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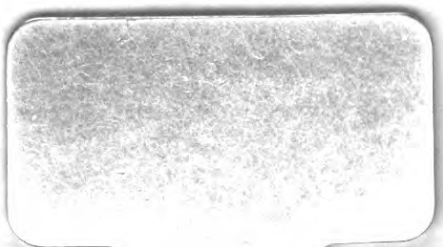
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HISTORY WITHDRAWN
FROM
OF THE CIRCULATION
EXPEDITION TO RUSSIA,

UNDERTAKEN BY THE
EMPEROR NAPOLEON

IN THE YEAR 1812.

By **GENERAL COUNT PHILIP DE SEGUR.**

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

*Quamquam animus meminisse horret, luctuque refugit
Incipiam—* *VIBÉIL.*

FIFTH EDITION.

LONDON:

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X
V

TO THE
VETERANS OF THE GRAND ARMY.

THE work with which I here present you, my brave companions, is a history of the grand army and its commander for the year 1812. I address it to those among you who have been disarmed by the frosts of the north, and who are no longer able to serve their country but by the recollections of their misfortunes and their glory. Intercepted in your noble course, your existence is made up more of the past than of the present ; but when recollections are of a description so elevating and grand as yours, men may well live on recollections alone. I have no apprehension, then, that, while I recall to your minds the most fatal of your conflicts, I shall disturb the repose which you have so dearly purchased. In the obscurity of their retreat, we well know that the eye of the unfortunate fondly dwells on the light which irradiates their past

existence, even though it exhibits the rock which shattered their fortunes, and the wreck in which they had nearly perished.

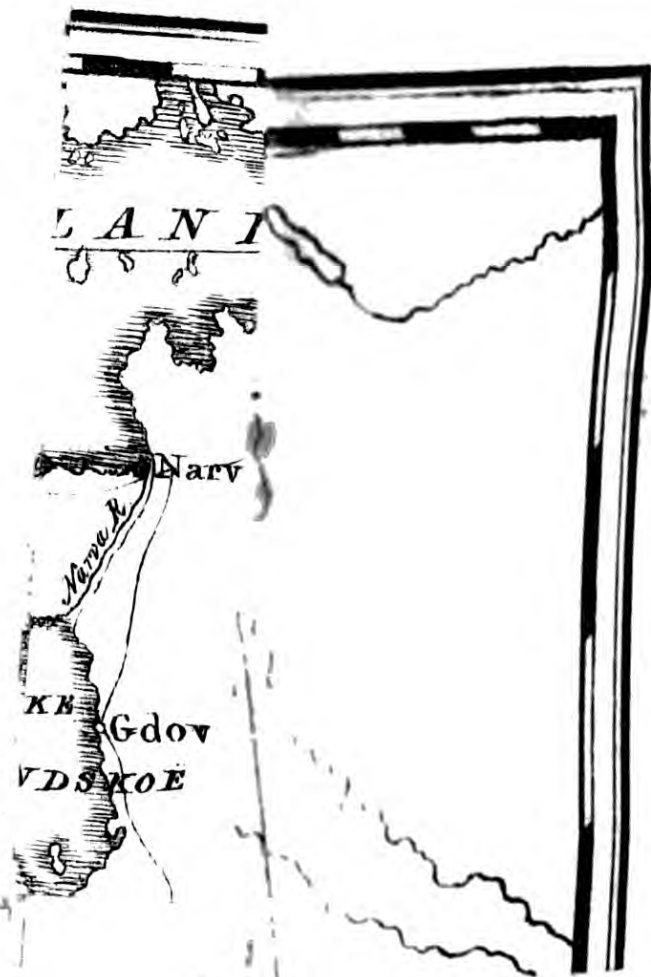
With respect to myself, I acknowledge that my attention is directed by an irresistible impulse towards that disastrous epoch both of our public and private misfortunes. A melancholy pleasure steals over my mind while memory presents the painful traces left on it by so long a succession of horrors. It would seem . . . if the soul felt gratified in the contemplation of its deep and numerous scars, as if it took a real pride in the exhibition of them ; as if they constituted a property, by the possession of which it might justly feel elated: or rather, perhaps, next to the ardent desire it feels of knowledge, the most ardent is its wish and want to communicate the sensations which itself experiences. To feel strongly, and to impart its feelings, seems always desirable, and, indeed, almost indispensable to it.

But, whatever be the nature of the feeling by which I am in the present instance actuated, I shall, in what follows, recount all the various sensations

which I experienced in the course of that dreadful war. I shall eagerly devote my leisure to the task of collecting my scattered and confused recollections, and exhibiting them with correctness and order; I, likewise, my fellow-warriors, call upon you for yours. Suffer not recollections so animating and glorious, purchased at so high a price as ours, and which are, in truth, in our case, the only good which the past can confer on the future, to perish from your minds. Single against such hosts of enemies, you fell with greater glory than they rose. Learn, then, to be conquered without any feeling of shame. Lift up those manly faces which bear on them the marks of all the artillery of Europe! Fix not on the ground those eyes which have beheld so many subject capitals—so many vanquished monarchs. Fortune, unquestionably, owed you a retreat more triumphant; but it depends upon yourselves to make a noble use of it even as it is. Dictate to history your recollections; the silence and solitude of misfortune are favourable to her labours; and, finally, let truth, which never fails to present itself in the long nights of adversity, illumine every page of your valuable and interesting lucubrations.

With regard to myself, I shall exercise the privilege, often painful, but often gratifying and glorious, of relating what I have seen. I shall retrace it with a care and solicitude which may perhaps be deemed too scrupulous, even in its minutest details. My opinion, however, is, that nothing ought to be considered minute, connected with that prodigious genius and those gigantic facts, but for which we should have remained ignorant of the extent to which might be carried the strength, the glory, and the misfortunes of man.





HISTORY.
OF
NAPOLEON'S EXPEDITION TO RUSSIA,
IN THE YEAR 1812.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

FROM the year 1807, the distance between the Rhine and the Niemen might be considered as no longer existing; these two important rivers might be regarded as rivals. By his concessions at Tilsit, at the expense of Prussia, Sweden, and Turkey, Napoleon had only conciliated Alexander. The treaty of Tilsit was the result of the defeat of Russia, and the date of her submission to the continental system. It was considered in Russia, by some, as reflecting on the national honour, and by all as hostile to the national interest.

By the continental system, Napoleon had declared mortal war against the English; and he connected with that system, the honour and political existence both of himself and France. It shut out from the Continent every species of merchandise that was English, or that had paid to England any kind of duty. It could succeed only in consequence of unanimous consent, which could reasonably be hoped for only under one universal continental domination.

France, moreover, had alienated nations by her conquests, and kings by her revolution and her new dynasty. It was no longer in her power to have either friends or rivals; she could merely have subjects; for friends would have proved false, and rivals implacable: it became necessary, therefore, that all should be subjected to France, or France to all.

Such were the causes which led its political chief, urged on by the position in which he found himself, and by the daring enterprise of his character, to form the mighty project of constituting himself sole master of Europe, by crushing Russia under his feet, and wresting Poland from her grasp. This vast design, which it was impossible to keep long confined within his own bosom, was already becoming apparent on every side. The immense preparations indispensably necessary for so distant an enterprise, the accumulations of provisions and ammunition, the clashings of arms, the heavy lumbering of carriages, the marchings of immense bodies of soldiers, the universal agitation, the majestic and formidable advance of all the forces of the west against the east, now distinctly proclaimed to Europe that its two colossal powers were about to meet in deadly conflict.

But, in order to reach Russia, it was necessary to pass through Austria, to traverse Prussia, and to march between Sweden and Turkey. An offensive alliance with these four powers became, therefore, indispensable. Austria was in subjection to the ascendancy of Napoleon's mind, and Prussia to that of his arms: in both cases he had only to disclose his enterprise. Austria engaged in it with readiness and alacrity; and Prussia he gently and easily urged into it.

Austria did not, however, join in this enterprise

blindly and rashly. Placed between the Colossus of the north and that of the west, she was pleased with their mutual hostilities; she hoped that they would each weaken the other, and that her own strength would increase through their exhaustion. On the 14th of March, 1812, she promised to France thirty thousand men; but she furnished them with secret prudential instructions. She obtained a vague promise of aggrandisement in indemnity for her necessary expenses, and a guarantee of her possession of Galicia. She admitted, however, the possibility of her cession of a part of that province to the kingdom of Poland, in which case she was to be indemnified by the Illyrian provinces; this we learn from the sixth article of the secret treaty.

The success of the war, therefore, could not be frustrated by the refusal of Galicia, or by any cautionary policy exercised in deference to Austrian jealousies and fears about that possession; and Napoleon, when he entered Wilna, instead of deceiving the hopes of Poland, exciting its astonishment, and extinguishing its enthusiasm, by vague expressions, might, it appears, have openly proclaimed the liberation of the whole country.

This was one of those important, those salient points, which in all affairs of policy as well as war are of decisive moment; upon which every thing depends, and which must be adhered to with inflexible obstinacy. But, whether Napoleon depended too strongly on the ascendancy of his genius, the strength of his army, and the weakness of Alexander; whether contemplating what he left behind him, he considered so distant a war too dangerous to be conducted slowly and methodically; or whether, according to his own intimation, it may be ascribed to his doubt respecting

the success of his enterprise, he neglected, or as yet hesitated, to proclaim the liberation which he came to bestow.

He had, notwithstanding, sent an ambassador to the diet. When this contradiction was pointed out to him, he replied, "that that nomination was a war-like act, which only bound him for the war, while his expressions would bind him both for war and peace." Accordingly, he replied to the burst of Lithuanian enthusiasm, in language evasive and equivocal, while he incessantly renewed his attacks on Alexander, during the whole of his march to Moscow.

He neglected even to clear the southern provinces of Poland of the weak hostile armies which controlled their patriotism, and thus securing himself, by judiciously organizing their insurrection, a solid basis of operation. Habituated to making short cuts, to the use of lightning and the thunderbolt, he determined to imitate himself, notwithstanding the difference of places and circumstances: for such is the weakness of man that he always proceeds by imitation, either of others or of himself, which last is in reality nothing more or less than proceeding by habit; and thus, we frequently perceive great and extraordinary men meeting their ruin on the very side where they might naturally be deemed least vulnerable!

Napoleon, in the instance before us, referred himself to the decision of battle. He had prepared an army of six hundred and fifty thousand men; and in doing this, he thought he had done enough for victory. He expected everything from that. Instead of sacrificing everything to obtain that victory, it was by it that he resolved to obtain everything else; he considered it as his means, while it ought to have been his end. It had already become of too much importance

and moment to him. But he intrusted to it so much of the future, he loaded it with so heavy a responsibility, as to render it absolutely urgent and indispensable. Hence his precipitation to attain it, in order to extricate himself from a position so critical.

Let no one, however, rashly decide on the conduct of a genius so great and universal; we shall soon hear his own observations and statements; we shall see how he was urged on by his necessities, and that, even admitting that there was a rashness in the rapidity of his expedition, yet success would in all probability have crowned it, if, instead of experiencing an early decline of health and constitution, the bodily frame of that extraordinary man had retained the vigour which was still preserved by his mind.

CHAPTER II.

WITH respect to Prussia, then under the complete power of Napoleon, we cannot ascertain whether it was his hesitation in what way finally to dispose of her, or at what point of time he should begin the Russian war, that led him to refuse in 1811 the alliance which she offered him, and the terms of which he dictated himself in 1812.

His aversion towards Frederick William was remarkable. Napoleon had been often heard to reproach the Prussian cabinet, for its treaties with the French Republic. He pronounced such conduct, "an abandonment of the cause of kings." According to him "the negotiations of the court of Berlin with the French directory, disclosed a policy, timid, interested, and disgraceful, and which sacrificed its dignity, and

the general cause of thrones, for the sake of petty acquisitions." Whenever he traced on the maps the frontiers of Prussia, he appeared irritated at seeing them still so extensive, and would exclaim, "Is it possible that I can have left that man so much territory!"

This great dislike to a mild and pacific prince was astonishing. As nothing relating to Napoleon is unworthy of history, it is incumbent upon us to inquire into the causes of it. Some trace back its origin to Louis XVIIIth's refusal of certain arrangements proposed to him by the first consul, through the mediation of the King of Prussia. They think that Napoleon imputed the ineffectiveness of the mediation to the mediator himself. Others ascribe it to his being compelled by Frederick, as protector of the north of Germany, to deliver up the English agent Rumbold, whom he had seized at Hamburgh; up to that period Frederick and Napoleon had kept up a private correspondence, in which they communicated to each other, with the most friendly confidence, both their feelings and their policy. That event, it is said, put a sudden termination to it.

It was in vain, however, that in the beginning of 1805, Russia, Austria, and England, endeavoured to induce Frederick to join in their third coalition against France. The court of Berlin, the princes, the queen, Hardenberg, and the whole military youths of Prussia, eager to exhibit the glory which had been bequeathed to them by the great Frederick, or to efface the ignominy of the campaign of 1792, cordially joined their influence in promoting the cause of the three powers: but the pacific policy of Frederick and his minister Haugwitz effectually opposed them, until the violation of the Prussian territory, by the

passage of a French corps near Anspach, so exasperated the passions of the nation, that their cry of war prevailed.

Alexander was then in Poland, and was invited to Potsdam, whither he immediately proceeded, and on the 3d of November, 1805, he engaged Frederick in the third coalition. The Prussian army instantly quitted the Russian frontiers, and M. Haügwitz presented himself at Brunn, to menace Napoleon with it. But the battle of Austerlitz imposed silence upon him; and within a fortnight from that event, the dexterous minister had so ably manœuvred, as to sign with the conqueror the division of the spoil.

In the meantime, Napoleon dissembled his resentment; for he had to re-organize his army, to confer the Grand-Duchy of Berg on his brother-in-law Murat, and Neufchâtel on Berthier, to conquer Naples for his brother Joseph, to mediatize Switzerland, to dissolve the Germanic body, and to form the Confederation of the Rhine: he intended to get himself declared protector of that Confederation, and also to change the Republic of Holland into a kingdom, and bestow it on his brother Louis; on these accounts, he, on the 15th of December, ceded Hanover to Prussia in exchange for Anspach, Cleves, and Neufchâtel.

At first the acquisition of Hanover was a bait highly seductive to Frederick; but when the time came for signing the instrument, he blushed and hesitated. He would only half-accept that province; he would only take possession of it in trust. Napoleon had no conception of a policy so timid. "Will this prince, then," said he, "neither dare to make peace nor war? Does he prefer the English to me? Is another coalition preparing? Is my alliance despised?" The

very supposition filled him with indignation; and on the 8th of March, he, by a new treaty, compelled Frederick to declare war against England, to take complete possession of Hanover, and to receive French garrisons in Wesel and Hameln.

The King of Prussia alone submitted; his court and subjects were exasperated. They reproached him with suffering himself to be conquered without daring to fight; and, glowing with the recollections of national glory, they considered themselves as commissioned to triumph single-handed over the conqueror of Europe. In their impatience they insulted Napoleon's minister; they sharpened their arms on the threshold of his gate; they bitterly reviled Napoleon himself. Their queen, full of grace and fascination, appeared in military uniform; their princes, more particularly one of them, whose carriage and features, whose sense and intrepidity gave every promise of a hero, volunteered to lead them to battle. All glowed with the ardour and frenzy of chivalry.

It is stated that at this crisis Frederick was persuaded by certain persons, who were either dupes or traitors, that Napoleon was compelled to observe a pacific line of conduct; that the warrior did not intend war: to which they added the suggestion, that he was perfidiously attempting to negotiate a peace with England at the price of the restoration of Hanover, which of course, he designed in that case to take back from Prussia. Yielding at last to the general feeling, Frederick gave free course to the passions by which all were actuated. His army advanced in menacing array against Napoleon; and within a fortnight he possessed neither army nor kingdom; he fled almost without attendants, and Napoleon dated from Berlin his decrees against England.

Prussia being thus humbled and conquered, it was impossible for him to abandon the possession of her. She would have placed herself under the protection of Russia. Not being able to conciliate her, like Saxony, by an act of extraordinary generosity, his true line of policy was to divide her; and yet, whether through a feeling of compassion, or the influence of the presence of Alexander, he could not bring himself to resolve on her dismemberment. Here was an error in policy, such as is generally committed when men adopt half-way courses. It was not long before Napoleon perceived it; and when he exclaimed, "Is it possible that I can have left that man so much territory!" in all probability it was because he could not pardon Prussia for having obtained the protection of Alexander; he hated her, knowing that he was hated by her.

