comrades on the opposite wing, and had advanced a considerable distance, the latter failed to make a progress equally rapid, had exhausted itself in vain efforts to penetrate into the thickness of the wood, which was defended by numerous infantry. Our right wing was thus held in check, whilst our centre was considerably advanced, and our left still more so; and the Russian general, Konownitsyn, perceiving this state of affairs, directed against our left and centre

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

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

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

Napoleon passed the night of this day in the midst of the advanced guard, resolving to place himself at dawn at the head of his troops, for each new step rendered the position of the army more perilous, and might be productive of the gravest consequences. He had ordered the detached divisions of the first corps, the guard, and Marshal Ney to join the head of the army with the greatest possible despatch, that he might be in a position to give battle should the enemy be disposed to accept it, and had left the Bavarians exhausted with fatigue in the rear at Beschenkowiczy, to cover the communications with Polotsk, the post assigned to Oudinot, and with Wilna, the central point of all our resources and all our communications.

On the following morning at daybreak, Napoleon, followed by Prince Eugène and King Murat, went forward for the purpose of personally inspecting the movements of the troops.

Witebsk was now at no great distance, and its steeples were already visible on our left, on the bank of the Dwina, at the foot of a hill. A ravine, the bridge across which had been burned, separated us from the enemy, and at some distance beyond it, on a rather extensive plain, were visible a numerous Russian rearguard, composed of cavalry and light infantry, preparing to dispute its passage, whilst beyond a little river which ran at the bottom of this plain, joining the Dwina near Witebsk, was the Russian army itself, in order of battle, and apparently amounting to ninety or a hundred thousand men. The adoption of this position by the enemy seemed to intimate that they were determined to give us battle to prevent us interposing to frustrate their intended junction with Bagration, and from penetrating into the open space which separates the Dwina from the Dnieper; and Napoleon, therefore, immediately sent off aides-de-camp after aides-de-camp to hasten the approach of the remainder of the army. During the delay necessarily occasioned by the reconstruction of the bridge over the ravine, and the defiling of the troops across it, Napoleon took up a position a little to the left, in the rear, on an eminence from whence he could survey at a glance the whole extent of the field of battle. The weather was superb, full of sunshine and excessively warm. The army of Italy formed as usual the head of our column, in company with General Nansouty's cavalry. Delzons' division, which had been in action the previous evening, now gave way to the division of General Broussier, who hastened to repair the bridge, which he speedily rendered fit for the passage of the troops. The 16th cavalry chassensurs of the brigade Piré were the first to pass the ravine, followed by three hundred voltigeurs of the 9th of the line, and defiling by the left at the foot of the eminence on which Napoleon had taken up his position, advanced into the plain, whilst Broussier's regiments were crossing the bridge in their turn, and proceeding a little too much to the left, the 16th was attacked by the Cossacks of the imperial Russian guard, and in spite of a most gallant defence was compelled to give way after having suffered severe loss. At the same moment the greater portion of the Russian cavalry was set in motion, and being thrown upon our left, seemed to swallow up the three hundred voltigeurs of the 9th, who, however, checked the numerous charges of the enemy with a well-sustained fire. Still pursuing their movement in advance, however, the latter almost reached the foot of the eminence occupied by Napoleon, and attacked the squares which the troops of Broussier's division had formed as soon as they had crossed the ravine. But the first of these squares, formed by the 53rd of the line, received them with the aplomb of veteran troops of Italy, and having

repulsed their charge, advanced unbroken, and disengaged the chasseurs and the three hundred voltigeurs, who had remained as it were drowned in the midst of a flood of assailants. The action took place in the sight of the whole army, and it was filled with joy as it beheld the little group of voltigeurs emerging in safety from the midst of the frightful mêlée in which it had been involved; whilst Napoleon, who had observed the whole affair, crossed the ravine, and riding in front of the brave voltigeurs, exclaimed, "Who are you, my friends?" "Voltigeurs of the 9th of the line, and all of us children of Paris," was the reply. "Ah! you are brave men, and all deserve the Cross of the Legion of Honour," rejoined the emperor; and he went forward to the squares of Broussier's division, which had advanced into the plain, and pursued with the fire of its artillery the numerous cavalry of General Pahlen. As Nansouty's cavalry and Delzons' division also speedily came up on the centre and the right respectively, the Russians, considering that it would be imprudent to attempt to hold their ground against such forces, had repassed the little river, the Loutcheza, and drawn up their troops there in battle array behind it; and had all his troops been now at his command, Napoleon would have seized the opportunity of giving battle while the moment seemed to offer. As, however, the troops at his immediate disposal were insufficient for the purpose, he resolved to employ the remainder of the day in reconnaissances and in concentrating his troops. In the meantime our soldiers longed for the decisive contest, however bloody it might be. They were worn out indeed with a march which had no result, which had been pursued under a heat which had reached twenty-seven degrees Réaumur, and during which they had had only the very scantiest supply of brandy, scarcely any bread, and had been compelled to eat their meat without salt. Their ranks also had been much thinned by fatigue; the combats in which they had just been engaged had deprived them of three thousand men in killed and wounded, and the departure of the Bavarians had been a loss of fifteen thousand more. Nevertheless the remaining troops, consisting of Nansouty's and Montbrun's cavalry, the army of Italy, the three divisions of the first corps, the troops under Ney, and the guard, still amounting to one hundred and twenty-five thousand men—all excellent soldiers—were more than sufficient for the army of Barclay de Tolly.

The determination of Barclay de Tolly to give us battle was indeed most daring, and was the result of a more powerful consideration than the bitter complaints of his troops, which were indignant at their continued retreat. Had he withdrawn a step further in the rear, the communication between Witebsk

and Smolensk would have been intercepted, and Bagration, whom he had arranged to meet at Babinowiczi, would have been checked in his march, probably caught between the troops of Davout and Napoleon, and consequently destroyed. He resolved, therefore, whatever might be the consequences, to fight a desperate battle behind the little river Loutcheza, although the withdrawal of Wittgenstein's corps, the protracted marches, and the three days' contest in which they had just been engaged, had reduced his troops to ninety thousand men, whilst the French amounted to one hundred and twenty-five thousand. His resolution was desperate, but the occasion was one of those in which desperate resolutions save empires.

He had employed the whole day in preparations, when an officer suddenly arrived bearing the most urgent reasons to induce him to change his plan. The officer was one of Bagration's aides-de-camp, and brought information of the battle of Mohilew and its consequences, which were that Bagration, forced by Davout to pass the Dnieper much lower than Mohilew, was compelled to make a long detour for the purpose of joining Barclay de Tolly in the opening which separates the sources of the two rivers, and could only at most hope to join the latter at Smolensk. Such was the information brought by Bagration's aide-de-camp, and it showed that whilst a further retrograde movement would by no means render impossible the junction of the two armies behind the line of the Dnieper and the Dwina, it would be utterly useless to fight a dangerous battle for an object the attainment of which would not be jeopardised by the continuance of the retreat. Relieved, therefore, of the immense responsibility which he had been nearly forced to incur, he resolved to continue his retreat the same night; and accordingly, late on the night of the 27th, when fatigue had begun to relax the vigilance of the French, the whole of his army resumed its march with the most remarkable unity of action, silence, and precision. The watch-fires were left burning, and the Count Pahlen's rearguard remained on the banks of the Loutcheza, the more completely to deceive the enemy. The army retreated in three columns, that of the right, composed of the 6th and 5th corps (Doctoroff's and the guard), marching by the Roudnia route upon Smolensk, that of the centre, consisting of the third corps (Touczkoff's), proceeding by Kolycki upon Poreczié, and that of the left, composed of the 2nd and 4th corps (Bagowouth's and Ostermann's), making for the same point by Janowiezi.

Poreczié, towards which two of the Russian columns were thus directing their march, was situated behind a little marshy and wooded stream, the Kasplia, which, crossing the space of eighteen or twenty leagues which lies between the sources of

the Dnieper and those of the Dwina, closes, so to speak, the gates of Muscovy. By taking up a position, therefore, with the bulk of his forces at Poreczié, behind a region of wood and marsh, and protected by the sinuous and muddy stream of the Kasplia, and free to march upon Sourage, on the banks of the Dwina, or upon Smolensk, on the banks of the Dnieper, Barclay de Tolly would be in a position to await for some days the junction with Bagration, whilst at the same time covering both the Moscow and St. Petersburg roads; and indeed the promptitude with which he formed and the precision with which he executed this plan, are in the highest degree creditable to the military judgment and skill of Barclay de Tolly, and prove that had he been less interfered with, he would have been able to conduct with prudence the operations of this serious and difficult war.

On the morning of the 28th of July, Napoleon, surrounded by his lieutenants, rode to the bank of the Loutcheza, where he hoped to find a new Friedland, and above all things that peace which he had so lightly abandoned, and which he now regretted; but his quick eye soon discovered through the skilful manœuvres of the brilliant rearguard, conducted by Count Pahlen, that the Russians had retreated to await a battle. Ignorant of the motives which had regulated Barclay de Tolly's actions, he might well have thought that this retreat was intended as a method of enticing the French to a pursuit which should fatigue and exhaust them; but this opinion was rather that of his lieutenants, officers, and soldiers than his own, and he immediately gave orders that the troops, in spite of the heat, which was at 27 or 28 degrees Réaumur, and the fatigues of the preceding days, should hasten forward at their utmost speed to endeavour to overtake at least some portion of the fugitive army. But Count Pahlen's cavalry, although never avoiding the charge of ours, always ended by retreating and yielding the disputed ground.

Our troops had scarcely commenced their march when they perceived upon the left, on the Dwina, the city of Witebsk, the capital of White Russia, containing about twenty-five thousand inhabitants, and a place of some trade. One of our detachments entered it without difficulty, chasing before it the bands of Cossacks which, like ill-omened birds, never retreated without having filled the places through which they passed with unsightly ruin. On this occasion, however, they had only destroyed the principal magazines and the mills, not having had sufficient time to fire the town. But the inhabitants, with the exception of a few priests and merchants, had fled at our approach, terrified by the exaggerated reports which prevailed respecting the atrocities committed by our troops in Poland,



and which had no foundation, in fact, as respected the army itself, although too true with respect to isolated bands of pillagers.

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

Thus had Napoleon's combinations at the opening of this campaign, which were the most brilliant he had ever conceived, been baffled, although he had vanquished the enemy in every encounter, inflicted a loss upon him of about fifteen thousand in killed, wounded, or prisoners, and deprived him of his best provinces, such as Lithuania and Courland. Some errors in the execution of his plans had doubtless contributed to their want of success—such as having crossed the Niemen too hastily, and not having passed at Kowno, before the alarm had been given to the enemy, the time which it had been necessary to devote at Wilna to bringing up the stragglers and baggage; such as having relied too securely on the junction of King Jerome with Marshal Davout, and of having too much relied, in short, on men and the elements. But independently of these faults, his insuccess in itself was a great proof of the imprudence of this war, which he

attempted to carry on with soldiers forcibly enlisted from various countries, and compelled to march through immense tracts too barren and too thinly inhabited to supply the necessaries which it was impossible for them to carry with them. At the same time we must remark, that had Napoleon, when he had once been so imprudent as to commence the war, been more imprudent still, and marched straight forward without halting at Wilna to rally his troops and convoys, he might have left many more stragglers in the rear, but he would probably in this case have been enabled to have overwhelmed Barclay de Tolly on the one side and Bagration on the other, and to have struck those terrible blows which would have brought about peace, or at least have given a lustre to this first campaign which would have rendered it unnecessary for him to seek in the depths of Russia those brilliant results which were necessary to preserve his prestige. But we may observe here, as we must observe hereafter, that forming plans too rashly and executing them with too much hesitation were the fatal errors which caused Napoleon's failure in this war; that in fact, if we might venture to say so, had he been more blind, he might have succeeded better. It must be added, that although his health remained unaffected, he seemed to be less active, being more frequently in his carriage than on his horse, either because the heat, or increasing stoutness, had somewhat reduced his physical not mental energy; because the vastness of the undertaking on which he had entered began somewhat to frighten him, and thus deprive his will of its natural strength and ardour; or because, let us say, if we share the superstitions common to humanity, that Fortune, inconstant or fatigued, ceased to second his designs.

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

Napoleon now installed himself in the palace of the governor of Witebsk with his military court, distributing the corps of his army around him in such a manner as to guard against surprise, obtain provisions, and be able to concentrate them immediately on the points on which it might be necessary to act. At Witebsk itself he posted the imperial guard; somewhat in advance, at Sourage, a little town situated above Witebsk on the Dwina, Prince Eugène; a little to the right, towards Roudnia,

in the midst of the space between the Dwina and the Dnieper, Marshal Ney; and in advance of the latter, at all the points at which an enemy might possibly approach, the entire mass of his cavalry. He encamped behind Ney, between Witebsk and Babinowiczi, the three divisions of the first corps, which awaited with impatience the moment in which they should meet the severe but paternal chief, under whom they had been accustomed to serve.

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

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

According to his custom, Napoleon ordered that the resources of the country should be immediately employed to afford the troops that subsistence which they had wanted during their march, and to provide also a reserve of provisions sufficient to last them eight or ten days. As the surrounding country was tolerably well cultivated, and the Russians had not been able to destroy all the magazines, our troops were

able to procure a certain amount of provisions; and Napoleon ordered the establishment of magazines, particularly at Witebsk and Orscha, where he determined to place his two principal points d'appui on the Dwina and the Dnieper. At the same time, as there was a great want of hospital accommodation, not only for our wounded, but also for the Russian wounded left in our hands, whom the good and skilful surgeon Larrey, a true hero of humanity, most carefully attended, in order that the enemy might in turn bestow some care upon their wounded prisoners, Napoleon took advantage of Davout's presence at Orscha to have prepared at Orscha, and also at Borisow and Minsk, hospitals capable of receiving twelve thousand patients.

The chiefs of corps had spoken with so much earnestness to him respecting the extent to which the ranks of the army had been thinned by the sufferings attending their march, that as soon as he had resolved upon a halt at Witebsk, he ordered, for the purpose of learning the real extent of the evil, that a detailed inspection should be made of every corps, from the extreme left to the extreme right, from Marshal Macdonald towards Riga, to General Reynier towards Brezesc, a line of more than two hundred leagues in extent, and the following were the sad results which it made known. Marshal Macdonald, who had under his command the Prussian and Polish troops, which had marched fifty leagues at the most, and had had to endure but few privations, had only lost six thousand out of thirty thousand. Marshal Oudinot, whose corps, with the division of Doumerc's cuirassiers, which had been detached from Grouchy's cavalry corps, numbered thirty-eight thousand combatants at the passage of the Niemen, had no more than twenty-two or twenty-three thousand men at Polotsk—a terrible diminution, which he attributed to the prevalence of desertion amongst the foreign troops, such as the Croatian, the Swiss, and the Portuguese, the deserters amongst the French troops being only those of the last conscription. Marshal Ney, who was at the head of thirty-six thousand men at the commencement of operations, now declared that he had no more than twenty-two thousand capable of bearing arms; the strangers, in this case, Illyrians and Wurtembergians, being in this corps as in the others the chief cause of the diminution. Murat's cavalry, including the cavalry reserves of General Nansouty and Montbrun, was reduced from twenty-two thousand horsemen to thirteen or fourteen thousand. The imperial guard itself, which had originally numbered thirty-seven thousand men, was now diminished to twenty-seven thousand, this loss of ten thousand being chiefly due to the losses in the ranks of the young infantry and the light cavalry, which was constantly employed in the reconnaissances ordered by the emperor him-

self, and to the extraordinary losses of the division Claparède, which had possessed mere skeleton regiments on its withdrawal from Spain, and had been recruited with young Poles, who had almost to a man succumbed to the fatigues of the march or the temptation of desertion. The old guard was the only force which retained undiminished strength.

Prince Eugène's troops, which had been estimated at eighty thousand men at the passage of the Niemen, now numbered no more than forty-five thousand. A frightful dysentery had reduced the Bavarians from twenty-seven to thirteen thousand, and their ranks became each day so much thinner by the increase of sickness amongst them, that their corps had been considered unfit for active service, and had been left at Beschenkowicz. The Italian division was the corps which next to the Bavarian had suffered most severely from dysentery; and even the Italian guard, which was composed of picked men, had not escaped. The excellent French divisions of Broussier and Delzons had suffered less, having lost only a fourth part of their twenty thousand—two thousand in engagements with the enemy, and three thousand from sickness and fatigue; and thus offering a very advantageous contrast to the Italian division Pino, which from eleven thousand had been reduced to five thousand. Marshal Davout's corps had suffered less than the others, being composed of stronger materials; and if it had had no Dutch, Hamburg, Illyrian, or Spanish troops in its ranks, would have suffered scarcely the loss of a sixteenth part of its effective strength. In consequence, however, of the presence of these troops and of refractory recruits in its regiments, its effective strength had been reduced from seventy-two thousand to about fifty-two thousand. Finally, Jerome's corps, which was composed of the Westphalian, Polish, and Saxon troops, together with Latour-Maubourg's cavalry, had lost eight thousand of its thirty thousand Poles, eight thousand of its eighteen thousand Westphalians, and four thousand of its seventeen thousand Saxons, whilst Latour-Maubourg's cavalry had been reduced from ten thousand to about six thousand.

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

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

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

As the gendarmerie d'élite consisted of about three or four hundred, which ordinarily exercised the functions of police in the rear of the army, appeared to be insufficient for this duty, notwithstanding that it was assisted by the columns mobile,

Napoleon ordered that all the troops still remaining in the depôts of the guard should be sent from Paris to headquarters. He created, moreover, and by this measure showed his opinion of the bad state of the army, two inspectors, who under the titles of *aides-major-generaux* of infantry and cavalry were to watch narrowly and constantly the condition of these two arms of the service, to learn the exact force of each regiment at the moment of each action, and to superintend above all things the little depôts left by the army on its route. The two officers chosen by Napoleon for the fulfilment of these duties were excellently selected, whether we consider their vigilance or their acquaintance with the species of troops they would have to superintend, and were for the infantry Count Labau, for the cavalry Count Durosnel. But unfortunately the multiplication of officials can no more of itself remedy abuses than the multiplication of physicians can of itself heal the sick; and Napoleon much more reasonably sought during this halt at Witebsk a remedy for the disorganised state of the army, in bringing up the stragglers and convoys which had fallen in the rear, and collecting a fresh reserve of provisions. At the same time, in the hope of renewing the spirit of discipline amongst the troops, he determined to review them himself in the place of Witebsk, and had some of the surrounding houses pulled down for the purpose of rendering it sufficiently large for the purpose. He first inspected the various brigades of the imperial guard, examining them most minutely, and addressing the soldiers and officers in language calculated to arouse in their hearts the most noble sentiments. During one of these reviews he received General Friant in the character of colonel-commandant of the foot grenadiers of the guard, a post which had become vacant by the death of General Dorsenne, and embracing the general, who was one of the most accomplished and valuable officers France possessed, said to him, "My dear Friant, you must not assume your new command until the end of the campaign, for these soldiers themselves know how to perform their duty, and you must remain with your division, where you may still render me important services. You are, in fact, one of those men whom I wish to place wherever I cannot be myself."

In the meantime the impossibility of coming up with the enemy was the general subject of bitter expressions of regret amongst generals, officers, and soldiers. "Still the cowards fly!" cried the soldiers, but the remarks of the officers on this subject were to the effect that the Russians desired to entice us on until fatigue and exhaustion should have so reduced our numbers as to enable them to attack us at an advantage. This latter idea was also generally shared by the chiefs of the army, and it was generally asked in the circle immediately

surrounding Napoleon, whether it were not time to check the movement in advance now that the army had reached the true border between Europe and Asia, to take up a solid position on the Dwina and the Dnieper, to fortify Witebsk and Smolensk, to take Riga on the left, to extend the right wing as far as Volhynia and Podolia for the purpose of arousing these provinces to revolt, to organise an army and a government for Poland, and to prepare winter cantonments in which the troops might wait, reorganised, well armed, and well fed, until the Russians should advance against them, prepared to give battle for the recovery of Poland.

There was considerable good sense in these ideas, but they elicited, nevertheless, very strong objections from Napoleon. In the first place, he said, cantonments were not so easily established as was implied; for the Dnieper and the Dwina, which now appeared to be a protecting frontier, would no longer be so when for a time obliterated, as within the space of three months they would be, by ice and snow; "and how then," he asked, "could such positions as Dunabourg, Polotsk, Witebsk, Smolensk, Orscha, and Mohilew, distant from each other about thirty and forty leagues, and but slightly fortified, be defended against troops whom winter was so far from disabling, that it rather facilitated their movements? How again could the French troops, naturally so active, and so accustomed in the campaigns in which they had so lately been engaged to rapid movements, be restrained during nine whole months, from the August of the current year to the June of the following year; whilst moreover there could be no certain hope of their obtaining fit and sufficient food for so long an interval. And how," he continued, "would it be possible to explain to Europe the close in August of a campaign which had begun in June? Would it not be generally regarded as a sign of weakness, and be the cause of hostile movements in the rear of the French army? And would not Spain immediately become fertile in sources of embarrassment, which, comparatively of little moment while the grand army was between the Elbe and the Rhine, would become very serious when it should be confined with its chief for an indefinite time between the Niemen and the Barysthène." Such were the objections addressed by Napoleon to those who considered a position on the Dnieper and the Dwina as a sufficient result of the campaign; and there were many other objections to the plea urged by the latter, of which he was well aware, but which he refrained from mentioning; for if it were his nature to plunge into inextricable difficulties, he was most quick to discover those difficulties when he was once amongst them; and if he denied their existence, it was not because he was ignorant of them, but because he was averse to



owning his errors, and because he calculated that by denying their truth he could in some degree diminish their reality. He knew, for example, although he was far from confessing it, that his popularity began to decline even in France, that a spirit of exasperation against him prevailed throughout Europe, and that amongst the troops, who formed his most faithful adherents, a certain degree of coldness and distrust towards him were the result of the fatigues to which he had exposed them.

Napoleon, however, by no means wholly discarded the idea of making the limits of Europe the limit also of his expedition, but he was willing only to put it into execution after having performed, as he hoped a halt of fifteen days would enable him to do, some brilliant action, which would permit him to pause on the confines of Muscovy, without exciting distrust of his power in France or elsewhere. In the meantime, projecting new and decisive operations, he directed in accordance with them the movements of the corps which were not to share in the halt at Witebsk. We have seen above that he had ordered Marshal Oudinot to march upon the Count de Wittgenstein, to push him upon Sebej, the St. Petersburg route by Pskow, in order to disengage the left of the grand army; that he had ordered Marshal Macdonald to support the movement of Marshal Oudinot, marching on the Lower Dwina, in order to take Dunabourg and make preparations for the siege of Riga, which would secure not only the peaceable occupation of Courland, but probably the possession also of the two strong points of defence of Dunabourg and Riga. We have also seen that in the direction of the Dnieper he had ordered General Reynier with the Saxons, Prince Schwarzenberg with the Austrians, to march to Brezesc or Kobrin and Minsk respectively; Reynier having to cover the Grand Duchy, and to rouse Volhynia to revolt.

Marshal Oudinot had successively defiled before Dunabourg, Drissa, and Polotsk, and had finally passed the Dwina at Polotsk itself, having first, in accordance with Napoleon's orders, left his third division, composed of Swiss, Illyrians, and Dutch, under General Merle, at the Drissa camp, for the purpose of destroying its works; but the hands of these troops, enfeebled by exhaustion, and unfurnished with tools (for the engineer matériel remained in the rear), had been able to make but very little progress in this important work of demolition, when the marshal, finding himself far too weak before Wittgenstein's corps, which had been increased by the reinforcements of Prince Repnin to thirty thousand men, had recalled them to his corps. In order to conform to the order to push on to Sebej, on the St. Petersburg route, he had advanced a portion of his light cavalry on the 28th of July upon the little river, the Drissa, one of the tributaries of the Dwina, and had successively écheloned his

first and second divisions with the cuirassiers between the Drissa and Polotsk. For the purpose of guarding against the Russian troops under Wittgenstein, posted beyond the Drissa in a direction almost perpendicular to his left flank, he had posted at Lazowka the remainder of his light division and the foreign division of General Merle. On the 29th he had made a step in advance, having crossed the Drissa at Sivotschina ford, carried his advanced guard near to Kliastitsoui, ranged his two chief divisions a little in the rear, and left the division Merle to guard the Sivotschina ford, some detachments of cavalry and light infantry connecting it with Polotsk.

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

Executing this retrograde movement on the 31st, Marshal

Oudinot occupied a position on the evening of that day beyond the Sivotsclina, having tirailleurs along the Drissa, the two divisions Legrand and Verdier at some distance in the rear, the cuirassiers in a position from whence they could support the infantry, and the division Merle in observation in the direction of Polotsk. Our tirailleurs were ordered, should the Russians pass the Drissa, to resist them only so much as might be necessary to entice them on, and to give immediate information at headquarters of their approach. On the night of the 31st of July the Russians marched upon the Drissa, and on the following morning began imprudently to effect its passage. This was the moment for which Marshal Oudinot had waited, and he immediately threw upon them in succession the first and second divisions of the brigade Legrand.

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

In the meantime, Marshal Macdonald, with the Polish division Grandjean, and the seventeen thousand Prussians which had been placed under his command, had advanced upon the Dwina and obtained possession of Courland by means of a rapid march. The Russians, retreating, had been taken in flank by the Prussians, and having suffered a severe blow at the hands of the latter, had precipitately fallen back upon Riga, resigning to us Mitau and the whole of Courland. It is a fact worthy of remark that the Prussians, who detested us, and were unwilling soldiers in our cause, were yet so excited by our presence, that they fought almost as well for us as they could have fought against us. And we must add, that

whilst the troops furnished by the small allied States, such as Bavaria, Wurtemberg, and Westphalia, were much thinned by desertion, the Prussian and Austrian troops were retained in their ranks by true military spirit, and did not desert from us until they abandoned us en masse, in accordance with a change in their national policy.

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

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

In the meantime, on the other extremity of the vast theatre of the war, a hundred and fifty leagues to the south-east, towards the upper course of the Bug, certain events were occurring which could not fail to produce certain changes in

Napoleon's plans. General Reynier had retreated with the Saxons from Neswij to Slonim, and from Slonim to Provjany, for the purpose of covering the Grand Duchy, and subsequently invading Volhynia; whilst Prince Schwarzenberg had marched with the Austrian army from Provjany to Slonim and Neswij on his way to the headquarters of the French army, in accordance with the wishes of the Emperor of Austria, who was unwilling that his troops should be commanded by any one but Napoleon himself, and much to the dissatisfaction of Napoleon, who was unwilling to trust the defence of his rear to an Austrian army.

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

The moral effects of this misfortune were more disastrous than the actual loss incurred by it, and produced a most unfortunate impression at Warsaw; for the wretched Poles, who had entertained with so much ardour the project of a general insurrection, on learning that the Russian troops were so near

them, immediately began to tremble at the idea of exile and sequestration, and many of them set the dangerous example of collecting the most precious portion of their property, and passing to the left bank of the Vistula. Much as they had rejoiced in the war which Napoleon was waging against Russia, they now reproached him with having imprudently advanced beyond the Dwina and the Dnieper, and left them unprotected. They complained also on this occasion of the cold tone of his reply to their address at Wilna, imputing to its reserve their own want of zeal, and forgetting that it was for them to excite by the manifestation of enthusiasm on their side the enthusiasm of Napoleon in their behalf.

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

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

accomplished, he would recall him to headquarters in accordance with the wishes of the Emperor of Austria, to whom he wrote for a reinforcement for the Austrian corps, and to request that the Austrian corps which was at this time in Galicia might be authorised to assume a threatening attitude on the side of Volhynia, which would act as a restraint upon General Tarmazoff's movements; but as he had but little expectation of being successful in this application, he insisted more particularly on a reinforcement of seven or eight thousand men for Prince Schwarzenberg.

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

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

that the movements he was about to execute with the main army would reduce to insignificance any events which might occur on his wings. Believing that Marshal Oudinot would be able to drive back Wittgenstein upon Sebej and Pskow, he also concluded that Marshal Macdonald would immediately afterwards be able to concentrate his whole corps upon Riga, and to commence its siege.

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

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

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



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

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

Having resolved upon the execution of this excellent and extensive manœuvre, Napoleon ordered every preparation to be made for the departure of the troops on the 10th or 11th of August. Marshal Davout was to rally his three divisions Morand, Friant, and Gudin, to unite them with the divisions Dessaix and Compans, the Poles and the Westphalians, and to hold himself in readiness to cover, together with Grouchy's

cavalry, the débouches of Rassasna and Liady, near which it was decided that the army should pass the Dnieper. The cavalry of Montbrun and Nansouty, under Murat, and the corps of Marshal Ney, were to proceed by Liosna and Fioubawiczi to Liady and Rassasna, and to cross the Dnieper close to Marshal Davout, whom they would thus reinforce with thirty-six thousand men. Finally, Prince Eugène and the guard, departing from Sourage and Witebsk respectively, to pass by Babinowiczi and Rassasna, would increase by fifty-five thousand men, the guard numbering twenty-five thousand, and Prince Eugène's troops thirty thousand, that portion of the French army which was capable of being marched forward, and which, with Latour-Maubourg's five or six thousand horse, numbered a hundred and seventy-five thousand.

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

In the meantime the Russians were making preparations for the execution of a plan which was less well concerted than Napoleon's, and less likely to succeed. Prince Bagration had united with the principal army by Smolensk the forty-five thousand men who remained of his force, and thus raised to one hundred and thirty-five thousand or one hundred and forty thousand men the main army under Barclay de Tolly. A portion of Alexander's plan for the campaign still remained in force, and was that which proposed that the Russian troops should retreat before the French army, watching to take advantage of any errors which it might commit. Such errors the enemy now supposed that they saw in the apparent dispersion of our cantonments, which, extending from Sourage by Witebsk, Liosna, and Babinowiczi to Doubrowna, were to their eyes spread over a space of thirty leagues, since they were ignorant that behind the tract of wooded and marshy country which separated them from our troops were posted Murat with his fourteen thousand horse, and Ney with twenty-two thousand infantry, all admirable troops, and capable of being joined within the space of a few hours by the thirty thousand men of the divisions Morand, Friant, and Gudin; since they were ignorant, moreover, that the twenty-five thousand troops of Prince Eugène and the thirty thousand of the guard could be received in flank; and since such troops and such generals, posted with such skill, could not be easily surprised or routed by an unexpected attack on one of their cantonments.

Although the Russian generals, who formed rather a military

oligarchy than a staff subject to a single commander-in-chief, were forced to perceive the wisdom of retreating before the French troops until they should have been sufficiently exhausted, they did so very unwillingly, and were ever eager to find some favourable opportunity for a battle. Prince Bagration's natural ardour placed him at the head of those who were eager for an engagement with the enemy; and generally, throughout the army, those who still insisted on the wisdom of a continued retreat were accused of cowardice. Barclay de Tolly feigned to bear the insults which were heaped upon him on this account with indifference, but in reality he felt them deeply. On the 5th of August, however, he called a council of war, at which were present, besides the two generals-in-chief, Barclay de Tolly and Bagration, the Grand Duke Constantine, General Yermolof, and Colonel Toll, the former chief of the staff, and the latter quarter-master-general of the first army, the Count de St. Priest, chief of the staff of the second, and Colonel Wolzogen, the most prominent representative of the system of retreat. Colonel Toll urged with the enthusiasm which was natural to him, and with the success always obtained by those who speak in accordance with the prevailing tendency of men's minds, the expediency of acting on the offensive; and it was in vain that Barclay de Tolly and Wolzogen set forth the advantages of a retreat which would entice the French into the depths of Russia, and enable the Russian armies to attack them when so exhausted as to render them an easy conquest. The members of the council either could not or would not see the force of this reasoning, and they very openly displayed to Barclay de Tolly, who was a foreigner in name, and to Colonel Wolzogen, who was a foreigner both in name and reality, the distrust with which this advice was received, and immediately resolved against all reason that an offensive plan of action should be immediately adopted. It is seldom that men can retain their good sense when exposed to the influence of a dominant idea. Before the war, the tendency to imitation had inclined every one to the adoption of a plan of retreat similar to that executed by Lord Wellington in Portugal; and now, since the commencement of actual hostilities, the patriotic spirit had rendered the same minds eager for battles. Barclay de Tolly yielded to the prevailing opinion, and it was at length resolved to attack the enemy on the 7th of August in three columns; two of these columns, composed of troops of the main army, advancing by the Upper Kasplia upon Inkowo against Murat's cantonments, which were supposed to present the feeblest point in the midst of the French line, and the third column, composed of troops of the second army, advancing under Prince Bagration from Smolensk upon Nadwa, to second the efforts of the two others.

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

The information of these movements of the enemy reached headquarters on the 9th of August, and were somewhat difficult of explanation; but Napoleon was so eager to meet the Russian troops in battle, that he was indifferent to the circumstances under which he might do so. Having Murat and Ney

on his right, and somewhat in advance towards Liosna, the divisions Morand, Friant, and Gudin in the rear, and being himself in a position to advance with Prince Eugène's troops and the guard, he was confident of being able to overwhelm the Russians, and driving them to the Dnieper, to throw them by thousands into the hands of Davout. He ordered the whole army to be on the alert, and seemed to await the development of the enemy's designs before undertaking his grand manœuvre. But the 9th and 10th of August having passed without any visible decided movements on the part of the Russians, he supposed that the recent movements which had attracted his attention had been mere changes of cantonments, and he put his army in motion on the 11th and 12th of August. On the morning of the 11th, the corps of Murat, Ney, and Eugène, the three divisions Morand, Friant, and Gudin, commenced their march, preceded by General Eblé with the pontoon equipage. Murat and Ney defiled behind the woods and marshes which extend from Liosna to Lioubawiczi, and reached the bank of the Dnieper opposite Liady. Prince Eugène followed Murat and Ney at the distance of a day's march, by Sourage, Ianowiczy, Liosna, and Lioubowiczi; and the divisions Morand, Friant, and Gudin advanced by Babinowiczi to Raszasna, where they crossed the Dnieper by four bridges which had previously been thrown across it. The guard had followed them. During the evening and night of the 13th, the whole army effected the passage of the Dnieper, and on the morning of the 14th, one hundred and seventy-five thousand troops were assembled on its further bank, full of confidence, with Napoleon at their head, and believing that they were marching to obtain an immediate and decisive triumph. Never had so many men, horses, and cannon been really assembled at the same point; for when historians speak of an army of a hundred thousand men, and it is but seldom, it would be a mistake to suppose that a hundred thousand were actually present under arms, the truth being in all probability that the real number was no more than a moiety of the supposed one. The enormous crowd of men, animals, and waggons actually present was indeed extraordinary, and at first appeared to be involved in inextricable confusion, which soon, however, yielded before the spirit of order breathed through the entire mass by the governing mind which directed it. The sun had dried the roads, and the army advanced across immense plains covered with heavy crops, along a broad road bordered by four rows of birch-trees, and under a sun of unobscured brilliancy, but less intensely warm than it had latterly been. In the meantime, whilst the troops were ascending the left bank of the Dnieper, and executing one of the most brilliant movements that had ever been accomplished,

and advancing to turn the left of the Russian forces, they were seeking us on their right.

On the morning of the 14th, Murat, with the cavalry of Generals Nansouty and Montbrun, preceded by that of General Grouchy, marched upon Krasnoé. Ney followed with his light infantry, and everything<sup>1</sup> proceeded in this direction as well as could be desired. Napoleon had ordered a movement in advance, ascending the Dnieper in the direction of Smolensk.

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

Our advanced guard halted in front of Korytnia, the main army not having yet passed Krasnoé. Marshal Davout had restored the Polish division Claparède to the guard, Valence's cuirassiers to Nansouty, and had reserved the command of his three divisions of infantry, Morand, Friant, and Gudin, which

were delighted to find themselves once more under their old leader. The Polish troops, commanded by Poniatowski, and the Westphalians, whom Napoleon had entrusted to General Junot, were placed under the direct orders of headquarters, and posted at the head of the army, towards its extreme right, and Grouchy's cavalry accompanied the advanced guard of Murat and Ney, until Prince Eugène, who had the longest march to make, should have rejoined the main body.

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

On the following day, the 16th of August, the advanced guard was ordered to march upon Smolensk, which, it was hoped on our side, might be surprised, for Nèveroffskoi's division, of which a third had been taken or destroyed, being the only troops yet encountered, it was supposed that this city would be but slightly guarded, and consequently fall into our hands within the space of a few hours. Upon arriving, however, on the hills which overlook Smolensk, it was discovered that the hope of surprising it was a vain one, since a numerous body of troops posted on the other side of the Dnieper, on which river this city stood, were then seen entering within its walls. These troops were those of the 7th, Raëffskoi's corps, which Bagration, on perceiving our movement, had directed thither in all haste, whilst he himself, advancing by forced marches along the right bank of the Dnieper, hastened to the succour of the ancient city of Smolensk, situated on the frontiers of Muscovy, and dear to the Russians, who had disputed its possession with the Poles for many ages.

Ney had scarcely approached a ravine which separated him from the town, when he was attacked by an ambuscade of several hundred Cossacks, received a ball in the collar of his coat, and was only with much difficulty disengaged by the light cavalry of the third corps. Having perceived on his left that a portion of the enceinte of Smolensk was closed by a pentagonal citadel of earth, he attempted to take it with the 46th of the line; but this regiment being received by a furious fire, was

compelled to withdraw from the attack with the loss of three or four hundred men; and upon this, Ney, who was ignorant on what point the city was susceptible of attack on this side, and who was unwilling to expose himself to the risk of any serious reverse in the absence of Napoleon, determined to await his arrival. Gradually the remainder of the 3rd corps arrived, and posted itself in line on the heights above the city. Ney took up a position on the left, and near the Dnieper, with his infantry, whilst Grouchy's cavalry debouched on the right, and advanced towards a large body of Russian cavalry, which, having shown a disposition to attack our troops, was charged at full gallop by our 7th dragoons, and driven back upon the town.

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

Smolensk, as we have already said, is on the Dnieper, at the foot of two ranges of hills, which contract its current. The old town, which is much the more important portion, is on the left bank, the one by which our troops had reached it, and the new town, called the faubourg of St. Petersburg, is situated on the right bank—the side on which were posted the Russian troops. A bridge unites these two portions of the city. The old town is surrounded by a brick wall about fifteen feet in thickness, twenty-five in height, and flanked at intervals with great towers. A fosse, with a road covert and glacis, preceded and protected this wall, but the whole was very badly traced, and executed long before the rise of the modern system of fortification. In front of and around the old town were large faubourgs; one named Krasnoé, on the Krasnoé route, touching on the Dnieper; another in the centre, named Micislaw, from the Micislaw road, which runs into it; another still more to the centre, named Roslawl, from a similar reason; a fourth, to the right, called the Nikolskoié; a fifth and last, named the Raczenska, forming the extremity of the semicircle, and abutting on the Dnieper. From the heights on which the army had taken up its position the old town could be beheld, its enceinte flanked with towers, its streets winding and inclined towards the river, its noble and antique Byzantine cathedral, the bridge connecting the two banks of the Dnieper, and the new town dotting the sides of the opposite range of hills, whilst numerous bodies of Russian soldiers could be seen hastening up by the right bank of the river to defend a city which was almost as dear to them as Moscow. Napoleon, therefore, could no longer hope to surprise Smolensk, and he consoled himself by the hope that the whole Russian army would debouch for the purpose of giving him battle; for a great victory gained under the walls of this city, followed by the consequences which he well knew how to



extract from all his victories, would be sufficiently in accordance with his plans.

In fact, Prince Bagration, who was ascending in all haste the right bank of the Dnieper by a movement parallel to that of our troops, and Barclay de Tolly, who was approaching by a transverse route which led from the Dwina to the Dnieper, began to appear on the heights opposite to those which we occupied; for each of these generals having become acquainted with Napoleon's designs, was advancing with the utmost eagerness to the defence of the ancient Russian city, and resolved—although to give battle to the French in such a position was the height of imprudence—not to endure the shame of yielding it without a struggle. The adoption of this resolution was hastily agreed on throughout the Russian army, and the task of executing the various measures which had to be performed adopted without discussion. And of these tasks there were two of pre-eminent importance, the first and most apparent of which consisted in the defence of Smolensk; but as it was possible that whilst defending Smolensk, Napoleon—his attack on that city being only a feigned one—might pass the Dnieper at some point above it and turn the Russian army, thus exposing it to that serious disaster to which it had been unconsciously exposed since the commencement of the campaign, it was agreed that Prince Bagration should take up a position with the second army above Smolensk on the banks of the Dnieper to watch the fords, whilst Barclay de Tolly defended the city itself. Prince Bagration accordingly immediately proceeded to take up a position with forty thousand men behind the little river Kolodnia, a tributary of the Dnieper; and General Raëffskoi, who had guarded Smolensk with the 4th corps during the 15th and the morning of the 16th, now withdrew, resigning it to the troops of Barclay de Tolly, who confided its defence to the 6th corps under General Doctoroff, together with the division Konownitsyn, and the débris of the division Névéroffskoi, which was the division which had fought at Krasnoé, and posted the remainder of his army on the other side of the Dnieper, in the new town, and on the hills above it. And thus—the French, to the number of one hundred and forty thousand men, occupying the heights of the left bank of the Dnieper, and the Russians, to the number of one hundred and twenty-nine thousand, occupying those of the right bank—was presented by each army to the other the most interesting and extraordinary spectacle.

The Russians having at length halted, it was impossible for Napoleon to retreat, or to allow them the advantage of having disputed with them the possession of such a place as Smolensk. He might doubtless have ascended the Dnieper, have been

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

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

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

On the morning of the following day, the 17th, Napoleon, mounting his horse at an early hour, proceeded, accompanied by his lieutenants, to traverse the semicircle of heights on which he was encamped, and distinctly saw the thirty thousand men of the divisions of Doctoroff, Konownitsyn, and Névéroffskoi taking up their positions in the city and the faubourgs, whilst the remainder of the two Russian armies remained immovable on their heights. Amongst the events which Napoleon had

considered to be possible, but very improbable, was, that the Russians, in possession of Smolensk, and able at will to pass and repass the Dnieper under the shelter of strong walls, should go forth to offer him battle for the purpose of saving a city which they so highly valued. There was, in fact, beside Smolensk, on our right, a plateau in an excellent position, and surrounded by a ravine, on which Napoleon planned to deploy his cavalry; but as he considered it was quite possible that this very position might tempt the Russians to occupy it, and as nothing would have been more in accordance with his plans than the commission of such a fault by them, he had taken care to leave it unoccupied, and to withhold his cavalry in the rear in the hope of thus enticing them to advance. But to advance beyond the Dnieper, to give battle to the French in such a manner that, if beaten, they would have that river behind them, would have been so great an error, that it could scarcely be hoped they would commit it; and they were, moreover, not so anxious to encounter our troops in battle as they were to die in defence of Smolensk.

Napoleon, however, allowed ten or twelve hours to elapse before taking any decided measures, as he was anxious to leave open to the last the opportunity for a general action; and in the meantime many reflections were made in his hearing respecting the difficulty of taking Smolensk by assault whilst defended by thirty thousand Russians. To these remarks he made no reply, but brooded over the idea which had occurred to him of the possibility of crossing the Dnieper above Smolensk, and debouching unexpectedly on the left of the Russians, by which he would secure the complete execution of his grand manœuvre. To attempt, however, such an operation as this without imprudence, it was absolutely necessary that it should be conducted with the utmost celerity, and that the river should be fordable, since, if it should be necessary to throw bridges across it in the presence of the enemy, the Russians would infallibly oppose insurmountable obstacles to the establishment of such bridges, or would debouch by Smolensk on our flank and our rear to cut off our line of communications, or would again retreat and escape us, leaving us certainly in the possession of Smolensk, but still depriving us of the opportunity of meeting them in battle. The whole success of such a manœuvre as the one alluded to depended in fact on the answer to the question whether the river were fordable at any point near the position occupied by the French troops? For to proceed any considerable distance up the stream, and leave the enemy at liberty to debouch from Smolensk on our rear, would have been in the highest degree imprudent. Carefully taking all these considerations into account, Napoleon sent a detachment of cavalry to the bank of the river for the purpose of seeking for a ford;

but although the river appeared to be far from deep at this portion of its course, either because the reconnoissance was badly executed, or because it was not carried sufficiently high, no practicable ford was discovered, and the only measure that remained open, therefore, was to obtain possession of Smolensk by a vigorous assault. And on this measure, in spite of all objections, Napoleon resolved; for to hesitate in the presence of the enemy after having come so far to meet them, and to be timid of expending troops in actual conflict after having been so lavish of their lives on the march, would have been as unworthy of his genius as unsuited to the existing state of affairs. Between ten and eleven o'clock in the forenoon, therefore, he gave the signal for the commencement of the attack, and each portion of the troops advanced against the enemy in an order relative to the positions which they respectively occupied. On the right, the cavalry was thrown upon the plateau which had been left vacant, and which extended to the Dnieper; and the squadrons of General Bruyère driving back a brigade of Russian dragoons, protected the establishment of a battery of sixty pieces of cannon, which Napoleon had ordered to be formed on the very bank of the river, to bombard the town, to enfilade the bridge connecting its two portions, and to command also the opposite bank on which the Russians were drawn up in order of battle. When this battery opened fire, the artillery of the enemy attempted to reply, but was speedily reduced to silence.

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

The principal attack was to be executed by Marshal Davout against the Micislaw and Roslawl faubourgs; and his first operation was to seize, with the division Morand, a great road which separated these two faubourgs, and descending to the town, ran on to the Malakofskia gate, his purpose being to isolate these two faubourgs from each other, and thus to facilitate the attack which he was about to direct against them in front. The 13th leger, led by General Dalton, and supported by the

30th of the line, crossed bayonets with the Russian troops which were in advance of the road, and drove them back with irresistible vigour even to the walls of the city. At the same moment, and a little to the left, the division Gudin, conducted by its general and Marshal Davout in person, made an equally vigorous attack on the Micislaw faubourg, and driving back the division Kaptsewitch by which it was defended, entered it, driving the enemy from street to street, and thus reaching the edge of the fosse at the very moment when the division Morand arrived there by its side by the great road. On the right the division Friant had with less difficulty obtained possession of the Roslawl faubourg, and had arrived, as had the other three divisions, in front of the enceinte, when the whole three divisions might have been destroyed had the old walls been provided with embrasures for artillery. Some shot and bullets did indeed reach their ranks from the towers; but the loss on the side of the Russians was far the greatest, for driven at the bayonet's point into the fosses of the town, and then exposed to a point blank fire, their only means of entrance into Smolensk was by a few openings in the walls.

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

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

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

In accordance with information received from General Haxo, who had reconnoitred the town under a terrible fire, Marshal Davout resolved to direct the assault upon an apparently accessible point situated towards our right, between the position of the 1st corps and that of Prince Poniatowski. There was an

old breach at this point, called the Sigismonda breach, which had never been repaired, and was now only closed by an epaulement in earth; and General Haxo having declared the position susceptible to attack, Marshal Davout granted to General Friant the honour of conducting his division to the assault on the following morning.

A terrible spectacle filled the night. The Russians determining at length to sacrifice the city so dear to their hearts, and in defence of which they had expended so much blood, now united their efforts with ours in its destruction, and purposely filled it with those conflagrations which we involuntarily caused by our cannonade. Through the midst of the darkness suddenly poured forth torrents of flame and smoke, presenting to the eyes of the army encamped on the heights a spectacle which deeply affected them, and which much resembled an eruption of Vesuvius in a fine night of summer. It was a spectacle which prefigured the fury which should signalise the war of which it was one of the incidents, and whilst it failed to inspire fear, it could not but excite emotion. Our artillery added fresh flames to the fire, and rendered the city untenable by the enemy.

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

A great portion of the city, including the principal magazines, was found destroyed by the fire, and the loss, especially of colonial produce, was immense. The Russians had themselves been the chief authors of this damage; but the merit of the sacrifice thus made was much diminished by the fact that the troops and their leaders had destroyed property belonging to the poor merchants, and had thus satisfied their fury at the expense of others. The inhabitants had for the most part fled, and those whom want of time or means to fly had retained in the city, were assembled in the principal church, an old, and in Russia renowned, Byzantine basilica. Crowded within its walls, women, old men, and children, filled with terror, embraced its altars, bathed in tears. Fortunately our cannon had failed to

injure the venerable edifice, and had spared us the chagrin of being the authors of useless profanation. The wretched group was comforted by assurances of safety, and conducted to such of the houses as had escaped destruction. The streets presented a hideous spectacle, covered as they were with dead and wounded Russians, and these latter the excellent doctor Larrey caused to be collected almost simultaneously with our own wounded, in accordance with the kind dictates of his heart, and in pursuance of his noble policy of tending the wounded of the enemy, that they might thus be induced to bestow a similar care upon ours. Unfortunately national fury, excited against us to the highest pitch, rendered his calculations vain.

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

Napoleon traversed the town and the faubourgs on horseback, and then took up a position in one of the towers which flanked the enceinte on the side of the Dnieper, and from which could be seen all that was passing beyond the river. He saw that the

Russians were still in possession of the new town, but preparing to evacuate it, and only anxious to defend it until the evacuation could be accomplished. To secure the passage of the Dnieper was, therefore, the task of the immediate moment, and in accordance with Napoleon's orders, General Eblé took immediate measures for throwing bridges across it, employing for this purpose his own pontonniers and the troops of Marshal Ney.

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

Those severe judges who after his fall became as harsh towards Napoleon as Fortune herself, attributed the ill success of his combinations to his own errors, and the circumstances above narrated will have shown that such blame is more or less well founded. We have seen, in fact, that when planning to surround Prince Bagration, or at least to isolate him during the remainder of the campaign, Napoleon had not sufficiently taken into consideration the difficulties which the nature of the country and the distances to be traversed opposed to the junction of King Jerome with Marshal Davout; that he had behaved also with too much roughness to his younger brother, and had placed too few



troops at the disposal of the marshal. To a certain extent, therefore, the failure of his first combination is attributable to himself. In the case of the project of defiling before the Drissa camp and suddenly crossing the Dwina between Polotsk and Witebsk, for the purpose of outflanking Barclay de Tolly and taking him in reverse, Napoleon's plan had been successfully carried out, and he is here only open to blame on account of the fact that by urging war against them he had taught the art of war to his enemies, and had thus enabled them to perceive the danger in which they had been placed by his combinations, and to escape from it whilst inflicting upon him the greatest possible amount of injury. Finally, with respect to his last project, it has been said that Napoleon should have paused before arriving at the Dnieper, have ascended this river by the right bank instead of the left, and turned the Russians by Nadwa. But it is well known that he calculated all the chances of this movement with Marshal Davout, and that it was only after mature reflection that he resolved to march by the left bank, which was the one unoccupied by the Russians; and indeed the state of affairs which we know to have been actually existing at the time show that he was right in adopting this resolution, for had he adopted the contrary course, he would have found Bagration in a state of desperation at Nadwa, would most probably have drawn the Russians *en masse* on their left, and incurred the risk of being drawn by them into the Dnieper. Again, it has been said, that instead of attempting to turn the Russians by their left, he should have made it his object to turn them by their right, namely, by Witebsk and Sourage, ascending the Dwina, descending upon the Russians by their right, and driving them upon the Dnieper. But a glance at the map will prove that Napoleon's calculations were better than those of his censors, for by throwing the Russians back upon the Dnieper he would have thrown them back upon the Smolensk bridge, which they would have been able to pass without difficulty, and from whence they might have readily regained the interior of the empire by the southern provinces, which were the most fertile, and offered the vastest field for a continued retreat.

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

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

To avoid this danger, Barclay de Tolly conceived the idea of taking the cross roads, which would place him out of reach of attack, and conduct him back to the main road at a distance of three or four leagues further on near a place called Loubino;

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

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

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

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

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

Marshal Ney arrived in the course of the afternoon before this third position, and resolved to take it. But to effect this object was a matter of considerable difficulty, since it would be necessary to force the road which descended somewhat to the right into a species of marsh, then crossed the streamlet

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

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

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

These difficulties, however, did not check the exertions of Ney or Gudin; and the latter prepared to seize with his division at any price the species of coupe gorge which extended

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

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

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

At its principal point, however, this desperate struggle was coming to an end. Barclay de Tolly, desiring to make one last effort, had directed the brave Konownitsyn division against the

divisions Gudin and Ledru, for the purpose of driving them from the plateau which they occupied; and the latter, yielding for a moment before the violence of the enemy's attack, had returned to the charge, and throwing themselves upon the Russian infantry with the utmost fury, had succeeded in completely routing them. At ten o'clock in the evening three divisions remained masters of the débouche. The division Ragout joined them, and Murat, having passed all obstacles, in his turn deployed upon the plateau, and completely cleared it of the Russian troops.

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

When Napoleon was informed of the details of this action, he was surprised at its serious character, and deeply affected at having missed so excellent an opportunity of seizing an entire column of the Russian army, which would have given to the capture of Smolensk the importance of a great victory, and relieved him of the necessity of seeking any further triumph. At the sight of the field of battle, which he visited at three o'clock on the morning of the following day, the 20th, he was astonished at the energy with which his troops must have fought, and of which the number and positions of the corpses, as well as the nature of the ground, afforded means of judging. As he ascended to the plateau and carried his observations towards the right, he was excessively irritated against Junot, whose dilatoriness had contributed to save the Russians, and as those about him failed to inform him that the road which he had to traverse was a very marshy and difficult one, and as he failed to remind himself that he had left Junot without orders, he resolved, in the first moments of his anger, to supersede him in the command of the Westphalians by General Rapp. Returning to the midst of the bloodstained bivouacs of the division Gudin, he had the troops formed into a circle, and distributed amongst them rewards for their courage, at the same time expressing the deepest regret for the brave General Gudin, who was dying. This illustrious general, indeed, who had for many years shared with Generals Morand and Friant the glory acquired by Marshal Davout, was, for his heroic courage, his goodness of heart, and his cultivated mind, an object of esteem with the officers, and of affection with the troops; and his death was regarded throughout the whole army as a common loss.

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

But his real opinions were not altogether, or were but very slightly in accordance with these declarations, and perceiving as he did the manner in which the ranks of his army had become thinned, even since the arrival at Witebsk, rather by the effects of the march than the enemy's force, he became awake to the danger which would be incurred by carrying the war any further into the interior of the enemy's country. At the same time he asked himself, as he had already asked himself at Witebsk, what would be the reflections and what the actions of the Prussians, Austrians, Germans, Dutch, and Italians, should they behold him halting before obstacles to which they would attribute whatever



character they chose, which they would declare to be invincible, and which they would not fail to assert would be as invincible during the next year as they were this. Would there not be herein, he asked himself, a source of extreme danger to an empire composed, as was his, of elements so discordant and so rebellious? Moreover, would it be so easy to establish, to defend, and provision that line of cantonments which he was so constantly urged to form from Bobruisk to Riga, over a line three hundred leagues in extent, on the Dwina and the Dnieper? Would these rivers, filled up with snow as they would be from the last days of October to the beginning of April, be a sufficient frontier? How would his troops, who were now for the first time infected with the contagious malady of desertion, endure in a state of inactivity eight months of painful and wearisome winter? Who would be able under such circumstances, if he himself did not remain among them, to maintain discipline and to preserve confidence amidst their ranks? And if he should remain amidst these cantonments, how would it be possible for him to govern from the midst of so difficult a position the course of affairs at Rome and Cadiz?

These were serious considerations, which are too little taken into account by those persons who blame Napoleon for not having terminated this first campaign at Smolensk, and which prove that the dangers attending this war were inherent in its very nature, rather than the effect of one or another method of conducting it. They caused Napoleon deep and painful reflections, and were the result of circumstances which demanded the adoption of some immediate plan of action. Nevertheless, although it was necessary to take some decided course without delay, there was little doubt that certain circumstances, which would be speedily apparent, must to a great degree determine what this course must be, namely, the attitude which the enemy should adopt beyond Smolensk, the disposition he should manifest either to encounter our troops or to retreat before them, and the situation of the generals left on the wings of the main army, of Marshal Oudinot at Polotsk, of Prince Schwarzenberg and General Reynier at Brezesc. Should the enemy display an inclination to give us battle, it would be necessary to encounter them at once. Should Marshal Oudinot, the Prince of Schwarzenberg, and General Reynier have been vanquished, it would be necessary to proceed to their aid; should they have been victorious, the main army would be more free to advance.

As the lapse of three or four days would suffice to afford him certain information on these points, Napoleon resolved to halt for that time at Smolensk, taking in the meantime those preliminary measures which would be necessary should he eventually resolve to advance farther into the country. Accordingly,

he ordered Murat and Marshal Davout, the two most dissimilar men in the whole army, and acting as useful checks the one on the other, to follow the enemy with two corps of cavalry and five divisions of infantry respectively, and to discover as accurately as possible the plans of the Russian generals. As Marshal Ney's troops, which had formed the advanced guard since the departure from Witebsk, had need of repose, and the marshal himself was too energetic for the conduct of the intended operations, Napoleon ordered him, after his divisions should have rested one or two days, to follow Murat and Davout, but at some distance; and at the same time sent Prince Eugène a little to the left of the main army in the direction of Doukhowtchina, for the purpose of sweeping the country between the Dnieper and the Dwina, and learning what might be on this side the intended movements of the enemy.

The information, in fact, which arrived every moment from both right and left, from both Brezesc and Polotsk, was of a very satisfactory character, and was generally to the following effect. General Reynier had fallen back upon Slonim for the purpose of meeting Prince Schwarzenberg, who had been ordered, as we have already seen, to retrace his steps towards the Bug, and to effect a junction with the Saxons for the purpose of driving General Tarmazoff into Volhynia. The intended junction between the Saxons and Austrians had been effected on the 3rd of August, and the united troops had moved upon Pronjany and Kobrin, where had occurred the unfortunate incident of the surprise of the Saxon detachment by the Russian general Tarmazoff. As General Reynier's troops were reduced to eleven thousand, and Prince Schwarzenberg's to twenty-five thousand, their allied forces numbered no more than thirty-six thousand men; but as those of General Tarmazoff, who had been obliged to leave troops at Mozyr to guard his rear, numbered scarcely so many, the latter had not failed to retreat before the French, and hastened to return towards Kobrin and Pinsk, for the purpose of covering the Bug, the Pripet, and the celebrated marshes of that part of the country.

Pursuing the retreating enemy with considerable activity, the Austrians and Saxons arrived on the 11th of August at a place named Gorodeczna, at some leagues' distance from Kobrin, and found the Russians established there in a strong position, which they were evidently determined to defend. At Gorodeczna the Kobrin road ascended somewhat elevated ground, at the foot of which ran a stream, of which the banks were somewhat marshy, and to effect the passage of which would necessarily be a matter of difficulty; and it was on this elevated ground that General Tarmazoff was now posted with thirty-six thousand infantry and sixty pieces of cannon. Perceiving the

difficulty of carrying such a position by an attack in front, Schwarzenberg and Reynier sought on their right for some passage which would enable them to outflank the enemy's right, and at a village named Podoubié found a position which afforded the opportunity of outflanking the Russian left, but the passage would have to be effected not only across a marsh-bordered stream, but at a point over which the enemy kept a careful watch. A little beyond this place, however, on the declivity of the elevated ground which it was intended to seize, was a wood which was unoccupied by the enemy, and through which ran a road which joined a league further the main Kobrin road.

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

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

Although both Austrians and Saxons fought in their respective positions with the utmost valour, the conflict of the day would have had no result, had not Prince Schwarzenberg directed an attack against the intermediate point at Podoubié, which was nearer the Russian left flank. At this spot, however, Coloredo's Austrian regiment, together with the Saxon chasseurs, plunging through the marsh, climbed the rising ground at the very moment when the conflict between Reynier's troops and the enemy was at its height. Their appearance filled the latter with dismay, and General Reynier, seizing the opportunity to attack them still more vigorously, succeeded in gaining ground on their left, and at the same time threw the whole of his cavalry on his extreme right on the enemy's rear; by this means threatening

the great Kobrin road. As soon as the Russians perceived this movement they met our cavalry with their own, but after some fighting, considered that it would be imprudent to attempt any longer to defend a position so difficult to maintain, and retreated under cover of the night, having lost in killed, wounded, and prisoners about four thousand men—a loss more than double that suffered by their opponents.

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

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

In the meantime the course of events had been no less favourable on our left, on the side of the Dwina. Marshal Oudinot had, as we have seen, after the checks inflicted by him on the Count Wittgenstein on the 24th of July and the 1st of August, retreated upon Polotsk, for the purpose of affording his troops some repose, a position which they might readily defend,

and the advantage of being able to gather forage under the protection of the Dwina. Napoleon, however, fearing some unfavourable moral effect from these retrograde movements, and indulging in exaggerated ideas of the resources possessed by his lieutenants, had addressed reproaches to Marshal Oudinot, declaring that by retreating after a victory, he had placed himself in the position of one who had been vanquished, which was doubtless to some extent the truth; but it was no less true that Marshal Oudinot's troops were worn out, reduced from thirty-eight thousand men to twenty thousand by the fatigues of the march, the heat, and desertion, and that they were in absolute need of some repose. Moreover, the Bavarians, whom Napoleon had sent to reinforce Marshal Oudinot, were no less in need of an opportunity to recover from the effects of the heat, fatigue, and dysentery, which had reduced them to thirteen thousand men, and rendered them totally unfit for active operations in the field.

However, after some days of repose, Marshal Oudinot, who was constantly being urged on to active operations by Napoleon, considered that he ought to resume the offensive against Wittgenstein, and moved to the left from Polotsk upon the Drissa, towards Valeintsoui, some leagues below the Sivotschina, where he had inflicted so severe a blow on the Russians some time previously. Failing to find them behind the Drissa, he had crossed this river and moved upon Svoiana, behind which were encamped the troops of Count Wittgenstein, which had been increased by reinforcements to a number equal to that of the French, who now amounted, with the Bavarians, to thirty-two or thirty-three thousand men. But it is necessary to add that the Russian troops were in a much better state than ours, although inferior as soldiers, and were entirely Russian, whilst of Marshal Oudinot's corps scarcely half were French.

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

However, Marshal Oudinot, who had taken up an advanced

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

Established in this position on the 16th of August, he convoked a council of war, for the purpose of discussing the question whether it would be better to engage the enemy, or to repass the Polota and the Dwina, in order to attain a position protected by those two rivers, and in which he might confine his operations to disputing with the enemy the much larger course of the Dwina. General St. Cyr, who formed one of the council in his character of commander of the Bavarian army, maintained that it would be useless to engage the enemy and incur the loss which must necessarily arise from such a measure, in case the enemy had failed to follow our troops; but that if, on the contrary, the Russians had followed in our track, it would be necessary to check them by a vigorous combat, for the purpose of proving that the reason of the retreat was not timidity, but the desire of obtaining a more convenient position. At this moment, however, the sound of cannon put an end to all deliberations, and induced every one to run to arms to resist the Russians who were attempting to cross the Polota. A French and a Bavarian division posted in advance of the Polota received the Russians with considerable energy, and repulsed them vigorously on its bank, until the approach of night put an end to this preliminary contest. On the following day, Marshal Oudinot, who never failed to exaggerate the Russian force, and considered his position to be a very insecure one, felt much uncertainty with regard to the course which he ought to take. And indeed, the position which he occupied was not a particularly favourable one, for whilst it was covered in front by a little river, the Polota, there was behind it the larger river Dwina, which was at this part crossed by no other available bridge but that of Polotsk, and presented, therefore, but a very insufficient means of retreat in case of a repulse. As is too often the case in such situations, the marshal decided to adopt a medium course of action, resolving to defend vigorously, with

a portion of his troops, the position he then occupied, and to convey the other portion, with the artillery and baggage, across to the left bank of the Dwina.

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

The general called together the chief officers to consult with them respecting the best course to pursue for the purpose of escaping from a situation which was exceedingly complicated. As energetic as he was prudent, he explained the inconveniences attending a purely defensive attitude, and showed the danger which existed, that the enemy might attack them on both sides of the Dwina, and proposed that on the following day, whilst apparently continuing the retreat, advantage should be taken of the covered ground on which the battle had taken place to repass secretly the Dwina and the Polota with the greater portion of the troops, to inflict upon them, if possible, a severe blow, and then to fall back, under cover of this success, behind Polotsk and the Dwina. The objection that the soldiers were too much exhausted by marching and fighting to meet the enemy, having been overruled by the general's declaration that four hours would be sufficient to enable him to inflict upon the Russians a serious check, it was resolved to devote the morning to repose, and to encounter the enemy in a new and final conflict in the afternoon of the following day.

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

The Bavarian and French troops were in the ravine of the Polota, the Bavarians on the right, the two French divisions, Legrand and Verdier, in the centre, and a moiety of General Merle's Swiss division on the left with Doumerc's cuirassiers.

The other moiety of Merle's division was on the hither side of the Polota to hold in check any of the enemy's troops which might attempt to cross this river on the extreme right, and to debouch from the forest of Gumzéléva on our rear.

The Russians, on their side, were posted beyond the Polota in a semicircle around our position, and very close to our advanced posts, that they might be ready to throw themselves upon us as soon as we should beat a retreat, as they expected us to do as soon as they perceived the movement of our artillery on the left of the Dwina. At a given signal the whole of our artillery, Bavarian as well as French, suddenly advanced, to the number of sixty pieces, and overwhelmed with missiles the surprised and disconcerted Russians. Their cavalry were not on their horses, and but a portion of their infantry in their ranks, and our divisions, seizing this moment of their confusion to advance to the attack, forced them to fall back in great disorder, leaving the fields and marshes covered with their wounded and their cannon, which they were equally unable to carry off. As soon as they had reached their second line, however, they halted, and presenting to our troops a more determined front, renewed the combat, which now became furious and desperate. Two hours, however, had scarcely elapsed, when the enemy was repulsed at all points, and obliged to resign to us the field of battle, covered with their dead and their artillery.

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

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

This victory, which was known at Smolensk on the 19th of August, the day succeeding that on which that city had been entered by our troops, was a source of extreme satisfaction to Napoleon, and caused him to be just at length with regard to General St. Cyr, whose energetic determination had regained



for us on the Dwina the prestige of victory. He sent a marshal's baton to the general, numerous rewards to the French and Bavarian troops, which had equally distinguished themselves, and granted donations to the widows and orphans of the Bavarian officers fully equal to those granted to the widows and orphans of French officers. He ordered also particular honours to be paid to the memory of General Deroz, the loss of whom and of General Gudin were at present the greatest losses which the army had suffered. How soon, alas! was it to suffer losses far greater, or at least far more numerous.

These two victories of Gorodeczna and Polotsk, which were obtained on the 12th and 18th of August respectively, seemed to guarantee the security of our flanks, and to enable us to advance still further, should there appear any hope of obtaining a decisive victory on the Moscow route. This was Napoleon's own view, and calculating that the Austrians and Saxons would be sufficiently strong to hold Tarmazoff in check on his right, and that the French and Bavarians would be equally able to stop Wittgenstein on his left, without taking into account Marshal Macdonald, who had been left between Polotsk and Riga, he could see no cause in the position of his wings which should induce him to halt if there should appear any opportunity by making a forward movement, either of concluding the war, or of obtaining glory. The only source of misfortune that could be foreseen was in the probable return of Admiral Tchitchakoff, whose troops would become available by the establishment of peace between the Russians and Turks; but as the 9th corps, under Marshal Victor, would afford, by its advance from Tilsit to Wilna, a resource against almost every imaginable accident, Napoleon, in forming his final resolutions, had only to take into account the relative positions of the grand army under his own personal command, and the grand Russian army under the command of Barclay de Tolly, and now on its retreat upon the Moscow route. In this direction his thoughts were constantly turned, sometimes inclining to the plan of halting at Smolensk for the purpose of reorganising Poland and preparing winter quarters for his troops, at the cost of exciting all the ideas which could not fail to spread throughout Europe respecting a mode of action so opposite to his character; and sometimes determining that it was absolutely necessary to plunge into the depths of Russia for the purpose of striking, before the end of the season, a blow of too decisive a nature to be resisted by a character so fickle as that of the Emperor Alexander. In the meantime he received those reports from his two generals of the advanced guard which could not fail to afford him reasons for deciding to adopt the one or the other of these two courses of action.

Murat and Davout were following, in fact, with their cavalry and infantry respectively, the grand Russian army, which was retreating by the Moscow route. They had entered Solowiewo after some skirmishes with the enemy's rearguard, and leaving to others the care of preserving this post, had hastened on to Dorogobouge, the last point at which the Moscow route encounters the sinuosities of the Dnieper. The reports sent by the two commanders were as various as their characters. The brilliant but inconsiderate valour of Murat, prodigal of his cavalry, had come into collision with the firm and calm temperament of Marshal Davout, who was most averse to making any useless sacrifice of either the lives or strength of his troops, and who, by advancing less quickly than others, reaped the advantage of never having to retrace his steps. They had not advanced in company more than a few days before bitter altercations had arisen between them, and this spirit of dissension was fully displayed in the reports which they presented to the emperor.

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

As they approached Darogobouge, our troops perceived the

Russians drawn up in battle array behind a little river named Ouja, which fell into the Dnieper on our left at a place called Ouswiat; and in such attitude and numbers as seemed to show the imminence of a general engagement. The little river which we had to cross in order to reach them was no serious obstacle, although its banks were muddy and difficult; and moreover, it was hoped that by ascending a little to the right we should be able to turn the Russians, and probably succeed in driving them into the angle formed by the Ouja with the Dnieper. There was a good opportunity, therefore, at this point of encountering the enemy in a grand and decisive engagement, and on the evening of the 22nd a report to this effect was sent to Napoleon from our advanced guard, which had left Smolensk on the 20th; whilst the Polish army, which marched at two leagues on our right, proceeded to take up a position towards the sources of the Ouja, the point by which it was hoped we might succeed in turning the enemy.

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

Napoleon received the report of the generals of his advanced guard some hours after it had been despatched, for although the space to be traversed had occupied the troops of the advanced guard three days, it was only a journey of ten or twelve hours to a courier; and as soon as he had received it, hastened to quit Smolensk, for the purpose of hastening that decisive and important event which he considered absolutely necessary to support him in the position in which he found himself placed. The single fact of his departing from Smolensk, several days' march, with all his forces, would of itself, in great measure, decide the grave question which at this time so deeply occupied his attention, but the reasons which urged him to seek this

battle even at the distance of some marches were so powerful that he could not hesitate to do so; and on the 24th, accordingly, he set out with the guard. At the same time, although he still remained undecided whether to winter in Poland or to march on to Moscow, he made all his preparations as though he had decided upon the latter measure, for he could not but foresee that circumstances might constrain him to adopt it, and he was unwilling to move a step in advance without having taken in his rear precautions worthy of his foresight.

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

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

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

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

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

Although on the eve of his departure from Smolensk, Napoleon had devoted his attention to his base of operations, it occupied his thoughts still more deeply, now that he was about to advance so great a distance into the country. This base had at first been at Dantzic and Thorn, then at Königsberg and Kowno, and subsequently at Wilna, successively changing its position in accordance with the progress of the extraordinary march of the French troops across Poland and Russia; and it was evident that its new position should be at Smolensk; this

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

Thus, with a corps of fifty thousand men between Berlin and Dantzic, with strong garrisons at Dantzic, Königsberg, Memel, Kowno, Wilna, and Witebsk; with the two corps of Marshals Macdonald and St. Cyr on the Dwina, with that of Prince

Schwarzenberg on the Dnieper, with an excellent Polish division at Mohilew, to connect Prince Schwarzenberg's corps with the grand army, with the corps of the Duke of Belluna at Smolensk, perfectly ready to succour either of his wings which might be in peril, or to follow his own march to Moscow ; and finally, with a continual succession of battalions serving as garrisons in all the towns on the route, until they should continue their march for the purpose of recruiting the grand army ; with all these resources at his disposal, we say, Napoleon was able to persuade himself that he was safe, and thought not of comparing his own position with that of Charles XII.

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

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

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

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



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

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

According to the information received by the advanced guard, and which was indeed true, our army should have found the Russians at Wiasma ready to engage in that terrible conflict on which they had at length resolved, and which they had determined to accept as soon as they should have found a

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

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

Another incident, equally to be regretted, took place at the same time. We have seen above, that a spirit of great dissension existed between Davout and Murat whilst commanding together the advanced guard; and at length when they had reached Wiasma, Davout, irritated at the prodigal manner in which Murat expended his cavalry, refused to grant him his infantry, being unwilling to see it treated as Murat had treated the horse. In spite of Murat's claims as a king and brother-in-law of the emperor, Davout persisted in his refusal, before the

whole army forbidding General Compans to obey the King of Naples; and it is difficult to say to what extent the quarrel might have grown had it not been appeased by the presence of Napoleon, who, whilst he considered Davout to be in the right, felt hurt at the little respect shown by the marshal to one so nearly allied to the imperial family, and accordingly inflicted on him a public rebuke, by deciding that the division Compans should obey Murat's orders as long as it formed a portion of the advanced guard.

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

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

In the course of the day, the advanced guard reached Ghjat,

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

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

When Alexander was driven, as to a certain extent he was, from his army, he had retired to Moscow to fulfil there the office which had been represented to him as the one most suited to his dignity, and most conducive to the defence of the empire, namely, that of exciting the enthusiasm and the efforts of his people against the French. Upon his arrival at Moscow he had convoked the corps of the noblesse and merchants, for the purpose of demanding of them some genuine proof of their devotion to their prince and country. The governor Rostopchin had been charged with the superintendence of these convocations, and had experienced but little difficulty in inflaming spirits which the approach of Alexander towards the capital already filled with patriotic ardour; but at the sight of Alexander himself, coming to demand the support of the nation against a foreign invader, their excitement had burst forth in sobs and cries of affection. The noblesse had voted a levy of one man in ten on their domains; and the commercial body had voted considerable subsidies; the several supplies being together capable of furnishing, it was said, a militia force of twenty-four thousand men for the government of Moscow. And similar levies, independently of those which the

emperor had ordered to be raised in the imperial domains, were to be raised in all the governments which were not occupied by the enemy.

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

This peace had been concluded immediately after the commencement of hostilities with France, but not before, as Alexander had promised to M. de Lauriston; and had been negotiated by M. de Suchtelen on the part of Russia, and Mr. Thornton, the English agent, who had been sent to Sweden, and stipulated for the concurrence of the whole strength of each empire in the prosecution of the new war. Lord Cathcart had arrived immediately after the peace had been signed, and he concurred with the German councillors and the prince-royal of Sweden, that success could only be obtained in the war by perseverance, that two or three battles would doubtless be lost, but that a single victory would suffice to destroy the French, advanced, as they were, into the interior of the empire. Alexander, who was wounded to the heart by the haughty manner in which Napoleon had behaved towards him during the last three years, and at the open indifference with which he had received the overtures of peace made by the Russian court, was determined to carry on the war, now that it had been begun, to the utmost extent, trusting in the efficacy of his system of a continued retreat. At the same time, the pursuance of this system was necessarily attended by some humiliation and con-

siderable loss, since not only the towns of Smolensk, Wiasma, and Ghjat had fallen a prey to these ruinous tactics, but also all the chateaux and villages situate on the French route, through a space of twelve or fifteen leagues. And in addition to these ill consequences, was the fact that the generals who conducted the retreat were called cowards or traitors who did not dare to face the French in battle, and who preferred to oppose them rather with a devastated country than with their lives.

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

Barclay de Tolly was consequently a lost man; for even the persons who were thoroughly aware of the truth, perceiving, as they did, the outrageous fury of which he was the object, and the insubordination which was spreading throughout the army from this cause, advised that he should be sacrificed. In the midst of this excitement was one name in every one's mouth, and it was that of General Kutusof, that old, one-eyed soldier whom Admiral Tchitchakoff had replaced on the Danube, who had previously lost the battle of Austerlitz, and who nevertheless had become, by virtue of his thoroughly Russian name and his having been a pupil of Suwarrow's, the favourite of public opinion. It must be added, that Kutusof had restored the fortunes of Russia in the last campaign against the Turks, and that although seventy years of age, so perfectly worn out by war and pleasure as to be scarcely capable of holding himself on his horse, thoroughly corrupt, false, perfidious, and a liar, he was possessed of consummate prudence, and had the art to make himself the idol of the party which was ardent for the

plan of engaging the enemy, whilst he was himself the decided partisan of the system of retreat. And no man could be more capable than he was of gaining the mastery over men's minds, of directing them as he chose, of ruling them by affecting passions which he had not, and of opposing Napoleon by patience, the only arm with which he could be successfully fought. Providence, which had prepared an adversary for him in the extremities of the Peninsula—a man of resolute will and keen intellect, firm as the rocks of Torres Vedras—Lord Wellington—had also prepared an adversary for him in the depths of Russia, in the person of a man who had not that inflexibility of character which was absolutely necessary at the extremities of the Peninsula, where there was no more room to fall back, but who was astute and patient, as flexible as the space in which he would have to plunge, who knew both how to resist and to yield, and who was capable, not indeed of vanquishing Napoleon, but of deceiving him, and of thus defeating him. It is not with equals but with inferiors Providence opposes the genius which it has resolved to punish, as though it desired thus to render the punishment more severe.

Old General Kutusof was therefore the second adversary who was about to stop Napoleon at the other extremity of the European continent, and it must be acknowledged that popular passion had seldom less erred than in pointing out Kutusof as the man to be selected by their emperor. But when we speak of the popular passion, we do not wish to intimate that the populace of St. Petersburg attempted to compel the emperor to accept their selection of his generals, but that the passions which rule a court even may have a popular character, and do have such a character when wise and foolish, young and old, men and women, all concur in demanding something of which they know only the name, being alike ignorant of its real qualities, and unfurnished with genuine reasons for desiring it. With such a popular passion, then, were the most aristocratic circles of the capital inspired when they demanded the appointment of Kutusof, who, since his return from Turkey, had very hypocritically placed himself at the head of the St. Petersburg militia, thus obtruding himself upon public notice. Alexander had no confidence in him, considering him to be wanting in firmness and skill on the battlefield; and indeed, Kutusof's sole merit as a warrior was, and it was a very great one, that he was profoundly skilful in giving the general direction to the conduct of a war. Overwhelmed, however, by public opinion, Alexander determined to select Kutusof as commander-in-chief of the united armies of Bagration and Barclay de Tolly, leaving these two generals in command of their respective troops. General Benningsen, who had followed Alexander to St. Petersburg, and

whose character, in spite of some disadvantageous recollections attached to it, would have satisfied the popular leaning of the moment, had he borne a Russian name, was nominated Kutusof's chief of the staff.

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

A general acquaintance with the above facts had persuaded Napoleon that he should encounter beyond Ghjat the Russian army prepared to meet his troops in battle. But at this very moment he found himself checked for a time by the weather, which during the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd of September was terribly adverse, turning the roads, which had hitherto been tolerably good, into quagmires. The horses died by thousands of fatigue and inanition, the cavalry was gradually disappearing, and there was great reason to fear that there would be no means of carrying forward the artillery, the absence of which would have rendered it impossible to engage in any great battle. At the same time the bivouacs, cold and wretched, were in the highest degree injurious to the health of the men. Napoleon attributed the evil to error on the part of his lieutenants, and severely rebuked Marshal Ney, who lost some hundreds of his troops each day. His corps had been reduced to subsist on such provisions as it could gather on its march, and had been as much weakened by the exertions rendered necessary by this state of destitution as it might have been by a bloody battle. Ney had



revenged himself for the rebuke he had received by recounting the sufferings endured by his troops in their too protracted marches, and declaring that to continue the movement in advance would be to expose the army to perish. Murat, who was partly to blame for the evils complained of, confirmed Ney's statement; and Berthier, who did not dare to repeat his representations, supported it by a sullen silence. Napoleon was strongly moved by these assertions, and replied to them, "Ah! well, if the weather have not changed by to-morrow we will halt," . . . which was equivalent to saying that he should have considered the bad season to have commenced, and would have returned to Smolensk! And never would Fortune, who threw a fog over his fleet to enable it to escape from Nelson when he went to Egypt, who granted him the little road by which he turned the Fort of Bard, who granted him the sun of Austerlitz—never would Fortune, we say, have more manifestly favoured him than she would have now, had she now sent him three or four days of bad weather. But Fortune no longer favoured him so much as to oppose his wishes on this occasion for his own advantage; and on the morning of the 4th of September there arose a radiant sun and a lively breeze, such as would most probably dry the roads within the space of a few hours. "The lot is cast!" cried Napoleon; "let us advance! Let us march to meet the Russians!" and he ordered Murat and Davout to set forward about noon, when the roads would have been in some degree dried, directing their movement upon Gridnewa, which was half way from Ghjat to Borodino. The remainder of the army was ordered to follow the movement made by the advanced guard.

Obedient to destiny, the army set out and proceeded to pass the night at Gridnewa. On the following day, the 5th of September, it resumed its march, and advanced towards the plain of Borodino, a place destined to become as famous as Zama, Pharsala, or Actium. On the line of march stood a celebrated abbey, that of Kolotskoi, a great building flanked with towers, the roofs of which, being formed of coloured tiles, contrasted vividly with the sombre hues of the surrounding landscape. During many days the troops had been advancing along the elevated plateaux which separated the waters of the Baltic from those of the Black Sea and the Caspian, and on setting out from Ghjat, began to descend the slopes from which the Moskowa on the left, and the Protwa on the right, flow by the Oka into the Volga, by the Volga into the Caspian Sea. The landscape appeared to sink towards the horizon, and to be covered with thick forests, whilst a sky half veiled with the light autumnal clouds served to increase its sad and savage aspect. All the villages were either burned or deserted, and there remained only

a few monks at the Abbey of Kolotskoi. Our army left this abbey on the left, and continued its march along the course of a little river now half dried up, called the Kolocza, flowing direct east, the direction which had been constantly pursued by our troops since the passage of the Niemen. The cavalry rearguards, after a certain amount of resistance on the part of the enemy, which had been speedily overcome, threw themselves upon the right of the Kolocza, and hastened to take up a position at the foot of a fortified mamelon, where there was a large detachment of about fifteen thousand men of all arms.

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

The first work which opposed the advance of our troops to the right of the Kolocza was a redoubt, more advanced than the others, constructed on a mamelon towards which the Russian rearguard had fallen back; and Napoleon considered that it would be necessary to gain immediate possession of it, in order to be able to establish himself at his leisure on this portion of the plain, and uninterruptedly make his preparations for the impending battle. He ordered, therefore, Murat and Compans, whose cavalry and infantry were at his immediate disposal, to carry this redoubt, which was called the Schwardino redoubt, from a neighbouring village of that name. Murat with his cavalry, and Compans with his infantry, had already passed the Kolocza, and were now on the right of the plain, and towards nightfall Murat forced the Russian cavalry to fall back, and thus cleared the ground for the advance of our infantry. On an elevation in front of the redoubt General Compans posted some pieces of cannon and a body of tirailleurs, and after a vigorous cannonade deployed the 57th and 61st of the line to the right, the 25th and 111th to the left, personally directing the former two regiments, and entrusting the latter two to General Dupellin. Our troops advanced with the utmost energy and firmness across a little ravine which lay between them and the redoubt, and

having reached the further side, exchanged with the Russian infantry during several minutes a fire of musketry of the most murderous description. General Compans rightly considered that a charge at the bayonet's point could not have such deadly effects, and gave the signal for the charge; but in the midst of the clamour and the smoke it was not well understood, and galloping, therefore, to the head of the 57th, which was the regiment nearest to the redoubt, he conducted it himself with fixed bayonets against the grenadiers of Woronzoff and Mecklenburg, whom it speedily drove back in disorder. The example thus set by the 57th was followed by the 61st, which was at its side; and as the 25th and 111th had been equally successful on our left, the redoubt was outflanked by this double movement, and fell into our hands; the Russian artillerymen being almost to a man slain on their pieces.

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

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

On the morning of the following day, the 6th, the sun shone once more on thousands of helmets, bayonets, and pieces of cannon, on the heights of Borodino, and our army had the

satisfaction of perceiving that the Russians were still in position, and evidently determined to fight. Napoleon, who had bivouacked on the left of the Kolocza, in the midst of his guard, proceeded at a very early hour, surrounded by his marshals, to reconnoitre the ground on which he was about to measure his strength with the Russians.

After a most careful reconnoissance of the position occupied by the enemy, Napoleon was confirmed in the opinion he had formed at a single glance, that the left of this position being greatly escarped, and protected by the deep bed of the Kolocza, the attack should be directed against its right, where the heights were less precipitous, and defended by ravines without depth and without water. The great Moscow road, which we had followed, passing at first along the left of the Kolocza, continued upon the right of this river to Borodino, and rising on the Gorki plateau, traversed the chain of hills on its way to Mojaisk. This portion of the position, which was its centre, was as impregnable as that on the left, and it was only at some distance from Borodino and towards the right of the Kolocza that the ground presented any facilities for an attack. The first elevation on the right of the Borodino was covered with thick brushwood at its foot, and was terminated at its summit by a sort of tolerably large plateau, which was crowned by a redoubt the sides of which were prolonged in curtains, and the embrasures of which were filled with twenty-one pieces of cannon of great calibre; and which was to be named in the memorable battle which was about to take place the great redoubt. Still more to our right there was another elevation, separated from the first by a little ravine called the Séménoffskoié ravine, from a neighbouring village of that name, which, less large but steeper than the first, was surmounted by two rows of artillery, and a third placed en retour and turned towards the ravine of Séménoffskoié. The village of Séménoffskoié, situated at the commencement of the ravine which separated the two elevations, and previously burned by the Russians, was surrounded by an elevation of earth and armed with cannon. Still more to the right were woods extending far into the distance and traversed by the old Moscow road, which rejoined the new road by the village of Outitza. It would have been possible to turn on this side the position of the Russians; but the woods were dense and little known, and a movement of this sort would have rendered necessary a long detour.

Having concluded this inspection, Napoleon resolved to leave but a small portion of his forces on the left of the Kolocza, to execute a vigorous attack on the centre of the enemy's position, towards Borodino, by the new Moscow road, in order to draw off the enemy's attention, but to direct his principal effort

towards the right of the Kolocza, against the two elevations crowned by the great redoubt and three pieces of cannon; and at the same time to advance across the woods, upon the old Moscow road, the corps of Prince Poniatowski, which had always formed the extreme right of the French army; his intention being to direct such a force upon this point as must cause the Russians serious alarm, and might perform even more effectual services should circumstances favour.