In fact, indications of a jealous and impatient hatred were visible among the youth of Prussia, whose education, at once patriotic, liberal, and mystical, tended to produce a high degree of excitement. Among them originated and grew up a formidable power, in opposition to Napoleon's. It consisted of all who had felt disgusted or degraded by his triumph; it exhibited, in full array, the whole strength of the feeble and oppressed, natural justice, mystery, fanaticism, and the thirst for vengeance! Not finding assistance on earth, it threw itself for support on heaven, and its moral force was completely beyond control from the material power of Napoleon. Animated by the genuine sectarian spirit, ardent, indefatigable, and self-devoted, it scrutinized every movement, and detected every weakness of its enemy; insinuated itself into the most secret recesses; and, holding itself in readiness to seize whatever opportunity

should offer, awaited events with that patient and phlegmatic character peculiar to the Germans, which was the cause of their defeat, and against which one victory was won in vain.

This vast combination was designated "The Friends of Virtue *." Its head, that is, the man who seasonably stood forward to give it a clearness and unity of

* In 1808 a number of men of letters at Königsberg, grieved at the calamities which afflicted their country, imputed them to the general corruption of manners; which, in the opinion of these philosophers, had extinguished patriotism in the citizens, discipline in the army, and courage in the people. It became, therefore, the duty of the respectable part of the community to unite for the purpose of regenerating the nation by furnishing an example of every generous sacrifice. An association was in consequence formed, under the name of "The Moral and Scientific Union." The government sanctioned it, merely prohibiting the introduction of politics. This resolution, however, noble as it was, would probably like various others have been lost in the ocean of German metaphysics, but that about this period prince William, after being dispossessed of the Duchy of Brunswick, had retired to his principality of Oeils in Silesia. From the bosom of that retreat he is said to have noticed the first advances of the "Moral Union" in the Prussian nation. He became a member of it, and, his heart swelling with hatred and vengeance, he formed the idea of another Union, to consist of men determined to subvert the Confederation of the Rhine, and expel the French from the soil of Germany. This union, the object of which was more distinct and palpable than that of the first, completely absorbed it; and from these united associations was formed that of "The Friends of Virtue."

Before the close of May, 1809, its existence had been already signalized by three enterprises under Katt, Dornberg, and Schill. That of Duke William began on the 14th of May. The Austrians at first countenanced it. After experiencing a variety of fortune, this chief, abandoned to himself in the midst of subjected Europe, and with only two thousand men under him to oppose to the whole power of Napoleon, neither submitted nor despaired; he threw himself into Saxony and Hanover; but, finding himself unable to rouse them to co-operation, he eventually cut himself a passage through many corps of French military, and, arriving on the coast at Elsfleth, escaped from the Continent on board a ship from England, which had been there stationed to convey him, with his hatred and his glory, to that country.

purpose, was Stein. Napoleon might possibly have conciliated him; but he preferred punishing him. His plan was discovered by one of those chances to which the police are indebted for so many of their miracles; but when those engaged in conspiracy are united in interests, passions, and even consciences, the clue can scarcely ever be discovered; every one understands without any communication; or rather all is communication; there is a general and simultaneous sympathy.

This flame spread from one district and territory to another with rapidity; it attacked Napoleon's power in the opinion of all Germany, extended itself as far as Italy, and threatened its very existence. It had been already seen that, in case of a reverse of circumstances, men would not be wanting eagerly to avail themselves of it. In 1809, even before the disaster of Esslingen, the first to raise against Napoleon the standard of independence were Prussians. He had sentenced them to the galleys: of such importance did he deem it to suppress a cry of revolt answering to that already raised among the Spaniards.

In short, independently of these various causes of hatred, the situation of Prussia, between France and Russia, compelled Napoleon to continue master of it; he could reign in it only by force; he could be strong in it only by enfeebling it.

He ruined that country, although he well knew that poverty inspires audacity; that the hope of gaining something is the sole governing principle of men who have no longer any thing to lose; and that to leave them nothing but iron was actually urging them to have hostile recourse to it. Accordingly, when the year 1812 approached, fraught with that

dreadful conflict which has so memorably distinguished it, Frederick, restless and harassed by his long subjection, was desirous of extricating himself from it, by alliance or war. In March 1811 he offered himself to Napoleon as an auxiliary in the expedition he was then preparing. In the month of May, and more particularly in the following August, he renewed his proposition; and, as it remained without any satisfactory reply, he declared that the grand military movements which surrounded, traversed, or exhausted Prussia, excited his apprehensions that her total destruction was contemplated. "I have taken up arms therefore," said he, "since circumstances imposed upon me the necessity of so doing, and since it is better for a man to die with the sword in his grasp, than ignominiously to yield without resistance."

It has been asserted, that, at this very time, Frederick secretly offered Alexander, Graudentz, his magazines, and himself at the head of all his insurgent subjects, if the Russian army would advance into Silesia. If we may believe the same authorities, the proposition was not displeasing to Alexander. He immediately despatched to Bagration and Witgenstein sealed orders of march, which those generals were to open only on receiving another letter from their emperor. That letter he never wrote; he changed his determination; whether from his fearing to be the beginner in a war so great and tremendous, and a wish to secure on his own side the justice of heaven, and the approbation of men, by not being the aggressor; whether, perhaps, Frederick, become less anxious and uneasy respecting the projects of Napoleon, had resolved to follow his fortunes; or whether Alexander was truly influenced by those generous motives and

sentiments which he expressed in answer to Frederick's application. He is reported to have observed, "that, in a war which might begin with serious reverses, and which demanded great perseverance, he felt only courage enough for himself; that the disasters of an ally might, perhaps, shake his firmness; that he should be shocked to find he had chained Prussia to any ill fortune he might meet with, and that, if he met with success, she should be sure to share it with him, whatever side hard necessity compelled her now to adopt."

These details have been furnished by an actual witness, though not a man of rank or station. Whether, however, such counsel was given by Alexander out of generosity or policy, or whether necessity alone determined the conduct of Frederick, certain it is, that the time was now come for him to decide; for, in February, 1812, either these communications with Alexander (if they in fact took place), or the hope of obtaining better conditions from France, having induced him to hesitate in replying to the definitive propositions of Napoleon, the latter, in a fit of impatience, ordered Dantzic to be more strongly occupied, and despatched Davoust into Pomerania; his orders for this invasion of a Swedish province were repeated and urgent, grounded at first on the illicit commerce between Pomerania and the English, but afterwards on the necessity of compelling the court of Berlin to accede to his propositions. The prince of Eckmuhl even received an order to hold himself in readiness to take sudden possession of the whole of Prussia, and to secure the king himself, if within eight days after the reception of the order that monarch had not concluded the offensive alliance dictated to him by France; but while

the marshal was tracing the few marches necessary for that operation, he was apprized that the treaty of the 24th of February, 1812, was ratified.

This submission, however, did not give Napoleon perfect assurance. To his strength he added wariness and cunning. Even the fortresses which he had left to Frederick, only because he was ashamed to take them from him, his distrust now led him to covet the occupation of: in some of them he was required to keep only fifty or eighty invalids; in others, he was to admit a number of French officers, all of them bound to send him their reports, and to receive his orders. His solicitude extended to every thing. "Spandau," says he, in his letters to Marshal Davoust, "is the citadel of Berlin, as Pillau is that of Königsberg; and already orders were given for the French troops to be in readiness to introduce themselves into it at the first signal: he even pointed out the manner in which it should be done. With regard to Potsdam, which was reserved expressly for the king, and which our troops were forbidden to enter, he ordered that the French officers should frequently shew themselves there, both to make their observations and to accustom the people to the sight of them. He recommended that the greatest respect should be paid both to Frederick and his subjects; but he required at the same time that the latter should be deprived of every thing which might be of service to them in case of revolt. He specified, on this point, every article, down to the smallest weapon; and, contemplating the loss of a battle, and the realization of "Prussian Vespers," he ordered that his troops should be stationed in barracks or in camp; with a thousand other precautions of almost endless detail. Finally, in case of a descent by the

English between the Elbe and the Vistula, and although Victor, and afterwards Aügereau, were to occupy Prussia with fifty thousand men, he had secured to himself the assistance of ten thousand Danes.

Yet, in the midst of all his precautions, his distrust existed still: when the prince of Hatzfeld came to request the grant of twenty-five millions of francs to defray the expenses of the war then in preparation, he replied to Darü, "that he should take good care not to put arms into the hands of an enemy, to be used against himself." Thus was it that Frederick, entangled in an iron net, surrounding and confining him on every side, was induced to put at the disposal of Napoleon between twenty and thirty thousand men, and the greater part of his fortresses and magazines*.

CHAPTER III.

THESE two treaties opened the way for Napoleon to Russia; but, in order to penetrate into the recesses of that empire, it was incumbent upon him to secure Sweden and Turkey.

The military combinations adapted to this mighty enterprise were required to be on so grand a scale,

* By this treaty Prussia bound herself to furnish two hundred thousand quintals of rye, eighty thousand of rice, two million bottles of beer, four hundred thousand quintals of wheat, six hundred and fifty thousand of straw, three hundred and fifty thousand of hay, six million bushels of oats, forty-four thousand oxen, fifteen thousand horses, three thousand six hundred waggons, to carry each 1500 weight, with harness and drivers complete; and lastly hospitals properly furnished for the accommodation of twenty thousand sick. It is true that the cost of all these supplies was to be deducted from the remainder of the taxes imposed on Prussia by the conquest.

that in sketching a plan of operations, the configuration of a province, or a chain of mountains, or the course of a single river, was of trifling consequence. When such sovereigns as Alexander and Napoleon contended for Europe, it became necessary with a comprehensive eye to survey the general and relative position of all the states comprised within it. The hostile plans of their policy were to be traced out, not on the maps of individual countries, but on that of the globe itself.

But Russia is mistress of the heights of Europe, and her flanks are supported by seas both on the north and south. Her government can with extreme difficulty only be driven up into a fastness, and forced in consequence to capitulate, possessing as she does a wide and almost boundless extent of territory, the conquest of which would require long campaigns, to which the climate presents an irremovable bar. Hence it results, that without the concurrence of Turkey and Sweden, Russia is not easily assailable. The object, therefore, was, with their assistance, to make a rapid incursion and strike a deadly blow into her heart, her modern capital, and to turn at a great distance, in the rear of its left, her grand army of the Niemen; for if merely partially attacked in front, in her immense plains, extent of space would prevent disorder, and leave a thousand roads open for that army's retreat.

Accordingly, even the very privates in our ranks expected with anxiety the gratifying intelligence of the combined march of the grand vizier towards Kief, and of Bernadotte upon Finland. Eight monarchs were already arrayed under the banners of Napoleon; but the two sovereigns most interested in his quarrel were still disobedient to his summons. It was worthy of the great emperor to combine all the powers and

all the religions of Europe in the accomplishment of his great designs: their success might then be considered secure; and if the voice of a modern Homer had been wanting to this earthly king of kings, the voice of the nineteenth century, become the century of wonders, would have been an effective substitute for it; the exclamations of admiration and astonishment proceeding at once from an entire age, and penetrating and traversing the recesses of futurity, would have re-echoed from one generation to another to the remotest posterity.

Such glory as this, however, was not in reserve for us.

What individual who belonged to the French army does not recollect the amazement which overwhelmed him when, in the midst of the plains of Russia, intelligence arrived of the ominous and dreadful treaties of the Turks and Swedes with Alexander; and with what anxious and agitated looks we contemplated our uncovered right, our enfeebled left, and our menaced retreat? We then thought only of the fatal effects that might arise from that peace between our allies and enemy; we now feel solicitous to develop the causes of it.

The treaties concluded towards the close of the last century had subjected to Russia the feeble sultan of the Turks: the expedition to Egypt had armed him against us. But, from the time of Napoleon's accession to power, a community of interest, well understood by both parties, and the intimacy naturally attending on a confidential and mysterious correspondence, had greatly conciliated Selim's attachment: a strict union was formed between these two princes, and they even mutually exchanged their portraits. Selim attempted to effect a great revolu-

tion in the Ottoman usages. Napoleon approved of it, and was aiding him in introducing the European discipline into the Mussulman army, when the victory of Jena, the Polish war, and the influence of Sebastiani induced the sultan to shake off the yoke of Alexander. The English hastened to oppose this, but were driven from before Constantinople. At that period Napoleon wrote Selim the following letter.

“ *Osterode, April 3, 1807.*

“ My ambassador has informed me of the good conduct and bravery of the Mussulmans against our common enemies. Thou hast proved thyself the worthy descendant of the Selims and the Solymans. Thou hast requested of me officers, and I now send them to thee. I regretted that thou didst not ask for several thousand men; thou hast desired only five hundred, and I have ordered them to be immediately despatched to thee. I intend that they shall be paid and accoutred at my expense, and that thou shalt be reimbursed for whatever cost they occasion thee. I have given orders to the commander of my troops in Dalmatia to send thee arms and ammunition, and whatever assistance thou mayest wish me to afford. I have also sent the same orders to Naples, and the Bashaw of Janina has already had a number of cannon placed at his disposal. Generals, officers, arms of every description, money itself, all are at thy service. Thou hast only to ask: explain clearly thy wants, and I will instantly supply them. Arrange matters with the Shaw of Persia, who, like ourselves, is the enemy of Russia. Urge him to keep firm to his engagements, and to attack the common enemy with vigour. I have defeated the Russians in a great battle, and taken seventy-five pieces of cannon, six-

teen standards, and a great number of prisoners. I am at present eighty leagues beyond Warsaw, and shall avail myself of the fortnight's rest I have allowed my army, to go to Warsaw and receive thy ambassador there. I see clearly thy great want of artillery-men and troops. I had offered them to thy ambassador; but he declined them through fear of hurting the feelings of the Mussulmans. Intrust me with all thy wants. I am too powerful, and too completely interested in thy success, both from friendship and policy, to refuse thee anything. I have had proposals made me here for peace. Every advantage was conceded to me that I could desire; but I was expected to ratify the state of things established between the Porte and Russia, and that I refused. I replied, 'that complete independence should be guaranteed to the Porte, and that all the treaties extorted from it, while France was asleep, should be cancelled.' "

This letter of Napoleon had been both preceded and followed by verbal assurances of a formal and solemn nature, that he would not sheath his sword till the Crimea was restored to the Crescent. He had even authorized Sebastiani to give the Divan a copy of the instructions which contained these engagements.

Such were his words. Let us now look at his actions. At first, they were in agreement. Sebastiani requested permission for the passage of an army of twenty-five thousand French through Turkey. He was himself to have the command of it, and it was to unite with the Ottoman army. It is true that an unforeseen incident deranged this scheme; but Napoleon then gave Selim the promise of an aid of nine thousand

French, of whom five thousand were to be artillerymen, and who were to be conveyed in eleven ships of the line to Constantinople. The Turkish ambassador was, at the same time, received with the most respectful and scrupulous attention in the French camp : he accompanied Napoleon in his reviews ; the most complimentary assiduities were lavished upon him ; and the grand equerry of France was treating with him concerning an alliance offensive and defensive, when the negotiation was interrupted by an unexpected attack from the Russians. The ambassador returned to Warsaw, where the same consideration continued to be shewn him.

This consideration he enjoyed up to the day of the decisive victory of Friedland ; but from that time the illusion was dissipated. He found himself neglected, for he no longer represented Selim ; a revolution had subverted the throne of that sovereign, the friend of Napoleon, and consequently all hope of conferring on the Turks such a regular army as might be fully depended upon. Napoleon knew not now whether he could any longer rely on the assistance of those barbarians. His system was therefore changed. From that time it was Alexander whom he wished to conciliate ; and, as his genius never wavered in indecision, he was already prepared to abandon to him the empire of the east, were he left himself to take possession of that of the west.

But his grand object was the extension of the continental system. Europe was to be brought completely under the restrictive agency of that system ; and the co-operation of Russia was necessary to perfect its development. Alexander would promise to shut the ports of the north against the English, and compel Sweden to a rupture with them, while the

French would repulse them from the centre, the south, and the west of Europe. Napoleon already meditated the expedition to Portugal, if that kingdom should refuse to join the coalition. Turkey, therefore, was now no longer any thing more than a point of minor consideration ; and he consented to the armistice and the interview at Tilsit.

In the mean time, deputies arrived from Wilna demanding from him liberty, and offering the same devotion to his person and cause as Warsaw had displayed before. But Berthier, whose ambition was satisfied, and who was weary of war, treated them with incivility, and even designated them as traitors to their sovereign. The prince of Eckmuhl received them with politeness, and introduced them to Napoleon, who resented the conduct of Berthier, and gave the Lithuanians a very gracious reception, without however promising them his support. Davoust vainly represented to him, that the opportunity was favourable, as the Russian army was destroyed ; but Napoleon replied, " that Sweden had just announced her armistice to him ; that Austria offered her mediation between France and Russia, which he considered an indication of hostility ; that the Prussians, on seeing him at such a distance from France, might perhaps recover from their consternation ; and, finally, that Selim, his faithful ally, was dethroned, and succeeded by Mustapha, of whose dispositions he was completely ignorant."

The emperor of France continued, therefore, to negotiate with Russia ; and the Turkish ambassador wandered about our camps despised or forgotten, without being invited to be present at the discussions then pending for terminating the war. He returned to Constantinople, in a short time after, in

great disgust. The treaty of Tilsit restored to that barbarous court neither the Crimea nor even Moldavia and Wallachia; the restitution of the two latter provinces was provided for merely by an armistice, the conditions of which were not intended to be executed. However, as Napoleon had styled himself a mediator between Mustapha and Alexander, the ministers of both powers repaired to Paris; but, during the long continuance at that city of this pretended mediation, he never condescended to receive the Turkish plenipotentiaries.

If we are at liberty to state what has been asserted, we must observe that, both at the interview at Tilsit and afterwards, one of the subjects agitated, was a treaty for the partition of Turkey. Russia, it was proposed, should take possession of Wallachia, Moldavia, and Bulgaria, together with a part of Mount Hemus; Austria was to have had Servia and a part of Bosnia; and France the other part of Bosnia, Albania, Macedonia, and the whole of Greece as far as Thessalonica. Constantinople, Adrianople, and Thrace were to be still Turkish.

It is impossible to say whether the conferences relating to this partition were founded on the serious proposal of it, or whether they were only the discussion of a grand idea; but it is certain, that very soon after the interview of Tilsit, Alexander felt no longer disposed to cherish such projects of ambition. Prudence had shewn him the danger of substituting for ignorant, blind, and feeble Turkey, a neighbour active, interfering, and powerful. Accordingly, the Russian emperor, in his conversations on this subject, replied, "that he had barren deserts enough; that he knew full well by his occupation of the Crimea, still in a state of depopulation, the little value of

those conquests which are gained over foreign and hostile religions and manners; that, besides, Russia and France were too powerful to be in such near neighbourhood to each other; that two bodies so strong would, if placed in immediate contact, dash against one another with destructive violence; and that it was far better to have other states between them."

The emperor of the French urged the point no longer; indeed the Spanish insurrection demanded all his attention, and peremptorily called him away with all his forces. Even before the interview at Erfurt, when Sebastiani had returned from Constantinople, although Napoleon appeared not to have abandoned the idea of the dismemberment of Turkey in Europe, he had yielded to the reasoning of his ambassador, "that in the partition in question every thing would be against him; that Russia and Austria would obtain provinces that were contiguous to them, and conveniently round and compact their territories, while our maintaining possession of Greece would require a force of eighty thousand French to be constantly kept up there; that such an army, considering its distance, and its losses arising from long marches, novelty of possession, and insalubrity of climate, would require annually thirty thousand recruits, by which France would be exhausted; that a line of operations from Paris to Athens would be beyond all practicable bounds; that, besides, it was strangled at its passage at Trieste, where the Austrians might, in two marches, throw themselves across, and cut off the army of occupation from all its communications with Italy and France."

Napoleon on this exclaimed "that Austria in fact complicated every thing; that she was here a com-

plete clog ; that it was time to have done with her, and divide Europe into two empires : that the Danube, from the Black Sea to Passaŭ, the mountains of Bohemia to Königsberg, and the Elbe to the Baltic, should be their demarcation. Alexander should become emperor of the north of Europe, and himself of the south." Then, descending from his elevation, and reverting to Sebastiani's observations on the division of European Turkey, he terminated a conference of three days with these words, " You are right ! what you say is unanswerable ; I give up the idea entirely. Besides, it suits my views upon Spain : I am going to unite that country to France." " What," cried Sebastiani, " unite it ! and your brother ?" " What signifies my brother," replied Napoleon ; " are such kingdoms as Spain to be given away ? I am determined to unite it to France. I will confer on it a grand national representation. I will obtain the emperor Alexander's consent, by permitting him to appropriate Turkey as far as the Danube, and by evacuating Berlin. As to Joseph, I will find him an indemnity."

Then the congress of Erfürt took place. His motive could not be that of supporting in it the rights of the Ottomans. The French army, imprudently involved in the midst of Spain, was far from successful there. The presence of its chief, and that of his armies of the Rhine and Elbe, became more and more necessary ; Austria had seized upon this favourable moment for taking up arms. Uneasy respecting Germany, Napoleon resolved, therefore, to secure to himself the friendly dispositions of Alexander, to conclude with him an alliance offensive and defensive, and even to furnish him with employment by a war. On these accounts he abandoned Turkey as far as the Danube

The Porte soon found it might justly reproach us for the war rekindled between it and the Russians. However, in July, 1808, Mustapha being dethroned, Mahmoud who succeeded him announced his accession to the emperor of the French; but Napoleon, whose policy it was to keep well with Alexander, and who also sincerely regretted the death of Selim, detested the cruelty of the Mussulmans, and despised a government so contemptibly unstable, sent no reply to the new sultan for the space of three years, and seemed studiously to avoid the recognition of him.

He was in this doubtful position in respect to the Turks, when suddenly, on the 21st of March, 1812, only six weeks before his war with Russia, he demanded Mahmoud's alliance; he required that within five days after this communication all negotiation between the Turks and Russians should be broken off; and that an army of a hundred thousand Turks, commanded by the Sultan himself, should be on the banks of the Danube within nine days. The price he offered for this mighty effort was that same Wallachia and Moldavia which, in existing circumstances, the Russians felt but too happy to cede in return for an immediate peace; and also that same Crimea which he had promised to Selim six years before.

We know not whether the time at which this despatch was supposed likely to reach its destination was incorrectly calculated, whether Napoleon believed the Turkish army to be stronger than it really was, or whether he hoped to surprise and bear off the determination of the Divan by the suddenness as well as advantageousness of the proposition. His ignorance, however, of that invariable usage among the Mussulmans which precludes the Grand Seignior from com-

manding his army in person, could have been scarcely presumed.

It seems as if the genius of Napoleon could not stoop so low as to suppose the possibility of that stupid ignorance which the Divan exhibited of its true interests. After his own abandonment of those interests, however, in 1807, perhaps he did not sufficiently consider that the Mussulmans might distrust his new promises; that they were too ignorant duly to appreciate the change which, at Tilsit, new circumstances had introduced into his policy; and that these barbarians would still less comprehend the disgust with which they had at that period inspired him by the deposition and murder of Selim, to whom he was strongly attached, and with whose assistance he had hoped to make European Turkey a military power capable of resisting Russia.

Perhaps he might still have drawn over Mahmoud to his cause, if he had sooner had recourse to more powerful means; but, as he afterwards observed, it was repugnant to his pride to employ corruption. We shall, moreover, soon perceive him hesitating to begin the conflict with Alexander, or estimating too strongly the terror with which that prince would be inspired by his immense preparations. It may also be supposed that, as the last propositions which he had to make to the Turks might be construed into a declaration of war against the Russians, he delayed them, more effectually to deceive the czar as to the precise period of his invasion. In short, whether from the influence of all these causes, or from that confidence he felt in the natural effect of the deadly hatred existing between the two nations, and in his treaty of alliance with Austria which had just gua-

ranteed to the Turks Moldavia and Wallachia, he purposely delayed sending off his ambassador, and waited, as we have seen, till the latest moment.

But the Russian, English, Austrian, and even Swedish envoys immediately besieged the Divan, and exclaimed with one voice, "that the Turks owed their continuance in Europe solely to the divisions existing among the christian princes; that as soon as ever these became united under one powerful domination, the Mahometans in Europe would be overwhelmed; and that, as the emperor of the French had nearly attained that universal empire, it was he whom they had most to dread."

To enforce this language the efforts of the two Greek princes Morozi were added. They were of the same religion as Alexander. They expected to receive from him the provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia. Enriched by the favours he had conferred on them, and by the treasures of England, these dragomans lectured the ignorant and unreflecting Turks upon the folly and peril of suffering the military occupation of the Ottoman frontiers by the French. They did much more. One of them gained complete ascendancy over the Divan and the capital, and the other over the grand vizier and the army; and, as the high-spirited Mahmoud resisted, and was determined to accept only an honourable peace, these perfidious Greeks disbanded his army, and compelled him, by sedition and insurrection, to sign the disgraceful treaty of Bucharest with Russia.

Such is the power of intrigue in the seraglio: two Greeks, whom the Turks despised, decided in it the fate of Turkey, in opposition even to the Sultan.

Dependent on the intrigues of his own palace, like all despots who so seclude themselves, he yielded, and the Morozi prevailed; not long afterwards, however, he cut off their heads.

CHAPTER IV.

It was thus that we lost the support of Turkey: Sweden however we had still left. Its prince rose from our own ranks; and being a soldier of our army, owed to that both his glory and his sceptre. Could he, on the first opportunity that occurred for displaying his gratitude, desert our cause? Ingratitude like this was not to be anticipated; but what was still less to be expected, was, that he should sacrifice the real and invariable interests of Sweden to his ancient jealousy against Napoleon, and, perhaps, to a weakness but too common with men of recent and sudden elevation; if, indeed, the subserviency shewn by men who have newly attained honours and power to those who enjoy them by illustrious descent, may not rather be considered a necessity of their situation than an error of their self-love.

In this grand conflict between democracy and aristocracy, the latter obtained a reinforcement from the ranks of its most inveterate and formidable enemies. Bernadotte, suddenly and singly placed in the midst of ancient courts and hereditary nobles, made it his grand aim to obtain their adoption: in this he succeeded; but the success must have cost him dear. In order to obtain it, it became requisite for him, in the first instance, to abandon, in the moment of danger, the veteran companions and authors of his glory.

He afterwards proceeded beyond this; and actually marched over their bleeding bodies to join the united host of their enemies, and but recently also his own, in order to overwhelm his native country, although he thereby placed his adopted country at the mercy of the first Czar that should be ambitious of reigning over the Baltic.

On the other hand, it may seem that the character of Bernadotte, and the importance of Sweden in the ensuing decisive struggle, were not allowed their due weight in the political balance of Napoleon. His ardent and absolute genius hazarded too much; he loaded too heavily a foundation of great solidity; and it in consequence gave way. Thus, while correctly appreciating the interests of the Swedes, as naturally blended with his own, in every effort for weakening the power of Russia, he thought he might exact from them every support, without being over-liberal to them of his promises. His own pride prevented his paying a proper attention to theirs; and he considered them too substantially interested in his cause, for them ever to think of abandoning it.

It is necessary, however, to look back to events of an earlier period: facts will prove that the defection of Sweden may be ascribed to the jealous ambition of Bernadotte, as much as to the inflexible haughtiness of Napoleon. We shall perceive, that its new prince incurred a great part of the responsibility for the rupture, by offering his alliance to the French emperor, only as the price of the latter's perfidy.

When Napoleon returned from Egypt, it was not by any means with their universal concurrence that he became the head of his equals. Jealous before that period of his glory, they now still more envied his power. They could not contest the one, they en-

deavoured to shake off the yoke of the other. Moreau, and many other generals who had from sympathy, or from surprise, co-operated to bring about the change of the 18th of Brumaire, sincerely repented of it. Bernadotte refused to assist in it. On the night preceding that eventful day, Bernadotte, at that time a republican, in the midst of a thousand officers assembled at Napoleon's house, devoted to his cause, and awaiting his orders, dared singly to oppose his arguments, to refuse the second place in the Republic, and to return menace for resentment. Napoleon saw him proudly quit the apartment, and make his way through the train of his partisans, eager to divulge the discoveries he had made, and declaring himself his adversary, and even his accuser. Whether from respect for the alliance of that general with his brother, or from that moderation which generally accompanies strength, or from the surprise and suddenness of the circumstance, Napoleon offered no impediment to his passage.

On the same night a party, consisting of ten deputies of the Council of Five Hundred, were met at the house of S——; Bernadotte went thither. It was there agreed, that the council should begin its sitting on the following day at nine o'clock; that this should be made known only to those of their own party; that a decree should be there passed, that in imitation of the wisdom shewn by the council of ancients, in nominating Bonaparte general of their guard; the Council of Five Hundred should choose Bernadotte to command theirs; and that that general, completely armed, should be in readiness to be summoned to it. It was at the house of S—— that this plan was formed; and S—— hastened to disclose it to Napoleon. A threat was sufficient effectually to baffle

the conspirators ; none of them ventured to appear at the council ; and, on the morrow, the revolution of the 18th of Brumaire took place.

After that event, Bernadotte sacrificed to prudence by a pretended submission ; but Napoleon kept in mind his resistance. His vigilance followed every movement made by him ; and he soon afterwards received information that he was at the head of a republican conspiracy formed against him in the west. It was discovered by means of a premature proclamation ; an officer, arrested for other causes, and an accomplice of Bernadotte, gave information against the authors. On this occasion, could Napoleon have convicted Bernadotte, the latter would certainly have been undone.

He contented himself with banishing him to America, under the title of minister of the republic. But fortune favoured Bernadotte after his arrival at Rochfort, by delaying his embarkation till the war again broke out against England. He then refused to go ; and Napoleon was no longer able to compel him.

Thus all their connexions had tended to hatred ; and mutual animadversion and upbraiding kept it constantly augmenting. Napoleon was soon heard to reproach Bernadotte with his envious and perfidious inaction during the battle of Auerstadt, and for his order of the day at Wagram, in which he ascribed to himself the honour of the victory. He found fault with his character, as displaying more ambition than patriotism, and, perhaps also, with the seductive nature of his manners, all circumstances dangerous to a rising power ; and yet, promotion, titles, and decorations, he had poured upon him with a lavish hand : but, ever ungrateful, he seemed to accept them always as a debt of justice, or as ascribable solely to the need

of his services. These complaints were but too well founded.

Bernadotte, on his side, abusing the emperor's moderation and endeavours to conciliate, drew on himself more and more of his displeasure, which his ambition denominated hostility. He asked what had been Napoleon's motive for placing him at Wagram in a position so false and dangerous? why the report of that victory was so disadvantageous to him? and to what cause he must ascribe the eager anxiety to lessen his eulogium in the journals by insidious notes? Hitherto, however, the sullen and determined opposition of the general to his emperor had led to nothing important, but now a larger field was opened for their dissention.

At Tilsit, Sweden, as well as the Ottoman empire, had been sacrificed to Russia and the continental system; a calamity attributable to the false or frantic policy of Gustavus IV. From the year 1804, that prince seemed to have placed himself in the pay of England; he had been the first to break the ancient alliance between France and Sweden. He persevered in his stupid policy so far as to contend against France when she was victorious over Russia, and, soon afterwards, against Russia united to France. Notwithstanding the loss of Pomerania in 1807, and even that of Finland and the islands of Alan, united to Russia in 1808, his obstinacy still remained unshaken.

It was then that his irritated subjects resumed the power which had been wrested from them in 1772 and 1788, by Gustavus III., and which his successor had so weakly abused. Gustavus IV. was seized and deposed, his direct issue excluded from the throne, his uncle substituted in his place, and the Prince of Hol-

stein Augustenburg, elected hereditary Prince of Sweden. War had been the cause of that revolution, and peace was the result of it: it was signed with Russia in 1809; but the hereditary prince lately elected, died suddenly in the same year.

The year 1810 had not long commenced, before the French restored to Sweden, Pomerania and the Island of Rugen, as the price of her accession to the continental system. The Swedes, harassed, impoverished, and rendered nearly islanders, by the loss of Finland, commenced hostilities against England with repugnance, urged to it solely by the compulsion of Russia, which they dreaded as at once both near and powerful. Finding themselves, therefore, thus feeble and insulated, they sought out for support.

Bernadotte commanded the corps of the French army, which took possession of Pomerania: his military reputation, and still more that of his nation and his emperor, his captivating gentleness, his generous feelings, his kind and attracting attentions to the Swedes, with whom he had to negotiate, led some of that nation to fix their eyes on this occasion upon him. They appeared not to be aware of the misunderstanding between the marshal and his sovereign; they imagined that by choosing him for their prince, they should not only obtain in him a formidable general and a powerful mediator between France and Sweden but also in his emperor, an unfailing protector. The result was directly contrary.