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

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

Prince Eugène, who since the departure from Smolensk had always formed the left of the army, was alone directed to operate

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

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

The Russian army had, in the meantime, made preparations

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

The Russians were drawn up in the following order:—

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

In immediate succession to the first army was the second army, under the command of Prince Bagration. The 7th corps, under Raéffskoi, rested its right on the great redoubt, its left on the ruins of the village of Séménoffskoié. The 8th, under Borosdin, had its right bent back, on account of the curve of the Russian line around Séménoffskoié, and its left established near the three lines of artillery which were guarded by the 27th division, under Névéroffskoi, placed for this day under the orders of Prince Gortschakoff, together with the 4th cavalry corps of General Siewers. Numerous battalions of foot chasseurs filled the thickets and the wood. The militia, which had recently arrived from Moscow, together with some Cossacks,

was posted at Outitza. Finally, at some distance behind the centre, in the environs of Psarewo, was placed the reserve, consisting of the guard, the 3rd corps, Touczkoff's, and an immense artillery of heavy calibre.

The Russian army consisted altogether of about one hundred and forty thousand men, of whom one hundred and twenty thousand were regular troops, the remainder being Cossacks and Moscow militia. The principal body of the Russian force was on their right, opposite our left, and the best portion on their left, opposite our right, the part of their line against which Napoleon had resolved to make his principal effort; and although Napoleon had not divulged his designs, the proceedings he had already taken had sufficiently served to point out to the Russians the danger which threatened their left, towards Sémenoffskoié, the three lines of artillery, and the Outitza wood. But when representations to this effect were made to Kutusof, who, as has been already remarked, was more fit to conduct a campaign than to fight a great battle, he failed to perceive their force, and obstinately retained the corps of Ostermann and Bagowouth in the positions they then occupied, because he still saw the bulk of the French army on the new Moscow road, and only detached the 3rd corps from the reserve to post it at Outitza. These were the sole arrangements he had made for the battle; but the energy of his army, the firmness of Barclay de Tolly, and the patriotic courage of Bagration, were well calculated to supply the place of what he had left undone.

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

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



bent to the ground, accompanied the procession in the midst of his staff.

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

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

At three o'clock in the morning the French troops began to take their arms, and to take advantage of the mist to pass over to the right of the Kolozca, and to assume their appointed stations; Prince Eugène opposite Borodino and the great redoubt, Ney and Davout in front of the second hill, the cavalry behind them, Friant and the guard in reserve in the centre, Poniatowski far upon the right, crossing the wood. Whilst our troops were taking up these positions in silence, so as not to attract the attention of the enemy, the artillerymen of the great batteries, with which it was intended to meet the fire of the Russian works, were at their guns waiting Napoleon's signal to open fire. Napoleon himself had taken up a position at a very early hour in the morning at the Schwardino redoubt, at a point where he would be able to observe all that took place, and at the same time be in some degree sheltered from the Russian bullets. Murat, glowing with ardour and embroidery, wearing a tunic of green velvet, a plumed cap, and yellow boots, and presenting an object for ridicule, did not his heroism forbid it, galloped in front of his cavalry, radiant with confidence, and inspiring his troops with the same spirit by means of his martial bearing. Clouds obscured the heavens, and the sun, rising

opposite to us and beyond the Russian lines, announced its approach only by a ruddy line along the horizon; but speedily displaying its whole disc as a ball of red-hot iron, Napoleon, who watched it rise in the midst of his lieutenants, exclaimed, "Behold the sun of Austerlitz!" Alas! yes! But veiled in clouds!

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

This address having been read, and the troops having taken up their respective positions, about half-past five o'clock the report of a cannon on the right was the signal, at which the most terrible uproar succeeded the previous unbroken stillness, and a long trail of fire and smoke instantly portrayed in fearful outlines the positions of the opposed armies. Whilst one hundred and twenty pieces of cannon directed their fire against the Russian works, whilst Davout and Ney on the right advanced with their infantry, Prince Eugène had sent the divisions Morand and Gudin across the Kolocza against the great redoubt, leaving the division Broussier on the bank of this little river in reserve, and with the division Delzons advancing towards Borodino, where the Kolocza turned to the left, and covered the Russian right up to its junction with the Moskowa; the intention being that Prince Eugène should commence the action by attacking Borodino, in order to persuade the enemy that we were desirous of debouching by the great Moscow road, called the New Road.

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

dino; a position which remained in our hands throughout the battle.

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

Marshal Davout, in fact, preceded by thirty pieces of cannon had advanced at the head of the divisions Compans and Dessaix along the wood, the depths of which were being traversed by the troops under Poniatowski. He had approached that one of the three lines of artillery which was most to the right, and had formed the division into columns of attack, leaving the division Dessaix in reserve for the purpose of guarding his right flank and his rear. Scarcely had the division Compans found itself within reach of the enemy than it was suddenly overwhelmed by a terrific fire from the three lines of artillery and the lines of Woronzoff's grenadiers. Its brave general and almost all its officers were struck down, and although still undaunted, its troops paused for a moment from want of leaders. The marshal perceived their indecision, and learning its cause, hastened up to replace General Compans, and threw the 67th on the right *flèche*. This regiment entered with fixed bayonets and slew the Russian artillerymen at their guns, but at the same moment a bullet struck Marshal Davout's horse, inflicting a severe contusion on the marshal himself, and depriving him of consciousness.

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

selves together upon the disputed work; but Ney, advancing the division Marchand, and debouching with it right and left, succeeded in repulsing them, and at the same time sent the division Razout against the *flèche* on the right.

At the commencement of the battle, Prince Bagration, who was opposed to the two marshals Ney and Davout, perceiving that he was threatened by formidable forces, had withdrawn some battalions from the 7th corps, which was posted between *Séménoffskoié* and the great redoubt, had advanced the Mecklenburg grenadiers, the Douka cuirassiers, and the 4th regiment of Siewer's cavalry, and sent for the division Konownitsyn, which formed a portion of Touczkoff's, which was directed upon Outitza. At the same time he had immediately sent information of what was taking place on his side to Kutusof, for the purpose of warning the commander-in-chief to send him reinforcements.

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

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

Dessaix, and adding to them the Westphalians, who were behind, endeavoured to support Prince Poniatowski, whose artillery was now crossing the Outitza wood.

Our troops thus gained ground by extending themselves to the right, and being masters of the heights, they had the advantage of being able to direct against the Russians a plunging fire. The Russians replied by a fire which was less well directed, but very vigorous, and the cannonade on this point speedily became tremendous; whilst Ney on the right, and Murat on the left, continuing their movement in advance, approached the Séménoffskoié ravine, and passed the third line of artillery, which formed the *retour en arrière*, and naturally, therefore, fell into our hands. But in this position they found themselves suddenly exposed to the enemy's fire from the Séménoffskoié village, and to that of the Raéffskoi corps, which occupied the other side of the ravine, and extended from Séménoffskoié village to the great redoubt.

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

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

Whilst these events were taking place on the right in advance of the three flèches, Prince Eugène on the left, having very early carried the two divisions Morand and Gudin across the Kolocza, had subsequently directed the division Morand against the great redoubt, and left the division Gudin at the foot of the work, with the object of husbanding his resources. The division Morand had ascended the elevated ground on which the great redoubt was constructed, and had supported with admirable coolness the fire of eighty pieces of cannon, and when, advancing through a cloud of smoke, it had arrived close to the redoubt itself, General Bonamy, at the head of the 30th of the line, had thrown himself upon it, and driven out the Russians at

the point of the bayonet. The whole division had then, debouching to the right and left, repulsed the division Paskewitch of Raéffskoi's corps, which had thus found itself driven back on the one side by Morand's infantry, and on the other by the cuirassiers of Latour-Maubourg.

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

In the meantime, Kutusof, who was at table a little in the rear of the field of battle, whilst Barclay and Bagration were exposing themselves in the midst of the most deadly fire, was on his side besieged with the most urgent requests that he would fill up with his reserves the gap made in the Russian line; and in compliance with reiterated demands, had detached from the guard, which was posted at Psarewo, the regiments of Lithuania and Ismailow, the Astrakan cuirassiers, those of the empress and emperor, together with a strong reserve of artillery, and had sent them towards Séménoffskoié. He had also determined to withdraw Bagowouth's corps from the extreme right, and had advanced one of the two divisions of which it was composed, that commanded by Prince Eugène of Wurtemberg, towards Séménoffskoié, and the other commanded by Olsoufief, towards Outitza, for the purpose of aiding Touczkoff to resist the attack of Prince Poniatowski. And finally, in compliance with the solicitations of Platow and Ouvaroff,

who, posted at the extreme right of the Russian army, on the heights protected by the Kolocza, perceived our left to be much weakened, and were anxious to take advantage of the fact, he had given them permission to cross the Kolocza with their cavalry, and to make a diversion which could scarcely fail of having considerable effect, since it would be altogether unexpected by the French.

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

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

Bagration, on his side, having received the Konownitsyn division, detached from Touczkoff's corps, together with the foot and cavalry regiments of the guard, had sworn to die or to recover the three flèches situated on his left and our right. He had to encounter the troops under Murat and Ney, who

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

It was thus that we occupied, in default of possessing more forces, this portion of the field of battle which extended from Séménoffskoïé to the Outitza wood. Suddenly an illustrious



victim fell on the side of the Russians. Bagration was mortally wounded, and carried off the field amidst cries of grief from his troops, with whom he was almost an object of idolatry. Raéffskoi was summoned to take the command of the second Russian army, which was now without a leader, but he could not quit the remnant of the 7th corps, which continued to occupy, together with Prince Eugène of Wurtemberg, the interval between the grand redoubt and Séménoffskoié; and General Doctoroff was then summoned to replace Bagration.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

At this period the victory was certainly in our hands, for we had entire possession of the field of battle. On the extreme right, beyond the wood, Prince Poniatowski, after a desperate contest, had succeeded in establishing himself beyond Ontitza,

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

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

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

At length the sun sank on this terrible scene, which is without a parallel in the annals of humanity. The cannonade gradually subsided, and the opposed forces, thoroughly exhausted, permitted themselves to indulge in some repose. Our generals withdrew their divisions far enough to be out of reach of the enemy's fire, and posted at the foot of the heights which had fallen into our hands, being perfectly convinced that the Russians would not attempt to recapture them. Napoleon, victorious, entered his tent in the midst of his lieutenants, some of whom were full of discontent at what he had left undone, whilst the others declared that he had been wise to remain satisfied with the result which he had obtained; that the Russians were, in fact, destroyed, and the gates of Moscow were open to the French army. But none of that manifestation of joy and admiration which had burst forth at Austerlitz, at Jena, and at Friedland were heard this evening in the conqueror's tent.

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

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

Kutusof, as complete a liar as he was a Russian, finding that his army was not to be wholly destroyed, had the audacity to write to his master, declaring that he had resisted during a whole day the assaults of the French army; that he had slain as many of his foes as he had lost of his own troops; and that if he retired from the field of battle, it was not because he was beaten,

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

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

Anxious to reap the fruits of his victory, Napoleon directed Murat upon Mojaisk with two divisions of cuirassiers, several divisions of light cavalry, and one of the infantry divisions of Marshal Davout, who followed with his four other divisions, being himself conveyed in a carriage, as he was unable to maintain his seat on his horse. At the same time, Prince Poniatowski was directed, as he had been during the whole march, upon the right of the grand route, by the Wereja road, and Prince Eugène upon the left, by the Rouza road. Napoleon himself, with Ney's corps and the guard, remained one day longer on the field of battle, for the purpose of executing the

measures demanded alike by humanity and the interests of the army; and the first of these was the conversion of the Kolot-skoï Abbey into a hospital for such of the wounded as were too ill to be transported any distance, it being arranged that the others should be conveyed to Mojaïsk as soon as it should be in our hands. For the cure of the horses and the repair of the cannon, which were but slightly injured, Napoleon established a cavalry and artillery *dépôt* in the villages surrounding the Kolotskoi Abbey, and determined that Junot with the Westphalians should remain in this position to guard and to procure for the unhappy wounded soldiers the provisions they were unable to obtain for themselves.

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

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

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

The Russians continued their retreat, and the French their pursuit. Prince Eugène having taken the lateral route on the



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

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

On the 11th the French reached Koubinskió, on the 12th Momonowo, and on the 13th Worobiewo, the position immediately before Moscow, at the very gates of which the Russian army had established itself towards the Dorogomilow barrier. The Moskowa on entering Moscow, where it describes numerous windings, forms a very concave arc, open on the side of the Smolensk road; and against this the Russian army leant back, supporting its right on the village of Fili, and its left at the top of Worobiewo, tracing in a certain measure the cord of the arc described by the Moskowa, its only opening for retreat being a bridge leading across the Moskowa to the interior of the Dorogomilow faubourg. This was scarcely a safe position in which to give battle to an enemy, and of this Kutusof was perfectly conscious, being also thoroughly convinced of the impossibility of checking the advance of the French upon Moscow. But still faithful to his system of constantly flattering popular passion, because he believed that it might be more easily directed by means of flattery than by opposition, he had constantly written to Rostopchin, the governor of Moscow, that he was to defend it to the utmost. There was considerable astonishment in Moscow, therefore, when the real state of the Russian army was discovered, and it took up a position so near to the town that there remained no space for the execution of the movements which an engagement would render necessary. And although Kutusof had resolved to save his army rather than the capital, he called a council of war that he might share the responsibility he was about to incur with his lieutenants. In spite of the cunning and coldness of his nature, he could not

but be agitated as he heard the cries of rage which arose around him, and the voice a thousand times repeated, rather to perish under the ruins of Moscow than abandon it to the French—a vow dictated by feelings very similar to those which might lead a man rather to stab his cherished spouse in his very arms than yield her up to the outrages of others. But Kutusof knew that Russia would not necessarily be lost because Moscow might fall into the hands of the French, and that, on the other hand, it would be lost if the grand army should be destroyed. At the same time, he would have been glad to throw the odium of measures which he knew to be necessary upon others, and he summoned to the memorable council, which now assembled on the Worobiewo height, Generals Benningsen, Barclay de Tolly, Doctoroff, Ostermann, Konownitsyn, and Yermoloff. Colonel Toll assisted at it as quartermaster-general. Barclay de Tolly, with his usual simplicity and practical experience, declared the position then occupied to be untenable, affirmed that the preservation of the capital was of but slight importance in comparison with the preservation of the army, and advised that it should evacuate Moscow, retreating by the Wladimir road, by which means new tracts of territory would be added to those which the French army had already had to traverse, and the Russian army would not only be left in communication with St. Petersburg, but be able at the right moment to resume the offensive. Benningsen, who was perfectly capable of appreciating this advice, but who was unwilling to incur the odium of supporting it, maintained that the Russian army should defend to the utmost the sacred city of Moscow; and Konownitsyn, yielding in like manner to popular opinion, also supported the plan of making an obstinate resistance, but with the provision that they should leave the position in which they were then encamped, and find another by advancing towards the enemy. Generals Ostermann and Yermoloff were of the same opinion, and indeed it was the expression of the courage of despair. But Colonel Toll, on the other hand, proposed that the army should retreat, advancing immediately to the right upon the Kolocza road, by which means it would be able to take up a position at once threatening to the enemy's communications, and in direct relation to the richest provinces of the south. As is generally the case under such circumstances, this council of war was agitated, confused, and filled with opposite counsels.

Kutusof had already, however, determined upon his course of action, and we must confess that it was worthy of a great captain. Of all the various counsels which had been given, none had been thoroughly good, although most possessed certain recommendations. To have fought a battle for the sake

of Moscow would have been utterly unwise. To have defended it against the enemy as Saragossa had been defended, barricading the streets and arousing the whole of its population to the aid of the army, would have certainly been to have involved its destruction, for it was not built of stone like Saragossa, but of wood, and it could not in this case but have perished by the flames. The only means, in fact, in the power of the Russians of preserving Moscow from the grasp of the French was by effecting its destruction, but such an idea as this had not yet been entertained, for no one desired the destruction of this capital, and its capture by the French was not regarded as equivalent to its being destroyed.

To retreat, then, appeared the only course open to the Russian army. To fall back upon Wladimir, as Barclay de Tolly proposed, would have been to push the system of retreat too far, and would have involved the loss of communications with the south of the empire, which was far richer in resources of every kind than the north. Thus the only line of retreat which could wisely be adopted was upon the right of Moscow (the right as regarded us), which would lead the Russian army upon the communications of the French, and place it in direct communication with the south provinces and the army returning from Turkey. But to have marched immediately in this direction, as was proposed by Colonel Toll, would have been to have excited the French to instant pursuit, and to have revealed the plan of the system of retreat, which, now that the French had been enticed so far, consisted in manœuvring upon their flanks with the purpose of attacking them when they should have been sufficiently enfeebled. A much better mode of action was to retreat across Moscow itself, to leave this city in the hands of the French, to take advantage of the time during which they would certainly be employed in seizing upon this rich prey to defile tranquilly before them, and then turning round Moscow to take upon their flank that threatening position which Colonel Toll advised should be taken immediately, and without the intervention of any manœuvres. This was the plan drawn by the old Russian general from all the various counsels which he had received; drawn from them with a sagacity as profound as it was fatal to the French, and which, fatal as it was to us, cannot but demand the admiration of posterity.

It was accordingly determined that the Russian army should retreat during the night of the 13th of September, the rear-guard avoiding combats with the French in order that Moscow, which the Russians were anxious to save, and which they believed that they were saving by leaving it in the hands of the French, might not be set on fire by the howitzers; and that the retreat should be by the Riazan road, from which it would be easy, by

means of a slight detour, to return some days later to the Kalouga road, on which it would subsequently be necessary to operate.

We must now turn to Rostopchin, the governor of Moscow, a Russian full of savage passions concealed under polished manners, and inspired with a spirit of patriotism so furious that it had become fanaticism. He hated us as a Russian, he hated us as a member of the European aristocracy. He would have willingly sacrificed the city could he at the same time have destroyed twenty or thirty thousand Frenchmen, and he considered that after having destroyed all the villages, there could be no honourable reason for sparing Moscow. As no proposal, however, had been made that the army should barricade itself within the city and defend it to the last, he could only in silence brood over the idea which he cherished in the depths of his exasperated spirit. The futility of the hopes which had been kept up by General Kutusof had profoundly irritated him against the general, and he expressed himself to him with extreme bitterness; but there was no time for recrimination: it was necessary to make immediate preparations for the evacuation of the city. In the excess of his hatred, Rostopchin was anxious that there should not be a single Russian left to adorn the triumph of the French, and using his authority as governor, he ordered all the inhabitants of Moscow to depart immediately, taking with them whatever they could, and he threatened the infliction of the most severe chastisements on those who should not have quitted by the morrow. Moreover, such atrocious calumnies had been spread abroad with respect to the conduct of the French troops, that this was no occasion for the use of threats to induce the Russians to fly from before them. Nor was Rostopchin anxious only to leave the enemy a city without inhabitants. He was anxious, without calculating the consequences of such a measure, to leave them, instead of a luxurious home, a heap of cinders, amongst which they would be able to find no means of supporting existence, which should be a testimony of the terrible hatred with which they had inspired the Russian heart, which should be a declaration of war to the death. But to have breathed such a project to any one would have been to render its execution impossible. The gentle spirit of Alexander would have revolted at such a proposal; the generals would have shrunk from the responsibility of sharing such a secret; and to have submitted such a design to the inhabitants would have been to excite them more furiously against the author of it than even against the French. But although he was thus forced to keep his purpose profoundly secret, he had accumulated, under the pretence of fabricating an infernal machine against the French, an immense quantity of inflammable materials in one of his gardens; and when the hour for the evacuation had arrived, he selected as

executors of his project those infamous persons who possessed nothing but the prisons in which their crimes had procured them an asylum, and who possessed an innate taste for the work of destruction. To these criminals he committed the task, when the evacuation should have been completed, of secretly and thoroughly firing the city, assuring them that by thus ravaging their country they would be performing for her the most useful of services. At the same time, in order that the French might have no means of checking the conflagration, he had all the pumps destroyed. On the morning of the 14th he followed the army from the city, taking with him none of his wealth, and consoling himself for its loss by the idea of the terrible surprise he had prepared for the French.

During the evening and night of the 13th and a portion of the 14th of September the Russian army defiled across the city of Moscow and stopped at the Moskowa bridge, which was the only one remaining at this point; they accumulated in the Drogomilow faubourg in such a manner as to show very plainly how great a disaster might have been the result of a retreat across Moscow after a defeat. The disorder throughout the unhappy capital was at its height. The wealthy, whether nobles or merchants, had withdrawn to their most distant estates; and the remainder of the inhabitants, submitting to the odious edict imposed upon them, and filled also with the idea that the French would fire the town, quitted their dwellings in a state of despair, carrying with them their most precious possessions in carriages or on their shoulders. Knowing not whither to go, or how they should be able to procure the means of subsistence, the bulk of the population, uttering the most frightful lamentations, mechanically followed the army. Some of the inhabitants, however, had declined to take part in this flight, preferring to remain in the city with the victorious French (whose real mode of acting they had become better acquainted with than their compatriots) rather than follow in the track of an army of whose line of march or proposed movements they were utterly ignorant. Amongst these latter were many merchants of various nations, and especially of our own, who had no fear of the French, but for whom the moment of the evacuation was one of the most frightful terror, for they suddenly learned that as the Russian troops left the city with the authorities, three thousand abandoned wretches would be let loose to indulge in unrestrained pillage. With trembling impatience, therefore, these unhappy inhabitants awaited in their houses the arrival of the army which was to replace the one departing.

In the meantime, Miloradovitch, perceiving that the evacuation of the city would occupy some hours, proposed to the French advanced guard that all hostilities should be suspended

whilst it was taking place, as well for the sake of those who were about to enter as of those who were departing, since an attack would necessarily call forth a desperate defence, and consequently cause the entire destruction of the city. An officer was despatched to Murat with this proposal.

With rapid steps the French army advanced towards the heights whence they hoped to perceive at length the great city of Moscow; and if the Russians were filled with the utmost sadness, the hearts of the French were equally inspired with feelings of joy and triumph, and the most brilliant illusions. Reduced from four hundred and twenty thousand, which was its number at the passage of the Niemen, to one hundred thousand, and utterly exhausted, our army forgot all its troubles on its approach to the brilliant capital of Muscovy. There were many officers and soldiers in its ranks who had been at the Pyrenees, to the banks of the Jordan, to Rome, Milan, Madrid, Vienna, and Berlin, and who trembled with emotion at the idea that they were about to visit also Moscow, the most powerful metropolis of the east. Doubtless the hope of finding there repose, abundance, and probably peace contributed to their feelings of satisfaction on the occasion, but imagination, the empress of all hearts, and especially of those of soldiers, imagination, we say, was strongly excited within them at the idea of entering Moscow, after having entered all the other capitals of Europe with the exception of London, protected by the sea. Whilst Prince Eugène advanced on the left of the army, and Prince Poniatowski on its right, the bulk of the army, with Murat at its head, Davout and Ney in the centre, and the guard in the rear, followed the great Smolensk road. Napoleon was in the midst of his troops, who as they gazed upon him and drew near to Moscow forgot the days of discontent, and uttered loud shouts in honour of his glory and their own.

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

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

of Russian history and Russian ambition—the Cross above the reversed Crescent. This citadel was the Kremlin, the ancient dwelling-place of the czars.

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

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

The information sent to Napoleon of the actual state of affairs deeply afflicted him. He had waited during the whole afternoon the arrival of the keys of the city, and the prayers of a submissive population for that mercy which he was always ready to accord to the vanquished. This disappointment, so immediately succeeding to a moment of triumph, was, so to speak, the dawn of ill fortune. Being unwilling to enter during the night a city which an implacable enemy had but just left, and which might very possibly contain many ambushes, Napoleon paused in the Dorogomilow faubourg, sending forward detachments of cavalry to take possession of the gates, and to act as police. Eugène on the left guarded the gate on the St. Petersburg road; whilst Davout in the centre guarded the Smolensk gate, by which the bulk of our army would enter, and extended his troops on his right as far as that of Toula. The cavalry, which had passed through the city, was to guard the gates on the north and east, opposite to those by which we were about to enter. From our ignorance of the city, however, many means of egress were left open, and twelve or fifteen thousand stragglers of the Russian army were thus enabled to make their escape. There remained, indeed, fifteen thousand wounded whom the Russians recommended to our humanity; but to Russian humanity should they rather have recommended them, for they perished by other hands than ours.

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

The army was distributed through the various quarters of Moscow, Prince Eugène occupying the north-west quarter, Marshal Davout the south-west, and Prince Poniatowski the south-east. Marshal Ney, who had traversed Moscow from west to east, established his troops in the district comprised between the Riazan and Wladimir roads, and the guard was naturally posted at the Kremlin and in its environs. The houses were



full of provisions of every kind, and the first necessities of the troops were readily satisfied. The superior officers were received at the gates of palaces by numerous servants in livery, eager in offering a brilliant hospitality; for the owners of these palaces, perfectly unaware that Moscow was about to perish, had taken great pains, although they fully shared the national hatred against the French, to procure protectors for their rich dwellings by receiving into them French officers. And with extreme delight the latter plunged into the midst of a luxury fraught with all those signs of sensuousness which form so strange but frequent a contrast with ardent popular devotion and savage military energy in nations which have suddenly arisen from a barbarous state to a civilised one; for the first lesson which men learn from those who have learned how to live, is how to live pleasantly.

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

Although they had become sole possessors of the disputed city, our troops, always sociable, were distressed that there were none whom they might astonish by their gentleness after having terrified them by their boldness. But although the solitude

of the city was a source of great vexation to them, they had no suspicion of any approaching catastrophe, for the Russian army, which alone had hitherto devastated their country, had departed, and there appeared to be no fear of fire.

The French army hoped, therefore, to enjoy comfort in Moscow, to obtain probably peace by means of its possession, and at least good winter cantonments in case the war should be prolonged. But on the afternoon they had entered columns of flame arose from a vast building containing vast quantities of spirits, and just as our soldiers had almost succeeded in mastering the fire in this spot, a violent conflagration suddenly burst forth in a collection of buildings called the Bazaar, situated to the north-east of the Kremlin, and containing the richest magazines, abounding in stores of the exquisite tissues of India and Persia, the rarities of Europe, colonial produce, and precious wines. The troops of the guard immediately hastened up and attempted to subdue the flames, but their energetic efforts were unfortunately unsuccessful, and the immense riches of the establishment fell a prey to the fire, with the exception of some portions which our men were able to snatch from the devouring element. This fresh accident was again attributed to natural causes, and considered as easily explicable in the tumult of an evacuation.

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

the matter had remained, the terrible determination with which Moscow had been given to the flames.

In the meantime, the wind, increasing in violence every moment, rendered the efforts of the whole army ineffectual, and suddenly changing, with the abruptness peculiar to equinoctial gales, from the east to the north-west, it carried the torrent of flame into quarters which the hands of the incendiaries had not yet been able to fire. And after having blown during some hours from the north-west, the wind once more changed its direction and blew from the south-west, as though it had a cruel pleasure in spreading ruin and death over the unhappy city, or rather, over our army. By this change of the wind to the south-west the Kremlin was placed in extreme peril. More than four hundred ammunition waggons were in the court of the Kremlin, and the arsenal contained some four hundred thousand pounds of powder. There was imminent danger, therefore, that Napoleon with his guard, and the palace of the czars, might be blown up into the air.

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

Napoleon, therefore, followed by some of his lieutenants, descended from the Kremlin to the quay of the Moskowa, where he found his horses ready for him, and had much difficulty in threading the streets, which, towards the north-west, in which direction he proceeded, were already in flames. The terrified army set out from Moscow; the divisions of Prince Eugène and Marshal Ney fell back upon the Zwenigarod and St. Petersburg roads. Those of Marshal Davout fell back upon the Smolensk route, and with the exception of the guard, which was left around the Kremlin, to dispute its possession with the flames, our troops drew back in horror from before the fire, which, after flaming up to heaven, darted back towards them as though it wished to devour them. The few inhabitants who had remained in Moscow, and had hitherto lain concealed in

their dwellings, now fled, carrying away such of their possessions as they valued most highly, uttering lamentable cries of distress, and in many instances falling victims to the brigands whom Rostopchin had let loose, and who now exulted in the midst of the conflagration, as the genius of evil in the midst of chaos.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

However, without permitting himself to be overwhelmed by the consideration of what might possibly be the consequences of the conflagration of Moscow, he employed himself in giving orders which were demanded equally by humanity and the interests of his army. He issued the most stringent commands for the suppression of pillage, and with some difficulty the prevalent disorder was suppressed, and regular searches established throughout the town for the discovery of its resources. The city was partitioned out between the various corps of the army almost as on the day of its arrival, each having its *tête de colonne* at the Kremlin, and its chief bulk in that portion of the city at which it had made its entry; Prince Eugène's troops being between the St. Petersburg and Smolensk gates, Marshal Davout's between those of Smolensk and Kalouga, Prince Poniatowski's towards the Toulga gate, the cavalry beyond it, in pursuit of the enemy, Marshal Ney's eastward between the Riazan and Wladimir gates, and the guard in the centre, at the Kremlin. The houses which had escaped the conflagration were reserved for the officers, and the great buildings were converted into magazines to which the troops each day conveyed what they found in the city, so that there might be a reserve of provisions for the use of the army whether it continued in Moscow or departed from it.

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

At the same time he afforded succour to all those whom the

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

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

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

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

M. de Jakowleff, the Russian to whom Napoleon expressed these sentiments, disputed none of Napoleon's assertions, for having before his eyes, as he had, the horrible sufferings endured by the wretched inhabitants of Moscow, he was indignant with Rostopchin, and considered that such a war should be concluded as soon as possible, or, at least, conducted on a different plan. He urged upon Napoleon, as General Toutelmine had done, that he should make his pacific inclinations known at St. Petersburg; and Napoleon, who desired nothing better, proposed to M. de Jakowleff that he should himself be the bearer to St. Petersburg of a written declaration of the sentiments he had just heard expressed. M. de Jakowleff accepted the mission with the utmost alacrity, and set out with a letter for Alexander, couched in terms which were at once courteous and haughty.



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

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

On receiving this information, which reached Moscow during the 21st and 22nd September, Napoleon was excessively irritated against General Sebastiani, notwithstanding the esteem in which he held him, and ordered Murat to proceed immediately to the head of the advanced guard, taking with him Poniatowski's corps, although it was thoroughly fatigued and worn out, in order that, being accompanied by troops speaking the Slavonic tongue, he might the more easily discover the route of the Russian army. As the incursions of the Cossacks afforded reasons for believing that General Kutusof had executed a flank movement upon our right with the purpose of marching upon our rear by the Kalouga route, Napoleon directed Murat to proceed from south-east to south, in other words, from the Riazan route to the Toulâ route, and to continue his march until he should receive information of Kutusof. At the same time, being unwilling to leave the search for the Russian army in the hands of Murat alone, he despatched by the Kalouga gate, with orders to march upon Kalouga itself, Marshal Bessières with the lancers of the guard, Grouchy's cavalry, the

light cavalry, and the fourth division of Marshal Davout's infantry; and finally, he threw back by the Smolensk route the dragoons of the guard, a division of cuirassiers, and the division Broussier of Prince Eugène's corps. He was himself almost certain that Kutusof would be found on the Kalouga route, being drawn into that direction by the double object of threatening our rear and placing himself in communication with the richest provinces of the empire. But although he was almost convinced that this was the case, he was nevertheless impatient to obtain positive information. He did not share the terrors of those who feared that we should be cut off, but he was resolved not to permit Kutusof to take up a threatening position on our rear, and was determined to go forth from Moscow to fight a second battle if the Russian general should take up a position too close to our army and the line of its retreat. Marshal Davout, indeed, entreated Napoleon at once to combat and crush the enemy, and the emperor was disposed to follow this advice, provided it could be executed without too protracted marches. He awaited, therefore, in a state of readiness for immediate departure, the arrival of information with respect to the new position which had been taken up by the Russian army.

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

Such was the state of affairs when suddenly, during the terrible night of the 16th, the violent north-west wind carried to the Russian army, which was turning Moscow, the roaring

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

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

Taking advantage of some communications which had passed between General Sebastiani and General Raéffskoi, for the purpose of avoiding useless conflicts, he had given orders that all the wishes of the French should be complied with for the purpose of lulling their vigilance, and completely concealing from them the direction which the Russian army was about to pursue; and on the 17th, whilst a cavalry rearguard continued to pursue the Riazan route, and to draw in this same direction General Sebastiani, the bulk of his army, suddenly changing its direction, turned from the south-east to the south-west, and advanced behind the Pakra, a little river which, rising near the Smolensk route, pursued a circular course around Moscow, similar to that which the Russians wished to describe about it, and which would serve very suitably, therefore, as their line of defence. It was behind this river then, and not behind the Oka, that Kutusof took up his position, establishing himself, not

precisely on the line of our communications, but beside it, and within a day's march of it.

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

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

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

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

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

It was not Napoleon's pride alone, therefore, which rendered him repugnant to the idea of making a retrograde movement, but his profound perception of his actual position. The check which his army had apparently received in the south, before Torres Vedras, might be attributed to his own absence from the scene of the campaign; but should they encounter a similar check in the north, where he commanded in person at the head of his principal armies, it would be regarded as a sign that his career of victory had closed, and enslaved Europe, which awaited but the dawn of the slightest hope that he might be vanquished, would rise unanimously against him in his rear, and submerge the modern Pharaoh beneath the waves of a European insurrection.

Napoleon had good reason, therefore, to be excessively anxious to quit Moscow only as an enemy who was executing a manœuvre, and not to quit it as an enemy who was beating a retreat. And for this purpose the only plan that appeared to Napoleon worthy of adoption was that which should unite the four following conditions: first, certain and constant communication with

Paris; secondly, the approach of the army to its resources of provisions, equipments, and recruits; thirdly, the preservation of the undiminished prestige of our arms; and fourthly, continued support to the negotiations for peace which had recently been attempted. These four conditions he had found embodied in a plan which his inexhaustible genius, strongly excited as it was by the dangers of his situation, had conceived, and which was worthy to be ranked with any which he had yet devised. This plan consisted in an oblique retreat towards the north, which, in combination with an offensive movement carried on by the Duke of Belluna upon St. Petersburg, would have the twofold advantage of reconducting us into Poland, and of leaving us at the same time in an attitude as menacing as ever, and consequently as fully capable of negotiating.

Napoleon had reserved, as we have already seen, besides the army of the Prince of Schwarzenberg on the Dnieper, and the army of Marshals St. Cyr and Macdonald on the Dwina, the corps of the Duke of Belluna in the centre, which awaited at Smolensk ulterior orders. This corps, which numbered thirty thousand men, and could be raised to forty thousand by incorporating with it a portion of the Westphalian, Saxon, and Polish troops which had not yet had time to join, and the battalions *de marche* destined to recruit the army, might easily be carried to the north of the Dwina by the St. Petersburg route through Witebsk, and Veliki-Luki. By the junction of the troops under Marshal St. Cyr, and a division of Marshal Macdonald's, it would number seventy thousand men at least, ready to advance upon the second capital of Russia, the seat of government; and the Prince of Wittgenstein could not but promptly fall back before them upon St. Petersburg. At the moment when the Duke of Belluna should commence his movement, Napoleon with the guard, Prince Eugène, and Marshal Davout, would withdraw obliquely to the north, in the direction of Veliki-Luki, marching almost parallel to the Smolensk route, and at a distance from it of about twelve or fifteen leagues, whilst Marshal Ney, following with his corps the direct route from Moscow to Smolensk, would cover our retreat, and Murat, stealing away from Kutusof by a movement on his right, would proceed to Mojaïsk, and establish himself with Marshal Ney between Smolensk and Witebsk. After ten or twelve days' march, in accordance with this profoundly devised plan, the army would be thus posted: the Duke of Belluna would be at Veliki-Luki with seventy thousand men threatening St. Petersburg, Napoleon with seventy thousand at Wielij ready to support him, or to join the thirty thousand men under Murat and Ney for the purpose of making head against Kutusof by whatever route he might advance. By pursuing this route we should be taking a line of march untra-

versed by troops and consequently well provisioned, we should be driving the Russians in a direction they could not pursue without losing half their reinforcements, and without having suffered any loss, either moral or physical, would retrieve the error of the march to Moscow by one of the boldest and most finely conceived marches which had ever been executed. At the same time there was every appearance that the winter subsistence of the troops would be easily procured, for the magazines established at Wilna might be readily transported, the roads in winter being easily traversed, to Polotsk and Witebsk; and the immense quantity of cattle collected at Grodno would have no difficulty in arriving at Witebsk, since they would have to pass through a friendly country on their way to that place. And when the spring should have arrived, and Napoleon, having employed the whole winter in assembling new forces, should be ready to march with three hundred thousand men upon St. Petersburg, it was most probable that the simple menace of such a march would be the means of procuring peace; and if it did not, we should be able to occupy St. Petersburg without danger of finding this second capital wrapped in a conflagration, for it was far less generally built of wood than Moscow, and Muscovite fanaticism, moreover, had not attained there to the same intensity.

Conceived and matured in the latter days of September and the commencement of October, this plan, than which Napoleon's genius had never conceived anything more profound and admirable, might, by immediate departure, have been completely executed by the 15th of October, when the weather would most probably be still favourable, and when it was, in fact, extraordinarily fine. But all Napoleon's most excellent plans during this campaign were destined to be frustrated by his error of being advanced to so great a distance. Having already demanded so much of his soldiers and his lieutenants, and being able, after having brought them so far, to offer them only the ruins of Moscow, he was compelled to be cautious in his treatment of them, and in place of imperiously commanding them, as he had been wont, to endeavour to persuade them to look favourably on his projects. To troops amongst whom prevailed widespread lassitude and profound despondency, the result of the terrible spectacle of Moscow in ashes, and of secret dread of the fearful Russian winter, which within a month would be upon them, it was necessary not to speak as an imperious master justified in his commands of daily success, but as one who conciliates and consults, employing persuasions rather than orders. But when Napoleon submitted his plan to each of his lieutenants in succession, they protested, without exception, against a fresh

progress northwards, an attempt against the second capital of Russia.

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

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

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

Should these representations be listened to, M. de Lauriston



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

M. de Lauriston set out on the 4th of October, having previously sent forward a letter to General Kutusof, announcing his desire for a personal interview with the general of the Russian army. On the same day he reached the enemy's camp. The prudent Russian general, surrounded by the most eager partisans of the war policy, and the English agents, by whom he was eagerly watched, hesitated at first to grant a personal interview to M. de Lauriston from the fear of being compromised and called a traitor, as had been Barclay de Tolly. He sent, therefore, the emperor's aide-de-camp, Prince Walkonsky, to receive and entertain the French general at Benningsen's quarters. But M. de Lauriston, offended at this proceeding, refused to confer with Prince Walkonsky, and retired to Murat's headquarters, declaring that he would only speak with the general-in-chief himself. This sudden rupture of relations somewhat disturbed the Russian staff; for the vehement national hatred against the French began to subside amidst the higher ranks of the army, and they were unwilling to render peace quite impossible. And even the persons opposed to peace regretted the manner in which M. de Lauriston had been treated, although for a different motive—their fear that this offensive treatment might induce the French army to advance against them full of anger and determination before the Russian army had been reinforced or reorganised. The astute Benningsen, who united cunning with audacity, sought an interview with Murat, and by feigning a desire for peace which was not real, enticed the latter into making similar protestations, which were but too apparently genuine. Similar interviews took place at the advanced posts between the officers of each army, and a species of armistice was thus established, the result of which was that it was agreed on the part of the Russians to receive M. de Lauriston at headquarters.

Kutusof received M. de Lauriston with much politeness, and held with him many and long interviews, in the course of which he declared that he had employed his utmost endeavours to preserve the character of the war, that of a regular war between civilised nations, but he had not been able to compel the Russian peasants to comply with his wishes, and he was not surprised that he had found it impossible to civilise in three

months a people whom the French called barbarians. To M. de Lauriston's representations with respect to the burning of Moscow, he replied that he was far from accusing the French, and that he himself believed that this great sacrifice had been the result of Russian patriotism. In answer to the hints respecting the establishment of peace, or even an armistice, he represented himself as completely powerless to negotiate, and as being compelled to refer to the emperor. He proposed, therefore, and the proposal was accepted, to send the aide-de-camp Walkonsky to St. Petersburg, to convey thither Napoleon's overtures, and to bring back a response. With regard to the armistice, it was agreed that although the Russian general could not sign one, the advanced posts on either side should cease to carry on hostilities.

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

groups he directed him, neglecting the first and third, to remove the second to Wilna.

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

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

## BOOK XLV.

### THE BERESINA.

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

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

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

Whilst Alexander was entering into these arrangements with Sweden, he had concluded peace with the Porte, on terms somewhat different from those which he had originally flattered himself that he would be able to obtain. After having successively desisted from his demands for Wallachia, for Moldavia as far as the Sereth, and finally, for Moldavia altogether, he had finally persisted only in claiming Bessarabia, for the purpose of acquiring at least the mouths of the Danube, and on the alliance of the Turks, indulging in the chimerical idea of inducing them to invade the Illyrian provinces, perhaps even Italy, in concert with a Russian army. The Turks, weary of the war, and weary also of their relations with the European powers, had imprudently consented to yield up Bessarabia, which a few days' patience would have secured to them, but had resolutely refused to enter into any species of alliance with Russia. The treaty of peace, already signed, remained uncompleted only from this cause; and Admiral Tchitchakoff, finding himself frustrated in the hope of invading the French empire in company with the Turks, had devised the contrary plan of invading the Turkish empire itself, and had proposed to Alexander to march directly upon Constantinople for the purpose of seizing it; hoping that, habituated as the world then was to the overthrow of Italy, this magnificent conquest might be secured to Russia by the arrangements of the next peace. When this proposition was first submitted to Alexander it greatly excited him, and he was on the point of giving orders for carrying it into execution. But fearing, on reflection, that such an action might displease, and even alienate, not only his declared allies, England and Sweden, but even his secret allies, Prussia and Austria, by laying violent hands on

Constantinople, considering the difficulty of marching upon this capital with at the most fifty thousand men, the imprudence which he would be committing in invading another country when the invader was actually in his own, and the great advantage which might result from moving these fifty thousand men, in conjunction with the thirty thousand under Tarmazoff, upon the flanks of the French army, he had restrained his rash friend, Admiral Tchitchakoff, recommending him to defer his designs upon Constantinople and to march immediately upon Volhynia.

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

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

The idea that Napoleon would immediately march from Moscow to St. Petersburg universally prevailed, and preparations for departure were already commenced. In the meantime,

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

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

As the Russian fleet of Cronstadt would soon become enclosed in the ice, and thus become exposed to the danger of falling into the hands of the French, he determined upon the painful sacrifice of entrusting it to the English; and having informed Lord Cathcart of his fears respecting its safety, declared that he confided it to the honour and good faith of Great Britain. The English ambassador, delighted at such a proposal, promised that the deposit should be faithfully guarded, and that the Russian fleet should be received with the most cordial hospitality in the English ports. Alexander, accord-

ingly, having stored in it his most valuable possessions, had the fleet moved towards the Great Belt, in order that it might be able to leave the Baltic at the first signal, under the protection of the British flag. At the same time much property belonging to the crown, especially the State papers, was conveyed to Archangel.

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

Induced to adopt this plan by his interviews with General Pfuhl, and encouraged to persevere in them by his aide-de-camp Michaud, Alexander directed M. de Czernicheff to proceed in succession to Prince Kutusof, Admiral Tchitchakoff, and Count Wittgenstein, for the purpose of inducing them to concur in its execution. And being occupied, therefore, in such views as these, it was not probable that Alexander would make a favourable answer to Napoleon's overtures, which caused him much satisfaction, as a proof of the embarrassments which the French had begun to experience in the midst of Moscow, and which presaged not only the safety but also the triumph of Russia. As, however, it was of importance to retain Napoleon in Moscow as long as possible, Alexander determined to delay



his answer to those overtures, without allowing the enemy to suspect what would be its character.

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

On the 12th of October, a date at which it was impossible that any answer to the communication made to Kutusof on the 5th should have arrived, Napoleon perceived that it was absolutely necessary to take some decided steps, and that he ought, if he intended to remain in Moscow, to drive back the Russians from their cantonments, and if he intended to depart, to commence his retreat immediately, before the setting in of unfavourable weather. He had already ordered the departure of all the wounded capable of being removed, and given directions that everything should be in readiness at Smolensk to assist the progress of the army in whatever direction he might order. But still he hesitated, withheld by the reflection that the first backward step which he took would be the commencement of a series of painful and dangerous confessions—confessions that he had advanced too far, that he was unable to maintain his position at that distance, that he had deceived himself, that he had failed to obtain the object for the sake of which he had entered on the campaign. And what defections, what ideas of rebellion, would there be excited by the spectacle of Napoleon, hitherto invincible, compelled to retreat.

Shrinking from this danger, he constantly brooded over the idea of either passing the winter in Moscow, or of executing a

movement which, while it conducted him nearer to his magazines, would have the appearance of being a manœuvre and not a retreat. The plan of passing the winter in Moscow was one of singular audacity, and was not without its partisans, the chief of whom was a man whose opinion deserved the greatest respect, and who was M. Daru, accompanying Napoleon at secretary of State, and in this character charged with all the details of the management of the army. This eminent administrator considered that it would be easier to feed the army in Moscow, and to secure its communications whilst it remained there, than to convey it safely and in good condition to Smolensk, by an unknown route, should a new one be adopted, or a devastated one, should it retrace the path by which it had advanced. The great difficulty was not how to find the means of subsistence, for the army possessed, as has already been observed, great stores of corn, rice, vegetables, spirituous liquors, and salted provisions; but how to provide forage for the horses, which were dying of inanition, and for whom it was found scarcely possible to provide food even at a season which was far from being the least favourable of the year. But even if this difficulty could be overcome, there remained the no less serious difficulty of maintaining the communications between the posts on the route from Smolensk to Moscow, for which purpose it would be necessary to convert each post into a fortress, and to garrison them with forces which would necessarily amount in the aggregate to twelve or fifteen thousand men, without taking into consideration those which would be necessary at Darogobouge, Wiasma, Ghjat, Mojaïsk, and many other places of less importance, but which it would nevertheless be necessary to defend. And what would happen in Paris—what would take place in Europe, if, in spite of all the care which might be taken to keep open the communications, there should some day be no news of Napoleon, and if he should be separated from the empire as Massena had been during the campaign in Portugal? And finally, supposing that all these difficulties should be successfully overcome, what advantage, it was asked, would the French have gained by being at the commencement of the succeeding spring in Moscow? In Moscow, which was one hundred and eighty leagues from St. Petersburg—one hundred and eighty leagues of the most difficult road, without taking into account the one hundred leagues between Smolensk and Moscow, and which would raise the number of leagues to be traversed by the reinforcements which the grand army would require when about to march for St. Petersburg to two hundred and eighty leagues; whilst if it took up a position at Witebsk, the distance which would thus have to be traversed would only be one hundred and fifty leagues.

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

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

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

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

With respect to the plan of operations to be adopted, there was much diversity of opinion; Marshal Davout expressing himself strongly in favour of the Kalouga route, and intimating very plainly his opinion that the army had already delayed too long at Moscow, whilst Major-General Berthier, accustomed to make his opinions conform to those of Napoleon, and conscious of the preference of the emperor for the northern route, proposed that the return should be upon Witebsk, the line of march lying laterally to the Smolensk route, by Woskresensk, Wolo-klamsk, Zubkow, Bieloï. Marshal Mortier, loyal and submissive, concurred in this opinion, whilst Ney, on the contrary, giving way to his natural roughness and indocility, reiterated Marshal Davout's opinion that the army had already delayed too long at Moscow. Prince Eugène, too timid to maintain any opinion contrary to that of the staff as represented by Berthier, ac-

quiesced in the views supported by the latter; and M. Daru, putting forward an independent opinion, declared that the army ought to remain at Moscow during the winter, since, he maintained, provisions of all sorts could be obtained then in sufficient abundance, and the adoption of this plan would relieve the army from the double inconvenience of a retreat, and a movement across districts which were either unknown or devastated at an advanced period of the year.

When Napoleon sought the counsels of others he usually received them without remark, reserving his own opinion; and the perplexities in which he was involved were sufficient cause for his silence on this occasion. He was most anxious to remain, but he perceived the difficulty there would be, should he adopt that measure, in obtaining provisions for the army, and maintaining his communications, and at the same time, the approach of the bad season and the appearance of Admiral Tchitchakoff upon the Lower Dnieper were forcible arguments against a movement northwards, and in favour of the plan of marching upon Kalouga, establishing the army in winter quarters in this rich province, leaving a garrison at the Kremlin, and posting the Duke of Belluna at Jelnia, for the purpose of maintaining communications with Smolensk. This plan, therefore, was the one finally selected, but still the vague hope of receiving some answer from St. Petersburg, the difficulty attending the evacuation on account of the want of waggons, the fineness of the weather, and the natural repugnance to commence a retrograde movement, caused a further delay of four or five days, and the final orders were about to be given directing the march upon Kalouga, when on the 18th of October a sudden and serious occurrence caused the most unfortunate delay.

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

Although Kutusof, whose army was now raised by the arrival of reinforcements to eighty thousand infantry and regular cavalry, and twenty thousand Cossacks, had determined to risk nothing against such an enemy as Napoleon, and only to attack him when he should have already been three parts vanquished by the climate, the position occupied by Murat was well

calculated to induce him to break this resolution. Situated in the midst of a great plain, behind the Czernicznia ravine, Murat had his right covered by the deepest portion of this ravine, which fell into the Nara, but his left was unprotected, since the ravine in that direction was not of sufficient depth to be a defence against an enemy's attacks. By taking advantage of a wood which extended between the two camps, and which would serve to screen its movements, the Russian army could easily debouch on Murat's left, turn him, cut him off from Woronowo, and might possibly succeed in destroying his corps, which comprised, besides Poniatowski's infantry, almost the whole French cavalry.

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

This manœuvre had been executed during the night of the 17th, and on the morning of the 18th General Sebastiani had found himself suddenly attacked, and being unprepared for such a movement on the part of the enemy, lost some pieces of cannon, several hundreds of men taken prisoners by the enemy, and a considerable quantity of baggage. But nevertheless, by means of prodigies of valour, in the course of which he dispersed Orloff-Denisoff's cavalry and sabred four battalions of infantry, and by means also of ill-judged tactics on the part of the Russians, Murat succeeded in falling back in safety upon Woronowo, as much a conqueror as vanquished, and in possession of the Moscow route. He had lost about fifteen hundred men, whilst the loss on the side of the Russians was about two thousand.

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

At the same time he saw that the best means of chastising the latter would be to put into execution the proposed march upon the Kalouga route; and he accordingly immediately ordered Prince Eugène, Marshals Ney and Davout, and the

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

On the morning of the 19th of October, the first day of this retreat which was to be ever memorable for the misery and the heroism by which it was to be signalised, the corps under Prince Eugène commanded the movement of the army, followed successively by those of Marshals Davout and Ney, and the imperial guard. The cavalry under Murat, the Poles under Prince Poniatowski, a division of Marshal Davout's corps under General Fredericks, were at Woronowo, in front of the Russian rearguard; and General Broussier's division of Prince Eugène's corps had for some days past occupied a position on the new Kalouga route, which passed between the old Kalouga route, now followed by the bulk of the army, and that of Smolensk.

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

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

This strange and immense appendage to the army was a source of considerable anxiety and even alarm, for how, it was asked, would it be possible for the army to manœuvre when burdened by such an encumbrance; and how, moreover, to

resist the attacks of the Cossacks. Bound by these considerations, Napoleon was strongly inclined to give orders which would relieve the army from this source of embarrassment; but on reflection it occurred to him that the accidents which would occur on the line of march, and the daily consumption of provisions, would speedily reduce the mass of baggage to more moderate dimensions, and that it was unnecessary, therefore, to distress its proprietors by rigorous regulations.

The army occupied the whole of the 19th in effecting its departure from Moscow, and had not, at the most, proceeded on its march more than three or four leagues on that day; but on the following day, the 20th, the weather still continuing fine, it was enabled by means of a forced march to encamp between the Desna and the Pakra. Napoleon, who had remained at Moscow during the 19th for the purpose of superintending the evacuation, set out on the morning of the 20th, and having speedily arrived at the château de Troitskoié, there formed a sudden resolution of the utmost importance. He had set out from Moscow, not with the idea of beating a retreat, but with the intention of punishing the enemy for the manner in which he had surprised our troops at Winkowo, of driving him back beyond Kalouga, and taking up a position in this city, communicating on the one hand with the troops marched from Smolensk upon Jelnia, and on the other with Marshal Mortier, who had been left at the Kremlin. But as soon as he had glanced at the enemy's position he modified his plan with the most admirable promptitude. The fact was that there were two routes by which he could reach Kalouga—the one to the right, parallel to that of Smolensk, called the new route, passing by Scherapowo, Fominskoié, Borowsk, and Malo-Jaroslawetz, entirely free from the enemy, occupied by the division Broussier, and for the most part passing through countries which had not been devastated; the other, that which the French army was actually following, passing by Desna, Gorki, Woronowo, Winkowo, and Taroutino, in the possession of the Russians, who had established themselves upon it in a camp which had been carefully constructed; and the brilliant manœuvre which Napoleon now suddenly devised, was to avoid an engagement with the enemy, which would probably cost him twelve or fifteen thousand men, by secretly defiling in front of the Russian army, concealing the movement by making a sudden detour to the right, which would carry the army from the old Kalouga route to the new, and place it out of danger of attack from the enemy. But whilst the adoption of this plan would enable the French army to recover its endangered communications, and conduct it to the most fertile district it could possibly find in these regions at this season, it would



involve the necessity of definitively abandoning Moscow, for should it adopt the plan of avoiding instead of engaging and vanquishing the Russians, and leave them between itself and Moscow, unvanquished, and a hundred thousand strong, it would be unable to maintain Marshal Mortier in his position in the Kremlin, since it could not in this case send him aid. Napoleon, therefore, determining upon his line of action with all the promptitude of a great captain, immediately sent orders to Marshal Mortier to evacuate the Kremlin, to destroy it by means of mines which had been already prepared, and to rejoin the army by the Wereja route. At the same time he sent orders to Junot to evacuate Mojaisk with the last columns of the wounded by the Smolensk route, which the army was about to cover by its presence on the new Kalouga route.

These orders having been despatched relative to the evacuation of Moscow, Napoleon devoted his attention to the movement from left to right, which he had determined that the army should execute for the purpose of proceeding from the old Kalouga route to the new. He planned that the army should make this movement by the road running from Gorki to Fominskióé by Ignatowo, and ordered Prince Eugène, a portion of whose cavalry and the division Broussier were already at Fominskióé, to make the first advance in this new direction, Marshal Davout to follow him, and the guard to follow Davout. Marshal Ney, who remained at Gorki with his corps, with the Polish division Claparède, and a portion of the light cavalry, was to replace Murat in front of Woronowo, to render himself conspicuous before the Russian advanced posts, and to make demonstrations in the neighbourhood of Podolsk, continuing this species of comedy until the evening of the 23rd, so as to deceive the Russians as long as possible, and thus allow time for the passage of our baggage; and then was to carry his own troops from the old Kalouga route to the new by forced marches, reaching Malo-Jaroslawetz by the 25th.

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

Having in this strange manner, then, and in a sudden moment of inspiration, as it were, resolved to beat a retreat and to evacuate Moscow, Napoleon passed the day between Troitskióé and

Krasnoé-Pakra, for the purpose of personally assisting in ordering the defiling of the army, which continued to present a spectacle as extraordinary as it was a subject of anxiety, by reason of the burdens which encumbered its rear, and which at every ravine, at every little bridge, at every village caused a deplorable delay which gave ample intimation of the terrible consequences which might be expected to ensue when the army should be pursued by the enemy's innumerable light cavalry.

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

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

In the meantime, the Russian army remained with singular carelessness at its camp at Taroutino, perfectly unconscious of the humiliation which was being prepared for it, and supposing only that Napoleon intended to attack and carry Taroutino in revenge for the surprise at Winkowo. Nevertheless, the light troops of General Doctoroff having given intimation of the presence at Fominskoié of Broussier's division, which had been during some days past in occupation of the new Kalouga route, Kutusof imagined that the purpose of this division was to connect the main body of the French army, which was now distinctly visible on the old Kalouga route, with the troops which pursued the Smolensk route, and he resolved to seize it, considering it to be in a position very open to his attack. He entrusted the execution of the proposed measure to General Doctoroff; but the latter, having advanced as far as Aristowo on the 22nd, believed that he had discovered before him something more considerable than a simple division; and as information, moreover, reached Kutusof on the morning of the 23rd, that

French troops had been observed executing a transverse movement from Krasnoé-Pakra to Fominskióí, it became evident to the Russian general that Napoleon had abandoned the old Kalouga route for the purpose of reaching the new, and turning the Taroutino camp. To stop Napoleon at Borowsk was not, therefore, any longer possible, and the only chance which the Russians now had of barring his road was by advancing to Malo-Jaroslawetz, behind the Lougea. Kutusof, therefore, ordered Doctoroff to proceed thither with the utmost despatch, and at the same time made the most strenuous exertions to assemble his army so as to be able to direct it by way of Letachewa upon Malo-Jaroslawetz, the possession of which, it appeared probable, would decide the campaign.

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

The division Broussier, penetrating into the town, chased Doctoroff's troops from street to street, and compelled them to fall back upon the plateau; but at this time the corps of General Raéffskoi, preceding the Russian army, arrived at the town, and immediately took part in the furious struggle which the Russians were making to check the French in their desired retreat upon Kalouga; nevertheless the French, although now only ten or eleven thousand against twenty-four thousand enemies, and exposed to a furious fire of artillery, held their ground. The unhappy town, which was soon in flames, was taken and retaken no less than six times, and the combat was carried on in the midst of a conflagration which destroyed the wounded, and calcined their corpses. At length, just as we were about to be finally driven back, the Italian division Pino,

which had not hitherto engaged the enemy in this campaign, and which was most eager to distinguish itself, crossed the stream, and climbing the heights, reached the plateau in spite of a furious fire, and debouching on the left of the town, drove back the masses of the Russian infantry; but Raëffskoi's corps speedily attacked it, and in spite of its firmness, it was in great need of reinforcements, when the chasseurs of the royal Italian guard hastened up in their turn, and supported it with the utmost valour; and Malo-Jaroslawetz having been retaken for the seventh time by the French with the aid of the Italians, remained in our hands, covered with thousands of corpses and filled with smouldering ruins.

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

Napoleon bivouacked a little in the rear of the Lougea, at the village of Gorodina; convinced that his finely conceived manœuvre, which would have been successful had he attempted to execute it at the head of less considerable numbers, was no longer possible without fighting a desperate battle, which would probably add ten thousand wounded to the immense encumbrances by which the army was already burdened. He passed the night deliberating on the favourable and unfavourable chances of a determined march upon Kalouga, and early on the morning of the 25th hastened to reconnoitre the position taken up by the Russians. Setting out from the village of Gorodina, surrounded by his principal officers, he had reached the bank of the Lougea, and was about to cross it, when suddenly were heard the tumultuous cries of a number of sutlers flying from a body of about four or five thousand Cossacks, who had passed the Lougea on our right, with a display of that skill in the art of surprise which is so distinguishing a property of these indefatigable savages. The Hetman Platow and the whole Cossack nation were constantly brooding over the idea of effecting the capture of Napoleon, and taking him a prisoner to Moscow, considering that hundreds of millions would not be too great a reward for such a

capture; and on this occasion had but one amongst them been acquainted with the features of him with respect to whom they entertained this dream of avidity, it might have been realised. Rushing right and left, they thrust their lances against the imperial group, which fought sword in hand in a close circle around Napoleon, who smiled at the misadventure, when, fortunately, the dragoons of the guard, having perceived the danger, hastened up under the command of the brave Lieutenant Dulac, and throwing themselves upon the enemy, sabred some, and drove the remainder beyond the Lougea.

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

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

distance towards this city, or at least to have reached Darogobouge, where it would have found the convoys sent to meet it.

But although it must ever be the subject of regret that this plan was not adopted, the French army could not and ought not to have ventured to put it into execution. The unanimous opinion of the council which now sat under the roof of an obscure Russian cottage was in favour of an immediate and direct retreat by Mojaisk and the beaten Smolensk route; but Marshal Davout, whilst fully sharing in the opinion that it was absolutely necessary to renounce the attempt to force a path to Kalouga, nevertheless proposed the adoption of a line of march which still remained open, and which, lying between the new Kalouga route, occupied by Kutusof, and the Smolensk route, filled with desolation, passed by Medouin, Jouknow, and Jelnia, across a country which was undevastated and abounded in provisions.

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

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

In the meantime, Ney, having quitted Gorki during the night of the 23rd, was at this time defiling behind the main body of the army, and was two days' march distant from its head. Rain

had suddenly come down during the night of the 23rd, and softening the roads, had rendered the labours of the horses far beyond their strength. The bivouac was already cold, and everything wore the same sad and sombre aspect.

On the 26th of October, at a very early hour, Napoleon reconnoitred the new position taken up by the Russians, and found them to be making apparently a retrograde movement, with the purpose probably of taking up a better position, and one in which they might more advantageously defend the Kalouga route. In the meantime, Prince Poniatowski, having unfortunately attempted to advance along the Medouin road, the intermediate route which had been pointed out by Marshal Davout, had experienced there a check which was not likely to recommend the adoption of this line of march; and Napoleon at length resolved to execute a direct retreat by the Smolensk route, and gave the necessary orders for its execution.

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

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

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

And now failure of the means of transport already began to strew the roads not only with baggage, but also with the wounded. For a few days the wounded had been carried on with the army by means of giving up all the baggage waggons to their use, without exception even of those of the staff; but

at every step it now became absolutely necessary to leave some behind from the want of means of transport; and Davout, who, stern and inflexible as he was, was distracted by this cruel necessity, stated his embarrassments to the staff, which, occupying a position at the head of the army, gave too little attention to what was taking place in the rear. In the meantime, Napoleon, who had long been accustomed to entrust the execution of details to his lieutenants, who had at this time no great manœuvre to order, and was, moreover, profoundly humiliated by the retreat which could no longer be dissimulated, began to remain perpetually in the midst of his staff, confining himself to the expression of blame directed against Davout's management of the rearguard, declaring that he was too methodical and marched too slowly; and he added to the difficulties of the rearguard by ordering, in his irritation against the Russians, the destruction of the villages on the line of march, and thus, as he neglected to confine the performance of this duty to Davout's corps, deprived the rearguard of food and shelter which it might otherwise have obtained.

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

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



treated M. de Wintzingerode, showed this officer the utmost civility and kindness.

The army having arrived on the Mojaisk heights, bivouacked on the field of the battle of Borodino, and could not but experience, as it gazed upon it once more, the most painful emotions. In a peopled country a field is soon freed from the signs of deadly strife, but in this instance, the inhabitants of Mojaisk and the surrounding country having fled, there had been none to remove the fifty thousand corpses, the broken waggons, the dismounted cannon, the innumerable arms and pieces of armour with which the conflict had strewed the ground. The corpses were half devoured by beasts of prey, and swarms of carrion birds, filling the air with sinister cries, obscured the heavens. The frost which had begun to prevail during the nights had fortunately checked the dangerous exhalations which would have otherwise proceeded from the corpses; but had rather increased than diminished the repulsiveness of their appearance. The reflections inspired by this spectacle were of the most sombre character. How many had been the victims, it was said, and how futile the results! From Wilna to Witebsk, from Witebsk to Smolensk, and still on to Wiasma and Ghjat, had the army hurried for the purpose of engaging the enemy in a decisive battle at Borodino; this battle had at length been fought, and the army had then marched on to Moscow to reap there the fruit of its victory, and had found there only a vast conflagration. From thence it had been forced to retreat without having forced the enemy to submission, to retreat without adequate resources, with the certainty of having to pass a painful winter in Poland, and with scarcely any hope of peace, since peace would scarcely be the result of a retreat which was evidently compulsory; and for such results as these had the earth been strewn with fifty thousand corpses!

Anxious that the troops should not be utterly overcome by so melancholy a spectacle, Napoleon ordered that each regiment should stay only during one night at Borodino. The army found there poor General Junot, who was suffering from his wound, and still more from the contemptuous treatment he had received during the campaign, and whose troops were now reduced to little more than three thousand from the ten thousand they had numbered at Smolensk, and the fifteen thousand they had numbered at the passage of the Niemen. Whilst the main army was at Moscow he had devoted himself to the care of the wounded in the Kolotskoi Abbey, and had conveyed as many as he was able to Smolensk. There still remained, however, two thousand to be transported thither, and Napoleon, still full of solicitude, as he ever was, with respect to the wounded,

gave orders that every person, without exception, whether officer, cantinier, or fugitive from Moscow, who possessed any species of vehicle, should undertake the conveyance of a certain number of the wounded. The surgeon—Larrey—whose goodness of heart knew no bounds, had already hastened forward for the purpose of bestowing on the wounded in the Kolotskoi Abbey all the resources of his skill. He found there some Russian officers who owed their lives to his care, and when they expressed the extreme gratitude they felt towards him, he demanded of them as the sole recompense he would receive, that they would pledge their honour that when they should themselves be free, they would bestow upon other unfortunates who might then be in their power such care as they had themselves received from the surgeon-in-chief of the French army. They unanimously gave the required promise, and it is known to God alone whether they paid the debt contracted with the best of men.

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

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





Paul Girardet sc.

MARSHAL DAVOUT

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

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

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

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

with some of the artillery waggons, and in some instances the attempt had succeeded, but in others the waggons had broken down, and thus choking up the path, had raised the confusion to its height.

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

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

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

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

The brave General Gerard, whose division formed the ad-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

On the 5th of November, Napoleon arrived at Darogobouge,



Prince Eugène's corps reaching it on the 6th, and the other corps on the 7th and 8th. The cold had for some time past been very bitter, but not of a deadly intensity; but on the 9th a sudden and violent snowstorm cruelly increased the general misery. Except in the ranks of the rearguard, which Davout had conducted with inflexible firmness, and which Ney now conducted with an energy which no suffering could subdue, the sentiment of duty began to be utterly neglected in the ranks of the army. All the wounded had been left behind, and certain of the allied troops, to whom had been entrusted the Russian prisoners, had relieved themselves of the charge by destroying them. Seized by that contagious selfishness which is ever so sad and striking a feature in great calamities, immense numbers of soldiers deserted from their ranks to seek the means of subsistence, and to increase the disorderly and unarmed crowd which followed the army, and which numbered at the departure from Darogobouge about 50,000 persons. More than 10,000 soldiers had already been left dead on the route; there remained scarcely 50,000 under arms; and all the cavalry, with the exception of that of the guard, was dismounted. But there remained only three more marches between the army and Smolensk, and there the army hoped to find magazines, provisions, clothing, shelter, reinforcements, and fortified walls. This hope supported the courage of the army, and Smolensk! Smolensk! was the universal cry.

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

On the two wings of the army the plans of the enemy had been completely developed. Admiral Tchitchakoff, after having joined Tarmazoff with about 30,000 men, and assumed the command of the two armies, had commenced operations on the offensive against the Prince of Schwarzenberg and General Reynier, who commanded with much unity, but without much energy, the Austro-Saxon corps; driving them before him from the line of the Styr to that of the Bug. At the same time the allied generals were scarcely to blame, for General Reynier could not be more enterprising than the Prince of Schwarzenberg, and the latter could scarcely have done more than he did. Had he received a reinforcement of 10,000 men he might have displayed greater hardihood, but the Austrian government, resolved to observe the terms of the agreement it had made with Russia, was far from desirous of increasing the auxiliary corps with which it had furnished Napoleon, and would only consent to raising it to 30,000 by a reinforcement of 5000 or 6000.

The allied generals were in a position which formed their usual asylum, behind the marshes of Pinsk, when Prince Schwarzenberg, having received information of the approach of these 5000 or 6000 men by Zamosa, left General Reynier in position, and proceeded to meet them. Having united these troops with his own, he returned to Reynier, who on his part awaited a reinforcement of 12,000 or 13,000 men, the division Durutte, which he expected to arrive by way of Warsaw. In the meantime, Admiral Tchitchakoff, in conformity with the Emperor Alexander's instructions which had been sent to him by M. de Czernicheff, had left General Sacken with 25,000 men in front of the allied generals, and had marched with 35,000 upon the Upper Beresina, for the purpose of acting in concert with Count Wittgenstein, who had been directed to repulse Marshal St. Cyr from the banks of the Dwina, and to advance to meet the army of Moldavia.

Whilst this was the condition of affairs on the right, that on the left, or in other words, on the Lower and Upper Dwina, was still worse. Marshal Macdonald, after having remained during the months of September and October close to Dunabourg, with a Polish division of 7000 or 8000 men, for the twofold purpose, in pursuit of which he was entirely unsuccessful, of covering the siege of Riga, and maintaining communications with Marshal St. Cyr, had withdrawn towards the Lower Dwina, for the purpose of supporting the Prussians against the troops of Finland, which had been carried to Livonia according to the arrangement made by Russia with Sweden, and being from this moment thrown out of the radius of the operations of the grand army, found itself condemned to a long period of inaction.

At Polotsk itself the progress of affairs had been still more disastrous. The Finland troops embarked for Revel had landed in Livonia, marched upon Riga, seconded General Essen in the demonstrations which had recalled Marshal Macdonald to the Lower Dwina, and then ascended this river to the number of 12,000 men, under the Count de Steinghel. Wittgenstein, reinforced by these troops and some militia, which raised the strength of his corps to 48,000 men, had resolved to assume the offensive, for the purpose of obliging Marshal St. Cyr to evacuate Polotsk, and to act in concert with Admiral Tchitchakoff on the Upper Beresina. In conformity with the plan of operations sent to St. Petersburg, the Count de Steinghel was to cross the Dwina below Polotsk, for the purpose of harassing the rear of Marshal St. Cyr, and thus rendering more easy the execution of the direct operations which were in preparation against him. Marshal St. Cyr's whole force only amounted to 22,000 men at the most, whilst that of the enemy against which he had to defend himself

amounted to 45,000, of whom 33,000 were to attack him in front and 12,000 to take him in reverse.

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

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

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

The Russians having debouched boldly on our right, advanced without hesitation towards that portion of the town which was unprotected by the Polota, and were vigorously encountered by the divisions Legrand and Maison, the latter of which, in a more exposed position than the former, maintained its ground with the utmost firmness although assailed on every side, and at length succeeded in driving back the enemy to a considerable distance. The division Legrand acted with equal vigour, and the Russians were not only completely checked, but repulsed. In the meantime, Marshal St. Cyr had been sufficiently prudent not to leave his left unprotected, and when the remainder of the Russian troops, debouching in their turn, threw themselves upon the Polota redoubts, they were permitted to approach to the very foot of the works, and were overwhelmed by their fire. On this point, therefore, as on the other, in spite of some confusion caused by the over-eagerness of the Swiss troops, the army of Count Wittgenstein was repulsed with a loss of from three to four thousand men, our own loss being about half this number.

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

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

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

A great addition to Napoleon's sources of anxiety consisted in the fact that the abundance which the army had hoped to find at Smolensk did not actually exist there, for the active transport service which had been established by M. de Bassano from Kowno to Minsk by Wilna had been chiefly employed in the conveyance of spirituous liquors and munitions of war, as it was confidently believed that sufficient corn would be found in Lithuania; but when an extensive requisition had been issued to the Lithuanian farmers for the corn which our commissariat required, they had made the want, either real or pretended, of waggons, a reason for neglecting to satisfy the demand.

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

There had been detained during many years in the prisons of the *conciergerie*, an old officer, General Malet, an ardent and

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

In the *Maison de Santé* near the *Porte St. Antoine*, in which he had been confined, he had formed an intimacy with a priest who was animated by sentiments similar to his own, and with his assistance he selected two young men, very innocent but very bold, and ignorant of his secret, whom he designed to employ as his *aides-de-camp*. By the assistance of these young persons he procured uniforms and pistols, and on the evening of the 22nd October, the day on which Napoleon was manœuvring around *Malo-Jaroslawetz*, he escaped by a window from the place in which he had been confined (the priest, his colleague, having already fled), ran to the lodging where the two young men awaited him, dressed one of them as an *aide-de-camp*, clothed himself in the uniform of a general, told them that Napoleon had died at Moscow on the 7th October; that the Senate assembled that night had voted the re-establishment of the Republic; and then, displaying false orders which had been carefully prepared in his prison, proceeded to the *Popincourt* barrack, then occupied by the 10th cohort of the national guard, commanded by an old officer of the Revolution named *Soulier*, who had served and acquired honour in Spain. General Malet had this officer awakened, and then proceeded to his bedside, feigning to be General *Lamotte*, declaring that Napoleon was dead, slain at Moscow by a ball on the 7th October; that the Senate had secretly assembled, decided on the re-establishment of the

Republic, and named General Malet commander of the public force in Paris; and that he, the speaker, had been sent to assume the command of the 10th legion to carry into execution certain orders on various points of the capital. This news was received by Soulier and the troops under his command, to whom he immediately communicated it, with extreme surprise, but without doubt, and the supposed commands were met by unhesitating obedience.

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

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

Up to this point the plot had succeeded well, but the arrest of the minister of police had somewhat delayed that of the minister of war, and General Malet himself lost time in effecting that of General Hulin, the governor of the Place de Paris, whom he had surprised in bed, and to whom he had made the same assertions which had already met with so much success. General Hulin had received without hesitation the news of

Napoleon's death, but was reluctant to believe that the Republic had been re-established by a decree of the Senate, and demanded of General Malet the production of his orders, when the latter—more faithful to his plan than his accomplices had been—replied to General Hulin that he would show them to him in his cabinet, and accompanying him thither, shot him down with a pistol. From the cabinet Malet proceeded to the chief of the staff, Doucet, repeated his tale, announced to him his elevation to the grade of general, and demanded of him the immediate surrender of the command of the fortress. But at this point of his undertaking his nerves began to give way, he hesitated, lost time, and encouraged by his manner an incredulity which he failed to overwhelm by an absolute affirmation of the truth of his assertions or another pistol-shot. Whilst he was conversing with Doucet, another officer of the fortress, named Laborde, came up, and recognising Malet's features, at once surmised that he was conducting an audacious conspiracy, called to the spot an officer of police who was well acquainted with Malet, and who perceived that he was one of the persons under his charge, and demanding how and why he had quitted his prison, embarrassed and disconcerted him to such a degree that he lost all command over his troop; and upon his attempting to use his arms, he was overpowered and placed under arrest in the presence of his soldiers, who began to think that they might have been deceived. Malet flattered himself that his accomplices would come to his succour; but instead of them, a portion of the imperial guard soon afterwards came up and arrested those who had come to make arrests.

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

It was scarcely noon when the whole affair was over, everything in its old position, the authorities, for a moment surprised, re-established in their functions; and Paris, becoming informed of this rapid series of events, passed from a feeling of alarm to one of intense amusement at the expense of a detested police which had been so easily overpowered. And this feeling of amusement was again, in its turn, succeeded by one of terror at the existence of such a state of things as that which had permitted this affair to take place. In the

meantime, the police and the military authority, fearing that Napoleon would attribute the blame of this extraordinary adventure to one of them, were equally anxious for an examination into the facts of the case, each hoping that the result would be its own justification and the blame of the other. The fact was that although the police had not discovered, and the military authorities had assisted in the execution of the plot, they were equally and entirely innocent; for, on the one hand, the police could not possibly have discovered what existed only in the head of a single man, and on the other, it was perfectly natural that an inferior military authority should believe the occurrence of so probable a circumstance as the death of Napoleon. The government, composed of the ministers, the great dignitaries present in Paris, assembled under the presidency of the Arch-Chancellor Cambacérès, to determine upon what steps should be taken in respect to what had just occurred, and resolved upon the appointment of a military commission for the purpose of trying more than twenty accused persons. The result was that fourteen unhappy wretches were arrested, and within fifteen days judged and condemned, and twelve of them executed.

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

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

Napoleon sent orders to Schwarzenberg and Reynier to march as speedily as possible against Admiral Tchitchakoff, since the presence of this general on the Beresina, or in other words, on



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

Having despatched these orders, Napoleon set out for Smolensk, urging Marshal Ney, who was to cover the retreat, to delay the enemy as long as possible, and directing Prince Eugène to leave the Smolensk route at Darogobouge for that of Doukhowtchina, which he had already traversed, on which it would be possible to procure a certain amount of provisions, and from whence it would be possible to secure the position at Witebsk, which was at this moment threatened by Wittgenstein.

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

Whilst Napoleon marched upon Smolensk, Prince Eugène

followed the Doukhowtchina route, and at the close of the first day's march his artillery and baggage were suddenly checked by a hill, up which the most strenuous efforts of the artillerymen could only raise the very lightest cannon, and at the foot of which, consequently, the heaviest pieces had to be abandoned. On the following morning the troops resumed their march at an early hour for the sake of crossing the Vop, a river which in the month of August had been a mere brook, but which now rolled wide and deep, and was full of mud. The pontonniers who accompanied Prince Eugène's troops had hastened forward, and had employed the night in the construction of a bridge, which was, however, but partly completed when a crowd of stragglers, coming up in the midst of a thick mist, attempted to cross it with so much eagerness that many were precipitated into the water and drowned. In the meantime, some of the cavalry who still possessed their horses made a successful search for a ford, by which the transit of the river was at length accomplished by the main body of the troops; but when it was attempted to convey the cannon across to the other bank, some of the pieces soon became fastened in the bed of the river, and thus obstructed the passage at the very moment when between three and four thousand Cossacks ran up, uttering the most savage cries, and upon being checked by the fire of the rearguard, threw a storm of bullets upon the terrified crowd of unarmed soldiers and fugitives from Moscow who were still attempting to pass to the other bank of the river. At every instant the tumult increased, and it became necessary to resign the baggage, which was the sole source of subsistence, to the fugitives, and which had up to this time afforded some resources to the officers.

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

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

Some Poles having been despatched in search of information of the general state of affairs, brought back news which almost convinced Prince Eugène and his staff that the city of Witebsk had been taken, and rendered them, therefore, unanimously of opinion that the wisest plan would be to rejoin the grand army by marching directly upon Smolensk. In order to gain a march, the corps set out during the night of the 11th, having first set fire to the poor wooden town which had afforded them so much succour; and continuing their march during that night and a portion of the following day, closely pursued by the Cossacks, passed the night of the 12th under the shelter of a few villages; and resuming their march on the following morning, about mid-day perceived from the hills which border the Dnieper, in the midst of plains gleaming with snow, the towers of Smolensk, which, ignorant of what, alas! was still to come, they regarded almost as the frontier of France.

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

Napoleon knew, as he entered Smolensk, that it did not contain the vast magazines which the army supposed to be there, but he hoped that the eight or ten days' provisions which actually were there would suffice to attract the disbanded soldiers to their standards, as he intended that provisions should only be distributed at the quarters of each regiment. Having entered Smolensk at the head of the guard, he ordered that none others should be admitted; an order which inspired a general feeling of despair and indignation, and of jealous dis-

like of the guard, which had been of so little service throughout the campaign. These feelings were most bitterly and loudly expressed by the stragglers, but they were shared by the soldiers of the 1st corps, which had never for a single day been spared any labour or danger; and in spite of their habits of discipline, they joined the unarmed crowd which blocked up the gates of Smolensk, and making a violent entry into the streets of Smolensk, advanced towards the magazines, the keepers of which, directing the famished troops to proceed to the quarters of their respective regiments, assuring them that they should be supplied there with rations, were for a moment believed and obeyed. But when, after having wandered in every direction throughout the town, the soldiers could find no trace of the distribution of rations which had been promised, they returned, uttering seditious cries, and casting themselves upon the magazines, burst open the doors and pillaged them. "The magazines are being pillaged," was a cry which created a general feeling of terror and despair, and attracted every one to the spot in the hope of obtaining some share of the spoil. After some time, however, a certain degree of order was re-established, and a portion of the contents of the magazines were preserved for the corps of Prince Eugène and Marshal Ney, which now arrived, continually fighting with the enemy, and checking their advance upon the town. There was no longer room for the illusion that the army would be able to find at Smolensk either food, clothing, shelter, or reinforcements; and it was evident, on the contrary, that it would be absolutely necessary to set out on the following day, recommencing an interminable march, enduring every species of privations, and engaged in perpetual conflicts with the enemy, with the cruel certainty that to receive a wound would be equivalent to becoming the prey of the wolves and the vultures. This was a prospect which threw the army into despair, and yet it knew not the worst.

In the meantime, Napoleon had received news still more disastrous than that which had reached him at Darogobouge. In the first place, General Baraguey d'Hilliers having advanced, in accordance with orders received from headquarters, with his division upon the Jelnia route, had fallen into the midst of the Russian army, and having lost the brigade Augereau, consisting of two thousand men, returned to Smolensk, when Napoleon, by an order of the day, directed him to return to France that his conduct might be made the subject of inquiry before a military commission. At the same moment Napoleon was informed that Tchitchakoff's army had made fresh progress, threatening Minsk and the immense magazines which it contained, and our line of retreat; that Prince Schwarzenberg,

hesitating between the plan of following Tchitchakoff and the fear of leaving Sacken on his rear, was losing time in useless inactivity; that the Duke of Belluna (Marshal Victor) had found upon the Oula the 2nd corps separated from the Bavarians, and reduced by this separation to ten thousand men, his own forces amounting only to five thousand; and that the two marshals Victor and Oudinot, entertaining exaggerated ideas of the forces at Wittgenstein's command, and fearing to give him battle with their united forces, numbering thirty-eight thousand men, had confined themselves to marches and counter-marches between Lepel and Sienna. The French general having neglected, therefore, to drive them by a prompt victory beyond the Dwina, Tchitchakoff and Wittgenstein advanced rapidly towards each other, with the purpose of effecting a junction on the Upper Beresina. And what would be the position of the wreck of the French army between Tchitchakoff and Wittgenstein in front, and Kutusof in its rear?

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

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

sixty leagues which intervened between Borisow on the Beresina, he thought that by making the troops which had arrived on the 9th set out on the 14th, and those that had arrived on the 10th, 11th, and 12th, set out on the 15th, 16th, and 17th respectively, he would be allowing to each corps time to obtain some repose and a certain degree of reorganisation before encountering the army of Moldavia—the only hostile force which Napoleon at the moment took into consideration.

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

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

purpose had taken up a position in the defile of Krasnoé, situated half way between Smolensk and Orscha, and consisting of a bridge crossing a ravine through which flows the Losmina, a river which falls into the Dnieper at two leagues' distance from Krasnoé. The route from Smolensk to Krasnoé lay over this bridge and ravine, and the enemy, therefore, having purposely permitted a portion of the French army to pass them, could, by blockading Krasnoé with a portion of their forces, and occupying the bank of the ravine with the remainder, interrupt the passage of those of our columns which had not yet crossed it.

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

After having disdainfully dismissed an officer sent by Kutusof to summon in respectful terms the prince to surrender, Eugène concerted with his generals a plan which appeared to offer some chance of success, and which consisted in leaving the division Broussier in line to feign another attack upon the left, against the heights which bordered the route, whilst the remainder of the troops gained the plain on the

right, beside the Dnieper, and then clandestinely defiled towards Krasnoé under cover of the night, which at this period of the year commenced about four or five o'clock. This plan involved the destruction of the remainder of the division Broussier, but implicit reliance could be placed on the devotion of this heroic troop. Towards nightfall, therefore, Prince Eugène, having carried forward upon the left the remnant of the unhappy division Broussier, so as to direct towards it the enemy's entire attention, led the remainder of his troops towards the Dnieper under cover of some elevated ground, and thus, after a two hours' march, succeeded in reaching Krasnoé, having left upon the road two thousand in killed and wounded, and the remainder of Broussier's division, which could only be saved by the arrival of Marshals Davout and Ney.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

At nightfall, in accordance with his proposed plan, Ney carried his troops forward towards the Dnieper, and having succeeded in gaining its bank, found it just sufficiently frozen to allow its passage to be effected by the exercise of great

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

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

And thus of six or seven thousand men Ney had brought back to the army twelve hundred at the most; and these almost dying from fatigue, and utterly incapable of any active service. But at the same time he had saved the honour of the French armies, rescued for France his name, his person, and by the successes of his manœuvre forced from the enemy an expiation of the cruel success they had obtained during the last few days. Napoleon himself was intensely rejoiced at Ney's return, for it spared him the humiliation of having it said throughout Europe that Ney was a prisoner in the hands of the Russians. But he had the wickedness to allow

the odium of the abandonment of Marshal Ney to fall on Marshal Davout, and either from anxiety to exonerate himself, or from the bitterness of spirit which the unfavourable state of affairs was so calculated to aggravate, he manifested with respect to Marshal Davout a degree of disapprobation, which the general despondency and the pleasure common to human nature of depreciating a hitherto unstained renown, hastened to accredit and to propagate.

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

Finding himself at Orscha in a secure position and in possession of well-furnished magazines of provisions, Napoleon made a new attempt to rally his army, and by means of a detachment of *gendarmérie d'élite*, which had recently arrived, to incorporate in its ranks the crowd of disbanded soldiers. But all such efforts were fruitless, for the men who had once thrown off the yoke of honour were not inclined to resume it. The moral contagion had extended even to the guard, and Napoleon found it necessary to assemble it for the purpose of addressing it in person, and endeavouring to inspire it with its old feeling of duty, by declaring that it was the last asylum of French military honour, that to it especially belonged the obligation of giving the example of good discipline, and of

thus saving the remainder of the army from the dissolution which threatened it; that if the guard should fall away from the path of duty, it would not have the excuse of want possessed by the other corps, since such resources as had been obtainable had always been reserved for its use; that he would employ the severest means to preserve the discipline of his guard, but that he hoped that it would be maintained rather by its old military virtues, and that from its devotion rather than its fear would be obtained the good example he desired it to display.

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

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

Whilst at Orscha news reached Napoleon which was of a more disastrous character than any he had yet received, and which informed him that Schwarzenberg had been decidedly outflanked by Admiral Tchitchakoff on the Upper Beresina, the latter having marched, whilst Schwarzenberg was hesitating what course to pursue, by Slonim upon Minsk, to the abundant provisioning of which M. de Bassano's efforts had been principally directed, and compelled the three thousand troops under General Bronikowski to evacuate it, thus snatching from our grasp one of the principal points on the Wilna route, and one which contained provisions sufficient for a month's subsistence. After evacuating Minsk, General Bronikowski effected a junction with General Dombrowski, whose excellent Polish division had

been left in the rear for the purpose of guarding the Dnieper; and the united troops, numbering four or five thousand, advanced to Borisow upon the Upper Beresina for the purpose of defending the Borisow bridge, since, if this bridge on the Beresina were to fall into the hands of Tchitchakoff, the road would be entirely closed against the grand army, unless it were to ascend to the very sources of the Beresina, and even in this case it would be exposed to the danger of encountering Wittgenstein, whom the information which had now reached Napoleon pointed out to be a more formidable enemy than even Tchitchakoff.