During the intrigues occasioned by this circumstance, Bernadotte thought he had ground for adding to his previous list of complaints against Napoleon. When, in opposition to Charles XIII., and the majority of the members of the diet, he was proposed for the crown of Sweden; when, supported in his preten

sions by its prime minister, (a man undistinguished by ancestry, and who, like him, was indebted for all his distinction to himself,) and also by Count Wrede, the only member of the diet who had voted for him, he came to request the intervention of Napoleon, why did the latter, to whom Charles XIII. had applied for instructions, manifest so much indifference? Why did he prefer, to him, the union of three northern crowns on the head of a Danish prince? If he (Bernadotte) had succeeded in this enterprise, he owed it not certainly to the Emperor of the French; he was indebted for it only to the pretensions of the King of Denmark, which were injurious to those of the Duke of Augustenburg*, his most formidable rival; to the audacious gratitude of Baron Mœrner, who first proposed him; and to the aversion of the Swedes for the Danes; he owed it, above all, to a passport adroitly obtained by his agent from the minister of Napoleon. This document, it is said, was daringly produced by the secret emissary of Bernadotte, as evidence of the express mission he stated himself to be charged with under the emperor's own hand, and of the formal desire of Napoleon to see one of his lieutenants, and the relation of his own brother, on the throne of Sweden.

Bernadotte, moreover, felt that he held that crown through the chance which brought him into near contact with the Swedes, and led him to a knowledge of their peculiar character; to the birth of his son, which secured the transmission of the crown; to the address of his agents, who, whether authorized or not, dazzled the eyes of the Scandinavians by the fourteen millions which his election would pour into the exchequer of

* Brother of the late prince.

the state ; and finally, to his humane and kind attentions, which won to his interest many Swedes, who had been not long before his prisoners. But what did he owe to Napoleon ? What reply did he make on receiving intelligence of the offer from Sweden, and which he had himself communicated to him ? - " I am too far from Sweden, to interfere with its concerns : don't depend upon any assistance of mine." At the same time, however, whether from the necessity of circumstances, from a dread of the election of the Duke of Oldenburg, or, lastly, from a deference to the fiat of fortune, Napoleon had declared that he would leave the decision to her, and Bernadotte had, in fact, been elected Prince of Sweden.

The new prince then presented himself before Napoleon, who received him with great frankness. " You have been offered," said he to him, " the crown of Sweden, and I permit you to accept it. I had, as you know, a different intention ; your sword, however, has made you king, and it would ill become me to set myself against your fortune." He then disclosed to him the whole system of his policy. Bernadotte appeared to throw himself completely into it : he attended the emperor's levees every day, with his son, mingling freely with the other courtiers. By these marks of deferential attention, he completely won Napoleon's heart. The time for his departure was nearly arrived, and he was about to depart poor. The emperor was hurt at the idea of his ascending the throne of Sweden thus destitute, and like a mere adventurer ; he presented him therefore with two millions of francs ; and even continued to the family of the new-made prince the donations which, as a foreign prince, he could not now hold himself ; in short, they parted in appearance mutually satisfied.

The hopes entertained by Napoleon in reference to the alliance of Sweden were increased by this election, and by the favours he had himself conferred. At first, the correspondence of Bernadotte was that of a grateful inferior; but the moment he quitted the French territory, he seemed to feel relieved from a long and painful constraint, and is said to have exhaled his hatred against Napoleon, in language of virulence and menace: whether said truly, or falsely, he was accused of it to the emperor.

It must be admitted that that sovereign, compelled as he was to take peremptory and absolute measures with respect to his continental system, harassed not a little the commerce of Sweden: he endeavoured to exclude from her ports even the vessels of America; and, at length, actually declared that he would acknowledge none as his friends who were not enemies of Great Britain. Bernadotte was compelled to an option. Winter and the ocean precluded him both from the assistance and aggression of the English. The French were contiguous to his ports. The war with France, therefore, would have been real and immediate; the war with England might be little more than nominal. The Prince of Sweden preferred the last.

In the mean time, Napoleon, who went on conquering in peace as well as war, and who distrusted the intentions of Bernadotte, had demanded from Sweden a considerable number of seamen, for his Brest fleet, and a body of troops whom he would take into his pay; thus enfeebling his allies to overcome his enemies, and obtaining, in fact, the mastery of both. He next required that colonial commodities should be subjected in Sweden, as in France, to a duty of five per cent. It is asserted that he even required Bernadotte

to permit French custom-house officers to be stationed at Gottenburg. These demands were evaded.

Soon afterwards, Napoleon proposed an alliance between Sweden, Copenhagen, and Warsaw; a Confederation of the North, of which he was to be at the head, as he was of that of the Rhine. The reply of Bernadotte, without being absolutely negative, had the same effect; and such was the case, also, with respect to a treaty offensive and defensive which Napoleon again offered him. After that period, as Bernadotte has asserted, he wrote to him four letters with his own hand, ingenuously explaining the impossibility of his complying with the emperor's wishes, and declaring his attachment to his former chieftain, to neither of which he deigned a reply. This impolitic silence (admitting the fact) can be attributed only to the wounded pride of Napoleon, in consequence of Bernadotte's refusals. He undoubtedly considered his protestations as too false to merit a reply.

The irritation by this time became considerable; the communications were unpleasant; those with Alquier, the French minister in Sweden, were suspended; and he was recalled. In the mean time, Bernadotte's pretended declaration of war against England continued ineffective; and Napoleon, who could neither be refused nor deceived with impunity, made war upon the Swedish commerce by privateers. By means of them, and by the invasion of Swedish Pomerania, on the 27th of January, 1812, he punished Bernadotte for his deviations from the continental system, and obtained, as prisoners, many thousands of those Swedish sailors and soldiers whom he had vainly demanded as auxiliaries.

Then came on the rupture of our connexion with Russia. Napoleon immediately applied to the Prince

of Sweden: his notes were in the style of a paramount sovereign, pointing out what he deemed the real interests of his vassal, sensible of his claims upon his gratitude and obedience, and fully depending upon them. He required that Bernadotte should carry on a real war against England, that he should shut the ports of the Baltic against her, and that he should arm forty thousand Swedes against Russia. In compensation, he promised to give him his protection, Finland, and twenty millions of francs, for an equivalent in colonial produce which the Swedes were forthwith to deliver. Austria undertook to support this proposition; but Bernadotte, as if now habituated to a throne, replied like an independent prince. Ostensibly, he declared himself neutral, opened his ports to all nations, referred to his rights, and to his grievances, appealed to humanity, recommended peace, and proposed himself as mediator: secretly, he offered his services to Napoleon, in return for Norway, Finland, and a subsidy.

At a style of address so new and unexpected, Napoleon was struck with astonishment and indignation. He saw in what he read, and not without reason, a premeditated defection on the part of Bernadotte, a secret concurrence with his enemies! He was absolutely maddened with rage. "The wretch!" he exclaimed, striking his hand violently on the letter, as it lay open on the table, "he presumes to advise me! he lays down the law to me! he dares even to propose to me an act of infamy*! a man who holds every thing he has from my bounty! What base ingratitude!"

* Napoleon certainly referred to Bernadotte's proposal that he should take away Norway from Denmark, his faithful ally, in order to purchase, by that perfidy, the assistance of Sweden.

Then, traversing the room with rapid strides, he abruptly uttered the following expressions: "I ought to have expected this! He has always sacrificed everything to his interests! It was he who, during his short ministry, attempted the resurrection of the infamous Jacobins! When he had no hopes but in disorder, he opposed the 18th of Brumaire! It was he who conspired in the West, against the re-establishment of order and religion! It was his envious and perfidious inaction which long since betrayed the French army at Auerstadt! How often, out of regard to Joseph, did I pardon his intrigues, and connive at his misconduct! Notwithstanding all, I made him general-in-chief, marshal, duke, prince, and last of all king! But, in return for the forgiveness of so many injuries and the grant of so many favours, what was to be expected from radical ingratitude! If for a century past, up to the present moment, Sweden, half swallowed up by Russia, has still retained its independence, it may thank France only for its support. But all that is nothing; Bernadotte wants to be baptized into the old aristocracy; a baptism of blood, and of French blood! and you will see that, in order to gratify his envy and ambition, he will betray both his old and his new country."

Attempts were in vain made to calm his agitation. It was suggested that he should consider what might be required of Bernadotte by his existing position; and that the cession of Finland to Russia had separated Sweden from the Continent, and made her politically an island, and consequently thrown her into the system of England. But, even in circumstances of such momentous importance, the extreme need he felt of this ally could not subdue his exasperation at a proposition which he regarded as absolutely insult.

ing; possibly, also, in the new Prince of Sweden he still saw too distinctly that same Bernadotte who was recently his subject, his military inferior, but who now presumed he had carved out for himself a destiny independent of him. His instructions from that time savoured strongly of these dispositions: his minister, indeed, somewhat softened their bitterness; but a rupture was inevitable.

It is impossible to say whether the imperiousness of Napoleon, or the ancient jealousy of Bernadotte, contributed most to this event. It is certain, however, that the motives by which the emperor was actuated were those of honour. "Denmark," he said, "was his most faithful ally. Her attachment to France had cost her her fleet, and led to the burning of her capital. What a base and treacherous return should he make for a fidelity so decidedly and painfully proved, by wresting from her Norway, to bestow it upon Sweden!"

In reference to the subsidy demanded of him, he observed, as in the case of Turkey, "that if the war were to be carried on merely by money, England would always be able to outbid him." And, what was still of more consequence, "that a sense of weakness and of shame ever attended those who succeeded by corruption." The wound received by his pride here again agitating his feelings, he closed the discussion by exclaiming "Bernadotte impose conditions on me! Does he think, then, that I really need him? I will find means to chain him to my victorious car, and force him to follow my sovereign impulse."

In the mean time England, active and observant, and beyond the reach of injury, formed a correct judgment of the violence and momentousness of the conflict, and found the Russians tractable to her

suggestions. It was England that for the space of three years had endeavoured to draw off and exhaust the forces of Napoleon in the defiles of Spain; and she was now ready to take advantage of the vindictive enmity of the prince of Sweden.

Well aware that men who have started into sudden elevation are always uneasy and susceptible in the presence of those possessed of long-descended honours, she joined with Alexander in attracting Bernadotte by liberal promises, and more especially by seductive manners. While the irritated Napoleon was menacing the prince, they flatteringly caressed him; they promised both Norway and a subsidy, while Napoleon, not content with refusing that province because it belonged to a faithful ally, resentfully took possession of Pomerania. While Napoleon, a prince solely of his own creation, depending on the basis of treaties, on benefits long conferred, and on the real interests of Sweden, imperiously demanded assistance from Bernadotte, the hereditary sovereigns of London and Petersburg asked advice of him with deference, and expressed an eagerness to avail themselves of the wise counsels of his experience. In short, while the genius of Napoleon, the grandeur of his elevation, the importance of his enterprise, and the nature and habitude of their former mutual relations, occasioned Bernadotte to be still estimated as his lieutenant, they appeared already to respect him as their general. How was it possible, on the one hand, not to wish to escape from such a painful sense of inferiority; and, on the other, to resist assiduities and promises so seducing? The interests of Sweden were accordingly sacrificed, and her independence delivered over to the faith of Russia, by the treaty of Petersburg which Bernadotte

signed on the 24th of March in 1812. That of Bucharest, between Alexander and Malmoud, was concluded on the 28th of May. Thus we lost the support of both our wings.

The emperor of the French, however, at the head of more than six hundred thousand men, had advanced too far to retreat, and hoped that his force would decide every thing; that a victory on the Niemen would dissipate all those diplomatic difficulties, which he viewed, perhaps, with too great contempt; and that then the princes of Europe, compelled to acknowledge him as "star of the ascendent," would press forward to re-enter his system, and all move as satellites within its vortex.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

IN the mean time Napoleon continued at Paris in the midst of his great officers of state, who viewed with considerable alarm the approaching conflict. These last persons had not much to acquire, but they had much to preserve; their personal interest, consequently, led them to join in the general wish of nations, now weary of war; and, without contesting the utility of the present expedition, they trembled as it drew near. They talked of it, however, only among one another and in private, either from the apprehension of exciting displeasure, of impairing the confidence of the people, or of having their predictions falsified by the event. In Napoleon's presence, therefore, they were perfectly silent on the subject, and seemed totally uninformed about a war which long had been a topic of conversation throughout Europe.

But at length this respectful silence, which had been imposed in reality by himself, annoyed him. He suspected it to imply rather disapprobation than discretion; it was no longer enough for him to obtain obedience, he must have also conviction: here would be new scope for conquest: he was, moreover, better acquainted than any other with that power of opinion which, according to his own maxim, *creates or destroys sovereigns*. In fine, whether from policy or vanity, he loved to persuade.

Such were the dispositions of Napoleon and those of the great by whom he was surrounded. when. the

veil being ready to be torn off, and the war appearing inevitable, their silence before him became more indiscreet than conversation conducted with a due degree of caution. Some of them, therefore, began the subject themselves, and others were anticipated by the emperor.

At first, all the difficulties of his situation appeared to be fully entered into: “* It was necessary to complete the work that had been begun. It was impossible to stop on so steep an acclivity, and so near the summit. The empire of Europe was suited to his genius: France would be the centre and the base of it; grand and compact herself, she would see around her only feeble states, so completely divided that all coalition among them would be contemptible or impracticable; but, with such an object in view, why had he not begun by subjecting and distributing what was immediately about him?”

To this objection Napoleon answered, “That that had been his project in 1809, in the Austrian war; but that the disaster of Esslingen had deranged his plan; that that event, and the doubtful dispositions afterwards shewn by Russia, had led him to espouse an Austrian princess, and to support himself by the emperor of Austria against the emperor of Russia.

“That he did not create circumstances, but that he would not willingly let them escape him; that he conceived them all, and as far as possible kept ready for their arrival; that he clearly saw the completion of his designs would require a dozen years, but that he had not time to wait for them.

“That, besides, the present war had not been provoked by him: that he had faithfully kept his en-

The Arch Chancellor.

gagements with Alexander ; which was sufficiently proved by the coldness that had subsisted between him and both Turkey and Sweden, which had been surrendered to Russia, the one almost entire, the other dispossessed of Finland and even of the isle of Alan, near as it was to Stockholm. That he had replied to the calls of the Swedes in their distress, only by recommending to them that cession.

“That, notwithstanding, in 1809, the Russian army destined to act in concert with Poniatowski in Austrian Galicia had arrived both too late and too weak, and had also acted treacherously ; that, afterwards, Alexander, by a ukase dated 31st of December 1810, had broken through the continental system, and, by his prohibition, actually declared war upon French commerce ; that he was well aware he might be under constraint both from the national interest and feeling of the Russians, but that he had at the time informed the emperor that he could fully enter into his situation, and was ready to agree to any arrangement that his ease and comfort required ; and yet, that Alexander, instead of modifying his ukase, had assembled an army of ninety thousand men under pretence of supporting his custom-house officers ; that he had suffered England to prevail upon him ; finally, that even to the present day that prince had refused to recognise the thirty-second military division, and demanded the evacuation of Prussia by the French, which was equivalent to a declaration of war.”

Throughout this long series of complaints it was thought clearly perceivable that the pride of Napoleon was hurt at the independent attitude exhibited by Russia more and more strikingly every day. The expulsion of the Russian princess of Oldenburg from her duchy brought with it other conjectures : it was said,

that certain intirations thrown out either at Tilsit or at Erfurt respecting a divorce, after which a more close alliance might be contracted with Russia, had met with no encouragement, and that Napoleon bore that slight still in his memory; this fact is asserted by some, and denied by others.

The various passions, however, by which other men are so despotically governed, were impulses too weak to operate with great effect upon a genius so firm and vast as his. They could at most only influence the first steps which hastened him forward somewhat sooner than he intended. But, without attempting to penetrate too far into the recesses of such a mighty mind, one single idea, one evident fact, was sufficient to have urged him sooner or later to this decisive struggle this was the existence of an empire which rivalled his own by equal grandeur, was still young, like the prince who governed it, and growing and improving every day; while the French empire, already mature like its emperor, could henceforward exhibit nothing but declension.

Notwithstanding the height to which he had raised the throne of the south and west of Europe, Napoleon perceived the northern throne of Alexander still ready to overwhelm him from a position eternally threatening and impending. On those icy summits of Europe, whence formerly issued such floods of barbarians, he perceived all the elements of a new inundation combining for destruction. Hitherto Austria and Prussia had proved sufficient barriers; but these had been subverted or reduced by himself; he remained alone, therefore, in the field, the single defender of the civilization, the wealth, and all the enjoyments of the nations of the south against the ignorant barbarism and ferocious rapacity of the needy

inhabitants of the north, and against the ambition of their emperor and his nobility.