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

Without criticising what they had already done, Napoleon sent General Dode to the two marshals with orders to Marshal Oudinot to proceed immediately by a transverse movement from right to left, from Czeréa to Borisow, for the purpose of supporting the Poles and aiding them to defend the bridge over the Beresina; and with orders to Marshal Victor to remain on the right, opposite Wittgenstein and Steinghel, for the purpose of holding them in check by inspiring them with the fear of a manœuvre of the grand army against them, and thus affording it time to reach the Beresina. Should these instructions be followed, as it was to be presumed they would, Tchitchakoff having been driven from Borisow by Oudinot, and Wittgenstein held in check by Victor, the grand army would be able to reach the Beresina in time to pass it, rallying Victor and Oudinot, to retake Minsk and its magazines, to rally Schwarzenberg, and

thus to find itself ninety thousand strong, in a position to overwhelm one or two of the three Russian armies, and thus to terminate a campaign which had been brilliant up to the entrance into Moscow, and calamitous since the departure from Malo-Jaroslawetz, but which was destined perhaps to become once more brilliant and even triumphant towards its conclusion.

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

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

On receiving the despatch containing the information of this state of affairs, Napoleon descended from his horse, perused the despatch with feelings of emotion of which he permitted no trace to become apparent, advanced a few steps towards a bivouac fire which had been lighted on the route, and perceiving General Dode, who had returned from his mission to Marshals Oudinot and Victor, ordered him to approach, and as he came up, said, gazing at him with a glance of which the expression was unequalled, "*They are there*"—meaning that the Russians were at Borisow; and then entering a cottage and spreading out a map of Russia on its coarse table, proceeded to discuss with General Dode the method by which it would be possible to extricate the army from its perilous position. General Dode proposed the plan of ascending the course of the Beresina towards the point of its junction with



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

In the midst, however, of the observations made by those around him, and of the brilliant dreams in which his soul indulged, Napoleon determined upon the course which he would pursue with the utmost tact and discernment; resolving to advance directly upon the Beresina, to send Oudinot to Borisow to snatch this position from the enemy's grasp, and should this

be impossible, to seek a passage in the environs. He sent suitable instructions to Oudinot, who had arrived on the right of the French army, and proceeded to Bobr for the purpose of personally superintending the execution of his proposed manœuvre.

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

Although, however, the bridge across the Borisow had been thus destroyed, the unexpected discovery of a ford made by General Corbineau afforded a ray of hope, and Napoleon, after having received from General Corbineau in a personal interview a minute account of its position, sent orders by the general to Oudinot to make immediate preparations for effecting the passage of the Beresina by the Studianka ford, but at the same

time enjoining the utmost secrecy, and the execution of such manœuvres below Borisow as might deceive Tchitchakoff, and divert his attention from the point at which the French army was about to attempt the passage.

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

General Eblé set out on the evening of the 24th from Lochnitza towards Borisow, with his four hundred men, followed by the able General Chasseloup, who still possessed some of his sappers, although quite unfurnished with matériel, and marching throughout the whole night, reached Borisow at five o'clock on the morning of the 25th, and from thence, by a movement on the right, reached the bank of the Beresina at Studianka in the course of the afternoon, when General Eblé, addressing his troops, declared to them that the fate of the army was in their hands, inspired them with his own noble sentiments, and obtained from them the promise of the most absolute devotion—a promise which bound them, although they had just marched during two days and two nights, and the cold had again become most intense, to remain in the water throughout the whole of the night and the following day, in the midst of enormous masses of ice, and exposed to the bullets of the enemy, without an hour of repose, and only taking time to snatch a morsel of the roughest food.

Napoleon, after having proceeded from Lochnitza to Borisow, and slept at the château de Storoï Borisow, galloped up to Studianka on the morning of the 26th with his lieutenants, Murat, Berthier, Eugène, Caulaincourt, and Duroc, and watched the pontonniers fixing the bridges, without daring to urge to

further exertions men who, at the exhortations of their worthy general, were exerting to the utmost all their strength and intelligence. In the meantime, as it was a subject of the most anxious inquiry whether the French troops would have to encounter or not the Russian army at the moment when they were attempting the passage of the river, Marshal Oudinot's aide-de-camp Jacqueminot had with some difficulty crossed to the other bank, and seized on an inferior officer of the Russian army, from whom it was learned that Tchitchakoff with the bulk of his forces was before Borisow, fully deceived by the pretended intentions of the French below that town, and that he had only a detachment of light troops at Studianka.

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

Working in the midst of the freezing water with the utmost ardour, and without even complaining of the terrible hardships they were undergoing, the pontonniers rendered practicable one of the two bridges they were constructing an hour after noon, and the divisions Legrand and Maison, and Doumerc's cuirassiers of the 2nd corps, and the remains of the division Dombrowski, amounting altogether to nine thousand men, immediately passed over it to the other bank, where they immediately engaged and put to flight some light infantry troops which General Tchaplitz, who commanded Tchitchakoff's advanced guard, had moved upon this point; and established themselves in a position in which they would be able to cover the passage of our troops.

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

In the meantime the bridge which had been first completed, and which was on the right, having been devoted solely to the passage of those on foot and the infantry, had never ceased to be practicable, and during the night of the 27th of November almost all the unarmed crowd of stragglers reached the opposite bank by its means. The attraction of some farms and a certain

amount of provisions, however, had retained a portion on the left bank of the river, and about ten or fifteen thousand men, distributing themselves around bivouac fires, resolved not to leave the left bank that night for quarters which might be far less endurable, and thus, the bridge to the right being rendered useless, whilst that on the left was rendered impracticable by breaking down under the artillery, was lost (and it was a loss which was very soon to be bitterly regretted) the night of the 27th.

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

The 9th corps, that of Marshal Victor, after having slowly fallen back before Wittgenstein, had finally made a decided retrograde movement, for the purpose of covering the grand army, and had posted itself between Borisow and Studianka in such a manner as to protect these two positions; and Napoleon, considering it a matter of extreme importance to deceive Tchitchakoff with respect to the point at which the army was about to cross the Beresina, ordered Marshal Victor to leave at Borisow the French division Partouneaux, already reduced from twelve thousand men to four thousand, whilst he himself with the Polish division Gerard and the German division Dáendels, numbering altogether about nine thousand men, and seven or eight hundred cavalry, covered Studianka. At the same time, making every attempt to resist the enemy's attack, he directed Marshal Davout, as soon as he should have effected the passage of the river, to advance on the Zemin route, which was also the Wilna route, to seize, before they should be occupied by the Cossacks, the many important defiles which occurred along it.

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

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

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

The terrible struggle commenced on the evening of the 27th. The unfortunate French division Partouneaux (the best of Victor's three) had to remain in front of Borisow during the whole of the 27th, in order to detain there and deceive Admiral Tchitchakoff. In this position it was separated from its corps by three leagues of wood and marsh, and was cut off, as was to be expected, from the other divisions of Victor's corps, employed in covering Studianka, by Miloradovitch's advanced guard effecting on the Orscha route its junction with Wittgenstein and Steinghel. It was on the evening of the 27th that Partouneaux first perceived the perilous nature of his position, and found himself suddenly attacked on the Orscha route, and on the other side by Tchitchakoff's troops, which were attempting to cross the Beresina on the wrecks of the Borisow bridge; the embarrassment of his position being immensely increased by the presence of many thousands of

stragglers who had accumulated about his troops with their baggage, believing that their passage across the Beresina was really to be effected below Borisow, and who, seeking refuge in their despair, with cries of anguish, amidst Partouneaux's troops, impeded their movements, and increased the desolation of the scene. Partouneaux resolved, nevertheless, in spite of these adverse circumstances, to extricate himself from his perilous position, and attempted to cross the labyrinth of wood and marsh which separated him from Studianka, but he had only a force of four thousand men with which to contend with forty thousand, and after a most heroic contest he surrendered, or rather was taken prisoner, with two thousand men who alone remained to him. A battalion of three hundred men alone succeeded under shadow of the darkness in ascending the Beresina and gaining Studianka; whilst the stragglers, unable to escape, fell before the Cossack lances.

On the morning of the 28th, the conflict commenced on the two banks of the Beresina; on the right bank with those of our troops which had effected the passage, and on the left bank with those who covered it. The enemy's fire became terribly vehement, and on each bank thousands fell to die. Nevertheless, although the Russian generals had concerted amongst themselves measures calculated to drive the French troops on each bank of the Beresina into its waters, they were, fortunately, so intimidated by the presence of Napoleon and the grand army that, though possessed of the advantage both in numbers and position, they acted with extreme reserve, and did not display that vigour which must have completed our ruin.

Marshal Oudinot was engaged from an early hour of the morning with the troops of Tchaplitz and Pahlen, which were supported by the remainder of Tchitchakoff's forces, and a detachment of Yermoloff's; and his generals, Maison, Legrand, and Dombrowski, by the exercise of as much skill as valour, had just succeeded in driving back Tchaplitz and Pahlen upon the bulk of Tchitchakoff's corps, when Oudinot himself was wounded and carried off the field. As General Legrand was also wounded, Napoleon sent Ney to replace Oudinot, and Ney immediately hastened up with the wreck of his corps, followed by the division Claparède, and proceeded to support the divisions Maison and Legrand, and to aid them to drive back the head of Tchitchakoff's troops upon their *corps de bataille*. He ordered Doumerc to hold himself in readiness to charge towards the right, and arranged his infantry columns in such a manner as to be able to charge with them either on the centre or on the left, at the same time directing a violent cannonade against masses of Russian troops which were posted in the thickest part of the wood. Doumerc, impatient for action, perceiving on his right

six or seven thousand veteran Russian infantry supported by a line of cavalry, charged them with the 7th cuirassiers, under Colonel Dubois, and having thus broken the Russian square, hastened up with the 14th cuirassiers to prevent the enemy's line from re-forming, whilst the 4th held the enemy's cavalry in check on the left, and the light cavalry held it in check on the right. The conclusion of this portion of the battle left us in possession of about two thousand prisoners, and had cost the enemy a further loss of one thousand in killed and wounded. In the meantime, Ney had advanced his infantry against the enemy's line, and compelling the Russians to retreat into the thickest portion of the wood, continued the pursuit to the extremity of the Stakow forest, half way from Brill to Borisow, and there paused, concluding with a cannonade a battle which had resulted in a complete victory for us, and had cost the enemy three thousand in killed and wounded, and as many prisoners.

In the meantime, Marshal Victor, on the left bank of the Beresina, had to maintain his ground against forty thousand Russian troops, with nine or ten thousand soldiers whose movements were embarrassed by the presence of ten or twelve thousand stragglers. He had taken up a position, which was fortunately well calculated for defensive operations, on the side of a ravine which ended in the Beresina, and had posted there the Polish division Gerard, together with the German division and the Dutch division de Berg. By his right he covered Studianka and protected the bridges, and he was supported on his left by a wood which he had not sufficient forces to occupy, but in front of which he had posted the eight hundred cavalry which were still at his disposal under the command of General Fournier; whilst with twelve pieces of cannon he had established a dominant and murderous fire against the Russian troops, and thus held them in check.

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

Marshal Victor, fearing for the safety of this portion of his line, since the defence of the bridges was his chief duty, threw



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

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

The Russian artillery having been thus driven back, ceased to aggravate the disorder at the bridge by its fire; but General Diebitch, unwilling to consider himself vanquished, re-formed his line, which was three times more numerous than ours, and returning to the charge, drove the French troops once more beyond the ravine, when the approach of night separated the exhausted combatants, and the contest ended, leaving Fournier with scarcely three hundred of his seven or eight hundred horse, and Marshal Victor with scarcely five thousand of his eight or nine thousand infantry, the Russians having lost in the double contest waged on each side of the Beresina ten or eleven thousand men, without taking into account the three thousand men who had fallen into the hands of General Doumerc. But the Russian wounded were saved, whilst ours were necessarily abandoned, together with the stragglers, whom it was now useless to hope to be able to transport across the river in time to avoid the enemy.

The night brought with it a certain degree of calm in the place of the carnage and confusion which had marked the whole course of the day, and the French army could fairly indulge in the feeling of having obtained a glorious triumph; but it was nevertheless necessary that it should on the following day not so much retreat as fly, and from nine o'clock in the evening, until Marshal Victor's troops crossed the Beresina, taking with them all their artillery and matériel, with the exception of two pieces of cannon. There still remained, however, several thousands of disbanded stragglers or fugitives

on the left bank, who wished to defer their passage across the river until the morrow, and as Napoleon had ordered that the bridges should be destroyed at daybreak, General Eblé and several other officers proceeded to their bivouacs, to entreat them to cross the river immediately, and to declare to them that the bridges were about to be destroyed. But all his efforts were in vain.

At daybreak on the following day, the 29th of November, General Eblé received orders to destroy the bridges at seven o'clock, but being anxious to give every opportunity to the stragglers, who, convinced too late of their danger, now hastened to cross the river with the utmost eagerness, he delayed the execution of this order until nearly nine o'clock, when the Russians being almost upon them, he was compelled with a heavy heart to set fire to the heaps of inflammable materials which had been placed under the bridges to facilitate their destruction. Immediately torrents of smoke and flame enveloped the two bridges, and the unhappy wretches who were upon them precipitated themselves into the stream to avoid being carried down with them in their fall. From the midst of the crowd which had not yet effected the passage arose a cry of bitter despair, accompanied by tears and convulsive gestures, the wounded and the women stretching out their arms towards their companions, who were making a desperate effort to reach the opposite bank, either by the burning bridges, or through the stream itself, to avoid a captivity less endurable than death. The Cossacks now galloped up, and thrusting their lances into the midst of the crowd, slew some of the unfortunate wretches of which it was composed, and then drove the others, numbering from six to eight thousand, men, women, and children, disbanded soldiers or fugitives, towards the Russian army.

The French army retreated overwhelmed with a deep feeling of affliction caused by this spectacle, and no one was more bitterly distressed at it than the generous and intrepid Eblé, to the exertions of whom and his gallant pontonniers the fifty and odd thousand individuals armed or unarmed who had crossed the Beresina owed both life and liberty.

Such was the immortal event at the passage of the Beresina, one of the most tragic to be found in history, and a fit completion of this terrible campaign.

It was now necessary that the army without a moment's loss of time should proceed by Zemin, Pletchenitzzy, Iliá, and Molodeczno, to rejoin the Wilna route; and on the 4th of December the head of the army had reached Smorgoni, whilst the rearguard was at Molodeczno, where a violent and desperate encounter took place between it and a Russian force consisting of Platow's cavalry and the division Tchaplitz, ending in the

repulse of the latter, but leaving Ney's troops reduced to four or five hundred, and consequently insufficient for the service of the rearguard, which was now entrusted to Marshal Victor, with the Bavarians under General Wrède.

Napoleon having arrived at Smorgoni, considered that he had satisfied all the demands of honour in remaining with the army up to the point where the Caudine Forks no longer threatened it, and resolved to return to Paris. M. Daru, indeed, to whom he communicated his intention by his own mouth, and M. de Bassano, to whom he sent information of it by letter, insisted strongly upon the necessity of his remaining with the army; but Napoleon disregarded their advice, being most strongly impressed by the sense of the danger he should incur should he find himself with a few worn-out troops incapable of any resistance at four hundred leagues distant from the French frontier, the Germans on his rear being very disposed to revolt. What would be the result, he asked himself, what would be the effect on the empire, should the Germans entertain the very evident idea, that by preventing his return to France they would at one blow destroy the fabric of his power, and should they give effect to this idea by closing the Rhine route against him and the wrecks of his army? Exaggerating this peril with that vivacity of perception which was one of the distinguishing qualities of his mind, Napoleon was impatient to quit his army now that the passage of the Beresina had been miraculously effected, and the claims upon his imperial honour no longer demanded his presence at the head of his troops. Fearing that as soon as his disasters became known, a thousand arms would be outstretched to bar his road, he was anxious to escape at once with Caulaincourt, Lobau, Duroc, and Lefebvre-Desnoettes, traversing Poland and Germany secretly, and to reach the Tuileries unexpected even by his wife.

But although there were many reasons which urged the adoption of this course, there were many also of considerable weight which were of an opposite tendency. He was still at the head of twelve thousand armed troops, followed by forty thousand stragglers, who were quite capable, by the aid of a month or two of repose and proper resources, of being reconverted into disciplined troops, and in the meantime the twelve thousand troops who still preserved their arms would be joined between Molodeczno and Wilna by Wrède's six thousand Bavarians, at Wilna itself by Loison's nine thousand French troops, the two brigades of Poles and Germans under Franceschi and Coutard, numbering altogether about seven or eight thousand men, and in addition to these organised corps, some squadrons and battalions *de marche* numbering about four thousand, and six

thousand Lithuanians. The junction of these various corps with the grand army would form a force capable of offering a considerable degree of resistance to the enemy, and numbering forty-five thousand well armed and disciplined troops. At the same time there were, on the right, Schwarzenberg with twenty-five thousand Austrians, and Reynier with fifteen thousand French and Saxon troops; whilst Macdonald commanded on the left ten thousand Prussians, who would not dare to be untrue to the French army as long as it was true to itself, and six thousand Poles, who would be proof against every hostile influence. In the rear the division Heudelet of Augereau's corps reached Königsberg fifteen thousand strong, whilst Augereau himself was in command of an equal number, together with Grenier's corps, which had passed the Alps, eighteen thousand strong. Augereau would be able to hold Berlin with thirty thousand men, Heudelet to fill up the intervening space with fifteen thousand, and Napoleon would have the power of assembling around Wilna one hundred thousand, a force equal to that which was at the disposal of the Russians. Kutusof's troops numbered only fifty thousand, Wittgenstein's twenty thousand, and Tchitchakoff's about as many, whilst Sacken, after the disastrous conflicts he had had with Schwarzenberg and Reynier, had now no more than ten thousand. Moreover, should the French army gain a battle before Wilna, the influence of such success would be sufficient to attract the thirty or forty thousand stragglers into its ranks, and it would be sufficiently strong to hold the Russians in check, to await reinforcements from France, and to procure resources from Poland.

But the moral sentiment was wanting to Napoleon's mind which would have caused him to prefer the loss of a throne to the abandonment of an army which he had led to disaster. Had his life only been in danger, Napoleon was a sufficiently good soldier to have remained without hesitation with an army which his own errors had compromised; but to be dethroned, and which was far worse, to become a prisoner in the hands of the Germans, was a prospect which he could not bear to contemplate, and he formed the resolution at Smorgoni to return immediately to France.

Confiding the chief authority in his absence to the King of Naples, Napoleon left with him Major-General Berthier, hoping that the service would thus have a wise, laborious counsellor, capable of restraining his impetuosity, and of supplying his want of knowledge of details. Unfortunately, the major-general was completely demoralised, and his health totally destroyed. He was anxious to set out with Napoleon, and the severest language was necessary to induce him to remain.

On the evening of the 6th of December, at Smorgoni, Napoleon assembled Murat, Eugène, Berthier, and his marshals, and communicated to them his intention. They were greatly astonished and considerably agitated by this declaration, but did not dare to offer any opposition to the resolutions of their master, whom, although vanquished, they still feared; moreover, both his arguments and manner, which was on this occasion extraordinarily bland and persuasive, had considerable weight with them. He declared that he would speedily rejoin them at the head of a formidable army, and recommended them in the meantime to support each other, and faithfully obey Murat. Having concluded his address, he embraced his hearers, and throwing himself into a sledge, followed by M. de Caulaincourt, Marshal Duroc, Count Lobau, and General Lefebvre-Desnoettes, set out in the middle of the night, leaving his lieutenants acquiescent in, and almost persuaded of the wisdom of the step which he was taking, but at the same time overwhelmed with astonishment and almost with despair.

The greatest secrecy was to be observed until the morrow, in order that news of his departure might not precede him on the road which he was about to traverse in the strictest incognito. Before his departure he had issued the twenty-ninth bulletin, which subsequently became so celebrated, in which for the first time in the course of the retreat he acknowledged that portion of the disasters suffered by the French army which could not be positively denied, attributing them to the inclemency of the weather, and relieving the account of his reverses by a description of the glorious and immortal passage of the Beresina.

When the army became informed of Napoleon's departure it fell into a species of stupefaction, for with him had vanished its last hope, and it mechanically continued its march, anxious to reach Wilna, as a month before it had been anxious to reach Smolensk. Each successive day brought an increase of its sufferings. On its departure from Molodeczno the cold had become still more intense, and had descended to thirty degrees Réaumur. Almost all the horses were dead, and the men daily dropped on the roads by hundreds. The troops marched huddled together, careless of their ranks, steeped in the silence of stupefaction and the depths of despair, saying nothing, regarding nothing. Smitten by the intense cold, those who were of feeble constitution lost in succession sight, hearing, and consciousness, and then fell without power of motion to die on the road, and be trampled on by the crowd of those who followed.

And whilst the troops thus perished of cold on their march, they also perished in their bivouacs through the unrestrained

enjoyment of warmth; for too eagerly exposing their frozen limbs to the heat of the bivouac fires, many of them brought upon their feet, and hands, and even faces, fatal gangrene. Many also perished by being burnt to death through their own carelessness in farm-houses in which they passed the night.

At length this desolate crowd of beings, lean, exhausted, clothed in rags, and wearing over their uniforms all varieties of strange costume brought from Moscow, arrived on the 9th of December at the gates of Wilna, and experienced on the occasion, in hearts which appeared to have been deprived of all sensation, one last feeling of pleasure. Wilna! Wilna! . . . It was a word which was identified in the minds of the troops with the ideas of repose, security, and abundance; and in fact, although this city did not contain such resources as was generally supposed, it was capable of affording far more than what would supply the most pressing necessities of the army, and enable it to reach the Niemen in good order. At the sight of the walls of the city, the crowd, forgetting that the largest gate would be but a very narrow entrance for such numbers, neglected to make the circuit of the walls in search of several gates, and mechanically following the head of the column, accumulated about the gate which was towards Smolensk in a state of terrible confusion similar to that which had arisen at the bridges across the Beresina. When at length the troops had entered the town, this scene of confusion was repeated in its streets, for as no attempt was made to supply the necessities of the soldiers or to preserve order amongst them, and the inhabitants, terrified at their wild appearance and clamorous cries, closed their shops and warehouses against them, even when they approached to purchase provisions, Wilna was speedily a sacked town.

The army reached Wilna during the 8th and 9th of December. Some days of repose were necessary to our exhausted soldiers, and it might easily have been procured for them had proper orders been given to Schwarzenberg and General Reynier; the former of whom, having received a reinforcement of six thousand men, had reached Slonim, whilst the latter had advanced towards Narew for the purpose of acting in concert with the division Durutte, which came from Warsaw, and had inflicted a severe check upon the Russian general Sacken, whom he encountered upon his road. Schwarzenberg, receiving information of this event, had marched upon Sacken's flank, and assailing him in his turn, had contributed to throw him back in disorder towards Volhynia. This success had cost the Russians some seven or eight thousand men, and had afforded Schwarzenberg and Reynier the security for their rear necessary before

they could undertake any movement in advance, and had they been informed of the real state of affairs, Schwarzenberg, probably Reynier also, would certainly have marched upon Wilna, which he might have reached before the 10th of December. But Napoleon had set out without giving any orders to this effect, and Schwarzenberg and Reynier lingered between Slonim and Neswij, uncertain what course to pursue, and unable to determine between the various contradictory reports which reached them from all sides. The result was, therefore, that Wilna was completely uncovered, and that there was no hope of making an effectual defence there against the three Russian corps which were advancing against it.

Each corps of the French army had fallen into complete dissolution under the influence of the cold and incessant fatigue; and at the gates of Wilna, Victor had reached the conclusion of his duties as commander of the rearguard by finding himself without a single soldier. The only troops remaining in their ranks were about three thousand in Loison's division, and about as many of the imperial guard. The generals, whether wounded or well, having no men to command, wandered hither and thither, and Murat, horrified at the responsibility which had fallen upon him, alarmed for the safety of his kingdom in the midst of the widespread ruin which had begun to take place, and receiving but little support from Berthier, who was both sick and paralysed with fear, knew not what to do or to order.

The enemy, however, left him no time for hesitation. On the evening of the 9th, Platow appeared with his Cossacks before the gates of Wilna, and aggravated to the highest possible pitch the disorder which prevailed within it. There was no longer any rearguard in existence, and General Loison, therefore, who alone had any troops at his disposal, hastened up with the nineteenth, and attempted to cover the town, whilst Ney and Lefebvre, running through the streets, cried to arms, and endeavoured to collect some of the armed soldiers for the purpose of conducting them to the ramparts. By these means the Cossacks were checked, but only for a time, and each man from this moment only thought how he might effect his own flight. Murat, the hero of the plains of the Moskowa, Murat, the invulnerable Murat, who seemed proof against every weapon, was among the first to fly, and set off on the night of the 10th, declaring that he was going to Kowno, where it was to be attempted to assemble the army behind the Niemen. All who were capable of doing so fled in confusion, leaving to the enemy vast magazines of all kinds, and some eighteen or twenty thousand wounded or exhausted men, many of the former of whom had been placed in the houses of the Polish

Jews, and were thrown from the windows or murdered by these wretches as soon as the French army was in retreat.

As the ground from the gates of Wilna for about the distance of a league was covered with ice, it was difficult, and even impossible, for the horses to drag up the ascent the carts which bore the sick and wounded officers, the gun-carriages, or the chests of treasure, which latter M. de Bassano, unwilling to manifest by their removal the danger of the situation, had left at Wilna as long as possible. At the bottom of the hill, therefore, there ensued a scene of the most terrible confusion, and after some hours of ineffectual exertion, it was found necessary to abandon the artillery, the trophies brought from Moscow, many of the sick and wounded, and to resign to the pillage of our own troops the greater portion of the treasure. As the night ended the Cossacks hastened up to substitute their own pillage for that of the French, and to seize a booty such as had never before been offered to their avidity.

During the 10th, 11th, and 12th, the French troops traversed the twenty-six leagues which separated Wilna and Kowno; and in what destitution did they now re-pass the Niemen which six months ago they had crossed numbering four hundred thousand men and sixty thousand cavalry, twelve hundred pieces of cannon, and with incomparable *éclat*! All who had not been entirely deprived by the severity of the weather of all sense and feeling could not avoid making this bitter comparison, and felt their eyes fill with tears as they considered it. As the Niemen was frozen over and the Cossacks had already crossed it at a gallop, there could be no hope of defending Kowno, and it only remained to depart, having first emptied, or to speak truly, pillaged the magazines which the activity of General Baste had filled with all the resources of Dantzic.

On the morning of the 12th of December, Murat consulted with the marshals, Prince Berthier and M. Daru, on the course which it would be proper to adopt. The only troops which remained in their ranks were about two thousand men in Loison's division, and about one thousand five hundred in the guard, of whom only some five hundred were capable of bearing a musket; and Murat, exasperated into hatred of Napoleon by a state of things which imperilled the safety of the crowns possessed by the Bonaparte family, permitted himself to indulge in bitter complaint of Napoleon's ambition which had caused it. Davout, indeed, having a thorough dislike of the King of Naples, silenced him by observing that if Napoleon was to find censors in the army, they should not be those of his lieutenants whom he had made kings, and that under existing circumstances the object in view should be to



discover some means of safety, and not to sanction by evil example the want of discipline amongst the troops.

The defence of Kowno and the conduct of the conclusion of the retreat was unanimously entrusted to Marshal Ney, and for the purpose of affording the remains of the French army time to escape, he was to defend Kowno for forty-eight hours with the remains of the division Loison and some troops of the German Confederation, and then to fall back upon Königsberg, when he would be joined by Marshal Macdonald, who, on his side, retreated from Riga upon Tilsit. Marshal Ney demanded that in this last effort under the walls of Kowno he should be assisted by General Gerard, and this request was acceded to.

As soon as these plans had been arranged, the remains of the French army immediately departed for Königsberg, leaving Ney and Gerard at Kowno to attempt to hold in check the Cossacks, who appeared on the morning of the 13th by the Wilna route, in front of the bridge across the Niemen, upon which the German troops, after some hesitation, in spite of the remonstrances of Ney and Gerard, and although the Cossacks had been compelled to fall back by the fire of a detachment of the 29th, gradually disbanded, inducing by their example the soldiers of the 29th to do so likewise. Finding themselves, therefore, on the evening of the 13th with only five or six hundred men and eight or ten pieces of cannon, Ney and Gerard resolved to depart during the night. But at the point of departure from Kowno, a hill arose as at the commencement of the route from Wilna, and covered as it was with ice, had caused a terrible scene of confusion, which was much increased by the fact that some Cossacks, having crossed the Niemen on the ice and ascended the opposite side of the hill, threatened to cut off the route; and at this new danger the five or six hundred men who still followed Ney and Gerard dispersed, each now seeking his own safety, and the latter, with a few officers who still remained with them, turning to the right, followed the course of the Niemen, and succeeded in gaining in safety the Gumbinnen route at Königsberg; thus performing for France a last service, the only one in their power, since it was at least something in the immensity of this disaster to save two men such as these.

From this moment not a trace of any corps of the army remained; the disbanded soldiers continuing their retreat across the frozen plains of Poland pursued by the Cossacks, who, after having advanced some leagues beyond the Niemen, recrossed it, since the Russian armies, triumphant but exhausted and much reduced in numbers, did not intend to advance to the opposite bank.

There were at Königsberg about ten thousand individuals in the hospitals, of whom some were wounded, but the greater number sick. Of these latter some had their limbs frozen, whilst others were suffering from a horrible species of pestilence, named by the doctors *fièvre de congélation*, and terribly contagious. The heroic Larrey, worn out with fatigue and suffering, had caught this fever, and died of it. Heroism, of whatever species it may be, is the one consolation in the midst of great disasters, and this consolation for the disasters of the Russian campaign was granted to France in a measure which fully equalled those disasters. Amidst the crowd of those unhappy ones who expiated at Königsberg by their death either the ambition of Napoleon or their own intemperance were some whom France must ever regret, and amongst these were General Lariboisière and General Eblé; the former of whom, borne down by fatigue, which he supported with rare fortitude in spite of his age, but inconsolable for the loss of a son slain before his own eyes at the battle of the Moskowa, died of the contagion prevailing at Königsberg; whilst the latter, who had succeeded him in the chief command of the artillery, had been himself smitten by a mortal disease at the Beresina, and expired two days after the chief whom he succeeded.

Many attempts have been made to reckon up the losses suffered by France and her allies in this Russian expedition, and although such a calculation is as impossible as terrible, some idea of the truth may nevertheless be attained. The total force of the army intended to act from the Rhine to the Niemen consisted of six hundred and twelve thousand men (with the Austrians, six hundred and forty-eight thousand), and one hundred and fifty thousand horses. Of these, five hundred and thirty-three thousand had passed the Niemen, of whom there remained, under the Prince Schwarzenberg and Reynier, about forty thousand Austrians and Saxons, fifteen thousand Prussians and Poles under Marshal Macdonald, and some isolated troops numbering about thirty or forty thousand. Of the remaining four hundred and thirty-eight thousand, about one hundred thousand had fallen into the hands of the Russians; and according to this calculation, therefore, about three hundred and forty thousand would have perished; but this, happily, was not the case, for a certain number of men who had deserted their ranks at the commencement of the campaign had gradually rejoined their country across Poland and Germany. Nevertheless, it can be no exaggeration to say, that in the course of the campaign about three hundred thousand men fell beneath the enemy's fire and the severities of cold and want.

What can we say of the expedition which caused this terrible

loss? What judgment pass upon it which has not already been passed by the general good sense of the world?

It was an enterprise which under no circumstances, or under scarcely any, could have possibly succeeded; the most perfect system of execution could not have corrected its essential fault, and the errors which were committed, and which for the most part were natural results of its inherent principle, rendered its success entirely impracticable.

It was not an enterprise which political causes compelled Napoleon to execute, for by employing all his resources in carrying on the war in Spain he might have solved the European question, and by sacrificing some of his territorial acquisitions, which were more burdensome than useful, might have doubtless obtained a general peace. But even supposing this to be an error, and that it was inevitable that Russia should enter into an alliance with England and make war with France, to invade Russia instead of awaiting her attack upon the Vistula was one of the greatest political faults recorded in history, and was the fruit of that impetuous element of Napoleon's character which rendered him at once both impatient and rash. Had Europe, indeed, been united, for the purpose of securing its independence, into a league against this vast empire, it might, by attacking it by sea, or even by advancing against it methodically by land, have succeeded, since it would have had no reason to fear an attack on its rear, in obtaining a victory over her. But for Napoleon to march upon Moscow across Europe, secretly conspiring against him, and thus left full of hatred in his rear, was a proceeding of the rashest temerity; whilst, by awaiting Russia in Poland or Germany, he might have vanquished Russia and Germany by the same blow, had the latter constituted itself the ally of the former.

But if this enterprise was unreasonable in its very principle, it was still more so considering the state of Napoleon's military resources in 1812. The greater number of the veterans of Austerlitz and Friedland were dead or were dying in Spain; and although some of them remained in Davout's corps, and some old divisions of Ney, Oudinot, and Eugène, these corps were unfortunately immoderately swelled with young and refractory conscripts, and mingled, moreover, with allies who hated us, and who, although the sense of honour constrained them to fight well on the actual battlefield, deserted on the first opportunity. It would have been better to have had three hundred thousand soldiers such as were those of Marshal Davout than the six hundred thousand which were actually collected, for the difficulty of providing their subsistence would have been only one-half, and being fed, they would have remained in their ranks. In 1807, with excellent troops, he had failed to reach the

Niemen, and to attempt in 1812 to advance twice as far with troops only half as efficient, was to ensure some terrible disaster. At this period, indeed, the difficulties attending such an expedition were as great as possible, whilst the means for executing it were almost entirely wanting, for after having aroused against himself the rage of the Spaniards, who consumed many of our best troops, to advance an immense distance through enraged Germany for the purpose of provoking the frenzied enmity of the Russians, and then, too, with an army composed of troops in a very imperfect state of discipline, and consisting to a great extent of foreigners secretly hostile, was almost certain to invoke the most horrible of catastrophes.

The fault of this enterprise was so thoroughly essential to its very nature, that to inquire into the errors which were committed in its execution would be almost entirely useless, had not these errors themselves been the inevitable consequences of this principal fault.

Thus it is true that Napoleon, entering Russia on the 24th of June, lost eighteen days at Wilna; that when he advanced Davout against Bagration he failed to provide him with sufficient forces, from his desire to reserve with himself a crushing force with which he might at once overwhelm Barclay de Tolly; that he lost twelve days at Witebsk; that when he set out from Witebsk for the purpose of turning the two Russian armies assembled at Smolensk, he wrongly, perhaps, hesitated to ascend the Dnieper as far as Smolensk, by which course, probably, he might have obtained the desired result; that instead of stopping at Smolensk, he permitted himself to be led on, by the desire of obtaining some brilliant result, in pursuit of the Russian army into those depths in which his own was to perish; that at the great battle of Moskowa, his hesitation to send his guard into action was probably the cause which prevented the complete destruction of the Russian army; that when he found it necessary to evacuate Moscow, and had devised a vast and skilful combination for the purpose of returning upon the Dwina by Veliki-Luki, he had not had sufficient firmness to overcome the opposition of his lieutenants; that his pride led him to remain at Moscow after he perceived that his position there was untenable; that he again wrongly yielded to the opinion of his lieutenants in resigning his plan of turning the Russian army at Malo-Jaroslawetz, for the purpose of penetrating into the rich Kalouga province; that when the retreat was necessary he neglected to conduct it in person; that at Krasnoé, by moving the army in detachments instead of en masse, he had lost there the whole of Marshal Ney's corps, almost all the troops which remained to Prince Eugène, a portion of the guard, and of the troops under Davout; and finally, that miraculously saved at

the Beresina, he departed from the army, and thus neglected the opportunity of concentrating the remnants of his forces, and with the force thus formed, of striking the Russians a blow which would have compensated for his disasters by a triumph. All this is perfectly true, but they form but a feeble opinion with respect to the great catastrophe who do not perceive that the errors above recounted were not the result of any want of genius in Napoleon, but the natural consequences of the essential fault of the expedition itself. When he lost time at Wilna and Witebsk, awaiting the stragglers, his fault was not in waiting for them, but in having brought his troops so far; when he sent Davout against Bagration with an insufficient force, he relied upon being able to concentrate troops in a manner which the nature of the country rendered impossible, and for this error the nature of the expedition was chiefly to blame, as it also was for the error of his not stopping at Smolensk, for if it was dangerous to advance to Moscow, it would have been no less dangerous to winter in Lithuania with frozen rivers alone for a frontier, and with Europe in the rear, full of hatred against him, and beginning to doubt his invincibility. If at the Moskowa he did not make use of his guard, it was because he found it necessary to act cautiously in an enterprise of which he began to perceive the folly; if he remained too long at Moscow, it was on account of the danger of exposing his embarrassments to Europe, always so ready to pass from a state of submission to one of revolt; if he paid too much deference to the opinions of his lieutenants with respect to his projected movements upon Veliki-Luki and Kalouga, it was because he had already demanded too much of them, and dared no longer demand anything of them but what was absolutely necessary; if in the retreat he displayed not that energy of which he had previously given so many proofs, it was because his energy was paralysed by the excessive consciousness of his errors; and finally, if he abandoned the army at Smorgoni, it was because he perceived too clearly, and even in an exaggerated aspect, the consequences of the disasters which he had suffered, and which he considered could only be repaired at Paris. All this was not the result of any want of strength in Napoleon's mind or character, as he was speedily to prove on numerous battlefields, but of the essential fault of this enterprise, or rather of that intemperate trait of Napoleon's character which hurried him into committing it.

At the same time let us not impute this disastrous catastrophe solely to earthly accidents, but also to moral causes; for to do this is demanded of us by our reverence for Providence, our sovereign judge, the supreme disposer of our fortunes in this world as in the next. To no fault of mere detail should we attribute this catastrophe, and not even to the fault of

entering upon the Russian expedition at all, but to the far greater fault of having attempted to control the affairs of the world in a manner contrary to the rights and affections of its peoples, and without regard either for the sentiments of those whom it was necessary to vanquish, or for the lives of those by whose aid this conquest would have to be effected—to the intemperance, in short, of genius blinded by a spirit of ambition. It is neither truthful nor useful to depreciate Napoleon, for to do so is simply to depreciate human nature and human wisdom; but both truth and wisdom demand that he should be rightly judged and displayed in his true light to the universe, together with the real causes of his errors, that nations, monarchs, and warriors may perceive by a notable example the consequences which result when genius bursts the bonds of self-restraint, and permits itself to be carried away by the instigations of unlimited power. We need not wish to draw any other lesson from this terrible catastrophe. Still must be attributed to him who fell into this disastrous blindness that greatness which adds to the greatness of the lesson, and which at least affords to its victims the recompense of glory.

## BOOK XLVI.

### WASHINGTON AND SALAMANCA.

WHILST the unexampled catastrophe which we have been describing was taking place in the north of Europe, the distant shores of the Atlantic and the burning plains of Spain were the theatre of events which, although doubtless less extraordinary, were still extremely serious; resembling, in this respect, all the results of Napoleon's exorbitant policy, and thus proving the ill-advisedness of the principles on which it was conducted. We may herein perceive a clear manifestation of the truth which we have already enunciated. And if instead of attempting to vanquish Europe at the bottom of Russia, Napoleon had persevered in combating it on the theatre, difficult, indeed, but selected by himself, on the Peninsula and the Atlantic, he would probably have compelled England to yield, and at the same time have disarmed the whole of Europe, at least for many years, and would thus have obtained time, more judicious views having taken possession of his mind, to make such sacrifices as his greatness would have allowed him to make with the utmost safety, and would have rendered his government endurable by rendering it supportable. It is necessary then, that before entering upon the consideration of the consequences of the fatal Russian expedition, we should retrace the course of events in Spain and America during the year 1812—some of them disastrous, and some fruitlessly fortunate, since they were the results of the rash and careless will of a great but undisciplined genius.

When Napoleon, disgusted with the Spanish war at the moment when perseverance might have rendered it successful, resolved to carry his forces to the north, England was, as we have already seen, in a position of extreme difficulty. The success which the errors committed on our part had enabled Lord Wellington to obtain, had doubtless in some degree tranquillised the public mind in Great Britain; but it was still overwhelmed by the constant fear that Napoleon might direct against it some decisive effort, and the painful position of its commerce was in no degree ameliorated. Enormous quantities of colonial produce, sugars, coffees, cottons, accumu-

lated in the docks, or in the vessels which blocked up the Thames, and a no less considerable quantity of unsaleable manufactures, caused the emission of an immense number of bills, which the bank discounted, giving in exchange paper money which was depreciated 20 or 25 per cent. At the same time the national expenses began to rise to £100,000,000 sterling a year against a revenue of £90,000,000, of which £20,000,000 were the produce of an annual loan; and dearth of provisions, which during the year had fallen upon France, had been so severe in England, that bands of workmen, bursting into the shops and sometimes plundering the manufactories, demanded bread with clamorous cries which would have terrified any government less accustomed to the clamours of a free people, but could not fail to distress every government which was wise and humane.

It is true that a hundred vessels of war, and two hundred frigates, bearing her victorious flag over every sea, an army small in numbers, indeed, but valiantly and skilfully conducted, and finally, a cabinet which was the only one in Europe which had refused to be dictated to by Napoleon's despotic will, recompensed in some degree glorious England for her sufferings; but every thoughtful mind perceived that her existing position was one which concealed great perils, and that should the terrible genius with which she was contending carry out his designs with prudence and forethought, he might reduce the commerce and finances of England to the last extremity, and even terminate the interminable war in Spain, driving Lord Wellington and his brave army into the sea. One hundred thousand of the 600,000 men lost in Russia, and his own presence in the Peninsula, would have sufficed to have obtained this result. This was everywhere the general opinion, and everywhere found expression in words coloured by the peculiar opinions of the various speakers. The Opposition in the British Parliament expressed it in the language of party; the populace vociferated it in the streets in popular fashion; and the enlightened members of the government whispered it in the recesses of the cabinet, from which the Marquis of Wellesley, brother of the celebrated Lord Wellington, and sharing the opinion above alluded to, had withdrawn, on account of his antipathy for the character and inflexible policy of Mr. Percival. But a state of warfare may become as much a habit as one of peace, and after having been long accustomed to such a state, it was found as difficult to escape from it in England as in France. Great Britain had become used to being at war, and at war it remained; the actual result being such as to testify to the good judgment of those who persisted in maintaining the war policy; but yet the exercise of a little



wisdom on the part of Napoleon might have produced a result of a very different nature.

A sentiment, partly honourable and partly interested, had gained possession of the minds of the bulk of the nation, consisting partly of sympathy for the Spanish insurgents, and partly of anxiety to prevent Napoleon from establishing his influence over the Peninsula. Had Napoleon made some sacrifice in this respect, or by a prodigious victory set England free from the obligations in which she felt bound in honour towards Spain, peace would have been immediately accepted, leaving France in possession of immense aggrandisements. Two men alone in England displayed invincible resolution, and those were Mr. Percival and Lord Wellington. The former, a most able advocate, of an upright heart, and so strict and resolute as to be much disliked by his colleagues on account of his obstinacy, had obtained by this characteristic the chief place in the cabinet, and his resolution not to make peace was simply one of its manifestations; whilst the latter, partly because the conduct of the war in the Peninsula raised his glory every day to a greater height, and partly because his extraordinary sagacity enabled him to perceive the commencement of some confusion in the management of affairs in Spain on our part, was anxious that the war should be continued, declaring, that although he could not be quite certain of being always able to maintain his footing in the Peninsula, that he could nevertheless see that ruin was about to overwhelm Napoleon's vast empire. The prince-regent, who a year since had obtained the reins of government, hesitated between the heads of the Opposition, his old friends, and the ministers who were the old confidential advisers of his father. He had gradually become accustomed to the latter, and alienated from the former; but he perceived the danger of persisting in a system of unlimited war, and was at the same time equally conscious of the danger of suddenly placing the power of the nation in the hands of men who had never conducted this war, and who even condemned it, at the very moment when its successful conclusion perhaps could only be accomplished by a skilful perseverance in it for some time longer. In the midst of these perplexities he had attempted at the commencement of the year 1812 to effect a reconciliation between the ministers and Lords Grey and Grenville, but failed, notwithstanding his strenuous endeavours to effect his object; when suddenly an unexpected event, which under any other circumstances would certainly have caused some change in the English government, removed the principal minister from the scene. A man named Bellingham, a sort of madman, who believed that he had rendered his country good services in Russia, and who continually demanded some reward for them of the ambassador, Lord Gower,

and of the various members of the cabinet, daily frequenting the lobbies of the Houses of Parliament with the purpose of interesting powerful patrons in his favour, at length determined to kill one of the persons whom he had vainly solicited, and wished that this object of his vengeance should be Lord Gower, but meeting Mr. Percival, shot him instead. He surrendered himself, acknowledged his crime, and died with the tranquillity of a madman. An opinion at first prevailed that this crime had some political cause, and although this was soon found to be erroneous, it became evident that it had a political significance, when the ferocious cries of the populace, exasperated by suffering, arose in favour of the wretched being who had struck down a man who was amenable to history, but not to the assassin.

Had this event taken place before the Russian war had become probable, it would have changed, there is good reason to suppose, the system of English policy. But Mr. Percival was killed on the 11th of May, at the moment when Napoleon was marching towards the Niemen; and this war between France and Russia opened to it such new perspectives, that when entrusting the ministry of foreign affairs to Lord Castlereagh, the prince-regent intimated his determination to persevere in the policy of Pitt and Percival.

Thus was a first fortunate chance snatched from Napoleon by the Russian war, and he was soon to lose another not less to be regretted, being that which might have arisen from the war which had just been declared between England and America.

As Napoleon was obliged to oppress the nations of Europe by the measures he was forced to adopt for the purpose of compelling them to submit to the rigours of the continental blockade, so was England forced to oppress even more cruelly the maritime nations in the exercise of her supremacy on the seas. To compel, indeed, all the commercial nations to send their vessels to London or Malta for the purpose of receiving permission to sail, to pay tribute, and to receive cargoes of English merchandise, and to compel them to regard as blockaded ports those which had never really been so, required the exercise of an insupportable tyranny on the ocean which was as odious as that of Napoleon on land.

This was one of the circumstances from which Napoleon might have reaped great advantage, and by which he might have gained allies in exchange for those whom he had given to England by the rigours of the continental blockade, had he known how to await the benefits of patience.

The greater number of the maritime powers of the old world had disappeared, absorbed in his immense empire; but beyond

the Atlantic existed one which, inaccessible to European armies, silently increased, day by day acquiring a strength which was suspected but not thoroughly understood. This power was America, a real Hercules in the cradle, and destined to astonish the world as soon as it should begin to exert its natural vigour; and with respect to this country, on the subject of maritime rights, both France and England committed the gravest errors, at the very moment when to each of these countries friendship was of the utmost importance. As, however, the British government had committed these errors to a greater extent than Napoleon, the balance of American goodwill turned in favour of the latter, and its hostility became directed solely against England.

We have already seen how America, irritated by the orders in council, which declared it necessary that all vessels should touch at London or Malta for the purpose of obtaining a licence to navigate the ocean, and also declared a vast extent of coast to be blockaded when no semblance of an actual blockade existed there, had been almost immediately afterwards equally disgusted by the decrees of Berlin and Milan, which declared denationalised every vessel which had submitted to these orders of the British council, and had responded to these two acts of tyranny, of which the second was the necessary consequence of the first, by a measure of a very similar nature, the law of non-intercourse. It will be remembered that this law prohibited American vessels from frequenting the European seas, and that many American shipowners, attracted by the chances of obtaining enormous profits, had disregarded its provisions; and submitting, on the contrary, to those of the English orders in council, had thus formed that race of pretended neutrals of whom Napoleon had made such large captures, and of whom he had desired all the other European States, including Russia, to make seizures. It will be remembered also that when this state of things had lasted somewhat less than two years, the American States, weary of injuring themselves for the purpose of causing injury to others, declared that it would abandon the system it had adopted in favour of that one of the two powers, France and England, which should renounce all pretensions of controlling the navigation of the oceans. Napoleon had cleverly taken advantage of this circumstance, and declared that from the 1st November 1810 the decrees of Berlin and Milan should be annulled in respect to the United States, provided that the Americans on their part should either obtain of England the revocation of the orders in council, or compel her to respect their rights. On this occasion Napoleon displayed unusual consideration for the rights of others, refraining from dictating too openly to America the course which she should pursue

by actually demanding that she should declare war against England; whilst, nevertheless, his meaning was sufficiently manifest under the formula in which he clothed it.

America, eagerly responding to this overture, had declared, by an act of the 2nd of March 1811, its maritime relations re-established with France, and the law of non-intercourse maintained with respect to England until she should revoke her orders in council; and in answer to this act the British cabinet, which clung to the orders in council more from a feeling of vanity than on account of any advantage to be derived from them, had modified certain of their details, whilst it still maintained their principle intact. It annulled the obligation which had been laid upon merchant vessels to visit the ports of London or Malta, and restricted its paper blockade to the coasts of the French empire, from the Elba to the St. Sebastian in the ocean, and from Port-Vendre to Cattaro in the Mediterranean and Adriatic, but at the same time persisted in its resolution to confiscate enemy's goods in neutral vessels; and thus maintained almost in its entirety the maritime tyranny which Great Britain had arrogated to itself, and those usurpations which had called forth in reply the decrees of Berlin and Milan. And if this system, and if these orders in council, were contrary to every principle of right, in a still greater degree were they productive of actual inconvenience to the citizens of the United States, for the English not only made them the pretext for seizing silks and wines belonging to Americans, on the ground that they were enemy's goods, but at the same time pressed into their service American sailors, on the pretence that as they spoke English they were deserters from the British navy. Every vessel freighted with a cargo of French merchandise was pillaged, every sailor speaking the English language was arrested as a deserter, and many English frigates pursued this system even on the very shores of America, in the sight of indignant populations. Doubtless there were at this time a certain number of deserters from the English naval service in America, for it usually happens that when a country is engaged in warfare some of its sailors emigrate for the purpose of avoiding being forced to exchange the commercial service for the governmental, which is far less lucrative. Fortunately, however, for the honour of nations, those who act in this manner are always but few in proportion to the whole number; and whilst the number of men lawfully seized in the manner above mentioned amounted at most to six thousand, there is good reason to believe that at least double that number were seized on board American vessels, on the pretence only that they were English sailors. The right of search, therefore, being thus exercised, whilst the coasts of

the French empire which comprised the best part of Europe were blockaded, it is evident that, notwithstanding the relaxation which had been made in the orders in council, the commercial intercourse of America with England was rendered impossible.

The Americans were too jealous of the right of free navigation of the ocean, and too careful of their own interests, not to resist these intolerable pretensions, and to point out the illusory nature of the pretended modifications in the orders in council. The impressment of their sailors especially, which was obstinately continued by the English frigates at the mouth of the Chesapeake and Delaware, was the source of unanimous indignation, and in the course of 1811 the dispute between England and America had reached the utmost degree of violence. Lord Castlereagh maintained with incredible arrogance and an obstinate sophistry little worthy of England, that the modifications made in the orders in council were more considerable than those made by Napoleon in the decrees of Berlin and Milan; that in reality these decrees had not been revoked, that America could furnish no proof of their revocation, that testimony to the contrary was furnished every day by the seizure of numerous American vessels by the French marine; and that, finally, to claim for neutral vessels the right of freely conveying any species of merchandise, save contraband of war, was to demand, in fact, the free circulation of French products throughout the whole world; whilst the Americans had not in return obtained an equal freedom of circulation for English products. With regard to the impressment of sailors, Lord Castlereagh displayed inflexible firmness, declaring that with regard to sailors, her most precious species of property, England would take possession of her own wherever she could find them.

The Americans rejoined, with much reason, that the modifications made in the orders in council were of no effect, since they still maintained the right of searching neutral vessels for enemy's property, and the fictitious blockade; that the revocation of the decrees of Berlin and Milan was a matter which concerned them alone, and of the sincerity of which they alone could be the right judges, since it concerned only their own commerce, and not that of any other nation; that they possessed, moreover, the official declaration of the French minister, ready to be converted into a decree as soon as the concession demanded of America by France should have been fulfilled; that some arbitrary proceedings, indeed, had been taken by the French, but were partly due to the unsettled state in which the affair stood, and partly to the violent course pursued by the English, and that America both could and would prevent their repetition; that the reproach that America had

not obtained from France the recognition of her right to traffic freely in English merchandise was puerile and unworthy of a serious discussion ; that, in short, America, asserting the right of neutrals to take in whatever freight they might choose on their own coasts, did not claim the right to introduce into England, for example, the wines or silks of France, which would have been an impertinent pretence, but did claim the right to convey such silks and wines to whatever countries might desire to receive them, since it was the undoubted right of every neutral nation not to be injured by the war which might be waged between others ; that the right which it claimed for neutrals was, not that they should have liberty to introduce into other countries such merchandise as it might be contrary to their interests to receive, but that they might traffic without restriction with those countries which were willing to receive it ; that to complain that America had not demanded of France the privilege of introducing into that country English products was unreasonable even to folly.

With regard to the impressment of sailors, the Americans added, that whilst England had an undoubted right to pursue and punish deserters from her services on her own territory, she had nevertheless no right to pursue them on the territories of other nations ; that on the seas, which are the common property of all nations, and the exclusive property of none, a ship sailing under its national flag was a portion of the territory of the nation to which it belonged, according to the recognised principles of international law ; that for England, therefore, to seize any sailor, whether English or not, on board an American vessel, was as gross a violation of American territory as would be committed should an English constable seize an English culprit at Washington itself.

The truth of these principles was so evident that Lord Castlereagh and his civilians were wholly unable to answer them, and in the course of the year 1811 war was declared between England and the United States, a circumstance which would doubtless have been very greatly to our advantage had not France still, unfortunately, executed rigorous measures with respect to the commerce of the latter country, which furnished the partisans of British influence in America and the friends of peace at any price with specious arguments against a war between the two countries.

Napoleon had been unwilling to withdraw his decrees immediately, and had limited himself in the first place to a formal promise to revoke them as soon as America should have taken some decided measures against England. As soon, therefore, as the American Act of the 2nd March 1811, which re-established commercial relations with France, whilst it left them

suspended with regard to England, became known in Europe, Napoleon replied to it by an Act passed on the 28th April 1811, which revoked the decrees of Berlin and Milan in respect to America; and thus utterly destroyed the principal of the assertions made by the English. But unfortunately he partly destroyed the good effects thus produced by maintaining certain exceptions to the free right of commerce belonging to neutrals, and subjecting American commerce to certain restrictions of a nature peculiarly inconvenient. In the first place, he was unwilling to restore the celebrated cargoes which had been seized in Holland, not only because they were of great value, but because also they belonged to that class of American traders which had more particularly engaged in commercial relations with Great Britain, and for which he had more aversion than even for the English themselves. He excused this rigour by two good reasons, the first of which was, that the proprietors of those cargoes had violated the law of non-intercourse by sending them to Europe, and having thus broken the laws of their country, had become denationalised; and the second, that the confiscation of these vessels was the natural result of the seizure in America of French vessels, on the ground that they had violated the law of non-intercourse. With regard to this latter reason, indeed, it is true that the French vessels seized numbered three or four, whilst the American vessels seized by Napoleon numbered several hundreds; but on the point of honour, Napoleon declared that the mere number could not be held in any account, and that the capture of a thousand American vessels would not compensate in his eyes for any ill treatment of a single French vessel in the ports of the United States. Nevertheless, he had consented to release some of the American vessels seized since the declaration of the 1st November 1810, that is to say, since the date of the offer made to America to revoke the decrees of Berlin and Milan, if America should accept the conditions on which this offer was made.

Whilst re-establishing the rights of neutrals in respect to the Americans, Napoleon still maintained some exceptions to these rights, declaring his intention to seize any American vessel which should be found sailing under an English convoy, as having become an enemy by association, and in reprisal for the blockade of the shores of France by the English, to prevent any vessel from visiting the shores of England—directing this interdiction, he said, not against the ships of America, but against the shores of England. And finally, as he had armies before Lisbon and Cadiz, he asserted that to convey provisions to either of those places, would be to violate a real blockade, and therefore forbade it. All these restrictions upon the

enjoyment of the simple rights of neutrals were capable of being supported by sound reasons; but this fact in no degree diminished the bad effect produced by them in America.

With regard to commerce, Napoleon, who was always anxious, whilst permitting commercial relations between France and America, to keep away from the former country both English ships and English merchandise, had devised the most minute precautions for enforcing his wishes. In the first place, he directed that the ships sailing from America to France should depart only from New York or New Orleans, and should touch the French shores only at Bordeaux, Nantes, or Havre. In addition to this regulation, he ordered that every cargo before its departure from America should be verified and inventoried by his consuls, for the purpose of preventing any change being made in it en route, and that neither sugar nor coffee should form a portion of such cargoes, the origin of those articles being always doubtful. At the same time he endeavoured to compel the American merchants bringing cargoes to France to take back in return two-thirds of the value of such cargoes in French silks and wines; and finally, he had rendered all goods imported from America subject to the famous tariff of the 5th of August 1810, which consisted in substituting a tax of 50 per cent. for the absolute prohibition which had been pronounced against the importation of any exotic produce.

As soon as the American merchants found themselves exposed to these restrictions, they uttered bitter complaints against them, which unfortunately caused the most unfavourable impressions in the United States, and the result was, that Napoleon deprived himself, for the sake of a slight gain, of the immense advantage which he must have derived from a declaration of war between England and America. He was quite right to be unwilling to permit English goods to gain admittance into France by means of neutral vessels, but had war been declared between England and America, the ships of the latter country would have obtained but a small portion of their cargoes from the depôts of the former; and the rule that the vessels trading between France and America should only sail between three ports of the former country and two of the latter, was simply to facilitate the blockade of our coasts by the English, and might well have been exchanged for strict examinations of the cargoes by consuls of integrity. With regard to the prohibition relative to sugars and coffees, a certain portion of those articles was so absolutely necessary to France that Napoleon had permitted them to be brought even from England by means of licences; and it would have been much simpler to have received them at the hands of the Americans, who might have obtained them from the English colonies. And finally,



with respect to the obligation imposed upon American merchants to buy in exchange for their imports a certain portion of the wines and silks of France, it was to be remembered that too much solicitude for the welfare of Bordeaux and Lyons might be rather injurious than beneficial, and moreover, that the Americans might well be left to select such French products for export as might seem best to themselves.

The great object to be obtained was the creation of a state of war between Great Britain and America, not only because the loss of the trade of the latter country would be one of the greatest blows which could be inflicted on the former, but because also, from the firing of the first cannon-shot in anger between them, the American flag would at once cease to be the secret agent of England; and without the aid of such secret agency it may be well imagined what the effect would have been to her of the continental blockade.

No sacrifice could have been too great on our part for the purpose of obtaining such a result as this, and it was evident that it could only be obtained by removing, in the first place, all causes of complaint against us on the part of the Americans, that their irritation might be solely directed against England; and in the second place, by leading them to hope that an extensive commerce with France would compensate them for that which they were about to lose with England. But unfortunately a spirit of distrust, pride, and obstinacy rendered Napoleon unwilling to grant the concessions demanded of him, and induced him, when he did yield them ungraciously one by one, to destroy their effect by untimely rigour. When, therefore, the advocates of a war with England cited in the American Congress the number of vessels seized by the English or on board of which they had impressed into their service American sailors, those who were opposed to the declaration of war were able to cite in reply the number of American vessels captured by the French ships of war at the mouths of the Thames or the Tagus; and when the former set forth the vastness of the French commerce which America would enjoy in compensation for that of which she would be deprived by a state of war with England, the latter were able to state in reply the restriction which had been imposed on this commerce by its limitations to two ports in America and three in France, and the many inconveniences and excessive taxes to which it was exposed.

The state of public opinion in the United States, and the division of parties in this free country, still more complicated this question.

At the time of which we speak, as well as before and after it, the people of North America were divided into Federalists

and Democrats. The former, although formerly eager for war with Great Britain for the sake of severing America from connection with it, had, when this severance was once effected, permitted themselves to entertain a species of predilection for the mother country, which led them to desire both its commerce and alliance. Motives of interest also had considerable influence in strengthening the hold of this feeling upon those minds which entertained it; for, being almost entirely established on the north-east coasts of America, at Philadelphia, at New York, at Boston, they had been long engaged in the English trade, and were naturally anxious that America should receive those English products in which they trafficked. This party was composed of wealthy merchants, whose manners, tastes, and ideas were those of that great English commercial class of which they had once formed a portion; and whilst they held the reserved, severe opinions of a commercial aristocracy, they delighted in the wise, cautious, Conservative policy of Mr. Pitt, and altogether resembled the merchants of the city of London, who had always been the adherents of this illustrious British minister. With regard to America, they gave their willing support to the Federal government, and were anxious that it should be at peace with the rest of the world. The France of Louis XVI. was scarcely to their taste, that of the convention not at all, and that of Napoleon but little. They deplored the rigorous measures enforced by England against their commerce, but they were unwilling to make them a cause of war; and they were especially distrustful of the government of Napoleon, whom they regarded as revolutionary, despotic, ambitious, and the general disturber of the world's peace.

The Democrats, or Republicans, as they were called at this period when the Republic had not been long proclaimed, were both by feeling and interest precisely opposed to the Federalists. Inhabiting for the most part the interior of the country, and spread over Virginia, Carolina, Ohio, Kentucky, territories rich in cotton, tobacco, sugar, cereals, and woods of all kinds, their interests led them to desire free commercial relations with France, where there was a great demand for their agricultural products; and at the same time not only preferred themselves French goods to English, but also, having both the manners and the opinions of the planters, entertained the most extravagant liberalism. Eager formerly in provoking the revolt against England, they had, unlike the Federalists, continued to hate Great Britain even after they had obtained the triumph they sought, and desired to complete their independence by renouncing all connection with the mother country, whether in alliance, trade, or manners; and whilst they thus hated Great Britain, they naturally bestowed upon France an equal degree

of goodwill, preserving a lively consciousness of the services received at her hands, and readily pardoning her revolutionary excesses, at which they had been less revolted than the Federalists, and although she had become subject to a temporary despotism, always regarding her as an active, enterprising nation, destined in every age to quicken the development of the human intellect. Irritated in the highest degree by the outrages offered to their flag, they were impatient to avenge them; filled with ambition, they longed to effect the conquest of Canada; and excited by these various motives, were eager for war with England. They were anxious, therefore, that France by freely opening her ports to American commerce, and receiving their agricultural products from the south and the west, should furnish them with arguments in support of their vehement and passionate policy.

Whenever news arrived from Europe of some excess committed by England against the honour of the American flag, the Democrats triumphed; but when, on the other hand, information was received of the seizure by the French of some ship belonging to the United States, the Federalists declared that it would be most unjust to make war against England without at the same time commencing hostilities against France, and as it would be mere folly to make war against both these powers, that therefore war should be declared against neither of them. The Democrats replied, that only persons void of any sentiment of honour or patriotism could be willing to suffer the impressment of their sailors and the violation of their flag, and that it was evident that the Federalists wished to become once more British colonists; to which the Federalists rejoined that the Democrats were turbulent fellows completely under the sway of French influence.

The head of the executive power of the United States at this moment was Mr. Maddison, the friend and disciple of Jefferson, a moderate Democrat, well informed, keen-sighted, thoroughly conversant with the conduct of affairs, and serving by means of his personal intelligence to correct the extravagant opinions of his party. Thoroughly persuaded, as he was, that commercial relations with France were more advantageous to America than those with England, he regarded a war with the latter power as inevitable, although he would have been glad that his country should have remained neutral, and have derived all the advantages which must have accrued to her in a state of neutrality. But whilst he considered that the maintenance of her rights as a neutral power must inevitably lead America into a war with England, he was anxious to be forced into it by public opinion, and that the United States should be supported in it by France, and receive from this

power the commercial advantages which should fitly reward the enforcement of the maritime rights of neutrals. Full of wisdom, but loving power, he entertained that ambition which was the only one the Presidents of the United States had up to that time permitted themselves to indulge, and was anxious to be elected a second time to the presidency, thus extending his term of power from four years to eight, and obtaining a dignity which had been the glory and recompense of Washington and Jefferson, the full satisfaction of their modest and patriotic desires. But whilst he had before his eyes these two illustrious examples, he had also to remember that of Mr. John Adams, who, desiring in 1798 to provoke a war with France, had failed to obtain his re-election. It behoved him, therefore, to behave with great circumspection, and he had selected as his minister for foreign affairs Mr. Monroe, who entertained Democratic views similar to his own, was equally accustomed to the conduct of affairs, had acted as American envoy both in France and England, and hoped to be one day the successor of Mr. Maddison, as Mr. Maddison himself had been that of Jefferson. In order, however, to appoint Mr. Monroe to this post, Mr. Maddison had been compelled to dismiss Mr. Smith, a distinguished and violent Democrat, a member of a powerful family, and he now had to meet the opposition not only of the Federalists, but also of the extreme Democrats, who were much discontented with his circumspection and deliberate caution.

All that was requisite to bring the struggle between the two American parties to an end was the arrival of a despatch from Paris containing a complete and definitive acknowledgment of the rights of neutrals, and the concession of valuable commercial advantages. But, unfortunately, it was now the close of the year 1811, when Napoleon was already occupied with his projects against Russia, and his ardent intellect, although immensely great, was not capable of carrying out two projects simultaneously. Passionately desirous in 1810 of enforcing the continental blockade, he had then regarded a war between Great Britain and America as capable of affording a thousand combinations agreeable to his plans, and he had neglected no means which might tend to bring it about. At the close of the year 1811, however, being full of the idea of destroying at one blow all resistance to his power, he had treated Mr. Barlow, the American minister, and an intimate friend of President Maddison, with much neglect, sometimes making him wait for an audience during whole weeks. In addition, moreover, to this characteristic of Napoleon's mind, which led him to devote its attention to any one object to the exclusion of all others, another of its peculiarities consisted in a species of political avarice, which led him to endeavour to obtain as much as possible whilst giving as

little as possible in return, and which not unfrequently defeated itself, causing the loss of what a more liberal spirit might have obtained. Still anxious, although less eagerly so, to enforce the continental blockade, fearful that should he change his system in any way he would open paths to English commerce, and fearful also of being deceived by the Americans, he was unwilling to make any concessions to this latter people until they should have declared war against England. He continually said to Mr. Barlow, "Declare yourselves, cease to indulge in these protracted hesitations, and you shall obtain of me all the advantages you can desire."

In the meantime the French frigates destroyed every American vessel carrying corn to Lisbon or Cadiz, whilst the French corsairs bore down upon all ships that attempted to enter the mouth of the Thames.

It was thus that the war which might have been declared in 1811 was deferred, and that the whole of this year was occupied by violent discussions between the various American parties. On the arrival of any vessel from Europe, application was immediately made to M. Serrurier, the French minister, whom Napoleon had sent to America to induce that country to declare war against England, to know whether he had received any satisfactory information, upon all which occasions this diplomatist, who was as zealous as he was prudent, repeated the lesson which had been sent to him from Paris, and replied, that as soon as the Americans should have abandoned their policy of tergiversation, they would receive the reward due to their assertion of the free navigation of the seas. The American Congress had therefore been adjourned to 1812 without having taken any decided measures; a circumstance which was most unfortunate for us, since a war between England and America would have rendered the continental blockade so efficacious, and affected Great Britain to such a degree, that the policy of its government would have probably undergone an entire change.

It was impossible, however, that this state of affairs should continue. England persisted in enforcing her orders in council, and exasperated the American public to the highest pitch of anger by a declaration which was made by the British cabinet at the moment when the full exercise of the royal power was committed to the prince-regent. This prince, as has already been stated, on assuming the regency in 1811, had been obliged to submit to certain restrictions of his prerogative, which, although of slight importance, seemed to be in some degree the adjournment of his definitive installation; and an opinion had universally spread throughout Europe and America that his real policy would not appear until he had been fully invested

with the royal power. The English Opposition, therefore, had not despaired of his return to his old friends, and the United States, continually deferring the commencement of a serious war, indulged in the idea that he might yet restrict that naval despotism of Great Britain which had been one of the characteristics of the policy of Mr. Pitt and his followers. The restrictions, however, upon the prince's authority having been removed at the commencement of 1812, and no change having thereupon taken place in the course of British policy, the United States determined at length to offer effectual resistance to the vexations imposed upon her commerce by England, and to await no longer the favours so often promised by Napoleon. And singular was the spectacle now presented by the two great powers, France and England, the former enlightened by all the lustre of genius, the latter by all the light of liberty, falling with respect to America, through the blindness of passion, into similar errors; for it must unfortunately be acknowledged that free countries are as subject to the blindness of passion as others, although we may still say that of all safeguards against the blindness of passion, liberty is the most certain and the most ready of effect.

The American government, discontented with France, but indignant at the conduct of Great Britain, made preparations for a series of military measures which manifestly indicated an intention to commence a war, and at the same time took great pains to avoid entering into any communications with the French legation, in order that its resolutions might not be attributed to French influence. It proposed to raise the permanent army to twenty thousand men, to enrol fifty thousand volunteers, to establish a fleet of twelve ships of the line and seventeen frigates, and to borrow eleven millions of dollars (fifty-five millions of francs). These measures were discussed by the American politicians with great ardour, and from the points of view proper to each of the two parties into which they were divided. The Federalists, desiring an increase of power for the central authority of the State, favoured, since war was inevitable, the augmentation of the permanent army and the navy, but at the same time were opposed to the enrolment of volunteers. The Democrats, on the other hand, having an instinctive distrust of central authority, were opposed to the creation of a permanent army, and were willing that the war against England should be carried out only by throwing a host of volunteer troops upon Canada, for the purpose of snatching that country from England, and annexing it to the American Federation. A vote passed the American Congress, however, in favour of the measures above detailed, with some modifications in favour of the views of the Federalists, the strength of

the permanent army being raised to thirty-five thousand men. To these measures was added another, being the law of embargo, by which all American vessels were prohibited during two months from leaving the American ports, in order that the English might be able to make but few captures. After these two months war itself would be declared.

In the meantime, various incidents furnished arguments both to the Federalists and Democrats in support of their particular views. Certain revelations having been made by an intriguer, which appeared to show that certain Federalists had had culpable communications with the English government of Canada, their party, although unjustly accused, fell for a time into disrepute. Another incident, however, speedily altered this state of affairs, for information arriving that the French had sunk in the neighbourhood of Lisbon several American vessels which were conveying corn for the use of the English army, the Federalists once more took a prominent position, asserting that the decrees of Berlin and Milan had not been withdrawn, that the decree of the 28th April 1811 was but a pretence, and asking how it would be possible to declare war against England for not having revoked the orders in council, when France had not on her part revoked the decrees of Berlin and Milan.

It was necessary, however, for the government of President Maddison to determine upon some definite course of conduct, lest the continual tergiversations in which it had hitherto indulged should injure it in public estimation. And accordingly, as the American public began to consider, after some reflection, that it was not unnatural that the French should endeavour to prevent the conveyance of provisions to the English army, and as, moreover, Mr. Barlow's despatches contained assurances of the excellent disposition of France towards the United States, in the middle of June, at the very time when Napoleon was marching from the Niemen upon the Dwina, the question of war with Great Britain was solemnly submitted to the American Congress. The discussion which ensued was violent and prolonged. Some Federalists declared that if America were really resolved to enforce respect for her flag, and to play a heroic part, she ought to declare war against both France and England. But slight attention, however, was bestowed upon the sallies of persons who thus attempted to decry a course of policy by carrying it to excess, and by a majority of seventy-nine votes against thirty-seven in the Chamber of Representatives, and of nineteen against thirteen in the Senate, war with England was voted by the American Congress. The official declaration was dated the 19th June 1812.

Whilst the errors committed by Great Britain were leading to this result, which might have had for her such disastrous

consequences, the English cabinet, willing to act with prudence when it was too late, revoked at length the orders in council. The news of this act reached Mr. Forster at the moment when he was about to take his departure, and he left to a chargé d'affaires the duty of communicating it to President Maddison.

The Democrats, however, were eager for the commencement of hostilities, and two facts occurred in connection with the war to fill the American people, the one with joy, and the other with sadness. General Hull, at the head of three thousand men, hastening imprudently to cross the Canadian frontier near Fort Detroit, to spread insurrectional proclamations amongst the Canadians, had been surrounded by the English troops between Lakes Huron and Erie, and compelled to lay down his arms. But at the same moment the brother of this General Hull, captain of the *Constitution* frigate, obtained a triumph which exalted in the highest degree the spirit of American patriotism. Several English frigates had for the space of a year insulted the coasts of America, and insolently exercised the assumed right of impressment at the mouths of her ports. The frigate *La Guerrière*, formerly belonging to the French, had especially braved the American commodore Rogers, and he sought for an opportunity to punish it. Captain Hull, commanding the *Constitution* frigate, encountered the *Guerrière*, and having in thirty minutes totally dismasted her, compelled her to surrender with three hundred men, some fifty being killed or wounded. The manœuvres and firing on the part of the American frigate during this engagement had been of the most admirable description, and her officers and sailors had displayed an intrepidity which announced the advent of a new race of heroes on the sea. The enthusiasm excited by the one of these events, and the confusion produced by the other, rendered utterly vain all attempts to bring about a reconciliation with Great Britain.

Such had been the events on the other side of the Atlantic whilst the tragic catastrophe was overwhelming our army in Russia. And what might not have been the result of these events, of this declaration of war against England, had it been made a year earlier? When England, without allies in Europe, would have beheld a new enemy arising beyond the ocean; when the Americans, the sole violators of the continental blockade, would have become ardent co-operators in its enforcement; when it would have been consequently impossible to reproach Russia for her favour for them, and war with her on that account could not have occurred; when twenty thousand men might have been sent under a new La Fayette, in one of the numerous squadrons lying idle in our ports; when,



finally, our unbroken forces might, by striking a last blow in Spain, have put an end to the maritime war! But after the disaster of Moscow, the occurrence of a war between England and America was no longer an event from which France could derive any real advantage.

In the meantime, the course of events in Spain had been equally serious, flowing from the same causes, and almost uninterruptedly unfortunate. It will be remembered that the wise captain who commanded the English armies in the Peninsula, and by remaining there kept alive the Spanish insurrection, had successively recaptured the important fortresses of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, and thus annulled all the advantage we had gained by two sanguinary campaigns. Nor will it be forgotten in what manner he had inflicted upon us this double affront. Whilst Napoleon, sending his commands from a distance, giving his attention to the matter one moment, and withdrawing it the next, had abruptly advanced all our *corps d'armée* upon Valencia, Lord Wellington, always well informed of our movements by the inhabitants of the country, had taken advantage of the occasion to surprise Ciudad Rodrigo in the face of the army of Portugal, which was much enfeebled by the withdrawal of the detachments which had been marched upon Valencia. And when, in the next place, Valencia having been taken, Napoleon had withdrawn the French forces in all haste towards the north of the Peninsula, for the purpose of securing the communications with France, and driving towards the Niemen the detachments he required, Lord Wellington, always lying in wait for any favourable opportunity, had rapidly advanced towards the south of Portugal, had taken Badajoz by assault, and had thus subjected the army of Andalusia to an affront more bitter even than that to which the army of Portugal had been subject on the occasion of the loss of Ciudad Rodrigo. It was immediately after having sustained this double check that Napoleon had departed for Russia, leaving Joseph in command of all the French armies in Spain, after having withdrawn from these armies the Polish troops, the young guard, a portion of the squadrons of dragoons, and many excellent officers, such as Generals Eblé, Montbrun, and Haxo. The twenty-four millions of francs which Napoleon had promised to devote annually to the pay of the troops in the Peninsula had not been paid in 1812 for 1811; and of the million francs a month allowed to Joseph to assist him in creating an administration, there were due two and a half millions on account of 1811, and six millions on account of 1812. The only directions which Napoleon had left with Joseph were, that he should be careful to preserve the communications with France, and to

keep the armies of Portugal and Andalusia always ready to unite against that of Lord Wellington. But how was this precaution, on which, in fact, the whole success of the war depended, to be secured? Napoleon flattered himself that with the general command of three hundred thousand excellent troops, Joseph, if indeed he failed to accomplish marvels, would have been able to maintain his ground; for although he held the military talents of his brother in but little account, he relied upon the wisdom and experience of Marshal Jourdan, whom he esteemed at his true value, whilst he regarded him with but little personal favour, and he ceased, therefore, to bestow his attention upon this Peninsular war at a moment when it had become a matter of the utmost importance. Had Joseph and Jourdan been able to obtain obedience to their commands, they would certainly have accomplished all that Napoleon expected of them, and probably more; but we shall presently see how far the state and position in which the French armies were at the time rendered it probable that this obedience would be accorded to them.

General Dorsenne at this time occupied, with forty-six thousand men, Navarre, Guipuscoa, Biscaye, Alava, and Old Castille as far as Burgos. About twenty-one thousand of this number formed the garrisons of Bayonne, St. Sebastian, Pampeluna, Bilbao, Tolosa, Vittoria, Burgos, and some other intermediate posts, and there remained, therefore, only twenty-five thousand active troops to operate against Mina, who ravaged Navarre, and against Louga, Campilo, Parlier, and Mérimo, who overran Guipuscoa, Biscaye, and Alava as far as Burgos, communicating with the English, and intersecting the routes to such a degree that a despatch was often two months on the road from Paris to Madrid. The twenty-five thousand troops at Dorsenne's disposal, or even a less number, might have sufficed under an active leader to destroy those guerilla bands, or at least to have reduced their operations to insignificance; but General Dorsenne, brave as he was, and well fitted as he was to act in general warfare under the direction of an able superior, was neither active enough nor keen enough to compete with guerilla warfare. Cold and proud, he acknowledged no chief but Napoleon, and relying on the old instructions furnished by the latter to the commandant of the provinces of the north, directing him to occupy himself exclusively with their pacification, unless the English should place the army of Portugal in danger, General Dorsenne devoted himself too exclusively to the precise duties of his position to be readily willing to submit to the commands of Joseph. When, therefore, the latter informed his lieutenants of the emperor's orders which constituted him commander-in-chief of the French

armies in Spain, General Dorsenne replied that these orders did not affect him, since he had a particular mission, the extent and objects of which had been determined at Paris, and were quite incompatible with the execution of the orders sent to him from Madrid.

The remainder of Old Castille, the kingdom of Léon, the province of Salamanca as far as the bank of the Tagus, were occupied by the army of Portugal, which had to perform a very extensive task, since the line along which it might have to encounter the enemy extended from Astorga to Badajoz, and was at least a hundred and fifty leagues in length. It had no longer any connection with Portugal save in name, and its sole duty was to make head against the English, especially should they, advancing, attempt to throw themselves into Old Castille, and threaten our line of communications, as had been formerly done by General Moore. In this case, Marshal Marmont, who commanded the army, was directed to check the English with the utmost resolution, General Dorsenne and Joseph being directed to succour him, the latter by sending from Madrid a portion of the army of the centre, and Marshal Soult having orders to send him by the bridge of Almaraz a reinforcement of fifteen or twenty thousand men. If, on the contrary, Lord Wellington should move upon Madrid by the Tagus, as he had formerly attempted at the time of the battle of Talavera, Marshal Marmont was to cross the Guadarama, to descend upon the Tagus by Avila, and thus to cover Madrid. If, finally, Lord Wellington should threaten anew Lower Estramadura, Marshal Marmont was to pass the Tagus at the bridge of Almaraz, and to advance as far as Badajoz itself, accomplishing for this purpose a long march of a hundred leagues, which he had already effected in the course of the previous year for the purpose of affording succour to Marshal Soult. Having very little fear that this latter supposition would occur, Napoleon had removed Marshal Marmont's ordinary position from the Tagus to the Douro, from Placencia to Salamanca, by which means he had rendered it easy for Lord Wellington to seize Badajoz. Napoleon considered, with good reason, that our position in Spain could only be effectually maintained by the zealous co-operation of the generals of the various French armies in the Peninsula, and he constantly, therefore, urged upon them the necessity of affording mutual succour; but unfortunately there could be but little hope that Marshal Soult, who had been always averse to affording assistance to the army of Portugal, would at this time be very willing to aid Marshal Marmont, who had now the utmost need of such support, since it was evident that Lord Wellington, possessed as he was of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, the real

gates opening from Portugal into Spain, would pass by the former and not by the latter, since the latter led to Andalusia, where he could execute no advantageous operation, whilst the former led into Castille, from whence he might take our armies *à revers*, and by a single blow snatch Spain from our hands. Lord Wellington, whilst failing to manifest those vast, profound, and daring views which constitute genius, had nevertheless given evidences of a judgment so judicious and firm that there could be little doubt of the course which he would adopt; and Napoleon showed through all his instructions to his generals that he had divined it.

The British army numbered this year sixty thousand excellent troops, two-thirds of whom were English, and the remainder Portuguese; and to oppose them, Marshal Marmont had no more than thirty-seven thousand men, for of the fifty-two thousand men who composed his army, seven thousand had been sent, in accordance with Napoleon's directions, under General Bonnet into the Asturias to take up a position at Oviédo, whilst some eight thousand more were posted in detachments at Astorga, Zamora, Léon, Valladolid, Salamanca, amongst some lesser posts, such as Benavente, Taro, Palencia, Avila, &c., and along the routes. Marshal Marmont had sent, therefore, his aide-de-camp Jardet to represent to Napoleon this state of his forces, and to point out to him that whatever might be his danger, General Dorsenne, occupied with the guerilla bands in the north, would find a thousand reasons for declining to come to his assistance; that Joseph would neither be bold nor active enough to send at the critical moment ten thousand, or even six thousand, of the fourteen thousand men who composed the army of the centre; that Marshal Soult would find in the distance which separated him from the army of Portugal more than sufficient reasons for not quitting Andalusia; and that consequently the enemy would have time to overwhelm the army of Portugal, and by overwhelming it to uncover the frontier of France, before succour could arrive. This being the state of affairs, therefore, the marshal declared that unless he were at least placed in chief command of the two armies of the north and of Portugal, he could not make head against the English, and would be glad to quit Spain, to accompany the emperor on his expedition to Russia. Napoleon had listened to Colonel Jardet, had appeared to be much struck by his representations, and had promised to attend to them, at the same time ridiculing the ambition which led Marshal Marmont to desire a command so superior to his talents. As, however, to satisfy Marshal Marmont's necessities it would have been requisite to have adopted very serious measures, to have recalled such

and such of his lieutenants, to have altered the distribution of the French forces in the Peninsula, and perhaps to have evacuated important territories for the purpose of concentrating them, he departed from Paris, leaving unchanged the general arrangement which conferred upon Joseph the command in chief, always hoping that he was about to act in Russia in a manner which would place on a satisfactory basis the whole system of his affairs.

Notwithstanding his just apprehensions, Marshal Marmont had remained at the head of the army of Portugal, bestowing great solicitude on the requirements of his soldiers, taking pains to place Salamanca in a state of defence by means of large convents converted into citadels, and endeavouring to remount his cavalry and repair his artillery. In the meantime, Joseph, commanding the army of the centre, had at his disposal thirteen thousand or fourteen thousand troops, with whom, reinforced by about three thousand Spaniards, whom he paid out of his own pocket, and who were faithful as long as they were paid punctually, he had to guard Madrid, together with the province of Toledo on the right and that of Guadaluara on the left, to maintain in the rear his communications with the army of the north, and to preserve in front across La Mancha some relations with the army of Andalusia. It was even necessary for him to extend one of his wings as far as Cuença for the purpose of communicating with the army of Aragon posted at Valencia. Had one of these points been left unarmed, Joseph would have immediately been cut off from one of the important portions of his kingdom, and lost the slender resources he was still able to obtain, and which consisted in some grain and forage procured at the period of the harvest, and of the taxes levied on the city of Madrid. At this moment especially, compelled to satisfy the pressing demands of Marshal Marmont, and to send grain to the province of Toledo, from which province he usually obtained supplies of it, he had impoverished Madrid to such a degree in respect to provisions that the pound of bread cost there from twenty-six to twenty-seven sous; and the consequence was an extreme state of misery which was ill calculated to reconcile the Spaniards to the new dynasty.

Andalusia, invaded so prematurely, was in the hands of Marshal Soult, who had under his command the best portion of the French forces; and the fifty-eight thousand troops at his disposal were stationed as follows: twelve thousand before Cadiz, to continue the semblance of a siege; ten thousand at Grenada, for the defence of that province; five thousand at Arcos, to patrol between Seville, Cadiz, and Tarifa; fifteen thousand in Estramadura under the Count

d'Erlon, for the purpose of watching General Hill, who was posted at Badajoz ; and two or three thousand cavalry in the neighbourhood of Bæza, occupied in scouring the country towards the defiles of the Sierra Morena ; the remaining thirteen thousand or fourteen thousand men being under Soult's immediate command in Seville.

Being posted in so rich a country, Soult was able to procure ample sustenance for his troops, but he entirely neglected to comply with Napoleon's directions to the various generals, to reserve for the king a portion of the war contributions they might levy, declaring that he could command no more resources than were actually necessary for the supply of his own army and the requirements of the siege of Cadiz. As, moreover, communications had entirely ceased between Soult and the general staff, since the former had drawn in all the posts which had been the means of keeping up any communications with Madrid across La Mancha, asserting that the defence of this province properly devolved on the army of the centre, he had some grounds for declaring that he was ignorant that Joseph had become his commander-in-chief, for no despatch containing information of the fact had reached him either from Paris or Madrid.

This state of things proved how great an error Napoleon had committed in prematurely invading Andalusia, the conquest of which procured him none of the results which he had anticipated from it. The siege of Cadiz consisted only in the occupation of some redoubts, from which our artillery directed no cannonade, and to hurling from time to time a few bombs against the town, which never reached it ; whilst the succour afforded to the army of Portugal had been limited during the march of Massena upon the Tagus to the capture of Badajoz, which was almost immediately afterwards lost again, and had been reduced since to the establishment of Count d'Erlon with fifteen thousand men at Llerena, where he was more than a hundred leagues from Marshal Marmont ; whilst, as for the pecuniary resources which Napoleon had hoped to obtain by the occupation of Andalusia, it is sufficient to mention that Marshal Soult was constantly and eagerly demanding his share of the twenty-four millions of francs which Napoleon had determined to devote to the troops in Spain.

Napoleon frequently and bitterly complained that no real advantage was derived from the occupation of Andalusia, or the ninety thousand troops by which it was held ; but his reproaches and counsels alike lost their effect in the immense distance through which they had to pass, and the ill consequence of having uselessly and prematurely extended operations to the south remained.