It was evident that war only could settle this grand contest, this momentous and eternal struggle of the poor against the rich; and yet, on our side, that war was not European, nor even national. Europe marched to it with reluctance, because the object of the expedition was to add to the strength of him who had conquered her. Exhausted France panted for repose; even those who constituted Napoleon's court were alarmed at thus doubling the theatre of war, and extending our armies from Cadiz to Moscow; and, while all admitted that a necessity for this momentous conflict must inevitably arrive, its present urgency was deemed by no means obvious.

They knew that it was on the point of policy they had the best chance of shaking the determination of a prince whose principle it was, "that there are some men whose conduct can seldom be regulated by their feelings, but always by their circumstances." Following up this idea, it was remarked to him by one of his ministers *, "that the state of his finances required repose;" but he replied, "On the contrary, they are embarrassed, and require a war." Another of them observed, † "that the state of his revenues had in fact never been in a more satisfactory state; that excepting one account, of between three and four thousand millions of francs, it was really matter of admiration to find that we were without any demandable debt; but that this extraordinary prosperity was now near its termination, since it appeared that a ruinous campaign was to commence with 1812;

* Count Mollien.

† The Duke of Gaeta.

that hitherto war had been maintained by war; that the table had been everywhere found ready spread for us; however, that in future we could no longer live at the expense of Germany, which was now our ally, but instead of that should be obliged to maintain her contingents, and to do it without any hope of indemnity, whatever might be our success, for every ration of bread consumed at Moscow must be paid for at Paris, the new field of battle presenting no other harvest, with the exception of glory, than hemp, tar, and masts, which certainly would do little towards defraying the expenses of a continental war. That France was in no state thus to become the paymaster of Europe, and more particularly so at the moment when its resources were rapidly draining off into Spain; that it would be setting fire to the two extremities, from which it might easily reach the centre, already exhausted by so many efforts, and thus end in consuming ourselves."

This minister was listened to with attention; and the emperor bestowed on him a smile of complacency, accompanied with one of those caresses which were familiar to him. He thought he had produced conviction; but Napoleon said, "Do you think, then, that I do not know by whom the expenses of the war shall be defrayed?" The duke was just about to inquire upon whom it could possibly be meant that such a burden should fall, when the emperor, by a single word, disclosing all the grandeur of his projects, closed the mouth of the astonished minister.

He saw, however, very clearly all the difficulties of his enterprise. The case just adverted to is, probably, what drew on him the reproach of having availed himself of means which he had rejected with disdain in the war against Austria, and of which

the celebrated Pitt, in 1793, had furnished the example.

About the close of 1811 the prefect of police at Paris discovered, it is said, that a certain printer was clandestinely engaged in counterfeiting Russian bank-notes. Persons were despatched to apprehend him, but he resisted; his house, however, was at length forced, and he was carried before the magistrate, who was astonished at the confidence which he manifested, and still more so, on his declaring that he was under the protection of the minister of police. He was instantly liberated; it is even added, that he continued his occupation, and that, after our entrance into Lithuania, we circulated the report that, at Wilna, we had found many millions of Russian bank-notes in the army-chests of the enemy.

Whatever was the origin of that counterfeit money, Napoleon could not look at it without disgust. It is uncertain whether he ever actually determined to use it; at least, it is well known, that in passing through Wilna, on our retreat, the greater part of these notes were found there untouched, and burnt by his orders.

CHAPTER II.

In the mean time, Poniatowski, on whom this expedition seemed not unlikely to confer a throne, generously joined the ministers of the emperor in their endeavours to convince him of its danger. Patriotism was in that prince a genuine and powerful passion, as was evinced both by his life and by his death; it did not, however, blind or impair his understanding. He described Lithuania as an almost impracticable desert; its nobility as already more than half Russian;

and the character of its inhabitants as cold and without energy; but the emperor interrupted him with impatience: he wanted to be informed of inducements, not of checks, to the enterprise.

The greater part of these objections, indeed, were only a feeble répétition of those which had long since presented themselves to his own mind. It was little imagined how carefully he had estimated the danger, and what multiplied efforts he had made, since the 30th of December, 1810, to become acquainted with the ground which was infallibly destined, sooner or later, to become the theatre of a decisive war; how many emissaries he had employed to reconnoitre it; and what various memoirs he had procured to be drawn up on the routes to Petersburg and Moscow, on the dispositions of the inhabitants, particularly of the mercantile classes, and on all the natural resources that the country could supply: if he still persisted in his design, it was not in consequence of his participating in the mistaken confidence in his force which many entertained, and which, perhaps, prevented their perceiving of what high importance the weakening of Russia was to the future existence of the grand French empire.

In this view, he again addressed himself to three of his great officers *, whose known services and attachment authorized directness and freedom, and all of whom had, at different periods, become acquainted with Russia as ministers, envoys, and ambassadors. His grand object was to convince them of the utility, justice, and necessity of the war. By one of them particularly † he was often interrupted with impa-

* The Duke of Friuli, Count Segur the father of the author, and the Duke of Vicenza.

† The Duke of Vicenza.

tience ; for, when a discussion was admitted of, Napoleon suffered it to proceed desultorily and freely.

That state officer giving way to the impetuous and inflexible frankness which he derived from his character, his military education, and, perhaps, from the province of his birth, observed, " that he ought not to deceive himself, or endeavour to deceive others, that, after possessing himself of the continent, and even of the family estates of his ally, he could not becomingly accuse that ally of breaking through the continental system ! While the French armies covered the face of Europe, how was it possible to reproach Russia for her army ? Ought the ambition of Napoleon to denounce the ambition of Alexander ?

" That, besides, the determination of that prince was settled ; that when Russia was once invaded, no peace was to be expected while a single Frenchman remained in her territory ; that, in this instance, the national and obstinate pride of the Russians corresponded with that of their emperor.

" That his subjects, indeed, accused him of weakness, but that in this they were wrong. That his character ought not to be judged of from his complaisances and compliances at Tilsit and Erfurt, to which he had been induced by his admiration, his inexperience, and some portion of ambition. That that prince was a lover of justice, that he was tenacious of having right on his side, and, till he felt himself supported by that, might hesitate, but afterwards became inflexible ; and that, considering him in reference to his subjects, he would find more danger in making a disgraceful peace than in carrying on an unsuccessful war.

" In short, how was it possible not to see that in this war we had every thing to fear, even our very

allies? Did not Napoleon near their unhappy kings declare that they were no more than his prefects? They all only waited for an opportunity to turn against him; why, then, run the risk of supplying them with one?"

The general, then, supported by his two colleagues, added, "that from 1805 a system of warfare, which compelled the most disciplined soldier to pillage, had sowed the seeds of hatred throughout Germany, which the emperor now intended to leave behind him. Was he then really going to conduct his army beyond all those various states and nations, whose wounds had been inflicted on them by us, and were yet far from being cicatrized? What fearful hostility and deadly vengeance would he thus place between himself and France!

"And on whom had he relied for his *points d'appui*? On that same Prussia, which, for five years, we had been actually preying upon, and whose alliance was forced and hollow; so that he was going to form the longest line of operations ever traced out, over a country in which terror reigned in all its silence, obsequiousness, and perfidy, and which, like the crater of a volcano, contained the materials of tremendous fires, of which the slightest collision might produce the eruption*.

"After all †, however, what good would he derive from so many conquests? from substituting for kings lieutenants, who, more ambitious than the generals of Alexander, would perhaps imitate them, without waiting, as they did, for the death of their sovereign; that death which, otherwise, must be infallibly met

* The Duke of Vicenza, and Count Segur, the author's father.

† Count Segur.

on one out of so many fields of battle, and before he had matured and consolidated his work, as each new war would awaken the secret hopes of the various parties in the interior, and stir up questions which were before settled*.

“ Did he wish to be made acquainted with the sentiments of the army? They said, that his best soldiers were in Spain; that regiments, when too frequently recruited, were deficient in proper intimacy and sympathy, that the men had scarcely any knowledge of each other; that each was doubtful whether he could depend upon the others for support in the hour of danger; that the first rank in vain concealed the inefficiency of the two others; that already, through extreme youth or weakness of constitution, numbers had sunk during the first marches under the mere weight of their knapsacks and arms.

“ And yet, in this expedition, it was not so much the war that excited dissatisfaction, as the country into which it was to be carried! The Lithuanians had invited us, it was said; but to what soil? into what climate? amidst what description of manners? These had been too well ascertained by the campaign of 1806. In those endless and level plains, destitute of every species of position fortified by art or nature, where could an army halt in security?

“ Every one knew that from the first of October till that of June these countries were defended by the strength of all the elements; and that, excepting in the short interval between those points of time, an army drawn into these deserts of mire or ice might there perish entirely and ingloriously. They added, that, in habits and manners, Lithuania was already more

* The Duke of Friuli, Count Segur, and the Duke of Vicenza.

like Asia even than Spain was like Africa ; and that the French army, although banished from France by a perpetual war, would wish, at least, to remain European.

“ To conclude : on meeting the enemy in these horrid wastes, by what different motives and feelings would the opposing hosts be actuated ? The Russians, by patriotism, independence, and every private and public interest, including even the best wishes of our own allies ! Ourselves, in opposition to all the mighty obstacles to our success, by glory merely ; glory even without cupidity, to which the frightful poverty of those climates presented no temptation !

“ And what was the object of all these labours ? The French, even already, scarcely recognised themselves or one another in a country no longer bounded by any natural frontier, and exhibiting so great a diversity of manners, physiognomy, and language.” On the same topic, the eldest * of these state officers added, “ that it was impossible so to extend and not to weaken ; that it was sinking France in Europe ; for, in fact, whenever France became Europe, she would be no longer France : already, the removal of such numbers appeared to be leaving her solitary, deserted, without a chief, without an army, and accessible to every attack : who would then defend her ?” *My renown* (exclaimed the emperor) : *I leave to her my name, and the fear inspired by an armed nation!*

And, without appearing at all shaken by so many objections, he announced “ that he was going to organise the empire into cohorts of *ban* and *arriere-ban*, and should leave to Frenchmen with perfect confidence

the guardianship of France, of his crown, and of his glory."

"That, with respect to Prussia, he had secured her remaining tranquil by putting it out of her power to move even in case of a defeat, or of a descent by England on the coasts of the North Sea and in our rear; that he held in his own hand both the civil and military administration of that kingdom; that he was master of Stettin, Custrin, Glogau, Torgau, Spandau, and Magdeburg; that he would station clever officers at Colberg, and an army at Berlin; and that, with these means and precautions, and the fidelity of Saxony, he had nothing to apprehend from Prussian hostility.

"That, as to the rest of Germany, ancient policy attached it to France, as well as the intermarriages with the houses of Baden, Bavaria, and Austria; and that he depended with confidence upon those of its kings who were indebted for their new titles to himself. That, after having bound anarchy in chains, and ranged himself on the side of kings, the latter could effectually assail him, in the present height of his power, only by kindling in their subjects the principles of democracy; but that sovereigns would certainly never thus ally themselves with that natural enemy of thrones, which, but for him, would have overturned them, and from which he only could defend them.

"That, besides, the Germans were of a slow and plodding genius, and would always allow him sufficient time; that he governed in all the fortresses of Prussia; that Dantzic was a second Gibraltar (which was incorrect, and especially in winter); that Russia ought to excite the alarm of Europe, both by her military and conquering government and by her

savage population; to her already immense numbers, she added half a million every year, and her armies had been seen throughout Italy, in Germany, and on the Rhine! That, in demanding the evacuation of Prussia, she required what was impossible, as his withdrawing from Prussia, after having so humbled and irritated her, would be delivering her into the hands of Russia, who would instantly direct her power against us."

Then pursuing the subject with more animation, "Why," said he, "menace my absence with different parties in the interior of the empire? Where are they? I know only of one against me, that of some royalists, the greater part of the ancient *noblesse*, men at once old and inexperienced; but even they fear my ruin more than they desire it. That is what I actually told them in Normandy. I am celebrated as a great captain and an able politician, but little spoken of in reference to the home administration of government; yet the most difficult and the most useful thing I ever accomplished was stemming the torrent of revolution; it would have overwhelmed every thing, Europe, and yourselves! I united the most discordant parties, and blended rival classes; and yet it seems there are among you a few obstinate nobles who still hold out. They refuse to accept places of me! And of what consequence is that to me? It is for your own benefit, for your own safety, that I offer them to you. What could you do by yourselves, and without me? You are a mere handful against vast masses! Do you not perceive that this war between 'the third estate' and the *noblesse* must be terminated by completely amalgamating what is best in both classes? I hold out my hand to you, and you reject it; but what need have I of you? When I

support you, I injure myself in the opinion of the people; for what am I? king of 'the third estate;' is not that sufficient?"

Then, adverting with less agitation to another topic, "He knew," he said, "the ambition of his generals, but its point was turned aside by war; and, in its excess, it would never find support from French soldiers, who were too high-spirited and too ardently attached to their admirable country. That, if war was perilous, peace likewise had its dangers; that by leading back his armies into the interior, he should enclose and concentrate within it too large a mass of audacious interest and passion, which leisure and communication would occasion to ferment, and which he should then be no longer able to control; that a direction must be given to these dangerous influences; and that, after all, he feared less from them abroad than at home."

Finally, he observed, "You fear war on account of my life. It was thus that at the time of the conspiracies it was attempted to terrify me about Georges. He was crossing my path everywhere! The villain might fire at me! What if he had done so? He would at most have killed my aid-de-camp; but as to killing me that was impossible! Had I then accomplished the decrees of destiny? I feel myself urged onward to a purpose that I know not: when I have attained it, when I can be no longer useful to it, an atom will have power to destroy me; but till then all human efforts against me will avail nothing. In Paris, or with the army, therefore, the case is the same. When my hour shall come, a fever or a fall in hunting will kill me as effectually as a bullet: days are registered."

This opinion, serviceable in the moment of danger

frequently deceives conquerors as to the price really paid for their great achievements. They are fond of believing in predestination, either from a greater experience than others have of whatever is unexpected and unaccountable in the course of human affairs, or because it frees them from a too heavy load of responsibility. Such observations were too much in the tone of the time of the Crusades, in which the phrase, "It is the will of God," was deemed a sufficient answer to all the objections of a prudent and pacific policy.

In fact, the expedition of Napoleon to Russia bears a melancholy resemblance to those of St. Louis to Egypt and Africa. These invasions, the two latter of which were undertaken for the interests of heaven, and the other for those of earth, had a similar termination; and the world may learn from those great disasters, that the profoundly-calculated projects of an age of illumination may be attended with the same result as the wild bursts of religious frenzy in ages of ignorance and superstition.

We do not, however, compare those expeditions with respect either to their propriety of object, or to their chances of success. That to Russia was indispensable to the completion of a grand design nearly accomplished; its object was not beyond reach; the means for attaining it were sufficient; the time for undertaking it might, perhaps, be ill-chosen; its movement might be sometimes precipitate, and sometimes hesitating: in these respects facts will speak, and according to them we must decide.

CHAPTER III.

THUS did Napoleon answer every objection. His skilful tact could mould to his purpose every mind; and, in fact, when he made efforts to persuade, there was in his conversation a species of enchantment which it was impossible to resist: the persons he addressed felt their comparative weakness, and were constrained to yield under his influence. It was, if we may so express it, a species of magnetic power; for his ardent and versatile genius was completely absorbed in every object which he desired, whether trifling or momentous. Whatever design he formed, all his powers and faculties were united for its accomplishment: they hastened, they even rushed to his service, and, docile to his bidding, instantly assumed the forms that pleased him.

Accordingly, nearly all whom he endeavoured to engage in his schemes found themselves unresistingly carried away by his persuasions. It was flattering to behold the master of Europe appearing animated by no other ambition, no other object, than to produce in them conviction; to see those features, which were so terrible to others, beaming on them with the most impressive and affectionate benevolence; to perceive that wonderful, that mysterious man, whose every word merited the notice of history, giving way, as it were for their sake only, to the irresistible attraction of the most artless and confidential communication. The voice which addressed them in accents of such tenderness was the same as that the slightest tone of which resounded throughout Europe, the same as that which proclaimed wars, decided battles, fixed the fate

of empires, raised up or cast down reputations ! What vanity could resist the charm of such powerful seduction ? it operated upon them on every side, and his eloquence was proportionally more persuasive, as he appeared to be completely persuaded himself.

In the present instance there were no colours, however varied, which his vivid and fertile imagination did not employ to set off his scheme, in order to induce his hearers to adopt it both with conviction and delight. The same text supplied him with a thousand different arguments ; he was inspired by the individual character and circumstances of each of the interlocutors in turn, and engaged him to the enterprise by painting it under the form, with the tints, and in the aspect best adapted to attract and please him.

We have seen that, in order to obtain the approbation of him who objected to the conquest of Russia the expense that must attend it, he disclosed the plan by which others might be made to pay it.

To the military man, who was startled at the dangers of the expedition, but who might be easily won over by suggestions favourable to his ambition, he observed, that peace was at Constantinople, that is, at the very extremity of Europe : the person thus addressed was consequently at liberty not only to speculate on the probability of his obtaining a marshal's baton, but to indulge pretensions even to a sceptre.

To a minister * who had been brought up in the ancient system, and who would naturally be confounded and aghast at the idea of the effusion of so much blood, and the indulgence of so much ambition, he remarked, " that it was a war of pure and absolute policy ; that he was going to Russia merely to fight

* Count Molé.

against England ; that the campaign would be short ; that its conclusion would bring repose ; that this was the fifth act, the *denoûement* of the piece."

With others, it was the power and ambition of Russia, and the force of events, by which he was urged to the war, against his decided inclination. To the superficial and inexperienced, for whom he would not take the trouble to explain or to dissemble, he abruptly said, " You know nothing at all about the matter ; you are ignorant both of causes and consequences."

But to the princes of his own family he had long since fully declared his mind. He complained that they did not justly appreciate his situation, " Do you not perceive," said he, " that I was not born to the throne ; that I can keep it only by the same means by which I mounted it, by glory ; that that glory must go on constantly increasing ; that one who, like me, from a private individual has become a sovereign, can never stand still ; that he must be incessantly advancing ; and that if he remains stationary, he is undone."

He then pointed to the array of all the ancient dynasties in arms against his own, contriving plots, preparing wars, and eager to destroy in him the dangerous example of a self-created king. It was on that account that every peace appeared to him to be a conspiracy of the weak against the strong, of the conquered against the conquerors, and more particularly of the great by birth, against those who had become great through talent. All the successive coalitions had confirmed him in these apprehensions. He had, in fact, frequently entertained the idea of abolishing every ancient dynasty in Europe, and instituting, himself alone, an epoch which should be a new era for

thrones, and under which every thing should date from him.

Thus completely did he open his mind and feelings to the members of his own family in vivid descriptions of his political position, which, perhaps, will at present be deemed neither false nor overcharged. The amiable Josephine, however, always affectionately watchful to restrain and tranquillize him, had often suggested to him, "that, although he was conscious of the superiority of his genius, he did not seem sensible of that of his power, but, as in the case of persons addicted to jealousy, was incessantly requiring proofs of it. How was it possible, that, amidst the pealing acclamations of Europe, his susceptible ear could distinguish a few scattered voices contesting his legitimacy? His solicitous mind was too apt thus to seek agitation as its element; and, while strong to desire, but thus feeble to enjoy, it would be himself alone that he would be unable to conquer."

But in May, 1811, Josephine was separated from Napoleon; and, although he still visited her with respectful and friendly attention, the voice of the empress had lost that influence which springs from uninterrupted presence and habits of confidential and affectionate communication.

In the mean time new contentions with the pope still farther complicated the position of France. Napoleon applied on this occasion to Cardinal Fesch. The cardinal was a zealous churchman, and had all the impetuosity of the Italian character: he defended the papal rights with ardour and obstinacy; and, so warm were his discussions with the emperor, that, on a preceding occasion, the latter, in a state of high irritation, exclaimed, "that he would compel him to obe-

dience?" "Who," replied the cardinal, "disputes your power? but force is not reason; for, if I have reason on my side, all the power you possess cannot put me in the wrong. Besides, your majesty knows that I am not afraid of martyrdom." "Martyrdom!" replied Napoleon, passing instantly from anger to smiles, "pray do not flatter yourself, my lord cardinal, with that: two parties must be concerned in that affair; and, as to myself, I do not mean to make a martyr of any body."

These discussions, it is said, assumed a graver cast about the close of 1811. It is stated by one who was present at them, that the cardinal, who had hitherto kept aloof from politics, at that time blended them with religious controversy; that he conjured Napoleon not so to persevere in assailing men, elements, and religions, earth and heaven, at the same time; and that he at last expressed the apprehensions he felt of his sinking under the weight of such complicated hostility.

In reply to this spirited attack, the emperor taking him by the hand, and leading him to the window, merely said to him on opening it, "Do you see yonder star?"—"No Sire."—"Look attentively."—"Sire, I do not see it."—"Well! I do," said Napoleon. The cardinal was both astonished and silenced, conceiving that no human voice was strong enough to make an impression on that colossal ambition which had already reached the heavens.

The witness, however, of this extraordinary scene, understood the words of his sovereign in a totally different sense. They appeared to him by no means to express any presumptuous confidence in his fortune, but rather the difference existing between the extended views of his own genius and the contracted policy of the cardinal.

But, even admitting that Napoleon was not exempt from a tendency to superstition, his mind was at once too firm and enlightened to hinge affairs of such high and momentous magnitude upon a weakness. One great uneasiness preyed upon him, which was the anticipation of a speedy death, much as he appeared to brave and court it. He felt his strength declining, and feared that, when he was no more, the French empire, that grand trophy of all his toils and victories, would be dismembered.

The Russian emperor, he said, was the only sovereign who still pressed upon the summit of that vast edifice. In the vigour of youth and spirits, his rival was still advancing in strength, while his was already in the wane. His agitated mind descried Alexander on the banks of the Niemen, waiting only for the intelligence of his death to pluck from the hands of his feeble successor the sceptre of Europe. "All Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Prussia, and the whole of Germany, were now marching under his eagles; and now, therefore, was the time for him to hasten to prevent the danger, and consolidate the power, of the great empire, by forcing Alexander, weakened as he would be by the loss of all Poland, beyond the Boristhenes, and limiting the Russian dominion by that boundary."

Such was the language he uttered in the privacy of friendship. It undoubtedly expresses the true motive to that dreadful war. With respect to his precipitation in commencing it, he seems on that point to have been influenced by the anticipation of a speedy death. He was daily and hourly corroded by a morbid humour diffused throughout his frame, to which he imputed his irritability, "but without which," said he, "battles are not to be won."

Which of us is so intimately acquainted with the

human organization, as to assert with just confidence, that this secret disease was not one of the causes of that restless activity which hastened on events, and which led both to his greatness and his fall?

This formidable enemy gradually increased in power, and indicated itself by an internal pain and spasms in the stomach. In 1806, at Warsaw, Napoleon was heard* to cry out in one of the paroxysms of his malady, "that he bore about in his frame the principle of a premature dissolution; and that he should die of the same complaint as his father."

Already he began to be fatigued by hunting, in its gentlest form, and by moderate exercise on horseback: how, then, could he support the long journeys, and rapid and violent movements, which were inevitable in war? Thus, while almost all, even of those immediately about his person, considered him as stimulated to the enterprise by his high ambition, the restlessness of his spirit, and his fondness for war, in silence and solitude he deeply pondered on its enormous difficulties, and, urged on by what he deemed necessity, decided on it only after painful hesitation.

At length, on the third of August, 1811, in the course of a public audience, at which the envoys of all Europe were present, he abruptly disclosed his sentiments. But this explosion, although a presage of war, was one proof more of his repugnance to engage in it. Perhaps the defeat which the Russians had just experienced at Roũtschoũk had elevated his hopes, and he might think it possible to stop Alexander's preparations by menaces.

Prince Kourakin was the person to whom he spoke.

* By Count Lobau.

That ambassador had been just protesting the pacific intentions of his sovereign: "No," said he, interrupting him, "your master is resolved on war; and I know from my generals, that the Russian armies are advancing to the Niemen! The emperor Alexander beguiles and wins over all my envoys." Then, perceiving Caulaincourt, he rapidly traversed the hall of audience, and, addressing him with vehemence, "Yes," said he, "you also are become a Russian; you have been gained over by the emperor Alexander." The duke answered with firmness, "Yes, sire, on this question, because on that I believe him to be a Frenchman." Napoleon was silent: but from that moment he manifested great coolness to that state-officer, without declining his attendance, or treating him with rudeness. He even made various attempts by new arguments, blended with caressing attentions, to induce him to adopt his opinions: but he found him on every occasion inflexible; offering his services, but withholding his approbation.

CHAPTER IV.

WHILE Napoleon, urged on by his character, position, and circumstances, appeared thus to be longing for, and hastening the moment of battle, he kept within his own breast the secret of his perplexity. The year 1811 had passed away in discussions respecting peace, and in preparations for war; that of 1812 was arrived, and the horizon had already become gloomy and lowering. Our armies in Spain had met with reverses; Ciudad Rodrigo had been taken by the

English *; the discussions between Napoleon and the Pope had assumed a tone of bitterness; Kutusoff † had destroyed the Turkish army on the Danube; in France itself disturbances existed, in consequence of a scarcity of provisions: in short, every thing was calculated to call off Napoleon's attention from Russia, and fix it steadily on France; and, instead of obstinately shutting his eyes to them, he rather recognised in these disastrous circumstances the admonitions of a fortune which had ever yet been faithful to him.

It was more particularly during the long nights of winter, which naturally bring with them solitude and meditation, that his guardian star seemed to shed on him her best and purest light; it pointed out to him the tutelary genii of the various nations he had subjugated awaiting in silence the moment of their vengeance; the dangers he was hastening to meet, those he left behind him, those immediately close to him; that, like the returns of the force of his army, the population tables of his empire were delusive, not in numerical, but real force: they included only old men, rendered such by the course of nature or by war, and children; scarcely any men in the vigour of their strength! What had become of all these? The tears of wives, the lamentations of mothers, too clearly told! Bowed down in grief and labour to the earth, which without their exertions would remain uncultivated, they execrated war, which they considered as personified in him!

And yet, without having conquered Spain, he was now going to attack Russia; totally forgetful of that principle of which he had himself so frequently given

* On the 19th of January, 1812.

† On the 8th December, 1811.

both the precept and example, "never to attack more than one point at a time, and to do that always in a mass." Why would he abandon a situation splendid, although not perfectly secure, to throw himself into a position so frightfully critical that the least check might ruin every thing, and every reverse would be decisive ?

At such a season, no necessity of position, no feelings of self-love could prevail upon Napoleon to contest his own reasonings, and prevent him from listening to himself. Accordingly, he became anxious and agitated. He collected accounts of the power and resources of every state in Europe ; and, after procuring an exact and complete summary of them, became absorbed in the profound study of it: his anxiety daily increased ; indeed, to him irresolution was torture.

He was frequently seen for hours together half-reclining on a sofa, wrapt in the most intense meditation. Then, with a sudden and convulsive start, he broke from his trance, exclaiming aloud, as if he had heard his name mentioned, "Who calls me ?" Instantly rising, and rapidly pacing his room, he at length cried, "No, undoubtedly! nothing is sufficiently fixed around me, or even immediately close to me, for a war so distant; it must be put off for three years." He then hastily dictated a note containing a project for appointing his father-in-law the emperor of Austria, to act as mediator between Russia, England, and France.

He afterwards read what he had dictated, but without signing it. When the omission was suggested to him, he replied, as he did not unfrequently, "To-morrow morning: we should never be in a hurry: night is a wise counsellor !"

He then ordered that the summary above-mention-

ed, and which was calculated to shew him all the dangers of his position, should be always placed on his table. He read it frequently over; and at every successive reading he approved and repeated his first conclusions.

The person who wrote the above-mentioned note, from the emperor's dictation, is not aware of what finally became of it, but it is known, that about that period, (the 15th of March, 1812,) Czernicheff was the bearer of new propositions to his sovereign; Napoleon offered formally to declare that he would not, directly or indirectly, contribute to the re-establishment of the kingdom of Poland; and to endeavour to arrange every other ground of complaint.

More lately still, on the 17th of April, the duke of Bassano proposed to Castlereagh an arrangement relative to the Peninsula and the kingdom of the two Sicilies, and, in regard to other points, to treat upon the basis, that each of the two powers should keep what the other had not been able to take from it by war. But Castlereagh replied, that England was pledged by the faith of her solemn engagements not to treat without the previous acknowledgment of Ferdinand VII. as king of Spain.

On the 25th of April, Maret, when communicating this determination to count Romanzoff, repeated part of Napoleon's complaints against Russia. This consisted, firstly, of his ukase of the 31st of December, 1810, which prohibited the introduction of French productions into Russia, and destroyed the continental system; secondly, of Alexander's protest against the annexation of the duchy of Oldenburg; and thirdly, of the Russian armaments.

That minister reminded the Russian government, that Napoleon had offered to grant an indemnity to

the duke of Oldenburg, and solemnly to bind himself never to concur in the re-establishment of Poland; and that in 1811, he had proposed to Alexander to grant prince Kouřakin the necessary powers for treating with the duke of Bassano on the whole of their mutual complaints, but that the Russian emperor had eluded that invitation by promising to send Nesselrode to Paris, a promise which had not been fulfilled.

The Russian ambassador, nearly at the same time, delivered in Alexander's ultimatum. He required the entire evacuation of Prussia and Swedish Pomerania, and a diminution of the garrison of Dantzic; with respect to other points, he agreed to accept an indemnity for the duchy of Oldenburg, was ready to enter into commercial arrangements with France, and finally, offered some nominal modifications of the ukase of the 31st of December, 1810.

But it was now too late. Besides, in the state in which circumstances then were, this ultimatum necessarily brought with it war. Napoleon had too lofty a sense both of his own honour and that of France, he was too much commanded by his position, to retreat before a negotiator who menaced him, to leave Prussia at liberty to throw herself into the arms of Russia, which were held open to receive her, and submissively to abandon Poland. He had advanced too far; to have been enabled to stop he must have retrograded; and Napoleon, in his existing position, considered every retrograde movement as involving necessarily a complete fall.

CHAPTER V.

THE wishes which he had expressed thus late not having been gratified, he consoled himself with the survey of his formidable and enormous force; he recurred to his recollections of Tilsit and Erfurt, and fondly dwelt on all the incorrect and unfavourable indications which he obtained on the character of his rival. Sometimes, he flattered himself that Alexander would yield at the approach of so tremendous an invasion; at others, he indulged his imagination in visions of conquest, and with perfect self-complacency permitted it to display his banners from Cadiz to Cazan, and to cover the whole of Europe. Then, his genius could find delight only at Moscow. That city was eight hundred leagues distant from him, and yet he was already making such inquiries and collecting such notices respecting it, as if he had been just on the eve of occupation. A French physician, who had long resided there, having informed him that within its walls, and in the immediate neighbourhood, there were ample supplies for his army for eight months, he instantly engaged him in his service.

Aware, however, of the danger upon which he was entering, he was desirous to collect around him all his friends. Even Talleyrand himself was recalled: it had been the emperor's design to send him to Warsaw; but, through an intrigue, and the jealousy of a competitor, he fell into disgrace. Napoleon, deceived by a calumny skilfully propagated, believed that he had been betrayed by him. His anger was violent, and his expression terrible. Savary made repeated but ineffectual attempts to explain the affair to him,

even up to the time of our entering Wilna. That minister farther sent to the emperor, while there, a letter from Talleyrand, which pointed out the influence of Turkey and Sweden on the Russian war, and made an offer of his most zealous services for negotiation with both.

But Napoleon noticed it only with an exclamation of disdain, "Did the man believe his services indispensable? did he presume to instruct him?" He then made his secretary send the letter to the individual minister who was most jealous of Talleyrand's influence.

It would not be quite correct to say, that the war was contemplated with uneasy feelings by all those who were about Napoleon's person. Within the palace, as well as without, the ardour of many of the military led them eagerly to applaud the policy of their sovereign. The greater number agreed, that it was possible to conquer Russia; whether this arose from the prospects of promotion, which might extend, according to the subject of it, from a simple step in the service, even to a throne, or from their being carried away by the enthusiasm of the Poles; whether it was that the expedition, if conducted with prudence, was, in fact, likely to succeed, or finally, that, under the auspices of Napoleon, every thing appeared possible.

Among the emperor's ministers, many disapproved of it; the greater number were silent on the subject; one only was charged with having flattered him, and even that single charge was without foundation. He was heard, indeed, more than once to say "that the emperor was not great enough: that it was necessary he should become greater still, in order to be able to stop." But that minister really was what courtiers in general merely wish to appear; he possessed en

ture and absolute faith in the genius and ascendant star of his sovereign.