We must now direct our attention to the kingdom of Valencia, and the vast establishment formed there by Marshal Suchet. Since the capture of Valencia, the great concentration of forces which Napoleon had ordered on this side had broken up, and the various contingents had returned to their several provinces. General Reille had returned to Aragon with fourteen thousand men, for the purpose of guarding Saragossa, Lerida, and Tortosa, assisting the army of the north to repel the incursions of Mina, Villa-Campa, Duran, and l'Empicinado, and affording assistance as occasion might require to the army of Catalonia. General Decaen, who commanded the troops of Catalonia under the superior authority of Marshal Suchet, had twenty-seven thousand men with whom to guard Figueres, Hostalrich, and Barcelona, and to appear from time to time under Tarragona, the most important of the conquests of Marshal Suchet, since it prevented the English from establishing themselves in the north-east of Spain. The latter, knowing that we had great difficulty in provisioning our fortresses, endeavoured to cut off communication by sea, while General Lacy endeavoured to cut off on the land side, and they flattered themselves that they would thus be able to reduce it by means of famine. Should this place be lost by us, and General Lacy established in it with his army, he would become, reinforced and provisioned as he would be by the English, a most dangerous enemy, threatening Tortosa, the route of Valencia, and render the evacuation of this city almost inevitable. Marshal Suchet had in the three provinces of Catalonia, Aragon, and Valencia, fifty-eight thousand actually under arms at his disposal; of these, fourteen thousand were consigned to General Reille, twenty-seven thousand to General Decaen, whilst sixteen or seventeen thousand, under his own immediate personal command, watched the long route which follows the coast of the Mediterranean from Tortosa to Valencia, held a position in front of Alicante, and communicated by Cuença with the troops of the central army; six or seven thousand of them at the most being available as a column mobile, ready to be thrown upon any point which might be more immediately threatened.

Amongst the dangers which threatened the army of Aragon was the appearance of the Anglo-Sicilian army, which had been formed in Sicily by Lord William Bentinck, one of those simple, generous, and liberal-minded Englishmen who become very grasping when concerned in matters relating to their country. He had made himself the real King of Sicily; for finding himself much impeded in the promotion of his objects by the Bourbons, who, having been deprived of Naples by the French, found themselves reduced to mere ciphers by the English in Sicily, and naturally neglected no opportunity of

relieving themselves from the yoke of their protectors, he had disembarassed himself of the king and queen by forcing them to consign the royal power to a young prince, who, invested with the regency at an age when he had himself need of the services of a regent, had summoned the Sicilian nation to his aid by bestowing upon it a constitution similar to that of Great Britain. Freed, then, from the court of Palermo, and being no longer under any apprehension of attempts on the part of Murat, since he had been compelled to take part in the Russian expedition, Lord William had been able to dispose of a corps numbering about twelve thousand men, consisting of an English and a Sicilian division, and from its power to effect rapid movements by means of the English fleet, producing effects superior to its numerical strength. It was carried to the Balearic Isles, which were in the hands of the English, and to the Murcian coast, which was almost equally in their power, and at which places respectively General Wittingham and General Roche organised two Spanish legions intended to be placed under English command; and here the Anglo-Sicilian army, being in a position to move either to Catalonia towards General Lacy, or to the kingdom of Murcia towards General O'Donnell, became a real and most disquieting danger.

Marshal Suchet, very attentive to the dangers of his position, had employed in the most judicious manner the sixteen thousand men reserved to the kingdom of Valencia. Having placed little garrisons, well provisioned, in Tortosa, Peniscola, and Saguntum, and having kept at Valencia another little garrison, which by means of the soldiers at the depôts and the invalids might be doubled if there were need, he had left about five thousand men under General Harispe in front of Alicante. Having reserved to himself an active division of six thousand or seven thousand men, he was ready to throw himself either upon Tortosa or upon Alicante, or even to move towards Cuença in the direction of Madrid.

The success which attended Marshal Suchet was chiefly the result of his powers of administration. On the day succeeding the capture of Valencia, that city, trembling at the remembrance of the massacre of the French, feared that it had fallen into the power of a pitiless avenger; but it speedily found, on the contrary, that their vanquisher was a gentle, adroit man, who took pains to reassure the inhabitants of the conquered city, inviting them to take a share in its government, as he had previously done at Saragossa. Already inspiring confidence by his conduct in Aragon, he had successively brought back the archbishop and the ancient municipal magistrates of the province, had formed a junta, arranged with it the re-partition of the impost, effected several useful reforms, and at the same



time, without in any manner oppressing the country, procured for his soldiers the enjoyment of all its abundance. Napoleon desired that Valencia should pay in money for the French blood which had been shed in 1808, and he had demanded a ransom of fifty millions. This was an excessive contribution to be levied upon a country in the midst of the disorders of war, and which, although rich, was of but small extent; but nevertheless there was good reason to suppose that the whole of it would be obtained, should the French troops occupy Valencia for the space of twelve months. Already had Suchet clothed, paid, and armed every one of his soldiers, filled his magazines, prepared a reserve, and sent to Joseph an instalment of three millions, with the promise of a speedy remittance of a sum of much larger amount. No other army in Spain was in such a good state as Suchet's; it served its general well, for it loved him, and it was ready to accomplish at his bidding even greater achievements than those which it had already accomplished.

Information of the new authority which had been bestowed upon Joseph had speedily reached Valencia, the communication with that city being well maintained, and had somewhat displeased Marshal Suchet, who, although of a most amicable disposition, was vexed at any interference with his just and tranquil reign. He was able and even ready to afford Joseph money, but he was quite unable to spare a single soldier, for the provinces which he guarded were the sole resource of the French armies, if, by any misadventure in Castille or Estramadura, they lost their communications with Bayonne. He was supported, moreover, in his refusal to relinquish any of his troops by the instructions which had been secretly sent to him by Napoleon, in authorising him to regard the staff at Madrid with a deference which should be simply formal; nevertheless, always moderate, and ever refraining from complicating existing difficulties by adding to them those arising from personal temper, he took care to render to Joseph all the services which were in his power, displaying towards him the most complete apparent deference, and resolving to refer to the secret instructions only in case the new commander-in-chief should require of him the performance of something which might be injurious to the provinces which he had been commanded to preserve for the empire.

The command in chief, which had been conferred upon Joseph and Marshal Jourdan, his major-general, was, in fact, it must be confessed, a very singular one. Of the five armies occupying Spain, that of the north refused to obey him; that of Portugal obeyed him, that it might obtain the support of the army of the centre, which obeyed him absolutely and directly, but was of very insignificant strength; that of Andalusia, the most

considerable of all, and the least prevented by circumstances from yielding him obedience, was resolutely determined to withhold it, even ignoring his authority, and for a considerable time feigning to be ignorant of its existence; whilst, finally, that of Aragon, testifying towards him much respect, and placing at his disposal sums of money, was yet prevented by circumstances from affording him any further services. Marshal Jourdan's keen judgment and profound experience soon pointed out to him the vice of the position, and he pointed it out to Joseph in a complete and startling report. But what could be done? To send a despatch to Paris would be a means of obtaining nothing but a reply, after a lapse of two months, from the Duke de Feltre, as long as insignificant; nevertheless, Marshal Jourdan sent to the minister of war a circumstantial account of the position of the staff at Madrid, that the responsibility attaching to it might be reduced to just limits.

The only enemy to be feared was the English army, which, having taken Ciudad Rodrigo in January, and Badajoz in March, and reposed during April and May, was ready to act in June. As there were no more fortresses for it to besiege, it became a question what would now be its course, and there existed certain indications which rendered this question a matter of easy solution to a man of Marshal Jourdan's discernment.

In fact, Badajoz having been captured, Lord Wellington had advanced to the north of Portugal with the bulk of his troops, and had taken up a position at Fuente Guinaldo, at some leagues from Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo, thus threatening Old Castille and the army of Portugal, to which was entrusted its defence. In addition, moreover, to the presence of Lord Wellington at Fuente Guinaldo, there were several very striking secondary indications of what were his real projects, such as the movements of troops in Le Beira, Tras-os-Montès and Léon, of immense magazines in Corogne, and numerous mule trains in Galicia. These various preparations were manifest indications of projects directed against Old Castille. But there was one great general reason which, independently of those several details, sufficiently proved what Lord Wellington's intentions really were, and it consisted in the fact that by advancing northwards he placed himself in a position to cut off our communications, and to overthrow by a single success the whole of our military system in the Peninsula, whilst by advancing southwards he could obtain no other result than to disquiet the army of Andalusia, to compel it perhaps to abandon the pretended siege of Cadiz, each of which objects might be obtained, moreover, with much more certainty by operations in the north, since the menace of any serious result in Castille would force the French to evacuate Andalusia, La Mancha, and perhaps

Madrid. Neither Joseph nor Marshal Jourdan failed to perceive their true position, and had they not done so, Marshal Marmont, whom the impending danger more immediately threatened, would not have left them in any doubt respecting it. He hastened, at the commencement of May, to announce to them that the English were in motion towards him, and earnestly demanded succour, at the same time making preparations to concentrate his forces. Both Joseph and Marshal Jourdan immediately perceived the course which should be adopted, and displayed on the occasion a keenness of judgment which was natural to the marshal, who had been engaged in the profession of arms from his youth, but was highly creditable to Joseph, who was a stranger to the art of war. Had their authority at this moment been respected, nothing would have been easier than to have frustrated Lord Wellington's project, and not only to have frustrated it, but even to have made it the means of procuring for us a brilliant triumph, which would have placed our affairs in Spain on a surer footing, and probably have counteracted in a certain degree the ill consequences resulting from the Russian expedition, for a great reverse in the Peninsula would have had a very important effect upon the English, and by England in reality was the whole of Europe influenced.

To meet the danger which had become so imminent, it was only necessary to concentrate for the common defence the available forces, which were far more than sufficient both as respected number and quality. The army of the north, although no longer numbering the forty-six thousand men with whom it had commenced the campaign, still consisted of twenty thousand active troops, and could well have spared ten thousand of them for some weeks, as was proved by the fact that it eventually did so, but in an inopportune manner, for although our communications would have been thus rendered more difficult, they were already so much obstructed that the evil could scarcely have been increased. Joseph, who had at his disposal thirteen thousand or fourteen thousand active troops, and three thousand Spaniards, might have afforded ten thousand of them, and a total reinforcement would thus have been provided of twenty thousand men. Finally, there was no reason why the army of Andalusia should not contribute the whole of Count d'Erlon's corps, or at least ten thousand of the sixteen thousand men of whom it consisted. Five or six thousand men would have sufficed to watch General Hill at Llerena; and had this general, as was very improbable, committed the imprudence of marching upon Andalusia, Marshal Soult, with the six thousand men of Llerena, would have been able to meet him at the head of about twenty-five thousand men; General Hill's numbering no more than about half that number. By moderate contributions of

troops, therefore, from the armies of the north, the centre, and Andalusia, a reinforcement of thirty thousand men might have been afforded to Marshal Marmont, whose army would thus have been raised to seventy thousand, and have become sufficiently powerful completely to overthrow the army under Lord Wellington, or at least to force it to retire into Portugal.

The necessary resources existed, then, and Jourdan and Joseph lost no time, it must be acknowledged, in endeavouring to utilise them, as soon as they were convinced that Lord Wellington was about to march upon Old Castille, and consequently to threaten the army of Portugal; they wrote to the two generals who were alone able to succour it, and who were General Caffarelli, the successor of General Dorsenne in the command of the army of the north, and Marshal Soult, at the head of the army of Andalusia. Pointing out to each of these commanders the danger which manifestly threatened Marshal Marmont, they enjoined General Caffarelli to move a detachment of twelve thousand men upon Salamanca, and urged Marshal Soult to furnish Count d'Érlon with considerable reinforcements, to order him to watch the movements of General Hill with the utmost vigilance, and should the latter proceed by the interior routes to reinforce Lord Wellington towards Old Castille, to follow him, crossing the Tagus by the bridge of Almaraz, and thus carrying to Marshal Marmont a reinforcement equal to that which would be supplied by General Hill to Lord Wellington.

This order was, unfortunately, not the best which might have been given, and had it not been subsequently modified, the proposed movement would have been an absolute nullity as far as regarded the army of Portugal. It was planned, in fact, on the supposition that General Hill had in advance of Badajoz considerable forces, that his position there was only a temporary one, and that he would be recalled towards Fuente Guinaldo as soon as Lord Wellington should be ready to commence operations. But every portion of this supposition was erroneous: instead of thirty thousand men, General Hill had under his command no more than fifteen thousand, amongst whom there was scarcely an English division; and his position was a stationary one, intended to mask the designs of his chief, and occupy Marshal Soult until Lord Wellington, having assembled seven English and several Portuguese divisions at Fuente Guinaldo, should march upon Salamanca. Count d'Érlon, therefore, however much he might have been reinforced, must necessarily, if under orders to remain stationary before General Hill's position, have left Marshal Marmont to perish unaided. It is only the very highest ardour of genius which can foresee completely and immediately an enemy's

designs, and Marshal Jourdan, whose judgment was very sure, but somewhat slow in its operations, required time to develop the resources of his military skill. Had he visited the scene of operations, he would doubtless have very speedily discerned the true position of affairs; but sick, disgusted, and in personal attendance upon a king who, although brave, was unwilling to quit Madrid, he had remained in the palace, and judging of the state of affairs from afar, had not succeeded in forming an exactly true opinion respecting them. He was speedily undeceived, however, and in the meantime the first orders were sufficient for the occasion, since they enjoined each of those who were in a position to be of any assistance to prepare to give it. Marshal Suchet, being at too great a distance and too poor in troops to send contributions of men, was directed to render to the common cause a species of service which he could afford without any difficulty, and which was to move up the forces under General Reille de la Navarre, in order that it might be easier for the army of the north to furnish the contingent which had been demanded of it, and to relieve at Cuença the troops of the army of the centre, that the latter were the most concentrated and the most readily available.

We may easily imagine what was the reception accorded to Joseph's orders, which were given with much firmness, but without that air of authority which was peculiar to Napoleon. General Caffarelli, who commanded the army of the north, was upright, devoted, and brave, as were all the Caffarelli, but endowed with a quiet obstinacy of disposition, and although personally courageous, somewhat timid in action, and very inferior in intelligence to the illustrious officer who had made the fortune of this distinguished family. Of the forty-six thousand men who had composed his army, ten thousand had been withdrawn for the Russian expedition, and moreover, the indefatigable guerilla bands of the Basque Provinces kept him in continual apprehension with respect to the safety of the posts of the interior and on the coast. Persisting, as General Dorsenne had persisted, in considering himself independent of the commander-in-chief, he did not actually refuse to afford assistance to Marshal Marmont, but refrained from stating any precise method in which he would succour him, and confined himself to promises which, although made in good faith, the exercise of a little foresight might well have estimated at their true value.

In Andalusia Joseph's orders were received in a manner still less satisfactory. Marshal Soult, since he had become reassured with respect to the consequences of his campaign of Oporto, had always hoped that he would have been appointed King Joseph's major-general; and when Napoleon, who was

not only very dissatisfied with the operations in Andalusia, but was also unwilling to force upon his brother a major-general who, he knew, would be displeasing to him, appointed Marshal Jourdan to this post, the discontent of Soult had been extreme, and there was small probability, therefore, that he would pay much attention to a demand of succour for the army of Portugal, with which he had been in continual contention. He had formed, moreover, an opinion respecting the projects of Lord Wellington which was entirely different from that entertained by the staff at Madrid, believing that the English general, instead of directing his operations towards Castille, was intending to carry on the campaign in Andalusia. He replied, therefore, to Joseph's orders that the army of Portugal and its general were mistaken, that Lord Wellington was not preparing to march upon Salamanca and Marshal Marmont, but upon Andalusia, and that it was necessary to succour the army of Andalusia rather than that of Portugal, since General Hill was but the head of the great British army, which was ready to advance in its entire strength upon Seville for the purpose of relieving Cadiz; that the language held at Cadiz in the insurrectionist journals proved that this was the case; and that there could be no doubt that it was necessary to reinforce Count d'Erlon, but for the purpose of affording assistance, not to the army of Portugal, which was in no danger, but to that of Andalusia.

To attribute to Lord Wellington an intention of acting in Andalusia for the purpose of relieving Cadiz, which was in no danger, and to judge of the enemy's projects by the statements of the insurrectionist journals, was in itself unreasonable; but the real reason which proved the improbability that any attempt would be made by the English against Andalusia consisted in the fact that Lord Wellington had no object to attain there, whilst a single success in Castille would enable him to take all our armies in the rear. Marshal Soult, however, was not of this opinion, for he remained persuaded that General Hill was at the head of thirty thousand men, that Lord Wellington was about to join him with forty thousand more, and that he, Soult, alone required succour.

In the meantime Marshal Suchet desired to do nothing which could endanger the safety of the provinces entrusted to his care, and being very unwilling to enter into a conflict with the authorities at Madrid, had complied with the orders which had been sent to him, making General Reille's Italian division replace at Cuença the troops of the army of the centre, although there was considerable inconvenience in its being moved to so great a distance.

The danger, however, became at each instant more pressing

and more apparent, and it became impossible any longer to entertain any doubt with respect to the direction in which Lord Wellington intended to execute his attack. Joseph, acting as usual under Marshal Jourdan's advice, wrote to General Caffarelli to the effect, that however independent he might consider himself of the staff at Madrid, he ought not to forget that military duty bade him hasten to the succour of a comrade in peril; that his former instructions expressly directed him to succour the army of Portugal against the English; and concluding by formally demanding of him the assistance rendered necessary by the fact that Lord Wellington was actually marching upon Salamanca and the army of Portugal. With respect to the army of Portugal, Joseph for a moment entertained a resolution which, carried into effect, might have saved Spain, and with Spain the whole French empire; and this was, to order the evacuation of Andalusia, the occupation of which procured for us but slight advantages, and which absorbed ninety thousand men, sixty thousand of them being active troops, and sufficient to overwhelm the English army. To have carried out this idea it would have been necessary to have deprived of his command Marshal Soult, who would probably have refused to consent to the evacuation, or at least have failed to effect it sufficiently soon to have been of use to the army of Portugal. But to abandon a vast province, to make a decidedly retrograde movement, and to deprive an illustrious marshal of his command, were resolutions which Joseph was sufficiently talented to conceive, but not sufficiently firm to put into execution, and the course which he really adopted was, to send Colonel Desprez, an officer who was in his confidence, and possessed of considerable talent, to watch all that took place in the army of Andalusia, to point out to Soult the error of the opinion which he entertained with respect to the projects of the English, to make him understand that it was towards Salamanca and not towards Seville that Lord Wellington was marching, to renew, on the ground of this fact, the imperative order that he should move General Drouet d'Erlon to the Tagus, without waiting for any movement on the part of General Hill, and to declare to him, as he had threatened to resign his command should displeasing orders be sent to him, that his resignation, should he make it, would be immediately accepted. At the same time he sent despatches to Clarke, the minister of war, in which he pointed out in detail all the dangers, we might almost say all the absurdities, attending the position of a royal commander-in-chief disobeyed by all his generals, and unable to induce them, either on the grounds of duty or interest, to assist that one of their number who was in the most imminent danger.

In the meantime, Joseph himself sent a first reinforcement to Marshal Marmont. When this marshal, in accordance with the emperor's orders, quitted the valley of the Tagus for the purpose of taking up a position in the valley of the Douro, he left one of his divisions, that of General Foy, on the Tagus at the bridge of Almaraz; attaching, with good reason, much importance to this bridge, and the numerous works with which it was surrounded. A faulty arrangement having divided our active forces into two parts, one in Andalusia, the other in Castille, very complete means of communication were necessary to enable our troops to move from the one province to the other. The Tagus being the chief obstacle to such facility of communications, Marmont had constructed a bridge across it with fortified works and magazines. It would have been unpardonable, in fact, not to have taken advantage of the example presented to us by the English, whose single army, under a single general, advanced alternately northwards and southwards by means of a fine road well maintained, furnished with bridges and magazines, and affording every facility for the rapid movements of troops.

This instructive example it was which rendered Marmont very unwilling, when he advanced from the Tagus to the Douro, to abandon the works of Almaraz, and induced him to leave there the division Foy. But as five or six days must elapse before this division could be brought back, on any emergency, to the main body of troops, the marshal now requested Joseph to undertake the defence of the bridge of Almaraz, and Joseph hastened to comply, sending to the required position the division d'Armagnac.

And now a rash attempt, little in conformity with the character of the English army, indicated the great projects with which Lord Wellington commenced this campaign, and how important he considered it to prevent the army of Andalusia from proceeding to the aid of that of Portugal.

General Hill having, by command of his chief, secretly advanced upon and ascended the Tagus, presented himself before the bridge of Almaraz on the 18th of May. This bridge was situated at the very foot of the mountains which separate the valley of the Tagus from that of the Guadiana, and after having crossed it, the great Estramadura road arose and passed over the mountains a *col de Mirabète*. Marshal Marmont had constructed on the summit of the hill a strong work, which would prevent the passage of the cannon of an enemy coming from Estramadura; and at the foot of the height, on the bank of the stream, had established two lesser works, forming *têtes de pont* on the left and right bank. A bridge of boats, which was not always in position, afforded a passage between the two banks.



General Hill, who had already two years before surprised General Gerard in the neighbourhood, at Arroyo del Molinos, and who was accustomed to this species of expedition, having arrived, almost without having been perceived, at the foot of the Mirabète work, perceived that it was too strong to be taken by assault, and devised the plan of sending by a cross road a column of infantry to endeavour to escalade the *têtes de pont*, whilst the remainder of the English troops feigned an attack on Mirabète on the height. This bold plan met with perfect success; the works on the left and right banks were almost immediately taken, the troops who defended them, composed of men of all nations, at once giving way, and being either captured or drowned. Having destroyed the works and burned the boats, the English retired, very proud of an expedition which had gained them more honour than profit, since at the best they had only temporarily interrupted our means of crossing the river. As soon as he heard of this exploit, General Foy, who was marching with his divisions towards Castille, immediately retraced his steps and hastened after the English, but failed, however, to overtake them.

This misadventure, although in itself far from irreparable, caused great excitement in Madrid, for it revealed Lord Wellington's intention to separate the armies of Andalusia and Portugal; and it was, in fact, an indication which should have had great weight with that one of the two armies which was summoned to the aid of the other; but although Joseph renewed his entreaties to this effect, they were in vain, as we shall speedily see.

Marshal Soult had received Colonel Desprez, had intimated to him his extreme displeasure at not having been appointed Joseph's major-general, had scrupulously refrained from renewing his offer to resign his command, and persisted in maintaining that the impending danger threatened Andalusia, and not Castille. Finding it impossible to alter the marshal's opinion on this point, Colonel Desprez had endeavoured to obtain from him some explanation with respect to his execution of the orders relative to the corps of Count d'Erlon, which Soult had reinforced in accordance with Joseph's orders, but which he had absolutely declined to send to Castille to the aid of the army of Portugal. To all the representations of Desprez the marshal replied, that if he were deprived of any portion of his forces he could no longer guard Andalusia, and that the only order, therefore, he could obey, would be one directing him to evacuate this province.

These messages and replies, this obstinate resistance, caused the loss of valuable time, during which Lord Wellington hastened to march upon the army of Portugal. In fact, information was

received during the first days of June, that he had raised his cantonments and was about to cross the Agueda for the purpose of proceeding to the province of Salamanca by the Ciudad Rodrigo route; and upon learning these facts General Caffarelli, whose disobedience to the orders which had been sent him arose rather from a want of the power of energetic action in the midst of difficulties than from a desire to dispute Joseph's authority, informed Marshals Marmont and Jourdan that he was on the point of marching to the aid of the army of Portugal with ten thousand men. In the meantime, Joseph sent to Soult the order which he should have given to him at first, namely, to march a detachment of ten thousand men upon the Tagus immediately, to evacuate so much territory as would be necessary for the purpose of rendering this measure possible, and finally, if he were disinclined to obey this order, to resign at once his command into the hands of Count d'Erlon.

Trusting to the execution of an order so precise, to the promises of General Caffarelli, and to the power he himself had of sending some thousands of men to Marshal Marmont, Joseph flattered himself that the arrangements he had made would raise the army of Portugal to seventy thousand men, and felt at ease with respect to events in Castille; felt at ease because, although endowed with good sense, military skill, and courage, he was not endowed with that quenchless ardour and sleepless vigilance which permit the man of action to believe only that which he has seen, to trust to those promises only which have been performed, and to give no order without carrying it himself into execution. These were the qualities which Napoleon possessed in the highest degree, and to which he chiefly owed his success.

Whilst the most valuable time was thus being lost on our side, Lord Wellington had put his troops in motion towards Castille, the only portion of Spain in which, for reasons which we have already mentioned, he could act advantageously. Although in undivided command of the English forces, and employed by the richest nation in Europe, he was far from satisfied with his situation, especially as regarded matériel. The pay of his troops was very much in arrear, for the English government had some difficulty in providing it, since they had for this purpose to convert the paper money into coin at a loss of at least twenty-five per cent.; and in fact, the six thousand muleteers who transported the provisions of the English army had not been paid for six months, and complained bitterly. Had these men refused to continue their services for only a single day the British army must have been lost, for had not its troops been supplied every evening with provisions at their bivouacs, and allowed time to cook and eat them, they would no longer have remained in their ranks. Lord Wellington never ceased, there-

fore, to write to his government, that if he were at the head of those admirable French soldiers, as he called them, who could dispense with regular rations, could run here and there to procure food for themselves, and then returning to their quarters cook with the utmost expedition what they might have been able to procure, he, Lord Wellington, might be able to carry on the war without money; but that to expose the troops actually under his command to the same system would be to leave him within a few days without a soldier. At the same time he complained that his army was not sufficiently numerous, especially as regarded the Spanish troops, who might have been furnished to him, he said, to the number of thirty or forty thousand, instead of the ten thousand ill-disciplined and ill-officered men who were at his disposal, and of so little real service.

The forces assembled on the Agueda under Lord Wellington's command at the commencement of June were as follows: seven divisions of English infantry, numbering altogether thirty-five or thirty-six thousand men of tried courage (an eighth division under General Hill at Estramadura), five or six thousand excellent English and German cavalry, two brigades of Portuguese infantry, and a Spanish division under General Don Carlos d'Espagne. Reckoning these latter auxiliary troops as amounting to fourteen or fifteen thousand men, Lord Wellington's whole army numbered about fifty-five thousand men, being strengthened, although it is impossible to judge in what exact degree, by the assistance of the guerilla bands. It is evident, therefore, that had our generals acted together with cordiality, they might have easily overwhelmed with the two hundred and thirty thousand active troops of the three hundred thousand French soldiers in the Peninsula the handful of English which, although certainly of good courage and well led, owed its chief strength to the wisdom of its chief and the disunion of our generals.

Lord Wellington was so conscious of the true state of affairs that it was not without trembling, if we may use such a word in speaking of such a man, that he advanced into Castille. The conquest of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz having been accomplished, it was necessary that he should undertake some measure, and the only one open to him was, as we have before said, a march on the offensive in Castille. But whilst his clear judgment pointed out to him the course which he ought to pursue, it could not fail at the same time to render him somewhat apprehensive of the danger he was about to incur by throwing himself upon the rear of the French between the armies of the north and of Portugal on the one side, and of the centre and of Andalusia on the other. The chief considerations which could induce him to enter into the midst of

such perils were, in the first place, that it was necessary to attempt to accomplish something at the favourable moment of Napoleon's absence, and secondly, that the wretched dissensions between our generals, of which he was well informed, would prevent them from overwhelming him by the union of their forces.

Although fully resolved to advance, the English general had nevertheless written to his government, that they must not indulge in hopes of any great results from the approaching movement, since the French generals had only to combine against him to throw him back into Portugal. He demanded, therefore, in the most express terms, that the Anglo-Sicilians should attempt a descent upon the province of Murcia, or on that of Catalonia, for the purpose of preventing the army of Aragon from sending detachments to the aid of the army of the centre; and at the same time required of the English ships which cruised in the Bay of Biscay and communicated with the leaders of the guerilla bands, that they should feign a disembarkation for the purpose of preventing General Caffarelli from proceeding to the assistance of Marshal Marmont. Having taken these precautions, he passed the Agueda at the commencement of June, and marched towards Salamanca. Knowing by means of very accurate reports, with which he was furnished through the zeal of the Spaniards, that Marshal Marmont had been compelled to scatter his divisions, for the purpose of enabling them to procure the means of subsistence, and that he had received as yet no reinforcement, he hoped to be able to compel him to evacuate Salamanca and to fall back behind the Douro; and proposed, should he effect this success at the commencement of the campaign, to act afterwards as might be suggested by the course of events.

Marshal Marmont, although ill served by his spies, speedily became aware of the approach of the English army, and took measures to guard against a surprise. Having had time to assemble four or five divisions by reason of the return of the division Foy, he was at the head of a body of troops of considerable strength, and such as could not fail to force the enemy to act with considerable caution. He had profited by the lessons he had received from the administrative measures of Napoleon, whose aide-de-camp he had been, and had employed the winter in taking care of his men, in repairing his artillery, in renewing as far as possible his attelages, and in placing his fortified posts in a good state of defence. In the absence of great magazines, which he had no longer the means of forming, he had established with each division a little store of biscuit, which permitted him to engage in manœuvres of a fortnight's duration, without incurring any anxiety with respect

to his soldiers' subsistence. He had fortified three convents which commanded Salamanca and the passage of the Tormès, and having placed there a garrison of a thousand men, could leave them without fear of their falling into the hands of the enemy. The line of the Douro, which was in the rear of Salamanca, and which, with its tributary the Esla, covered both Old Castille and the kingdom of Léon, was furnished throughout with well-garrisoned posts, Toro, Zamora, Benavente, and Astorga, promised to offer a certain amount of resistance, and there was every probability, the enemy acting with great caution, that the French troops would be able, by means of well-considered manœuvres, to carry on the campaign for some time without a decisive action.

Marshal Marmon, having made the arrangements above enumerated, broke up his camp at Salamanca, and established it at some distance from that city, that he might be able to devote his whole attention to the concentration of his divisions, and watching the operations of the enemy. He refrained from hastening to retreat behind the Douro, because his position was already covered by the Tormès, and he wished to remain in sight of Salamanca for the purpose of affording moral support to the little garrison left in the three convents.

On the 16th of June, Lord Wellington appeared before Salamanca, where he was received by the inhabitants with that enthusiasm which always burst forth at the departure of the French and the arrival of the English, and devoted a day or two to reflection and the enjoyment of the honour he had obtained of acting on the offensive without having incurred its dangers. The inhabitants desired him to relieve them from the hostile occupation of the three convents which commanded their city, and as, upon inspection, he considered that it would be necessary to attack them by regular siege operations, he determined to devote ten or fifteen days to this purpose, being in no way displeasèd at having such an opportunity of delay in a country when each step in advance might be one step nearer to some overwhelming catastrophe. As he had brought with him some pieces of heavy artillery, he commenced the siege immediately, sending to Ciudad Rodrigo in the meantime for additional supplies of ammunition.

Of the three convents, the principal and largest was that of St. Vincent, a great building resembling a fortress, on one side commanding the Tormès, which flowed at the foot of Salamanca, and on the other Salamanca itself. The two other convents, named respectively San Gaetano and de la Merced, were situated a little below, and towards the city, and completed our command of it.

Lord Wellington opened trenches in front of the St. Vincent

convent, but determined to take the two others by an assault, which he ordered to take place immediately. The troops which garrisoned these two posts, however, aided by the fire of the St. Vincent convent, succeeded in repelling the attack of the English, and compelling them to retreat with a loss of several hundreds of men; and Lord Wellington determined to await the arrival of the siege matériel, which he expected from Ciudad Rodrigo.

On the 28th of June, the siege train having reached the English camp and been directed against them, the French troops, after a most valiant defence, were compelled to yield the improvised citadels, by means of which Marmont had hoped to preserve Salamanca, or at least to have been enabled to repossess it at will; the result of the affair being, that we had lost 1000 men in slain and prisoners, whilst the English had lost at least as many, and in addition, twelve days, which were a gain to us as advantageous as the loss of them was the contrary to the English.

Salamanca having been taken, it would not have been wise of Marshal Marmont to have retained a position so close to the English army as the one he held then was, and he passed the Douro at Tordesillas, determined to dispute his line within it. Lord Wellington followed him to the bank of the Douro, which at this season was somewhat shallow, but still unfordable, save in very few places. The line of the Douro was protected, as we have already stated, by various strong posts, and of these, if we regard the Esla and Orbigo as a prolongation of the line of the Douro, that of Astorga was one of the most considerable, being well fortified and containing a garrison of 1500 resolute troops, and forming a strong support to our right. Lord Wellington, therefore, arriving on the bank of the Douro on the 1st of July, paused there to allow time to the Spanish army of Galicia to seize Astorga, thus giving to the French some fifteen days, during which, had they not been blinded by extraordinary passion, they might have concentrated 70,000 men against the English army. And so conscious, indeed, was Lord Wellington of this fact, that as long as he remained on the bank of the Douro he never ceased to urge, on the one side, the Anglo-Sicilian army to give the utmost possible occupation to Marshal Suchet, and on the other, the English naval forces cruising in the Bay of Biscay to keep General Caffarelli in continual dread of a great disembarkation of forces on the Asturian coasts.

In the meantime, Marshal Marmont, established behind the Douro, had employed himself in the concentration of the eight divisions which formed the army of Portugal, and as, after he had recovered the first of these divisions, that of General Foy,

there remained to be recovered the eighth, that of General Bonnet, he sent an order to this division to evacuate the Asturias, which it occupied, and his message found General Bonnet en route, for this officer, as intelligent as he was brave, perceiving what so many men of higher rank than himself failed to perceive, had rightly judged that every other consideration ought to be sacrificed to the necessity of repelling the English. The reinforcement of this division, which consisted of 6000 excellent troops, inspired Marshal Marmont with a great increase of confidence, and raised the number of his infantry to 36,000 or 37,000 men. The arm in which he was most deficient was that of cavalry, his troopers having been exhausted in pursuit of the guerilla bands, but, nevertheless, he had been able, by seizing all the available riding-horses of the country, to raise the number of his cavalry to 3000 well-mounted horsemen, and with his artillery, which was well served and numbered 100 pieces, his forces numbered altogether 42,000 men. By the addition of a reinforcement of 10,000, they would have been very superior in strength to the English; and even without, they might have made head against them, had they been wisely and fortunately led.

Marshal Marmont was endowed with many of the qualities of a good general, but was far from possessing all of them, and in addition to this want, was far from being a favourite to fortune. He was not clothed with the indefinable attribute which, whether it exist merely in human superstition or be a reality, brings to one opportunely and to another inopportunely, cold and heat, rain and sunshine, unexpected arrivals, all those various circumstances which so often enable inferior combinations to succeed, and frustrate those of real merit. And after all, may not this attribute, we may ask, be simply the result of that just proportion of qualities in a man's mind which enables him, even without the possession of superior genius, to form those simple and decided resolutions which save armies and empires?

Ought Marshal Marmont, sheltered as he was by the Douro, to have remained immovable? Doubtless it would have been his better course to have left the initiative in the enemy's hands, to have disputed with him the passage of the Douro as long as possible, and then to have fallen back methodically upon the army of the north, which must necessarily, when the enemy was at hand, have united with his own. But he was young, vain, and was at the head of an army of proved courage, over which the English had obtained no ascendant, and which retreated before them with great unwillingness; besides which, he received news which entirely put an end to all his hopes of succour. On the one side General Caffarelli, after having

announced the approach of a reinforcement of ten thousand men, now sent to inform him of the appearance of the English fleets between St. Ander and St. Sebastian, and the probability of an immediate disembarkation of the enemy, thus intimating that Marmont should no longer expect the promised reinforcement. At the same moment, Joseph, by a letter written on the 30th of June, and which reached the headquarters of the army of Portugal on the 12th of July, informed its chief of the exertions he had made to induce the army of the north and of Andalusia to aid him, and of the little expectation he had of prevailing upon them to do so; at the same time refraining, either because he was not prepared, or because he considered that the right moment had not yet come, from expressing any intention of depriving himself in Marmont's favour of one of the divisions of the army of the centre.

Compelled thus to rely on the forces actually under his command, Marshal Marmont, comparing his army with that of Lord Wellington, which, taking into account only the English troops, was not more numerous than his own, and remembering that the battles gained by the former had only been so gained because the French had injudiciously attacked them in positions where their manner of fighting rendered them invincible, he considered that he might be able so to manœuvre around them without compromising himself as to force them to abandon the line of the Douro, and fall back upon the frontier of Portugal without giving them battle; and also that, whilst endeavouring to force the enemy to retreat, he might be able to establish his own army on one of those defensive positions, the advantages of which had always hitherto been left to the enemy. The French, who scaled so well almost inaccessible positions, such as those of Talavera and Busaco, would be almost certain of victory, if instead of having to carry, they had to defend such. To these reasons for an immediate active movement was added another of great weight, consisting in the fact that the Spanish army of Galicia was besieging Astorga, which contained no more than fifteen days' provisions, and that whilst, on the one hand, the army of Portugal could not proceed to its relief without danger, its loss, on the other hand, would expose this army to be turned on its right and forced into an indefinite retreat.

Such were the ideas which induced Marshal Marmont to leave the asylum which he had found behind the Douro; and his first step, which was to repass this river in the presence of the English army, was effected with as much skill as good fortune. The banks of the Douro were of such a conformation that all that took place on the one could be seen on the other; and Marshal Marmont, under cover of a pretended descent of troops on his right towards Toro, prepared on his left, in the environs



of Tordesillas, the means of really crossing the river by several *ponts de chevalets*. During the night of the 16th, the left and centre of his army successfully accomplished the passage, and on the following day the right also, taking advantage of the surprise and confusion of the English.

Lord Wellington was no more anxious than was Marshal Marmont to risk a battle, but he was resolved not to permit himself to be cut off from Ciudad Rodrigo, which contained his provisions and war matériel, and was at the same time an excellent plan of entrance into Portugal. He now hastened, therefore, to break up his camp, and to retreat towards Salamanca by the road which he had already followed, and thus rendered Marshal Marmont successful in his project of making a retrograde movement.

As it fell back towards Salamanca, the English army encountered several tributaries of the Douro, first the Guarena, and then the Tormès, on which is situate Salamanca itself; and behind each of these in turn Lord Wellington withdrew with as much prudence as deliberation. Each army passed the evening of the 19th on the banks of the Guarena, the troops on each side braving the enemy's cannon for the purpose of bathing in its waters, the heat of the weather being extremely oppressive.

During the night, Marshal Marmont ascended the Guarena by his left, and crossing it at a point where it was a torrent of insignificant size, suddenly found himself in the presence of the English, who were not a little surprised that they were separated from us by no intervening obstacle, and immediately began to retreat, with admirable order and steadiness; along a rather extensive plain, whilst our army followed them along a plateau parallel to the one they occupied with equal steadiness and greater confidence, its light artillery frequently stopping to cannonade the retreating enemy. On the evening of the 20th, the English repassed the Tormès, and our troops bivouacked on its bank.

On the 21st, the French army crossed this river at a point a league and a half above Salamanca, and took up a position opposite the Arapiles heights, on which the English forces were established, and where it was not easy to attack them; and accordingly Marshal Marmont, almost elated by the success which had attended his movements in the face of the enemy, resolved not to imitate the errors of his predecessors, of attacking the English in positions where there could be no chance of vanquishing them, and took up a position opposite the enemy, but separated from them by a valley, and supported on the right by the village Calvarossa de Ariba, and on the left by woods of which he had hastened to take possession.

On the following morning, the 22nd July, Marshal Marmont mounted his horse at an early hour for the purpose of endeavouring to find out by personal examination what might be the designs of the enemy, and what course, consequently, he should himself pursue. No movement, however, on the part of the English had yet taken place which could throw any light on Lord Wellington's projects, with the exception that he had somewhat altered his position and fallen back a little more thoroughly on Salamanca and the Ciudad Rodrigo route. A species of valley which, although not very deep, was of some extent, separated the two armies, and rendered the position of each equally secure. The village of Calvarossa de Ariba, occupied by the division Foy, served as a pivot for our right, whilst our centre and left rested on the woods. Each of the armies might have remained in their positions without fear of the enemy encamped in front of it, and each was equally unwilling to engage, except under the most advantageous circumstances, but, nevertheless, Marshal Marmont devised a movement on his left for the purpose of outflanking to some extent the English right, threatening, consequently, their communications with Ciudad Rodrigo, and placing the French army in a position, when the English should leave their present position either for the purpose of rejoining Ciudad Rodrigo or approaching Salamanca, which would enable it to attack, and even to seize, a portion of their rearguard. The plan was feasible, but far too ambitious, and it would have been wiser to have afforded the enemy a bridge of gold than to have entered upon movements which might force us into engaging him in battle. At the same time it must be acknowledged that, by the exercise of great prudence in their execution, these movements might have been effected without any very disastrous consequences.

Leaving his right under General Foy at the village of Calvarossa de Aribi, and strengthening it by the addition of the divisions of General Ferry, Marshal Marmont made his centre and left defile behind this position along the woods by which it was adossé, and following the line of the heights on which he had encamped. Between the English and French troops, towards the right of the latter, arose two mamelons, named the Arapiles, the one of which nearest to us was also the loftiest, and commanded, consequently, the lesser one, of which the English had taken possession. He carried forward his divisions, the left being in front, defiling opposite the English, and keeping the valley between them and his own troops. The division Thormières, forming his extreme left, advanced a little en flèche; the division Sarrut and Maucune being in the centre, the division Clausel in reserve, and the division Bremier in the rear with the baggage and artillery.

Whilst Marshal Marmont was executing these movements, Lord Wellington, perceiving that they were directed against his communications, immediately ordered the execution of an exactly similar movement by his own troops, so that his right might be as much advanced as our left, and have the road before it open and unclosed by our forces. Leaving, therefore, his left stationary before our right, which was also stationary, and leaving his centre, which was formed vis-à-vis with ours, between the Lesser Arapile and the village of the same name, composed of four English divisions, numbering altogether more than twenty thousand excellent infantry—the first line, having their left resting on the Little Arapile, consisting of the fourth division under General Cole and the fifth under General Leith, the second line being the sixth under General Clinton and the seventh under General Hope—Lord Wellington carried his right, which was composed of the Portuguese brigade, Bradford, and the Spanish division Don Carlos, the third English division, and the remainder of his cavalry, to the village of Les Torres, opposite our left.

It was now noon, and there was every probability that the day would have been passed by the two armies in mere manœuvres, without the occurrence of any great loss on either side, and that Lord Wellington would have retreated before nightfall towards Ciudad Rodrigo, resigning Salamanca to us without a struggle, when, unfortunately, a fatal spirit of impatience induced Marshal Marmont to attempt to seize the enemy's rearguard. With this end in view he moved forward his left, which was already so far advanced that it now began to descend the heights before the 3rd English division, which, with a large body of cavalry, was intended to hold it in check. At the same time he carried his centre still closer to the side of the valley which separated us from the English, ordering General Clausel to support it, and advanced also the division Bremier. He gave no orders for an attack on the English lines, for, as we have already said, his object was simply to cut off their rearguard when they should be in retreat; but the execution of such manœuvres as these requires the possession of extreme skill, and of an authority sufficiently powerful to have its orders obeyed with precision, and it unfortunately happened that Marshal Marmont was in neither of these respects qualified to contend with so bold an adversary as Lord Wellington. General Maucune, commanding the division of the centre which was most in advance on the left, was an officer of tried courage and of extreme boldness on the field of battle, and now, believing that the English were in full retreat, he thought that it was the right moment to attack them; sending, therefore, to ask permission to attack the enemy, but failing

to await its arrival, he drove back the enemy's skirmishers, descended into the hollow which separated the two armies, engaged the divisions forming the English centre, being those of Cole and Leith. Perceiving this, Lord Wellington, who was willing to retreat but not to fly, accepted the challenge to battle which appeared to be offered to him, and ordered his centre to receive and repulse the attack of ours.

Whilst General Maucune was committing this rashness, General Thormières, on the left, continuing to advance, descended also into the plain without being supported, and exposed himself to be attacked in front by Picton's infantry, and on his flanks by a cloud of cavalry. And thus, therefore, the two armies were engaged throughout their entire length contrary to the intentions of the two leaders.

Unfortunately, the division of General Clausel, which was strong and well commanded, was still behind, and unable to afford that support of which the divisions which had imprudently engaged the enemy had so much need.

Marshal Marmont, perceiving with his glass from the top of the Greater Arapile, on which he had taken up his position for the purpose of directing the various movements, the faults which had been committed, hastened to mount his horse and to proceed himself to restrain the impatience of his lieutenants, but was scarcely in his saddle when he was struck by a shot which broke his arm and opened his side. The unhappy marshal fell covered with blood, and only just able to name General Bonnet as his successor in the chief command.

Whilst news of this event was being sent to General Bonnet on the right, the battle raged with the utmost fury, and on our side without the direction of a commander-in-chief. General Maucune, supported by General Sarrut, commander of one of the divisions of the centre, attacked the English vigorously, drove them back upon the village of Arapiles, but then, suffering great losses from the fire of the enemy, who were more numerous and individually stronger than our own troops, he was forced to fall back. General Clausel, however, coming up and taking the place of the division Maucune, again forced the English to retreat; upon which, Marshal Beresford, who was present at this part of the battlefield, ordered the second line to form *en potence* upon the first in such a manner as to take the division Clausel in flank. At the same time Lord Wellington attacked on his left the Greater Arapile with General Packenham's Portuguese, and towards his right, threw upon the division Thormières, which had very imprudently descended into the plain, the infantry of the division Picton and the whole mass of his cavalry. Still, in spite of the redoubled efforts of the enemy, our troops remained firm and held their

ground. The division Bonnet, although deprived of its general, who had hastened towards the centre to assume the command in chief, checked the advance of Pakenham's Portuguese, and remained in possession of the Greater Arapile. General Clausel supported with great firmness the attack in front made by the division Clinton, but suffered cruelly from the flank fire of the division Leith. The two armies encountered each other at such close quarters that the generals on each side were wounded; on that of ours, Generals Bonnet and Clausel receiving severe injuries; whilst on the side of the English, Marshal Beresford and Generals Cole and Leith were wounded more or less dangerously.

On our left, the English right, the combat was no less violent. The division Thormières was attacked in the midst of the plain by the enemy's cavalry, lost its leader, who fell dead upon the field, and fell back in confusion. The division Bremier hastened to its aid, but became so involved in the retrograde movement that General Clausel, who, although wounded himself, remained on the field of battle and replaced General Bonnet in the command in chief, ordered a retreat, and directed it very judiciously towards the plateau which we ought not to have quitted. Summoning thither the division Ferry, which had remained behind the division Foy, on the extreme right, and the division Sarrut, which had remained behind the division Foy, which had been less engaged than the divisions of the centre, he successfully rallied behind them the divisions Thormières and Bremier, Maucune and Clausel; the division Bonnet, which, posted at the Greater Arapile, had covered the foot of the mamelon with the bodies of the foe, at the same time retreating in the most regular order. An attempt on the part of the English to climb the heights to which we had retired having been repulsed, with the loss on our part, however, of General Ferry, who was mortally wounded, our divisions defiled in succession behind the divisions Sarrut and Ferry, passed behind the division Foy, which had remained stationary at Calvarossa de Aribi, and returned by the road which they had followed in the morning. The division Foy, which, not having as yet been engaged, was ordered to cover the retreat, was charged by the whole of the English cavalry, but received it in square, and inflicting considerable loss upon it, retreated in good order. Towards night our troops reached the river Tormès, and effected its passage without being pursued.

Such was this unfortunate and involuntary battle, known as the battle of Salamanca or Arapiles, the result of which was to the English army an unhopèd-for victory in the place of an inevitable retreat, and to us the commencement of the ruin of our affairs in Spain. And this result, without attempting to

deny the merits of Lord Wellington, we must certainly attribute in great part to his good fortune, for it was out of all proportion to the merits of the English general or the errors of our own. To be unexpectedly engaged in a battle, to have three commanders-in-chief wounded in succession, and to be involved in extraordinary confusion, after a march which had been continued for many days with the greatest success and in the best order, were severe, and we may say undeserved blows. But this battle is an eminent proof that the moral effect of events in war is generally far superior to their material effect; for if we had generals killed and wounded in this engagement, the English on their side suffered a similar loss; if the number of our killed and wounded amounted to five or six thousand, almost as many had fallen on the side of the enemy; and in short, although we had certainly lost nine pieces of cannon, which, having been drawn from the heights down into the plain, had there lost their horses and could not be carried off, the difference between the material results of the battle to either side was very inconsiderable. By its moral effects, however, the position of the two forces was completely changed. We had no longer any chance of being able to force the English to retreat, and were, on the contrary, ourselves compelled to make a retrograde movement, with an army in the highest degree irritated by its long series of misfortunes, from which neither its incomparable bravery nor resignation to the cruellest sufferings had preserved it. And now, whilst Marmont was compelled to withdraw behind the Douro, or even to a greater distance, as one of the first steps necessary in attempting to restore confidence to his army, Lord Wellington, on the contrary, was henceforth able to carry on the campaign in Castille, and on the French rear, for there was nowhere any force capable of making head against him. The army of Portugal would be compelled to fall back before him till it came up with the army of the north; the army of the centre was far too feeble to dare to approach him; the army of Andalusia was at a distance; and he was therefore at liberty to determine whether he should pursue General Clausel, or throw himself upon Madrid and enter it as a conqueror. Such were the ill consequences resulting from the want of goodwill on the part of those who had neglected to reinforce the army of Portugal in time, and of the imprudence of those who had engaged in a useless battle.

Fortunately for the army of Portugal, it had now become commanded, too late, but still in time to be of great advantage to it, by a chief worthy of leading it. General Clausel was young, vigorous both in mind and body, without much experience, it is true, and frequently careless, but imperturbably self-possessed, by turns cool and impetuous, keen-sighted on the

battlefield, and although he had never hitherto commanded in chief, as well fitted to bear the anxieties of such a position as the most experienced officer; esteemed by the soldiers on account of his valour, and loved by them on account of his bonhomie, he was the only one of their officers qualified to retain their obedience, and preserve their discipline by severity, without causing them to revolt.

The calmness with which Clausel, wounded as he was, assumed the command in chief in the midst of a rout, speedily restored calm to his troops, and with calm discipline. On the 23rd of July he retreated behind the Douro, receiving the English cavalry which pursued him in square, and repulsing them with considerable loss, the only casualty being in a square of the 6th leger, which, having failed to form in time, suffered some damage. Behind the Douro, Clausel found himself free from any attacks on the part of the English, but exposed to a swarm of guerilla bands, which, unable to inflict any serious damage, destroyed our wounded, stragglers, and foragers; and our troops, irritated by the cruelties to which they saw their comrades thus exposed under their very eyes, and being in want of provisions, having exhausted during their late manœuvres all the resources with which Marmont had provided them, began on their side to pillage, not only greedily, but even barbarously, an inhospitable country which they could not preserve, and which they expected never to revisit. General Clausel made great but fruitless endeavours to restrain these excesses.

At this moment arrived at length a portion of the reinforcements so earnestly demanded, so vainly awaited. On the first day of the retreat General Clausel came up with a thousand men sent by General Caffarelli, consisting of two regiments of cavalry and a detachment of artillery attélée; a reinforcement so absurdly small that it might have been just cause for anger, had not General Caffarelli had for his excuse his good faith, and the anxiety which was caused to him by the appearance of the English fleets on the coast of Biscay. Another reinforcement, which must have had a decisive effect on the course of the late events, had it arrived in time, was announced by a despatch from Joseph, which arrived at the moment when the army of Portugal had repassed the Douro, and consisted of about thirteen thousand men, comprising almost the whole of the army of the centre, which Joseph, in a species of despair, had determined to lead in person to Salamanca. He had set out from Madrid on the 21st, and this would not have been too late, had he only sent word of his intention to Marmont three or four days before, for in that case the marshal would doubtless have awaited his arrival, and the reinforcement he brought would probably have induced Lord Wellington to make an

immediate retreat, or have given rise to different manœuvres. In any case it could scarcely have happened that fifty-five thousand Frenchmen such as would have formed the army of Portugal would have been vanquished by an army of forty thousand English, and fifteen thousand Spaniards and Portuguese.

We must now turn our attention to the circumstances attending the arrival of the reinforcement which Joseph now brought to the army of Portugal, and more especially to those which had prevented that arrival from being more opportune. When Joseph had sent orders to Marshal Soult directing him to send ten thousand men immediately to the assistance of the army of Portugal, or to resign his command, at the same time authorising him to cease to occupy a portion of Andalusia should he find himself too much enfeebled by the withdrawal of those ten thousand men to continue to do so, it seemed that such orders admitted neither of tergiversation nor refusal, and they certainly could not have met with either had they emanated from a power so capable of making itself respected as Napoleon's. But as it was, Marshal Soult, repeating an argument already employed, declared that he was quite willing to obey, but on condition only that he might at once and completely evacuate Andalusia, since the withdrawal of ten thousand men would leave him utterly incapable of continuing to occupy it—an assertion very open to dispute; for the army of Andalusia, numbering as it did sixty thousand active troops, would have been quite sufficient to have guarded this province for some time even after the withdrawal of ten thousand of them. Together with this species of disguised refusal, Marshal Soult submitted his views on the best method in which to conduct the campaign against the English, to the effect that the object in view being to turn the English from the north of the Peninsula, it was necessary, so far from diminishing the army of Andalusia, to reinforce it, joining with it the army of the centre, and even that of Portugal, so that Lord Wellington, becoming fearful for the safety of Lisbon, might feel compelled to withdraw from the north to the south.

In the first place, this plan was precisely opposed to the instructions of Napoleon, who had ordered that everything should be sacrificed to the maintenance of the communications with France by the provinces of the north; and in the next place, independently of Napoleon's orders, what would have happened in Spain, if, the north and interior of the Peninsula being given up to the English, and Lord Wellington ruling from Vittoria to Baylen, rousing the whole population to insurrection by his presence, our armies had been confined in Andalusia?



What Joseph required of Marshal Soult, however, was not advice, but reinforcements for the army of Portugal, and finding that he could not obtain them of him, and that Marshal Marmont's danger increased every moment, he at length determined to proceed himself to his assistance. He might have been ready by the 17th of July, and had he set out at that date, would have arrived before Salamanca in time. But Marshal Suchet having placed Polombini's Italian division at his disposal, and it being possible to march this division upon Madrid, Joseph thought that it would be better to wait till the 21st of July, when he could set out with thirteen thousand men, than to depart immediately with ten thousand. Reinforced by three thousand Italians, he would have eighteen thousand men at his disposal, and of these he determined to leave five thousand at Madrid, marching to Salamanca with the remainder. And even now this measure would have been effectual had he written to Marshal Marmont immediately, informing him of his intended movement; but he delayed to send information of it until the very moment of his departure. Arriving at Villa-Castin on the 23rd, he received on the 24th vague rumours of the terrible battle of Salamanca. Unwilling to come into too close contiguity with the English, but at the same time equally unwilling to retrace his steps without being of some service to the army of Portugal, he entered into communication with General Clausel, and learning that the latter was anxious that he should remain within sight of the English for the purpose of somewhat distracting their attention, he remained upon the farther side of the Guadarrama, only departing when the army of Portugal had peaceably retreated upon Burgos, and that the danger of his own position compelled him to fall back upon Madrid, which he re-entered on the 9th of August, profoundly dispirited.

The course which had now to be taken by the French was unfortunately but too plainly pointed out by circumstances. Since they had been vanquished by not uniting in time against the common enemy, it had become still more evident that it was now necessary to unite as soon as possible, for the purpose of expiating the reverse suffered at Salamanca, by a great battle fought on the part of the French by an army composed of all their available troops then present in the Peninsula. But this concentration of troops could only have been obtained by means of the immediate evacuation of Andalusia, a measure much to be regretted, since its moral effect could not but be most injurious to our cause, as a source of great encouragement to the government at Cadiz, and as a means of interrupting or even breaking off the intrigues which were being carried on there in our interest with great

probability of gaining over important persons to our side. Nevertheless, the sacrifice of this province had become absolutely necessary, its complete and immediate evacuation being the only means of avoiding the greatest disasters. Joseph wrote, therefore, a severe letter to Soult, in which he peremptorily ordered him (directing him to resign his command to Count d'Erlon, should he be unwilling to obey) to evacuate the lines of Cadiz, Grenada, and Seville, and to fall back upon La Mancha. The annexation of the army of the centre to the sixty thousand troops of Marshal Soult would form a force sufficient for the defence of Madrid, and by the further addition of the army of Portugal the means would be provided of proceeding to meet Lord Wellington, wherever he might be, and to offer him battle with such a superiority of force that the issue could not be doubtful. On these conditions Madrid might well be abandoned; and if Lord Wellington, who was now able to choose whether he would pursue the vanquished army, or enter the capital in triumph, should determine to march upon Madrid, it was evident that it would be necessary to evacuate it, since Marshal Soult could not arrive in time to save it.

Lord Wellington's movements shortly put an end to these sad doubts, for after having pursued the army of Portugal during some days, he paused in the environs of Valladolid, and retraced the road towards Madrid. Had he continued to pursue the army of Portugal, it is very doubtful whether General Clausel would have been able to preserve it from total destruction. And as in that case the army of the north would but have arrived to be vanquished in turn, the illustrious English captain would have had an open road before him, for it is very improbable that the armies which occupied the south of the Peninsula would have assembled in sufficient time to check his progress. Had Napoleon found himself in a similar position, he would have freed Spain from the enemy within the space of two months—such is the difference between genius and simple good sense. But good sense is attended by so many other advantages that we should pause before we accuse its possessor of an error; and with respect to the present case, moreover, we must pardon the weaknesses which are associated with even the most solid character. Lord Wellington, clear-headed as he was, concealed under an air of calm reserve an inordinate vanity. The idea of making a triumphant entry into Madrid was one which had for him an irresistible attraction, and on the 10th of August, accordingly, he directed his march upon the Spanish capital. As soon as information of this movement of the British army reached Joseph, he was profoundly affected by it, and it was natural that he should

be, for no course was open to him which was not attended by serious disadvantages. The only feasible plan was to march to join either Marshal Soult at Seville or Marshal Suchet at Valencia; and the choice between these two measures could not be very doubtful. In addition to the fact that Seville was the most distant of the Spanish provinces, it was also deprived of all means of communication with France, whilst Valencia had easy communication through Tortosa, Tarragona, Lerida, and Saragossa with the Pyrenees. Another inducement for adopting the latter course was that at Valencia Joseph would find himself in the midst of a rich, submissive, and well-administered country, and would also meet with a cordial reception, the relations between Joseph and Marshal Suchet having been always friendly. But a conclusive reason for marching to Valencia instead of Seville was, that whilst it was quite possible to carry the army of Andalusia to Valencia, it would have been in the highest degree unwise to attempt to march the army of Aragon to Seville, since independently of the loss of Aragon and Catalonia, which must have been the result of such a movement, all communication with France would at once have been closed against our troops.

Directing his march, therefore, upon the Tagus, in the direction of Valencia, Joseph rescinded the orders he had previously sent to Marshal Soult, and ordered him to effect his retreat by Murcia upon Valencia. But Joseph had now to take leave of Madrid, and his leave-taking was a sad one. In the midst of this Spain, which was now being torn from his grasp, he had met with a certain number of Spaniards, some of them men of high birth and considerable fortune, who partly, perhaps, from affection for his own gentle and affectionate disposition, partly because they were anxious to spare their country from the horrors of a desolating war, and partly because convinced that Spain had derived all its civilisation from foreign dynasties, had rallied round him. There were many persons also filling the inferior public offices who had remained in his service simply in accordance with their habits of obedience, and who, known by the name of *afrancesados*, and most numerous at Madrid, amounted to some ten thousand. To leave these persons exposed to the ferocity of the Spaniards was equivalent to condemning them to death; to lead them in the month of August across the plains of La Mancha and the sterile mountains of Cuença was to lead them to perish of want and exposure. The alternative was sad, but as human nature generally seeks to avoid the evil which is most imminent, the *afrancesados* were all eager, at the first rumour of the evacuation of the city, to depart; and on the 10th of August at least two thousand carriages set out from the gates of Madrid

escorted by the army of the centre; the fugitives and troops together forming a mass of some twenty-four thousand individuals, of whom only one-half were provided with arms and a scanty supply of provisions. When he had arrived on the banks of the Tagus, in the neighbourhood of Aranjuez, Joseph was anxious to know whether the whole Anglo-Portuguese army was marching upon the capital, or only a simple detachment of one or two divisions, for in this latter case he might have disputed possession of the capital with the enemy, or at least have refrained from removing to any great distance, awaiting in its neighbourhood the arrival of the army of Andalusia.

In the meantime, General Treilhorn, who commanded an excellent division of dragoons, was directed to reconnoitre the English army, and executed this order in the environs of Majadahonda, on the banks of the Guadarrama torrent, with so much skill and vigour, that he surprised the English advanced guard, and took four hundred men, with three pieces of cannon. The report of the English officers leaving no doubt that Lord Wellington with his whole army were at the gates of Madrid, it was at length definitively settled to set out for Valencia by way of Orcana, Albacete, and Chinchilla. The sick and wounded whom it would be necessary to leave behind were placed in the Retiro, which had long since been fortified against the guerillas and the people of Madrid, but not in such a manner as to resist the attacks of a regular army, and was now furnished with a garrison of twelve thousand men under Colonel Laffond.

The departure from the Tagus took place about the 15th of August, in the midst of a stifling heat and with very slender resources, and hundreds of the fugitive families speedily encumbered the roads in badly horsed vehicles, entreating the soldiers for some portion of their plunder. The inhabitants were everywhere in flight, the granaries burnt or empty, and no one was to be found of whom could be purchased any kind of food. In the place of inhabitants, pitiless guerilla bands hovered around the retreating column, and worn out with fatigue, sick and famished, it had to pursue its way, or stay to be slaughtered under the very eyes of the French rear-guard. And this was all that remained of Joseph's government, which it had appeared so easy to substitute for that of Charles, and the attempt to establish which had already carried six hundred thousand Frenchmen into Spain, of whom scarcely three hundred thousand survived.

After the continuance of the retreat for some days, many of the unhappy fugitives perished, whilst others, unable to proceed any further, withdrew into the villages for concealment,

and to implore a pity which they seldom found. A portion of Joseph's Spanish guard deserted, and altogether, the mass of persons which had retreated from Madrid had much diminished when it arrived before Chinchilla.

On the confines of Valencia were encountered Marshal Suchet's advanced posts, and those who had had strength to continue this difficult journey had the satisfaction of finding themselves at length in a country which was tranquil, inhabited, rich, and friendly, whilst Marshal Suchet, to whom this visit was a heavy charge, received his royal visitor with the utmost respect, and with thorough cordiality the fugitives by whom he was accompanied. The marshal accompanied Joseph into Valencia, procured him a much better reception there than he had ever obtained at Madrid, and liberally bestowed upon his followers the abundance of his magazines. The entrance into Valencia was made on the 1st of September, and it was resolved to await there the arrival of the army of Andalusia.

Although Marshal Soult was very unwilling to quit Andalusia, he could no longer refuse to evacuate it, for, having refused to weaken his army, he had lost the only means of maintaining his position there. To have remained there any longer would have been to expose himself to the fate of General Dupont. It was more advisable for him to retreat upon Valencia than to retreat upon La Mancha, for he thus avoided the English army, of whose march and strength he was ignorant, and went, moreover, to a friendly district which was tranquil and provided with all kinds of resources. When, therefore, he received Joseph's new orders, he was ready to obey them, for he had already determined to take the route which they pointed out; but at the same time it was not without some anxiety that he prepared to present himself before Joseph and two marshals who were perfectly capable of judging how far his own conduct had led to the late misfortunes. It was no doubt quite true that General Caffarelli had allowed himself to be too much alarmed by the appearance of the English ships; that Joseph had committed a fault in setting out from Madrid too late, and a still greater fault in so tardily announcing his departure; and that Marshal Marmont had imprudently manœuvred in the presence of a skilful and resolute enemy; but yet to how great an extent were these misfortunes caused by Marshal Soult, who, in spite of repeated advice and evidences of the most striking nature to the contrary, had obstinately persisted in believing that Lord Wellington was marching upon Andalusia and not upon Castille, had refused any succour to the army of Portugal, from which he had received so many services, and had not only refused to succour it, but in so doing had disobeyed the king, who was his military chief, without that excuse of having

reason on his side, which may in some rare instances justify disobedience. To justify all these acts to Joseph and his marshals, who were completely acquainted with the whole of the circumstances, would be sufficiently embarrassing; but a tribunal of a still more formidable nature awaited Soult at Valencia, the judgment of Napoleon, who had remained silent respecting the affair of Oporto, but who could scarcely be so respecting the events which had lately taken place in Castille. The excuse which the marshal devised for the purpose of excusing his disobedience was a singular one, being founded on an assumption that the orders which Joseph had given him, and which he had refused to execute, were given in accordance with a secret understanding between himself, Bernadotte, England, and the Russians. The reasons upon which this asserted supposition was founded was that, according to the English journals, Bernadotte had taken many hundred Spaniards into his service, that Joseph's ambassador had remained in Russia, that Moreau had arrived from America to Sweden, &c. By adding to these facts the fact that Joseph was Bernadotte's beau-frère, he considered himself authorised to believe that Joseph had entered into a conspiracy against France, of which the first act was to be the abandonment of Spain, and that the order to evacuate Andalusia was the first step towards the execution of this criminal design. Entertaining, therefore, this strange idea, he believed it necessary to send information of the supposed plot to Napoleon, and accordingly wrote a despatch on the subject, which for greater safety he consigned to the charge of a captain of a merchant vessel, directing him to convey it to one of the French ports in the Mediterranean.

Having sent his despatch to the emperor, Soult in the next place replied to Joseph's orders, reiterating his opinion respecting the plan on which the campaign ought to be conducted, but adding, that in accordance with the royal command, he would concentrate his scattered troops and proceed to the kingdom of Valencia by Murcia; and in fact, after having destroyed or thrown into the sea the immense war matériel which had been collected with so much toil in the lines of Cadiz, and formed a great convoy of munitions, provisions, and baggage, the marshal commenced his retreat on the 25th of August by the Murcian route. That portion of his troops which was at Grenada would naturally join the bulk of the army on the road, whilst that which, under the command of Count d'Erlon, uselessly occupied Estramadura, was to descend to the banks of the Guadalquivir, ascend it by Cordova as far as Bæza, and join the main column at Huescar. Towards the end of September, Soult's advanced guard perceived in the environs of Almaraz that of Marshal

Suchet, experiencing the greatest delight at meeting them once more; for in those dangerous and distant regions the French soldiers, always regarding themselves as destined to perish to the last man, seldom met without throwing themselves into each others' arms, and manifesting the deepest emotion.

During the month of September, vague rumours had reached Joseph of the approach of Marshal Soult, and he had impatiently awaited the details of his march, and the explanation of his projects. Suddenly he learnt that the captain of a merchant vessel, the bearer of French despatches, had touched at Grao (the port of Valencia), and desired to resign his charge, being hotly pursued by the English; and having, therefore, hastened to receive and open the despatches in question, eager to learn what information they might contain respecting Andalusia, Joseph was filled with surprise on reading them to find himself denounced in them by Marshal Soult as a traitor towards his family and country. The sentiments with which he perused this accusation may be easily imagined; convinced as he was of his devotion to his brother, and also to the fact that Napoleon's brothers owed their whole fortunes, however dearly they might pay for them, to Napoleon himself, and that by the preservation of his, theirs could alone be preserved, he was indignant of being accused of treason which, if it had entered into Bonaparte's family, had certainly not done so through him, and immediately sent off Colonel Desprez to Moscow to carry to the emperor this tissue of strange ideas, and to demand both the removal and the punishment of the general of Andalusia.

Impatient to meet Soult, and to have the army of Andalusia under his own control, Joseph hastened to meet him, and appointed a rendezvous with him on the Murcian frontier, at Fuente de Higuera. Joseph was accompanied by Marshals Jourdan and Suchet, but at their request, as they were unwilling to be present at what would most probably be a very painful interview, he met Soult alone, and very unpleasantly surprised him by the information that the subject of his late despatches to Napoleon was known. The incident produced this advantage, that Soult was eager to atone for his offence by zealous obedience, which was all at that moment that Joseph desired to obtain, and after an angry interview, therefore, with the commander of the Andalusian army, Joseph endeavoured to form in concert with the three marshals a plan of campaign which, the whole of the French forces being concentrated to execute it, might make the English expiate their recent triumph by an overwhelming defeat. The chief part which Soult took in the conference was to intimate that he considered, not that his army was annexed to the others, but that the

others were annexed to his ; whilst Marshal Suchet seemed to be almost solely desirous for the preservation of Valencia, and Marshal Jourdan's good sense and want of any decided views on the subject led him to hold a middle course. At length it was arranged that in the course of the following day each of the marshals should submit to the king a written opinion respecting the course which it would be most advisable to pursue.

Marshal Soult proposed that an army, composed of the army of Andalusia, the army of the centre, and a portion of the army of Aragon, should be marched across La Mancha upon the Tagus and Madrid. To this plan Marshal Suchet's memoir offered great objections, on the ground that, as the number of active troops at his disposal only amounted to thirteen or fourteen thousand, of whom six thousand were absolutely necessary for the defence of Valencia, and the principal posts of San Felipe and Saguntum, he could only contribute to an army intended to march upon Madrid some eight thousand men, and that for the sake of so small a reinforcement would probably be lost Valencia with all its abundance of resources, the advantage of keeping at a distance from Catalonia and Aragon the armies of Murcia and Sicily, and finally, the only certain means of communicating with France. And in addition to these objections to the proposed movement was the consideration that, should it take place, and result in an encounter with the French and English armies behind the Tagus to the disadvantage of the latter, the French troops would find themselves in a cul-de-sac, the Tagus being closed against them in front, and the kingdom of Valencia in the rear. It was in the highest degree important, therefore, Suchet's memoir proceeded to declare, that Valencia should be well guarded, and for this purpose the whole of Marshal Suchet's troops were not only not too numerous, but on the contrary scarcely sufficient, for rumours were everywhere current that the Anglo-Sicilian army was of very considerable strength, and fourteen thousand men, therefore, were by no means too many to make head against that army and the army of Catalonia, especially as it would be necessary to march them from San Felipe to Tarragona, a distance of a hundred leagues. Marshal Suchet's plan for the conduct of the campaign, therefore, being entirely founded on the idea of the importance of defending Valencia, consisted in marching the armies of Andalusia and the centre into the province of Guadalaxara, forcibly effecting the passage of the Tagus there, then marching the army of the centre upon Cuença, where it would always be ready to afford support to the army of Aragon on the frontier of the kingdom of Valencia, and establishing the army of Andalusia in the



province of Guadalaxara, its base resting on Calatayud, its head on Madrid, and its right in constant communication with the army of Portugal. Thus, according to this plan, the four principal armies, those of Aragon, the centre, Andalusia, and Portugal, supported by each other and resting on the Pyrenees, would be always able to meet the enemy with a force composed of two of their number at any time that he might march against one of them; and at the same time, having secured possession of Valencia, Tortosa, Tarragona, Barcelona, Lerida, Saragossa, Burgos, and Valladolid, provinces from which a good system of administration would be able to procure an ample supply of resources, they would be firmly established in their positions, and be capable of preserving uninterrupted their communications with France.

According to Marshal Jourdan's plan, it was above all things necessary to ascend towards Madrid by the Upper Tagus, for the purpose of joining the army of Portugal, and then, with the three united armies of Portugal, the centre, and Andalusia, to march upon the English at the head of eighty thousand or ninety thousand men and a hundred and fifty pieces of cannon. Admitting that were there any great danger of encountering Lord Wellington, established with all his forces on the Tagus, before the army of Portugal had been joined with the other two, it would be advisable to proceed by Valencia, Teruel, and Calatayud, and from thence to Aranda, where, without having incurred any risk, the union with the army of Portugal might be effected, he nevertheless declared against the adoption of this route, which was both long and badly supplied with resources, on the ground that the chance of encountering Lord Wellington on the Upper Tagus was a very improbable one, and that it was far more likely that the British general would be found with two or three divisions guarding Madrid, the remainder of his army being engaged in Castille against General Clausel. Should this latter supposition be the case, there would be but slight difficulty in forcing the line of the Tagus, which in this part was by no means a serious obstacle, and the army of Portugal having been rallied, the united French force would enter Madrid with a decisive superiority of strength. At the same time, as it was possible that this supposition might be erroneous, and the Tagus in fact strongly guarded, it was necessary to retain the power of returning upon Valencia, and for that end to leave to Marshal Suchet his army undiminished by the withdrawal of a single battalion. Marshal Jourdan was of opinion, therefore, that the two armies of the south and centre alone being united, and thus forming a force of about fifty-six thousand men, should be marched in two columns, the one, consisting of the army of Andalusia, by the La Mancha route,

which passes Chinchilla, San Clemente, Ocana, and Aranjuez; the other, consisting of the army of the centre, by the Cuença route, which passes Reguena, Cuença, Fuenti Duena, both being ready at any time to support each other, and equally proceeding towards the point of the Tagus at which they were to effect the passage. At the same time, as the right column (the army of the centre) would, Jourdan considered, be too feeble, he proposed to add to it six thousand or seven thousand men of the army of Andalusia, and to place it under the command of Count d'Erlon.

This plan was so wise and so appropriate to the situation, that Joseph, who placed habitual confidence in Marshal Jourdan's advice, immediately adopted it, and immediately ordered Soult to prepare to march from Almaraz, where he was encamped, upon Chinchilla, San Clemente, and Aranjuez, whilst the army of the centre, marching from La Huerta de Valencia by the Las Cabrillas defile, should reach the Tagus at Fuenti Duena, at which place it would be sufficiently near Aranjuez to support the army of Andalusia. He also ordered Marshal Soult to give up to the army of the centre Count d'Erlon, with six thousand men, at the same time informing him that Marshal Suchet would supply him with such quantities of rice and biscuit and eau-de-vie as his troops might require.

These measures were particularly disagreeable to Marshal Soult, for they brought him under the direct orders of the king, and deprived him of a portion of his forces; and he accordingly began to raise new objections, declaring that Joseph had no right to withdraw from his command any portion of the troops with which he had been entrusted by the emperor. But as Joseph assumed at length the tone of a master, and intimated that he must either obey or resign his command to Count d'Erlon, he submitted, and during the 18th, 19th, and 20th of October the united armies, well provided with munitions and provisions, set out in two columns, numbering altogether about fifty-six thousand men, leaving with Marshal Suchet the embarrassing retinues which had accompanied the two armies on their departure from Madrid and Seville, and leaving with him also the whole of his army.

On the 27th and 28th of October the two columns reached the banks of the Tagus, between Fuenti Duena and Aranjuez, without having been stopped by any serious obstacle, and it then became an important matter of consideration whether they were about to encounter Lord Wellington in front of Madrid, resolved to defend his conquest—this being very probable, since the entry into the Spanish capital had created a great sensation throughout Europe, and it was natural that he should be unwilling to relinquish his prize. But fortunately

all the rumours which reached the French headquarters were of a reassuring nature, generally concurring in leading Joseph and Marshal Jourdan to hope that the two or three divisions under General Hill were the only hostile force between themselves and Madrid. It is now time that we should turn our attention to the movements of the English and the army of Portugal since Joseph's march to Valencia and the union of his army with that of Andalusia.

On the 12th of August Lord Wellington had entered Madrid surrounded by all the Spanish chiefs, who were eager to share his triumph; and when we consider that it had but lately required the exercise of their utmost strength to prevent us from driving them from the small portion of the Peninsula which they still occupied into the sea, we may well understand that their joy and surprise on this occasion almost amounted to madness, Lord Wellington himself aggravating the barbarous or indiscreet conduct of his auxiliaries by the ostentation with which he exercised his authority. The first care should have been to have reassured the inhabitants of Madrid, to have forgotten some things, and to have tolerated or even adopted others.

Don Carlos d'España, and l'Empecinado, who had now become to a certain extent the masters of Madrid, as the first exercise of their authority made the inhabitants swear fealty to the constitution of Cadiz, which was far from being agreeable to many Spaniards, who were but little prepared to receive the institutions which were being thus forced upon them, and did this, not so much with the intention of binding their countrymen to the constitution, as of forcing them to submit to the insurrectional government of Cadiz. Their next proceedings were to express themselves in the harshest manner with respect to the *afrancesados*, and to withdraw from circulation and destroy at a loss all the coin bearing Joseph's effigy. Then neglecting to procure the arrival of provisions at Madrid, they gave themselves up to extravagances of faction which were as dangerous as foolish, whilst the extremest misery prevailed around them. In the meantime, Lord Wellington added to these errors those resulting from British pride, wounding the haughty spirit of the Spanish nation by lodging in the palace of their kings; having already destroyed in capturing the Retiro, which Colonel Laffond had been compelled to give up for the want of water, the china manufactory, which answered to that of Sèvres in France, and that of Meissen in Saxony.

In the meantime, General Clausel had rallied, reorganised and reinstated the army of Portugal, and boldly marched it upon the Douro, although now reduced to only twenty-five thousand men, in the presence of the English army, of which

the principal portion was posted on the banks of that river. He had, moreover, driven back the enemy's advanced posts, and sent General Foy with a division to collect the garrisons of Astorga, Benavente, Zamora, and Toro, which were uselessly dispersed along a line which could no longer be defended. General Foy had arrived too late to save the garrison of Astorga, which had been forced to surrender to the Spanish army of Galicia, but he had been in time to succour its sick and wounded, and he had gathered together the troops occupying the other little posts on the Douro and the Esla.

Lord Wellington, finding himself thus braved, had been obliged to quit Madrid for the purpose of marching against the young adversary who, with the wrecks of a recently vanquished army, had so daringly posted himself before him; and accordingly, after having established General Hill at Madrid, he had departed for Old Castille, and having joined with his own troops the army of Galicia, had marched upon Burgos with fifty thousand men.

Compelled once more to retreat, General Clausel had fallen back successively upon Valladolid, Burgos, Briviesca, and the Ebro; Lord Wellington, pausing in his pursuit when he had reached Burgos, for the purpose of taking the castle by which this city was commanded, and without the possession of which, that of the town could not be considered secure. The siege was commenced towards the close of September, almost at the same time that Joseph was preparing to march upon Madrid.

The fortress of Burgos was an ancient edifice, erected during the period of the supremacy of the Moors in Spain, and crowned a height, at the foot of which lay the city of the same name. Two strong entrenched lines had been constructed around its Gothic walls, and armed by numerous and heavy cannon. A horn-work had been constructed on the height called St. Michel, which commanded the position of the castle. General Dubreton occupied this improvised fortress with two thousand men, and being provided with provisions and munitions, resolved to make a vigorous defence.

Lord Wellington, disdaining to attack such a place by a regular siege, resolved to attempt to carry the work on the St. Michel height by assault; and on the night of the 19th of September he succeeded in effecting this object with the loss of four hundred men, the loss on the side of the French being no more than a hundred and fifty.

As soon as the English had gained possession of the St. Michel position, they established a battery there and opened fire upon the fortress, but as their artillery was of less calibre than ours, it was soon dismantled and reduced to silence. The difficulties attending the transport service had rendered it impossible for

them to bring up great cannon under the walls of Burgos, and the only available cannon were some sixteen-pounders which the guerilla bands of Avala and Biscaye had received from the English squadron, and had laboriously conveyed to Burgos.

Perceiving at length that it would be almost impossible to breach the walls of the fortress with his cannon, Lord Wellington resolved to have recourse once more to an assault, and accordingly, on the night of the 22nd of September, his columns planted ladders against the first enceinte, but were driven back by our troops with great loss, one of them, composed of Portuguese troops, being partly destroyed before it had even approached the foot of the enceinte.

It was necessary once more to have recourse to regular approaches, and to undermine the works in the absence of the artillery necessary to breach them. Two mines were accordingly prepared, and one of them having been exploded on the 29th of September, a column of the enemy rushed to the assault, but were repulsed, as were those which had already made similar attempts. On the 4th of October, the second mine was fired, causing an extensive breach, whilst that which had been the effect of the first was considerably enlarged by the fire of the enemy's artillery; and the besiegers, throwing themselves upon these two breaches with the utmost fury, succeeded in carrying and effecting a secure lodgment in one of them. Having thus gained a footing on the first enceinte, the English began to open approaches towards the second in the hope of gaining possession of that also, but on the 8th of October, the garrison, executing a general sortie, overthrew their works, and driving them beyond the first enceinte, regained possession of all that had been lost, with the exception of the work on the St. Michel height.

Having thus lost twenty days and two thousand five hundred men without having made any advance towards the capture of the fortress, the English general determined to make a last attempt, and after some preliminary works on the 19th of October the besiegers threw themselves once more on the outer line of works, and having succeeded in gaining possession of them hastened towards the second; but the brave garrison rushing forth en masse, charged them at the bayonet's point, and a third time drove them back with great slaughter beyond the enceinte of which they had for a moment obtained possession. And thus during thirty or forty days two thousand men, now reduced by the enemy's fire and fatigue to fifteen hundred, entrenched behind some ill-constructed works, had held in check fifty thousand of the enemy. Eternal honour to those brave heroes and their commander, General Dubreton! Their heroic resistance proved of what service in certain decisive circumstances may be well defended fortresses, for it afforded time to

the army of Portugal to place itself once more in line, to the armies of the centre and Andalusia to advance upon the Tagus, and to all to concentrate for the purpose of overwhelming Lord Wellington.

In fact, General Clausel, who was now posted on the Ebro, had received the depôts established along the Pyrenees as well as the little garrisons on the frontier, together with horses for his cavalry and artillery, and had already thus become possessed of thirty-five thousand available troops. General Caffarelli, who, as we have already seen, being held in constant fear by the English fleets, had neglected the principal danger for one which was merely accessory, had at length pursued a better course, and reinforced the army of Portugal with ten thousand men. Unfortunately, just as General Clausel was about to march at the head of forty-five thousand men who now composed his army, the effects of his recent wound compelled him to resign his command to General Souham, an old officer of the Republic, who was as brave as he was experienced, and who now advanced to the succour of the intrepid garrison, which had defended during thirty-four days the paltry fortifications of Burgos.

Lord Wellington, situated between the army of Portugal, which marched northwards, and the armies of the centre and Andalusia, which marched southwards, was in one of those difficult and critical positions from which General Bonaparte had always extricated himself by some wonderful triumph. Had he been less circumspect and more active, the English general might probably, by concentrating the army of Italy with his own at the right moment, have vanquished in turn each of the armies which threatened him, and remained definitively master of Spain. But Lord Wellington was not formed by nature for wresting Spain from our hands in a single campaign; and it was sufficient for the triumph of the English policy, and for our misfortune, that he was endowed with the qualities calculated to enable him to effect its conquest in several.

Finding that the army of Portugal was approaching him greatly reinforced, the English general abandoned the wall of Burgos, before which he had lost three thousand men and the prestige of victory, and which would probably be the means of his losing Madrid; and after encountering our troops in several rearguard combats, withdrew in his turn behind the Douro, sending orders to General Hill to join him at Salamanca if Madrid should appear to him to be untenable in the presence of the armies which were now marching upon it.

Such were the events of which Joseph and Marshal Jourdan received information on their arrival upon the Tagus, and on the 30th of October the armies of the centre and of Andalusia, forcing the line of the Tagus, passed sur le corps of General

Hill's rearguard, and on the 2nd of November entered the Spanish capital, astonished at the sudden changes of fortune. Joseph was well received in Madrid, for its inhabitants, disgusted by the violence of the guerillas and the pride of the English, began to think that the new dynasty, represented by so gentle and wise a prince, would be as beneficial to them as that of the degenerate Bourbons under the sway of factious chiefs.

With a very unusual display of activity Joseph set out from Madrid, after a sojourn there of no more than forty-eight hours, for the purpose of effecting the junction with the army of Portugal, and pursuing Lord Wellington at the head of eighty thousand men, by which means he hoped, and with good reason, that he would be able to drive the English back into Portugal and re-establish himself, in spite of the evacuation of Andalusia, in his former position. Some anxiety, doubtless, began to be experienced respecting the Russian expedition, the silence of the *Moniteur*, which ceased to publish any bulletins from the grand army, being considered very ill-omened; but no idea was entertained of the extent of the disasters which had fallen upon us; and Joseph, therefore, expecting no ill news from Paris, hoped to find a recompense for the misfortunes which had befallen him at Salamanca in the environs of Salamanca itself.

Arriving on the 6th of November beyond the Guadarrama with his faithful major-general, he was in a position to turn to the left towards Penaranda, by taking which direction he would have come upon Lord Wellington's traces, but he preferred to turn to the right towards Arevolo, for the purpose of effecting his junction with the army of Portugal, being unwilling to attack the English until he had concentrated the whole of his forces; nor was it long before this object of his desire was effected, for Lord Wellington, eager to fall back upon Salamanca, made no attempt to prevent even the junction of the armies of the north and the south; and the rearguards meeting almost in the environs of the Douro, Joseph had under his command, by the junction of the three armies of Andalusia, the centre, and Portugal, ninety thousand men, and one hundred and fifty pieces of cannon; a force which would have been still larger had not General Caffarelli hastened to recall the ten thousand men he had furnished, that they might again take part in the struggle with the bands under Mina, de Longa, Merino, and Porlier.

The army of Portugal, which had numbered thirty-five thousand men, had lost a certain number during the pursuit of Lord Wellington; and the armies of the centre and Andalusia, which on their departure from Valencia had numbered fifty-six thousand men, had left some on the road, and had furnished,

moreover, a detachment for the garrison of Madrid; but the force now under Joseph's command still numbered eighty-eight thousand of the best troops in the world, men who were as full of indignation at the successes which the English had been permitted to obtain, as they were rejoiced at the approach of an opportunity to avenge them.

Lord Wellington, separated from the Spanish army of Galicia, but reinforced by Hill's corps, was at this period at the head of no more than sixty thousand men, of whom forty thousand were English, who were far less self-confident than on the morrow of the victory of Salamanca; and how could such a force as this make head against eighty-five thousand Frenchmen, even tolerably commanded? That it could do so was believed neither by French nor English.

Our three armies advanced, therefore, upon the Tormès by precisely the same route as that which had been followed by Marshal Marmont when about to fight the battle of Salamanca, marching so as to turn the Salamanca position and to place themselves upon Lord Wellington's line of communications.

On the 11th November they found themselves in a line at some distance from the Tormès, the army of Andalusia on the left, that of the centre in the centre, that of Portugal on the right, Lord Wellington tranquilly awaiting their approach at the Arapiles, since, trusting in a position the strength of which had already been proved, and having his line of retreat secure towards Ciudad Rodrigo, he believed that he should always be able to fall back in time. But he had committed a fault which might have cost him dear, and which Marshal Jourdan's keen glance immediately discerned.

The Tormès, which, although of considerable size in winter, was at this time fordable in several places, flowed in front of us across the little city of Alba de Tormès, situated on our left, and then describing a semicircle, proceeded to our right towards Salamanca. Lord Wellington had left General Hill at Alba de Tormès, and with the bulk of his army occupied Salamanca; the three leagues which intervened between himself and Hill being occupied only by a feeble detachment posted at the position of Calvarossa de Ariba; and the idea which now presented itself to Jourdan was, to advance between the English generals, and at least cut off the fifteen thousand men under General Hill.

This project, the details of which were explained to Joseph in the presence of his generals, on the very ground on which it was to be executed, was regarded as one which could not fail of success by all except Soult, who considered that it would be better to cross the Tormès above Alba for the purpose of turning the Salamanca position, and thus compelling the English



to resign it. To this it was replied that this movement would have the effect of forcing General Hill to quit Alba, to fall back in succession upon Calvarossa de Ariba and Salamanca, and would thus be the means of pointing out to the English the error which they had committed, and of causing the concentration of all their forces in the neighbourhood of Salamanca. The too modest Marshal Jourdan and all the generals present were firm supporters of this latter view, but it was determined, out of respect to Marshal Soult's rank and position, to defer the final decision on the subject until after a fresh reconnaissance should have been made of the upper course of the Tormès.

On the following day Marshal Soult again brought forward his project of passing the Tormès on the left above Alba, the river having been found to be fordable there, and insisted so strongly on the advantageousness of this plan, that Marshal Jourdan, when consulted by Joseph on the subject, advised him to submit to Soult's opinion; alleging that it would be dangerous to attempt the execution of the plan he had himself proposed in opposition to the wishes of the general of the principal army; and that although the temptation to strike the English a decisive blow in the manner pointed out in his own plan was very great, still the adoption of the course proposed by Marshal Soult would be less hazardous.

That the whole responsibility of the adoption of the measure proposed by Marshal Soult might be thrown upon him, and that he might be compelled, at least, to carry it into execution in the best manner he was able, the army of the centre was placed under his orders, and that of Portugal entrusted to Count d'Erlon. On the 13th, the French crossed the Tormès above Alba, and advanced as far as Nuestra Senora de Retiro. Marshal Soult had already fifty thousand men under his command, including the whole of the cavalry, and on the following day he would be able to pursue the forward movement uninterruptedly. On this day, however, the weather became very unfavourable, and when Joseph and Jourdan insisted upon the advisability of throwing the French cavalry upon the English army, which was visible through the mist defiling from our right to our left, Marshal Soult, become circumspect at the last moment, objected to the measure on account of the obscurity of the atmosphere, being in truth unwilling to advance until he should have been joined by the whole army of Portugal; and the result was, that when the eighty-five thousand French troops were assembled, the English were already out of their reach, and in full retreat upon the Ciudad Rodrigo route.

The confusion and irritation which now arose in the three armies was extreme. The pursuit of the English was continued for a day or two, and then having obtained by this formidable

concentration of force only the capture of some three thousand stragglers, Joseph re-entered Madrid, and placed his three armies in cantonments, the army of Portugal in Castille, that of the centre in the environs of Madrid, and that of Andalusia on the Tagus, between Aranjuez and Talavera.

Such was the disastrous Spanish campaign of 1812, which after having begun by the loss of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, was signalised by the loss of the battle of Salamanca, and ended with the retreat from Madrid, the evacuation from Andalusia, and the disgrace of permitting forty thousand English to escape from eighty-five thousand French troops, posted on their line of communication. The English had, in fact, in this year of 1812, not only taken from us the two important fortresses of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, gained a decisive battle, deprived us for a moment of Madrid, and forced us to evacuate Andalusia, but had also braved us by advancing as far as Burgos, and by returning uninjured from so bold a proceeding had exposed all the weakness of our position in Spain, a weakness attributable to many immediate deplorable causes, but to be traced eventually to the negligence of Napoleon, who, great as he was, being unendowed with the power of ubiquity, was unable to direct judiciously the course of affairs in Spain whilst in Paris, and still less whilst in Moscow; to that spirit of distrust which prevented him, whilst delegating his authority to his brother, from bestowing it upon him in full confidence; and finally, by that eagerness of mind which impelled him to carry on every measure simultaneously, to endeavour to exercise his authority everywhere at the same time, and to regard as executed what circumstances had rendered it necessary to neglect—such had been, and such was still, the secret of our disasters during this terrible Spanish war.

In the meantime, the occurrence of events so disastrous to us in the north, and so unfavourable in the south, produced, as might have been expected, an immense sensation throughout Europe. How great was the surprise, how intense the satisfaction which now spread amongst the innumerable enemies whom we had raised up against us on every side! England especially surrendered itself to what was almost the delirium of joy, whilst in spite of the credulity of hatred, it scarcely dared to credit the news of our disasters, which began to spread throughout Europe. Germany, stupefied by the spectacle which was presented under its very eyes, began to believe that we had been vanquished, but was slow to believe that we had been destroyed, and long awaited the arrival of the skeleton of the grand army before it could credit the declarations of the Russians, and comprehend that no skeleton even of it existed. Day by day, during the month of December, hope began to

revive in the breast of the German nation ; with hope, courage, and with courage a species of furious rage. All the secret societies which were in existence amongst its populations began to ferment and to prepare for a general rising, and through the midst of this excitement of popular feeling Napoleon pursued his clandestine journey towards Paris, where he was to find the adversaries of his government filled with ill-omened joy, his flatterers overwhelmed with despair, honest men struck with grief and surprise, and clear-sighted men regretting what it had been impossible for them not to foresee. But even at this time neither our vanquished in their pride, nor our enemies in their hatred, nor our faithful citizens in the depth of their affliction, were capable of imagining the whole extent of our misfortunes. Yet the moment was but too close at hand, alas ! when they were to be known universally.

## BOOK XLVII.

### THE COHORTS.

WHILST Europe, agitated by hope, fear, and hatred, asked what had become of Napoleon—doubting whether he had perished or were still alive—he was traversing in a sledge, in company with the Duke of Vicentia, the Grand-Marshal Duroc, the Count Lobau, General Lefèbvre-Desnoettes, and the mameluke Rustan, the vast plains of Lithuania, Poland, and Saxony, keeping himself completely hidden under thick wrappings of fur, since the slightest breach of his incognito might have drawn upon him some immediate and tragic catastrophe. The man who had so greatly excited the admiration of the populations of the countries which he now traversed, who had, in fact, been but lately the object of their superstitious submission, would at this moment have scarcely been able to escape destruction at their hands. In two places alone, Warsaw and Dresden, did he make himself known. At Warsaw he paused to address the Poles yet once more, and to endeavour to induce them to make one great and final effort. The Duke of Vicentia, hurrying in his travelling costume to the Archbishop of Malines, who was greatly affected by the news of Krasnoé and the Beresina, and but little qualified to inspire the Poles with a courage to which he was himself a stranger, and having almost forced the door of his residence, being very unwilling to be recognised by the archbishop's servants, appeared before him with an unexpectedness which was almost spectral, and filled him with astonishment by declaring who he was, with whom he had come, and by conducting him to the modest hotel at which Napoleon had secretly alighted. M. de Pradt found Napoleon in a wretched dwelling, where he had difficulty in procuring even a fire, and attempting to conceal, beneath an affectation of mirth, the immense humiliation suffered by his pride. And how great, indeed, was the difference between his position at this moment and that which he had held six months before, when! he had coolly issued instructions for the re-establishment of the kingdom of Poland, and the rearrangement of the European territory! But nevertheless, Napoleon, strong in the firmness of his will, affected to be

neither overwhelmed nor surprised, nor even seriously affected, by his misfortunes. "From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but a step," he said to the prelate-ambassador, with a forced smile. "Who has not suffered reverses?" he added. "It is true that none have hitherto endured so great ones; but it is fit that my misfortunes should be in proportion to my fortunes, and for the rest, they will speedily be repaired." Then he went on to boast of the good state of his health, of his personal strength, and to repeat that he was formed to encounter extraordinary adventures; that a world in ruins was his natural abode, but that at the same time it was his province to restore it to order, and that he would speedily return to the Vistula with three hundred thousand men, and exact vengeance from the Russians for a victory which had been not the triumph of their arms but the work of nature. He then had the principal Polish ministers summoned to his presence, and recommending them to observe the utmost secrecy with respect to his presence in Warsaw, endeavoured to inspire them with fresh courage, declaring that Poland should not be abandoned by him, and that he would speedily reappear in the midst of them at the head of a powerful army; adding, that the losses on the side of the Russians had been greater than those on his own, and that the essential difference between the power of France and Russia would be displayed within three months, in such a manner as to restore all that might have been lost.

After having thus attempted to restore some feeling of confidence to the Polish ministers, Napoleon resumed his journey across the snow, and having arrived in Dresden, alighted at the residence of his minister, M. de Serra, and having summoned thither the poor King of Saxony, who was filled with terror by the emperor's strange reverse of fortune, assured him that he need suffer no alarm on account of the recent events, since they were but to be reckoned amongst the ordinary accidents of war, and that he would return within a few weeks, more powerful than ever, to secure for him, the King of Saxony, that kingdom of Poland which had ever been for the Saxon princes an old and cherished dream. Having succeeded in almost reassuring the King of Saxony, and desiring him to keep the secret, the preservation of which would be still necessary for forty-eight hours longer, he wrote to his father-in-law, informing him that he had returned safe and well, and full of hope and confidence; that the state of affairs was as had been described in the 29th bulletin; that he was about to assemble a formidable army on the Vistula; that he continued to rely on the cordial alliance of Austria; that he was anxious that the Austrian corps should be promptly recruited, and that he

wished that an Austrian diplomatist of some consideration should be immediately sent to Paris (the presence of the Prince of Schwarzenberg being necessary in Galicia), since it would be necessary to enter upon the discussion of affairs of importance.

As the sledge would be of no further service in the country he had now to traverse, Napoleon borrowed the carriage of his minister, M. de St. Aignan, and posted on to Paris. When he had reached the banks of the Rhine, he had no longer any reason to preserve his incognito, for if he was for France an absolute, an exacting, and even a tyrannical master, he was at the same time its general and defender, and could with perfect safety present himself before her. That his arrival might not cause too great a surprise, he sent forward an officer bearing a few lines, which were to be printed in the *Moniteur*, to the effect, that on the 3rd of December he had assembled his generals at Smorgoni, conferred the command-in-chief on King Murat, for so long only as the cold should render military operations impossible; that he had passed through Warsaw and Dresden, and that he was about to return to Paris for the purpose of bestowing his attention on the affairs of the empire.

Napoleon followed very closely the bearer of the announcement of his arrival, and on the 18th December, at half-past eleven o'clock, he entered the Tuileries, to the surprise of his wife, who was by no means alienated by, but, nevertheless, was perfectly astonished at, the change in his fortunes, since, in uniting herself to him, she had believed that she was not only espousing a favourite of Fortune, but even, so to speak, Fortune itself. Napoleon tenderly embraced the empress, and keeping up with her the comedy which he had played with every one else, repeated that the cold, and the cold alone, had been the cause of his extraordinary misadventure, and that it could be easily repaired, as would soon be seen.

On the morning of the following day, the 19th, he awaited his ministers and the great personages of his court, the first interview with whom under existing circumstances could not but be a painful trial. But Malet's conspiracy, in conjunction with the baseness of the greater number of these persons, had provided him with a resource at this moment; for having freely denounced each other with respect to the errors committed in this affair, and being full of anxiety with regard to the manner in which Napoleon might now receive them, they scarcely thought of the five hundred thousand men who had perished, or the change in the fortunes of their country; and the effect was that Napoleon, who had, in justice, a heavy account to render, was able to assume the position of one who had only explanations to demand. He received, therefore, the persons composing

his court and government with extreme hauteur—assuming a manner which was at once tranquil and severe; appearing to await explanations rather than to be under the necessity of affording them; treating the external affairs of the empire as of but little importance in comparison with those of its internal administration; and in a word, taking care to question so that he might not be questioned. Certainly, he said, now addressing one group and now another of those present—certainly the French army had met with misfortunes, and had even suffered to a considerable extent, but not more than the Russian army. That it should have done so, he contended, was only amongst those ordinary chances of war which should cause no astonishment, and which were for finely tempered spirits but opportunities for the display of the grandest qualities of the soul. Only those men, he said, who were capable of triumphing over all trials, whatever they might be, were worthy of esteem; and he then proceeded to pay a deserved tribute of praise to Marshal Ney, but in such a manner as to direct his observations towards the men who had neither the courage nor the health of this marshal, rather than to the circumstances of the late campaign. In the next place, treating the Russian war as a matter of quite secondary importance, he demanded of those around him, how it was that they had permitted themselves to be surprised, and especially, how it was that when they supposed him to be dead, they had permitted themselves to believe so readily that the existing order of things was abolished, and had failed to resort immediately to the empress and the King of Rome?

To these well-founded but imprudent questions, for it was quite certain that every one had regarded his death as the most natural of events, and the fall of his throne, after his death, as the most natural of revolutions—to these questions none of the persons interrogated knew how to answer, save by assuming a humble appearance of acknowledgment that there was something inexplicable in the whole affair. No one dared to give the true answer—to declare that his empire was not established, and that although his genius had been able to endow it with an appearance of stability, such as is rarely possessed by new establishments, it could not be supposed that it would last longer than his own life, even if so long.

Whilst Napoleon was uttering these momentous questions, each seemed to signify by his eyes that the minister of police was the real culprit, the man who ought properly to expiate not only the conspiracy of Malet, but even, perhaps, the Russian campaign also. But when Napoleon, after the general and formal reception, conversed with each of those present in turn, he listened, both long and patiently, to the observations of the Duke of Rovigo, for whose courage, spirit, and sincerity he had

a certain sort of esteem ; and the duke, whose manner had something of that hardy familiarity peculiar to old servants, who are accustomed to tell their masters what they may dislike to hear, but what it is good that they should know, entering thoroughly into the details of the transaction in question, succeeded in perfectly justifying himself in the eyes of his master, whose talent always enabled him to be just, when anger or calculation failed to render him the contrary. He acknowledged to the Duke of Rovigo that he alone had seen the real nature of the affair ; and whilst adding that his arrest was a matter to be regretted, taking place, as it did, in the midst of a people given to raillery, he at the same time plainly showed that he was far from having any intention of disgracing him, and at the conclusion of the audience astonished every one by bestowing the most evident marks of favour upon a minister whom he could not but with great difficulty have replaced, and whom he certainly would not have replaced by M. Fouché, at a moment when fidelity in his servants would be their most precious quality.

Remaining alone with the Prince Cambacérès, and feeling some embarrassment in the presence of a man of such great good sense, he demanded of him what he thought of the terrible disasters of the Russian campaign, and whether they had not astonished him. The arch-chancellor acknowledged that he had been extremely surprised, but at the same time declared that he had long since begun to believe that so many wars must have some calamitous issue. Napoleon then proceeded to attribute all that had occurred to the sudden and extraordinary cold which had smitten his army, at a period so unusually early ; as if a genius such as his own might not have anticipated the possibility of such an event as this, and as if, moreover, his enterprise were not, without any reference to the cold, entirely unfeasible by reason of the enormous distance which had to be traversed in its execution. He also attributed this tragic misadventure partly to the barbarous folly of Alexander, who, he declared, had done himself more injury by burning his own cities than he, Napoleon, had any intention of causing him, since his only object had been to impose very acceptable conditions of peace ; as if Alexander could be expected to manage the war so as to suit the calculations of his adversary, and as though he had reason to regret a course of conduct which had overthrown the man who wielded the destinies of Europe, and substituted himself in his place. Having discussed this subject, Napoleon reverted to the matter which he wished to make the great event of the day—Malet's conspiracy ; declaring, and the observation became a sentiment in the mouths of all the high functionaries of the State, that he needed not only brave soldiers, but also firm magistrates, as capable of dying



for the defence of the throne as soldiers in defence of their country. He then spoke of the personal dangers he had run, of those which he would still have to incur in the course of re-establishing his affairs, of the necessity, therefore, of securing the succession to his son in the case of his own death, pointing out that the best means of attaining this end would be by crowning him as heir-presumptive, a ceremony which often took place in the Western Empire, which would advantageously strike the popular imagination at the present time, and be a means of teaching the civil magistrates the language of duty.

The latter of these observations implied a threat directed against M. Frochot, the prefect of the Seine, who had certainly displayed, with respect to the Malet conspiracy, a credulity which had caused as much amusement as the arrest of the Duke of Rovigo, and whom, although he respected him, and was far from regarding him with any animosity, Napoleon was resolved to make one of the objects towards which he intended to draw public attention, that it might not brood too intently on the events of the Russian campaign. He determined, therefore, that M. Frochot should be tried by the Council of State, and that all the great public bodies should visit the Tuileries for the purpose of presenting to him solemn addresses on his return and the affairs of the moment. And accordingly, on the 20th of December, the day following the morrow of his arrival, Napoleon received the Senate, the Council of State, and the great administrative bodies; the Arch-Chancellor Cambacérès having previously suggested to their several heads what should be the general terms of their addresses.

M. de Lacépède, president of the Senate, who was one of those writers who are ever willing to devote their pens to the service of any one capable of liberally rewarding them, knew very well how to clothe the ideas suggested to him by the Prince Cambacérès in that affected rhetoric of which he had learnt the usage in the school of the mediocre imitators of Buffon. Commencing his address by congratulating Napoleon on his propitious return, and congratulating France on the occasion, because, in the absence of her emperor, the beneficent influence of his genius on her fortunes became relaxed, he then proceeded to speak of the subject of the day, which was not the Russian campaign, but the Malet conspiracy. The men, he said, to whom the emperor had pardoned their past crimes had attempted to throw back the empire into the midst of that anarchy from which his genius had rescued it; but their chastisement had been prompt, and France, warned by their past attempt, had had fresh occasion for considering what it owed to the Napoleon dynasty, and had promised to remain unvaryingly faithful to it; whilst the Senate, established to preserve it, was

resolved to die in its defence. One passage of the president's address deserves some particular attention, and is as follows:—"At the commencement of our old dynasties, the monarch, more than once, ordered that every Frenchman, of whatever rank, should bind himself by a solemn oath to observe fealty to the heir to the throne; and sometimes, when the age of the young prince permitted it, a crown was placed upon his head as the pledge of his authority and the symbol of the perpetuity of the supremacy of his family." The address concluded with a few words respecting the Russian expedition, alluding to the sole source of our misfortunes, the barbarous conduct of the Russians, who had burned their towns rather than permit them to fall into our hands; to the chagrin of Napoleon at the character which the war had borne, since his only object had been to obtain an equitable arrangement; and finally, to the courage of the French troops, who were ever ready to rally round their flags to conquer for their emperor a glorious peace.

Napoleon, seated upon the throne, replied with a few words which were of a totally different character to those of his wretched flatterers.

He certainly had very much at heart, he said, the glory and grandeur of France; but he considered it his duty, before all things, to secure her domestic tranquillity and happiness. To save her from the desolation of anarchy had ever been, and would ever be, the constant object of his efforts. He asked of heaven, therefore, the gift of courageous magistrates as earnestly as of heroic soldiers. The noblest form of death, he said, would be when a soldier falls on the field of honour, if the death of a magistrate, perishing in defence of his sovereign, the throne, and the law, were not more glorious still. Our fathers had for a rallying cry, "*Le roi est mort—vive le roi!*" and in these few words are intimated all the principal advantages of the monarchy. . . . Alluding to the wish which had been expressed by the Senate, Napoleon said: "I have studied the disposition manifested by my people in various ages, I have reflected on what has taken place at various epochs of our history, and I continue to do so."

That portion of the imperial reply which referred to the Russian expedition was evidently carefully worded, so as not to aggravate the quarrel with the Russian emperor. "The war which I wage with Russia," said Napoleon, "is a political war. I undertook it without animosity, and should gladly have spared her the evils which she has drawn upon herself. I might have armed against her a portion of her own population by proclaiming the freedom of the serfs. This measure was frequently demanded of me, but I refused to adopt a course which would lead to the destruction of thousands of

families." Having repeated his allegations that the catastrophe which had overwhelmed his army was solely attributable to the weather, and thanked the Senate for their address, with considerable hauteur, he received the Council of State, which, after referring to the Malet conspiracy, in terms very similar to those employed by the Senate, proceeded to speak more freely than the Senate on the subject of the late misfortunes, declaring that they had discovered in them something which filled them with confidence and admiration, since they had been the means of developing to the utmost an august genius which had never appeared grander than when in the midst of these misadventures! . . . And with respect to these misadventures, they were but a passing trial, for France was arming en masse; and as the enemy could not fail to compare his forces with ours, a peace would speedily ensue. . . . The address concluded with the usual highly laudatory remarks. The reply given by Napoleon to this address has become celebrated. He was touched, he said, by the sentiments displayed in it. If France displayed so much affection for her son, it was because she was convinced of the benefits of monarchy. . . . He then added these famous words: "It is to that ideology, to those gloomy metaphysics, which, endeavouring to prosecute subtle investigations into first causes, are eager to make themselves the foundation of the national legislation, to which we ought to attribute all the misfortunes of France. . . . From hence arises the régime of those men of blood who proclaimed the principle of the insurrection as a duty, who paid court to the people by inviting it to assume a sovereignty for the exercise of which it was unfitted; who destroyed the sanctity of the laws, and the respect due to them, by making them depend, not on the sacred principles of justice, but simply on the will of an assembly, composed of men entirely ignorant of the first principles of legislation, or administration of politics, or the art of war. . . . Those who are summoned to the task of regenerating a State should follow an entirely different order of principles, and be at all times ready to perish in defence of the sovereign, the throne, and the laws."

What a spectacle was this exhibition of hatred to philosophy; what a spectacle to display before the eyes of the most intelligent people of Europe! Because, forsooth, the French army had been foolishly compromised in Russia; with the French army, the imperial throne; and what was far worse, the greatness of the French nation—philosophy was to bear the blame! Was it philosophy also which at that very moment held the unfortunate Pius VII. captive at Savona, and day after day plunged hundreds of priests into dungeons? And it was a man of prodigious intellect who could say these things in the

face of France and the world, in the very presence of events most calculated to contradict him. Such is the effect of faults, and especially of great faults! Beside the direct evil which they cause, they also have a tendency to weaken the judgment of those who commit them, to such a degree that genius itself wears the undignified aspect of angry infancy.

The real object, however, of these proceedings was to cover, as far as possible, the immense echo of the catastrophe of the Russian campaign, and to prepare for the immolation of an honest man, the sacrifice of whom was intended as a means of attracting public attention from events of more importance. The Council of State was, in fact, assembled on the very day after the occurrence of the puerile solemnities above described, and charged with the examination of the conduct of M. Frochot. Of the result of such a proceeding there could be little doubt; and M. Frochot was convicted by each section of the council, not of treason, of which he was declared incapable, but of a want of presence of mind; and on this ground Napoleon was requested to remove him from his office. And there can be no doubt that this was a proper measure; for M. Frochot had certainly failed to act judiciously on the occasion of the Malet conspiracy; but under any other circumstances the government, without consulting the Council of State, would simply have pronounced his deprivation on its own authority, and without adding the humiliation of a solemn judgment.

Leaving these sad scenes, we must now follow Napoleon to other occupations more worthy his genius, and better calculated to repair his faults. And indeed, whilst he had appeared to be entirely employed with the matters described above, he had been in reality occupied incessantly in a more noble work, and had never before displayed so eminently his grand qualities as an intelligent and active administrator. On quitting the army at Smorgoni, he had failed to imagine the true extent of the loss which it had suffered, supposing, in fact, that it only amounted to two-fifths, and that although all the cavalry horses were destroyed there still remained from twenty-five to thirty thousand troopers, whom it would be easy to supply with chargers purchased in Poland, Germany, and France. He knew that the artillery was almost wholly destroyed, both as respected men and matériel, but he knew that he could procure abundant supplies of the latter from his arsenals, and France herself would afford him sufficient numbers of excellent draught horses. Before marching for Moscow he had ordered the levy of the conscription of 1813, which had arrived in October with remarkable exactness, and filled the dépôts with one hundred and forty thousand troops, who had already received three months' drilling, and were quite ready to recruit the battalions

which were about to re-enter France. Napoleon had a year since formed a hundred cohorts of national guards, which, by the very nature of their constitution, consisted of the most vigorous persons of the population; and now, by contriving that some of these should demand the honour of being permitted to join the grand army (for by the laws of their institution they were not compelled to serve beyond the frontiers), and by having this wish consecrated by a decree of the Senate, he procured an addition to his army of a hundred thousand men in the prime of life. He had, therefore, already two hundred and forty thousand men at his disposal, who might be marched in one month on the Rhine, in two months on the Oder, and in three months on the Vistula; and if, as Napoleon at this time believed, there should remain, at the worst, only two hundred thousand troops of the six hundred thousand which had composed the grand army, he would have at his command four hundred and fifty thousand men already in line, a force that would be raised to five hundred thousand by the addition of the contingents due from the allies, and would be very sufficient to overwhelm the Russians, who had suffered almost as greatly as ourselves from the severity of the weather, and who were less able than ourselves to repair their losses. In the meantime, his foresight had already provided the means of checking the advance of the enemy during the three months which would be required for the completion of his arrangements. On his march from Smolensk to Moscow he had ordered an excellent corps of from fifteen to eighteen thousand men, taken from the old regiments of the army of Italy, to proceed from Verona to Berlin, and it was now there under General Grenier. He had also formed, under Marshal Augereau, a corps charged with the occupation of the line of the Elbe. Of this corps, a division, that of General Durutte, had been sent to General Reynier on the Bug, and had half perished; another, under General Loison, had been sent to Wilna to meet the grand army, and still existed when Napoleon quitted Smorgoni. Its two other divisions, those of Heudelet and Lagrange, remained intact, and had proceeded to Dantzic. By joining these troops with those which had come from Italy, a total force of forty-five thousand fresh troops would be formed, and would constitute an effective support for the retreating army. When Napoleon had quitted Smorgoni the guard still numbered seven or eight thousand men, Victor's corps was still in existence, Loison's division had not been engaged, and forty thousand men returned from Moscow, of whom the number would be daily increased by the addition of disbanded soldiers. He had, moreover, on the left, Macdonald's corps, consisting of seven or eight thousand Poles and fifteen thousand Prussians;

and on the right, Reynier's fifteen thousand Saxon and French troops, and Schwarzenberg's twenty-five thousand Austrians. Finally, he had at his disposal Poniatowski's corps, which had been sent into cantonments for the purpose of recruiting. M. de Bassano, who had been directed on his return from Wilna to proceed to Warsaw and Berlin, brought assurances that Poland was about to rise en masse, and that Prussia swore to remain faithful, and was even disposed, if assisted with certain supplies of money, to increase the contingent; and that Prince Schwarzenberg, as well as all the other Austrians with whom he had come in contact, whilst full of eagerness for an immediate peace, had nevertheless promised to remain faithful to the French alliance. Supposing, therefore, that only forty thousand men should return to Wilna of those who had penetrated into the interior of Russia, by adding to them the forty-five thousand fresh troops which under Augereau and Grenier guarded the Elbe, the twenty thousand which would return from Riga under Macdonald, and the forty thousand which, under Reynier and Schwarzenberg, would return from the environs of Minsk, Napoleon might hope to assemble one hundred and fifty thousand men at least, who would probably be increased to the number of two hundred thousand by the successive arrival of stragglers, and be enabled, therefore, successfully to oppose the march of the Russians, of whom certainly no more than one hundred and fifty thousand could have escaped the rigours of the winter. By adding to these the two hundred thousand troops, the two hundred and forty thousand who would proceed to the dépôts on the Rhine within the next two or three months, together with the fresh levies which France could not fail to furnish in the presence of danger, Napoleon might reasonably hope to be able to retain the Prussians and Austrians in his alliance, to drive back the Russians beyond the Niemen, recover continental peace without too great sacrifices, and even, perhaps, render it complete by a maritime peace also.

But, unfortunately, from the 5th of December to the beginning of January a change had taken place in everything, both military and political. From the moment of Napoleon's departure, the army, as has been previously described, fell into a state of the most frightful dissolution. The same fate had overwhelmed the detachments which formed the garrison of Wilna. The Saxons under Reynier, and the Austrians under Schwarzenberg, having remained in the environs of Minsk, in the want of any precise orders, Wilna had been completely uncovered, and it had been found necessary to evacuate in disorder, and in such haste as compelled the abandonment even of the clothing and provisions with which its magazines abounded. Murat, being no longer obeyed or capable of

commanding, had fled from Wilna in the middle of the night, and had lost the army treasury at the foot of the mountain which had to be traversed on first setting out from the town. At Kowno, collecting a few officers, and a marshal, and a thousand soldiers, he had directed Ney and Gerard to dispute for a moment the enemy's passage at the Niemen; but these two heroic men, having been left almost by themselves, had been compelled to fly to Königsberg.

Other misfortunes awaited us at Königsberg; for the inhabitants of this city, cherishing against us, in common with all Prussians, a violent hatred, had no sooner seen Murat arriving alone, the guard reduced to some hundreds of men, and the wreck of our army to consist only of a few wretched fugitives, flying over the ice of the Niemen before the pursuit of the Cossacks, than they displayed the utmost joy and exultation, and would doubtless have risen in insurrection, had they not been held in check by one of Augereau's four divisions, the division Heudelet, which, consisting of seven or eight thousand serviceable troops, was very capable of enforcing respect, and protected the twelve thousand sick and wounded who filled the hospitals, and the multitude of generals and other officers who had come, as had Generals Lariboisière and Eblé, to Königsberg to die of the fever *de congélation*. The inhabitants of this city were unable as yet, therefore, to rise against us; but resolving to do so at the first approach of the Russians, they employed themselves in the meantime in extorting from our unfortunate troops all the money they possessed, in return for the most scanty supplies of provisions or clothing. At the same time, nevertheless, there were amongst the inhabitants of Old Prussia men of the greatest humanity, who, notwithstanding their severe patriotism, respected our troops as brave men in misfortune, and soothed the miseries of their oppressors.

An event now took place which was of extreme importance, and proved to be a great addition to our reverses. Marshal Macdonald, having with him the Polish division Grandjean, consisting of seven or eight thousand excellent and faithful troops, followed at some distance by the auxiliary Prussian corps, had long awaited in vain at Riga orders to retreat, and at length, on finding the Russians advancing on all sides, had, on his own responsibility, retreated towards Tilsit, still followed by the Prussians, but so slowly, now on this pretext and now on that, that the marshal had become, with how much reason will presently be seen, very distrustful of their fidelity.

The Russians, after the passage of the Beresina, had continued their movement: Wittgenstein, with the army of the Dwina, advancing upon Königsberg, for the purpose of intercepting, if possible, the corps under Marshal Macdonald;

whilst Tchitchakoff, with the army of Moldavia, pursued the wrecks of our army towards Kowno; and Kutusof afforded the principal army some repose at Wilna. The Russians had suffered as much as we had from the cold, but very little from want, and being supported by joy at our misfortunes, and the hope of our total destruction, and being retained in their ranks by regular supplies of rations, had reached their present positions in a good state of discipline and full of ardour, although numbering only one hundred thousand in place of the three hundred thousand men who had filled their ranks at the commencement of the campaign. The Emperor Alexander, on receiving information of our disasters, had hastened to Wilna, and having overwhelmed with well-deserved rewards Marshal Kutusof, had assumed the direction of affairs, which would henceforth be as much political as military. Judging from conjectures which he could not fail to form, and some indirect communications received from Prussia, and even from Austria, he was tolerably certain that the adoption of a suitable line of conduct on his part would result in alienating from the French alliance Prussia at least, and probably Austria; and he immediately adopted, therefore, the language which was best suited to the existing state of affairs. He had not come, he said, to make conquests in Germany, or even in Poland, but to hold out the hand of friendship to the oppressed inhabitants of Germany, whether people or kings, bourgeois or nobles, Prussians or Austrians, Saxons or Bavarians, to aid them, to relieve them from an intolerable yoke, and to return to each, as soon as this work should have been accomplished, what belonged to each, taking nothing for himself but what he had been unjustly deprived of. He proclaimed a general amnesty for all the acts committed against the Russian government, and even spread abroad an intimation, that if the Poles were anxious for the restoration of their nationality, he was quite ready to gratify this inclination by forming Poland into a separate kingdom, of which he would himself be the clement monarch, ever ready to promote liberal and civilising institutions. Alexander's natural keen-sightedness and benevolence of disposition sufficiently inclined him to adopt this policy, and had they not, the Germans, who now thronged around him, could scarcely have failed to do so. The Prussian minister Stein, the celebrated author Kotzebue, and many other Germans, men of letters or military men, constantly uttering the most liberal sentiments, besieged Alexander with entreaties that he would proclaim the independence of Germany, and boldly march forward, since every part of Germany which should be freed from the domination of the French would instantly become his ardent and



enthusiastic ally. This course, however, was opposed by the veteran Kutusof, whose circumspection, justified by events, had become excessive; and by some Russian officers, who, keenly sensible of the exhausted state of their army, feared lest it should fall to pieces in the same manner as the French army, and were eager, therefore, to halt and secure a peace with France, which at this moment might be obtained under very advantageous terms. But Alexander, profoundly wounded by having been the object of Napoleon's contempt, and inordinately elated by having become his vanquisher, now aspired to a still higher rôle, and desired to become his destroyer, and the liberator of Europe. He authorised, therefore, the minister Stein and his compatriots to traverse the reconquered Prussian provinces, spreading abroad his promise to effect without delay the emancipation of Germany.

In the meantime, General Diebitch, chief of Wittgenstein's staff, followed Marshal Macdonald step by step, in the hope of depriving him of the Prussian contingent; and at length, after having carefully fomented the dissensions which were continually taking place between its commander, General d'York, and Marshal Macdonald, he proposed to the former to pass over to the Russians, under the pretence of being compelled to capitulate; upon which, General d'York, who was a good patriot, but very fearful of compromising himself with his court, transmitted to it an account of the communications which had taken place between himself and the Russian general. Failing, however, to obtain any reply from his court, which had been thrown into a state of great embarrassment by his communication, he finally adopted a decided course, and permitting himself to be surrounded by the enemy on the 30th of December, in accordance, as he said, with circumstances of a military nature which left him no alternative, he signed a convention of neutrality, on the part of his *corps d'armée*, which was only to be of force, however, on being ratified by the Prussian monarch. The real meaning of the convention was very apparent; and it was, in fact, an agreement that the Prussian corps should, after the lapse of a few days, be incorporated with the Russian army. A detachment of this corps which, under General Massenbach, had followed Marshal Macdonald, and proceeded as far as Tilsit, on receiving information of the convention, departed from the place secretly during the night, and rejoined the main body, by which it was viewed with the greatest enthusiasm.

The writer of these pages, of these sad details, is a Frenchman, and dares declare himself, without fear of contradiction, to be most deeply interested in the greatness of his country; but yet he cannot blame those German patriots, who, serving

unwillingly in a cause which was not their own, hastened to aid a cause which they believed to be that of their country, and which had unhappily become so through the errors of the man who was then our ruler.

The effect of the defection of General d'York was instantaneous; and from the Vistula to the Rhine he was called the saviour of Germany. The Baron de Stein and his companions hastened to offer him their congratulations, and to urge him to march upon Königsberg, to assemble there the States of Old Prussia, proclaim the independence of Prussia, and declare that the king, being under the coercion of the French, should no longer be obeyed. But General d'York was unwilling to take any such precipitate steps; and although he consented to march to Königsberg, determined to await there the arrival of orders from the Prussian court.

In the meantime, Murat had paused at Königsberg with a crowd of generals and officers without troops, of whom some were dying, and the remainder, exasperated by suffering, indulged in language which was almost seditious. Marshal Ney, in spite of his heroism and of the caresses lavished upon him by Napoleon, could no longer restrain himself, and openly spoke out against the imprudent chief, who had, he said, precipitated the French army into an abyss of destruction. And Berthier, confined to his bed by sickness, and worn out with chagrin at the absence of Napoleon, knew not what counsel to give with respect to a state of affairs which was perfectly unexampled. When, therefore, news was received of the defection of the Prussian corps, and the hostile demonstrations against us which it excited amongst the inhabitants of Königsberg were perceived, it was resolved to quit Königsberg, and to abandon the line of the Niemen, which, being frozen over, had ceased to be a defence. Marshal Ney was still charged with conducting the rearguard, consisting of the division Hendelet, and the two thousand men which remained of the division Loison; and the march was commenced upon Braunsberg, Elbing, and Thorn. Marshal Macdonald, who was at Tilsit, twenty leagues from Königsberg, surrounded by enemies, earnestly demanded that his arrival should be awaited, as by that means a force would be formed amounting to fifteen or sixteen thousand men, and sufficiently strong to enforce respect. But his letters were disregarded, and the march was continued until the 15th of January; the wrecks of the old army proceeding in detachments of fifty or a hundred men, who compelled the inhabitants of the districts through which they passed to give them provisions when they were the stronger, but died of hunger or cold when they had neither strength or money sufficient to enable them to procure the necessaries of

life. Towards the middle of January they arrived on the banks of the Vistula, and threw themselves into the fortified posts which Napoleon had supplied abundantly with provisions. General Rapp had preceded the army of Dantzic, and was surrounded by a mingled mass of five or six thousand troops of all nations and all arms. Murat sent thither the Polish division Grandjean, that of General Heudelet, and all that remained of the division Loison; and Rapp had thus at his disposal twenty-five thousand men, well provisioned, and he determined to defend with them the fortifications of Dantzic to the last extremity.

On the reiterated advice of Marshal Davout, places on the Vistula were named as rallying points for the various corps of the old army, and were Dantzic, Thorn, Marienwerder, and Mariebourg. The headquarters were established at Thorn; but after having been there two or three days Murat thought that it would be impossible to remain there; for, after the division Heudelet, Loison, and Grandjean had been thrown into the fortress of Dantzic, there remained only ten thousand men to accompany the staff, and to defend the immense number of flags which had been collected, and were carried along with it for safety: these ten thousand men consisting of eighteen hundred recruits, who had been met en route, and were intended for Davout's corps; twelve hundred d'élite Neapolitans; four thousand Bavarians, who had recently set out from their country; and finally, three thousand men of the imperial guard, who had been gradually rallied since the departure from Königsberg. As such a body as this, therefore, could not defend the Vistula, which was now frozen over, as were all the rivers of Poland and Russia, or even defend Murat and his staff, should the Russians under Tchitchakoff, united with those under Wittgenstein, endeavour to surround them, Murat proceeded to Posen, situated equally distant from the Vistula and the Oder. And thus the whole of Old Prussia and the whole of Poland were evacuated.

A fresh event was now to increase the excitement of the German populations. The mistake had been committed, in spite of the advice to the contrary of Marshal Macdonald, of leaving a garrison, consisting almost entirely of German troops, at Pillau, a little maritime fortress defending the entrance of the Frische-haff; and it had now declared against us, amidst the vehement applause of the Prussians, and to the great satisfaction of the English, who hastened to penetrate into the Frische-haff with their ships of war, and soon afterwards introduced the merchant convoys, by which means the inhabitants of Old Prussia procured not only the gratification of being freed from their conquerors, but also that of being able to engage once

more in that traffic in colonial produce from which they had been so long debarred.

Whilst the state of affairs on our left was thus unsatisfactory, the news received from our right, on the Upper Vistula, showed that they were in that direction also equally disastrous. General Reynier and Prince Schwarzenberg, seeing no advantage in remaining any longer at Minsk, had marched upon Warsaw. General Reynier, indeed, had wished to engage the enemy with the Saxon and French troops under their command; but Prince Schwarzenberg had earnestly dissuaded him from this course, declaring that to attempt to carry on warfare during the winter would simply be the means of suffering useless losses, and that it would be better to await at Warsaw the arrival of the forces which Napoleon could not fail to send there in the spring. Whilst giving this advice, the prince had fallen back himself, thereby compelling Reynier to do so likewise; and receiving at headquarters the visits of Russian officers, under the pretence that he could not avoid them, he permitted himself to engage in discussions respecting an armistice; and without precisely betraying Napoleon, whose marriage he had negotiated, and to whom he owed his marshal's baton, he prepared to act in conformity with the change which he foresaw was about to take place in the policy of the Austrian cabinet. At the same time he constantly advocated the conclusion of a peace, being sincerely anxious for this, both as an Austrian and as a favourite of the French court.

Brave as was Murat's heart, his feeble head could not long endure such a state of affairs as this. No artillery could daunt him, but he trembled at the idea of losing his crown. A thousand sinister images thronged his excited brain. Sometimes he saw the populations of Italy, excited by the priests and the English, rising up in insurrection, and overthrowing the Bonapartist thrones throughout the country; sometimes he saw himself abandoned by Napoleon, whose affection for him was but cold—abandoned as the sacrifice by which he might obtain peace. From the moment that these images obtained possession of his brain, he lost his sang-froid, and was only anxious to depart for the purpose of endeavouring to save that crown, which had been the object of such eager desire, and the reward of so much heroism. His distrust had become so great that he had begun to fear that even his wife was implicated in Napoleon's supposed designs against him; and this was a new motive for his anxiety to return to Naples. Tormented by these suspicions, and overwhelmed by the disastrous news which continued to arrive, hour after hour, of the retreat of the army, he suddenly summoned Prince Berthier and M. Daru to an interview, and communicating to them his intention of immediately quitting

the army, on the ground that the state of his health rendered this step necessary, he resisted all their entreaties to him to alter his determination, and informed them that he should send for Prince Eugène to assume the chief command.

When Prince Eugène arrived, both his modesty and his indolence induced him to urge Murat to remain with the army; but failing in this endeavour, he at length reluctantly consented to accept a duty which he considered far above his powers, and to remain at Posen with the ten thousand men of all nations, already enumerated, entreating General Reynier and Prince Berthier to preserve their position at Warsaw, which covered his own position on the right; and considering it certain that on his left the Russians would delay some time at least before Thorn and Dantzic, he ordered General Grenier with his eighteen thousand men, and Augereau with the nine thousand or ten thousand men of the division Lagrange, to hold themselves in readiness to advance to his aid immediately circumstances should render it necessary.

These, then, were the sole remaining fragments of what had once been the grand army! twenty-five thousand men at Dantzic, ten thousand in the second-rate fortresses of the Vistula, fifteen thousand of all nations at Posen with the staff, a few Saxon and French troops at Warsaw, and finally, at Berlin, Grenier and Augereau, with twenty-eight thousand men, who could only be removed at the risk of giving rise to a general insurrectionary movement throughout Germany. These were all that remained, instead of the two hundred thousand troops whom Napoleon believed to be still established on the Niemen, disputing with the Russians the possession of Königsberg, Kowno, and Grodno, and awaiting the arrival of the three hundred thousand fresh troops, to organise whom he had committed the grave fault of abandoning companions in arms whom he had plunged into an abyss of dangers. At the same time it must not be forgotten that had he remained on the Niemen, he would have allowed himself to be separated from Paris by insurgent Germany, and by allowing himself to be separated from the seat of his widely extended government, would have been guilty of a great political and administrative error. And this dilemma, this painful necessity of committing some great fault, was the just punishment of errors already committed as great as they were irreparable.

And at this moment the political consequences of those errors were as calamitous as their military consequences. The chief of the German exiles, Baron de Stein, was with General d'York at Königsberg, convoking the estates of the province, calling the whole population to arms, and employing, without

reserve, the pecuniary resources of the country. A spirit of universal devotion responded to these proceedings, and thousands of pamphlets, proclamations, and popular songs helped to excite against us the popular indignation. Germany had been filled, during some years past, with secret societies, of which the principal was one bearing the name of the *Union of Virtue (Tugend-Bund)*. A spirit of enthusiastic love for Germany, a conviction that, once united into a single empire, it would be invincible, and instead of being by turns the victim of the States of the north, and then of the south, would be their lawgiver, and be the first nation in the world; the necessity, therefore, of no longer considering the German peoples as Austrians, Bavarians, Saxons, Prussians or Hamburgians, as princes, nobles, bourgeois, or peasants, as Lutherans or Catholics, but simply as Germans; every one and all ready to die for their country; and the duty of ever giving the preference to that which might be of German origin, whether in works of industry, matters of custom, or literature—such were the ideas and sentiments which it was the purpose of those societies to propagate, and which they had propagated with the most extraordinary success. Nor were they less successful in now carrying from Königsberg to the extremities of Germany, not only those patriotic emotions which were natural and intense, but also advice respecting the course which was now to be pursued, and which was to the effect that everywhere the German populations should rise in arms, devoting both their persons and their possessions to the national cause; that they should ally themselves with the Emperor Alexander, deliver the kings who were in bondage to the French alliance, and depose as no longer worthy of reigning those who were capable of renouncing it and yet still remained faithful to it. *Vive Alexander! vive les Cossagues!* were the cries which everywhere arose from the midst of the general excitement; and there were even young Germans who in the fervour of their patriotism adopted the fashion of the Cossack beards; but what is especially worthy of remark is the fact that the princes and nobles themselves helped to excite this movement, which, despite its monarchical loyalty, was in reality essentially democratic, resembling in this respect the movement in Spain, the exciting causes of which had been partly a passionate love of liberty, and partly loyalty towards the captive king.

We may well understand how great at this time were the surprise, embarrassment, and perplexity of the unhappy King of Prussia and his principal minister, M. de Hardenberg. This just and wise monarch, in fact, had never, since the commencement of his reign, ceased to be involved in positions which could not fail to be in the highest degree obnoxious to an

upright and prudent man. Compelled in 1806 to place himself in opposition to the French, and having almost lost his crown by so doing, he had resolved in 1812 to avoid a similar fault, and had allied himself with France, at the same time endeavouring to persuade the Russian emperor to approve of the course which he had adopted, through the mouth of M. de Knesebeck, who, whether authorised or not, had carried his excuses to the extent of duplicity towards France. And now, after having believed that he had been far wiser in 1812 than in 1806, he found himself compelled either to be guilty of a breach of faith towards France, or to fight in the aid of France, which oppressed him, against the friends who offered to become his liberators. Nor was M. de Hardenberg, who, equally with himself, had passed from a hostile policy towards France to one of alliance with her, less a prey to all the perplexities which beset the king; these being increased in his own case by anxieties which arose out of his personal position. Should the progress of events condemn the policy of alliance with France, the Prussian monarchy might readily be excused as having merely committed an error of judgment; but the case was far different with M. de Hardenberg, whose conduct in the matter would be imputed to ambition, and to that basest species of ambition which leads a statesman into intrigues with the enemies of his country.

The first step taken by Frederick William upon hearing the defection of General d'York was to exclaim against such a breach of faith. He was equally averse to becoming compromised with France, which he greatly feared, and to being regarded as disloyal, for he was, in fact, a thoroughly honest man, and took pride in being regarded as such. He hastened, therefore, to disavow the course adopted by General d'York to M. de St. Marsan, the French minister, who readily permitted himself to be persuaded of the Prussian monarch's fidelity, and consoled and charmed him by all those flatteries which most delighted him, being expressions of confidence in the uprightness of his nature. He promised to make a public disavowal of what had been done by General d'York, and to have him tried before a military commission; promises which M. de St. Marsan carried away as a species of trophy, and regarded as useful replies to the declamations of the enemies of France.

When these promises became known, the German patriots were excessively irritated against the king, against M. de Hardenberg, and the policy of the Prussian cabinet, and everywhere declared, as formerly our emigrants, that the king was not free. His ministers indicated that they thought the step he had taken somewhat too decided, and after having

disavowed General d'York's proceeding, he refused to publish his disavowal.

Whilst the popular excitement in Berlin was at its height, the French troops quartered in this capital, preserving their accustomed pride, replied to expressions of German patriotism by others which were equally provocative of hostility, and were in the highest degree imprudent, irritating the Prussians, and after, in the first place, terrifying their monarch, leading him into a course of subtle policy. He did not as yet entertain the idea of abandoning the French alliance, but all his thoughts were directed to the means of becoming more independent of her, and of gaining a neutral position between her and her enemies, from which he might be able to aid in the arrangement of an advantageous peace.

The only means by which these views could be realised were, the departure of the king from Berlin, towards which the Russian troops were already marching, in their pursuit of the French troops in their retreat, and the establishment of his court in some town in Silesia, such as Breslau, for example; and also the organisation of vast bodies of troops—a measure calculated in the highest degree to please the German patriots, who flattered themselves that they should be able to turn those troops against the French, whilst the latter could make no objection to their being raised, since they had themselves demanded that Prussia should double her contingent.

The Prussian king proposed to supply the expenses of those armaments by demanding of Napoleon the price of the matériel of all kinds which he had supplied to the French army. It had been agreed, in fact, at the time of the last treaty of alliance, that should the value of this matériel exceed the forty-eight millions still owing from Prussia, the surplus should be paid to that government in money; and as the Prussian ministry calculated that there was such a surplus in favour of Prussia to the amount of forty-six millions, the king supposed that he would have sufficient available funds to triple his army, raising it from forty thousand to one hundred and twenty thousand men, and be in a position, in conjunction with Austria, to force the belligerent parties to accept reasonable terms of peace. As France from being a creditor had become a debtor, she would have, by virtue of former treaties, to surrender immediately the fortresses of Stettin, Custrin, and Glogau, and the Prussian king would thus, he expected, find himself established in Silesia at the head of one hundred and twenty thousand men, raised without any expense to his kingdom, and supported by all the fortresses of the Oder.

M. de Hatzfeldt, sent to Paris to clear the Prussian court from the suspicion of any complicity with General d'York, was



directed to submit to the French government the following propositions: the removal of the Prussian court to Breslau, that it might be removed from the theatre of hostilities; the extension of the Prussian armaments, for more effectually serving the interests of the alliance; and finally, the restoration of the fortresses on the Oder, for the purpose of fulfilling the existing treaties, and conciliating Prussian popular feeling. He was at the same time strictly enjoined to avoid any discussion on a singular proposition which Napoleon, on his return from Russia, had indirectly addressed to the Prussian court, to the effect, that France and Prussia might be more closely allied by the marriage of the heir to the Prussian throne with a French princess; and to declare very plainly, that if the propositions, of which he was the bearer, were not accepted, Prussia would consider herself free from all engagements she might have entered into with France.

The Austrian court was involved in perplexities exactly similar to those of the Prussian court; but it had the advantage of being surrounded by a less excited population, of being encumbered by less distracting scruples, and of being endowed with a larger share of ability. After having maintained with France four obstinate wars, and displayed an almost incredible perseverance in hatred, the Austrian emperor had at length fallen into the belief that he had been deceived, and that it would be better to form an alliance with France than to court destruction by contending with her. The conduct of the various courts of Europe was of such a nature as to relieve him of all scruples with regard to the adoption of such a course, and in accordance with the advice of M. de Metternich, he had become not only the ally, but the father-in-law also, of the French emperor. It was now a question whether Austria had not a second time fallen into error, and renounced a hostile policy just when it must have produced most advantageous results. The Emperor Francis, however, who was a clear-headed, tranquil-minded man, and a good father, only saw in the catastrophe of Moscow a means of making France appreciate more highly the Austrian alliance, of imposing peace on the belligerent party, of rendering Austria more powerful and Germany more independent. At the same time M. de Metternich, who had founded all his personal elevation on one course of policy, now resolved to make it rest on another, which had, moreover, the recommendation of conducing to the interest of his country. But although, according to the last news from Poland, Napoleon appeared to have been more thoroughly vanquished than had been at first supposed, he might still be able to inflict terrible punishment, and even probably recover his whole power, and it was necessary, therefore, to act with

prudence ; passing from the one line of policy to the other in such a manner that the safety of Austria, the dignity of its emperor, and the reputation of his minister, might be equally secured from injury. M. de Metternich at once perceived, with rare political keen-sightedness, the advantages to be derived from the existing state of affairs, and he resolved not only to redeem his own fortunes from the consequences of a fatal step, but to resuscitate also those of Austria and Germany, whilst still remaining faithful to France, of whom he was really, as well as avowedly, the ally. Thoroughly agreed on all points with the Emperor Francis, he immediately began to carry out, with promptitude and fairness, resolutions which had been well considered and unreservedly adopted. Simultaneously he commenced the organisation of the Austrian forces, the establishment of a secret understanding with Prussia, Bavaria, and Saxony, speaking to them all of a peace to be concluded on terms favourable to Germany, and then a discussion with France respecting the advantageousness of an immediate peace. M. de Bubna, who had been sent to Paris in accordance with Napoleon's demand that there should be present at his court some Austrian diplomatist of mark, was directed to declare most earnestly the fidelity of Austria to the French alliance, but at the same time strongly to recommend peace in the name of Europe, which had need of it, in the name of France herself, to whom it could not be less necessary, and further, to hint that if peace were not speedily arranged, the latter country might speedily find the whole world in arms against her ; giving this information in a tone which, whilst free from any appearance of being a threat, should nevertheless give it an air of proceeding from a profound conviction of its truth, and subsequently afford reason to Austria for renouncing an ally deaf to all wise counsels. M. de Bubna was even positively directed to offer the intervention of Austria, for the word mediation was not as yet considered appropriate with the various belligerent powers.

Such were the communications which, during the first days of January 1813, simultaneously demanded the attention of Napoleon's genius. In the place of formidable fragments of the grand army united on the Niemen, and holding the Russians in check, from Grodno to Königsberg, awaiting the three hundred thousand fresh troops who, he had declared, were soon to join them, he now saw only a few scattered troops falling back upon the Oder, without power to check the enemy at any point, and as ominously threatened by the Germans in the rear as they were relentlessly pushed by the Russians in front. At the same time his ears were filled by the enthusiastic shouts of Germany, ready at any moment to rise up against him, and

found himself surrounded by allies who had asserted their fidelity as a matter of form, whilst they gave counsels which were but conditions under another form, and not only afforded him reason to doubt their own good faith, but made him perceive that they suspected that France, weary of the bloodshed of her children and of despotism, was equally unfaithful.

Napoleon's heart was a soldier's heart by nature, and as such, capable of resisting the influences of any change of fortune; but he was now deeply affected. Nevertheless, he was resolved that none should perceive the emotions of his soul, and that under an air of icy indifference should remain hidden its agitations, caused by the influence of the sinister presentiments or blind illusions which by turns besieged it.

After having yielded to a sudden impulse of irritation against Murat, to whom he unjustly attributed the misfortunes attending the retreat—at one moment even entertaining the idea of having him arrested—he grew calm, confirmed the nomination of Prince Eugène, whom he would have himself selected had he been upon the spot, and had the change announced by an article in the *Moniteur*, in the following terms:—"The King of Naples, having been compelled to resign the command of the army through indisposition, has transferred it to the hands of the viceroy. The latter is more accustomed to the conduct of a great administration, and has the emperor's entire confidence." Manifesting confidence in Prince Eugène, for the purpose of encouraging him, Napoleon also took care to reassure him with respect to his position pointing out to him that the Russians would not dare to advance when they perceived forty thousand French troops on their right, in the fortresses on the Vistula; and on their left, around Warsaw, forty thousand Saxons and Austrians, who were still faithful, although inactive. Although he was unwilling to fatigue or compromise by premature movements the troops assembled at Berlin, he authorised Prince Eugène to summon to his own immediate command the division Lagrange, as well as the corps of General Grenier; and as the exertions he had made during the twenty days he had been in Paris would enable him to despatch to the Elbe a reinforcement of sixty thousand fresh troops, which would raise Prince Eugène's forces to one hundred thousand men, he rightly considered that the latter would be safe against the attacks of any enemy whatever.

A supply of cavalry was the most pressing necessity, for the Russians were immensely strong in this arm, and spread far and wide a continuous terror, throwing forward bands of Cossacks who were feared because they were strange, and because it was not known that a handful of infantry could readily put them to flight. It was necessary, therefore, to provide immediately

several thousand horse—Prince Eugène having no more than three thousand at his disposal—and Napoleon ordered General Boureier, who had been directed to procure in Germany and Poland remounts for the dismounted cavalry troops, to purchase horses for this purpose at any price, and even, if necessary, to seize them by force where they could not be purchased. At the same time he invited the princes of the Confederation of the Rhine to place at his disposal, even for the sake of their own States, all their available cavalry. The King of Saxony had kept two regiments of cuirassiers and two regiments of hussars and chasseurs, forming together a corps of about two thousand four hundred excellent troopers, and these Napoleon earnestly demanded of him for the purpose of throwing them upon Posen.

Napoleon recommended Prince Eugène, after he should have furnished the two principal fortresses of the Vistula, Thorn and Dantzic, with strong garrisons, to throw the wrecks of the old corps, which had at first been directed to rally upon the Vistula, upon the fortress of the Oder, to provision Stettin, Custrin, Glogau, and Spandau, procuring the necessary supplies, either by purchase or force, and should there be any lack of wood, to have no hesitation in even cutting down the trees on the public promenades, paying no attention to the Prussian authorities, to whom explanations would be given at some future time. He should then, Napoleon continued, arm and provision the fortresses of the Elbe, Torgau, Wittenberg, Magdeburg, and Hamburg, which were to form a third line of defences; to march upon the Rhine almost all the remaining battalions of the grand army, and to send away that crowd of generals without troops, who indulged at headquarters in the most injurious language, retaining only Marshal Ney, to hurl him upon the first Russians who should appear. Finally, he directed him to proceed as quickly as possible with the re-organisation of the Polish troops, furnishing them with such money as they might require, and assuring them that whatever might be the destiny of Poland, the Poles should be in the pay of France, and should be Frenchmen if they could not be Poles.

Having taken these preliminary measures, Napoleon turned his attention to those which were to be the foundation of all his plans; and in the first place resolved to raise the force of two hundred and fifty thousand men, which was almost immediately available, to five hundred thousand.

By taking advantage of the system of the national guard, by which it was divided into three classes, comprising the citizens of from twenty to twenty-six years, those from twenty-six to forty, and those from forty to sixty, it had been possible to form of the men of the first class, cohorts composed of men of full strength, but who, being unmarried, were less necessary to their

families. Napoleon now resolved to raise another hundred thousand men of this quality by making a fresh selection from the classes of 1809, 1810, 1811, 1812. At the same time he determined to demand immediately the conscription of 1812, that it might replace in the depôts the men of the conscription of 1813; and he hoped by this means to have three hundred and fifty thousand troops at his command, who might be immediately marched to join the hundred thousand who still remained on the Vistula and Oder, whilst a hundred and fifty thousand would be in the depôts ready to defend the interior and frontiers—the armies of Spain being still of undiminished strength. He intended also to procure the offer to himself of voluntary aid, which, besides being of material advantage, would be of far higher importance as a great national demonstration.

As it was necessary to obtain legislative sanction for the employment of the hundred thousand men of the cohorts beyond the frontiers, to draw the hundred thousand men who were to be taken from the four last classes, and finally, to levy the conscription of 1814, a *senatus-consultum* was prepared, embracing the various measures, and to it was added the report of M. de Bassano, detailing at length the particulars of the defection of General d'York, describing the movements taking place in Germany as anarchical agitation, excited by the various sovereigns at the instigation of England, and comparing the systematic order which prevailed in France with the state of disorder which was imprudently favoured throughout the rest of Europe by the princes of old dynasties. The object of this report, in fact, was to excite throughout France, besides a hatred of foreigners, an excessive terror of revolutionary troubles; a terror which, indeed, had been already rendered general by the occurrence of Malet's conspiracy.

Before submitting this *senatus-consultum* to the Senate, Napoleon resolved to convoke an extraordinary council, in which he might receive the advice of certain eminent personages respecting the state of European affairs, and the measures best calculated to put an end to the struggle in which the French empire was then engaged. He had become more communicative with his ministers since his misfortunes, and although as disinclined as ever to follow any advice opposed to his views, he was now disposed to appear to do so. At the same time he resolved to lay aside the air of sovereignty, and to become once more that General Bonaparte who had obtained at the price of infinite exertions those favours which Fortune had appeared to bestow upon him of her own liberality. But although he was resolved to expiate his faults by prodigies of energy and application, it never occurred to him, unfortunately, to expiate them by the exercise of moderation, as was still possible.

Since his return the wishes of all those who surrounded him had been, whether publicly expressed or secretly entertained, directed towards an immediate peace. The arch-chancellor, with his usual gravity and reserve; M. de Talleyrand, with his sometimes affected, sometimes real *insouciance*; the Duke of Rovigo, with the boldness of a favourite accustomed to perfect liberty of speech; and Mollien, with the chagrin of a perplexed financier; and finally, of the great officers of the court, the Grand-Marshal Duroc, with discreet wisdom, and M. de Caulaincourt, with the firmness of a good citizen, severally hinted or openly declared that it was absolutely necessary to obtain an immediate peace—an advantageous peace, if possible, but at any price, peace. And to this universal opinion Napoleon replied that he was equally desirous for peace, but that it was to be gained by a firm and supreme effort, and that whilst France desired it, she must refrain from manifesting this desire too openly, since all would be lost if Europe once believed that her courage had begun to fail.

Of the great personages surrounding Napoleon, who now, either because they were emboldened by peril, or because the emperor's prestige was somewhat lessened, began to manifest their opinions, M. de Bassano alone reposed as much confidence in the emperor's fortunes as though the late events in Russia had never occurred. According to him, Napoleon, still invincible, although vanquished, would speedily repair the disasters, which were, after all, but the result of an unfavourable winter, lay Europe once more at his feet, and dictate to her the conditions of a general peace. And Napoleon, whilst appreciating these vain words at their true value, was pleased by them, for he loved to hear it declared that he was still as powerful as ever.

In the meantime, Napoleon was far from rejecting the idea of negotiations for peace, and disputed only the manner in which they should be opened. It was, in fact, an important question, and one which was eagerly discussed by Napoleon's court, in spite of the habitual reserve of its members, whether the negotiations should be opened in such a manner as to forward the views of Austria, by permitting her to assume the officious part for which she seemed so anxious, or whether, entirely declining the offices of mediators, France should not herself directly and openly endeavour to come to an understanding with Russia, and thus put an end to a useless and disastrous struggle. M. de Caulaincourt, who was well accustomed to the conduct of negotiations with Russia, and full of the souvenirs of 1810-1811, and acutely sensible of the efforts made by the Emperor Alexander to avoid the war, hoped that he might be able, by means of a personal interview, to persuade this prince

to accept a peace which to each party should be equally honourable. Yet it was not from the desire to assume an important diplomatic position, which he had voluntarily renounced, that he put forward this opinion, but simply from devotion to a dynasty to which he had attached himself, and to France, which he believed to be in danger. M. de Bassano, on the other hand, gave very different counsels. Having many private ties with the Austrian court since Napoleon's marriage with Marie Louise, he was anxious that negotiations should be carried by means of Austria, that he might thus himself become the author of a peace which all the world desired, and for which he himself was anxious, but, as was the case with Napoleon, on conditions which could not possibly be obtained. M. de Talleyrand, who employed the time which was no longer devoted to the service of the State in laughing at M. de Bassano, was now for very plausible reasons, and on account of his aversion to M. de Bassano, contrary to his usual custom, opposed to the advocates of the views of Austria, and deprecated the importance which they endeavoured to attribute to her influence.

There was certainly great reason to fear that Austria, accepted as a mediator, would speedily assume the tone of an arbitrator, and if not treated with deference in this character, assume that of an enemy. To give her as little reason as possible, therefore, for interference in the important affairs of the moment, and to enter into direct negotiations with the Russian court itself, certainly seemed to be the most politic course. But an almost insurmountable obstacle to the adoption of this method of proceeding consisted in the fact that the Emperor Alexander, after having trembled at the idea of meeting Napoleon on the field of battle, had been led, by the series of extraordinary events which had lately occurred, to consider himself Napoleon's vanquisher, and to hope that he might become the liberator of Europe. Strongly excited by the applause of Germany, he had become inaccessible, and it is probable that M. de Caulaincourt would have ill brooked a complete and sudden change of demeanour, which might have still permitted the display of personal regard towards himself, but would have failed to allow him any consideration in his character of diplomatist. Direct negotiations with Alexander being, therefore, almost impossible, it would be necessary to have recourse to the intervention of Austria. So far, then, M. de Bassano's views were right; but he was greatly in error with respect to the manner in which he considered that the mediation of the Austrian court should be employed, and the payment that should be made for its good offices. The real object of this court was neither to destroy nor even humble France, but to re-establish the fortunes of her own kingdom and the

rest of Germany. This was a natural and legitimate object, and one which the commission of grave errors on our side rendered it necessary that we should acknowledge as such, more especially as to do so would be to the real interest of France.

But should we still be unwilling to yield to circumstances, there was yet one course which we might hold, and this was to effect a good understanding with Austria, listening to her counsels with apparent deference, but at the same time carefully avoiding to become in any way involved with her; abstaining to ask of her either diplomatic or military services, since to ask the former would be to authorise her to interfere in the arrangement of the conditions of peace, and to ask the latter would be to afford her a reason for arming, and to lead her one step onwards towards a declaration of war against us.

All these various questions, then, respecting peace, the method in which negotiations should be opened with the enemy, and the extent to which should be raised the armies of France, Napoleon was now anxious to discuss in a special council, to be assembled at the Tuileries in the early part of January, and to be composed of men perfectly competent for the part they would be called upon to perform. The persons summoned to it—for the most part on the recommendation of M. de Bassano—were M. de Bassano himself, the Arch-Chancellor Cambacérès, the Prince de Talleyrand, M. de Caulaincourt, M. the Duke of Cadore (de Champagny), an old ambassador, and minister of foreign affairs, and finally, the two chief secretaries of this department, MM. de la Besnardiere and d'Hauterive; and a better selection could scarcely have been made, whether in respect to talent or the real desire of the men chosen to save both Napoleon and the French empire.

Napoleon calmly and gravely sketched in brief terms the situation of affairs, ordered the lecture of the decrees which were to be presented to the Senate, and then defined as follows the question which he wished to be taken into consideration. "I desire peace," he said, "but I do not fear war. In spite of the losses caused to us by the rigour of the climate, our resources are still very large. Tranquillity reigns throughout the empire itself; and its people have no desire to resign either their glory or their power. Austria, Prussia, and Denmark give the strongest assurances of their fidelity. Austria does not care to withdraw from our alliance, from which she expects to reap great advantages; the King of Prussia offers to reinforce his contingent, and is about to have General d'York tried by a council of war; Russia has need of peace, and although strongly influenced by the intrigues of England, I do not



think that she will be desirous of persisting in a struggle which must eventually end in her discomfiture.

“I have ordered a levy of three hundred and fifty thousand men; the *senatus-consultum* is drawn up, and about to be presented. Another decree is prepared for the convocation of the legislative corps, of which I have no new imposts to demand, but the presence of which will be useful in the present state of affairs, especially as it may be necessary to submit to it certain legislative measures.

“The next subject for consideration, after we shall have made arrangements for the development of our forces, is whether we should await proposals of peace or make them ourselves? Again, if we take the initiative, ought we to enter into direct negotiations with Russia, or rather seek to obtain the mediation of Austria? These are the questions respecting which I ask your counsel.”

At the conclusion of this concise and decided explanation each of the persons present gave his opinion.

M. de Caulaincourt maintained the necessity of peace and the advisability of entering into direct negotiations with Russia. The wise Cambacérés, distrusting the Austrian offers of mediation, and considering it the wisest course to discuss the conditions of peace directly with the power which must eventually have the chief voice in the decision, supported M. de Caulaincourt's advice; as did also M. de Talleyrand in a few sententious words.

When these gentlemen had spoken, M. de Bassano expressed, at length, the contrary opinion, asserting the difficulty of entering into negotiations with Russia, and the facility with which they might be carried on through Austria, declaring his entire confidence in the disinterestedness of the Austrian court, its attachment to the French alliance, the affection of its emperor for his son-in-law Napoleon, and affirming that on this side the interests of France would be perfectly secure, but failing to mention at what price the services of Austria were to be obtained.

M. de Champagny, a modest, sensible man, perceiving the great difficulties in the way of entering into direct negotiations with Russia, and the facility with which they might be conducted through Austria, and disposed to place confidence in its court, in which he had resided, was of M. de Bassano's opinion. M. d'Hauterive, and M. de la Besnardiere, whose talented but somewhat caustic mind was very ready to ridicule M. de Bassano's policy, but nevertheless yielded on this occasion to the dictates of self-interest, both declared in favour of the opinion of the minister who was at the head of their department. Consequently, four voices against three were in favour of the acceptance of Austrian mediation.

To have rendered the council of real use, it should have discussed, after it had decided that negotiations could only be carried on through the intervention of the Austrian court, on what conditions this intervention should be accepted; but Napoleon was unwilling that its deliberations should go so far as this, being not only unwilling to reckon the cost, but also convinced that by means of his empress he might prevail upon his father-in-law to afford him both military and diplomatic assistance in return for the gift of Illyria, which had already been promised to him as a compensation for Galicia. And here Napoleon committed a disastrous error, which was to prove almost as fatal as the Russian expedition.

It was Napoleon's custom in the solemn political councils, which he occasionally held, to refrain from expressing his own opinion; whilst in his administrative council, on the other hand, he was in the habit of declaring it both loudly and imperiously. He simply thanked, therefore, the members of the council, without explaining his own views, although he appeared to incline to the opinion of the majority, which was, that negotiations for peace should be commenced through the mediation of Austria, a great display being at the same time made of military force; that the projected *senatus-consultum* should, at the same time, be presented to the Senate for the levy of three hundred and fifty thousand men; and that the convocation of the legislative corps should be delayed for a few weeks, as this body might at the present time reflect somewhat too vividly the agitation of the public mind.

This course was, in fact, immediately followed, but in such a manner as rather to aggravate than diminish the existing dangers. Napoleon, after having listened to M. de Bubna, whom he had treated with great adroitness, and contrived to bring over to his own interests, wrote to his father-in-law in a manner which, although both affectionate and amiable, was not well calculated to enlist him in his cause. He recounted the events of the campaign of 1812, which had been, he said, very malevolently misrepresented in the thousand accounts of it promulgated at Vienna; complained that these accounts had received far too ready belief in his father-in-law's court; and added, that whilst the Russians had never vanquished him in a single engagement, he had vanquished them in many, and especially at the Beresina, where they had been most completely beaten. Explaining the loss which he had suffered of men and cannon as simply the effects of excessive cold, he proceeded to give an imposing account of the armaments now at his disposal, threatening with vengeance, not only his enemies, but also such of his allies as should desert him; at the same time declaring, however, that although he was quite certain of being

able in the course of the spring to drive back the Russians upon the Vistula, and from the Vistula to the Niemen, he was anxious for peace, and would have even offered it, had the late campaign terminated on the enemy's territory, and had it not been beneath his dignity to do so in the existing state of affairs. He was willing to accept, therefore, the intervention of Austria, and consented to the despatch of Austrian plenipotentiaries to the several belligerent courts. He added that, although he would not on the present occasion state the precise conditions on which he would make peace, he would speedily do so, as he had decided what these conditions should be, and was firmly resolved to agree to no others. He would never consent, he said, to detach from the French empire what the senatus-consultum had declared to form its constitutional territory—Rome, Piedmont, Tuscany, and Holland, and the Hanseatic department were invaluable and inseparable portions of the empire. Refraining from offering any explanation of his views respecting the Duchy of Warsaw, he did not exclude the idea that he might be willing to consent to enlarge to some extent the Prussian territory; but he expressly declared that he would permit no territorial aggrandisement in the case of Russia, and would only consent to free her from the obligations of the Treaty of Tilsit, or, in other words, from the fetters of the continental blockade. With respect to England, with which it was not only desirable but necessary to treat, since Russia could not withdraw from her alliance, Napoleon fell back upon the letter sent to Lord Castlereagh at the moment of his departure for Russia, in which he had laid down as a fundamental principle that of *uti possidetis*; according to which principle Spain, which he then possessed, would fall to the lot of Joseph; Portugal, which he did not possess, to the hands of the house of Bragantia; Naples, which he had conquered, to Murat; and Sicily, which he had never occupied, to the Bourbons of Naples—a deplorable arrangement for France, since it would give her territories upon the continent of which she had no need, and deprive her of all her colonies beyond the seas, which were then in the hands of the English.

It is difficult to imagine anything more important than such a declaration as this, calculated as it was to deprive Austria of all hope of persuading us to consent to her plans for procuring a general peace, and thus to determine her to change at once our alliance for that of our enemies. The essential object at this moment should have been to discover the wishes of Austria, and to have satisfied them to such an extent as should have attached her to our cause. What Austria desired was, to regain her own independence and the independence of Germany, to obtain such a position for herself as should give

her the first influence in the reconstituted Germanic Confederation, to recover Illyria, to obtain a better frontier on the Inn, and finally, to be disembarassed from the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, for she had no faith in the re-establishment of Poland, and in any case was unwilling to pay for it with Galicia. She had not as yet expressed any of these wishes, but the slightest consideration of her position rendered it easy to perceive that she must entertain them, and ambition must have lost the power of appreciating the real nature of existing circumstances when it proceeded to deprive her of hope in respect to such important points as these, especially when England and Russia were offering her, not only a complete restoration of German independence, but also the restitution to herself of all those portions of territory which had formerly been the source of her glory and power, and the loss of which she constantly brooded over with regret and grief.

To the unfortunate letter which Napoleon thus wrote to his father-in-law, M. de Bassano added one destined for M. de Metternich, in which was expressed at considerably greater length, and much more haughtily, what Napoleon had expressed in his letter with that hauteur which belonged to him. "People spoke," said M. de Bassano in the course of his letter, "of the excitement of public opinion against France; but let care be taken that such a susceptible people as the French be not irritated too greatly, lest it should rise en masse and overwhelm Europe in its anger. In that case would be witnessed catastrophes far other than any which had ever yet been seen!"

Napoleon and his minister accepted, they said, the mediation of Austria, but the arrangement of a peace was to be based on the conditions exacted from Russia after Friedland, and from Austria after Wagram. At the same time, as a means of interesting the Austrian court, it was informed with much ceremony, and as family news which must interest it, that the grandson of the Emperor Francis was about to be crowned King of Rome, and his daughter, Marie Louise, appointed to the regency of France—news not entirely devoid of interest to the Austrian emperor, and even calculated to afford him a certain degree of pleasure, for he loved his daughter, and could not be insensible to the advantage of seeing her in more certain circumstances at the head of the French government; but news, nevertheless, which it was strange to consider capable of inducing him to forget the state of Germany and Austria, and the twenty years of misfortunes which he had now in one moment to repair.

It was necessary also that Napoleon should enter into explanations with Prussia, reply to the excuses offered by her with respect to General d'York, and to discuss the intention

hinted by her of establishing herself in Silesia, forming there an army by the aid of our money, and taking advantage of this asylum to change gradually from the character of a friendly mediator to that of a hostile arbiter.

Although M. de St. Marsan did not despair of obtaining the good offices of the Prussian court, if due concessions were made to it at the right moment, it was evident that little was to be expected of it, controlled as it was by irresistible national passions; and to permit it to raise armies which would be speedily turned against ourselves, and at our own expense, would be a remarkable specimen of folly. To consent also to its withdrawal into Silesia, for the purpose of there negotiating with Russia, would be to give ourselves over to this power, towards which it was already too strongly inclined. It could no longer be a fault, in fact, to manifest distrust of the court of Berlin, for the evil on this side was already past remedy; and Napoleon, therefore, in his reception of M. de Krusemark, who was the regular Prussian ambassador, and M. de Hatzfeldt, who was the special envoy sent on this occasion, treated them with all his habitual hauteur, gave them his usual version of the late campaign, and then, expatiating on the vast extent of the armaments he was then preparing, declared that within three months he would have driven back the Russians, not only beyond the Vistula, but beyond the Niemen and the Dnieper also. With respect to the proposal of the Prussian court that it should withdraw into Silesia, he could make no objection, he said, since it was natural that it should be unwilling to remain in the midst of belligerent armies, but he could not consent that it should enter into direct negotiations with Russia for the purpose of obtaining the neutralisation of Silesia, for the first condition which Russia would demand in exchange would be the withdrawal of Prussia from the French alliance. With respect to the money demanded by Prussia, he denied the correctness of the account delivered by her, but nevertheless he declared his willingness to pay the forty-eight millions which she claimed as soon as he should be satisfied respecting the manner in which, situated as she was so close to his enemies, she meant to employ them. With respect to the strong places on the Vistula and the Oder, he placed the two Prussian diplomatists in a dilemma, for if Prussia, he said, were his sincere ally, she could not object to see these fortresses in his hands, and if she were not, he would not restore them to her at any price, especially at the moment when an active war was about to be carried on upon the shores of the two rivers which these fortresses commanded. Then turning his discourse to the general situation of Prussia, he declared that it was necessary to endeavour to create some intermediate

power in Germany, capable of resisting Russia, and that as Prussia alone could be this power, he was much inclined, could a reasonable peace be negotiated, to reinforce her on the side of Poland, and even towards Westphalia, if the pacification, instead of being merely continental, were also maritime. To these hints Napoleon added testimonies of affection for the Prussian monarch, and of regard for his representatives, but failed to utter anything of a nature really satisfactory.

Whilst Napoleon thus entered into explanations with the German powers, his reputed allies, he neglected no exertion to render himself independent of them. He had sent to the Senate the decrees of which mention has already been made, and which, to the conscription of 1813, already decreed and levied, added power to employ the cohorts beyond the French frontier, to draw 100,000 men from the four last classes, and finally, to levy immediately the conscription of 1814. It was impossible to reject these measures, and the Senate voted them submissively. By a free assembly they would have been voted with enthusiasm, and with the expression of sentiments which would have had the happiest effect on the public mind. That the government, by the commission of grave errors, had compromised that glory of the French empire which had already cost so much blood, could not be denied, but it was nevertheless the opinion of all enlightened men that one final effort should be made to drive back the hostile armies which now threatened it, and that when victories should have restored, not our glory, for that was imperishable, but the prestige of invincibility which we had lost, then, and then only, we should make peace, even at the price of considerable concessions. The mass of the nation, however, which had hitherto been so submissive, and even too submissive, to Napoleon, was now greatly inclined to blame and murmur against him, and to be excessively dissatisfied at the new burdens with which it found itself threatened. The parents of the children who were to become heroes on the battle-field complained openly and bitterly of the repeated conscriptions, of the incessant wars, and of conquests which occurred so far off that patriotism could scarcely care for them. The humbler the class to which these murmurers might belong, the louder were their complaints, for not only did the lower classes suffer more heavily from the conscriptions, but they were also less capable of comprehending the political necessities of a final and immense effort. In the streets of Paris the public boldness of expression became extreme, and reached the height which is truly surprising when we consider the nature of the government. A young man of twenty-two years of age, drawn for the conscription, having placed himself in the Faubourg St. Antoine, directly in the path of Napoleon, who was riding through it on

horseback, dared to address him, and in spite of the prestige which always surrounded his person, to make use of the most offensive language. The police, attempting to seize him, were prevented from doing so by the crowd; and it often happened that young criminals, by crying out that they were being forcibly dragged away for the conscription, prevailed upon the populace to effect their liberation. When sick soldiers passed through the streets from their barracks to the military hospital, which was situated at one of the extremities of Paris, they were usually surrounded by troops of pitying women, who, overwhelming them with compassion and gentle cares, cried out that they were fresh victims of Bonaparte, as he was called from the time he became unpopular, being thus in a manner deprived of the sceptre he had so cruelly used.

To this discontent of the masses was added the prevalence of the most sombre ideas and singular terrors. Alarming reports were propagated, being the echoes of echoes which had reverberated from Moscow to Strasburg and Mayence, and according to these some of the French marshals had been taken prisoners, whilst the others were mad, dying, or dead; a bloody combat had taken place between the army and the imperial guard; hordes of ferocious barbarians were on the point of hurling their masses upon France. At the same time, a prediction was spread abroad in Italy, which caused immense terror, to the effect that the waters of the Adriatic and Mediterranean seas were about to submerge the whole Italian peninsula. The Italian priests, always hostile, although apparently submissive, did their utmost to propagate these alarming superstitions, and to excite as much as possible, especially in the country districts, the public mind.

In the department of Old France these discontents and fears did not excite sedition, for if the government were oppressive, it was nevertheless national, and was not hated as a foreign tyranny. But between the Rhine and the Elbe, in Holland, in Westphalia, at Bremen, and Hamburg, the appearance of the English fleets, and the approach of the Russians, produced popular tumults, and gave cause to fear at any moment a general outbreak. In the Grand Duchy of Berg and at Hamburg open disturbances had taken place, and the French authority been defied and insulted; and although the populace in Amsterdam and Rotterdam had been less audacious, throughout the whole of Holland the cry of "*Vive Orange*" was frequently heard, and an insurrection on the approach of the enemy had become extremely probable.

However, when the enlightened class of a country approves of the measures of its government, it gives them a very efficacious support; and as this class in France perceived that it was

necessary to make an energetic defence against the foreign enemy, whatever might have been the errors of the government, the levies were carried out, and the high functionaries, sustained by a moral support which they had not always obtained, performed their duties, although they were at heart full of sadness and sinister presentiments. Napoleon himself called the manifestations of popular feeling just alluded to the tumults of the mob, which it was necessary to repress with energy, and which would not occur again when once properly punished. At Paris he had a certain number of arrests made, which rendered talkers in the public places somewhat more cautious in their expressions, had the Grand Duchy of Berg overrun by some columns mobiles, which filled the country with terror, and in Hamburg had six persons shot for outrages committed against the French authorities.

The occurrence of these events failed to discourage him, or to deprive him of the hope that he might yet induce France to make such a manifestation of national feeling as might be a species of reply to the patriotic ardour of the Germans, and give the lie to the assertion which was now very prevalent throughout Europe, that France was herself as weary of his despotism as foreign nations of his yoke. With this object in view, he conceived the idea of having offers made to himself from the various cities and cantons of fully equipped horsemen, as a means of repairing the loss of his cavalry, which had been immense during the late campaign. As Paris was the most suitable place to take the initiative in such a movement, as being the most populous and richest city in the empire, as well as the one most interested in public events, Napoleon, in execution of his plan, contrived that a member of the municipal council should declare that the city of Paris, being the seat of government, and better acquainted than any other city of the empire with its necessities, should give the example in helping to replace, by 40,000 well mounted and well equipped horsemen, the 20,000 which had been destroyed by the late extraordinary winter; that as the monarchs, the enemies of France, flattered themselves with having in their favour the public opinion of their countries, it was necessary to prove to them that the hero who had saved France from a state of anarchy had, no less than they, the esteem of his nation, being indeed regarded by it with boundless admiration, attachment, and devotion. He accordingly proposed that the municipal council should offer to the emperor a regiment of 500 horse, fully equipped, and this proposition had scarcely been made before the measure suggested was voted by acclamation, and the offer conveyed to the Tuileries by a deputation of the council. The account of this circumstance, which appeared in the *Moniteur*, was sufficient to arouse



the patriotism of some, the interested zeal of others, and throughout the whole of the departments situated between the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees, these offers were procured without any difficulty. Lyons offered 120 horsemen; Bordeaux, eighty; Strasburg, 100; Rouen, Lille, Nantes, fifty; Angers, forty-five; Amiens, Marseilles, Toulouse, thirty; Metz, Rennes, Mayence, twenty-five; Pau, Toulon, Bayonne, Caen, Besançon, Tours, Versailles, Geneva, twenty; Nancy, Clermont, Dunkirk, Nîmes, Aix, fifteen. The other cities, towns, and cantons of the empire made similar offers to a larger or less extent, and the columns of the *Moniteur* were filled for some time with their several deliberations on this subject. And here it may be remarked that the foreign cities which had been violently annexed to the empire, and were consequently less favourably disposed towards the French government, almost without exception made offers which were in great disproportion to their real zeal for Napoleon, and had evidently done so either from fear of the threats employed by the prefects, or under the influence of prudent men, who thus endeavoured to induce the government to forget certain rash acts of their fellow citizens. Thus Rome voted 240 horsemen; Genoa, eighty; Hamburg, 100; Amsterdam, 100; Rotterdam, fifty; the Hague, forty; Leyden, twenty-four; Utrecht, twenty; and Düsseldorf, twelve.

These offers having been made, it was necessary to realise them, and to find the men their horses and equipment, and the supply of the first of these requirements was more difficult of attainment than that of the two latter, since it could not be procured by the mere outlay of money. A despatch from the minister of the interior, however, informed the various prefects that the government would be satisfied if the offers made by the various cities, towns, and cantons were fulfilled as respected only the horses and equipment; and as it then became a mere matter of money, the prefects apportioned the cost of the contingent to be furnished by their several districts amongst the citizens, and the allotted sums were, with the exception of a few murmurs against a method of taxation so illegal, readily paid. The funds being procured, the prefects obtained the necessary horses by paying well for them, and the supply of the equipment was a matter of no difficulty in a country so industrious as France.

Within a few days the offers amounted to twenty-two thousand horses with equipments, and sixteen thousand troopers; a most material aid in themselves, and calculated to have a moral effect in the highest degree beneficial; for although the hand of authority was visible in the grant of these gifts, they were nevertheless undeniably the means of showing that the

nation had adopted the opinion, that an energetic resistance should precede a speedy and honourable peace.

As soon as he was in possession of the means for recruiting his armies, Napoleon employed them with that prodigious genius for organisation of which he had already given so many proofs. Of the four principal resources which he had at his disposal, two were already realised—the conscription of 1813, and the cohorts. The third, that of the hundred thousand men to be drawn from the four last classes, was to be actually obtained in February. As for the fourth, that of the conscription of 1814, it would be sufficient to obtain it in the course of the year, since it was only intended to replace in the *dépôts* the conscription of 1813, which was to be wholly converted into war battalions. Let us turn our attention to the manner in which Napoleon employed these resources in the reorganisation of his armies.

After having deceived himself for a moment with respect to the number of troops remaining between the Vistula and the Oder, he was now perfectly aware that there existed only a few remnants, chiefly in cadres. He ordered, therefore, that there should be retained on the Oder only one *cadre-de-compagnie* for a hundred men, and one *cadre-de-bataillon* for six hundred men. All the remainder was to be sent to France. But even upon this scale of reduction there could only be formed one battalion per regiment, although the regiments of the grand army upon their departure for the war had numbered five battalions actually in line. This first battalion was intended to compose exclusively the garrison of the fortresses on the Oder. Those on the Vistula, such as Dantzic and Thorn, were already blockaded, and had received, moreover, whole divisions, such as the divisions Grandjean, Heudelet, and Loison. By collecting all the straggling soldiers who could be gradually brought together, one battalion per regiment was with difficulty completed, and these battalions were then reinforced with the companies of infantry which Napoleon had placed in garrison on his vessels of war, and which, now that he was compelled to make use of all his resources, he withdrew to land again, marching those which had been on the Scheldt and the Texel immediately on the Oder.