It is, besides, perfectly incorrect to ascribe to the counsels of that minister a great portion of our calamities: Napoleon was not susceptible of being influenced: when once his object was defined, and he had begun to move forward for the attainment of it, he no longer permitted contradiction. He seemed, on his own account, to wish to hear only what flattered his determination. He repelled with abruptness, and with apparent incredulity, any unfavourable intelligence, as if he feared it might shake his purpose. This part of his moral constitution obtained different names, according to the varying course of his fortunes: when he was successful, it was denominated strength of character; when unfortunate, it was called infatuation.

Aware of this disposition of mind, some subaltern officers were led to make *him* unfaithful reports. Even one of his ministers thought himself occasionally justifiable in preserving a dangerous silence. The former exaggerated the expectations of success, in order to imitate the lofty confidence of their leader, and that their countenances might fix on his mind the impression that they entertained the happiest presages; the second was occasionally silent after receiving news of disaster, in order, as he said himself, to escape the sharp repulses to which he would otherwise have been almost certainly exposed.

But this unworthy fear had no operation on Caulaincourt and many others among his ministers, or on Duroc, Lobau, Rapp, Lauriston, and generally perhaps even Berthier, among his generals. In whatever concerned their respective departments, these were never sparing to him of the truth. If it hap-

pened to irritate him, Duroc, without giving way, wrapped himself up in a philosophic impassibility; Lobau rudely resisted; Berthier sighed, and withdrew in tears; Caulaincourt and Daru, the one pale and the other glowing with anger, repelled the contradictions poured upon them by the emperor, the former of them with stubborn impetuosity, the other with keen and laconic dryness. They were often observed to quit abruptly the scene of altercation, and close the door after them with violence.

It would be inexcusable, however, not to add, that these collisions were never followed by any unpleasant consequences; the parties recovered themselves the moment after, and no indication appeared of what had happened, but in the increase of Napoleon's esteem for the noble frankness with which he had been treated.

I have related these details because they are either not at all or only very inaccurately known, because the emperor in his closet had no resemblance to the emperor in public, and this part of the palace has hitherto been unexplored; for in that new and serious court there was little said, all were strictly classified, and one saloon knew little or nothing of another. Finally, I have related the above particulars, because the great events of history cannot well be understood without thoroughly knowing the character and manners of the principal personages concerned in it.

In the mean time indications of a famine appeared in France. The very precautions suggested by the alarm felt on this occasion augmented the evil. Avarice, ever ready to occupy every road to fortune, had bought up the corn while as yet at a low price, and waited for hunger to come and purchase it back at a most extravagant one. The panic then became gene-

ral. Napoleon was compelled to suspend his departure; he became impatient and urgent with his council; but the measures required, were grave and critical and his presence was indispensable. Thus a war, in which every hour lost was irreparable, was protracted for two entire months.

The emperor, however, was not daunted by this obstacle. The delay, it was to be considered, would give time for the new crops in Russia to reach their proper growth. These would supply his cavalry; his army would of course require a less heavy train of carriages; his march, being thus less encumbered, would be more rapid; he should, therefore, soon arrive within reach of the enemy, and this expedition, like so many before it, would be terminated by a single battle.

Such were his hopes! For, without deceiving himself on the subject of his successful fortune, he calculated its influence upon others; it was included and appreciated in the general estimate of his forces. Where other things were deficient, he balanced the defect with his fortune, and considered it as supplying any insufficiency of his means, entertaining no fear of wearing it out by too frequent use, and confident that both his allies and enemies believed in it more firmly than himself. It will be seen, however, in the sequel of the expedition, that he depended too strongly on this power, and that Alexander found means to escape its influence.

Such was Napoleon! Raised above the ordinary passions of mankind by his native grandeur, and also by his being himself under the dominion of a superior passion; for even the masters of the world are never, we find, perfect masters of themselves! And now torrents of blood were about to flow! But, in their high

and sanguinary career, the founders of empires advance towards their object like that destiny whose ministers they appear to be, and whose course can be neither terminated nor impeded by wars, or earthquakes, or any of those plagues which heaven permits, without deigning to explain their utility to its victims.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

THE time for deliberation was now past, and that for action had arrived. On the ninth of May, in 1812, Napoleon, hitherto constantly victorious, quitted a palace to which he was never again to return so.

From Paris to Dresden his progress was one continued triumph. He had first to pass through the eastern part of France—a part which, far different from the west and south, was entirely devoted to him, and knew him only by his favours and his victories. Numerous and brilliant armies, which were attracted by the fertility of Germany, and conceived themselves marching to certain and speedy glory, traversed these countries with proud complacency, and while they consumed their produce, liberally circulated among them money in return. In these parts war always carried the appearance of justice.

At a later period, when the bulletins of our success arrived there, the public imagination, astonished to find itself surpassed by fact, became excited to the highest pitch of enthusiasm. The inhabitants felt a rapture like that of the days of Austerlitz and Jena: the couriers were surrounded by immense groups; their intelligence produced the very intoxication of joy, and the multitudes never dispersed but with exclamations of transport of “Long live the emperor! Long live our brave army!”

It is, besides, well known that that part of France has been always renowned for its warlike character. It is frontier territory; the youth are brought up

amidst the clash of arms, and the profession of arms is there held in honour. The language now generally heard there was, that the present war would liberate Poland, that country so dear to France; that the barbarians of Asia, who were now threatening Europe, would be driven back into their deserts; that Napoleon would once more bring back with him all the fruits of victory. Would not it be principally the departments of the east that would gather them? Had they not hitherto owed their wealth to war, which occasioned all the commerce of France with Europe to pass through their hands? In fact, blockaded as it was on every other side, it was only through the eastern provinces that the empire obtained respiration and subsistence.

For the space of ten years their roads had been covered with travellers of every rank, who came to admire the wonders of the great nation, to view that capital which was daily receiving new embellishments, those masterpieces of every art and age which victory had there collected, and, above all, that extraordinary man who was prepared to raise the national glory above all the glories transmitted by history. With interests thus flourishing, and vanity thus gratified, the inhabitants of these departments evidently owed every thing to victory. They were by no means ungrateful; they accompanied the emperor with their best and most ardent wishes: he was received everywhere with the same glowing cordiality, with rapturous acclamations and triumphal arches.

Germany manifested less affection, but perhaps more homage. Subdued by his power, the Germans were tempted, either by the consolation it afforded to their vanity, or by their characteristic fondness for the marvellous, to consider Napoleon as a super-

natural being. Astonished, overpowered, and carried away by the universal feeling, these worthy people strove really to be what it was their decided interest to appear.

They pressed eagerly on to line the long route pursued by the emperor. Their princes quitted their capitals and hastened to the different towns where the arbiter of their destiny was to halt barely for a few instants. Napoleon was followed by the empress, and a numerous court; he advanced towards the dreadful chances of a distant and decisive war like one returning from it in the full glory of triumph. It was not so that he formerly used to march to battle.

He had intimated a wish that the emperor of Austria, several kings, and a great number of princes, should meet and attend him at Dresden on his journey. His wish was gratified. They all repaired thither, some influenced by hope, others driven by fear: his own motive for the meeting was to convince himself thoroughly of his power, to display it, and to enjoy it.

In thus associating to himself the ancient house of Austria, his ambition indulged itself by exhibiting to Germany his family union with it. He conceived that this splendid assemblage of sovereigns would form an impressive contrast with the desertedness and desolation of the Russian emperor, and that he might, perhaps, be struck with dismay by so general an abandonment. This congress of coalesced monarchs would, moreover, shew that the war against Russia was European.

In that city, in the very centre of Germany, he was now exhibiting to it his imperial spouse, the daughter of the Cæsars, seated at his side. Whole populations had deserted their dwellings and rushed forward to meet him; rich and poor, nobles and plebeians,

friends and enemies, all eagerly pressed on to view an object so interesting. The vast collections formed of these mixed descriptions, were seen crowded together in the streets, the roads, and the public places, full of intense curiosity and observation. They passed whole days and nights in gazing on the gates and windows of his palace. It was not his crown, his rank, or the luxury and splendour of his court which interested them; it was the man himself; they wanted to stamp on their minds his figure and features; they wanted to obtain the power of saying to their less happy fellow citizens and descendants, that they had seen Napoleon.

At the theatres, poets degraded themselves by offering him divine honours; and thus whole nations were his flatterers.

In the general homage of admiration paid to him, there appeared little difference between kings and their subjects: none stayed to imitate; the burst was universal and simultaneous. The internal feelings, however, were far from being the same.

At this important interview, we were particularly attentive to notice what degree of apparently zealous assiduity would be displayed by these princes, and what loftiness of bearing by our own sovereign. We certainly entertained great hopes of his prudence, and conceived that being now used to his great power, and perhaps also being almost weary of it, he would scorn to abuse it; but could the man who, while an inferior, had never spoken, even to those above him, but in the style of command, adapt himself to all the minutiae of ceremonial observance after he had become the master and sovereign of all? However, he conducted himself with moderation, and even made efforts to please. But there was too much the appearance of

effort, and the fatigue occasioned by his endeavours was too visible. He had rather the air of receiving those princes, than of being received by them.

In respect to them, it might have been supposed that, well knowing his lofty spirit, and only hoping to conquer him by himself, these monarchs and their subjects humbled themselves so lowly before him, merely to increase disproportionally his elevation, and dazzle and infatuate him with a sense of his superiority. At the various royal and imperial parties, their attitude, their language, and even their very tones of voice, attested his ascendancy. All were there for him alone. They scarcely at all, or with the greatest difficulty, engaged in discussion with him; and were always ready to recognise that pre-eminence of which he was already fully conscious. A paramount lord could scarcely have exacted from his vassals more deference and homage than were on those occasions paid to him.

His levee presented a still more extraordinary spectacle! Sovereign princes attended at it to obtain audience of the conqueror of Europe; they were so intermingled with his officers, that the latter were obliged to be particularly cautious lest they should involuntarily jostle against the new courtiers with whom they were thus confounded. Thus did all differences disappear in the presence of Napoleon; he was at once their sovereign and ours. This common dependence seemed to level all around him. Perhaps the haughty and ill-restrained military spirit of some of the French generals at those assemblies offended those princes. They considered themselves as raised to the same elevation; and, in fact, whatever may be the rank or dignity of the conquered, the conqueror is his equal.

The most reflecting and judicious among us were not without alarm. They observed, although only in

whispers, that a man ought to be something more, thus to invert the nature and place of everything around him, and yet avoid being himself involved in the general subversion. They observed these monarchs quit Napoleon's palace with eyes and bosoms full of bitter resentment. They fancied that they heard them, in their safe and secret intercourse with their ministers at night, pouring out the numberless vexations which had annoyed them, and which they had borne till then in silence, although in misery. Everything had tended to aggravate their pain! How irksome was the crowd through which they were obliged to make their way in order to arrive at the gate of their stately sovereign, while, in the mean time, their own remained deserted! Everything, even their own subjects, appeared to betray them. While displaying his own prosperity, was he not in fact insulting their misfortune? They had, it seemed, come to Dresden merely to heighten the splendour of Napoleon's triumph; for it was over them that he thus triumphed: every acclamation for him was a reproach upon them: his grandeur was their abasement; his victories were their defeats.

In this manner they doubtless expressed the bitterness of their feelings; and every day augmented their hatred. One prince was observed to withdraw by a precipitate departure from a position so painful. The empress of Austria, whose ancestors in Italy had been dispossessed by general Bonaparte, was particularly distinguished by her aversion, which she in vain attempted to disguise. It escaped from her in unguarded starts and ebullitions of feeling, which Napoleon noticed, and checked by a smile: she employed all her superior wit and fascination to gain over hearts in which she might plant her own deadly hatred.

The French empress involuntarily increased a disposition thus bitterly hostile. She was observed to eclipse her step-mother in splendour of dress and ornaments ; if Napoleon at any time required of her more caution and reserve, she resisted, and even wept ; and the emperor, through affection, fatigue, or his attention being called off to other matters, gave up the point. It is farther asserted, that that princess, notwithstanding her origin, threw out many indiscreet comparisons between her old and her new country not a little mortifying to German vanity. Napoleon blamed these imprudent sallies ; but only gently : he was, in fact, pleased with the patriotism which he had himself inspired ; and he imagined that presents would repair all these indiscretions.

This princely congress, then, must naturally have led to much collision of sentiment, and the vanity of many present at it must have been deeply wounded. Napoleon, however, as he had endeavoured to please, thought he had actually done so ; and while he yet remained at Dresden, waiting the result of the marches of his army, the numerous columns of which were still passing through the territories of his allies, he directed his attention chiefly to considerations of policy.

General Lauriston, the French Ambassador at Petersburg, received orders to request the Russian emperor to authorize him personally to communicate definitive propositions to Napoleon at Wilna. General Narbonne, aid-de-camp of Napoleon, repaired to Alexander's head-quarters, to assure that prince of the pacific dispositions of France : and also, it is asserted, to prevail upon him to come to Dresden. The archbishop of Malines was despatched to direct the movements of Polish enthusiasm. The King of Saxony

expected to lose the grand duchy, but was flattered with the hope of an indemnity more solid.

It had at first excited no little surprise that the king of Prussia did not appear, to increase the number of the imperial court. It was soon, however, discovered that his presence had been interdicted. That prince was the more alarmed because he had done nothing to offend. But his presence might produce embarrassment. Being encouraged by Narbonne, however, he determined to appear. When his arrival was announced to the emperor, the latter became irritated, and at first refused to see him. "What," said he, 'does that prince require of me? Is it not enough to be constantly teased with his letters and memorials? Why does he come here to persecute me with his presence? What do I want of him?' But Duroc was urgent. He reminded Napoleon how much he really did want Prussia against Russia; and the Emperor's doors were in consequence thrown open. The king was received with the consideration due to his supreme rank, and the fresh assurances of his devotion, of which he gave numerous proofs, were graciously accepted.

It is said that hopes were at that time given the Prussian monarch of his eventually retaining the Russian-German provinces which his troops were appointed to invade. It is even asserted that, after their conquest, he demanded of Napoleon the investiture of them. And it is farther added, although somewhat vaguely, that Napoleon permitted the prince-royal of Prussia to aspire to the hand of one of his nieces. That should be the reward of the services which Prussia would afford him in this new war. He would himself endeavour to find out his niece's inclinations. Frederick, by such a family union with Napoleon,

would be able to preserve his enfeebled crown: but there is no sufficient evidence that the king of Prussia was really seduced by the hope of such an alliance, as the prince of Spain had been by a similar one.

Such was, at that time, the submissive demeanour of sovereigns to the power of Napoleon. We see in it an example of the empire of necessity over all, and to what extent, not merely among private individuals but among princes, the hope of gain and fear of loss may be carried.

In the mean time Napoleon awaited the result of the negotiations of Lauriston and general Narbonne. He hoped to vanquish Alexander by the mere aspect of his united army, and above all, by the formidable splendour of his residence at Dresden. At Posen, a few days afterwards, he shewed that he had entertained this expectation by his reply to general Dessolles, "that, as the congress at Dresden had not induced Alexander to peace, it could no longer be expected but from war."

On that day he spoke of nothing but his former victories. It appeared as if, entertaining doubts of the future, he intrenched himself in the past, and found it necessary to call in aid all his most glorious recollections in order to meet an extraordinary danger. In fact, then as well as afterwards, he felt the necessity of self-delusion with respect to the pretended weakness of his rival's character. As an invasion so great and critical drew near, he hesitated to consider it as certain; for he no longer felt the consciousness of infallibility, that martial confidence imparted by the strength and fire of youth, nor that presentiment of success which generally ensures it.

These pending communications, however, were not merely an effort for peace, but also a *ruse de guerre*. He

hoped by their means to render the Russians so negligent that they might be surprised in scattered corps, or so presumptuous, if they were united, as to wait his attack. In either case the war would be soon terminated, by a *coup-de-main*, or by a victory. Lauriston, however, was not received. Narbonne, on his return, stated, "that he had found the Russians neither depressed nor boasting: that the result of all the replies of the emperor was, that they preferred war to a disgraceful peace; that they would take good care not to risk a battle with an adversary so formidable; and finally, that they were determined to make every sacrifice to protract the war, and drive back the invader."

The emperor received this reply in the midst of all the pomp and splendour of his glory, and treated it with disdain. If the truth must be related, a great Russian nobleman had contributed to deceive him. This Muscovite, either from ignorance or deceit, had persuaded him that his sovereign gave way before difficulties, and was easily cast down by reverses. Unfortunately, the recollection of Alexander's complaisance and concessions at Tilsit, and at Erfurt, confirmed the French emperor in that false opinion.