When these first battalions had been completed, the troops which remained of the other battalions were assembled, part in the interior of Germany, part upon the Rhine. The French regiments of the army of Russia were thirty-six in number, sixteen belonging to Davout's corps, six to Oudinot's, six to Ney's, and eight to Prince Eugène's; and Napoleon now decided that whilst Davout's corps should be reorganised in sixteen regiments, the 2nd and 3rd corps should be amalgamated into

one of twelve regiments, and confided to Marshal Victor, and that the 4th (Prince Eugène's) should be reorganised in Bavaria. The corps of Marshals Davout and Victor would consequently consist of twenty-eight regiments, and Napoleon desired that the cadre of the second battalions of these twenty-eight regiments should be retained at Erfurt, sending immediately General Doucet to command them, and also despatching from the depôts of the conscripts of 1813, already well drilled, bodies of men sufficient to raise these twenty-eight battalions to eight hundred men each. As soon as these battalions had been properly reorganised, they were to join, some of them Marshal Davout, and some Marshal Victor. The cadres of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th battalions were to be recruited on the Rhine with men who were not yet drilled, being those drawn from the four anterior classes, and these battalions consequently could not be reorganised before the lapse of three or four months. Napoleon intended to send the 3rd and 4th of these battalions as soon as possible to Marshals Davout and Victor, who would then have three battalions per regiment; and as these marshals were perfectly conversant with the conduct of warfare in the north, Napoleon proposed to throw them again upon the Vistula, where he hoped to be in the following June. On passing the Oder they were to receive their 1st battalions, posted in the fortresses, and Marshal Davout would have a corps consisting of sixteen regiments of four battalions each, Marshal Victor a corps of twelve regiments, also of four battalions each, these united forces forming a body of infantry numbering a hundred and twenty thousand men. In the meantime, Marshal Davout, with the sixteen 2nd battalions reorganised at Erfurt, was to occupy the city of Hamburg, accustomed to submit to his authority, whilst Marshal Victor, with the twelve regiments to be entrusted to his command, was to garrison the great fortress of Magdeburg, both the one and the other being able, from their positions, to afford protection to Prince Eugène's rear.

The cadres of the 4th corps, being of Italian origin, were marched upon Augsburg to receive the recruits which were to come from the banks of the Po across the Tyrol and Bavaria; and when the nature of the ground to be occupied and the time at his disposal are considered, it must be seen that it would have been impossible for Napoleon to have arranged his forces with greater skill.

Having thus taken measures for the reorganisation of the old corps, Napoleon, in the next place, directed his attention to the new corps, which he was compelled to create in all haste, since the necessity of checking the Russians in their forward movement might force him to proceed to the Elbe at the end of the month of March. The most available resource was that of the

cohorts, consisting of a hundred battalions, which, having been organised during some nine months, were almost thoroughly disciplined, and destined to form a solid and intrepid infantry, though somewhat given to discontent. Napoleon distributed these cohorts into twenty-two regiments, of four battalions each, and having given them good colonels, marched them upon the Rhine towards Wesel and Mayence. The twelve first, formed into four battalions of three regiments each, composed the corps of the Elbe, and set out immediately for Hamburg for the purpose of joining Prince Eugène, and reinforcing him with forty thousand of the best infantry. Napoleon appointed to the command in chief of this corps General Lauriston, a sensible and determined man, who as ambassador in Russia had endeavoured to prevent the war, and who during the active progress of the war had behaved with such courage as rendered him worthy of the appointment.

Napoleon's next care was to form two corps on the Rhine. There remained at his disposal ten regiments of cohorts, and in addition to these, a large number of cadres, of which some had been left in the interior at the moment of the departure for Russia, and others successively drawn from Spain. With these latter bodies of troops he was able to form between thirty and forty regiments, of two or three battalions each, and hastened to recruit them with the men of the conscription of 1813, who were now partly disciplined, and whose instruction it was proposed to perfect on the march. With eight of the ten remaining cohorts, and a portion of these thirty and odd regiments, he formed the first corps of the Rhine, distributing it into four divisions, and confiding it to the hero of the retreat from Russia, Marshal Ney, who had shared the common feeling of indignation which had been caused by the desertion of the army by its chief, but who upon receiving information on the Oder of the brilliant and just recompense which had been awarded to him for his services (he had been created Prince of Moskowa) had felt himself inspired afresh with all his old ardour, and was only anxious to encounter the Russians, that he might tear from them an expiation of their successes during the late campaign. A fifth division, comprising the German troops of the allied princes, would raise his corps to the number of fifty thousand men, and even sixty thousand, taking into account the artillery and cavalry, and this corps it was which was intended to strike the first and the severest blows. It was to rally successively at Mayence, Frankfort, Hanau, and Wurzburg, and set out on its march a month after that of the Elbe, that is to say, on the 15th of March; Marshal Ney, who had been in Paris during the last few days, less for the purpose of taking repose, of which his iron consti-

tution had no need, than for the purpose of receiving the investiture of his new title, being ordered to set out immediately for the banks of the Rhine, in order to superintend the organisation of the troops which he was to command.

The second corps of the Rhine was composed of some provisional regiments and marines, which owed their creation some time since to the foresight of Napoleon, who, knowing that he never had a too great abundance of resources for the execution of the various measures he wished to carry out, had formed, at the period when he dreamed of vast maritime expeditions to be sent forth upon a hundred vessels of the line from the magnificent ports of the empire, from the Texel to Trieste, a troop accustomed to act either as artillerymen or as infantry, and equally fit for land or sea service. This body was quite capable of furnishing sixteen thousand well-disciplined, vigorous soldiers, inspired with the high spirit of the marine service, and Napoleon ordered their immediate departure for the banks of the Rhine; dividing them into four regiments, of four battalions each, and incorporating them, together with some of the regiments which he was hastily organising, in the second corps of the Rhine. This corps, which, to replace the first corps at Mayence, was to be ready to set out on the 15th of April, consisting of four divisions, and numbering altogether about forty thousand infantry, and was to be entrusted to the command of Marshal Marmont, the vanquished of Salamanca, who although no longer to be trusted as a commander-in-chief, might still perform good services as a lieutenant. The wound which he had received, although at first considered mortal, was rapidly healing, and he was directed to proceed to Mayence as soon as his health would permit.

Napoleon resolved to draw from the personnel and matériel of war, which had been long since accumulated in Italy, another corps of about forty or fifty thousand men, which, descending into Bavaria, whilst he himself debouched on Saxony, would complete the mass of troops which he wished to unite upon the Elbe. He charged with the organisation of this corps General Bertrand, the governor of Illyria, who was well acquainted with the details of the organisation of troops, and was both active and devoted, and directed him to employ for this purpose all the military resources of Illyria, only leaving there some dépôts and local militia, and transporting the surplus into Frioul. For as the Illyrian provinces must, if the Austrian alliance were preserved, inevitably return into the possession of that power, and as it would be impossible for France, if the Austrian alliance were lost, to dispute their possession for four and twenty hours, it would have been a

useless dispersion of our forces to have left any part beyond the Julian Alps. With the squadrons drawn from the province, with some regiments remaining in Lombardy, some other regiments posted in Piedmont, and returned from Spain, and with two regiments of cohorts, which still remained available of the twenty-two, there would be sufficient troops to compose three good French divisions, of twelve battalions each, and as the Italian army, properly so called, would be able also to furnish an excellent division, the army which General Bertrand was directed to march into Germany would consist of four.

The infantry being reorganised as speedily as circumstances would permit, it was now necessary to direct attention to the special arms, which had suffered even more than the infantry. When Napoleon called from Italy the corps of General Grenier and formed that of Marshal Augereau, he had drawn from France all the available companies of artillery, and ordered that there should be created in each cohort a company of cannoners. In consequence of this precaution, the personnel of the artillery could not fail. To reorganise the artillery of the army, Napoleon employed the artillerymen who had returned from Russia, forty-eight companies from the ports and arsenals, and eighty companies formed in the cohorts, and thus obtained an artillery force sufficient to serve a thousand pieces of cannon. The matériel of this arm which had been carried into Russia unfortunately remained buried under its snows, but our arsenals were well stored, and the only want was of gun carriages, for the construction of which Napoleon gave immediate orders. The loss of horses had been greater than that of either men or carriages, but Napoleon hoped that General Bourcier, who was charged with the purchase of horses, and daily urged by letter to increased efforts, would be able to obtain ten thousand draught horses in Lower Germany; and he also gave orders for a levy of fifteen thousand in France, by means of requisition, which was a purchase for ready money, the owner being compelled to sell whether willing or unwilling.

The cavalry was, if possible, a more important arm than even the artillery itself, on account of the enemy's great strength in this respect, and unfortunately not only had we lost almost the whole of our cavalry horses, but even the very means of supplying this loss, since we had no longer in our power Poland, Old Prussia, Silesia, and Mecklenburg. There remained, however, Hanover and Westphalia. Two or three thousand horses had been drawn from the evacuated countries, and there was reason to hope that nine to ten thousand might still be drawn from the countries comprised between the Elbe and the Rhine. Flattering himself with the idea that General Bourcier would be able

to procure mounts for thirteen or fourteen thousand troopers, and having no doubt that at least an equal number would return from Russia, he sent to him two or three thousand troopers on foot from the dépôts on the Rhine, and at the same time despatched Generals Latour-Maubourg and Sebastiani from Paris, for the purpose of taking the command of the remounted cavalry in Hanover. He ordered them to form two corps, partly of cuirassiers and partly of chasseurs and hussars, and as soon as they should have six thousand troopers fit for active service to march them to Prince Eugène.

Napoleon considered that the cavalry dépôts having received of the conscriptions of 1812 and 1813 the portion which belonged to them, would be capable of furnishing ten thousand well-trained horsemen; and he instructed the Duke de Plaisance to form them into squadrons answering to the old regiments of the grand army, and as soon as they should have been thus formed to conduct them to the corps of Latour-Maubourg and de Sebastiani, to incorporate each detachment with the regiment to which it belonged, and thus to re-establish the regiments in their entirety.

Horses were not wanting in France for the ten thousand troopers whose organisation had been entrusted to the Duke de Plaisance. About ten thousand were actually in hand; orders had been given, as already stated, for the requisition of fifteen thousand more, and twenty-two thousand had been furnished by voluntary gifts. France alone, therefore, would supply sufficient to mount forty-five thousand men; and with the addition of those which would be, it was hoped, procured from Germany, the cavalry actually available for the ensuing campaign would amount to fifty or sixty thousand.

To all these forces Napoleon was anxious to add the imperial guard, reconstituted in new proportions. It had suffered cruel losses in the late campaign; but numerous portions of it still existed in Germany, France, and Spain, especially in Spain, where there was an entire division of the young guard, and Napoleon resolved to employ these elements in the recomposition of the chosen troop. He was anxious to preserve the old guard on account of its fidelity, a quality which the progress of events might render especially valuable; and he was anxious to preserve the young guard, because, admitting into its ranks none but picked men, it was capable, by virtue of the *esprit de corps*, to acquire within a brief space of time the valour of first-rate troops. He demanded, therefore, of all the corps which had not suffered from the disasters of the late campaign, and especially from those employed in Spain, a certain number of veteran troops, for the purpose of completing the old guard. At the same time, he selected from the ranks of the conscription of the four last

classes, young and strong men to refill the vacancies in the young guard. He carried the number of the battalions of the guard, both old and young, to fifty-three, that of the squadrons to thirty-three, and increased the reserve of artillery. The imperial guard would thus afford an army of reserve numbering fifty thousand men, capable of placing forty thousand in line.

The transport service, although a matter of less moment in Germany than in Russia, was always of great importance in the eyes of Napoleon, as rendering possible, when effective, the sudden concentration of masses of troops. He reorganised the battalions d'équipage, formed five in Germany of the wrecks of the fifteen which had made the campaign in Russia, and six more by means of the cadres remaining in France. These eleven battalions would be capable of conveying ten days' provisions for two hundred thousand men, a sufficient number to fight one of those great battles by which the fate of wars is usually decided. With respect to waggons, being forced to regard as lost those which were plunged in the bogs of Poland or the sands of Prussia, he was reduced to the old caisson somewhat modified, and the *char à la comtoise*, which by its lightness had rendered most effectual service.

It was by means of these extensive armaments that he proposed to check the enemy's forces on the Elbe, if he could not check them on the Oder, and to dissipate the hope with which they appeared to be intoxicated. Having about fifty thousand men in garrison in the fortresses on the Vistula and the Oder, and forty thousand active troops under Prince Eugène, he intended to reinforce the latter with the forty thousand under General Lauriston, and with the eighty thousand men who would be thus concentrated on the Elbe, to stop the progress of the enemy, and prevent any invasion of Lower Germany. He would then, he proposed, in the month of April or May, join Prince Eugène with the two hundred thousand which would at that time be in Saxony, and with a force of three hundred thousand men overwhelm the Russian army, however greatly it might have been strengthened by allies. There would remain as a reserve the old corps, which were to be reorganised under Marshals Davout and Victor, the cadres arriving from Spain, and the hundred and fifty battalions in dépôt, destined to receive the conscription of 1814, and capable of affording an additional hundred or hundred and fifty thousand combatants. The principal difficulty with respect to the organisation of these vast bodies of troops was in the shortness of the time in which it had to be effected; but whether in administration or war, Napoleon was a marvellous economiser of time, having measures simultaneously carried on which are usually accomplished only in succession, seeing with his own



eyes that every order given by him had been duly executed, despatching in all directions a multitude of confidential officers, whose reports he always read or heard himself every night before retiring to rest, and rigidly investigating the very slightest neglect in the execution of his orders.

But whilst collecting these enormous forces, it was also necessary to provide the means of paying them; and in fact, whilst Napoleon devoted himself day and night to the re-composition of his armies, he employed himself no less energetically in placing the finances of the empire in such a state as would enable them to bear the expense of the vast armament he was preparing.

We have already seen how the budget of the empire had risen in 1811 from nine hundred millions to eleven hundred millions, on account of two causes: first, the annexation to the empire of Rome, Illyria, Holland, and the Hanseatic provinces; and secondly, the cost of the armaments for the war in Russia. The budget of 1811 showed a deficit of forty-six millions, and the budget of 1812 a deficit of thirty-seven millions and a half; but in the case of the budget of 1813, as it would relate to the expenses of war carried on almost upon our own frontiers, and in allied countries, in which it would be necessary to maintain our troops at the cost of France herself, there was reason to suppose that the budget would rise to at least twelve hundred and seventy millions, and that the deficit would be one hundred and forty-nine millions. Adding, therefore, this fresh deficit to those of the budgets of 1811-12, there would be a total deficit of two hundred and thirty-two millions, and in fact, at the commencement of 1813, the expenses being immense, and far exceeding the realised receipts, the embarrassment became extreme. M. Mollien, minister of the treasury, a man of an ingenious but very circumspect mind, being with good reason fearful of putting in jeopardy his personal character should he have recourse to irregular means of obtaining financial resources, was excessively disconcerted at the state of affairs, and by reason of his scruples became for Napoleon one of the difficulties of the moment. Being no more than the other ministers in Napoleon's actual confidence, and believing in common with the public that an immense amount of treasure was accumulated in the Tuileries, he was desirous that Napoleon should transfer from them a hundred or two hundred millions to the treasury coffers, and often accused him, in the bitterness of his chagrin, of being guilty of almost personal avarice. But in this matter, as in war, Napoleon's conduct was distinguished by admirable foresight, method, and address; and it must be added, with respect to avarice, he was greedy of nothing but power.

The treasure amassed in the Tuileries consisted of the *tresor extraordinaire* and the savings of the Civil List.

The remains of the *tresor extraordinaire* had been much diminished by the donations prodigally bestowed upon soldiers of distinguished merit, and by the aids which had been drawn from it for the war finances. Its nominal amount at this period was almost three hundred and twenty-five millions, but as a portion of this sum consisted of property which could not be immediately realised, and a larger portion was due from cities of the empire and foreign States to which it had been lent, its actual available amount was only fifty-eight or sixty millions, an inconsiderable sum, and yet one which, properly employed, might be of the greatest service.

In addition to this *tresor extraordinaire*, Napoleon had at his disposal the savings of his Civil List, amassed by prodigies of economy, and amounting to about a hundred and thirty-five millions, of which he had invested a portion in government or commercial securities, but retained about a hundred millions in coin in the cellars of the Tuileries; and as there remained at his disposal about sixty millions of the *domaine extraordinaire*, he had at this period in gold or silver coin immediately available, and lying in the coffers either of the Tuileries or the *domaine extraordinaire*, a sum of a hundred and sixty millions.

Had Napoleon, yielding to the advice of his minister, made use of those hundred and sixty millions in the first moments of embarrassment, they would have speedily disappeared, and he would have found himself without ready money, much in the same position as a general on the battlefield without a reserve. He was wisely resolved, therefore, not to expend this resource until compelled to do so by the most imperious necessity; in the meantime, employing only such portions of it as might be necessary to support the *valeurs*, which the minister of finance would sooner or later have to create. Carefully refraining from justifying his resistance to this minister's entreaties by informing him of the real amount (much less than M. Mollien supposed it to be) of this private treasure, he bore with equanimity the severe insinuations in which he and others frequently indulged, remaining calm and gentle in the midst of the greatest perplexities, that he might not add by defects of temper to the troubles of those who served him. He sought then without explaining himself the means of supplying the two hundred and thirty-two millions remaining deficient with respect to the budgets of 1811 and 1812, and of paying altogether that of 1813.

Napoleon was unwilling for any consideration to increase the taxes, although an increase of the direct taxes might have been easily borne, and would have produced the hundred and thirty millions which were wanting for 1813. The direct taxes, as

re-established by him, had succeeded financially, although in a political point of view they had met with no more than the customary success; but the indirect taxes could not be arbitrarily increased, for it was by no means certain that an increase in their tariff would augment their product. At the same time, with respect to the landed property, Napoleon was particularly unwilling, after having freed it from the burdens which oppressed it, to subject it to them again; for he loved to be able to say, that in the midst of the greatest wars the material condition of France had not been deteriorated, and that they affected only the army itself, which gained by their glory, honours, rank, and riches. This army, however, had now begun to indulge in bitter complaints, and all the soldiers who returned from the banks of the Niemen were in the habit of indulging in such language, that it had become needful to keep careful watch over them, and to separate them from the new soldiers to prevent the contagion of discontent. Moreover, the army could not be formed without the levy of the impost of blood, the cruellest of all taxes; and although the men of France, when once in their ranks, become soldiers with a good grace, their parents were not so easily reconciled to their fate, and gradually stored up in their hearts a bitterness of hatred, of which the explosion was to be terrible. Napoleon was in error, therefore, when he thought that provided his wars did not burden his people with money taxes, they would not have any evil influence on their feelings towards himself; but fondly cherishing this idea, he resolved for this reason to make no augmentation of the imposts.

The issue of rentes, which might have probably succeeded in raising the required sum had the public been earlier accustomed to such a proceeding, was actually impossible, or at least a matter of great difficulty, and now it would indeed have been extremely singular, after having refrained from raising money on credit in 1807 and 1808, to begin to do so in 1813. The produce of the customs, which had been employed, together with contributions from the *tresor extraordinaire*, in covering the deficits of former years, and especially the cost of the great expedition of 1812, were exhausted. At the same time, the ordinary receipts of the customs were very much increased, having risen from thirty millions to eighty by virtue of the famous tariff of fifty per cent., which had become the principal instrument of the continental blockade. Napoleon had also granted this year so great a number of licences, that the ordinary receipts of the customs might fairly be calculated to amount to a hundred millions. And here we may remark that England and France had in some degree exchanged positions, for whilst, two years before, Napoleon had tortured Europe for the purpose of restraining her from holding any relations with England, it was England

now who, perceiving the advantages derived by its enemy from the communications carried on by means of these licences, took pains to render them ineffectual.

Napoleon being unwilling, therefore, to augment the taxes, whether direct or indirect, public loans being unusual, and commercial seizures producing almost nothing, there remained only the old means of raising money, by the alienation of national domains. And this resource had itself become confined to very narrow limits, for Napoleon had restored to the emigrant families a large portion of their possessions, and he was unwilling, by selling those portions which had not been alienated, to carry out the system of confiscations to which his government had had the honour of putting an end. There remained, however, a certain amount of property held in mortmain, of which the owners might be dispossessed, being indemnified by means of annuities paid by the State; and this property was that which was in the hands of the communes. In almost all the departments, and in some of them to a much greater extent than in others, the communes possessed considerable property, which was very badly managed. To have laid hands on the whole of this property, without distinction as to its nature, would have been not only iniquitous, but impracticable, and infinitely dangerous, as it would probably have excited seditions; for a portion of it consisted of buildings employed in the public service, such as the *hôtels de ville*, schools, hospitals, churches, public grounds, and promenades, of which it was manifestly impossible to deprive their owners, whilst another portion was equally, although perhaps less manifestly, a public necessity, consisting as it did of public pasturages, woods, and turbaries. To have seized these, at the moment when the rural populations were excited to the pitch of exasperation by the conscription, would have been almost to incur the danger in some provinces of a fresh Vendée. But there remained a third species of communal property, being that from which the communes derived only a certain amount of revenue, which they applied to the payment of their expenses. As this property was to them in fact only so much income, it could matter but little to them whether this income were paid by a farmer or the State, the probability of due payment being made being at least as great in the latter case as in the former. The total value of the property of which Napoleon thus proposed to take possession was estimated to amount to about three hundred and seventy millions, bringing in, however, only eight or nine millions to the communes. Supposing that it were really sold for three hundred and seventy millions, there would remain, after deducting the two hundred and thirty-two millions required for the service of

the State, about a hundred and thirty-eight millions, which, at the price of the funds at that period (the five per cents. being at seventy-five francs), would produce the nine millions of rent which would have to be paid as indemnity to the communes.

But in spite of the manifest advantages of this plan, there were serious objections to it on the ground that it would be an attack on the rights of property; that the source of income given to the communes in exchange for that taken away from them would be liable to constant depreciation, whilst the latter, consisting of land, would, on the contrary, be continually increasing in value; that this method of proceeding would alienate the goodwill of the municipal administrations, which, accustomed to the management of the communal property, regarded it as their own; and fourthly, that the realisation of this property, however prudently conducted, could not fail to be difficult and slow, whilst the necessities of the State were pressing, and therefore, that if this measure were adopted, it would be necessary to anticipate it by the emission of paper money founded on its future profits.

The matter was daily discussed with great earnestness between M. de Bassano, whose habit of receiving Napoleon's schemes with favour caused him to be consulted upon almost all the affairs in hand, and M. Mollien, who was somewhat too inclined to enter into subtle disquisitions on incontestable truths, and who opposed the proposed plan rather with chagrin and ill-temper than firmness. The discussion respecting the proposed plan would have been interminable, had not Napoleon, who became impatient, and discerned with the utmost clearness how much truth and how much falsehood existed in the allegations of the disputants, at length said to M. Mollien: "All that is very well, and I fully comprehend your objections, but before rejecting one plan, it is but right to propose another in its place." And this observation was one to which it was difficult to reply, for it was a cry of want from the lips of him who was of all persons the most conscious of the necessities of the State, since he had to feed, clothe, and arm a million of soldiers, and his existence, greatness, and glory depended on the solution of the problem now under discussion. Had M. Mollien been a man of greater firmness and readiness of mind, he would have replied to Napoleon: "Issue five per cent. rentes, at sixty francs, or even seventy if necessary; pay the capitaux eight or ten per cent., or even more, and this operation will be in reality less dear, will excite less enmity, and will afford you speedier and better means of supplying the necessities of your soldiers than a paper money regarded with suspicion and unwillingly received." But M. Mollien did not dare to express such an opinion as this, and it

is very probable that at this period he would not have dared even to entertain it in his own mind.

It was, therefore, at length agreed that that portion of the possessions of the communes which we have particularised above should be summarily valued, replaced by a rent payable by the State, and then transferred to the *caisse-d'amortissement*, which had been in the habit of executing the State sales of landed property, anticipating the receipts by a paper money which it issued for the service of the State, and gradually withdrew from circulation, as the price of the property sold was actually received. This paper money maintained an undepreciated value, because it was very inconsiderable in amount, and because its holders could always obtain in exchange for it its full value, both capital and interest. It was now arranged with respect to the sale of the communal property, that the purchasers should pay one-third on the completion of the sale, another third in 1814, and another third in 1815, paying interest on the two latter sums at the rate of five per cent., and that in the meantime the *caisse-d'amortissement* should supply the treasury with bills to the amount of two hundred and thirty-two millions, which were to be liquidated as the receipts on the sale of the communal property became actually realised, the treasury making use of them as it might be able; forcing or persuading the creditors of the State to accept them. At the same time Napoleon expressed his intention of taking up, with a portion of the ready money at his command, sixty or seventy millions' worth of this paper at the moment of its emission, hoping by this means to keep up its value.

Such were the financial measures by which Napoleon hoped to obtain means for carrying on his last and most terrible campaign. There being no more private or Church property which could well be confiscated, he now seized the communal property, and disposed of it by a species of paper money which was issued on a sounder basis and within far more prudent limits than the assignats, but which nevertheless could not fail to call to mind reminiscences of a former disastrous paper money, and was issued, moreover, at a most unfavourable moment.

Whilst making every possible exertion to render himself able to repel the enemies whom he had excited against France, Napoleon perceived the necessity also of regaining that public favour for his government which he perceived it to be gradually losing; and as the only complete means for obtaining this object, an immediate peace, was at present unattainable, he sought some other method of procuring a moral satisfaction for his people.

Of all the causes which excited an adverse feeling towards Napoleon in the public mind, the most powerful after the war

was the quarrel with Rome, and the captivity of the Pope. In the mouths of the partisans of the house of Bourbon, it was a most efficacious subject for animadversion against a tyrannical government, which, according to them, was an oppressor of consciences. With the pious portion of the population it was a serious and sincere motive for blame and even aversion; and as in general the men and women whose souls have a strong religious bias are of an eager and active temperament, they are formidable enemies to a government which has been guilty of injuries to religion. Napoleon was now anxious, therefore, to disarm the anger of this respectable class of citizens, to deprive the royalists of the religious pretext of which they made use to injure him, and at the same time to give hopes of a European peace by making one with the Church.

He resolved, therefore, to put an end to this quarrel with the Pope; conceding as little as possible, but nevertheless, as much as might be necessary. The Pope, after having been long a prisoner at Savona, was at this moment at Fontainebleau, a captive in reality, but apparently free, and surrounded with attentions and honours; having been removed to this latter place on account of Napoleon's fear that the English might take advantage of his absence in Russia to carry off Pius VII. from Savona. The strict surveillance under which he was here placed was concealed under an air of the greatest respect. In addition to the attendance of his medical man and chaplain, and some old servants on whom he could rely, he received visits occasionally from the Cardinals of Bayonne and Maury, the Archbishop of Tours, and the Bishop of Nantes, who frequently conversed with him on the evils suffered by the Church, on the means of putting an end to them, and the hope that they would cease, now that Napoleon's return to Paris would permit two princes who loved each other to enter upon those personal explanations which were always so much more effectual than negotiations carried on through third persons. The society of these persons was all that was allowed to the Pope, and the only kind that he desired. The fact of his removal from Savona had been kept so private, and the public attention was so wholly engrossed by the Russian campaign, that few persons had visited Fontainebleau on the Sunday to behold him perform mass, as he was on that day permitted, in the great chapel. He passed his time, therefore, in the depths of profound seclusion, and as he refrained from either walking in the park, which had been placed at his service, or from even reading, although the library of the château was at his very door, it seemed as though he had fallen into a species of prison lethargy.

No moral or physical circumstances could be imagined better calculated to vanquish the Pontiff's resistance; especially if

Napoleon should suddenly appear before him and bring to bear upon him the double prestige of his power and fascinating conversation. Returning from Moscow, vanquished by nature, if not by his enemies, Napoleon would have less influence than formerly, but he still doubtless retained sufficient to overcome the Pope, especially as he had only been permitted to receive information respecting circumstances which it was impossible to conceal, and which were explained to him in the manner most favourable to our arms.

Napoleon had hastened on the very day after his arrival in Paris to write to the Pope, expressing the pleasure he felt at his residing so close to himself, and his anxiety that the differences which disturbed the peace of the Church should be immediately terminated. To this letter he had added communications by MM. de Bayane, de Barral, and Duvoisin, endeavouring to obtain the Pope's consent to an agreement by almost unhopèd for concessions. In fact, the points in dispute no longer offered such difficulties as formerly. The method of canonical institution was agreed on; and there now only remained the task, which was indeed a more difficult one, of determining the nature of the Pope's temporal establishment. Pius VII., failing to entertain the idea of Napoleon's fall, and seeing no means of forcing him to restore the Roman States, might fairly consider the establishment of the Papal court at Avignon, with a suitable allowance, as a species of *pis aller* arrangement, for which history afforded a precedent, an excuse, and a consolation; but what especially disgusted him, and appeared to him even worse than death, was a project attributed to Napoleon, of establishing the Papacy in Paris under the very hand of the French court. And herein lay a valuable means of conducting negotiations, for by refraining to enforce his establishment at Paris, insisting only that he should reside in Avignon, the Pope might be induced to consent to the solution of the question, which was reputed to offer the greatest difficulties, and the settlement of which would speedily lead to an agreement respecting the minor points in dispute.

As soon as he should have been properly prepared for the interview, Napoleon resolved to transport himself to Fontainebleau, to terminate by his presence the Pope's ordinary hesitations, and to obtain from him a formal act, which he might present to his people as a pledge of religious peace, as the *avant-coureur*, perhaps, of a European peace.

Accordingly, on the 19th of January, pretending to be engaged in the chase at Grasbois, he suddenly changed his direction and proceeded to Fontainebleau, where the Pope was at the moment engaged with several bishops and cardinals. Already excited by the consideration of the important affairs which had



been lately forced on his notice, he was much agitated by the sudden arrival of Napoleon, whom he had not seen since his coronation, and whom he both desired and feared to meet. Without leaving him time for reflection, Napoleon hastened to him, embracing him and saluting him by the title of father. The Pope received the emperor's embraces, addressing him by the title of son; and thus, refraining for this day from entering upon the discussion of affairs, these two princes, so singularly led by destiny to gratify and torment each other all their lives, appeared delighted to have met once more. The hope of a prompt and complete reconciliation played upon their countenances.

On the following day, Pius VII., surrounded by his cardinals and the bishops who had been permitted to visit him on this occasion, went in grand state to return the emperor's visit in his apartments. From the emperor he proceeded to the empress, whom he did not know, since it was not she whom he had crowned—the empress of that throne with respect to which all things changed so swiftly being already another person! But whilst the Pope was engaged in this interchange of visits, and appeared to derive from it some feeling of satisfaction and hope, he could not blind himself to the facts that Napoleon had come to Fontainebleau to force him to consent to renounce his temporal dominion, to exchange Rome for Avignon, and to receive in return for his Italian principality a magnificent hospitality, which would be in reality a gilded slavery; to assume, in short, in the west, with a little additional wealth and air of sovereignty, the position held by the Patriarch of Constantinople.

When the visits of ceremony had been concluded, the interviews on business commenced, and in these Napoleon was resolved to display all his grace of manner and energy of mind, for the purpose, on the one hand, of winning over the Pope to his will, and on the other, of persuading him that there was no better course open to him than that of compliance with the demands which had been made of him. His first care was to persuade the Pope that although he had now for the first time failed to return triumphant, he was still as powerful as ever, and as capable of enforcing the performance of his wishes; and his next, to convince the Holy Father that it was useless to indulge in any hope of recovering Rome. It remained for the head of the Church, then, to choose either Paris or Avignon as his place of residence; “and it would be better,” said Napoleon, “that his choice should fall upon the latter city, where he would be treated with the greatest reverence, be surrounded with every species of homage, and find the Emperor of the French as disposed to hold his stirrup as formerly were the German emperors.” But as he decidedly objected to Paris, he had no alternative but to choose Avignon, a place consecrated

by having already been during a considerable period a Papal residence. The necessary orders would be immediately given, and every arrangement made to render his residence there one of sumptuous magnificence. He would have full liberty to receive there the ambassadors of all the various powers, who would enjoy at his court full diplomatic privileges and independence, even although they might be the representatives of States at war with France, and would be able to proceed to the new pontifical court by the sea and the Rhone almost without touching the French territory. Two millions of revenue would be paid as indemnity for the property sold in the Roman States. All the property, and it was the larger portion, which still remained unsold, would be restored and administered by the Papal agents. The *suburbicaires* sees would be re-established, and the Pope would have the right of nominating their occupants. In addition to this privilege he would have the right of nominating to ten dioceses, either in Italy or France, as he might prefer, as a means of recompensing the servants of his government; besides the nomination of the cardinals, which would still belong to him. The prelates of the Roman States whose sees had been suppressed, who were still living, and who formed one of the chief of the Pope's sources of anxiety, were to have the quality, title, and position of bishops *in partibus*, and to receive during their lives from the French treasury an income equal to the revenues of the dioceses they had lost, thus forming an important addition to the legion of great ecclesiastical dignitaries who would contribute to the éclat of the Papal court at Avignon. The Roman archives, the great administrations of the *penitencerie*, the *daterie*, the propaganda, &c., would accompany the Pope to the beautiful country of Vaucluse, and be properly established in the new pontifical Rome, which was about to be wholly consecrated to its glorious destiny.

The new arrangement, it was asserted, would leave to the Pope the power of controlling as freely as ever the affairs of the Church, and would deprive him only of that temporal power which was but a vain pontifical ambition, a serious source of danger to religion, and of constant disputes with the princes of Christendom. It was in respect to this point that Napoleon displayed all the subtle powers of his mind, for the purpose of convincing Pius VII. that the separation of the two kinds of power, the spiritual and the temporal, held by the Popes, and the abolition of the latter, must inevitably take place in the course of time, and would in nowise detrimentally affect religion, its influence or perpetuity. How many wonderful changes had taken place in the course of the last twenty years! And was not the temporal power of the Popes evidently one of those things which were destined to disappear with so many

others? And was it not even a subject of thankfulness to Providence that it should have chosen as the instrument of these revelations such a man as Napoleon, who, born in the Catholic faith, loved it as his maternal religion, and fully convinced of its value to mankind, was resolved to defend and cherish it to the utmost? "Put an end," exclaimed Napoleon to the Pontiff, "to this idle difficulty respecting temporal sovereignty, and you shall see what great things you and I, once relieved from these troublesome disputes, shall be able to do for religion." . . . And then he proceeded to point out how the German Church, deprived of its wealth by the avarice of the German princes, could only hope to be re-established through his aid; how the churches of Holland and the Hanseatic States, which had ceased to exist for two centuries, might still be restored; how the Spanish and Italian churches, in a state of utter decay, were in imminent need of a protector; and how, finally, all this ecclesiastical universe depended for its fate on the powerful will of the French emperor. "And once let them be reconciled," added Napoleon to the Pope, "be restored to repose by a European peace, and the Holy Father and himself would, in concert, be able to effect more for religion than even Charlemagne. Within sight of such a prospect as this, how was it possible to protract discussion, to continue to hesitate? Providence had chosen a Pontiff who was at once gentle, virtuous, and modest, that the purity of religion might be restored, a new example be given of the disinterestedness of the apostles, and had chosen him, Napoleon, a man of war, accustomed to vanquish earthly obstacles, to work out this resolution in such a manner that religion should not only not be enfeebled by it, but should, on the contrary, gain in moral power all that it had lost in material power.

The worthy Pope, who had often received letters filled with similar expressions, but who had never heard them expressed with such earnestness, eloquence, and airs of persuasion as they now were by Napoleon, became almost persuaded that the sacrifice of his temporal power was one which he was called upon to make for the interests of religion itself, and that to consent to the terms proposed would be an act of disinterestedness rather than of weakness, an honourable rather than a shameful one. But when it became positively necessary to decide, he fell into insurmountable perplexities.

When three or four days had been employed in repeated interviews, Napoleon made the Pontiff understand that it was necessary to come to some decision, and as the latter was almost as anxious with respect to the form in which his agreement with Napoleon was to be drawn up as with respect to its actual terms, Napoleon promised that the form should be such as

should excite no scruple in his mind, and should not overburden his memory. At the same time, as the Pope was especially averse to express in words the renunciation of the patrimony of St. Peter, Napoleon agreed that neither his abandonment of Rome nor his establishment at Avignon should be directly mentioned, it being expressed only that his Holiness should *exercise the pontificate in France and in the kingdom of Italy in the same manner and with the same forms as his predecessors*, it being understood only that this should be at Avignon, and not elsewhere. It was then added in formal terms that the Pope should receive the ambassadors of the Christian powers, clothed with full diplomatic powers, that he should recover the enjoyment and administration of the property which still remained unsold in the Roman States, that he should receive two millions revenue in exchange for the property which had already been alienated, that he should have the patronage of all the *suburbicaires* sees, and of ten bishoprics which should be at a future time determined on, and which might be either in France or Italy; that the old titular bishops of the Roman States should retain their titles, under the form of bishops *in partibus*, and should enjoy incomes equal to the revenues of their several sees; that the various administrative bodies forming the Roman chancery should accompany the Pope to his new residence; that the emperor and the Pope should in concert create new Catholic sees in Holland and the Hanseatic departments; and that finally, the emperor should receive into his full favour the cardinals, bishops, priests, and laymen who might have been compromised in the late troubles. It was stipulated that canonical institution should be given to the bishops nominated by the crown, according to the terms already agreed upon, namely, that should the pontifical court delay to confer institution on the person nominated by the crown for six months after nomination, that then the senior prelate of the province might confer it. To these last clauses the Pope insisted on adding one which was rather in the nature of an excuse than of a law or agreement, and was couched in the following terms: the Holy Father has consented to the above arrangement in the consideration of the actual state of the Church, and in the full confidence which he feels that his majesty will grant his powerful protection to the Church in the many circumstances of necessity to which in these times it is exposed.

It was finally agreed that the actual Concordat, although having the binding force of a treaty, should not be published until it should have been submitted to the cardinals, who had a right to be informed of it as the natural and necessary counsellors of the Church.

When the text of the treaty had been fully agreed on, and drawn up in French and Italian, it was sent to the persons who were to transcribe it, and on the same evening, the 25th of January, the two courts, the pontifical and imperial, were assembled, and the Pope and the emperor signed this extraordinary act, by which the temporal power of the Papacy was annihilated—for ever, as thought Napoleon and the Pope, but for a very brief space of time, according to the hidden designs of Providence.

Overwhelming Pius VII. with testimonies of veneration, and hastening to prove his joy on the occasion, and the complete return of his goodwill, Napoleon sent orders for the liberation of the detained cardinals, who were known as the black cardinals. Prodigal of acts of beneficence and favour, he summoned to the Council of State the Bishop of Nantes, to whom he, moreover, gave the cross of the Legion of Honour, and the grand cordon of the order of the Re-union; he made the Bishop of Trèves a councillor of State and an officer of the Legion of Honour; gave the grand cordon of the Re-union to Cardinal Maury and the Archbishop of Tours, the cross of the Legion of Honour to the Cardinals Doria and Ruffo, the decoration of the Iron Crown to the Archbishop of Edesse; made the Cardinal of Bayonne and the Bishop of Evreux senators; gave a pension of six thousand francs to the Pope's medical attendant; and distributed magnificent presents amongst all those persons who had contributed to the important act which had been just concluded.

Setting out for Paris on the 27th of January, with the conviction that he had just accomplished an act which might not perhaps be definite, but which would certainly produce at the time a great effect, he hastened to publish in the official journals that a Concordat was about to settle the differences which had arisen between the empire and the Church; at the same time having information spread abroad by word of mouth that the Pope was about to establish his court at Avignon. He wrote to Holland, Turin, Milan, Florence, and Rome, announcing to the representatives of his authority this important arrangement, authorising them to make known its general bearing, and to do all that might be necessary to restore a state of calm to troubled consciences.

But it was not probable that this calm would be of long duration, for it was easy to foresee that as soon as the Pope's ordinary counsellors should have returned to him they would torture his soul with reproaches for what he had done, pointing out to him the serious consequences which must result from it, especially on the eve of a war which could not end to Napoleon's advantage. And in fact, the black cardinals had scarcely been admitted to Fontainebleau when the Pope fell once more into

a state of despondency. The Cardinals di Pietro and others did their utmost to inspire him with remorse for what he had done, placing before him such a picture of the state of affairs as the most violent passions could alone have drawn, but which, unfortunately, was soon to be realised through Napoleon's own errors.

Once more the unfortunate Pius VII. fell into one of those states of agitation and despair in which we have so frequently seen him, and in which he lost the touching dignity of his character. And how was he to escape from the embarrassment into which he had fallen? How deny or revoke an act which he had but just signed? Who could venture to advise him to do so? No one—not even the cardinals, who, having just recovered their liberty by virtue of the late Concordat, would have feared in giving such advice that they were closing upon themselves the gates of the State prisons. It was agreed, therefore, between them and Pius VII., that they should dissimulate for the present, awaiting those events which must speedily occur.

But it would have required a greater power of self-command than that which the Pope possessed to conceal completely the idea which was reigning in his breast. The officer who guarded him under the term of chamberlain, Captain Lagorsse, soon perceived the state of agitation under which the Pope laboured, and was not slow in divining the cause, when he found that it ever became greatly increased by the visits of the cardinals most distinguished for their malevolence. On being informed through the minister of worship of this state of things, Napoleon exclaimed, "I fear we have acted too hastily," and he had speedily a certain sign, although one very closely disguised, of the secret resolutions entertained by the Pope; and it consisted in the fact that when Napoleon sent to him the agents of the imperial treasury to place at his disposal such sums as he might require, and which he had a right to draw from the revenues which had now been regularly assigned to him, he gently and unaffectedly declined the offer, as though the moment had not come for ostensibly assuming the exercise of his new sovereignty.

Nothing more was needed to enable Napoleon to divine the intentions and plans of the men who were the Pope's counsellors. But Napoleon was himself as cunning as the most cunning of them. He saw that they were unwilling that the main points of the Concordat should be generally known, and he was equally willing that they should remain unpublished; but in the meantime, as it was not of so much importance to him that the affairs of the Church should be arranged as that they should appear to be so, he had it everywhere made known that a Concordat had been signed between the Pope and the emperor, that the Pontiff was free, that he was about to resume the exercise of

his pontifical functions; that, in short, all the religious difficulties were at an end. And in spite of the declarations of some persons that this was a falsehood—some even venturing to assert that Napoleon had dragged the venerable Pontiff by the hairs of his head to the earth, in the vain attempt to force him to compliance with his wishes—the crowd of innocent and pious persons hastened to throw themselves at the foot of the altars to thank God for the new Concordat, and gave themselves up to the hope, as indeed Napoleon wished they should, that this peace in regard to the things of heaven would be accompanied by a peace in mundane affairs.

Two months had now elapsed since Napoleon's return to Paris, and he had already, as we have seen, made great progress in his diplomatic, military, and financial arrangements, and the settlement of the affairs of the Church. It was now time to open the sittings of the legislative corps, whose meeting had usually during this reign been regarded as a mere interesting formality, but whose assembly on this occasion—and it was a striking symptom of the change which was taking place in the popular mind—was expected with the utmost eagerness; the nation being especially anxious to read the discourse which would be delivered by the emperor, if, as was generally supposed would be the case, he should open the sessions of the legislative corps in person. And this, in fact, Napoleon resolved to do, that from the elevation of his throne—just now shaken, doubtless, but still the most elevated in the whole world—he might address France and Europe, and enable the world to judge by the haughtiness of his language of the true state of his spirit and the nature of his resolutions.

Consequently, on Sunday the 14th of February, he proceeded to the legislative corps, to accord it the honour, which he seldom granted it, of opening its session in person, and to make it acquainted with the state of the affairs of the empire. Surrounded by a magnificent cortège, he read the following discourse, which unfortunately was as imprudent as it was brilliant and energetic.

“Gentlemen, deputies from the departments to the legislative corps,—The renewal of war in the north of Europe offered an occasion favourable to the projects of the English in the Peninsula. They have made great efforts. All their hopes have been in vain. . . . Their army has received a check before the citadel of Burgos, and has been compelled, after suffering great losses, to evacuate the territory of the whole of Spain.

“I have myself invaded Russia, where the French arms have been constantly victorious—on the plains of Ostrowno, Polotsk, Mohilew, Smolensk, the Moskowa, and Malo-Jaroslawetz. The Russian armies have in no instance been able to

maintain their ground against my eagles. Moscow has fallen into our hands.

“When the barriers of Russia had been forced, and the invincibility of our arms incontestably proved, a swarm of Tartars turned their parricidal hands against the fairest provinces of this vast empire which they had been summoned to defend; and within a few weeks, in spite of the tears and despair of the unfortunate Muscovites, they burned more than four thousand of the most flourishing villages, more than fifty of the fairest towns, assuaging an ancient hatred under the pretence of retarding our progress by surrounding us with a desert. Yet in spite of all these obstacles we triumphed! Even the burning of Moscow itself, which annihilated, within the space of four days, the fruit of the toil of forty generations, failed to change the prosperous state of my affairs. . . . But the excessive and premature rigour of the winter overwhelmed my troops with a frightful calamity. The lapse of a few nights showed a wonderful change; showed that I had suffered great losses—such losses, indeed, as would have broken my heart, if, under these serious circumstances, I had been accessible to any other sentiments than those relating to the interests, the glory, and the destinies of my people.

“At the sight of the misfortunes which have fallen upon us, the joy of the English has been great, the height of their hopes excessive. They offer our fairest provinces as a reward to those who will betray us. They name as the condition of peace the disruption of our glorious empire, and thus in other terms proclaim *perpetual war*.

“The energy of my people in these momentous circumstances, their attachment to the integrity of the empire, the affection they have testified towards myself, have dissipated all these chimeras, and afforded our enemies a finer idea of the real state of affairs.

“The disasters produced by the rigours of the winter have but been the means of displaying, in all their extent, the greatness and solidity of this empire, which is founded on the energy and love of fifty millions of citizens, and the territorial resources of the fairest countries of the world.

“It is with extreme satisfaction that we have perceived our people of Italy, of Old Holland, and the annexed departments, vying in loyalty with the native citizens of France, and fully conscious that their interests and well-being are identified with the consolidation and triumph of the grand empire.

“The agents of England propagate amongst our neighbours the spirit of revolt against sovereigns. England desires to see the whole continent a prey to civil war and the madness of



anarchy. But Providence designs that that country shall itself be of anarchy and civil war the first victim.

"I have signed with the Pope a Concordat which puts an end to all the difficulties which had unfortunately arisen in the Church. The French dynasty reigns and shall reign in Spain. I am satisfied with the conduct of all my allies. I will abandon none of them. I will maintain the integrity of their States. The Russians shall retreat to their terrible climate.

"I desire peace. It is necessary to the world. Four times since the rupture which followed the Treaty of Amiens I have solemnly proposed it. Nevertheless, I shall never make any peace which is not honourable and in conformity with the greatness of my empire. There is no mystery about my course of policy. I have made known the sacrifices which I am willing to make.

"So long as this maritime war shall last, my people ought to be ready to make every species of sacrifice; for a bad peace would involve all in destruction—deprive us even of hope, and compromise the fortunes of our descendants.

"America has taken up arms for the purpose of enforcing respect to the sovereignty of its flag. She has the goodwill of the world in the glorious struggle in which she has engaged. Should she succeed in compelling the enemies of the continent to recognise the principle that the flag covers the merchandise, and that neutrals ought not to be subject to a paper blockade—all which is agreeable to the stipulations of the Treaty of Utrecht—America will have deserved well of all nations. Posterity will say, that the Old World, having lost its rights, they were restored to it by the New.

"My minister of the interior will inform you, in his report on the state of the empire, of the prosperous condition of its agricultural interests, its manufactures, and interior commerce, and the continual increase of its population. At no period of her history have French agriculture and manufactures been in a greater state of prosperity.

"I have need of extensive resources for the supply of all the expenses which circumstances now demand of me; but by means of the various measures which will be submitted to you by my minister of finance, I shall be able to avoid imposing any new tax upon my people."

This discourse, couched in terms calculated to excite greatly the minds of those who heard it, was received with those acclamations which ever welcome the prince, whether ignominious or great, whether his throne be firmly established or tottering, who presents himself to the crowd. But when we reflect on the situation of Europe, on the cries of excited patriotism which resounded from one extremity of Europe to

the other, it is impossible not to regret that the language here employed should throw so many difficulties in the way of the negotiations which could alone bring about peace, and stop the effusion of human blood. What, in fact, would be said in England with respect to the declaration that the *French dynasty reigned and should reign in Spain*? What would be said by all the States interested in the division of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, of the declaration that *France would maintain the integrity of the territories of all her allies*?

Such were the sad questions excited by the nature of this discourse, and the course of events themselves will enable us to judge of its actual effects.

It would be difficult to imagine the change which the lapse of a few days had wrought in Germany, already so excited.

The King of Prussia, who had retired to Breslau for the purpose of being independent of us, and even of his own subjects, was then more master of his own will. Convinced that large bodies of troops could alone enable him to escape in safety from the chaos of existing events, he had already ordered new levies without awaiting answers to the questions sent by him to Paris; publishing edicts which called upon and enabled all classes without distinction to enrol themselves in the ranks of his armies, and take part in what his people called the enfranchisement of Germany. Upon being the subject of these appeals, the public mind, already in a state of fermentation, had been seized with a general vertigo, and from every quarter M. de Goltz, the only Prussian minister who remained at Berlin, had been besieged with questions, demanding for whom and against whom the king required the aid of his subjects. To all which questions M. de Goltz, who was perfectly acquainted with the real state of affairs, had replied by exhorting the questioners to confide in the wisdom and patriotism of the king, giving themselves up to his service, and leaving him free to employ them as he might think most advisable. The minister's eyes and countenance expressed, however, what his tongue dared not utter, and his questioners left him to enrol themselves amongst the king's troops. At the same time the leaders of the secret societies in every direction had declared that it was necessary to take up arms, that the king, being surrounded by an armed people, might at the right moment follow the inclination of his heart, which led him to devote himself to the enfranchisement of Germany. And under the influence of these various impulses the whole youth of the nation enrolled itself in the ranks of the king's army, assuming as a badge a black and white cockade, the want of which in his hat was held to prove a man an enemy to his country.

The King of Prussia, on receiving information of the above

facts, was both pleased and frightened: pleased at the prospect of being almost immediately at the head of a considerable force; frightened at the idea of being pressed upon by both the Russians and the French, and being compelled to declare for either the former or the latter, without being certain on which side would be found the independence and restoration of Prussia. But at this moment, when circumstances rendered him most particularly indisposed to receive them with favour, he received the replies to the communications sent by him to Paris, and was filled with indignation at the rejection of his propositions, especially of that which regarded his entering into communications with the Emperor Alexander, for he held it of extreme importance that he should have an immediate personal interview with this monarch; in the first place, because the Austrians had already sent diplomatic agents to Wilna and London; secondly, because he wished to remove the belligerent armies from Silesia; and thirdly, and lastly, because he saw at Königsberg the Baron de Stein, General d'York, and the Russian agents, governing the province, convoking the States, acting without any reference to himself, and in a manner which might eventually be contrary to his interests. He might, it is true, have secretly despatched M. de Knesebeck to demand of Alexander the explanations which he desired respecting these various matters, but such a proceeding would have speedily become known, and would have been such an infraction of the Prussian alliance with Napoleon as might lead to unpleasant consequences should another victory of Jena open the campaign.

The Prussian monarch, presenting on the occasion the sad spectacle of an honest king compelled to adopt one of two opposite courses, of which the one was in accordance with the dictates of his conscience, the other with the interests of his crown, was in a state of cruel perplexity. Although ordinarily of a very undemonstrative temperament, he now displayed even a greater degree of anger than he felt, declaring that Napoleon oppressed him, withholding from him what was incontestably his own by refusing to pay the ninety-four millions which he demanded; that in retaining the fortresses which he had given as a pledge for what he had himself owed, the latter violated treaties and the Prussian territory, since Prussia was no longer indebted to him; and that in prohibiting him from exercising the power of negotiating with a neighbouring State, Napoleon treated him as a dependent prince—conduct for which there might have been some pretext had he still been able to afford protection, but which, after he had lost the Niemen, the Vistula, and was on the point of losing the Oder, was both unjust and unreasonable, since it prevented him from even negotiating for the security of his royal dwelling.

And at length, after having thus made a great display of these various reasons for so acting, the king, without either publicity or concealment, despatched M. de Knesebeck to the Russian headquarters; and from that day it may be said he had passed from our alliance to that of the enemy. He was by no means satisfied in his own mind that the course he had adopted was the right one, that he had not repeated the false step of 1806; but he saw the French retreating step by step from the Niemen to the Vistula, from the Vistula to the Oder; he heard his subjects calling upon him to act with vehement cries, he saw the great question of the day being hour by hour resolved without his intervention, and he determined, therefore, to await no other light than that which his reason could furnish.

The secret of the royal heart was divined by all his subjects, and by them reported to the Russians. M. de Knesebeck could not but report it to Alexander. It was necessary to march forward, to force the French headquarters to fall back from Posen to Frankfort-on-the-Oder; and necessary also to march upon Warsaw, from Warsaw to Cracow, that Silesia, enveloped thus by its two extremities, might fall, with its king, into the hands of the Russian emperor. But it was necessary to do even still more than this; to march, in fact, upon the Elbe, to disengage Berlin and Hamburg on the right, Dresden on the left; by which means not only would Prussia be freed, its whole population rising as one man, but the Hanseatic provinces also, together with Hanover, Westphalia, Saxony, and probably even Wurtemberg and Bavaria; whilst at the same time—and this result was a thousandfold more to be desired than even the others—Austria would be freed from the bonds which shackled her.

The more cautious military men, however, with Prince Kutusof at their head, disapproved of so bold a march, for it would be impossible to leave in the rear Dantzic and Thorn, with garrisons of thirty thousand men, Stettin, Custring, Glogau, and Spandau, with thirty thousand more, unblockaded at least; and to withdraw troops from the army for the purpose of blockading these places would leave it too enfeebled for the field. After leaving, as would be necessary, forty thousand men on the right, before the fortresses of the Lower Vistula, twenty thousand or thirty thousand on the left, before Warsaw and the Austrians, there would remain but fifty thousand with whom to carry on the offensive movements against the French. And it would be folly indeed, urged these objectors to a forward movement, to meet under these circumstances the first bound of that irresistible lion against whom success had hitherto only been obtained by avoiding him.

To this reasoning it was replied, that the French were shut up in the fortresses, and could not sally forth from thence; that the Prussians and twenty thousand Russians, at the most, would be able to hold them in check; that on the left the Poles were in a state of consternation, ready to accept from Alexander a restoration of their country, which they could not hope to obtain at the hands of France; that the Austrian soldiers were on terms of the greatest friendliness with those of Russia, would willingly fall back before the weakest Russian corps that might be directed to follow them; that this eighty thousand men at least would be available for a forward movement; that Prince Eugène had not twenty thousand; that the twenty-five thousand or thirty thousand French troops assembled at Berlin were threatened on all sides, and had the greatest trouble to maintain their ground; that the most simple demonstration on the part of the Russian troops would force the French headquarters to retreat from Posen upon Frankfort, from Frankfort upon Berlin, from Berlin upon Magdeburg; that by releasing Berlin and Dresden from the control of the enemy, Prussia would be enfranchised, and that the fact of her alliance being taken from Napoleon, and secured to Russia and England, would effect a complete change in the state of European affairs.

These assertions were truer than those who made them, or Alexander, to whom they were daily repeated, could suppose, but it was not so much truth that was requisite to convince the latter as the tumult of excitement which now prevailed around him, the glitter of the sudden glory which had now come upon him, the title of king of kings which on all sides met his ears. These were motives sufficient in themselves to determine him to advance. M. de Knesbeck had not had to make a very long journey to meet him, and had encountered him on his march upon the Vistula. But what had he then to say? Nothing but what Alexander already knew, nothing but what had already been told him—that when he should have advanced a little further, both Prussia and her king would be his allies.

Alexander had employed the month of January in advancing between Poland and Old Prussia upon the Vistula. Remaining from the 5th of February to the 9th at Plock, he had then set out for Kalisch, having only a short distance to traverse to reach Breslau and Frederick William. The Russian guards and the reserve, comprising about eighteen thousand men, had followed him. In the meantime, Wittgenstein, on the right with the old army of the Dwina, preceded by some thousands of Cossacks, had advanced at the head of thirty-four thousand men upon Custrin and Berlin, leaving in the rear the army of Moldavia to watch Dantzic and Thorn, with sixteen thousand men; whilst, on the left, Miloradovitch, Doctoroff, and Sacken, with forty

thousand men, directed their movements towards Warsaw, slowly following the Austrian corps. The orders given to the two columns on the right and left were to advance continually, whilst Alexander awaited in the centre the right moment for entering Breslau, and throwing himself into the arms of the Prussian king, and whilst the old Moldavian army, in the command of which Barclay de Tolly had replaced Admiral Tchitchakoff, watched the garrison on the Vistula.

Prince Eugène, outflanked on the left by Thorn, on the right by Warsaw, and afraid to leave Berlin unguarded by withdrawing from it Grenier's troops, was quite incapable of maintaining his position at Posen. He would have had, indeed, the means of doing so, had Prince Schwarzenberg been willing to fall back, with Reynier and Poniatowski, upon Kalisch; but when this prince was invited to make this movement, he replied, that having upon Cracow, that is to say, towards Galicia, his depôts, recruits, and magazines, it was impossible for him to take the Kalisch route, but that he would cover the movements of such of his companions in arms as might think proper to manœuvre in that direction. Upon this declaration Reynier had immediately set out for Kalisch, and had happily arrived there before the Russians, from whom he had only escaped with many rear-guard encounters. Poniatowski, collecting in all haste about fifteen thousand Poles, and leaving a garrison at Modlin, had not been able to reach the Kalisch route in time, and had been compelled to follow the Prince of Schwarzenberg upon Cracow, whither he had withdrawn with the other fugitives of the Polish government.

Prince Eugène, upon being informed of these various movements, had quitted Posen, and marched towards Frankfort-on-the-Oder by the great Meseritz route; but considering the position of Frankfort as but little more tenable than that of Posen, he had resolved to proceed to Berlin, where his own and Grenier's troops would form a body of forty thousand men, and where, therefore, a better front might be presented to the enemy than had been possible during the last month. Whilst he was on his march the skirmishers of the Russian army under Colonels Tettenborn and Czernicheff, having passed the Oder at Wrietzen, close to Berlin, had surprised a regiment of Italian cavalry of General Grenier's corps, and cutting it almost entirely to pieces, had filled Berlin with an immoderate burst of joy, which General Grenier somewhat calmed by immediately repelling the over-rash skirmishers of Wittgenstein's army with two divisions of infantry.

By taking up a strong position in front of Berlin, summoning to his aid the corps of General Lauriston, and showing a firm determination to accept battle, Prince Eugène would most pro-

bably have succeeded in checking the Russians; but fearing to provoke decisive events before the arrival of Napoleon, and finding himself surrounded by enemies, he determined to proceed to take up his position on the Elbe, whither General Reynier had already been compelled to fall back by the movement of the Russian centre. On the 4th of March he set out from Berlin, having despatched his sick and wounded and matériel to Magdeburg; and now, being at the head of forty thousand men, he had no longer reason to fear that either his prudence or his eagles would be insulted with impunity.

On the following day he was on the Elbe, and brought to a close this long retreat, which had commenced at Moscow on the 20th of October, and had been distinguished by such strange and prodigious disasters. Prince Eugène had nothing to reproach himself with since he had assumed the command, unless it were with having been a little over cautious, and he had certainly rendered indisputable services. All the marshals and generals without troops, except Marshals Davout and Victor, had quitted him. He sent Marshal Davout to Dresden with the division Lagrange, to receive General Reynier, who returned from Kalisch, and to defend the important positions Dresden and Torgau; and established himself at Wittenberg with the ten thousand men who had been long his sole resource, together with the troops of Grenier's corps, and drew to Magdeburg those divisions of Lauriston's corps which were ready for actual service. As he would have by these means eighty thousand men on the Elbe, besides many strong fortresses in a good state of defence, the enemy would be unable to force him from this line.

We may easily comprehend how tumultuous was the joy experienced throughout all Prussia on the arrival of news of the definite evacuation of Berlin; and it was this event which had the chief effect in inducing Frederick William to declare in favour of our enemies, for now, at length yielding to the reasons urged by the various emissaries—the fiery Baron de Stein, an Alsatian of great acuteness, the Baron d'Austett, whose native land had long since become French, and General Scharnhorst, an officer held in great esteem by the German patriots—who had been sent to point out to him the many advantages to be derived by such a step, and yielding to the enthusiasm of his subjects, he consented to declare against the French alliance, demanding at the same time, however, that as war it was to be, the war should be persevered in to the utmost, until the allies had exhausted upon it, if necessary, their last piece of gold, their last soldier. He authorised, then, M. de Hardenberg to sign on the 28th of February a treaty by which Russia engaged to assemble immediately a hundred

and fifty thousand men, and Prussia eighty thousand (each of these powers proposing to assemble larger numbers than these without delay), for the purpose of carrying on war with France, until Prussia should have received a constitution more in conformity with her old state of existence, and the balance of power in Europe; by which the two contracting powers agreed not to lay down their arms until this end should have been obtained; agreed to make every endeavour to induce Austria to join the common cause; and never to treat with the enemy but in concert.

Whilst entering into these engagements, neither the king nor M. de Hardenberg had dared to come to an open understanding with M. de St. Marsan, and their embarrassment with respect to him was extreme. M. de Hardenberg was sufficiently clear-sighted to perceive that he was playing a part which might have very dangerous consequences for his country, and the king had a memory sufficiently good to be conscious of the same fact, and so long as the French army had not re-passed the Elbe, they scarcely dared to avow what they had done. M. de Hardenberg, indeed, was so agitated that on the very eve of the signature of the treaty with Russia he said to M. de St. Marsan—"Only do something in favour of Prussia, and you will save us from a cruel perplexity!" The king, against whose honesty of character we wish to say nothing, was on this occasion, however, less frank than his minister, and made use of a ruse which was little worthy of him, feigning extreme irritation at some recent proceedings which had been laid to the charge of the French army, and which were as follows. Napoleon had given orders that the troops should pay for all that they required; but the Prussians had taken advantage of their position, and demanded such prices of General Mathieu Dumas, the intendant of the army, as it was impossible he should submit to. Napoleon had then seized the various goods required at his own price, ordered also that the fortresses on the Oder should provision themselves as they might be able, taking from the surrounding country what it was impossible to purchase. The governors of Stettin, Custring, and Glogau had not failed to follow these directions, and had seized such quantities of cattle, grain, and wood as they required. Another cause of offence was, that Prince Eugène, in those parts of the country which were dominated by his troops, had prevented the levies en masse. On the 28th of February, the day of the signature of the treaty with Russia, the Prussian monarch, affecting to be excessively irritated, desired that a note should be addressed to M. de St. Marsan in which an immediate explanation should be peremptorily demanded of these acts imputed to the French army. M. de St. Marsan



being unable to give any reply himself, despatched the note to Paris by express.

But there was henceforth little concealment with respect to the course which the king had resolved to adopt; and a series of measures of a sufficiently significant character speedily rendered the rupture with France almost official. Among these was a decree for the formation of a great Prussian army in Silesia, to which the illustrious General Blucher, who had always manifested the greatest distress at the subjection of his country, was appointed commander-in-chief; General Scharnhorst, who had been the principal means of inducing the king to renounce our alliance, being nominated chief of the staff. At the same time General d'York was declared innocent of the charges brought against him, and reinstated in the command of the troops with which he had deserted from our side.

After such measures there could be no reason for any further restraint, and the interview between the two sovereigns who had thus recently become allies took place on the 15th of March. Alexander, accompanied by M. de Nesselrode and a crowd of generals, entered the capital of Silesia, and in the midst of the plaudits of the people, and the acclamations of the army, threw himself into the arms of the friend who had formerly been sacrificed at Tilsit, and had been found again in the catastrophe at Moscow.

The city was illuminated during three days, and the king had to have M. de St. Marsan's house surrounded by his own guards to preserve him from violence. And at length, on the 17th of March, M. de Hardenberg broke the profound silence he had observed with respect to the French ambassador during Alexander's sojourn at Breslau, by transmitting to him a declaration of war with France, and whilst overwhelming him with testimonies of personal respect, leaving him to choose the time and manner of his departure.

We need scarcely say, that this event, although foreseen, produced the greatest possible effect throughout Germany and Europe, and that it was the occasion of an increase of exultation and hope amongst the German patriots, according to whom Saxony, Bavaria, Wurtemberg, and all the princes, in short, who were called our slaves, would immediately imitate the conduct of Prussia, and join the general coalition. At the same time, for the purpose of accelerating this result, Colonels Czernicheff and Tettenborn, leaving to Wittgenstein's corps the care of following Prince Eugène's rearguard in the direction of Magdeburg and Wittenberg, descended the Elbe with the Cossacks, with the view of making a demonstration in the direction of Hamburg, and attempting, in concert with the English flotillas, to arouse to revolt those Hanseatic French-

men, who were French in spite of themselves, and only longed for an opportunity of ceasing to be so. At the same time the advanced guards of the Russian army of the centre, which had traversed the Oder, were directed upon Torgau and Dresden, that Saxony might be induced to declare war against France, by the same means which had been so effectual in the case of Prussia.

Prince Eugène in his anxiety for Dresden, in falling back upon the Elbe, had carried his centre to Wittenberg, instead of carrying it to Magdeburg, and in consequence of this movement Hamburg had been left uncovered. Colonels Tettenborn and Czernicheff had hereupon hastened with nine or ten thousand Cossacks, supported by some light infantry, towards Lubeck and Hamburg, whilst the English, on their side, had formed again an establishment on the isle of Heligoland, in which they had accumulated arms, ammunition, and matériel of war of all kinds. Their flotillas filled the mouths of the Elbe. Nothing more was wanting to inflame the already heated brains of the inhabitants of Hamburg; and when General Morand (not the celebrated Morand of Davout's corps, but an old general of the same name, who was brave, but unfortunately infirm) retreated at this moment with two thousand men from Pomerania upon Hamburg, he was suddenly attacked, mortally wounded, and taken prisoner, with a portion of his troops. In another direction, General Lauriston, directed to proceed by Osna-bruck, Hanover, and Brunswick upon Magdeburg, was still forty leagues from the latter place. General Bourcier was at Hanover, in the midst of the dépôts of his cavalry. The forces which were quartered in Hamburg itself were not sufficient, either to check the Cossacks or overawe the populace, and the French authorities, who had been very roughly treated on the preceding 24th of February, fearing they might encounter still more unmerciful usage on the present occasion, evacuated Hamburg, giving it up to the municipal officers, and fled to Bremen. At the same moment Tettenborn's Cossacks entered, amidst general rejoicings, and received the keys of the city for the purpose of carrying them to the Russian emperor. The municipal authorities, appointed by the French, were replaced by the old Senate. A legion named the Hamburg legion was immediately formed, composed of all the citizens willing to fight in the cause of Germany, and equipped at the expense of the rich burgesses of Hamburg, who within a few hours subscribed a large amount for this purpose. The English were signalled to come up, and speedily did so, with vessels filled with sugar, coffee, and cotton, adding to the joy caused by the disappearance of the French authorities that resulting from the abolition of the continental blockade, and the prospect of the

renewal of commerce. The unhappy Hamburgians little knew to what a cruel reverse of fortune they exposed themselves by this imprudent demonstration.

On the Upper Elbe, in Saxony, and in Dresden, the same movements resulted from the approach of the Russian and Prussian troops.

The unfortunate Frederick Augustus, beginning to perceive that he was unfitted for an ambitious path in life, was ready to renounce, although naturally with some regret, Poland, provided only he were left in possession of his dear Saxony, just in the same state as he had possessed it before he was overwhelmed with greatness at the hands of Napoleon. Since the last events, although still as devoted as ever to France, he had sought a counsellor who might direct his weakness, and he had considered that he had made the best possible choice in selecting for this purpose the Emperor of Austria, both the father-in-law and ally of Napoleon. M. de Metternich had thereupon immediately attempted to induce him to join that coalition of German princes which he was endeavouring to form, and of which the end was declared to be the pacification of Europe, by interposing between England, Russia, and France, and forcing them to accept a peace which should be constructed with a direct view to the interests of Germany. Having been assured, and with reason, that to endeavour to re-establish peace on terms which should render Germany independent and powerful, would not be to betray France, but rather to serve her, and at the same time to fulfil the duty of a good German, Frederick Augustus had not hesitated to yield to his adviser, and began to evade the demands made by the French minister for supplies of provisions and contingents of troops by declarations of inability to procure them, partly on account of the shortness of the time within which they were required, and partly on account of the spirit of ill-will pervading his subjects. His *corps d'armée* having returned to the Elbe under the command of General Reynier, he had cantoned it in Torgau, and then, under pretext of recruiting it, had placed it in a strong position, to await, in a species of neutrality similar to that of Prince Schwarzenberg, the direction of Austrian policy. With respect to his cavalry, however, consisting of twelve hundred superb cuirassiers, and twelve hundred excellent hussars and chasseurs, and which, when imperiously demanded by the French emperor, he had positively refused to send to him, he was resolved to establish them in some secure position, with himself in their midst, out of the way of the belligerent armies.

This being the disposition of his mind, it needed but the defection of Prussia and the approach of the Russian advanced guard to determine him to execute the project of flight which

he had resolved on. In spite, therefore, of the remonstrances of the French minister, M. de Serra, who took pains to point out to him the inconveniences and dangers which must result from his departure, he now set out, leaving Dresden in the hands of Marshal Davout, and the most valuable portions of his property in the fortress of Königstein; and proceeded by Plauen and Hof to Ratisbon, in the territory of the King of Bavaria, who was as embarrassed as himself.

Scarcely had he departed from Dresden when the Russians appeared in the environs of the city. The Saxon infantry enclosed in Torgau declared itself unwilling to leave its position for the purpose of aiding in the defence of the Elbe, and Marshal Davout had therefore for the protection of the upper course of the Elbe only the French division Durutte, some troops sent to him by Prince Eugène, and finally, the second battalions of his corps, which were organised at Erfurth. He hastened to Dresden, and immediately carried out with pitiless severity, although never with wanton cruelty, all those measures which military tactics rendered necessary; destroying, amongst other things, in spite of the threats and outcries of the inhabitants, the beautiful stone bridge which served as the means of communication between the old and new towns. And these measures of defence speedily took a prominent place amongst the grievances alleged against us by the Germans; engravings respecting the destruction of the bridge of Dresden by, as he was called in the north, the ferocious Davout, being spread abroad by thousands throughout the cities and country districts.

The fresh excitement produced by the defection of Prussia was speedily felt in Vienna, in spite of the distance and its habitual tranquillity. The profound policy of M. de Metternich and the Emperor Francis, although guessed by the men of more acute intellect, was quite beyond the comprehension of the more passionate persons of the court, the army, and the people, who saw in it only a culpable dilatoriness in breaking off the alliance with France, and repudiating the disastrous engagements which had been entered into on the occasion of the marriage of Napoleon with Marie Louise, and the irritation of this party now became extreme; the empress herself, the Princess of Modena, and which is even more astonishing, the Archduke Charles, being amongst its members.

The excitement at length reached such a height that M. de Metternich had reason to entertain some fears for his personal safety, and the government was compelled to order numerous arrests, even of persons of high position, such as M. de Hormayer, one of the highest officials of the Austrian chancery, who was the means employed of secretly carrying on negotiations with the Tyrol. The emperor and M. de Metternich were

equally dissatisfied with this state of affairs, being unwilling to shake off Napoleon's yoke only to become subject to that of masses of the populace; and being, moreover, so far from certain that Napoleon's power was destroyed, that they expected to see him debouch by the defiles of Thuringia, to punish the imprudent populations that had exposed themselves to his vengeance. They were anxious, in any case, to refrain from taking any decided step until the Austrian army should have been reconstituted, and would have much preferred that the condition of Germany should have been placed on a new and satisfactory footing by means of mediation and without the danger of a war with France.

Such being its views and inclinations, the Austrian cabinet never ceased to counsel prudence and moderation to that of France, and was thrown into a state of despair when it found Napoleon, as in the report addressed to the Senate, demanding new levies, and the imperial address delivered on the 14th of February, announcing the determination to pursue an absolute course of policy with respect to Spain, the Hanseatic departments, and the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, for this was to render mediation impossible. M. de Metternich held long and frequent discussions with M. Otto on these points, endeavouring to learn from him the conditions on which France would accept peace; and when all his efforts proved fruitless, the French minister being perfectly ignorant on the subject, he intimated the conditions on which peace would be accepted by Europe. "Spain," he said, "will scarcely be conceded to you after the events of the last campaign. This is a matter of no importance to us Germans personally, and only affects us with respect to England, in strict concert with whom Russia and Prussia will alone negotiate. You will be able only, at the most, to induce England to consent to the annexation of Holland to France; but this again is a matter which only touches us with respect to British interests. With regard, however, to the definitive annexation of the Hanseatic provinces to the French empire, you will find England, Prussia, Russia, and Germany equally opposed to you. And why be so determined on this point? Of what importance to you are places so distant from your real frontier, so little useful to your defences, so slightly conducive to your commercial interests, so little in sympathy with your nation, so necessary to the constitution of an independent Germany. When you attached great importance to the maintenance of the continental blockade, the possession of these provinces might, it is true, have been valuable; but at the present time this blockade is disregarded on all sides, and you yourselves infringe it every day. With respect to

Prussia, it is necessary that you should consent that it should become both stronger and more extensive, as being the intermediate power between Russia and the south of Europe; an intermediate State such as it would be absurd to attempt to find in Poland, since you have not succeeded in re-establishing it as a kingdom, and of which it rather belongs to us than to you to purpose the reconstitution, since we are the neighbours of Russia, and you are not. Why then do you express yourselves so decidedly with respect to the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, which cannot possibly be maintained, which Russia will never suffer to exist on her frontier, and which is, moreover, the only means of reconstructing Prussia without destroying your kingdom of Westphalia? Why place in our path insuperable difficulties by expressing yourselves on these points as though your determination upon them were irrevocable?" . . . Then referring to the Confederation of the Rhine, M. de Metternich continued as follows. . . . "Of what advantage to you is this strange creation, which imposes charges upon you without producing any return, which is incompatible with the independence of Germany, and is at this very moment irrevocably destroyed in the public opinion of all Germans? Is it that you are determined to persist in this matter for the purpose of preserving the empty title of protector? Is it that your emperor, possessor of the frontier which extends from Basle to the Texel, and having Strasburg, Mayence, Coblentz, Cologne, Wesel, and Groningen as the points d'appui of this frontier, has not sufficient influence over Germany, is not already a sufficient source of anxiety to her?" . . . Disclaiming on the part of Austria any desire but for the independence of Germany and a European peace, M. de Metternich added, "You will tell us that you are powerful, that you will again triumph over your enemies. We know that you are, we believe that you will do so, and it is even necessary that you should do so, to enable us to negotiate the peace of which we have intimated to you some of the conditions; but at least render it possible, refrain from displaying too absolute a disposition, and do not be the cause of breaking off the negotiations when they are but scarcely begun!"

These admirable counsels, given with the utmost sincerity, and enunciated with the utmost gentleness, showed very clearly that the peace which Austria was disposed to accept, and even, perhaps, to support by her forces, was such an one as might be described somewhat as follows: Spain to be restored to the Bourbons, the Hanseatic towns to be restored to Germany, the Confederation of the Rhine to be suppressed, the Grand Duchy of Warsaw to be divided between Prussia, Russia, and Austria; a better frontier on the Inn and the restoration of Illyria being

at the same time granted to the latter. And truly France, keeping the line of the Rhine, together with Holland, having the kingdom of Westphalia as an allied State or vassal, Piedmont, Tuscany, and Rome as French departments, and Lombardy and Naples as family principalities, would be as powerful an empire as could well be imagined.

But whatever were to be the terms of the peace which was to be ultimately accepted, it was not necessary, as M. de Metternich wisely remarked, to announce absolute resolutions, which would prevent even the commencement of negotiations, and compel the cabinet of Vienna to declare at once either for or against us; and probably against us, as was not yet declared, but might readily be divined. "Let us once," said M. de Metternich, "assemble the negotiators, and the negotiations will proceed more rapidly than is now believed possible, for the world is anxious for peace, and will demand it so vehemently at the meeting of the first congress assembled to discuss it, that this congress will be unable to refuse it."

At this very moment the perfect justice of these counsels was verified, and in the following manner. On being authorised to do so by the French government, the court of Vienna had sent M. de Wessenberg to London, and M. de Lebzeltern to Kalisch, to offer the intervention of their court to the two principal belligerent powers, for the purpose of procuring a reconciliation between them and France, and a peace of which the whole world had pressing need. M. de Wessenberg, on arriving in London, had been received with great politeness by Lord Castlereagh, but secretly, that the public mind might not be uselessly agitated. Whilst, however, the English minister testified great satisfaction at the presence of an Austrian agent in London, and expressed the greatest readiness to accept the intervention of the Austrian court, he said that probably he knew that his mission had lost its aim, since Napoleon's address, now known throughout the whole of Europe, left no doubt that he would refuse all reasonable conditions. He added, that England would be always ready to treat on equitable grounds, that neither she nor her allies were disposed to dispute the possession by France of the just greatness due to her efforts and her long wars, but that she would never surrender generous Spain to Napoleon's usurpation.

At Kalisch, in the Russian camp, the reception of M. de Lebzeltern had been deferred, sometimes on one pretext, sometimes on another, until time had been gained to consult the English cabinet, after which he was received with infinite respect, told that Russia was anxious for peace, that the intervention of Austria would be gladly accepted, but that the Austrian court

would itself perceive the impossibility of treating with Napoleon after the declaration which he had just made, that when Austria should have returned, as it was natural and necessary she should, to her alliance with the rest of Europe, that her alliance would then be gladly welcomed, and she would be made the arbiter of peace, of war, and in short, of all the interests of Europe.

When the despatches announcing these things arrived in Vienna, M. de Metternich communicated their contents to the French minister, inviting him to transmit them to the Emperor Napoleon, and expressing earnest hopes that the latter would take them into serious consideration, and at once indicate to the Austrian cabinet the course which it ought now to pursue. M. de Metternich added, that he had given to the Prince of Schwarzenberg a temporary leave, his corps having entered the Galician frontier, and that this prince was about to visit Paris, for the purpose of endeavouring to obtain from Napoleon more frank and satisfactory explanations than those obtained by M. de Bubna.

This defection of Prussia, these agitations throughout Germany, these communications from Austria, alike failed to have any great effect upon Napoleon. The defection of Prussia he had expected and regarded as inevitable from the time that he had seen our headquarters falling back successively upon the Vistula, the Oder, and Elbe. At the same time, being little accustomed to watch the great movements of public opinion, but slightly disposed to believe in their existence, and still less disposed to yield to their influence, he was surprised at the boldness of Prussia in declaring against him, and found her more courageous than he had believed her to be; but was nevertheless convinced that the King of Prussia was filled with terror at the idea of the approaching campaign, and was resolved speedily to realise all his fears. Calculating that Prussia would not be able to contribute more than one hundred thousand men to the coalition, of whom fifty thousand would be immediately available, and that Russia was not capable at that time of placing in line more than one hundred thousand, and seeing these powers advancing upon the Upper Elbe and Thuringia with such forces as these, he felt certain that within three or four weeks he would be able to drive them back into Poland more quickly than they had come. Experiencing already the joy of victory, he felt certain that he would be able by means of one or two battles to bring those powers to reason, to reinstate himself in the position from which he was supposed to have fallen, and to conclude a peace, not precisely according to the terms of his address, in which he had considered it good policy to declare himself even more inflexible than he was in reality, but still generally according to the plan therein laid down, except with respect to Spain,



where he was willing at length, but too late, to make great sacrifices.

The defection of Prussia was so far from dismaying him, that he saw in it only a pretext for demanding of France fresh levies. He was very satisfied with his levy of a hundred thousand men drawn from the four anterior classes, it having procured for him, for the imperial guard, and the reorganisation of the old corps, a species of excellent troops, who, although at first displaying more discontent than the other conscripts, speedily became reconciled to their lot on joining their various corps, and who, with the stature and bodily strength of twenty-five years, possessed the courage natural to Frenchmen. He now, therefore, caused a new *senatus-consultum* to be prepared, for the purpose of demanding eighty thousand more men, not only of the four, but of the six last conscriptions, naturally alleging as the reason for this fresh levy the defection of Prussia; not indeed to the Senate, which had no need of it, but to the enlightened portion of the public, which, whilst sighing at the necessity for such sacrifices, could not deny that the necessity existed in the presence of the dangers with which France was now threatened.

Prussia served also as the reason for a demand of another kind. The appeal to arms in Germany had been made to all classes, but had been first made to the young nobility. In France the levies had been taken in general only from the middle or lower classes; the upper classes escaping from services by finding substitutes; for whom, so horribly sanguinary had the war become, they were compelled to pay heavy premiums. They had hitherto only contributed to the voluntary gifts by their fortunes; Napoleon had long been desirous that they should do so with their persons also, and he thought the present occasion was a favourable opportunity for prevailing upon them to do so. In Germany the young noblesse considered it its duty to run to arms at the head of all the other classes of the people; and why should not this be the case also in France? In former times the French noblesse had allowed to none the honour of preceding them on the battlefield; arms were then their profession, their glory, the greatest passion of their life. And why should it not be so at the present time? It was possible, indeed, to give an explanation of its disinclination to serve, in the fact that it loved the old dynasty and disliked the new. Although this might be a valid reason in the mouths of the old men who were grown grey in the imbecile retreat of their châteaux, it was by no means admissible, according to Napoleon, or at least would not long be so, with respect to those young men who had blood in their veins which could not fail to ferment with the ardour of youth, and who could not really believe that the chase was a pursuit sufficient to satisfy their age, their rank, their

destiny. He had but, he believed, to form them, either voluntarily or by force, into a corps, the title of which should flatter their vanity, whilst the beauty of its uniform should satisfy the frivolity of their age; and once transported to the army, he would know how to inflame their ardour, for it was not to be supposed that they were less subject than the rest of the nation to the inspiration of the cannon's roar, or of the voice of the great captain.

As it would not be possible to levy these persons by means of a conscription, since they had just satisfied a conscription by providing substitutes, and it would be necessary, therefore, to take them arbitrarily, some on account of their wealth, some on account of their names, Napoleon resolved to invest the prefects with power to select them at will, giving as an excuse for this irregular method of proceeding the singular reason that it was chosen for the sake of equality. And by this method Napoleon hoped that he would obtain ten thousand excellent cavaliers, distinguished for their birth and wealth, and most probably for valour also, whom he resolved to form into four regiments of two thousand five hundred men each, under the title of guards of honour, and intended to serve by the side of the emperor himself, and to wear a brilliant uniform. He selected Versailles, Metz, Lyons, and Tours as the places in which these regiments were to be formed, and nominated as their colonels men distinguished for their families, their rank, and their achievements. They were the Count de Pully, general of division; the Baron Lepicé, general of the horse-grenadiers of the guard; the Count de Segur, general of brigade; and the Count de St. Sulpice, general of cuirassiers.

Having prepared to meet by this extension of his armaments the course of events in Prussia, it was necessary that he should bestow equal attention upon the proceedings of Austria, which, whilst retaining the title of ally, was gradually assuming the position of mediator, from which she might readily proceed to one of a less friendly character. Since the defection of Prussia she had, in fact, become very urgent in her communications, expressing an eager desire for some basis on which to negotiate the peace which she declared to be indispensable; and it would speedily be difficult to refuse to come to an explanation with her, especially as Prince Schwarzenberg was on his way to Paris, and had such access to the court of the Tuileries that the maintenance of any reserve with respect to him would be almost impossible. At the same time Napoleon was himself disinclined to believe that Austria would declare against him for the following reasons: in the first place, because the population of Vienna was not so *exigeant* as that of Berlin, and the court of the former city not so feeble as that of the latter; in the next place, because

Austria had contracted family alliances with us, which, if not an indestructible bond, must at least be the means of making her hesitate to join our enemies, since shame is a yoke which is not without its strength; and lastly, because she was governed by men who had learned to fear the French arms. To a dread of war with France, and to a desire of gaining some rich territory from the turmoil in which were involved at present all European affairs, Napoleon reduced the whole policy of the Austrian court, and in doing so, unhappily for himself and us, greatly deceived himself. For he failed to perceive that Austria, although doubtless under the influence of interested motives, was as wise as she was interested, and considered as far superior to the advantages to be derived from any extension of territory, the political advantage of regaining the independence of Germany, and thus establishing a better balance of power in Europe. Moreover, with regard to territorial aggrandisement, there was nothing which the European coalition was not ready to offer, and actually to give her, for the sake of inducing her to declare against us; and the sole reason which deterred her from seizing the opportunity of thus gaining a vast increase of territory, and what she desired far more, a better arrangement of the nations of Europe, was the fear of being again at war with us—a fear which the incessant augmentation of our enemies could not fail daily to diminish.

Considering the Austrian cabinet as solely influenced by fear and interest, Napoleon sought in the defection of Prussia the means of attaching this cabinet to his own interests, and determined to offer her the following baits. Austria desired peace, and provided he could obtain it on his own terms, he was equally anxious for it. He knew that she was arming, and that she already had about a hundred thousand available troops. She might at the very commencement of the campaign employ these hundred thousand men in a decisive manner, and for the adoption of such a course there was now a very natural occasion. Her overtures of peace had been badly received, and she had reason, therefore, to indulge in extreme displeasure. She might now at once, he said, constitute herself mediator between the belligerent powers, demand of these the establishment of an armistice, in order that negotiations might be conducted in peace, and then, should this demand be disregarded, debouch with her hundred thousand men from Bohemia to Silesia, taking in flank the coalition troops which the French were about to attack in front, the result of which would be, that after a month not a single Russian or Prussian would remain between the Elbe and the Niemen. Europe would then be at the mercy of victorious France and Austria, and the division of the spoils would be easy. The Emperor Francis might have

Silesia, which was the subject of eternal regret to the house of Austria, a large portion of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, and Illyria. Saxony should be indemnified for the loss of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw by the gift of Brandenburg and Berlin. Prussia should be thrown back beyond the Oder, and consisting of Old Prussia and a considerable portion of the Duchy of Warsaw, become a species of Poland, partly German and partly Polish, having Königsberg and Warsaw for its capitals.

It is very true that Austria, by throwing into Silesia the hundred thousand men who were ready for service, and if necessary, the hundred thousand others who would be ready in three months, might have procured the total defeat of the European coalition, and forced it immediately to treat for peace. But what did Napoleon offer her in return for such an employment of her forces? He offered to carry back the line of the Prussian territory to the other side of the Vistula, to leave to her of her old States only Old Prussia from Dantzic to Königsberg, adding to it the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, and replacing it between the Oder and the Elbe by the house of Saxony; and what he thus offered was, in fact, simply the destruction of Prussia, for this power, transported to Königsberg or Warsaw, would no more become Poland than Saxony, extended from Dresden to Berlin, would become Prussia. The strength of a nation consists not only in its territory, but in its history, the memories of its past. Were this plan carried out, there would no longer be a German Prussia; and Austria, which sought its own independence in the independence of Germany, would have failed to obtain what she desired, although aggrandised by the addition of a province, and that province Silesia. She would have been, indeed, but an enriched slave; and this was a truth which, had she not perfectly understood it, as she did, the indignant cry of the whole people of Germany would speedily have forced upon her. The idea entertained by Napoleon of the state of Europe was a fantasy, leading him to imagine that he had but to increase his battalions by an additional hundred thousand men to add another victory to the series of his triumphs, and that he might then settle the affairs of Europe as he chose. Knowing that Austria had long hated Prussia, and long regretted the loss of Silesia, he concluded that he had but to offer the annihilation of Prussia as a gratification to her jealousy, and to restore to her the province of Silesia to induce her to act as he desired. He failed to understand that there is a time when all the world is compelled to be honest and disinterested; that it is when an intolerable oppression compels it to unite for mutual defence; and that he, Napoleon, had now unfortunately brought that time to pass for our ruin, by making us the voluntary oppressors of Europe. He failed to comprehend that Austria

might prefer a lesser amount of territory with an established system of affairs to a larger extent under a system which was as fictitious as it was arbitrary.

A serious misfortune, incident to the plan thus entertained by Napoleon with respect to Austria, consisted in the fact that it brought her more prominently forward into the scene of affairs than was at all necessary, gave her a dangerous importance, and furnished her with a pretext for arming, and smoothed the path by which she might pass without dishonour, and almost without embarrassment, from a state of strict alliance with us to a state of open hostility. And this was a fault which Napoleon greatly aggravated by the selection which he made of a person to urge upon the Austrian court the adoption of his ideas. Our ambassador at this court was M. Otto, formerly ambassador in Berlin, a wise and modest man, who was excellently fitted to be our representative at the court of Vienna, had we endeavoured to keep on good terms with it, without permitting it to take too prominent a part in the conduct of European affairs. Napoleon now considering, however, that he was neither sufficiently influential nor clear-sighted, took pains to find a fit successor for him, and selected M. de Narbonne, whose tardy but warm adhesion to the empire we have already related. A patriot of 1789, an old minister of Louis XVI., a grand seigneur, a clever soldier, a man of brilliant and varied talents, and endowed with much tact and grace of manner, M. de Narbonne was marvellously fitted to succeed in an aristocratic and elegant court, knowing how to blend the character of the man of the world with that of the politician. His fault was that he was too inclined to exceed the limits of his rôle; but for the performance of an active part no better agent could have been selected, and there was good reason to suppose that M. de Metternich would find it difficult to elude his penetration and energy.

Napoleon having selected, then, M. de Narbonne as his ambassador, was so anxious to send him to his post that he would not await even the arrival of Prince Schwarzenberg, who was on his way to Paris to explain the views of the Austrian court. He was little anxious, indeed, to know what these views might be, since, whatever they were, he was only desirous that his own should be adopted in their place; and M. de Narbonne could not reach Vienna too soon, since the campaign was on the eve of commencing. Napoleon did not explain to him at first on what conditions he would consent to make peace, sending him away entrusted with only the first part of his secret, which was that it was necessary to his interests that Europe should carry a hundred thousand men to the slopes of Silesia, that she should summon the forces of the coalition to pause in their

onward march; that if, as would be most probably the case, they should disregard this summons, she should then take them in flank, whilst he, Napoleon, attacked them in front. He authorised him to propose that when the united arms of France and Austria should have been victorious, the latter power should receive as its reward, Silesia, a portion of Poland, and Illyria.

Having obtained all the levies which he desired, and taken the diplomatic measures which have been above narrated, he determined to enter at length upon the new campaign. It was now the end of March 1813. His various military armaments were in a very forward state, with the exception of his cavalry, which had not been reorganised so quickly as he could have desired; and he determined to set out towards the middle of April, impatient to realise the fair hopes which he entertained with respect to the issue of the approaching struggle. He made all his arrangements with a view to his departure at that date. He addressed some reproaches to Prince Eugène for having retrograded too hastily and too far; not that he regretted the steps which the forces of the coalition had been thereby induced to take, but because he regretted the time which was lost to him by the enemy's too rapid progress, calculating that it had compelled him to hasten the commencement of hostilities by at least twenty days, during which he might have much increased the efficiency of his forces. He regretted especially the loss of horses, which was a consequence of the abandonment of the German territories; and also blamed Prince Eugène for having inclined too much towards the right in his anxiety to cover Dresden, which was of little importance, whereby he had left uncovered Hamburg, which it was of the highest importance to shelter from the contagion of the German popular excitement. At the same time he informed him in general terms of the future plan of operations.

He directed him to refrain from occupying himself with the defence of the route from Dresden to Erfurth, Fulde, and Mayence, since it would be of little importance, even if the forces of the coalition penetrated in that direction to some distance. He recommended him, on the other hand, to defend to the utmost that of Magdeburg, Hanover, Osnabruck, and Wesel, which passed by Lower Germany. In establishing himself firmly on this line, Prince Eugène would defend the greater part of the course of the Elbe, cover Hamburg, Bremen, Holland, and Westphalia, and that portion of Germany which Napoleon had desired to make French. If the coalition, taking advantage of this arrangement of the French troops, should penetrate by Dresden, and advance as far as the mountains of Thuringia, as far as the celebrated plains of Jena, it would only be necessary for the French forces to

execute movements by which Prince Eugène's left should be posted at Wittenberg, the right at Eisenach, the Harz mountains being in the rear, and that when this position had once been taken up by Prince Eugène's forces, Napoleon would advance with one hundred thousand men by Hesse or Thuringia to his support, and to join him on the Elbe; and that then, his forces amounting to two hundred and fifty thousand men, Napoleon would cut off the forces of the coalition from Berlin and the sea, drive them back, crush them against the mountains of Bohemia, and entering Berlin, would release from blockade the garrisons of Stettin, Custrin, Glogau, Thorn, and Dantzic; and would thus, within the space of a month from the commencement of the campaign, find himself victorious on the banks of the Vistula.

To these general outlines of the campaign, Napoleon added, as was his wont, precise, detailed directions. He blamed Prince Eugène for having sent the terrible Marshal Davout to Dresden, where it was necessary to reassure the public mind, instead of having reserved him for Hamburg and Germany, where it was necessary to terrify, and he directed that he should now be transferred to the countries of the Lower Elbe, to supply by the fear inspired by his presence all that was wanting in military resources. This marshal had received his second battalions to the number of sixteen, recently reorganised at Erfurth, by the incorporation of the staffs returning from Russia with the recruits arriving from France on the banks of the Rhine; Marshal Victor had also received his, which were twelve in number; and Napoleon now directed that he should be left on the Upper Elbe, for the purpose of serving as a link between Prince Eugène and the grand army, which was about to debouch from Thuringia, and that Marshal Davout should descend upon Hamburg to retake it. The staffs of the third and fourth battalions of Marshals Davout and Victor were at this moment being recruited on the Rhine, with the men of the old classes. There were still, therefore, thirty-two battalions for Marshal Davout, and twenty-four for Marshal Victor, which, added to the second battalions which they had already, would give forty-eight to the one, thirty-six to the other—eighty-four between the two. This, then, was a second and excellent army, which might within two months be upon the Elbe; and Napoleon devised means of increasing it by the addition of twenty-eight battalions. It has been already said that the staff of the first battalion of these old corps had been retained in the fortresses on the Oder; but it had been found that the staffs of two companies were sufficient to receive the soldiers who returned from Russia. These staffs of the first battalions having become disposable, with the

exception of two companies, had been brought back to the Rhine, and having had the two companies which were wanting to them supplied by two others taken from the depôts, were completely reorganised, and were to be filled up with the excellent recruits of the old classes. And thus within a few weeks the Marshals Davout and Victor, already provided with their second battalions, would receive the third, fourth, and first, and be thus placed at the head of ninety thousand infantry. Three hundred pieces of cannon were prepared for them in the fortresses of Westphalia, Holland, and Hanover. The cadres of dragoon and chasseur regiments arriving from Spain would furnish them with a fair body of cavalry, and thus, independently of the three hundred thousand men with which he was himself about to open the campaign, there would exist a second army of one hundred and ten thousand men on the Lower Elbe. As, however, the insurrection of Lubeck and Hamburg rendered the need of succours urgent, Napoleon despatched immediately a certain number of those battalions which were ready, sending them under the command of General Vandamme to the Hanseatic departments. The name alone of General Vandamme was calculated to produce a great impression upon the revolted populations; and moreover, throughout the whole of the 32nd military division the rule of military commissions had been substituted for the constitutional government.

At Mayence, independently of the guard and the two Rhine corps which had been there organised, and were already distributed between Frankfort, Wurzburg, and Fulde, Napoleon planned the construction of a fresh body of troops with the remainder of the cadres which had been recalled from Spain. A formal order had been sent beyond the Pyrenees, that only the staffs necessary for the existing number of troops should be retained in Spain, and as the surplus staffs successively reached France, Napoleon had directed that they should be filled with the eighty thousand men of the six old classes of which he had recently decreed the levy. The staffs drawn from Spain were the best, having been engaged in that species of war which is best calculated to form the experienced officer—namely, a war of surprises; for it is one in which it is almost necessary that each officer should be a general. They were inured to fatigue, and not having been under Napoleon's immediate command for some time, arrived full of zeal for the honour of being under his personal orders; whilst, on the contrary, the staffs arriving from Russia, although excellent in respect to their military qualities, were worn out, and animated by a resentment which was far from being concealed. It was necessary that these last should have repose, indemnity for







Paul Girardet sc.

GENERAL BERTRAND

what they had lost, and be well recruited before being again employed on active service. With respect to the Spanish cadres, however, there was no need for any particular exertions, and day by day, as they reached Mayence, they entered upon the performance of their duties, and served with ardour. Napoleon prepared with these staffs an army of reserve upon the Rhine, as he had formed one on the Elbe of the old corps.

Finally, he was resolved to create an army of reserve for Italy, whither General Bertrand had already proceeded for the purpose of forming a corps of 40,000 or 50,000 men, of the numerous military elements which France had accumulated beyond the Alps since 1796. General Bertrand had accomplished his task, and was on his march with 45,000 men, having met with no misadventure, with the exception that an Italian regiment, having fallen in with a detachment of troops of the same nation who had returned from Russia, after having heard their countrymen's recitals of what they had suffered, had deserted en masse. With the exception of this incident, General Bertrand's army arrived in good order, and animated with the best spirit. It was to be joined by the 3000 troops already assembled at Augsburg, and by the other cadres of Prince Eugène's corps which should return from Russia, and which were now directed to assemble at Verona instead of Augsburg, Napoleon considering the latter place too distant from Italy. The cadres sent to Verona would furnish twenty-four battalions, and would be reorganised during the spring and summer. The depôts of Italy were filled with conscripts of Provence, Languedoc, Savoy, Piedmont, and Corsica, respecting whose discipline, as they had already been to the depôts from one to two years, there could be little cause for doubt. Of the forty-eight battalions which composed the army of Italy properly so called, there were seven or eight in Spain, and twenty in Germany. There remained about twenty in Italy which were already recruited, and these, with the eighty staffs returned from Russia, would present a total of forty-eight battalions, which number might be raised to sixty by adding to them some French staffs which had been recalled from Spain, and were en route towards Piedmont, where were situated their depôts. There was here the material for the basis of a second army of Italy. And thus taking into account the Neapolitan army which Murat was reorganising with great pains, and with which he consoled himself for the chagrin caused him by Napoleon's severity, 80,000 men would be available for active service in Italy, should the movements of Austria be hostile.

Napoleon had, therefore, both in Germany and Italy, besides the armies which were to be engaged in actual service, other armies which would serve as a reserve, and repair the losses

caused by the war. In the cavalry arm, as has been already said, were we alone deficient. General Bourcier in Lower Germany had seen his cantonments overturned, and the districts in which he could obtain troop horses very much restricted by the insurrection of the Hanseatic provinces, whilst the manufacture of harness was very greatly interrupted by the ill-will of the German workmen, and the credits with which he was furnished became reduced to almost nothing in his hands, on account of the difficulty which existed of obtaining money for even the most unexceptionable bills.

Of the 30,000 saddle or draught horses which he hoped to procure, he had only succeeded in obtaining sufficient to mount 12,000 troopers, of whom 6000 were already mounted, and ready to take their place with the corps of Generals Latour-Maubourg and Sebastiani. The depôts of the Rhine would furnish an almost equal number of mounted troopers, who would proceed under the Duke de Plaisance to join the army, and would speedily be followed by a similar contingent. Finally, fresh means of providing cavalry regiments would be furnished by the cavalry staffs arriving from Spain. It was confidently reckoned that 50,000 cavalry would be assembled by the middle of the year; but it was at the same time quite possible that not more than 10,000 would be available at the opening of the campaign. Napoleon, however, allowed himself to be but little disturbed by this circumstance. "We shall fight battles and gain them," he said, "as we fought and gained those of Egypt, with squares of infantry." And he had himself traced out the plan of education to be pursued with regard to the young infantry, prescribing the formation of the square as the one which would be most frequently required in the field.

Spain had been to him at this period, as we have seen, a nursery of officers and sous-officers of the first quality; and it was only just, after having exhausted himself for the purpose of supporting this deplorable war, that he should draw from it such aid as this. But at the same time, he was unwilling to enfeeble his armies in the Peninsula to too great an extent, since he had determined, when the time for negotiations should have arrived, to give up Spain, the only sacrifice he was prepared to make for the purpose of disarming England. To have withdrawn from it now would have been the wiser plan, but it would have exposed him to a campaign with the English in the south of France, and have deprived him of the principal means he possessed on which to base negotiations in the future European congress. It was necessary to defend it, therefore, to the utmost, and as though he were determined to retain it in his grasp.

He approved of the new position taken up by our armies,

whilst bitterly blaming the faults which had led them to it. At the same time, he was anxious, should the English make a fresh attempt upon Valladolid and Burgos, that they should be driven back to a considerable distance, and that sufficient occupation should be given them to prevent their undertaking any maritime expeditions on the coast of France. Marshal Suchet, who had not been enfeebled, appeared to him to be sufficiently strong to defend the Ebro and the coast of the Mediterranean, from Barcelona to Valencia. The armies of Andalusia, of the centre, and of Portugal, united as they had been in the last campaign, appeared to him to be sufficient to defend the Castilles against Lord Wellington. But he considered it of great moment that these armies should be still more closely drawn together, and ordered them to pass the Guadarrama, only retaining the cavalry on the Tagus, and a division of the advanced guard at Madrid, the latter being left for the sake of moral effect, and to establish the court at Valladolid. He wished that the three armies should be united in front of Valladolid, so as to be able at any moment to concentrate and march upon the English. He even directed the preparation of a siege train, for the purpose of leading Lord Wellington to fear that he was about to make an attempt on Ciudad Rodrigo, and thus detain him in the Peninsula. He also ordered that a portion of the three armies should be employed in destroying, at any price, the guerilla bands which desolated the north of Europe, and which interrupted the communications with France, in Navarre, Guipascoa, Biscaye, and l'Alava. Proposing, in fact, as he did, to make Spain an object of negotiation and exchange, he was anxious to be able to say that he possessed the best half, with a firmness which could not be disputed. To retain the districts which were commonly called the banks of the Ebro, and to restore the remainder to Ferdinand, was the arrangement which he was prepared to compel Joseph to accept, and to conclude with Ferdinand and the English.

With this intention, and for the sake of having some communications, he had entrusted the army of the north to General Clausel, with whose merit, although displayed at such a distance, he had been much struck, and had empowered him to take under his own command a portion of these armies concentrated in Castille, in order that he might destroy the guerilla bands before the period when the English usually commenced the campaign. This was an important decision, and was to have, as we shall hereafter see, very serious consequences. But with the exception of this decision, which, if we are to judge of it by its results, was an error, his arrangements with respect to the conduct of the campaign in Spain were most excellent. He had not withdrawn more than thirty thousand men from this

country by taking away the staffs, and had left them two hundred thousand troops, which were the best that France at this time possessed.

He had recalled Marshal Soult, who could no longer act with the court at Madrid, and had given Joseph, in addition to Marshal Jourdan as adviser, Generals Reille, d'Erlon, and Gazan, to command under him the three armies of the centre, Andalusia, and Portugal.

And now, being satisfied with respect to the state of affairs in Spain, and satisfied with the progress of his armaments in the direction of Germany, Napoleon, as full of confidence with respect to the result of his vast combinations as he ever was in his life, determined to depart; resolving, however, before doing so, to take some precautions against the recurrence of such an accident as that of the Malet conspiracy.

We have already said, that being anxious to crown the King of Rome this very winter, and to invest Marie Louise with the regency, he had conversed with the Arch-Chancellor Cambacères, the only man who was, with respect to the domestic policy of his empire, in his entire confidence. After some consideration it had appeared to him that in the existing state of affairs the coronation of the King of Rome at that time would be somewhat unadvisable; but he still resolved to invest Marie Louise with the regency, which might be easily done without much ceremony, in order that, should a bullet deprive him of life, the country might be able to rally round a government already constituted, and already even engaged in the performance of his functions. He was anxious, too, after having made the campaign of 1812 in the character of an emperor, to make that of 1813 in the character of a simple general. He resolved, therefore, to confer the regency on Marie Louise before his departure; an arrangement which, beside its other advantages, would have that of flattering the pride of his father-in-law, who was sincerely attached to his daughter, although more so to his house.

It will be easily understood that it was not to Marie Louise, a good and sensible woman, but profoundly ignorant of affairs of State, that Napoleon intended to confide the government of his vast empire, but to a man whose good sense was unequalled, whose experience was consummate, and whose character was somewhat less weak than was generally supposed. The reader will have perceived that we are speaking of the Arch-Chancellor Cambacères. Napoleon could have even died without anxiety, if, the war terminated, he could have been certain of leaving the minority of his son and the ignorance of his wife for ten years under the direction of this man, whose finesse, tact, moderation, and experience united to form a statesman of the highest

character; not, indeed, a firm, bold, open-speaking statesman, such as are found in free countries, but a master of that art of managing a people which is so necessary in a country like France, which, even when not free, still requires to be governed with infinite caution. For such a task as this Napoleon feared to select his brothers, distrusting their pretensions and restless temperaments, especially during a minority.

Increasing years, the commencement of a change of fortunes, a long acquaintance with men, the abasement of the human character when exposed to the influence of absolute power, the historical learning in which his youth had so much delighted, and the teachings of which had great influence on his mind in his maturer age, had singularly added to the natural distrustfulness of Napoleon's character. Full of ill-humour against his brothers and his brother-in-law, who annoyed him, and on whom he bestowed much ill treatment, he was convinced that, should he die, leaving his child under age, they would disturb his minority. He conversed at great length on these subjects of anxiety with the Prince Cambacères, and displayed a determined resolution to employ even the most offensive precautions with respect to his brothers. By the imperial constitution the regency could not be held by a woman, but must be conferred on the uncles of the imperial minor; and Napoleon, therefore, now boldly said to Prince Cambacères that he was unwilling that his brothers should be invested with the regency, and that he intended to confer it on Marie Louise, in order that he, Cambacères, might exercise it in reality, in the name of the empress. Cambacères, whose ambition had always been restrained by his prudence, and who was now, by reason of age and indulgence in some sensual pleasures which were little worthy of the gravity of his years, less ambitious than ever, was terrified at the intentions thus expressed by the emperor, and pleaded with him the cause of his brothers. In the first place, he said, it would be necessary to deprive them of the office in question by a constitutional decree, and history taught but too plainly that the decrees of dead sovereigns, whether declared constitutionally or not, prevailed but little against the passions which were almost invariably let loose at their death. Moreover, he urged, Joseph was of a good disposition, was sincerely attached to Napoleon, had no male infant, and was anxious, probably, to marry one of his daughters to the King of Rome; whilst Jerome was entirely devoted to his brother, besides being to a great extent disqualified by his age for disputing the possession of the regency; Louis had disappeared from the scene; and Murat, except in his military character, was of no importance. "There was no reason, then," said Cambacères, "why Napoleon should be suspicious of his brothers, and he ought,"

he declared, "to leave the regency in the hands of Joseph, whose possession of it would be little disputed." Napoleon remaining unaffected by any of these reasons, the arch-chancellor proceeded to speak of Prince Eugène, who had never given him any cause of discontent, save by a little nonchalance of manner, and who, moreover, had obtained much honour in the late campaign; but at the name of Prince Eugène, Napoleon, who usually displayed the utmost affection with respect to this prince, suddenly appeared to be overwhelmed with disquieting and ominous reflections. "Eugène," he said, "is an excellent man, but he is young! We must take care that we do not inflame with an excessive ambition that heart so little fitted to encounter the passions of the world. . . . Who knows what time may not bring forth?"

As Napoleon remained firm to his idea, it became necessary to consider in what manner it could be least offensively carried out; and no one was more fitted for this task than Prince Cambacérès. For excluding the greater part of the princes of the imperial family from the regency, and even from the council of the regency, there existed a most natural reason in the fact that they were possessed of foreign thrones; for princes who governed countries distant from the empire might have interests so opposed to those of France that their exclusion from the government in the case of a minority could not be considered either a distrustful or an excessive precaution. It was agreed, then, by an article of the projected *senatus-consultum*, that all the princes seated on foreign thrones should be excluded from the regency, unless, which was very improbable, they should abdicate. A second arrangement, which was as natural as the first, was to be that the mother was to rule during the minority of her son. And this measure was one which was not only in accordance with the dictates of nature, but also of good policy, for it could not but be an advantage to confer the imperial power upon a daughter of the Cæsars, who was beloved by her royal father, and had the most sacred claim upon the protection of the chief court of Europe. Napoleon's brothers, then, being excluded without injustice and without offence, and the empress constituted regent in accordance with the best of reasons, it became necessary to compose a council of regency, and to regulate its functions. Napoleon resolved that it should be composed of the princes of the blood, the uncles of the emperor, and the princes, high members of the French government (always on condition that they should not be reigning over any dominions beyond the limits of the empire), and in the following order: the arch-chancellor, the arch-chancellor of State, the grand *electeur*, the constable, the arch-treasurer, and the grand admiral; an arrangement which gave the first



place and the chief influence to Prince Cambacérès—a place and influence which Napoleon determined to secure to him still further by his secret instructions to the empress. The council was to be consulted on all the great affairs of State, but it was only to have a deliberative voice with respect to them.

These matters having been thus arranged in a projected *senatus-consultum*, Napoleon submitted the proposed plan, in the first place, to the Council of State, before sending it to the Senate, explaining it with his own mouth in words which were at once precise and authoritative. Every one was silent, and appeared to listen with approval; but at length a member asked whether it would not be as well to supply an omission in the proposed plan by conferring the regency on the mother of the imperial minor, in case she should not be also the empress-dowager—a case which would have occurred had Napoleon adopted as his heir a son of his brother Louis and the Queen Hortense, who lived in France, separated from her husband, and much loved in society. The inquiry which was now made was evidently intended to serve her interests, and was supported by a young chancellor of State who enjoyed a large share of the imperial favour, M. the Count Molé. Napoleon, however, repelled the suggestion in a manner so stern and peremptory that it was at once allowed to drop; and on leaving the council, he said to Cambacérès, “Eh! bien! have you seen how the friends of Hortense begin to stir? What would it be if I were dead?” . . . And he sighed at the idea of all that would very probably take place in the event of his death.

The *senatus-consultum* was adopted by the Senate in the form in which it was proposed. By his letters patent Napoleon conferred upon the regent the full sovereign authority, with the exception of a prohibition to submit laws to the legislative corps, and *senatus-consulta* to the Senate, but at the same time he limited the use of this authority by well-calculated precautions, and declared that the regent was to perform no act without the signature of Prince Cambacérès. He appointed, moreover, as secretary of the regency, and to perform for it the functions of a minister of State, the wise Duke de Cadore—M. de Champagny.

On the 30th of March he invested the empress with her new dignity. When the formalities of the ceremony were over, he dismissed all who had assisted at it but the ministers, and made the empress take part in a Council of State, at which were discussed matters of the highest importance. She appeared attentive, curious, and not wanting in intelligence. Day after day, with infinite pains, her husband strove to initiate her into the conduct of affairs, and at the same time took care to indicate

to those who were to advise her what they should submit to her notice and what conceal from her.

Amongst the exceptions which he made to the authority of the regency was the nomination of the superior officers of the army; saying, "that the minister of war alone was acquainted with the personnel of the army, and that he could entrust the duty of making these appointments to none but him."

At the moment of his departure for the army, Napoleon, anxious to make friends for his son and his wife, would have been glad to promote a considerable number of persons to the senatorial dignity, in order to strengthen, by the aid of self-interest, the shaken devotion of a great number of persons. But such a measure presented a danger which the arch-chancellor's penetration pointed out to him, and which was, that as there were only thirteen vacancies in the Senate, and thirteen available dotations, to nominate more than this number of senators would render necessary either a division of the existing resources of the Senate, which would create a feeling of discontent amongst its members, or an increase of the Senate's revenues, which the state of the finances could not suffer. Napoleon, therefore, added to the Senate but thirteen new members, and failed, as we shall hereafter see, to add very much thereby to its fidelity. At the same time he distributed with great prodigality the decorations of the order of the Re-union, and raised the Count Decrès to a dukedom. He selected as his aide-de-camp General Corbineau, who had miraculously found the passage of the Beresina, and the illustrious Drouot, who had rendered such illustrious services with the artillery of the guard. Being as anxious also to relieve his wife and child from any sources of embarrassment as he was to procure friends for them, he recalled Marshal Soult from Spain, and permitted M. Fouché to return to his senatorial position; but as he was very unwilling to leave these two persons idle in Paris (especially the second), he took Marshal Soult with him, proposing to give him some post in his guard, and resolved, as soon as he should have entered the German countries, to confide to M. Fouché the government of the conquered provinces.

The session of the legislative corps was now terminated, after having lasted three or four weeks, and voted the law of finance, as well as the law relative to the sale of the communal property.

Before actually setting out, Napoleon took some further measures relative to the Concordat of Fontainebleau, which the Pope had failed to execute, whilst preserving complete silence with respect to his ultimate intentions. Returning to the system of finesse, which did not originate with himself, but with his counsellors, he was far from declaring that he wished to repudiate

the Concordat of Fontainebleau and to retract his signature; but he appeared to intimate that in the existing state of affairs the immediate execution of the treaty was not necessary, and affected to slumber more profoundly than ever in his peaceful retreat. In the meantime, the active personages of the Church party visited Fontainebleau with great frequency. All this excessively irritated Napoleon, and he was on the point of destroying by some violent act the advantage of his reconciliation with the Holy Father; but wisely restrained himself to making public, as he considered himself by the Pope's late conduct perfectly justified in doing, the Concordat which the Pope had publicly and freely signed.

He had it, therefore, inserted in the bulletin of laws as a law of State, expecting that this insertion would procure its execution. He then took measures, of which the Pope was officially informed, for the institution of the new prelates by the metropolitan, should the Pope fail to grant it himself within six months; and limited the number of visitors to be admitted to Fontainebleau, naming those whom the Pope was to be permitted to see. Finally, he ordered, but secretly, the arrest and removal forty leagues from Paris of the Cardinal di Pietro, as having lately distinguished himself by his bad counsels to the Pope; and that those around the Pope might be duly warned, he had full intimation given to them of the reason of this fresh severity.

A few days before Napoleon's departure from Mayence, the Prince Schwarzenberg arrived; being announced as fully informed of the most secret resolutions of the Austrian cabinet. Napoleon had already sent back M. de Bubna to Vienna, after having sedulously striven to impress him with the idea, which could scarcely take hold of a German brain at this period, that Austria's wisest course was to endeavour to repair in concert with France her shaken fortunes. He endeavoured to impress the same idea upon Prince Schwarzenberg, who found himself in a position of much embarrassment, since he was most unwilling to displease Napoleon, and yet was resolved to show due regard for the patriotic passion of his country, although he was far from being thoroughly imbued with it himself. M. de Metternich had sent him to question rather than to explain, and whilst directing him to endeavour chiefly to discover on what terms Napoleon would be willing to conclude a peace, had also instructed him to hint that Austria would draw the sword only for the sake of obtaining peace—such a peace as should satisfy the interests of Germany. The prince, however, who had accepted the mission with great reluctance, feared to utter to Napoleon half of what he had been sent to say; and the latter, in fact, left him neither time nor opportunity to do

so, constantly striving, as he did, to persuade him of the wisdom of his projects, treating with a confidence which had a diplomatic purpose, and making every endeavour to convince him that he had in France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, eleven or twelve hundred thousand men under arms, and that he was about to crush the Prussian and Russian forces, and drive them beyond the Vistula. He took pains also to point out to the prince that it was now the moment for Austria to render the conclusion of peace certain and immediate by declaring in favour of France, and to make it for himself the most advantageous she had ever concluded by accepting Silesia, a million of Polish subjects, and Illyria, all which he, Napoleon, was ready to give her. Prince Schwarzenberg, who, although endowed with a sufficiently firm mind, was influenced by Napoleon's calculations, strove to point out, in reply, that the French emperor, in the ensuing campaign, would have to fight with troops animated by a violent fanaticism; that the war would not be such a one as could be decided by one or two battles, that it would be well, therefore, that he should enter into negotiations for peace; that Austria was quite ready to aid him in this, but that she could not enter into a contest with Europe for the sake of an arrangement that would in no way satisfy either the wishes or the interests of Germany. Napoleon's ardour, however, was too vehement to be checked by any such cold reasoning as this, and Prince Schwarzenberg, seeing very clearly that he was determined to enter upon a decisive war, in which it was very probable that he might be successful, considered that it would be necessary to await the issue of affairs before resolving upon anything. He contented himself, therefore, with uttering a few remarks which neither were, nor were calculated to be, of any effect, and then kept silence, not daring even to speak to Napoleon on a point respecting which it would have been more consistent with loyalty that he should have given him information. We allude to the Austrian auxiliary corps. As Austria affected to remain faithful to the treaty of alliance of the 14th of March 1812, its corps would naturally remain at Napoleon's disposal, and as its services were especially desirable at this moment, Napoleon said to Prince Schwarzenberg, that he intended to send orders to this corps to advance with Prince Poniatowski towards Upper Silesia, and that he hoped that these orders would be executed; whereupon Prince Schwarzenberg, who well knew that his government was resolved not to fire a shot in Napoleon's favour, had the weakness to reply that the Austrian corps would obey. After having vainly endeavoured to convert Prince Schwarzenberg to his views, Napoleon addressed to his allies the Grand<sup>d</sup>Duke of Baden, the prince-primate, the Duke of Wurzburg, the

Kings of Wurtemberg, Bavaria, and Saxony, a recommendation to prepare their contingents, and especially to send him as soon as possible all the disciplined cavalry at their disposal—particularly insisting upon this latter point in the case of the King of Saxony, who had withdrawn to Ratisbon with the two thousand four hundred troops already mentioned, and upon whom Napoleon reckoned as an addition to the corps of Marshal Ney. He made this demand in the form of an absolute order.

At length, all these arrangements concluded, and having received the last embraces of his empress, who was in a state of agitation and despair at the approaching separation, he set out on the 15th April, as ardent and as confident as he had ever been at the commencement of his most successful campaigns! A happy yet fatal confidence, which was destined to be productive of much that was glorious, and yet, by its very excess, to be productive of fresh and irreparable disasters.

## BOOK XLVIII.

### LUTZEN AND BAUTZEN.

AFTER Napoleon's departure Prince Schwarzenberg had remained confounded by all that he had seen and heard, and very dissatisfied at having been both unable and afraid to utter a single one of the truths to express which he had been sent to the French court. He attempted to be more frank with the empress, to whom he had access; for being a countryman and her father's ambassador, and having been the negotiator of her marriage, he had every claim to her attention. Unfortunately, however, his representations to this princess could not have any very great effect; for Marie Louise, dazzled by the prestige by which she was surrounded, and fascinated by her husband, who overwhelmed her with affectionate attentions, was ardently anxious for his triumph, but had not any influence over him. Her eyes were still red with the tears she had shed at taking leave of him when she received her father's ambassador, to whose declarations respecting the dangerous aspect of affairs, the state of passionate excitement prevalent throughout Europe against France, the necessity of concluding peace with some nations, and of at least preserving it with others, she listened with chagrin, only replying by repeating the accounts she had heard of the immense forces at Napoleon's command, and demanding that her own position in France should be taken into careful consideration, lest after having been sent thither as a pledge of peace, she should become a fresh victim to revolutionary violence. The misfortunes of Marie Antoinette had made so deep an impression on Europe that Marie Louise often found herself seized with sudden terrors, and considered herself in as much danger as though Austria were again at war with France. She alluded to these fears to Prince Schwarzenberg, but without succeeding in making him pay much attention to them, for he scarcely considered them serious, and he thought, moreover, as a politician and a soldier, and although somewhat bound by the favours he had received from the French court, was in the first place anxious only on account of the fortunes of his country and himself. But little advantage could result from such interviews as these,

and although those which Prince Schwarzenberg had with M. de Bassano, who had still remained some few days at Paris, might have had more effect, they unfortunately had not.

From the time of the marriage of Marie Louise the Prince of Schwarzenberg had carried his intimacy with M. de Bassano almost to an intrigue; they were therefore very familiar with each other, and able to speak together with perfect frankness, and Prince Schwarzenberg endeavoured, accordingly, to place before M. de Bassano what appeared to him to be the true state of affairs; and when the latter, who appeared scarcely to comprehend the truths insisted on by the prince, continued repeatedly to refer to the treaty of alliance, and especially to the marriage, the prince at length lost patience, and exclaimed, "The marriage, the marriage! . . . Policy made it, and policy may unmake it!" At which outburst M. de Bassano began to perceive the true state of affairs, but feigned not to understand its meaning, that he might not have to reply to it; and the interview terminated with fresh and deceitful protestations of fidelity to the alliance. M. de Bassano determined to refrain from repeating what he had heard to the emperor, that he might not irritate him against Austria; and this was doubtless well intended; but it is thus that servants destroy the masters whom they have not accustomed to the language of truth. If the whole world, if the nature of things would follow the fashion attributed to them, to ignore an evil would be to annihilate it; but, in the actual state of things, to hide adverse facts from those whose fortunes they concern, is but to convert them into disasters.

In Vienna the course of affairs was not more favourable, although much more clear-sightedness and diplomatic skill were brought to bear upon them there by the representatives of France and Austria. Whilst M. de Narbonne had been on his way thither, the position of affairs had become much worse for us, whilst M. de Metternich and the emperor found themselves day after day compelled to plunge into more painful dissimulations. It would doubtless have been wiser to have come to an open and immediate explanation with all the belligerent powers; to have said both to the allies and to Napoleon that Austria desired peace, but such a peace as should secure the interests of Germany in the first place, and in the next, those of Europe in general, to the equilibrium of which an independent Germany was indispensable; that being able to throw a decided weight into the balance, she was ready to give it against that side which should refuse to accept completely and immediately that basis of a general peace. But to speak thus before having two hundred thousand men in Bohemia, might have been a hazardous proceeding in the

presence of one so impetuous as Napoleon, and of a coalition so intoxicated with unexpected successes as was that of Russia, England, and Prussia. It was prudent, then, to gain time before entering into full explanations.

In the meantime, the Austrian cabinet had neglected nothing which could help her to succeed in the task she had to perform, and in the first place had sought to procure adherents to its mediatorial policy in Germany itself, amongst the princes engaged, as it was itself, to the French alliance. It had commenced by entering into secret communication with Prussia, and when this power, having suddenly turned from a policy of mediation to one of war, could no longer be of use, it had directed all its efforts towards Saxony and Bavaria, which were most anxious for peace, especially a peace which should be advantageous to Germany, and had succeeded in inducing them to adopt its policy. It had induced the King of Saxony to quit Dresden, as we have already seen, and it was now anxious that he should proceed from Ratisbon to Prague, that he might be more completely at its disposal, and ready to acquiesce in its views, the chief of which was to obtain from him the resignation of Poland; by procuring which it hoped to render the acceptance of the terms of peace it proposed less difficult on the part of Napoleon, who would then be freed from the embarrassment of abandoning an ally for whom he had always affected great favour; whilst a territory extending from the Bug to the Wardt would afford the means of reconstituting Prussia. Russia would thus be freed from the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, which was for it such an accusing and threatening phantom, and something might be given her for the Duke of Oldenburg. Finally, Austria might take for herself, and in the midst of her views for the public welfare this was a matter by no means lost sight of by her, the portion of Galicia lost after the battle of Wagram. Austria was also desirous that Saxony should employ her forces in strict co-operation with her own armies; and of the Saxon forces, far the most interesting in the eyes of Austria was the Polish contingent of Prince Poniatowski, which had fallen back towards Cracow in the track of Prince Schwarzenberg, not only on account of its military importance, but on account also of its special position. It was necessary, in fact, to prevent this Polish corps from acting at the approaching opening of hostilities, in accordance with the order sent by Napoleon, and thus drawing the Russians upon Bohemia.

The means devised by M. de Metternich by which to escape from the complications in which the Austrian court was involved, consisted in a continuance by a written convention of what had already been done in accordance with a tacit understanding, namely, to retreat before the Russians, feigning to be compelled



to do so by superior numbers. A note, therefore, was exchanged between the Austrians and Russians, which, it was declared, should be ever kept secret, and by which it was agreed that the Russian general, the Baron de Sacken, should repudiate the armistice, in accordance with which the Russians had suspended hostilities with the Austrians at the end of the last campaign, and feign to deploy a considerable force upon their flank; and that the latter, feigning, on their side, to be forced to retreat, should re-pass the Upper Vistula, abandon Cracow, re-enter Galicia, and carry with them Poniatowski's Polish corps, compelling it to submit to the pretended necessity of retreating. The Russians were to halt upon arriving at the Austrian frontiers.

As the Austrian cabinet was unwilling that the Polish troops should be left too near the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, and especially unwilling that they should be left in the midst of Galicia, it was anxious to come to an agreement with the King of Saxony, their grand duke, with respect to their being marched, unarmed, across the Austrian States upon the Elbe, where Napoleon might do with them what he pleased. And to this the poor King of Saxony, who was in a horrible state of anxiety, and unable to decide in whose hands to place himself, consented.

This point having been obtained, it was necessary to obtain of the King of Saxony the definitive abandonment of the Duchy of Warsaw, in order to take from Napoleon what, as we have said, was both an argument and a source of embarrassment; and Austria was desirous that the King of Saxony should receive in exchange for it the fair principality of Erfurth, hitherto kept en dépôt by France, and at one time offered as a recompense to the Duke of Oldenburg. And it was because it wished to have this monarch more completely under its influence that it now proposed that he should remove from Bavaria to Bohemia, declaring to him the advantages to him of being at Prague, in an inviolable country, and explaining that at so short a distance from Dresden he could be in constant communication with his subjects, and thus preserve their affection.

The negotiations entered into with Bavaria were as delicate, and even more full of difficulties, than those with Saxony, since it was necessary to bring it to consent to a sacrifice which could be of no service to the general cause, but of great advantage to Austria, being the re-establishment of the frontier of the Inn, which had been rearranged at the expense of Austria, and to the profit of Bavaria, by the treaty of peace of 1809. As for our allies of Baden and Wurtemberg, Austria could only proceed with the utmost caution, for their vicinity to the banks of the Rhine rendered them constantly exposed to Napoleon's vigilant power.

It was whilst Austria was in the very midst of this subtle and secret web of diplomacy that M. de Narbonne surprised it by coming the bearer of views which were, unfortunately, very different from her own. Instead of bringing a project for the reconstitution of Prussia and securing the independence of Germany, he was the bearer of proposals for the destruction of Prussia, and the substitution of Saxony in its place, whilst Austria was to be paid for its assistance in effecting these changes by the addition of Silesia to its territory, and by being in a state of greater dependence than ever.

The reception of M. de Narbonne, however, by M. de Metternich was most cordial and flattering. The French minister was received, in fact, by the Austrian one as a friend from whom he had nothing to conceal, and by whose aid he was anxious to save France, Austria, Europe, from a frightful catastrophe. He took great pains to discover whether M. de Narbonne brought at length such concessions on the part of Napoleon as would prove his desire for peace; but M. de Narbonne still awaited his final instructions from Paris, and until their arrival he had nothing to say, except to intimate that Napoleon was resolved to yield nothing, but that if Austria was willing to become his accomplice, he would pay her well for her services, with territories which should be taken, it mattered not from whom. As, therefore, M. de Narbonne declined to speak, M. de Metternich took their conversations into his own hands, repeating things which would have been sufficiently well understood without the assistance of any words from his mouth, so often, and with such goodwill, that they could not fail to be comprehended. Pointing out to the French minister the excitement of public feeling in Vienna, and its demand that advantage should be taken of the present state of affairs to free Germany from the yoke of France, he proceeded to say that the Austrian cabinet was nevertheless well aware how terribly powerful was Napoleon, and how dangerous it must be rashly to attack him; and that it remembered, moreover, the marriage and the treaty of alliance of 1812. "Still," continued Metternich, "it was necessary to recognise evident truths, and to admit that there was throughout Europe a universal excitement of feeling against France, at least against her chief; that France herself had need of repose; that a few battles would doubtless be gained by Napoleon, but that victories on the battlefield would not suffice to enable him to resist, for any length of time, the popular movement which had now begun; and that it was necessary, therefore, that he should consent to such a peace as should preserve to him his just glory, but at the same time secure the independence of the nations of Europe.

As M. de Metternich failed to obtain any reply to these general truths, but equally general remarks respecting the extent of our armaments, the certainty that our arms would speedily gain fresh victories, and the consequent necessity of behaving with great caution with respect to us, he again sought to sound the depths of our ambition; repeating the remarks he had already so frequently made, upon the impossibility of maintaining the chimera of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, condemned by the campaign of 1812; upon the necessity of strengthening the intermediate powers, and especially Prussia, as being the only nation capable of replacing Poland, now for ever destroyed; upon the necessity of narrowing the territorial system of Europe; upon the impossibility of giving any lengthened existence to the Confederation of the Rhine; on the impossibility of inducing the belligerent powers to consent to the definitive annexation to the French empire of Lubeck, Hanover, and Bremen; and upon all those points, in fact, which we have already indicated, and in respect to which the disposition of the Austrian cabinet was already so clearly manifested. "It will be sufficiently difficult," added M. de Metternich, "to prevent the allies from raising difficulties with respect to Holland, Spain, and Italy; and even if England gives way to your views with regard to Holland and Italy, it is quite certain that she will not do so with regard to Spain. However, we will leave England on one side, and negotiate without her, if it be necessary to do so; for we should be able, most probably, to induce Russia and Prussia to separate themselves from her, if we submit to them acceptable conditions of peace!" With respect to what more particularly affected the interests of Austria herself, M. de Metternich intimated that the allies were willing to give anything as the price of the Austrian alliance, but at the same time declared that Austria would be contented with that portion of Galicia which had been taken from her in 1809 for the purpose of increasing the impossible Duchy of Warsaw, and the Illyrian provinces, "the restoration of which," he said, "France has already promised."

Such was the language of M. de Metternich. The Emperor Francis, more reserved and more measured in his expressions, contented himself with receiving M. de Narbonne with every personal testimony of consideration, declaring to him his satisfaction at his daughter's happiness in France, his admiration of the genius of his son-in-law, and his anxiety to remain his ally; but at the same time intimating that he could only be so in the cause of peace, since his people would not permit him to be so for any other purpose.

To all these intimations and declarations M. de Narbonne replied as well as he was able, boasting of his master's great-

ness, and taking advantage of the art which he had learned in the salons to cover with much ease and grace the impossibility of saying anything of real importance. In the meantime, however, he had discovered what were the real intentions of the Austrian cabinet. He had discovered that she was decidedly unwilling to fire a single shot in favour of France; that she was also unwilling, on the other hand, to pass abruptly, as Prussia had, from a state of alliance to one of war; that she wished to present herself in the character of a mediator between the belligerent powers, and was resolved to throw the weight of her forces against either the one or the other of them for the purpose of enforcing the acceptance of peace.

M. de Narbonne speedily determined that, at the best, neutrality alone could be obtained of the court of Vienna, and that by the exercise of caution, by avoiding explanations, and by making no demands, she might be retained in a state of inactivity sufficiently long to serve our purpose. The best course M. de Narbonne could have adopted upon making this discovery would have been, perhaps, to have frankly entered into the views of the Austrian cabinet, and to have declared his adherence to them to Napoleon. But such a bold proceeding would have been ineffectual, and M. de Narbonne did not care to venture upon it, resolving instead, that it would be better to make every endeavour to paralyse the activity of Austria than to render it more active, and preparing to counsel this course to his own government, when he received the long-expected instructions, which were certainly entirely opposed to the preservation of Austrian neutrality.

These instructions, which were despatched on the 29th of March and arrived on the 9th of April, empowered M. de Narbonne to adopt a decided tone, to declare that Austria must adopt a principal part in the conduct of affairs; that since she was desirous of peace, she must enable herself to dictate it by preparing powerful forces; that she should then summon the belligerent powers to pause in their movements, under a threat of throwing a hundred thousand men upon their flank; and that, finally, if they should not obey her, she should throw a hundred thousand men into Silesia, at once annexing it to her own territory, whilst Napoleon should drive the allied forces beyond the Vistula. . . . M. de Metternich listened to this project with apparent impassibility, and then asked—"Supposing that the belligerent powers do pause at our summons, what bases of peace should we offer them?" and to this question M. de Narbonne could give no reply, for the despatch he had received referred only to the circumstances arising out of the continuance of war, Napoleon being unwilling, in fact, to declare as yet what territorial system in Europe he would consent to.

M. de Metternich affected to be willing to await patiently the solution of this point, and to find in what M. de Narbonne had communicated matter for long reflection. He promised to give his answer as soon as the serious nature of the subject would permit.

M. de Metternich himself could not have selected a more satisfactory means of escaping from the embarrassment of the moment than that which was afforded by the last communications from Paris. This embarrassment consisted in the difficulty of declaring to Napoleon that Austria had adopted the rôle of mediator, which was necessarily the abandonment of the rôle of ally, of the difficulty of finding a pretext for armaments of which the extent could no longer be justified, and finally, of the difficulty of explaining the services which were to be performed by the Austrian auxiliary corps, which, instead of fighting with the Russians, was entering Galicia. And with respect to these three points, Napoleon himself had almost miraculously come to the assistance of M. de Metternich, who was too clever not to avail himself of the path to good fortune thus provided.

After the lapse of two days he announced to M. de Narbonne, with an air of satisfaction which may be easily imagined, that having consulted with his master, he was ready to give explanations with respect to the policy of the Austrian cabinet. Declaring his satisfaction at finding his own views on the most important points of the last communications similar to those of Napoleon, he proceeded to say that the Austrian cabinet had perceived, as Napoleon had done, the impossibility that Austria should take a secondary part in the present state of affairs, and had accordingly made such preparations as would speedily place at her disposal a hundred thousand men in Bohemia. "Austria would present herself," he said, "before the belligerent powers as an armed mediator; should they obey her summons to an armistice, and to have plenipotentiaries for the negotiation of peace, it would then be necessary to enunciate the conditions of peace, and on this point," continued M. de Metternich, "the fresh communications promised by the French cabinet were impatiently expected. Should the belligerent powers, on the contrary, refuse to entertain any proposition of peace, it would remain for France and Austria to agree respecting the manner in which their forces were to act in concert; and with regard to this point, the insufficiency of the last treaty of alliance and the necessity of modifying it in conformity with circumstances was evident. That new measures must consequently be taken with respect to the Austrian corps, which was on the frontiers of Poland in a perfectly false position, and that it would be withdrawn to the Austrian territory, together with the Polish

corps, in order that it might not be employed in a manner contrary to the views of the two cabinets.

At one single stroke M. de Metternich had freed himself on this occasion from all his embarrassments. From the position of an enslaved ally he had proceeded to that of an armed mediator. But M. de Narbonne was far too clear-sighted not to perceive through the Austrian minister's eagerness to appear to be agreed with the French government on all essential points, that he held, in fact, opinions entirely opposed to them. He attempted, therefore, without either anger or bitterness, but rather with the persiflage of a man of the world, anxious not to be supposed a dupe, to force M. de Metternich to an explanation, and to gain from him some portion of his secret, inquiring of him what were the conditions of peace of which Austria was prepared to compel the acceptance by the belligerent powers. "Those," replied M. de Metternich, "on which we shall have agreed; those respecting which we have vainly pressed you to explain yourselves during the last three months, the communication of which by you we have still to await, and the want of which renders the agreement between us incomplete in a most essential point, namely, that of the conditions which we are to present to the belligerent powers when summoning them to surrender." "But suppose that these conditions, of which I am not informed," said M. de Narbonne, "should not be such as you desire?" But here M. de Metternich, who was unwilling to attempt to accomplish too much in one day, and was contented with the ground already gained, and which enabled Austria to proceed from the position of an ally to that of an armed mediator, hastened to interrupt the French minister, saying to him—"I am under no anxiety with respect to these conditions. Your master will be reasonable. . . . Indeed, it is impossible that he should be willing to risk all for such a ridiculous chimera as the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, for the no less ridiculous protectorate of the Confederation of the Rhine, and for those Hanseatic towns which must cease to be of any value to him as soon as, by the conclusion of a general peace, he renounces the continental blockade!" . . . "But suppose," rejoined M. de Narbonne, who was unwilling to permit his adversary thus to escape him—"suppose that my master should be of a different opinion, and be resolved to preserve to France all that he has conquered for her; what will happen then?" "It will happen, it will happen," replied M. de Metternich, in a tone of embarrassment and impatience—"it will happen that you will be compelled to grant what France herself demands of you, and what she has a right to demand of you after such long-continued and glorious efforts, namely, peace!—a peace accompanied by that just glory which no nation, not even

England, wishes to dispute her enjoyment of." Still persisting in his questions, M. de Narbonne now inquired in plain terms whether, if Napoleon should reject the conditions of peace proposed by her, Austria would turn her arms against him; and M. de Metternich, questioned more closely than he liked, at length exclaimed—"Well! yes! an armed mediator, as his title shows, is an impartial arbitrator, who is provided with the force necessary to enforce respect to that justice of which he is the minister." And then, as though he felt that he had said too much, he added—"Of course you will understand that in this case the inclinations of the arbitrator are all in favour of France." "But in certain circumstances you would declare war against us?" again rejoined M. de Narbonne. "No, no! we shall not do so, for you will certainly be reasonable," replied M. de Metternich. And at this point of the conversation M. de Narbonne, endeavouring to give a pleasant tone to a conversation which he feared that he had rendered too serious, said to M. de Metternich—"Your real object, I imagine, is to gain time, and to afford us the opportunity of gaining some fresh victory. . . . And if the arbitration depend on that, permit me to express a conviction that it will be in our favour." "I do certainly," replied M. de Metternich, "reckon upon your gaining victories, and it is necessary that you should do so for the purpose of bringing your adversaries to reason. But do not deceive yourselves—as soon as you shall have gained a victory, we shall address you in more decided terms than now."

The consequences of the fault which Napoleon had now committed with respect to Austria were immediate and numerous. Scarcely had Austria assumed the position of an armed mediator when she took advantage of this position to advance upon the path which had thus been opened to her. The King of Saxony, still at Ratisbon, was assailed by advice, threats, and entreaties from every direction. He had declined the offers made to him by Prussia for the purpose of inducing him to join the coalition; but Austria still continued her endeavours to induce him to resign the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, and now had a fresh argument to adduce in favour of this measure—alleging that France had demanded the mediation of Austria, that Austria had consented to afford it, that Austria therefore did nothing which was not in conformity with Napoleon's views, and that the renunciation by Saxony of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw would relieve him from a serious embarrassment, and render, in fact, the attainment of peace not only easy but certain. Moreover, urged the Austrian cabinet, it would be well to secure a solid possession, such as Saxony, by the sacrifice of a chimera such as Poland, and to renounce a dream which was no longer suited to the times. Overcome by these various reasons, Frederick

Augustus, who perceived that a career of ambition was not suited to him, and that in allying himself with a conqueror who had risen from the whirl of revolutions he had accepted an association as foreign to his genius as to his conscience, subscribed the renunciation which was demanded of him, signing it on the 15th of April, three days after the declaration of armed mediation made by Austria upon our imprudent provocation. At the same time, fearing that if he remained at Ratisbon he might again fall under the influence of Napoleon, as the latter proceeded by way of Mayence and Erfurth to place himself at the head of his armies, the Austrian cabinet insisted that Frederick Augustus should remove from Ratisbon to Prague, from whence, it said, being but a short distance from Dresden, he might govern his kingdom as though he were there, and without incurring any danger either from the allies or the French.

At the very moment when he was being thus urged by the Austrian cabinet, the King of Saxony received the summons sent from Paris to deliver his fine cavalry to Marshal Ney, who required it for the purpose of opening the campaign. This was a demand which, to the unfortunate king, was almost equivalent to a demand of his life, so terrified was he at the idea of the Cossacks; and when M. de Serra, the French minister, insisted upon having a reply to it, Frederick Augustus, in a state of terror, and full of regret at having been placed in such a position of embarrassment on account of the ambitious dream of his ancestors, determined suddenly to depart for Prague. He was accompanied by an enlightened minister, M. de Senft, who had hitherto supported the policy of the French alliance, filling at Dresden a part similar to that played by M. de Metternich in Vienna, M. de Hardenberg in Berlin, and M. de Cetto at Munich. But he was now vanquished, as had been all the partisans of the French alliance, and yielded. At the last moment M. de Serra received a letter for the emperor, in which the worthy King of Saxony told him, that upon the invitation of Austria, with whose perfect understanding with France he was acquainted, he had proceeded to Prague, but was still as faithful as ever to the great monarch who had overwhelmed him with benefits.

When news of this event reached Vienna, the Emperor Francis and his minister Metternich could not conceal their joy at having in their hands so precious an instrument for effecting their designs, and believing that reserve was no longer necessary with respect to the auxiliary corps, wrote to Prince Poniatowski that it was necessary to evacuate Cracow, and re-enter the Austrian territories, since hostilities were about to be resumed, and the Austrian government was anxious to avoid drawing the Russians



upon Bohemia. He was informed, moreover, that on their march the arms of the Polish, Saxon, and French troops were to be deposited in waggons, to be subsequently restored to them. These directions reached Prince Poniatowski simultaneously with the order sent from Paris to prepare to enter upon active service in the field, and to co-operate with the Austrian corps, which also was to receive Napoleon's instructions. Prince Poniatowski hastened to lay all these communications before M. de Narbonne, that he might explain a mysterious state of things, which was quite beyond his, Prince Poniatowski's, comprehension.

M. de Narbonne, who could not fail any longer to perceive what the designs of Austria really were, hastened to seek another interview with M. de Metternich, to demand of him an account of the recent proceedings of the Austrian cabinet, and found him embarrassed at having to answer the questions which the French minister now put to him, and almost vexed that the results he had desired should have been so speedily attained. Commencing with the King of Saxony, he declared that no one was more surprised at his sudden arrival at Prague than the Emperor Francis. With respect to the withdrawal of the Polish corps to Bohemia and the order given for the removal of its arms, as he was unwilling to avow the secret arrangement signed with the Russians, he excused himself as adroitly as he was able, saying that the Austrian cabinet had simply given a piece of friendly advice on this matter to Prince Poniatowski, which he was at liberty to accept or refuse; that having hitherto loyally fulfilled the duties of companions in arms towards the Poles during the retreat they had commenced together, Austria now warned them of the impossibility of supporting them in their present position; that the Russians were approaching in force, and that the Austrian cabinet was unwilling to attract them towards the Austrian territory by entering into fresh conflicts with them, which would be entirely opposed to the mediatorial part which she was about to assume at the instigation of France; that she had resolved, therefore, to withdraw the Austrian corps into Galicia, where she hoped it would not be followed, and had suggested to Prince Poniatowski that he might withdraw with the Austrian troops in order to avoid being made prisoner, and that if he accepted this offer, the resignation for a time of the arms of his troops was a mere matter of course, since it was not customary for troops to traverse a neutral territory in arms.

Such were M. de Metternich's explanations, to which there could be no difficulty in finding replies; but it would have been better to have left M. de Metternich under the impression that he had succeeded in fulfilling at once the two parts of mediator

and ally, in order that he might have been constrained as long as possible to fulfil the duties of the latter. Unfortunately, however, M. de Narbonne had not been sent for this purpose, and he persisted in embarrassing his antagonist, saying, that although the treaty of alliance between France and Austria was found to be no longer entirely applicable to circumstances, that was no reason for the withdrawal of these thirty thousand troops, which, with the Polish troops, would form a force of forty-five thousand men, perfectly capable, if posted on the left flank of the forces of the allies, to paralyse at least fifty thousand of their troops. Again, Napoleon had declared, on setting out to place himself at the head of his armies, that he would speedily give orders to the Austrian corps; and was Austria now prepared, by withdrawing it from his orders, to announce to Europe, to Napoleon himself, that the treaty of the 14th of March 1812 no longer existed? Was it worthy, moreover, of the Austrian arms that she should retreat before a few thousand Russians, and after having timidly re-entered her own frontiers, should then conceal her troops, and disarm those of her own allies? And finally, would these latter, amongst whom were some French troops, consent to be disarmed?

Unable to reply to these observations, M. de Metternich defended himself against them on the ground of prudence. "A few thousand Austrian and Polish troops, more or less, at Cracow, could not be of any real importance to Napoleon," he said; "and to refuse to allow her to take the course she desired with respect to this matter, simply for the sake of compromising her, would be to place her in a false position with respect to the belligerent powers, to whom she was to present herself in the character of an arbitrator; to render the performance by her of the duties of this character impossible; to expose her to a great outburst of popular indignation, should she fire a single shot against the allies; and most probably to cause her to lose that hold on the thread of German politics which she now held, but with a trembling hand. If she refused these thirty thousand troops to France now, it was but that she might place at her service a hundred and fifty thousand as soon as acceptable conditions of peace should have been agreed on. Moreover, France must be reasonable, and not demand so impossible a thing as that Austria should fight with Germans for Poles. With respect to the point of honour, due care had been taken, and the justification of the retreat was the certainty of being confronted by considerable bodies of the enemy. With respect to the disarming of the Polish troops, their sovereign, the King of Saxony, had consented to it; and with respect to the French battalion—well! in consideration of Napoleon's glory and that of the French army, the Austrian cabinet would disregard an inter-

national principle, and authorise this battalion to remain armed upon a neutral territory; Bohemia, as Napoleon knew, having been declared neutral for the purpose of preventing the Russians from advancing in that direction.

Perceiving, as he could not now fail to do, that neutrality was all that France could expect to obtain of Austria, and even that only at the price of prompt and decisive victories, M. de Narbonne sent information of what had passed between himself and the Austrian minister to M. de Bassano, and demanded fresh instructions how to act in the difficult position in which he found himself placed. In the meantime, a new fact communicated from Munich by our ambassador, M. Mercy d'Argenteau, revealed how great were the exertions which Austria was making to procure adherents to her plan of armed mediation. She had endeavoured to make of Bavaria what she had made of Saxony—an ally of France in a double sense, an ally of this power, that is, if she would accept a peace which secured the interests of Germany, but an enemy if she persisted in refusing it.

Bavaria, eager for repose, and assailed on all sides by the clamours of German patriotism, had listened to, and almost agreed to, the proposals of Austria up to the point at which the latter had demanded for herself the boundary line of the Inn; but at the enunciation of this pretension, which could only be satisfied by depriving Bavaria of a portion of territory, for which she could not possibly receive compensation, she determined to remain faithful to the French alliance. These details were communicated to M. de Narbonne at Vienna, and M. de Bassano at Paris, and fully confirmed the impression, which the course she pursued could not fail to leave, that she was endeavouring to form an intermediate party, which should enforce the conclusion of such a peace as should be agreeable to Germany, whether it were or were not agreeable to Napoleon.

These various momentous circumstances in the course of European policy had taken place between the 1st and 20th of April, whilst Napoleon was preparing for his departure from Paris, was proceeding to Mayence, and was giving them his first orders. And of all these circumstances, what most surprised him was the abrupt departure of the King of Saxony for Prague at the moment when the French army was ready to set his dominions free. The retreat of the Austrian corps appeared to him more accountable, and he perceived that Austria, whilst refraining from repudiating the alliance, was resolved to ignore its obligations. But the proposed disarming of the Polish troops excited his indignation, and he sent off a courier to Cracow, with a command to Prince Poniatowski to resist this measure at any hazard, and to perish rather than yield to it, adding with a vehemence and grandeur of language

which were truly his own—" *The emperor cares not for the preservation of men who shall have suffered themselves to be dishonoured.*"

Employing M. de Caulaincourt as his minister of foreign affairs in the absence of M. de Bassano, he wrote to M. de Narbonne to the effect that he began to see too clearly that Austria was playing him false; that her policy with respect to Saxony was particularly mysterious; that it was necessary to discover the clue to it, and to find out whether the fortress of Torgau, to which the Saxon infantry had retired, would be faithful or not to France, since it was important to know this at the moment of commencing operations on the Elbe; to obtain an explanation as to how far France might rely on the services of the Austrian corps, and to persuade her that she ought to renounce the idea of disarming the Polish troops. Napoleon, in short, desired M. de Narbonne to penetrate the mysterious system of diplomacy by which he was surrounded, but in such a manner as should avoid the display of any want of consideration for the father of his empress, whilst he himself should march to Dresden and cut the Gordian knot which appeared to be so hopelessly intricate at Vienna. At the same time he wrote to M. de Bassano, desiring him to inquire of Prince Schwarzenberg how it was that there was so great a difference between his promises and the actual state of affairs.

But believing, as he did, that he would speedily arrange everything by the power of his arms, he allowed these subjects to cause him but slight disquietude, and employed himself, as soon as he had arrived at Mayence, with that activity and unequalled intelligence which made him the first administrator in the world.

In spite of the perfect obedience usually paid to his orders, and in spite of the presence at Mayence and indefatigable zeal of the old Duke of Valmy, all the corps were still very deficient both in respect to matériel and officers. But ten or fifteen days' exertions on the spot would enable Napoleon to repair all deficiencies. By means of his own activity, and by paying ready money for what was required out of the private treasure he carried with him, he provided for all that was wanting. To supply the deficiency of officers, which existed to a great extent, a great number of officers who had been summoned from Spain now began to arrive by the public conveyances, and they had no sooner come than he employed them in their several duties; and when this means of supplying officers failed, he selected, during reviews made under his personal inspection, individuals capable of filling the vacant grades, and delivered them their commissions without awaiting the formalities of the war office. He had said, that in this campaign he would no longer be the

Emperor Napoleon, but General Bonaparte, and he kept his word. He had reduced his own equipage to the strictest limits, and required that all his generals should follow his example.

As soon as a regiment was ready for active service, he sent it to Marshal Ney at Wurzburg, or to Marshal Marmont at Hanau, or the imperial guard at Frankfort. Of all his troops, the guard in particular demanded and received his greatest care, and its reorganisation proceeded with extraordinary celerity. The corps of General Lauriston, exclusively composed of cohorts, had already joined Prince Eugène on the Elbe. Those of Marshals Ney and Marmont were ready to enter the field. The corps of General Bertrand debouched upon Augsburg, and found its artillery sent there for it by Napoleon, to relieve it from the necessity of dragging it over the Alps, money with which to purchase two thousand draught horses in Bavaria, and three thousand recruits, at first intended for the staffs returning from Russia, but subsequently devoted to the corps arriving from Italy. Every measure was carried out with such rapidity, even to the discipline of the men, that every day the troops were stopped on their march in order to go through the manœuvres which Napoleon had especially recommended, and which consisted in forming the battalion in square, deploying in line, and then forming into column of attack.

Certainly, this is not the way in which first-rate armies are to be formed; but when, in consequence of a too unbounded policy, it is necessary to execute every measure with rapidity, it is at least fortunate to possess the faculty of doing so in a high degree of perfection.

And we may notice how marvellous was the sympathy between the genius of the French nation and Napoleon's errors, which itself, in fact, partly induced him to commit. This quick, intelligent, and heroic nation, which had never since the earliest periods of our history ceased to be at war with Europe, and which, during the twenty-two years of revolution from 1792 to 1815, never reposed a day, whilst the nations with which it was successively at war took rest by turns, is the only one in the world, perhaps, whose children are capable of being converted into soldiers within the space of three months. In 1813 the thing was easier than ever; for Napoleon possessed a body of highly trained officers, who had practised the art of war during twenty years of service in the field, who had unbounded confidence in themselves and their leader, and who, whilst bitterly deploring the catastrophe at Moscow, were full of eagerness to repair it. With such elements to work with, the accomplishment of prodigies was still possible.

Napoleon had calculated that by leaving about thirty

thousand men at Dantzic and Thorn; thirty thousand at Stettin, Custrin, Glogau, and Spandau; Prince Eugène, reinforced by the corps of General Lauriston, which had been sent to him in March, would be able to assemble eighty thousand combatants on the Elbe. He hoped to debouch himself with one hundred and fifty thousand men from Thuringia, receiving, in passing, fifty thousand expected from Italy, and that being thus at the head of two hundred thousand men in addition to the eighty thousand under Prince Eugène, he would have more than sufficient force to overwhelm the hundred and fifty thousand troops which the Russians and Prussians expected to have at their disposal at the opening of the campaign. There would also be the three armies of reserve which were being formed in Italy, Mayence, and Westphalia, and which would be ready in June or July.

But, as was usually the case, the number of troops actually ready for service in the field at the opening of the campaign fell short of Napoleon's calculations, and numbered only two hundred thousand, instead of two hundred and eighty thousand; but this lesser force was still quite sufficient to drive back upon the Elbe and the Oder, and even upon the Vistula, the imprudent enemies who had advanced so far to brave his power. The following were the various positions of our troops at the close of April, at the moment of the commencement of operations.

Prince Eugène, after having left twenty-seven or twenty-eight thousand men at Dantzic, thirty-two or thirty-three thousand in the other fortresses of the Vistula and the Oder, had still almost eighty thousand active troops; but a portion of them were not so perfectly available as to be capable of being marched to join Napoleon when he should debouch on Saxony. Thus Prince Poniatowski, now thrown towards the frontiers of Bohemia, was separated from Prince Eugène by the whole force of the allies, who had passed the Elbe at several points. Of the Polish troops, there was now available only Dombrowski's division, numbering some two thousand infantry and fifteen hundred cavalry, who were at this period being reorganised at Cassel. Of Reynier's corps since its separation from the Saxons, there remained the French division Durutte, which now numbered four thousand men. The twenty-eight thousand of the division Lagrange and Grenier's corps were reduced to twenty-four thousand by continual skirmishes with the Prussians and Russians, and were placed under the superior orders of Marshal Macdonald, and under the direct command of Generals Fressinet, Gerard, and Charpentier. Finally, General Lauriston's corps possessed only thirty-two thousand of the forty thousand troops of which it nominally consisted;

but its ranks were filled with well-trained soldiers, and it was commanded by officers of division of the greatest merit, such as, for example, General Maison. And this corps it was necessary to still further diminish, by detaching from it the division Puthod, for the purpose of covering the Lower Elbe, until Marshals Davout and Victor should, with their reorganised battalions, have retaken Hamburg and occupied Magdeburg. However, of the reorganised battalions there were eight, those of Marshal Victor, which had hitherto been at the disposal of Prince Eugène, and which guarded Dessau, a very important point, since it was situated at a short distance from the confluence of the Elbe and Saale, behind which two streams Prince Eugène and Napoleon were to effect their junction. This prince had, finally, the cavalry, which had been remounted in Hanover, and three thousand men of the imperial guard, which he would very shortly have to restore to the imperial guard. Altogether, he had but sixty-two thousand men with whom to join Napoleon instead of eighty thousand, which it was calculated would have been at his disposal. These sixty-two thousand, however, were well armed, well disposed, and well commanded, and were spread along the line of the Elbe from Wittenberg to Magdeburg, ready and full of eagerness to join Napoleon.

The two hundred thousand men whom Napoleon had hoped to have under his immediate command after his junction with General Bertrand were also replaced by a considerably smaller number. Instead of the sixty thousand troops which it had been supposed would have been at Marshal Ney's command, he had no more than forty-two thousand, the diminution being due to the absence of the Wurtemberg and Bavarian contingents, and the Saxon cavalry. Of the second corps of the Rhine, which was being organised at Hanau under Marshal Marmont, eight thousand were wanting of the forty thousand which it had been calculated to consist of; and the third of its division, that of General Teste, had so many men absent from its ranks, that it had to await them before joining the grand army. Finally, the imperial guard, the full number of whose troops should have been over forty thousand, was far from ready, in spite of the activity Napoleon had displayed in its reorganisation, fifteen or sixteen thousand alone being prepared for active service. General Bertrand was the only general who succeeded in bringing up his corps to its nominal strength, having almost forty-five thousand effective troops, well disposed, and better disciplined than the other portions of the new army, being composed of veteran troops and conscripts who had already been trained during one or two years.

The actual state, therefore, of the various corps was such,

that Napoleon would be able to debouch on Saxony at the head of one hundred and thirty-five thousand men and three hundred and fifty pieces of cannon, to join Prince Eugène, who awaited him on the Elbe with sixty-two thousand men and a hundred pieces of cannon, and to meet the enemy at the head of two hundred thousand troops, whose ranks would speedily be filled up by fifty thousand others, and who would be followed by three armies of reserve, the numbers of which would raise the total of our forces in the field to four hundred thousand at least—a marvellous and almost incredible fact, when it is remembered that Napoleon had had only three months in which to realise it.

Napoleon having at length completed his preparations, quitted Mayence on the 26th of April, and visiting successively Wurzburg and Foulde, proceeded to Weimar, whither Marshal Ney had preceded him with his young and valiant divisions. His plan, conceived with his usual rapidity and justness of thought, consisted in permitting the forces of the allies, already carried beyond the Elbe, to advance as far as they pleased, even as far as the Upper Saale, then to direct his own forces upon Erfurth and Weimar, to defile behind the Saale as behind a curtain, to use his own expression, to join Prince Eugène in the direction of Weissenfels, then to pass that river en masse, and to take the enemy in flank with two hundred thousand men in the direction of Leipsic. Should fortune favour him, he might obtain by the execution of this plan the most important results; for after having vanquished the forces of the allies in a great battle, and taken a considerable number of them, he would be able to drive back the remainder beyond the Elbe and the Oder, free the garrisons of the Oder from blockade, re-enter Berlin a conqueror, put himself in communication with Dantzic, and manifest in a more terrible shape than ever the lion whom his enemies considered overthrown.

In furtherance of these views he had sent Marshal Ney to occupy the passages of the Saale before the enemy should have had time to seize them, but directed him only to guard and not to cross the Saale, and had directed General Bertrand, followed at a short distance by Marshal Oudinot, to meet him at Saalfeld. At the same time he ordered Prince Eugène to advance en masse in the direction of Dessau, at no great distance from the confluence of the Saale and the Elbe, and to ascend the course of the Saale as far as Weissenfels. He himself followed Marshal Ney and General Bertrand with the guard and the corps of Marshal Marmont. On the 26th he was at Erfurth, on the 28th at Eckartzberg, near the celebrated battlefield of Awerstaedt. He had ordered the collection of immense supplies of provisions at Wurzburg, Erfurth, and Naumburg, and having overcome by the power of money the



spirit of German patriotism, which was somewhat less ardent in these districts than elsewhere, had reason to hope that his soldiers would obtain the means of subsistence without being reduced to commit any excesses for the purpose of obtaining it. The delicate operation which at this moment he purposed to accomplish consisted in a double movement along the course of the Saale, he descending and Prince Eugène ascending it, the result expected of it being to concentrate in one mass all his available troops in the field. The allies, although posted very near, were neither sufficiently keen-sighted nor alert to divine and frustrate his manœuvre, as they might have done by a single movement.

The Russian army, which had suffered almost as much as our own during the retreat from Moscow, numbered at this time no more than one hundred thousand men, who were spread over the country from Cracow to Dantzic. About twenty thousand of them, under Generals Sacken and Doctoroff, were opposed to the Polish and Austrian troops around Cracow; twenty thousand remained before Thorn and Dantzic; eight or nine thousand, under Tettenborn and Czernicheff, occupied the district of the Lower Elbe in the direction of Hamburg and Lubeck; ten thousand had followed Wittgenstein beyond Berlin, and with General d'York's Prussian corps watched Magdeburg; twelve thousand, of whom the greater number were cavalry, had, under Wintzingerode, passed the Elbe at Dresden; and thirty thousand, who formed the principal corps, and consisted of soldiers of the guard, the grenadiers, and the remainder of Kutusof's army, remained on the Oder at headquarters.

The Prussians had reconstituted their army with a promptitude which was a manifest sign of an organisation long and secretly prepared. Their treaties with Napoleon obliged them to have but forty-two thousand men under arms, and of these they had had to send twenty thousand to accompany our armies on the late campaign, and of this number a third had perished. But they had kept up numerous regimental staffs, and left *en conge* in the towns and country districts well-trained soldiers, who only awaited the signal to rejoin their ranks. By these means, therefore, and by spontaneous levies of the youth of the country, the Prussian government had been able to assemble an army of one hundred and twenty thousand men, of whom sixty thousand were well-disciplined troops, ready for active service, forty thousand troops in course of training, and destined to join the troops in the field, and twenty thousand in the garrison.

At the commencement of operations the allies were able to present on the field of battle, on their right, d'York's

Prussian corps and Wittgenstein's Russian corps, which together amounted to thirty thousand men; in their centre Wintzingerode's corps of from twelve to fifteen thousand cavalry and light infantry, forming the advanced guard; whilst in a second line were Blucher with twenty-six thousand Prussians, and Kutusof with thirty thousand Russians; finally, on their left, but out of reach, were ten or twelve thousand men, under General Sacken—a total force of one hundred and ten or one hundred and twelve thousand men, and a somewhat insignificant foundation for the boldness and presumption so largely displayed by the allies, and for the magnificent promises which they had spread throughout Europe, for the purpose of exciting it against us.

The allies had reckoned upon an addition of strength which they still had to await, and which was that they expected to receive at the hands of Prince Bernadotte. In the interview at Abo, the future King of Sweden had agreed with Alexander to assist the efforts of the coalition by means of a corps of thirty thousand Swedes, and it was arranged that these, together with a body of fifteen or twenty thousand Russians, should be under his own command. For the purpose of facilitating the formation of this army, the English government had granted a subsidy of twenty-five millions of francs. The reward which Sweden was to receive for waging war with France was, as we have seen, Norway; and Bernadotte, more anxious to seize the reward than to fulfil his engagements, took care first of all to send troops into Norway to take possession of the price which had been promised for his defection from our alliance. The result was, that the allies were full of distrust with respect to the Prince-Royal of Sweden, and they received information from their emissaries that the old Marshal Bernadotte had not yet determined on the course he should pursue, and that he might even now, by the offer of due advantages, be induced to adopt more friendly sentiments towards France.

But although thus deprived of the expected Swedish contingent, and still unsupported by Austria, who had not yet joined them, being anxious first to exhaust all the chances of obtaining the conclusion of a satisfactory peace, the allies had determined not only to meet, but even to advance to meet with such forces as they possessed the shock of Napoleon's armies. And indeed, after the boasts in which they had indulged, to repossess the Elbe could not but be difficult and even dangerous, for it would be to spread discouragement throughout Germany, and to surrender Austria into Napoleon's hands. They were now posted in a species of *coupe-gorge*, having Prince Eugène on one side of them, the

mountains of Bohemia on the other, Napoleon opposite, and thus being exposed to being attacked simultaneously both in front and flank. The cautious Kutusof, who had become a species of oracle since his triumphs, persisted in advising that the Russian army should be content with what it had already gained, and retaining the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, should make peace with France and return to Russia; advice which Alexander, although excessively displeased at having to resign the character of liberator of Germany, did not venture to disregard; and therefore, whilst Wintzingerode, marching in company with the ardent Blucher, had crossed the Elbe at the beginning of April, the Russian army had remained behind, only entering Dresden on the 26th, the same day on which Napoleon reached Erfurth. But suddenly Kutusof, exhausted by the late campaign, died at Bunzlau, in the midst, as it were, of his triumphs; and from the moment of his death, all prudential considerations being thrown away, the only desire of the allies was to meet us in battle anywhere and anyhow, so that the battlefield was in the plains of Saxony, where their cavalry would give them an advantage over the French, who had but a youthful infantry and no cavalry.

The forces of the coalition continued, therefore, to advance during the 27th, 28th, and 29th of April between Prince Eugène, who was at the confluence of the Saale and the Elbe, and Napoleon, who was advancing from the Thuringian forest. To have hastened upon Leipsic, Lutzen, Weissenfels, and Naumburg for the purpose of cutting the line of the Saale and preventing the junction of Napoleon and Prince Eugène would have been the method by which the allies could have escaped from the danger of their position, but the execution of such a manœuvre required the guidance of a general, and since Kutusof's death Alexander had remained the sole military authority, listening to every one's advice, without knowing whose to adopt. It was agreed that Wittgenstein should have the command when actually in the presence of the enemy, but in the meantime the coalition forces advanced under a command which was neither prompt, certain, nor calculated to obtain obedience, pushing on as far as Leipsic, Wittgenstein and d'York marching on the right in the direction of Halle, Wintzingerode commanding the advanced guard at Lutzen, Blucher and the bulk of the Russian army in the centre, between Rotha and Borna, whilst Miloradovitch was on the left, on the Chemnitz route, which runs along the foot of the mountains of Bohemia, to render this side safe should Marshal Ney happen to appear there. The allies marched on with the knowledge that he was advancing, but failed to perceive that, instead of proceeding along the mountains of Bohemia on

issuing from the Thuringian forest, he might take the opposite direction, and descend the Saale for the purpose of joining the viceroy.

On the 29th, in fact, Marshal Ney did descend the Saale, crossed it a little above Weissenfels, and advanced into the immense plains which extend beyond this river, and in the midst of which is Lutzen—Lutzen, which Gustavus Adolphus had rendered celebrated, and which Napoleon was speedily to render still more so.

Following Napoleon's instructions, Marshal Ney crossed the plain of Weissenfels with the division Souham formed into many squares, the advanced cavalry post having in the meantime afforded him very clear information of the approach of Wintzingerode's numerous squadrons. This German general, who commanded the Russian advanced guard, had under his orders the infantry division of Prince Eugène of Wurtemberg, and eight or nine thousand superb cavalry; and had that very day advanced beyond Weissenfels, for the purpose of seeking what Ney was perfectly ready to afford him, information of the French.

Our conscripts, although in the presence of the enemy for the first time, advanced with the ardour of youthful and exuberant courage, crossing the undulated ground which lay between them and the enemy undaunted by his fire, and debouching in many squares on the plain beyond. After some discharges of cannon, Landskoy's division of cavalry advanced at a gallop upon our squares, and the aged and intrepid Souham, the heroic Ney, and the generals of brigade placed themselves in the several squares for the purpose of encouraging their infantry, as yet unaccustomed to such a position. When successive discharges of musketry had checked the enemy's successive assaults, Ney broke the squares of his infantry, and forming them into column, drove the enemy before him. He congratulated his brave conscripts, who filled the air with shouts, a thousand times repeated, of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" and from this moment everything could be expected of them. They followed the Russians into Weissenfels, drove them out of it, and at the close of the day were masters of this important point.

At the same moment, Macdonald, whose troops formed Prince Eugène's *tête-de-colonne*, had entered Merseburg and mingled his advanced posts with those of Ney. General Lauriston, who followed him, had found the Halle bridges strongly occupied by the Prussian general Kleist, with infantry and artillery, and had not striven to force a position which must fall on the morrow by being turned.

On receiving information of the above recited events, Napoleon was greatly delighted, and wrote to Munich, Stuttgart,

Carlsruhe, and Paris, recounting the prowess of his young soldiers. On the following day, the 30th, he quitted Eckartsberg and proceeded to Weissenfels.

His junction with Prince Eugène having been now effected on the Lower Saale, he naturally was anxious to make it serve the purpose for which he had effected it, and which was that of enabling him to debouch en masse on the famous plains of Lutzen, march upon Leipsic, cross the Elster there, then execute a *mouvement de conversion*, the left in advance, and marching upon the allies, to crush their forces against the Bohemian mountains. His reconnaissances had informed him that the Russian and Prussian forces were crowding upon his right, that they were consequently between him and the mountains on the Upper Elster, which was the stream the French army would find on its north, after it had crossed the Saale. He resolved to advance from Weissenfels upon Lutzen, intending to march from thence upon Leipsic in close column, and then to pass the Elster; but as two hundred thousand men could not well advance at the same time by a single road, he sent Marshal Ney, the guard, and Marshal Marmont by the grand route from Lutzen to Leipsic, ordering General Bertrand and Marshal Oudinot to debouch from Naumburg upon Stössen, for the purpose of flanking them on the right, and ordering Prince Eugène to debouch from Merseburg and advance with all his forces upon Leipsic by the Mackranstædt route, for the purpose of flanking them on the left. On the following day, the 1st of May, he mounted his horse at an early hour, and accompanied by Marshals Ney, Mortier, Bessières, Soult, Duroc, and M. de Caulaincourt, set out in the hope of enjoying with his own eyes the spectacle which had so charmed Marshal Ney on the previous evening, that of our young soldiers supporting with undaunted courage the charges of the enemy's cavalry.

At daybreak, Marshal Ney's troops advanced upon the vast Lutzen plain formed in squares, which were accompanied by artillery, and preceded by numerous tirailleurs. Arriving at the brink of a long and deep ravine, called the Rippach ravine, from the name of a village which it traversed, the squares broke for the purpose of passing it, and when it had been crossed, reformed and continued their advance. The division Souham held the foremost place, marching with an excellent bearing, and had just deployed, when Marshal Bessières, who usually commanded the cavalry of the guard, and should not consequently have been where he now was, advanced a little to the right, for the purpose of being better able to observe the enemy's movements, and suddenly fell dead, struck by a bullet in his breast. It was the second time, alas! that this brave man had been hit on the battlefield by Napoleon's side, the first time being at Wagram,

where a bullet had struck him, but only caused a contusion. His death on the present occasion caused, in spite of the general confidence, a painful foreboding in more than one heart. He was a valiant man, of a lively Gascon temperament, but possessed of a fine intellect, and of a courage which frequently led him to express to Napoleon useful truths both impressively and opportunely. Napoleon loved and esteemed him, and felt a sincere pang of sorrow at his loss; but then exclaiming, "Death comes nigh us!" pushed forward to watch the march of his young soldiers, and experienced in the spectacle a satisfaction equal to that felt by Ney two days before, beholding his conscripts repelling again and again the repeated charges of the enemy's cavalry, and strewing the ground before them with three or four hundred killed and wounded foemen. The troops halted at Lutzen, and Napoleon went to visit the monument of Gustavus Adolphus, who had been struck down on this plain, as Epaminondas, in the bosom of victory, and gave orders that a monument should also be raised to the memory of the Duke of Istria, killed on the same ground.

On the following day, the 2nd of May, a day ever memorable, and one of the last on which fortune smiled upon our arms, Napoleon rose at three in the morning for the purpose of giving his orders and dictating a multitude of letters. Leipsic was distant only four leagues, and the reports of spies, more explicit now than they had been during the previous days, declared that the Russians and Prussians, continuing their movement on our right, had marched behind the Elster upon Zwenkau and Pegau, with the desire apparently to meet us or find out our position. Napoleon, confirmed by this news in his plan of advancing en masse upon Leipsic and then descending upon the enemy's flank, now ordered Prince Eugène to move Lauriston's corps directly upon Leipsic, to direct Macdonald to the right upon Zwenkau, the point at which would be encountered the enemy's most advanced detachments, and to occupy himself a position between Lauriston and Macdonald with the division Durutte, Latour-Maubourg's cavalry, and a strong reserve of artillery, for the purpose of affording support to the right or the left as circumstances might render necessary. At the same time, as it was possible that the enemy had ascended the Elster for the purpose of taking his own army in flank, Napoleon retained Ney with his five divisions in the environs of Lutzen, posting him at a group of five villages, of which the principal was named Kaja, and situated a league above Lutzen, on the bank of the Floss-Graben, a canal-d'irrigation which traversed the whole plain between the Saale and the Elster. Remaining at this point with his five divisions, Ney was to form the solid pivot around which we were to effect our *mouvement de conversion*; and Napoleon

ordered Marmont and Oudinot to cross the Rippach for the purpose of taking up a position on Ney's right, that they might be ready to assist him, or be assisted themselves should they be unexpectedly attacked, and that should they encounter no enemy, they might subsequently advance together upon the Elster by Zwenkau and Pegau.

Having informed each *chef de corps* with the utmost precision of what he expected him to do, and how to act under any circumstances that might happen, Napoleon employed himself in dictating letters, of which one was to the Duke of Rovigo, pointing out the kind of language which was to be held on the part of the government with respect to military affairs, at the moment when the public mind received with great distrust all official assertions, and concluding with these remarkable words: "*Truth and simplicity must be our rules to-day.*"

At ten o'clock he set out from Lutzen followed by a squadron of the guard, and hastened towards Leipsic, which was some four leagues distant. At the same moment, Marshal Macdonald, crossing the Leipsic route from left to right, advanced upon Zwenkau; whilst on the left, General Lauriston advanced from Mackranstædt upon Leipsic, Prince Eugène being upon the Leipsic route with the division Durutte and Latour-Maubourg's cavalry, and followed by the whole mass of the guard.

Passing along these various columns, which received him with repeated cries of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" Napoleon arrived in front of Leipsic, which the intrepid Maison, in command of the first division of Lauriston's corps, was attacking with his accustomed resolution and skill, General Kleist defending it with the Prussian infantry. A tract of marshy and wooded ground, as is well known, lies in front of Leipsic on the Lutzen side, and being traversed by various arms of the Elster, Leipsic itself can only be reached on this side by crossing the long series of bridges thrown over them, and these were now defended by powerful artillery and a body of Prussian infantry, *tirailleurs*, moreover, filling the surrounding thickets. But General Maison, directing a vigorous flank fire upon these defences, and then making a battalion ford the first arm of the Elster for the purpose of taking them in the rear, compelled the Prussians to evacuate the first bridge, and pursued them at the head of his infantry.

Whilst Napoleon watched through his glass in the fair May weather this scene so similar to so many others which had filled his life, a cannonade suddenly resounded on his right from the direction of the villages at which he had left Ney's five divisions. He had calculated all the chances of the vast manœuvre which he had planned, and could be neither surprised nor disconcerted. He listened some moments to this cannonade,

which continually increased, and then exclaimed, "Whilst we are endeavouring to turn them, they are endeavouring to turn us! It is well; they will find us ready for them." He immediately sent Ney, who had hitherto accompanied him, to maintain the position held by his five divisions in the five villages; and then with the readiness of one prepared for every eventuality, ordered a complete revolution in his order of march; in the first place directing General Lauriston to leave only one of his three divisions in Leipsic, and to échelon the two others in the rear, to ascend the course of the Elster with them as far as Zwenkau itself, and to advance upon the left of Ney. Macdonald, who had been ordered to move upon Zwenkau, he now directed to descend from this place upon Eisdorf, a little village situated on Ney's left, on the edge of the Floss-Graben, where he would be in a position to flank Ney's left, and even to outflank the enemy coming from Zwenkau. Prince Eugène, leaving Lauriston at Leipsic, was to support Macdonald with the remainder of his troops. Such were the arrangements Napoleon now made on Ney's left. On his right, Napoleon ordered Marmont to take up a position at Starsiedel, one of the five villages which Ney's corps had been directed to guard. At the same time, he ordered General Bertrand to debouch even on the enemy's rear, linking himself with Marmont, and thus Ney would be flanked on the right and left by corps which would not only afford him support, but also envelop the two flanks of the enemy. Finally, that his centre might not be penetrated, he made the whole of the guard retrace its steps, and moved it by the Lutzen route upon Kaja.

We must now direct our attention to the movements of the allies, and the circumstances which had brought them to encounter our arms at Kaja, instead of where Napoleon had expected to meet them, beyond Leipsic. On receiving information of the two engagements in which General Wintzingerode had encountered our troops with his cavalry, in advance of and in the rear of Weissenfels, on the 29th of April and the 1st of May, the allies had at length comprehended that Napoleon, ceasing to descend the course of the Saale for the purpose of joining the viceroy, was marching from the Saale to the Elster for the purpose of taking them in flank. Having determined to encounter us in battle, they were anxious to meet us on the plain of Lutzen, on account of the advantages it would afford their cavalry over so young an infantry as ours; and Diebitch, Prince Wittgenstein's chief of the staff, proposed to take advantage of Napoleon's flank march to attack him in flank himself, throwing twenty-five thousand men upon him in the direction of Kaja, in the hope of driving his infantry, thus unexpectedly assailed, amongst the marshes which extend from



Leipsic to Merseburg, the point of junction of the Saale and the Elster. This plan was assented to, and it was agreed that on the night of the 1st of May the troops of the allies should cross the Elster, those that came from Leipsic and Rotha at Zwenkau, and those which came from Borna at Pegau; that they should then cross the Floss-Graben, and should then by a *mouvement de conversion* fall upon the five villages situated on the right of the Lutzen, where only a few bivouacs had been observed, and should from thence hurl themselves upon the flank of the French army, the cavalry being ready to charge at a gallop as soon as the infantry should have taken the villages.

The whole night was employed in these manœuvres, and occupied so long a time that at ten o'clock in the morning the troops were still defiling, rejoiced at seeing the French army on its march upon Leipsic, hoping to surprise it. Alexander and Frederick William, abandoning the command to Wittgenstein, rode through the ranks of their soldiers, receiving their acclamations, and contributing thus to increase a loss of time which had already been too great.

The allies having crossed the Floss-Graben above us for the purpose of advancing to Lutzen, whilst we had crossed it below on our way to Leipsic, rested their right on the Floss-Graben, their left on the Rippach ravine, having in front the five villages, the possession of which was about to be so valiantly disputed. It was agreed that Blucher should attack in the first place the three first villages, which were situated in a hollow, and named respectively Gross-Gorschen, Rahna, and Klein-Gorschen, that Wittgenstein and d'York should support him, that Wintzingerode, posted on the right with all his cavalry, should be ready to pour down upon the French as soon as they should be thrown into disorder, that finally, the guard and the Russian reserve, infantry and cavalry, ranged on the right along the Floss-Graben, should be ready to advance to the support of the troops which might require it. There was some hope that Miloradovitch would arrive in time to take part in the battle, but without his troops the allies had at their disposal eighty thousand men, well concentrated, and animated with the utmost resolution.

When the troops had had an hour's repose, Blucher's Prussians commenced the attack under the eyes of the two sovereigns, who were posted on a slight eminence at some distance to watch the undaunted courage of their soldiers. Towards noon Blucher advanced at the head of the division Kleist upon Gross-Gorschen, throwing a violent artillery fire upon four battalions of the division Souham, which, *avertie* by the protracted preparations of the allies, had had time to get

under arms, and then attacking them with such extreme vigour with the division Kleist, that they were driven back into Gross-Gorschen, and from thence into Rahna and Klein-Gorschen. On the left, and opposite Starsiedel, another of the five villages, Wintzingerode had in the meantime approached the villages with his horse, with the intention of outflanking them, and seizing the occasion for a decisive charge.

In Klein-Gorschen and Rahna, the division Souham, numbering twelve thousand men, and rallied by its old general, whose rare courage was accompanied by the experience of twenty years, defended itself with the utmost vigour. Unfortunately the division Gerard, which was posted on the right, was still in the disorder of the bivouac, and was unable to use its artillery, the horses having been sent to procure forage, and it was possible, therefore, that on this side Souham might be outflanked. But at this moment, Marshal Marmont, having crossed the Rippach, debouched from Starsiedel opposite Wintzingerode, and posted his troops so as to cover the division Gerard, and Wintzingerode dared not attack infantry whose lines appeared as solid as walls, and which a storm of fire failed to shake.

But now, animated not only by his natural courage but also by all the passionate patriotism of a German, Blucher led his second division, that of Zeither, with so much energy upon Klein-Gorschen and Rahna, that he succeeded in overcoming the divisions Souham and Gerard, driving them out towards Kaja on the one side, and Starsiedel on the other, and to these two other villages Blucher, carried away by his heroic ardour, then advanced, resolved to surmount all obstacles.

But at this moment Ney arrived from Leipsic, bringing with him those of his divisions which were in the rear of Kaja, and Blucher had now to encounter an enemy capable of giving check to his own. At the aspect of Ney's energetic face and person our young soldiers recovered confidence, and having been rallied behind the division Brenier, which was at Kaja, advanced to retake the abandoned villages at the point of the bayonet, and driving back the Prussian troops which had advanced beyond them, re-entered Klein-Gorschen on the other, and in these two villages the conflict became a fierce hand to hand encounter, the result of which was that the Prussians were driven back to Gross-Gorschen, their first conquest.

Napoleon now came up, passing through the files of wounded, who shouted at his approach "*Vive l'Empereur!*" He saw that Ney maintained his position in the centre, that Eugène with Macdonald marched on the left beyond the Floss-Graben for the purpose of outflanking the enemy in the direction of Eisdorf, and that Marmont, whose troops were formed

on the right in numerous squares, maintained his position at Starsiedel. He could not perceive Bertrand, who was at some distance, but he could reckon upon his arrival, and knew that the guard were hastening up with the greatest expedition. He was satisfied, therefore, with the aspect of affairs, and allowed the battle to continue.

Blucher now brought up the royal guard and the reserves; throwing one or two battalions beyond the Floss-Graben for the purpose of preserving Eisdorf against a column of French troops which he perceived to be advancing against it; and on the left, hurling the royal horseguard upon the divisions Bonnet and Compans, which were ranged in square in front of Starsiedel, directing Wintzingerode to support this attack with the whole of the Russian cavalry, whilst he himself advanced with the infantry of the royal guard upon Klein-Gorschen and Rahna. He received a wound in the arm, but refused to leave the field; once more the enemy succeeded in gaining possession of Klein-Gorschen and Rahna, from whence, without pausing for a moment, they marched upon Kaja, and for the first time deprived us of its possession, whilst the cavalry directed against the divisions Bonnet and Compans endeavoured, but wholly in vain, to break their squares.

Kaja being taken, our centre was laid entirely open, and had the Russian army been now sent to the support of Blucher, Ney's line would have been pierced before our imperial guard could have had time to close up the breach. Napoleon, in the midst of the fire, rallied the conscripts. "Boys," he said, "I have relied upon you to save the empire, and you fly!" The guard not having as yet arrived, he ordered Count Lobau to place himself at the head of the division Richard, Ney's fifth division, and retake Kaja; and this officer, marching upon Kaja, attacked the Prussians which occupied it at the bayonet's point, and drove them back towards the hollow in which were situated the villages of Rahna and Klein-Gorschen. At the same time, Souham and Gerard, led on by Ney in person, returned to the charge with their rallied divisions; and from one wing to the other, over a space of two leagues, the combat continued to rage with unabated violence. Macdonald, with his three divisions, after having taken Rapitz from the enemy's advanced troops, approached from Eisdorf and Kitzen, and extended his cannon on our left beyond the Floss-Graben. Towards the opposite side, Bertrand debouched beyond the position occupied by Marmont and his first division, whilst Morand's was perceived in the distance on our right approaching in many squares.

Blucher now demanded support and the means of making a great blow at our centre, and the second line of the forces of the allies, that of Wittgenstein and d'York, was ordered to

advance to the support of Blucher's almost annihilated troops. Traversing the burning ruins of Klein-Gorschen and Rahna, they passed across the wrecks of the Prussian army, and through a storm of fire advanced upon Kaja, whilst Wintzingerode, with the Prussian horseguard and a portion of the Russian cavalry, threw themselves upon Marmont's squares, which had taken up a position a little in the rear, that they might rest on Starsiedel. Fruitless assaults! which the squares of Bonnet and Compans received as though they were inflamed citadels, pouring forth floods of fire from their walls. But on the right, the eighteen thousand men of Wittgenstein and d'York, led on with a vigour worthy of the importance of the moment, repulsed Ney's division, and pouring into Kaja, debouched from it and found themselves face to face with Napoleon's guard. Beyond the Floss-Graben the Prince of Wurtemberg disputed Eisdorf with the troops under Macdonald.

It was now Napoleon's turn to endeavour to make a decisive effort, and he ordered the advance of the young guard, directing the sixteen battalions of the division Dumoutier to break their squares, to form into columns of attack, to march upon Kaja and Starsiedel, to break through the enemy's lines at any price, and in short, to vanquish them, for it was absolutely necessary that they should do so. In the meantime, the old guard, formed into six squares, remained as so many redoubts intended to close the centre of our line. At the same time, Napoleon ordered Drouot to take up a position with eighty pieces of cannon, somewhat obliquely on our right in advance of Starsiedel, so as to take in front the cavalry which continued to attack uninterruptedly Marmont's division, and to take in flank Wittgenstein's and d'York's line of infantry.

These orders were executed immediately after they were given. The young guard, advancing in columns of attack, together with such of Ney's troops as were still capable of fighting, retook Kaja, and drove back the troops of Wittgenstein, d'York, and Blucher into the hollow in which were situated the villages of Klein-Gorschen and Rahna, where a storm of fire from Drouot's artillery fell upon them and compelled them to beat a retreat. At the same moment, two of Macdonald's divisions took Kitzen and Eisdorf from Prince Eugène of Wurtemberg, in spite of the aid sent by Alexander; whilst at the opposite extremity, Bonnet and Compans, led on by Marmont, broke their squares, and advanced in column upon the enemy's flank, behind which Morand had already extended his cannon.

It was now nearly eight o'clock; the staff of the allies began to be confused, and Frederick William and Alexander deliberated with their generals, on the height from which they had witnessed

the battle, respecting what should now be done. Blucher, more vehement than ever, was anxious that the Russian guard should once more be hurled against the French centre, urging that Miloradovitch would arrive in the course of the night, and serve as a reserve to cover the retreat of the army should a retreat be necessary. Wittgenstein and Diebitch replied, with good reason, that to persist in continuing the battle would be to incur the risk of being completely surrounded, and that, moreover, the supplies of ammunition were exhausted. These reasons were unanswerable, and a retreat was ordered, but Blucher, indignant, declared that he would prove with his cavalry alone that the day was not yet lost. There remained in fact about 4000 or 5000 of the Prussian cavalry, chiefly of the royal guard, yet capable of engaging the enemy, and having rallied them, the old Prussian general led them on in person against the French troops of Marmont's corps, posted on the left of the allies, in advance of Starsiedel. The first regiment, the 37th leger, of recent formation, surprised by the sudden attack, gave way, carrying along with them for the moment Marmont himself, who had hastened up with his staff. But the divisions Bonnet and Compans resisted all Blucher's furious attacks. And now at length having driven back this temporary disturbance, our troops could lie down in sleep upon the field of battle, which, covered with ruins and inundated with blood, the forces of the allies had been compelled, after so long a conflict, to abandon to us.

Napoleon slept on the field of battle, and at daybreak on the following day, the 3rd of May, mounted his horse, eager to give directions for the collection of the wounded, to put his troops in order and to pursue the enemy. Had he now possessed the cavalry which had perished in Russia, he might have taken them by thousands, but as it was, he could only collect the enemy's wounded, and dismounted cannon, of which trophies he collected a great number. Of the 92,000 men of the army of the allies, about 65,000 had been engaged, and on our side not many more. On each side the loss was very great, the Russians and Prussians having lost about 20,000, and the French about 17,000 or 18,000. The material results of our victory were not so considerable as our arms had been accustomed in former times to obtain, when each branch of our military service was in a state of perfection, and when we fought against enemies who were not as yet inspired with the courage of despair, but they were nevertheless satisfactory, and such as were sufficient cause that Napoleon should thank the generous nation which had thus once more poured out her blood for him, and should follow, if only for her sake, a prudent line of conduct.

How far the blow suffered by the allies was a decisive one

was speedily apparent, for their troops could be perceived in full retreat along the various routes. But decided and indisputable as their defeat had been, they nevertheless indulged in the most arrogant language, Alexander even claiming the result of the battle as a victory for the coalition, whilst the Prussians, overwhelmed apparently with the fact of having held their ground at all against Napoleon, spread abroad in all directions the announcement that they had gained a complete triumph, and retreated solely on account of the want of ammunition, and in conformity with a simple military calculation. And indeed it was in conformity with a military calculation, but it was that which leads the vanquished to fly before the conqueror. The forces of the allies hurried on in fact as quickly as possible to repass the Elster, the Pleiss, the Mulde, and the Elbe, and leave a hundred leagues of country between themselves and the French.

Napoleon having become convinced of the importance of this battle of Lutzen by the rapidity of the enemy's retreat, sent to Munich, Stuttgart, and Paris letters full of just pride, and breathing the admiration of his young soldiers, which they so well deserved; and then went to sleep at Pegan, rising at midnight, as was his wont, to give the necessary orders for the march of his troops. It was possible that the forces of the allies might take either of two directions—in the first place, the Prussians might gain by Torgau the Berlin route, for the purpose of covering their capital, whilst the Russians followed the Dresden route, for the purpose of re-entering Silesia; or, secondly, abandoning Berlin to its fate, and the zeal of the Prince-Royal of Sweden, the forces of the allies might continue their march in one mass upon Dresden; and Napoleon, with a military skill of which he alone was capable, formed his own plan of operations in such a manner that it might meet whichever course was pursued by the enemy. He directed Ney to remain two days at Lutzen for the purpose of tending his wounded, and then to enter Leipsic in triumph, that this city, which had displayed a spirit of hostility against us, might witness our triumph and the terror of our arms. He also arranged that he should be joined by Reynier with about 15,000 French and Saxon troops, the Duke of Belluna with 15,000 French, and General Sebastiani with 14,000; which, added to the 35,000 or 36,000 he still possessed of his 48,000, would form a total of 80,000. This addition to his force would be made within a week, and it was he who should have the honour of pursuing Blucher, should the Prussian general take the route to Berlin.

Napoleon reserved to himself the care of following the principal portion of the allied forces with the troops of Oudinot

and Bertrand, reinforced by the Bavarian and Wurtemberg divisions, with the troops under Marmont, Macdonald, and Lauriston, and finally, with the guard—a total force of about one hundred and forty thousand combatants. Having made these arrangements, and directed Ney to demand of the city of Leipsic six thousand beds for his wounded, and whatever he might have need of, he set out from Pégau, his troops being divided into three columns, of which the principal, composed of the troops under Macdonald, Marmont, and the guard, and led by Prince Eugène in person, was to gain, by Borna, the great Dresden road which passes by Waldheim and Wilsdruff; whilst the second, composed of the troops under Bertrand and Oudinot, keeping four or five leagues to the right, was to skirt, through Rochlitz, Mittweida, and Freyberg, the base of the mountains of Bohemia. The third, formed of Lauriston's corps alone, was to keep some leagues to the left, and proceed by Wurtzen upon Meissen, one of the *points de passage* of the Elbe, the most useful to occupy, and to form a line between Napoleon and Marshal Ney.

On the morning of the 5th of May, Napoleon set out for Borna for the purpose of placing himself in the track of his principal column, Prince Eugène preceding him. When the latter arrived at Kolditz on the Mulde, he found the Prussian rearguard posted along the river, the bridges of which were destroyed; he ascended the course of the stream, however, a little to the right, and discovering a ford, established himself on a height which dominated the great Dresden route, and compelled the Prussians to withdraw from the banks of the river under the fire of twenty pieces of cannon. They lost some hundreds of men, and retreated towards Leipsic, passing across the lines of a Russian corps which was in position at Seyfersdorf, beyond Harta, and was that of Miloradovitch, of whom the Prussians bitterly complained that he had allowed the whole fury of the battle at Lutzen to fall upon them alone. After having opened to let the Prussians defile through them, Miloradovitch re-formed his ranks, and taking advantage of his position, resisted with great firmness the energetic attacks of Prince Eugène, who could only dislodge him by turning him.

During the 6th and 7th our troops continued the pursuit of the enemy without pause, Napoleon wishing to arrive in Dresden by the 8th of May at the latest. The Prussians had taken the Meissen route, the Russians that of Dresden; but it was still impossible to conclude that they intended to separate. Napoleon having directed Lauriston's corps upon Meissen, urged him to hasten towards the Elbe, that he might obtain possession, if possible, of the passage of the river, a matter of

great importance, since our pontoons were far in the rear; and that he might also overcome all attempts at resistance on the part of Dresden, and render it unnecessary to destroy any of the fair edifices with which its electors had adorned it.

On the 8th our troops stood on the amphitheatre of hills, from the heights of which the fair city of Dresden appears, seated on the two banks of the Elbe and at the foot of the mountains of Bohemia, as Florence upon the two banks of the Arno, at the foot of the Apennines. Descending the slopes of this amphitheatre they beheld the dark columns of the Russian army thronging through the streets of the city, and repassing the Elbe by temporary bridges, which they burned behind them. Our soldiers entered the principal or old town, which is situated on the left bank of the river, and the Russians occupied the new town, situated on the right bank.

Our columns had scarcely entered Dresden when the municipal authorities hastened to implore our clemency, having good reason, indeed, to be alarmed, since they had raised triumphal arches in honour of the allied sovereigns, and addressed both entreaties and threats to their own sovereign, for the purpose of inducing him to follow the example of the King of Prussia. Napoleon, who had hastened up almost immediately, received the keys of the city on horseback, at the same time sternly declaring to those who presented them, that it was only his personal consideration for Frederick Augustus that induced him to save their city from pillage, and that the least act of treason in future would be immediately followed by the most terrible chastisements.

Napoleon was anxious to drive the Russians out of the portion of the city on the opposite bank, the new town, for the purpose of avoiding the occurrence of hostilities between the troops posted on the opposite banks, and the consequent danger of destruction to this beautiful capital. It would have been possible to have effected the passage by means of the stone bridge, supplying by a temporary structure the two arches of it which had been destroyed; but this would involve the necessity of a cannonade, which he was anxious to avoid, and he rode out of the town itself, therefore, to reconnoitre the points at which it was possible to cross the river above and below it. The passage above Dresden he found to be impracticable; but at almost a league below it, at Priesnitz, he discovered a place at which the passage of the stream, covered by artillery, might be successfully accomplished; and accordingly, at daybreak on the 9th of May, descending to this spot, with a strong column of infantry and the whole of the artillery of the guard, he had the construction of a bridge commenced and carried on under the fire of eighty pieces of cannon. It could



not be finished before the 10th, but in the meantime the Russians had evacuated the new town, and planks having been placed across the stone piles of the broken arches of the stone bridge, our troops had crossed over and occupied it. On the same day arrived General Bertrand and Marshal Oudinot, and Napoleon divided them between Dresden and Pirna. And now, as General Lauriston had succeeded at Meissen, where he encountered the Prussian rear, in crossing the Elbe without much difficulty, the French were at all points masters of the course of this river, and in peaceable possession of the capital of Saxony.

Napoleon resolved to halt some few days at Dresden for the purpose of rallying and refreshing his troops, to await the various cavalry corps which he expected to join him, to recall the King of Saxony to his States, and to arrange his military combinations in such a manner as to meet those of the allies. After having again assigned to Ney's corps the direction of Torgau, which left him at liberty to march it upon Berlin or to draw it back upon Dresden, and after having renewed the orders, which were to raise this corps to eighty thousand men, he occupied himself with the diplomatic affairs, which demanded all his attention.

The King of Saxony had fled not only from his own States, but even from Bavaria, at the very moment of Napoleon's arrival, for the purpose of proceeding to Prague to throw himself into the arms of Austria, whose policy he had evidently adopted. To have declared him on this account an enemy, would have been to proclaim one more defection from our alliance, and to have declared to Austria somewhat too roughly in what estimation we held her policy of mediation. Napoleon feigned, therefore, not to have understood the conduct of the King of Saxony, and to regard him as a prince in distress, but still loyal to the French alliance; and sent one of his aides-de-camp to Prague with a formal summons to him, under pain of forfeiture of his kingdom, to return to Dresden immediately, with his cavalry, artillery, and court, and to surrender into the hands of General Reynier the fortress of Torgau, together with the ten thousand Saxon troops who occupied it.

With respect to Austria, the conduct of affairs had become more difficult, in consequence of what had occurred in Vienna whilst Napoleon was fighting the battles of Lutzen and marching upon Dresden; for M. de Narbonne, receiving at length from Paris, through M. de Bassano, and from Mayence, through M. de Caulaincourt, Napoleon's most formal instructions, declared to M. de Metternich that he would send him a note summoning him to explain himself categorically upon the treaty of alliance of which he refused the literal execution. Upon

this M. de Metternich, abandoning subtle arguments, had entreated M. de Narbonne not to insist further upon placing Austria in a false position, by demanding what she could not grant, namely, the resumption of hostilities with Russia. M. de Narbonne still returning to the charge, M. de Metternich went so far as to say that he was committing a fault in doing so, for he believed he could be certain that Napoleon was unwilling to push matters to a crisis with the Austrian court. In fact, M. de Bubna, returning to Paris much impressed by the attentions of which he had there been the subject, declared that Napoleon was anxious to act in accord with his father-in-law, and that with proper management a reasonable arrangement of the affairs of Europe might speedily be effected.

M. de Narbonne, however, still adhered to his plan of submitting a formal note to the Austrian court, in which this court should be summoned either to execute the treaty of alliance of the 14th of March 1812, or declare that it no longer existed. But having some fears with respect to what might be the answer to such a demand, and being anxious to be able to anticipate it, he demanded an interview of the Emperor Francis, and being immediately admitted to his presence, besought him not to cause a state of hostilities between France and Austria, which could not but be productive of the greatest misfortunes. The emperor received M. de Narbonne with much quiet politeness, and repeated to him all that M. de Metternich had already said, declared that he wished to remain the ally of his son-in-law, but without abandoning the only policy which his people would willingly see him adopt—a mediatorial one. He concluded, as had M. de Metternich, by declaring his belief that M. de Narbonne, doubtless for the purpose of relieving himself from personal responsibility, persisted too far in the line he had adopted, and exceeded the intentions of his master.

M. de Narbonne still persisted, however, in demanding a reply to his note, and M. de Metternich, at length compelled to reply, referred to the declaration made on the 12th of April; declaring that as Austria had adopted the position of a mediator upon the instigation of France herself, she could not place herself in a position of hostility with respect to one of the belligerent powers; and that, moreover, as the services of the Austrian auxiliary corps were guaranteed by the treaty of alliance of the 14th of March 1812, which the 12th of April had declared inapplicable as a means of action in the existing state of affairs, it would be better to defer its active employment.

But at the same time, as M. de Metternich was anxious to avoid a rupture with France, he added, with respect to the Polish troops, that whilst, of course, they were always at liberty

to refrain from retreating behind the Austrian frontier, and to encounter the Russian forces alone if they chose, they might also, if they wished to pass through Bohemia for the purpose of entering Saxony, retain their arms on their way, and should find on their line of march both quarters and provisions.

The evil result of these disputations was, that they not only assisted Austria in making those declarations which she was subsequently to employ so disastrously against us, but also led her, in despair of inducing us to adopt a judicious course, to hasten to take that fatal resolution which was recommended to her by all around her. They were now interrupted, however, by the news of the late military events. The report that we had suffered a great defeat was everywhere spread abroad with the most extraordinary assurance. The English ambassador, Lord Cathcart, experienced in military affairs and a witness of the battle, regarded this report, indeed, as a foolish lie, and declared that if the allies could only gain such victories, it would be well to treat for peace on any terms; and M. de Metternich had too keen an intellect to be deceived by such idle boasting. And in fact, four days after the first arrival of the news, information was received that the *soi-disant* vanquished were at the gates of Dresden, and the *soi-disant* conquerors beyond the Elbe. The greatest confusion was excited by the information of these facts, and the salons of Vienna were filled with exclamations against the military incapacity of the two allied sovereigns; but instead of having gained over the public feeling in our favour by our success, it was now insisted more vehemently than ever that Austria ought to hasten to the aid of the allied armies, and join the coalition, for the purpose of saving Europe from an intolerable yoke.

M. de Metternich assured M. de Narbonne, and not insincerely, that he was by no means astonished at Napoleon's victories, and that he had, in fact, based his pacific calculations on the assumption that these victories would be gained by him. To render the attainment of a peace possible, he said, it was necessary to find a means of blotting out two-thirds of the propositions of Russia, England, and Prussia; and these means the battle of Lutzen would afford. But there remained the third part of these propositions, of which it was impossible to deny the reason, justice, and wisdom, and to which it would be necessary to agree—that the time had come for the court of Vienna to adopt its mediatorial office, assumed at the instigation of France, with the consent of the other belligerent powers; that it would immediately despatch, therefore, two plenipotentiaries, the one to the French, the other to the Russian headquarters, selecting the Count de Bubna as the former, and M. de Stadion as the latter. At the same time, without pretending

to impose them upon Napoleon, M. de Metternich would take the liberty, he said, to indicate the conditions which the Austrian cabinet considered would be acceptable to all the belligerent powers, and he repeated those which have been already laid before the reader—the suppression of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, and its restoration to Prussia, with the exception of some portions which would properly return to the share of Russia and Austria; the reconstitution of Prussia by means of this Grand Duchy, and other territories to be found in Germany; the abandonment of the Confederation of the Rhine, and the renunciation of the Hanseatic departments, that is to say, of the towns of Bremen, Hamburg, and Lubeck. All mention of Holland, Italy, and Spain was to be avoided, for fear of exciting insurmountable difficulties; and the subject even of a maritime peace was to be left in abeyance, should it be found impossible to come to an understanding with England on that point. Such, independently of the restoration of the Illyrian provinces, which we had almost promised to Austria, were the conditions now offered to us—conditions which left to us Westphalia, Lombardy, and Naples as royal vassals; Holland, Belgium, the Rhenish provinces, Piedmont, Tuscany, and the Roman States as French departments. Such was the France which was offered us, and the offer of which we regarded as an outrage. With respect to Spain, it was certain that its renunciation would be a necessary condition of peace with England; but this sacrifice on our part M. de Metternich said he had good reason to know would be sufficient, and we have already seen that it would be no insurmountable obstacle to peace on the part of Napoleon.

M. de Narbonne repeatedly declared that Napoleon, victorious, would not accept these conditions, and M. de Metternich as repeatedly rejoined, that Napoleon was not so unreasonable as he was represented, that those conditions, moreover, were inevitable, and that a great struggle would be necessary to induce the allies to accept even them.

In the meantime, the King of Saxony had sorrowfully consented to comply with Napoleon's intimation to him to return to his capital, and prepared to set out from Prague, with his troops and his court, anxiously entreating that secrecy might be observed with respect to the negotiations which had taken place between the cabinets of Dresden and Vienna, and which had simply had reference, in fact, to the adoption of a mediatorial policy.

When Napoleon received information of what had taken place at Vienna, he perceived at length the fault which had been committed in urging the Austrian cabinet to take so prominent a part in the politics of Europe, and in leading her to assume the part of an armed mediator, whilst unwilling

to submit to her arbitration. He perceived also the error into which he had fallen in believing that he would be able to interest this power in the success of his projects by the offer of the spoils of Prussia, and in failing to see that no territorial aggrandisement was equal in her estimation to independence. But, as is the wont of princes, he threw the blame on his representative, M. de Narbonne, who, with the instructions which had been given him, could not have acted otherwise; and in gentle language, for he held M. de Narbonne in sincere regard, blamed him for having pushed matters too far, for having submitted a written note to the Austrian cabinet whilst the archives of the embassy contained a prohibition against doing so without the authority of a formal order, and with having led M. de Metternich to declare that the treaty of alliance between France and Austria was no longer applicable to circumstances. He now directed him to maintain the most extreme reserve, and to avoid entering into any communications with the Austrian court, that she might perceive that we no longer considered her an ally, whilst still accepting her as a mediator, but not an armed mediator.

In the meantime, Napoleon was bitterly exasperated against Austria and his father-in-law, being irritated at finding that they had completely deceived his calculations, and disgusted at the conditions of peace which they submitted for his acceptance. He had renounced his plans with respect to the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, having found with how many difficulties its maintenance was surrounded; but after having just undertaken the campaign of 1812 for the purpose of humiliating Russia, to have to behold Russia aggrandised, and Poland, the re-establishment of which as a kingdom he had undertaken for the purpose of humiliating her, irrevocably destroyed; to have to endure the defection of Prussia, and to permit her to receive a reward for that defection; to have to renounce the protectorate of the Confederation of the Rhine, and to abandon the Hanseatic towns—were an accumulation of sacrifices which implied no diminution to his real power, but were fraught with severe shocks to his pride. With regard to the real interests of France, none of these sacrifices could properly be subjects of regret. With respect to Poland, it was puerile to attempt to make of this country a protection for Austria and Prussia, so long as these powers did not themselves care for it; with respect to Prussia, it could not be our interest, either in relation to Russia or to Austria, to keep her so shorn of strength as she now was. With respect to the protectorate of the Rhine, it was but an empty title, odious to the Germans, and capable only of bringing upon us their hatred without any counter-

balancing advantage; and finally, with respect to the Hanseatic towns, to persist in retaining them was simply to extend our military and commercial frontier beyond all reason. Their possession imposed a charge upon France for which she could receive no return, since she could not defend them without extending her territory to the Elbe; and they were commercially indispensable to the trade interests of Germany, whilst useless to ours.

The irritation Napoleon experienced on learning in decided terms the intentions of Austria was pushed to its utmost limit by a chance circumstance. A courier had been intercepted at Dresden on his way from Vienna, carrying despatches from M. de Stackelberg, who was the Russian representative at the Austrian court, since relations had been re-established between these two powers on the ground of a mediation; and in these despatches, addressed by M. de Stackelberg to M. de Nesselrode, were found many singular details, whilst they showed clearly that M. de Metternich, placed in a difficult position which condemned him to a course of extreme dissimulation, was prodigal of testimonies of sympathy with each of the belligerent powers, and even more so to the Russians and Prussians than to the French. And that this should be the case might have been well understood by us without the perusal of intercepted despatches, and was no reason why we should not consider M. de Metternich to be sincere in declaring that on certain conditions Austria would be on our side. We should have understood that M. de Metternich, being a German, could not and ought not to be entirely favourable to our policy, and should have endeavoured to obtain of his prudence just so much as was possible, and no more. But Napoleon, inspired by pride, victory, and despotism, was as irritated by the revelations contained in the intercepted despatches as though his keen intellect, which was full of light when undisturbed by passion, had not been able to foresee them.

Napoleon now suddenly returned to the policy which had been proposed in the council held in the Tuileries in the preceding January, and earnestly supported by MM. de Caulaincourt, Talleyrand, and Cambacérés, and which consisted in ignoring the mediation of Austria, and endeavouring to enter into direct negotiations with Russia. But judicious as the adoption of this policy would be, it was attended by a serious practical inconvenience, in the shape of the difficulty of entering into communication with the Russian emperor. This difficulty had been great in January, and had become much increased by the late military events, and the hopes which the Germans cradled in Alexander's breast that he was to be the liberator of Europe, and the first of reigning monarchs. Napoleon, however,

expected that the battle of Lutzen and another victory, which he felt certain he should obtain, would dissipate the extravagant ideas in which Alexander had permitted himself to indulge, and would render direct communication with him a matter of no difficulty. He resolved, therefore, to carry on this campaign with the utmost vigour, to strike as soon as possible some decisive blow, and to take advantage of it to secure peace, but by means of direct negotiations with Russia or even England, rather than with the Germanic powers. By yielding Poland wholly or partly to Russia, and Spain wholly or partly to the Bourbons, it appeared to him that peace might be arranged without submitting him to the yoke of Prussia, which, according to him, had openly betrayed him, or of Austria, who had betrayed him secretly. Should the progress of the war not bring an immediate decisive result and a negotiation, he wished to prolong the existing situation until the completion of the second series of his armaments should be completed, when he would have at his disposal a total force of some five hundred thousand combatants, when he would be relieved from the necessity of dissembling any longer with Austria, and established on the Elbe, as formerly on the Adige, at Dresden, as formerly at Verona, at the foot of the mountains of Bohemia, as formerly at the foot of the Alps, he would be able to carry on, not only against a single power, but against the whole of Europe, a new campaign of Italy, in which, by the aid of a riper experience, he would be able to repeat at a riper age the prodigies of his youth, to be concluded then, as formerly, by brilliant triumphs, which would enable him at length to enjoy repose by granting it to the world.

Having thus resolved, Napoleon gave up his whole thoughts as usual to practical arrangements, for, in himself a miracle of contrasts, he was as chimerical in his projects as he was precise and correct in the means he took to realise them. In the first place, he sent a series of despatches to M. de Narbonne, directing him to behave with the utmost reserve towards the Austrian cabinet, at the same time letting it see that France no longer relied on its aid, and recognised the truth of the maxim which it was so fond of repeating, that the treaty of the 14th of March 1812 was no longer applicable to circumstances. Directing him to attempt no denial of the vast armaments which were being so rapidly made in Italy, Bavaria, and France; and to intimate to the Austrian cabinet that its mediation was by no means necessary to France as a means of communication with the other powers, since the quarrel between the Emperor Napoleon and the Emperor Alexander was political and not personal, and the two sovereigns had never ceased to have a mutual feeling of friendship, which

would be revived on the first amicable demonstration on the part of Napoleon. "*A direct mission to the Russian headquarters,*" said Napoleon, "*would divide the world in two!*" an exclamation which signified that the despatch of M. de Caulaincourt, whose old friendship with the Emperor Alexander was well known to the Russian emperor, would entirely change the aspect of affairs; combining the forces of France and Russia in one camp, and those of the rest of the world in the other. But this hint was not founded on fact, since the pride of the Emperor Alexander had been so deeply wounded, and was most imprudent, since it would naturally lead Austria to throw herself immediately into the arms of Russia, and thus deprive Napoleon of the two months which he required for the purpose of converting into five hundred thousand men the three hundred thousand which were at this time at his disposal. Fortunately M. de Narbonne was too politic to commit such a fault as that of uttering so dangerous and useless a boast.

Napoleon, after having given M. de Narbonne a full intimation of his views through M. de Caulaincourt, who replaced at Dresden M. de Bassano, still detained in Paris, had Prince Eugène summoned to his presence, expressed to him his satisfaction of his conduct in the late campaign, and announced to him that he had determined to bestow upon his daughter the Duchy of Galicia as a dotation, and as a reward for the prince's services. He then told him that it was necessary that he should set out immediately for Milan, where he would meet with his family, from whom he had now been separated more than a year, for the purpose of fulfilling an important mission. In the first place, Napoleon told him he would have to take the command with respect to military matters, not only of the kingdom of Lombardy, but also of Piedmont and Tuscany, and to employ the whole summer in organising a serviceable Italian army. The necessary elements existed in the places themselves. The remaining troops of the 4th corps, with which Prince Eugène had made the Russian campaign, were re-entering Italy, and would furnish twenty-four battalions. The Italian army would furnish at least as many. The Piedmont regiments, which had recovered the battalions which had been sent into Spain, would possibly render it possible to raise the army of Upper Italy to the strength of eighty battalions. There was an abundance of artillery in this country, and there would be no difficulty in having one hundred and fifty pieces of cannon ready by the month of July. The cavalry which should have been ready for General Bertrand, but was not, would be ready for Prince Eugène. It would be easy, therefore, to have an army there of eighty thousand men within two or three months.



In the meantime, Murat, whose pride had been much hurt by the words which Napoleon had had inserted in the *Moniteur* with reference to him after his departure from the army, who feared that he had irretrievably incurred Napoleon's displeasure, and that he and his kingdom might at any moment be sacrificed to some scheme of compensation, some arrangement entered into for the conclusion of peace, found himself in the same position as that of the Kings of Bavaria and Saxony, and all those allies, in fact, who were too honest to betray us, but not too honest to speculate on doing so. The anxieties in which he found himself involved sometimes threw him into a state of agitation which resembled delirium. His health suffered severely, and he fell into a feeble, desponding state, in which he lost both his beauty and his courage. His subjects, whom he had known how to please, were filled with compassion for him, and endeavoured to console him by overwhelming him with acclamations wherever he appeared amongst them. Sometimes he determined to throw himself at Napoleon's feet, and offer to command what remained of his cavalry; sometimes to throw himself into the arms of Austria; and he despatched to Vienna a Prince Cariati, whose conduct became so great a scandal there that M. de Narbonne was compelled to acquaint Napoleon with it.

The result of this state of things was to excite Napoleon's compassion, but at the same time to make him resolve to summon Murat to the army, and to direct him to send twenty thousand of the forty thousand well-organised men at his disposal to Prince Eugène.

We have already seen that he had made arrangements for the formation of an army at Mayence with the cadres returned from Spain. He could calculate upon having sixty *cadres de bataillon* at Mayence, which would day by day be filled up with conscripts from the old classes; and he hoped to be able to add to them the cadres of sixty battalions of cavalry recruited from the cavalry assembled at the depôts, and mounted with horses obtained from France. In Westphalia the reorganisation of the corps of Marshal Davout and the Duke of Belluna would furnish one hundred and twelve battalions, or ninety thousand men. When the battalions should have been fully formed, he resolved to recompose of them the twenty-eight old regiments; giving sixteen to Marshal Davout and twelve to Marshal Victor, and creating an army of one hundred and twenty thousand men, with a numerous artillery drawn from Holland and the Hanseatic provinces, and with the remainder of the cavalry remounted by General Bourcier. Should Denmark at this moment, as there was reason to hope, return to our alliance, a contingent of twelve or fifteen

thousand excellent soldiers might be expected from this quarter, and the army of the Lower Elbe would thus be raised to at least one hundred and thirty thousand men. There were three armies, therefore, which Napoleon prepared independently of the one under his own immediate command, and the organisation of which became every day more complete, especially since he had been in Dresden.

He addressed the most precise instructions to Marshal Davout respecting the troops whose reorganisation was to be entrusted to his care, and ordered him to enter Hamburg as soon as possible, taking advantage of the projected movement upon Berlin, for the purpose of putting into force the most rigorous justice. He was exasperated against the Hanseatic towns which had expelled his officers of customs and his police, which had received the Cossacks with every testimony of delight, and which seemed to be the object of all the diplomatic and military efforts of the allies. He was resolved to bring these towns once more under his authority by means of force and terror, and if it were necessary to give them up to Germany, to resign them only in a state of ruin. He ordered Marshal Davout to shoot those members of the Senate who had resumed their functions, the persons who had taken a prominent part in exciting the insurrection, and some of the officers of the Hanseatic legion which had been raised to fight against us; at the same time he directed that five hundred of the principal merchants, suspected of being enemies of France, should be seized and deprived of their property, and that the colonial produce and English merchandise, which, since the insurrection of Hamburg, had entered the country through the Elbe in abundance, should be everywhere confiscated. He would thus obtain the means, he said, of satisfying the expenses of the war, of which the merchants of those parts were partly the cause. But whilst giving these orders, Napoleon secretly reckoned on the wisdom of the marshal to whom the execution of them was entrusted, and who, rigorous as he was, knew how to delay actual proceedings until his master's anger should have evaporated in terrible words. The practical result of the above orders, of which the chief part remained unexecuted, was a series of heavy contributions, on which the army lived for more than six months, from Hamburg up to Dresden.

Napoleon, passing on horseback all the time which he did not employ in his cabinet, traversed the banks of the Elbe, reconnoitring Königstein and Pirna as well as all the country above and below Dresden, and ordered the repair in timber-work of the stone bridge in Dresden itself, and the construction of a new one of rafts at Priesnitz, where the army had effected a passage by main force. He had also vast hospitals and

depôts of provisions established on the left bank of the river. In these and similar works, in reorganising and concentrating his cavalry, and raising the forces actually in the field to the complete number of three hundred thousand, he employed the time during which he awaited at Dresden the arrival of the King of Saxony, who arrived on the 12th of May, surrounded by his family, and the cavalry which had been so often demanded of him in vain.

Napoleon, who had resolved to play a grand sort of comedy, went forth from the gates of the city at the head of his guard to receive the Saxon monarch, to whom he was happy, he said, to restore his States, reconquered for him by the arms of France. As soon as he had come nigh the old king, he descended from his horse and embraced him, receiving him in every way in so gracious a manner as to excite deep feelings of emotion in his heart, and almost to appease the minds of his subjects, who were much moved by the spectacle of the reconciliation of the two monarchs, the manner in which the Russians had conducted themselves in Saxony having also very much diminished the hatred with which its inhabitants regarded the French.

After these and many other demonstrations of goodwill, Napoleon and the old monarch entered into mutual explanations, in the course of which, it has been said, that the latter made the avowals of which he has since been accused as a justification of the spoliation of a portion of his estates. But there is full proof in existing documents that this accusation is unfounded; it is probable, indeed, that the views of the Austrian cabinet might become apparent in the course of his recitals, for they were very manifest, and by no means of a culpable nature, although Napoleon took them at the moment in ill part; but it was quite certain that the revelations which completely changed Napoleon's disposition towards Austria had reached him before the 12th of May, the day of the King of Saxony's return to Dresden, either through M. de Narbonne or the intercepted despatches.

The first advantage which Napoleon obtained from the presence of the King of Saxony in Dresden was, that he was able to employ in his own service the superb Saxon cavalry, which numbered, with the addition of some recruits, about three thousand men, and which he immediately entrusted to the brave Latour-Maubourg. The Saxon infantry shut up in Torgau had been exposed to a dangerous trial, their commander, General Thielmann, one of the most ardent and sincere of the German patriots, who had visited the Emperor Alexander at Dresden, and manifested the greatest devotion to the cause of the allies, having, in a state of despair at seeing his king fallen again into the hands of the French, and in a state of terror for his own

personal safety, attempted to shake the fidelity of his troops, and persuade them to pass over to the Russians, on the ground that the king was not free, and only gave such orders as he was forced to give. His attempt, however, was unsuccessful, and he fled alone to Alexander's camp, abandoning his infantry, which passed without difficulty under the command of General Reynier, whose talents and character it held in high esteem.

In the meantime, Marshal Ney, in conformity with the instructions which he had received, had traversed Leipsic, and proceeded to Torgau, where he received the Saxon troops into his corps. A little to the left at Wittenberg he had the Duke of Belluna with his reorganised battalions, and on the right General Lauriston established with his corps at Meissen. General Sebastiani, who was to bring the cavalry remounted in Hanover, and the division Puthod (that one of Lauriston's divisions which remained in the rear), had not yet arrived; but yet, with the troops of Reynier, Victor, and Lauriston, Marshal Ney had a sufficient force with which to march upon Berlin, and he awaited the order to do so with impatience.

Before giving this order Napoleon wished to obtain precise information respecting the designs of the allies. He had already carried forward Prince Eugène's corps, which since this prince's departure had passed under the command of Marshal Macdonald, and had directed it upon Bischoffswerda, which it had entered, fighting with a rearguard of the enemy and through the midst of flames. From Bischoffswerda Marshal Macdonald had marched upon Bautzen, where the Russian and Prussian forces had shown signs of having resolved upon encountering us in a second battle, and indeed to retreat any farther was to abandon three-fourths of the Prussian monarchy, and especially Berlin, which they had not been able to defend directly by sending thither a detached corps, but which a strong position preserved in Lusatia protected up to a certain point. It was also to bid adieu to the German patriots whom they had summoned to meet them on all the battlefields of Saxony, and to Austria, whom they retained on their side but by means of promises, boastings, and exaggerations, and especially by the species of physical alliance resulting from near neighbourhood. It was necessary, therefore, to encounter the enemy at any hazard, rather than permit the enemy to drive them from the Bohemian mountains, at the foot of which they had paused after having quitted Dresden, and to take advantage also, as a means of defence, of one of those numerous streams which descend from the Riesen-Gebirge across Lusatia, and traverse the space between the Elbe and the Oder. At Bautzen, in particular, there was a strong position on the Sprée, which offered two battlefields, the one in advance of the Sprée, the

other behind it—a position rendered famous by the great Frederick during the Seven Years' War. And on this position, partly on account of its renown, partly on account of the advantages which it offered, the allies now resolved to have a desperate struggle with Napoleon's forces. Of the 92,000 troops of the coalition assembled on the plains of Lutzen on the 2nd of May, 20,000 had been lost either in engagements or on the march, but their place had been filled up by 30,000 others, supplied by the reserves which Prussia had provided in Silesia; and Barclay de Tolly's Russian corps of 15,000 men, which blockaded the fortresses of the Vistula. The allies posted, therefore, in advance of and behind Bautzen, along the Sprée, under the protection of vast abattis and numerous redoubts, about 100,000 Prussians and Russians, with whom they determined to resolve, under the eyes of Austria, at the very foot of her mountains, the great European question. At the same time the Prussian generals Bulow and Borstell were directed to cover Berlin and Brandenburg as well as they might be able, whilst Czernicheff's and Tettenborn's *coureurs* were to maintain themselves on the Lower Elbe at the expense of the Germans, as they could.

Napoleon having spent seven days in Dresden, employed in reinstating the King of Saxony in his States, in forming a body of cavalry, and placing his troops in line, now set out once more to dissipate the empty dreams with which the allies had permitted themselves to become intoxicated. Marshal Macdonald was already within sight of Bautzen, supported on the right and left by Marshal Oudinot and Marshal Marmont respectively, whilst still more to the left was General Bertrand; and Marshal Ney and General Lauriston were in advance of the Elbe, in a position from which they could advance either on the right towards the grand army, or on the left towards Berlin. On the 15th of May, in consequence of the receipt of certain information, Napoleon directed them to march without delay upon Hozerswerda, so as to debouch on the flank and rear of the Bautzen position, which the allies would find it difficult to maintain when 60,000 men proceeded to turn it. He ordered General Reynier to follow Ney and Lauriston, and left Marshal Victor in advance of Wittenberg as a permanent menace against Berlin.

At the moment when Napoleon was about to set out for Dresden, on the evening of the 16th of May, M. de Bubna arrived from Vienna, and immediately obtained audience of the emperor, who, although having a great personal regard for M. de Bubna himself, received him in a manner which was almost rude, being unable wholly to restrain the feelings of irritation excited in his mind by the efforts of Austria to make his will

submit to hers, and by what he considered the proved duplicities of M. de Metternich. M. de Bubna, however, being fortunately a man of great clearness of mind, ignored all Napoleon's manifestations of anger, and submitted to him, in the first place, a letter written to his son-in-law by the Emperor Francis, in which, in terms both affectionate and sincere, he pointed out the gravity of the existing state of affairs; pointed out to him the boundaries which separated the duties of the father from those of the sovereign, and earnestly entreated him for his own advantage and that of the world to listen to the overtures which would be made by M. de Bubna.

Napoleon's feelings of irritation were evidently softened by this letter, although it was far from being very effectual in inducing a change in his resolutions. He listened calmly and attentively to the propositions which M. de Bubna had to make to him, feigning that he now heard them enunciated for the first time; but tranquilly as he listened to their exposition, he gradually permitted to appear the real cause of his rejection of them—this cause being pride; a pride which could not endure to abandon the titles which it had assumed with so much ceremony, or to resign the territories which it had so solemnly annexed to the empire. The Grand Duchy of Warsaw was wholly lost, having perished in the Moscow catastrophe; there was no room for discussion on this subject, and Napoleon contented himself with declaring that he attempted to restore Poland, not for the sake of France, but for the sake of Europe. On another subject of still greater importance, the kingdom of Spain, he avoided making any decided explanations, appearing, however, to have resolved to make some sacrifices on this point, and declaring himself ready, for the purpose of inducing England to negotiate, to admit the Spanish insurgents to a share in the conferences. But on all those points in respect to which Austria was especially anxious that he should consent to adopt her views, he displayed a far less compliant disposition. To permit the reconstitution of Prussia as a reward for her having renounced her alliance, to resign the Hanseatic towns and the title of protector of the Confederation of the Rhine, appeared to him to be terrible humiliations. But although fully resolved not to submit to the conditions Austria attempted to impose upon him, he considered that the assembly of a congress for the discussion of the terms of peace would be of much advantage to him, in the first place, as a means of showing to France and to Europe his pacific tendencies; in the second place, as a means of gaining two or three months' time, which he yet required for the completion of his armaments; and thirdly, as a means of renewing direct relations with Russia and England, and thus coming to an understanding with these kingdoms without

the intervention, and even to the detriment of the German powers.

In a second interview, therefore, which he granted to M. de Bubna on the 17th of May, he declared his willingness to consent to the assembly of a congress for the purpose of negotiating a peace, and to an armistice, and to admit to this congress the representatives of the Spanish insurgents, this having been always made by England the essential preliminary condition of any negotiation. M. de Bubna, astonished and delighted at having obtained these concessions, immediately sent a letter, revised by Napoleon's own hand, to M. de Stadion, who had been sent to the Russian headquarters to do what M. de Bubna was doing at the French headquarters; which set forth that Napoleon, by no means rendered arrogant by his recent victory, was eager to put an end to the evils endured by the world, and consented to the assembly of a congress to negotiate a peace, and also ever being ready, that the effusion of blood might be stopped as soon as possible, to send commissioners to the advanced posts for the purpose of negotiating a suspension of arms. When M. de Bubna had despatched his letter, he demanded permission to return to Vienna, that he might delight the Emperor Francis and M. de Metternich by the announcement of the excellent disposition in which he had found Napoleon, and might also discuss with them certain modifications of the proposed conditions. Napoleon strongly approved of M. de Bubna's return to Vienna, and entrusted him with a letter for his father-in-law, in which, in the most affectionate and filial terms, he declared that he was anxious for peace, but that, having become the son-in-law of the Emperor Francis, he placed his honour in his hands—his honour, which he esteemed more than power, more than life; and that he was resolved to perish, sword in hand, rather than submit to humiliating conditions. With this letter he sent away M. de Bubna, after having lavished upon him marks of his favour.

As soon as M. de Bubna had set out, Napoleon made preparations for his own departure; but before quitting Dresden he was anxious to obtain from the negotiations to which he had consented, the principal result he hoped to draw from them, which consisted in entering into direct communication with Alexander, that he might escape from the interference of Austria. Under pretext of the armistice, therefore, he sent M. de Caulaincourt to the Russian advanced posts, in which he said, that in consequence of what had been agreed on by M. de Bubna, he, the Emperor Napoleon, had hastened to send a commissioner to the advanced posts of the troops of the allies, for the purpose of negotiating an armistice, which appeared to him to be an urgent necessity, since the opposed armies were in such close proximity,

and that he had chosen for this purpose the person he supposed would be most agreeable to the Emperor Alexander.

Having completed all his arrangements, Napoleon set out from Dresden on the 18th of May, proceeding in the direction of Bautzen, which he reached at an early hour on the following day. His guard had already arrived, and his troops awaited him with impatience, in the expectation that he would lead them to a fresh triumph. He immediately proceeded to reconnoitre the position on which we were about to encounter the allied forces of Europe, for the purpose of restoring the prestige of our arms.

The position rested on the highest mountains of Bohemia, the Riesen-Gebirge, neutral ground, against which either of the opposed armies could safely rest, since neither of them would hazard the chance of offending Austria by violating her territory. On our right arose these mountains, covered with dark fir-trees, the Sprée flowing from their side in a deep channel, and passing around the little town of Bautzen, under a stone bridge, which was strongly barricaded. Directly in front appeared the town of Bautzen itself, surrounded by an old embattled wall, flanked with towers and armed with cannon, and looking from thence to the left appeared again the stream of the Sprée, which, having flowed through the midst of a range of wooded hills, far inferior in elevation to the mountains on the right, suddenly spread out in an open bed in the midst of verdant plains.

Such was the first line of the Sprée, and one not easy to carry. On the right, on the mountains and their slopes, were perceived wooden abattis, and behind them many cannon, bayonets, and Russian uniforms. In the centre, above and below Bautzen, were also to be seen a great number of Russian troops; and on the left, on the wooded hills, across which the Sprée opened a way of escape into the plain, were to be seen masses of infantry and cavalry, some deployed in line, others posted behind the field-works, and all denoting by their equipment that they belonged to the Prussian army.

Napoleon resolved to force on the following day, the 20th of May, this line of the Sprée, and determined to send Marshal Oudinot to pass the Sprée, on the right towards the mountains, to endeavour to drive back the enemy upon their second position; whilst in the centre, Marshal Macdonald should seize the stone bridge which crossed the Sprée opposite Bautzen, and take this town by assault; whilst a little below the centre, Marshal Marmont should cross the Sprée upon pontoons, between Bautzen and the village of Nimschütz, and should establish himself in a good position beyond it; and whilst, finally, General Bertrand, on the left, effecting his passage at Nieder-



Gurck, *vis-à-vis* with the last hills which the Sprée washed before expanding its stream amongst the open plains, should endeavour to gain possession of the hills, or at least establish himself in their neighbourhood. In the meantime, Marshal Ney, completing his movement upon Hozerswerda with a mass of about sixty thousand men, would arrive on the Lower Sprée at Klix, about four miles below Bautzen, and would be able on the following day, by forcing the passage of the river at Klix, to attack in flank the enemy's second position, which Napoleon would attack in front.

In the meantime, the allies attributing to Napoleon errors such as he was not in the habit of committing, had supposed that Marshal Ney had advanced with his corps alone, this corps consisting, in their estimation, of no more than about twenty-five thousand men after the battle of Lutzen, and they had accordingly detached Barclay de Tolly and General d'York, at the head of about twenty-three thousand men, to meet and engage this corps of our army; hoping, at least, to be able to injure it sufficiently to prevent its being of any active service on the decisive day of battle. Generals Barclay de Tolly and d'York advanced therefore from Klix upon Hozerswerda, the one keeping to the left, the other to the right.

At this moment the Italian division Pezri, the second of Bertrand's corps, had been detached in the direction of Hozerswerda to form a link with Ney; but General Pezri, failing, unfortunately, to execute this delicate operation with sufficient precaution, was suddenly surrounded with his seven or eight thousand Italians in the neighbourhood of Königswarta by Barclay de Tolly and fifteen thousand Russians, and would have been completely overwhelmed, had not General Kellermann (the son of the old Duke of Valmy) come up by the Hozerswerda route with Ney's cavalry, and released him from his position by furious charges on the enemy's lines. As it was, he lost about two thousand men and three pieces of cannon.

At the same instant the Prussian general d'York, occupying a position on the right of Barclay de Tolly, seeking Ney's corps, fell in with Lauriston, who was advancing at the head of twenty thousand men, in the environs of the village of Weissig, and after maintaining a desperate conflict, was compelled to fall back upon the Sprée, with a loss of more than two thousand men.

On the following day, the 20th of May, Napoleon having calculated the amount of time likely to be employed in forcing the enemy's first line, and being desirous that the night should intervene between the operation of forcing the first line and the second, employed the morning in preparing the *ponts de*

*chevalet* and the boats necessary for effecting the passage of the Sprée.

At noon, from a position in front of Bautzen, Napoleon gave the signal, and the action commenced by a general discharge of musketry from our tirailleurs who were posted along the Sprée. Marshal Oudinot, in conformity with the orders he had received, advanced towards the village of Sinkwitz with the division Pachtod, and crossing the Sprée, found himself in front of the Russian troops, which formed the left wing of the coalition forces, and composed of the old corps of Miloradovitch, Wittgenstein's corps, and that of Prince Eugène of Wurtemberg. General Pachtod's brigades were immediately charged by numerous columns of the enemy's infantry, but remained firm until Oudinot's second division (Lorencez) came up upon their right, when the enemy left them in possession of the ground. Uniting with these two divisions the Bavarian division, Marshal Oudinot advanced to the foot of the mountains on our right, in the direction of the principal one, named Tronberg, and attempted to climb it under the enemy's fire—the left at Jessnitz, the right in the direction of Klein-Kunitz.

Whilst these events were taking place on our right, Marshal Macdonald, in the centre, took the stone bridge which crossed the Sprée in front of Bautzen, and enveloped the town itself with two of his three divisions, whilst his third, that of General Gerard, kept at a distance the troops of Prince Eugène of Wurtemberg, who showed a disposition to advance to the aid of Bautzen.

A little below Bautzen, *vis-à-vis* with Nimschütz, Marshal Marmont had also crossed the Sprée with his three divisions, and advanced to the ground assigned to him between the centre and left of the general position, carrying with little difficulty a village named Burk, which was situated there, and was defended by the Prussian general Kleist. Beyond this ground commenced the second position of the allies; its first defence being a deep stream, bordered with trees, on the edge of which stood three villages, that of Nadelwitz on the right, that of Nieder-Kayne in the centre, and that of Basankwitz on the left. Upon these villages General Kleist fell back, summoning General d'York to his aid; and then sallying forth from Basankwitz, attacked Marmont's troops at the bayonet's point, whilst Blucher, who was posted on his left on some wooded hills with twenty thousand men, simultaneously charged them with his cavalry. Whilst his infantry were firmly sustaining these various assaults, Marshal Marmont, anxious to relieve himself from the danger of attack from the town of Bautzen, which was still in the hands of the enemy, detached the division Compans on his right, and this division, finding a portion of

the walls of Bautzen accessible, scaled them, and facilitated the entrance of the troops of Marshal Macdonald. In the meantime General Bertrand had crossed the Sprée at Nieder-Gurck, at the foot of the hills occupied by Blucher, and had there been compelled to pause, finding himself before a strong position defended by the flower of the Prussian army. It was now six o'clock in the evening, and the whole of the enemy's first line had fallen into our hands, without our having suffered any very great loss. It is true that if the enemy had not reckoned on his second line, he would have disputed his first with greater vigour; but nevertheless he had valiantly defended it, and we had gloriously overcome his resistance.

Napoleon entered Bautzen at eight o'clock in the evening, reassured the trembling inhabitants, and then encamped beyond it, in the midst of the squares of his guard, making all the necessary arrangements for the attack on the following day, the 21st.

The principal lineament of the enemy's second position, which now remained to be taken, was a stream named the Blöser-Wasser, from the name of one of the villages which it traversed, which, flowing from the sombre mountains on the right, traversed the plateau on which stood Bautzen, and after having washed the walls of this town, flowed among the willows and poplars downwards from Nadelwitz, Nieder-Kayne, and Basankwitz, the villages opposite which Marshal Marmont had taken up his position on the previous evening, then arrived at our left, at the top of the village of Kreckwitz, turned behind the wooded hills on which Blucher had taken up his position, retrograded behind them as far as Klein-Bautzen, passed thus behind those hills, whilst the Sprée flowed in front of them, quitted them at a village named Preititz, and flowed on to join the Sprée across the extended plains already mentioned.

The Russian left had fallen back upon one of the mountains from which flowed the Blöser-Wasser, and was prepared to defend it to the utmost against our right, which was established upon Tronberg. Their centre was behind the Blöser-Wasser, at Baschütz, on elevated ground, opposite Nadelwitz and Nieder-Kayne, and under the protection of numerous redoubts and a powerful artillery. Towards their right, and consequently towards our left, the allies, instead of establishing themselves behind the Blöser-Wasser, had posted themselves in advance of it, and their line, therefore, at this extremity resembled a species of advanced promontory. Blucher occupied this portion of the line of the allies with twenty thousand men; the remnant of Kleist's and d'York's troops being on his left at Kreckwitz, whilst on the other side of the hills the Prussian cavalry and a portion of the Russian cavalry covered his rear. Finally, on slightly elevated ground on the verdant plain beyond

those hills, and on which the Sprée and the Blöeser-Wasser joined their streams, Barclay de Tolly was posted with his fifteen thousand men.

The strength of the position thus occupied by the allied forces was so great that an attempt to carry it by an attack simply in front must very probably have failed; but Ney, who had arrived in the course of the evening at Klix with sixty thousand men, would there pass the Sprée, traverse the extended plains on our extreme left (the extreme right of the allies), defile behind the hills occupied by Blucher, and then move his troops in the direction of the steeple of Hochkirch, which appeared at the very end of the battlefield covered with glittering copper. As soon as he had executed these movements, Bertrand in front and Marmont in flank were to attack Blucher, then cross the Blöeser-Wasser and assault the redoubts in the centre, defended by the Russian guard.

Such were Napoleon's arrangements for the following day, the 21st. He bivouacked for the night in the midst of the squares of his guard on the Bautzen plateau, at a point from whence he could perceive all the enemy's positions; and exactly opposite to him, at the post-house of Neu-Burschwitz, the sovereign allies were engaged in anxious deliberations throughout the night. They had received Napoleon's letter relative to an armistice and M. de Caulaincourt's mission, and had immediately resolved to brave the chances of a second battle, politely referring M. de Caulaincourt to M. de Stadion as the representative of the mediatorial power, and deferring the answer relative to the armistice until after the impending battle. This matter having been thus settled, the allied sovereigns employed themselves in discussing the chances of victory or defeat on the following day, and the question which was most anxiously discussed was relative to the position of Barclay de Tolly—could he resist Ney, who appeared to be advancing towards him? M. de Muffling, a distinguished officer of the staff, who had carefully reconnoitred the ground, insisted on the danger which threatened this portion of their line; but Alexander and all the other members of the staff were reassured on this point on learning from Wittgenstein that Barclay de Tolly had at his command fifteen thousand men.

Shortly after daybreak on the 21st of May, a terrible cannonade filled with its roar the vast extent of the field of battle. Marshal Oudinot on our right disputed with Miloradovitch's Russians the heights of Tronberg, which he had seized on the previous evening. In the centre, Macdonald and Marmont, having between them the squares of the guard, and behind them Latour-Maubourg's cavalry, awaited orders from Napoleon, who himself awaited the success of the manœuvre

entrusted to Marshal Ney. General Bertrand on the left, completing the passage of the Sprée, which he had commenced on the previous evening, climbed with his three divisions the right bank of the river under cover of artillery posted on the left bank. But it was at a point two leagues lower down, at Klix, that the decisive event of the day took place, Marshal Ney having there crossed the Sprée, and then succeeded after a desperate contest in compelling Barclay de Tolly to fall back from the position he occupied upon Gleine when he took up his position on the slope of the heights which filled the bottom of the field of battle.

Ney now ascended a little to the right for the purpose of taking in reverse the hills, where he had perceived the mass of the Prussian troops, and found himself in front of the village of Preititz, which was situated on the Blöseser-Wasser, at the point at which this stream, after having turned behind the position occupied by Blucher, resumed a direct course for the purpose of debouching on the plain. He had this village taken possession of by the division Souham, and then began to entertain some doubts with respect to his future movements, heavy masses of the enemy's cavalry, to which he could oppose but a small body of light cavalry, being in front, whilst Barclay de Tolly was in an advantageous position on his left, Blucher on the hills on his right, and Napoleon separated from him by a distance of three leagues and wooded hills.

In the meantime, Barclay de Tolly having sent earnest demands for succour, Blucher had ordered some of Kleist's battalions and two of the royal guard to proceed from his rear to retake Preititz; and this command, by falling unexpectedly upon the division Souham, these battalions succeeded in executing. Ney, however, immediately returned to the charge with his second division and retook the village. He might then, by advancing to occupy the Wurschen and Hochkirch routes, which were the means of retreat for the right wing of the forces of the allies, have taken twenty-five thousand Prussians and two hundred pieces of cannon. He was earnestly advised to adopt this course by General Jomini, the chief of his staff, but he wished to await until the roar of artillery, which at present was only heard on his right, should be more general and nearer, and until he should be less isolated on the vast and complicated field of battle, with the nature of which he was himself entirely unacquainted.

He had, however, already done sufficient to render the enemy's position untenable, and scarcely had his cannon sounded on Blucher's rear when Napoleon hastened to give the signal for the commencement of a general cannonade, and Marmont, who had at his disposal, besides his own artillery,

all that of the guard also, opened a terrible fire on the enemy's redoubts in front of him, as well as an oblique fire upon Kreckwitz and Blucher's flank. After this cannonade had lasted a short time Bertrand advanced to attack Blucher's line, when he saw the Prussian cavalry pouring down upon him at a gallop. The division Morand, however, received them in square without being shaken, repelled them with a fire of musketry, and then advanced in columns of attack upon Blucher's lines. In the meantime the Wurtemberg division had advanced upon and seized Kreckwitz, which was on the flank of the wooded hills. Blucher, finding his front threatened, moved forward his second division, that of Zeithen, for the purpose of opposing Bertrand's corps. This division found Morand firmly established in the position he occupied, and was unable to drive him back, but it gained ground on the Wurtemberg division, and outflanking Kreckwitz, made prisoners of the battalion which had taken possession of it. Marmont, however, redoubling his fire upon this village, whilst Morand also moved up to the attack, the division Zeithen was compelled to fall back upon the hills which served as Blucher's support. To have been enabled to hold his position, Blucher should now have been able to draw to his aid the whole of the Prussian royal guard, Kleist's corps, and a portion of the Russian forces; but to all his demands for this aid it was replied that these troops were employed in disputing the possession of Preititz on his rear, and that so far from persisting in defending his position, he should make a speedy retreat, if he wished to avoid being taken prisoner, together with his *corps d'armée*, by Marshal Ney. And at length, uttering a thousand invectives against the arrangements made by the Russian staff, he retreated through the lines of cavalry behind him.

Whilst Bertrand followed Blucher in his retreat, Marmont with his corps, Mortier with the young guard, perceiving the enemy's retrograde movement, descended to the bank of the Bleser-Wasser, and traversed the plain which extended to the foot of the Baschütz redoubts; which redoubts the young guard scaled without much loss, the retrograde movement which had been enforced on the allies' right having been communicated to other portions of their line. This general movement took place at the right moment for the relief of Oudinot, who, on our right, on Tronberg, assailed by all the forces of Miloradovitch, had been compelled to fall back and take up a position in the rear, where he had been supported by the intrepid Gerard, commanding Macdonald's right. As soon as the rumour that we were victorious reached him, Oudinot resumed the offensive against the Russians, who now retreated, and pursued them with vigour. And now over an extent of three leagues we

pursued the forces of the allies, being prevented from taking any prisoners and cannon, save a considerable number of wounded and dismounted pieces, by the nature of the ground, which was unsuitable for the movements of cavalry, and also by our deficiency in this arm. But as it was, the victory was a most brilliant one, depriving the enemy of a formidable position, defended by almost a hundred thousand men, and dissipating the idea with which they had flattered themselves, that they should be able to close against us the road of the Oder. They could not any longer, moreover, without the intervention of an immediate armistice, remain connected with the Austrian territory, and through its territory, with its policy.

With respect to the loss suffered on each side in this battle, it is very certain, whatever may be said by German writers, that ours was less than that of the allies. The latter have admitted a loss on the two days of about fifteen thousand men in killed and wounded, and whilst this number is far below the actual one, the loss on our side could not amount to more than thirteen thousand in killed and wounded, although we had been the assailants, and our task had been by far the more laborious. But we had to regret a species of loss which the allies had not suffered, and this was under the head of deserters: two or three thousand men of the Italian division Pezri, and the three German divisions which served in the corps of Oudinot, Ney, and Bertrand, having taken advantage of their neighbourhood to the mountains of Bohemia to escape amongst them from a service to which all their feelings were opposed.

But our victory may be fairly estimated by its consequences if not by its trophies. On the following day, the 22nd of May, Napoleon resolved to march in person in pursuit of the vanquished sovereigns, leaving Marshal Oudinot's corps, which had suffered the most severely on the 20th and 21st, and had need of three or four days to rally, to advance upon Berlin. He added to it eight battalions which were in garrison at Magdeburg, and which would be replaced there by the division Teste, and a thousand horse, which raised this corps to twenty-three or twenty-four thousand, a sufficient force to vanquish General Bulow, whom the allies had entrusted with the charge of covering Berlin.

On the morning of the 22nd of May, Napoleon advanced, preceded by Generals Reynier and Lauriston, and Marshal Ney, followed by Marmont, Bertrand, and Macdonald, and surrounded by his guard. The allies retreated by the Bautzen route to Gorlitz. On arriving near Reichenbach, the enemy's infantry were perceived effecting their retreat across a line of heights beyond a tolerably open plain, on which their cavalry

remained to cover it. Napoleon, however, threw Latour-Maubourg's twelve thousand cavalry upon them, and they were compelled to give way with loss; but not before Napoleon had perceived that his own cavalry, although mingled with veterans of this arm who had returned from the Russian campaign, had been organised too short a time to effect as much as his cavalry had been wont. He saw also that the enemy now retreating before him, animated as they were by the most energetic sentiments, were more difficult to cut off in a retreat than were those demoralised troops which, engaged in a war in which they felt no passionate interest, he had pursued after the battles of Austerlitz and Jena. After the cavalry engagement which had thus taken place in the plain, General Reynier, with the Saxon infantry, occupied the Reichenbach heights, and Napoleon, considering that sufficient had been now effected for this day, gave orders that his tent should be pitched on the ground the troops then occupied. As he was alighting from his horse there arose a cry, "Kirgener is dead!" On hearing these words Napoleon exclaimed, "Fortune nous en veut bien aujourd'hui!" But to the first cry immediately succeeded a second, "Duroc is dead!" "Impossible!" said Napoleon; "I have just been speaking to him." It was, however, not only possible, but the actual fact. A bullet, which had struck a tree close to Napoleon, had in its rebound slain successively General Kirgener, an excellent engineer officer, and then Duroc himself, the grand-marshal of the palace. Duroc, a few minutes before his death, overcome by a singular feeling of sadness, had said to M. de Caulaincourt, "My friend, do you observe the emperor? After a series of misfortunes he is now victorious, and should profit by the teachings of misfortune. . . . But see! he is still the same, still as insatiable as ever for war. . . . The end of all this cannot possibly be a happy one." He had received a cruel wound in his entrails, and there could be no hope that he could survive it. Napoleon hastened to him, took him by the hand, called him his friend, and spoke to him of a future life, where at length they might find rest; uttering these words with a feeling of remorse which he did not acknowledge, but which thrilled the inmost recesses of his heart. Duroc thanked him with emotion for these testimonies of regard, confided to his care his only daughter, and expressed a hope that his master might live to vanquish the enemies of France, and then to enjoy repose in the midst of that peace of which the world had so much need. "As for myself," he continued, "I have lived as an honourable man should live; I die as a soldier should die. I have nothing to reproach myself with. Let me again recommend my daughter



to your care." And then, as Napoleon remained beside him, holding his hands, and seeming overwhelmed with serious reflections, he added, "Go, sire, go; this spectacle is too painful for you." And Napoleon left him, saying, "Adieu, my friend. We shall meet again, and perhaps soon . . . !"

It has been asserted that these words uttered by Duroc, "*I have nothing to reproach myself with,*" were an allusion to some unjust reproaches made against him by Napoleon, who in his moments of excitement did not spare even the men whom he esteemed the most. But he rendered full justice to his grand-marshal, who was the second sincere and truly devoted friend whom he had lost during the space of twenty days. Napoleon was indeed profoundly moved by his loss. Leaving the cottage in which the dying Duroc had been placed, he went to sit down upon some fascines near the advanced posts; and there remained, overpowered with grief, his hands lying listlessly on his knees, his eyes wet with tears, deaf to the fire of the tirailleurs, unconscious of the caresses of a dog belonging to one of the regiments of the guard, which frequently ran beside his horse, and now stood before him licking his hands. Such and so changeable is human nature! So contradictory in its various aspects; so incapable of being judged by any but God alone! For this man who was now so afflicted by the wounded state of one human being, had within the preceding month been the cause of wounds and death to more than eighty thousand, and within the preceding eighteen years to more than two millions, and was still to be the cause of destruction to some hundreds of thousands.

On the following day we entered Gorkitz and crossed the Neiss. On the 24th we crossed the Queiss, and on the following day the Bober. The forces of the allies were divided into two columns, the one on our right composed of the troops of Miloradovitch and the Russian guard, the other on our left composed of the Prussians and Barclay de Tolly—a distribution similar to that which their troops had presented at the battle of Bautzen. Each of these columns was followed by our troops. One column, formed of Bertrand's and Marmont's corps, marched upon the right, by Gorkitz, Lauban, Goldberg, and Schweidnitz, proceeding along the foot of the mountains. Another, comprising the corps of Reynier, Lauriston, Ney, the guard, and the imperial staff, advanced in the centre, by Gorkitz, Bunzlau, Hainau, Liegnitz, and Breslau; whilst upon our left the Duke of Belluna, preceded by the cavalry of General Sebastiani, proceeded towards the Oder, to release Glogau from blockade.

At Hainau the division Maison suffered an unfortunate and even fatal surprise; the forces of the allies, perceiving themselves to be vigorously pursued, and desiring to check the rapidity

of our advance, devised a snare which cost us considerable loss, and which was contrived with much art. On one side of the plain of Hainau, which was well suited for the movements of cavalry, they concealed five or six troops of heavy cavalry, and when Maison's division, which Ney had urged on with some eagerness, being stimulated by Napoleon's complaints that he made no prisoners, had entered upon the plain, a cloud of troopers charged our infantry before they had time to form in square, and drove them to flight in spite of all the efforts of Marshal Ney and General Maison; taking three or four pieces of cannon, and causing a loss to us of about a thousand men in killed and wounded.

On the following day, however, General Sebastiani, who marched at the head of the corps of the Duke of Belluna towards Glogau, avenged in the environs of Sprottau the check thus suffered by General Maison, taking an immense park of artillery and five hundred prisoners. Such are the alternating chances of war! On the 27th our troops arrived at Katzbach and Liegnitz, and our left corps, having reached the Oder, released Glogau from blockade, to the great joy of the garrison which had been invested during five months.

There may be some feeling of wonder that after the letter of General de Bubna to M. de Stadion, and after that of M. de Caulaincourt to M. de Nesselrode, the one announcing the project of an armistice, and the other offering the means of immediately commencing negotiations, the subject of an armistice should appear to have been forgotten. But as we have already said, the Russians had been unwilling to admit M. de Caulaincourt, that no umbrage might be given to the allies they already had, the Prussians, or to the allies they hoped to have, the Austrians; and they had replied, therefore, that the mediation of Austria having been accepted, M. de Caulaincourt should address himself to M. de Stadion, its representative. This answer, signed by M. de Nesselrode, was enclosed in a letter from M. de Stadion to Prince Berthier, in which the Austrian minister said, that after the communication which he had received he was quite ready to receive M. de Caulaincourt, and in concert with the Prussian and Russian commissioners to enter at once upon the negotiation of an armistice.

This double answer, deferred to the day after the battle, was despatched on the 22nd of May; and Napoleon, considering it unnecessary to act with any great alacrity with respect to persons who gave so cold a reception to his overtures, had simply replied that when the commissioners presented themselves at the advanced posts they would be received. He had then continued his march, and had, as we have seen above, arrived at Liegnitz, one or two marches distant from Breslau.

In the meantime, a state of great confusion prevailed amongst the forces of the allies; lost battles and rapid retreats telling severely upon the young soldiers of whom they were principally composed. And of the two armies, the Russian was much more shaken than the Prussian; the war, which had at first been one of patriotism for the former, had become simply a political war since it had crossed Poland, and it now supported, therefore, the attendant sufferings with impatience. Barclay de Tolly, from whom Alexander had found it impossible to withhold any longer the command in chief, being as he was the only man capable of exercising it, although very unpopular with the troops, had found it impossible to restore order to the ranks of the army, and declared that it would fall into a state of complete dissolution unless it were carried into Poland for the purpose of having two months' reorganisation behind the Vistula. So anxious, indeed, was he to act in accordance with this opinion, that Alexander's formal orders had been necessary to make him abandon the Breslau route, which led directly to Poland, for that of Schweidnitz, on which the allies hoped to be able to halt on the famous field of Bunzelwitz, so long occupied by Frederick the Great, and which had the advantage, always so strongly insisted upon by the diplomatists of the coalition, of being in the neighbourhood of Austria. On inspecting this position, however, the fortress of Schweidnitz, which was its support, and which had been destroyed by the French in 1807, was found to be still in a state of ruin, and Barclay de Tolly declared, with good reason, that the allied armies could not maintain their ground in such a position more than a few hours, and was confirmed more strongly than ever in his idea of the advisability of leaving the Prussians in Silesia, and marching his own army into Poland, to return upon the Oder after two months' reorganisation.

The allies at length began to perceive that a suspension of hostilities was the only means by which they could escape from the difficulties of their situation. But unfortunately for the allies, the Prussian patriots were opposed to it. General Gneisenau, a member of the *Tugend-bund*, a man of warm feelings and keen intellect, but rash and thoughtless, filled with patriotic passion, the successor of General Scharnhurst in the function of chief of Blucher's staff, held the most violent language against an armistice, and was well calculated to have a dangerous influence over minds so excitable as those of the Prussian officers. However, the necessity of suspending hostilities was an imperious one, and it was agreed to send commissioners to the French headquarters in order to negotiate it. At the same time, it was hinted, as a means of soothing those who were excessively opposed to this measure, that hostilities

were but to be suspended for a short time, and that when resumed they would only cease with the destruction of the common enemy. Whilst the commissioners proceeded to the French headquarters, M. de Nesselrode was also sent to Vienna, to point out the dangers which surrounded the forces of the allies, and to intimate that unless Austria immediately took measures in their favour, they should probably be compelled to retreat upon Poland, which would involve the dissolution of the coalition, and the loss to Austria of the only means of saving Europe and herself. He was also armed with the threat of the probability, if Austria still hesitated, of a direct arrangement between France and Russia.

M. de Nesselrode therefore set out for the Austrian capital, whilst General Kleist on the part of the Prussians, and General Count de Schouvaloff on the part of the Russians, proceeded to the French advanced posts, which they reached at ten o'clock on the morning of the 29th of May, being received by Prince Berthier, who immediately referred them to the emperor.

It was to Napoleon's advantage to engage the enemy's forces yet once more, for the purpose of driving them back in disorder upon the Vistula, far from Austria, who would certainly in that case decline to become their ally; but feeling himself in some degree bound to the principle of an armistice by the answers he had already made, feeling also that his refusal would be a too determined declaration against peace, and above all, flattering himself that it would afford him time to carry his second series of armaments to such a state of completeness that he would be able to become himself master of the conditions of peace, he sent M. de Caulaincourt to Gebersdorf on the 30th of May to negotiate an armistice on the bases already mentioned.

M. de Caulaincourt found the Prussian and Russian commissioners very animated, and much too haughty for their situation, although very polite to the former ambassador of France to Russia. They showed themselves almost resolved not to yield on three points—being unwilling to abandon Breslau during the armistice, this having become a second capital to the Prussians; unwilling to resign to us the occupation of Hamburg, on the ground that this would be to establish beforehand a prejudice in favour of the definitive annexation of the Hanseatic towns to France; and finally, unwilling to allow the armistice to continue beyond a month. When the discussion on these three points had lasted ten hours without any result, M. de Caulaincourt referred them to the emperor, who was at Neumarkt, at the gates of Breslau.

Napoleon was excessively irritated at the tone and demands of the allies; and replied that the armistice was not necessary to him, whilst it was so to the allies; that he only consented to it

for the purpose of restoring to Europe hopes of the peace of which she had so much need. He was resolved not to resign Hamburg; and that as for Breslau, if he yielded it, it was only out of complaisance, since it was already in his power. However, he avoided declaring himself decidedly on this point, letting it be seen that Breslau would be the equivalent of Hamburg. With respect to the duration of the armistice, however, he was imperative, saying, that if a congress were really to be held, it must be allowed sufficient time to arrive at a result.

The commissioners now resumed the discussion of the various disputed points; those of the allies maintaining their pretensions, without, however, showing signs of having determined not to yield, for the conclusion of an armistice was absolutely necessary to their interests. In the meantime, Napoleon received information which rendered him on his side disposed to be somewhat more accommodating. M. de Bassano, recently arrived at Dresden from Paris, had proceeded to Liegnitz to resume his diplomatic functions at headquarters, and had scarcely reached this place when he had been joined by M. de Bubna, returning from Vienna with detailed explanations on all the points which Napoleon had discussed with him at Dresden on the 17th and 18th of May last.

On returning to Vienna from his interview with Napoleon, M. de Bubna had declared that he had found the French emperor more amiably disposed than he had ever before known him to be, set forth his consent to the presence of representatives of the Spanish insurgents in a congress as an unhopèd-for concession, and made no mention of his expressions of anger against M. de Metternich except to M. de Narbonne. This prudent report had been regarded as very satisfactory by the Emperor Francis and M. de Metternich, who were anxious to avoid being drawn into a war. They were, however, very content with Napoleon's letters, and accorded a certain amount of consideration to the repugnance he had manifested with respect to some of the proposed conditions; resolving to consent to such modifications of those which referred to the Confederation of the Rhine and the Hanseatic towns as might save from injury what Napoleon called his honour. The modifications they devised were that the Hanseatic provinces should not be restored for the purpose of reconstituting the free towns of Lubeck, Bremen, and Hamburg, until the conclusion of peace with England, and that the question respecting the Confederation of the Rhine should also be referred to the period of the arrangement of a general peace—of a peace which should comprise all the powers of the earth, even America.

M. de Bubna had then been sent to the French headquarters with these two modifications, which were, in fact, very important,

and the Emperor Francis had addressed another letter to Napoleon, in which, in answer to the prayer of the latter that he would have regard for the preservation of his honour, he said, "On that day on which I gave you my daughter, your honour became mine. Have confidence in me, and I will demand nothing of you which shall tarnish your glory." To all these testimonies of friendship M. de Bubna had added a formal declaration that Austria was as yet entirely free from engagements to other States, and that if Napoleon would accept the conditions of peace thus modified, she was ready to bind herself to him by a renewal, with the addition of fresh articles, of the treaty of the 14th of March 1812. Such were the declarations sent by the hands of M. de Bubna by the Austrian court, and made with sincerity, for it had not yet heard any mention of direct negotiations between France and Russia; and she had therefore neither cause for discontent nor any particular reason to adopt hasty measures. M. de Bubna, journeying with great rapidity, had reached Liegnitz on the 30th of May, and set forth to M. de Bassano the propositions of which he was the bearer, in spite of the coldness of the latter, with the warmth of a man who desired to succeed, in the first place for the sake of his country, but also for his personal glory. M. de Bassano immediately sent an account in writing of this conference to Napoleon, without saying a single word either in support of or in opposition to the proposals, the rejection of which was to prove the greatest misfortune which had ever happened to France.

Unhappily, Napoleon was irritated instead of being gratified by the opportunity now offered him of terminating his long struggle with Europe, and remaining in possession of a magnificent empire. He saw in these proposals signs of a determination on the part of Austria to commence its intervention without further delay, and believed that if he did not now immediately accept conditions to which he was unwilling to consent, however they might be modified, she would at once advance against him, a declared enemy; to gain, therefore, the two months' time which he required for the completion of the arrangements which would enable him to meet her, he wrote to M. de Bassano—"Gain time, avoid entering into explanations with M. de Bubna, carry him with you to Dresden, and put off as long as possible the moment when it may be absolutely necessary to accept or refuse the Austrian propositions. I am about to conclude an armistice, and shall thus gain the time which I require. If, however, they should refuse an armistice, except on terms which do not suit me, I will furnish you with themes, by discussing which you may prolong your conferences with M. de Bubna, and procure me the delay which is necessary

in order to enable me to drive back the forces of the coalition far from the Austrian territory."

At this moment, unhappily for himself and us, Napoleon received news that Marshal Davout was at the gates of Hamburg, and would certainly have entered it by the 1st of June. It was now the 3rd. He imagined, therefore, he would be able to solve the difficulty with respect to this city by making the terms of the armistice declare, relative to the Hanseatic provinces, that that condition of things should be accepted by both sides with respect to them which should have been arranged by the chances of war at midnight on the 8th of June. With regard to Breslau, he consented that a tract of neutral ground of ten leagues which should comprise Breslau should be left between the two armies; with respect to the duration of the armistice, he proposed that it should last until the 20th of July, with six days' interval between its renunciation and the renewal of hostilities, which would carry it to the 26th of July, and make it last nearly two months. He forwarded these conditions to M. de Caulaincourt, directing him to break off negotiations at once if they should not be accepted.

M. de Caulaincourt having presented them on the 4th of June, the commissioners, who were ordered to persist only in refusing to allow Breslau to remain in Napoleon's hands, accepted them, and this disastrous armistice, which proved to be one of the greatest misfortunes of Napoleon's life, was signed on the 4th of June. It was agreed that the Katzbach should be adopted as the line of demarcation between the two armies, in order that Breslau might be left as neutral ground; that after the Katzbach, the neutral line should be continued along the Oder, by which means Lower Silesia was secured to the French; that after the Oder, it should be continued along the ancient frontier which had always separated Saxony from Prussia; and finally, along the line of the Elbe from Wittenberg to the sea, with the exception of that portion which should be *advenu des* Hanseatic towns. It was stipulated, moreover, that the blockaded garrisons of the Vistula and the Oder should be successively provisioned, payment being made for what they might require. Almost simultaneously with the signing of the armistice information was received that Hamburg and the Hanseatic towns had been retaken by Marshal Davout, and had thus become secured to us during the continuance of the armistice.

Such was this deplorable armistice, to which Napoleon would assuredly have rightly consented had peace been his object, but which he ought most certainly to have rejected if he had determined upon war, since in this latter case he should have completed at once the destruction of the allies. But Napoleon, on the contrary, accepted it just because his policy was war,

and because he desired to gain two months' time in which to complete his armaments, and be in a position to refuse the conditions of peace which Austria proposed to him. And the error was but one of that fatal series of foolishly ambitious resolutions which were to bring his reign to a premature conclusion. It caused, however, except amongst the Prussians, a false and universal joy throughout the whole of Europe, because it appeared to be a sign of peace. Napoleon, on sending his army into cantonments, ordered the erection of a monument on the summit of the Alps, to be inscribed with these words: "NAPOLEON, TO THE FRENCH PEOPLE, IN MEMORY OF ITS NOBLE EFFORTS AGAINST THE COALITION OF 1813." And the idea was one commensurate with the greatness of his genius; but far more advantageous both to himself and the French people would it have been had he sent to Paris a treaty of peace stipulating the abandonment of the Confederation of the Rhine, of Hamburg, of Illyria, and of Spain, with these words: "THE SACRIFICES MADE BY NAPOLEON FOR THE SAKE OF THE PEOPLE OF FRANCE." The adoption of this course would have left Napoleon not less poetically but more really great, and would have left to his noble people the fruit of that blood, its best, which during the last twenty years had not ceased to flow.

END OF VOL. VIII.