He continued at Dresden till the 29th of May, elated by that homage which he knew well how to appreciate, and exhibiting to Europe princes and kings descended from the most ancient families of Germany forming a numerous court around a prince who owed all his honours to himself. He appeared to take delight in multiplying the effects of these great games of fortune, as if to surround and fortify himself by them; as if to make that appear more natural which had placed him on a throne, and thus to accustom to it, not only others, but himself.

CHAPTER II.

At length, impatient to conquer the Russians, and to escape from the homage of the Germans, Napoleon left Dresden. At Posen he remained only just long enough to give satisfaction to the Poles. He avoided Warsaw, where the war did not require his presence, and where he must have again plunged into politics. He stopped at Thorn to inspect the fortifications, magazines, and troops there. At that place the groans and lamentations of the Poles, whom our allies plundered and insulted without remorse, reached his ear. Napoleon severely upbraided and even menaced the king of Westphalia; but, in consequence of the bustle and extreme rapidity of our movement, the natural effect of this interference was, we well know, completely lost; to which must be added, that his paroxysms of anger, like all others, were succeeded by debility and dejection, and that then his natural mildness returned, when, with regret for what had passed, he frequently endeavoured to mitigate the pain it had occasioned. We know, moreover, that he was himself the cause of the evil which had thus exasperated him. For, although provisions were supplied all the way from the Oder to the Vistula, and even to the Niemen, both in abundance and with regularity, in the bulky articles of forage there was great deficiency. Our cavalry soldiers were already forced to mow the green corn, and to strip the roofs of cottages of their thatch, for food for their horses. All of them did not, certainly, stop at that; but when one irregularity is allowed, how are others to be prevented?

Beyond the Niemen the evil increased. The emperor had depended upon a multitude of light car-

riages and upon large waggons, each able to carry several thousand pounds weight over a sandy soil on which carriages conveying only a few quintals moved with difficulty. These waggons were organized in battalions and squadrons. Every battalion of light carriages (called *comptoises*) consisted of six hundred, and was able to carry six thousand quintals of flour; the battalion of heavy waggons, drawn by oxen, carried four thousand eight hundred quintals. There were, besides, twenty-six squadrons of carriages loaded with military equipments, a multitude of carriages containing tools of every description, many thousands of hospital and artillery waggons, six equipments for bridges, and one for siege.

The provision-waggons were to be loaded from the magazines established on the Vistula. When the army passed that river they were ordered to take with them, without halting, provisions sufficient for twenty-five days, but not to make use of them till they had got beyond the Niemen. But the greater part of these means of conveyance failed: the appointment of soldiers as conductors of military convoys seems to be in itself vicious, honour and ambition not stooping to the discipline necessary for such a service; but what had more effect was, that the carriages were too heavy for the nature of the ground; and when these circumstances are considered in connexion with the immense extent of country to be traversed, and the privations and fatigues to which the journey was exposed, it will not appear extraordinary that the greater part could with extreme difficulty reach the Vistula.

Provisions were procured on the march. The country being productive, horses, carriages, cattle, and food of every kind, were all seized upon and

carried off, as well as a sufficient number of the inhabitants to conduct these convoys. But within only a few days, at the Niemen, in consequence of the difficulty experienced in crossing that river and the rapidity of the first marches against the enemy, all these vast requisitions were abandoned, with an indifference equal to the violence by which they had been obtained.

The irregularity of the means thus employed, however, might be somewhat excused by the importance of the object, which was nothing less than to surprise the Russian army, either collected or dispersed, and to effect a *coup de main* with a force of four hundred thousand men. War, the worst of all visitations, would thus have been most happily shortened. Our slow and heavy convoys must have delayed and burdened our march; it was more advantageous to obtain provisions from the country we were passing over; compensation might have been given afterwards. But there was not only the necessary quantity of evil committed; much was done that was superfluous; indeed when once evil is begun, who is there that stops short in it? What leader can be responsible for the numerous parties of officers and soldiers dispersed over a country to collect supplies from it? to whom were complaints to be made? who was to punish? every thing was done in a hurried advance. There was no time to try, or even to discover the guilty. The business of one day was superseded by the more urgent claims of the next. The details of a month required to be accomplished in a day.

Besides, some of the leaders furnished the example. There was even an emulation in crime. In this point many of our allies surpassed the French. We were their masters in every thing; but, while imitating us,

they, in a comparison of depravity, excelled us. Their pillage was gross and brutal.

The emperor, however, endeavoured to introduce order into disorder. Among the accusations brought by two of the nations in alliance with him, he distinguished with indignation the names of certain individuals, and we find in his letters such passages as these, "I have inserted generals * * * and * * * in the orders of the day; I have suppressed the brigade * * *; I have exposed it before the army, that is, before Europe; I have ordered * * * to be informed that he will incur my heaviest displeasure, if he does not restore order." A few days after, seeing this * * * at the head of his troops, he angrily said, "You disgrace yourself; you give an example of pillage; either forbear, or go back to your father; I can dispense with your services."

From Thorn, Napoleon descended the Vistula. Graudentz belonged to Prussia; he avoided passing through it. That fortress was of great consequence to the French army. An officer of artillery, and some fire-artificers, were sent into it, ostensibly in order to make up cartridges, but the real motive was unknown; for the Prussian garrison was numerous. It was perfectly guarded and circumspect; and the emperor, who had advanced forward, thought no further on the subject.

At Marienburg, the emperor met Davoust. Through a natural or acquired pride, that marshal was reluctant to admit as his commander any other than the commander of Europe. His character, moreover, was despotic, and tenacious to obstinacy; and he could scarcely bend to circumstances more than to men. In 1809 Berthier had been his commanding officer, and Davoust had gained a battle and saved the army

by disobeying him. Hence arose a deadly hatred. During peace it increased, although in secrecy and silence; for they resided at a distance from each other; Berthier at Paris, and Davoust at Hamburgh. But the war against Russia brought them together.

Berthier felt his strength declining. From 1805 war had become hateful to him. His talent lay principally in great activity and memory. He could receive or send off intelligence and orders, almost infinitely varied and multiplied, at all hours of the day or night. On the present occasion, he thought he had a right to give orders himself. These orders offended Davoust. Their first interview gave rise to a violent altercation; it occurred at Marienburg, where the emperor had just arrived, and in his presence.

Davoust broke out with great vehemence and harshness: he went so far as to charge Berthier with incapacity and treason. Both proceeded to menaces; and, when Berthier was gone, Napoleon, influenced by the naturally suspicious temper of the marshal, observed, "I sometimes cannot help entertaining doubts of some of my oldest companions in arms, but whenever I do so, my head turns round with vexation, and I throw off such cruel suspicions as soon as possible."

While Davoust was probably enjoying the dangerous gratification of having humbled his enemy, the emperor arrived at Dantzic; and Berthier, thirsting for revenge, followed him thither. From that time, the zeal, the glory of Davoust, his anxious efforts to help forward the grand expedition, every thing which ought to have obtained him credit began to operate against him. The emperor had written to him, "that he was going to make war in a desolate country where the enemy would destroy every thing, and, therefore, that they must provide every thing for

themselves." Davoust in his answer had enumerated his preparations. "He had seventy thousand men completely organized, prepared with provisions for twenty-five days, to carry with them. Each company comprehended swimmers, masons, bakers, tailors, shoemakers, gunsmiths, in short, artificers of every description. They carried every thing with them: his army was like a colony: hand-mills for corn would be sent after them. He had foreseen every want; and the means of supplying it were all ready."

These endeavours to give satisfaction would naturally have succeeded. They excited, however, displeasure. They were misinterpreted. Insidious remarks were thrown out before the emperor. "That marshal," it was said, "wishes to have the credit of having foreseen, arranged, and executed every thing. Is the emperor, then, a mere spectator of the expedition? Is the glory of it due to Davoust?" In fact, said the emperor, "it seems as if he was the commander of the army."

Not satisfied with this, however, they awakened old and dormant suspicions. Was it not Davoust who, after the battle of Jena, had drawn the emperor into Poland? Was it not he, again, who, possessing as he did, vast property there, and having obtained the good will of the Poles by the probity of his administration, had been endeavouring to bring about a new war in their behalf, and been charged even with aspiring to their throne?

It is uncertain whether Napoleon's high spirit was hurt at seeing that of his lieutenants so nearly approaching his own; or whether, in this very irregular war, he was annoyed by the methodical genius and habits of Davoust; the unfavourable impressions against him, however, took deep root, and were at-

tended with pernicious consequences: they withdrew the emperor's confidence from an intrepid, steady, and prudent warrior, and promoted his partiality to Murat, whose temerity more strongly flattered his hopes. We may here add the remark that the quarrels of great men in his service never displeased Napoleon; they gave him light and information; their agreement disturbed and alarmed him.

From Dantzic, the emperor proceeded on the 12th of June to Konigsberg. Here terminated the inspection of his immense magazines, and of the second resting-point or grand station of his line of operation. Here were collected stores of provisions, enormous as the enterprise for which they were prepared. No detail had been neglected. The active and ardent mind of Napoleon was at that time fixed intently on that important and most difficult part of the expedition. He was, on this point, as his letters fully attest, lavish of recommendations, orders, and even money. The day was entirely swallowed up in dictating instructions on this subject, and at night he rose again to repeat them. One general alone received in a single journey six despatches from him, all expressive of this anxious solicitude.

In one of them he says, "If precautions are not taken for such matters as these, the mills of no country will be sufficient." In another, "all the provision-waggon's must be loaded with flour, bread, rice, pulse, and brandy, except what is necessary for the hospitals. The result of all my movements will be the concentration of four hundred thousand men upon one point. Nothing can then be expected from the country, and, consequently, we must carry every thing with us." But, on the one hand, the means of conveyance were badly calculated and on the other,

when he was once in motion, he hurried on with too great rapidity.

From Königsberg to Gumbinnen, Napoleon passed in review several of his armies, talking to the soldiers with gaiety, frankness, and even bluntness; well knowing that these hardy children of nature consider bluntness as affability, roughness as strength, and haughtiness as dignity, and that the elegances and graces which some carry among them from our saloons and drawing-rooms are regarded by them as weakness and pusillanimity; they are to them like a foreign language which they do not understand, and of which the accents excite ridicule.

As his custom was, he promenaded along the ranks. He knew the wars in which every regiment had been engaged with him. He stopped for a few moments before some of the oldest soldiers; and to one he recalled the battle of the Pyramids, to another that of Marengo, Austerlitz, Jena, or Friedland, by a single word, accompanied by a familiar caress. The veterans, thus recognised by their emperor, felt elated before their junior comrades, who looked up to them with admiration and envy.

Napoleon continued his advance. He did not neglect the young; he appeared interested by every thing that concerned them, and was well acquainted with their smallest wants. He questioned them. Did their captains properly attend to them? Were they regularly paid? Was there any article they wanted? He should like to see their knapsacks.

He halted at length before the centre of the regiment. There he informed himself of the places that were vacant, and inquired aloud who were most worthy to fill them. He called before him those who were pointed out to him, and questioned them as to

their length of service? their campaigns? their wounds? their brilliant exploits? He then appointed them officers; and they were instantly introduced as such in his presence, and in the manner which he indicated. These individual attentions absolutely charmed them! They remarked to each other that their great emperor, who pronounced their fate on nations in the mass, descended, in respect to themselves, into the most minute details; that they were his old, his genuine family! It was thus that he attached them to war, to glory, and to himself.

The army now proceeded from the Vistula towards the Niemen. That river, from Grodno as far as Kowno, flows parallel with the Vistula. The river Pregel runs from one to the other; it was covered with provisions. Two hundred thousand men arrived there at four different points. They found there bread and a quantity of forage; and these provisions ascended the river with them as far as its course would permit.

When the army was obliged to leave its flotilla, its *corps d'elite* took with them a supply of provisions sufficient for their reaching and crossing the Niemen, for preparing a victory, and arriving at Wilna. At that place the emperor depended upon the magazines of the inhabitants, on those of the enemy, and also on his own, which were to be conveyed from Dantzick by the Frischaff, the Pregel, the Deine, the Frederic canal, and the Vilia.

We were now close upon the Russian frontier. From the right to the left, or from south to north, the army was disposed before the Niemen as follows: first, at the extreme right, and advancing out of Galicia upon Drogiczen, were prince Schwartzenberg and thirty-four thousand Austrians; on the left, coming from Warsaw and moving on Bialystock and

Grodno, the king of Westphalia, at the head of sixty-nine thousand two hundred Westphalians, Saxons, and Poles; close to them, the viceroy of Italy, who had just completed the junction at Marienpol and Pily, of seventy-nine thousand Bavarians, Italians, and French; then the emperor with two hundred thousand men, commanded by the king of Naples, the prince of Eckmuhl, and the dukes of Dantzic, Istria, Reggio, and Elchingen. They came from Thorn, Marienwerder, and Elbing, and on the twenty-third of June were collected in one mass at Nogarsky, a league beyond Kowno. Finally, before Tilsit, Macdonald and thirty-two thousand five hundred Prussians, Bavarians, and Poles, formed the extreme left of the grand army.

All was now ready. From the borders of the Guadalquiver and the Calabrian sea to those of the Vistula six hundred and seventeen thousand men, of whom four hundred and eighty thousand had already arrived, six bridge-equipments, one for siege, some thousands of provision-waggons, innumerable herds of oxen, thirteen hundred and sixty-two pieces of cannon, and thousands of artillery and hospital-waggons were now collected and stationed within a few paces of the frontier-river of Russia. The greatest part of the provision-waggons were alone delayed.

Sixty thousand Austrians, Prussians, and Spaniards, were come to pour out their blood for the conqueror of Wagram, Jena, and Madrid; for him who had four times overthrown Austria, had humbled Prussia, and was then invading and desolating Spain: yet they were all faithful to him. When it was considered that the third part of the army consisted of foreigners or enemies, it was difficult to say whether the audacity shewn on one side, or the submissiveness on the

other, was more astonishing. Thus Rome employed her conquests in extending them.

With respect to the French part of the army, he found us animated and ardent; the soldiers impelled by habit, curiosity, the gratification of appearing in foreign countries as masters, and the younger part, above all, by vanity, longing passionately to acquire some glory the circumstances of which they might relate with that gasconading energy which soldiers are so fond of—these tumid recitals of their exploits being absolutely indispensable to their hours of leisure and when no longer under arms. To this must be added, the hope of plunder. For the harassing and exacting ambition of Napoleon had often alienated his soldiers, as the excesses of the latter had stained his glory; it became necessary to compromise. Since 1805 it was an understood case; they bore with his ambition, and he with their pillage.

That pillage, or rather that marauding, did not, however, generally extend beyond provisions, which, for want of regular distributions of them, were exacted from the inhabitants, but frequently with too little consideration. The worst cases of pillage occurred through the stragglers, who are always numerous in forced or rapid marches. Such excesses as were often exhibited by these were never tolerated. In order to check them, Napoleon left *gendarmes* and moveable columns in the track of the army; also, when these stragglers rejoined their corps, their knapsacks were examined by their officers, or even, as was the case at Austerlitz, by their comrades; and they administered to one another strict justice.

The last levies of troops were certainly young and weak; but the army had still many men in full vigour and power, accustomed to danger, and who could be

dismayed or alarmed by nothing. They might be recognised by their martial figure and aspect, and by the invariable subject of their conversations; their recollections and their anticipations were all of war; they never spoke but about that. Their officers were worthy of them, or, at least, soon became so; for, to maintain the ascendancy of rank over such men, it was necessary for an officer to exhibit scars, and cite achievements of his own.

Such was at that time the manner of life of these men. All within it was action, even not excepting words. Frequently there was somewhat too much boasting; but even that brought new obligations: for every one was incessantly put to the test; and it was necessary for him, therefore, to be what he wished to appear. The Poles are particularly addicted to the practice. They give themselves credit for more than they are, but not for more than they can be. They are a nation of heroes; estimating themselves, at first, beyond the truth, but afterwards staking their honour on verifying that which originally was neither true nor probable.

With respect to the generals of long standing, some of them were no longer the rough and hardy warriors of the republic; honours, fatigues, age, and, above all, the policy of the emperor, had relaxed and softened down many of them. Napoleon compelled them to luxury both by his example and his orders. It was his maxim that it had an imposing effect upon the multitude. Probably, also, he thought it useful, by preventing accumulation, which would render them independent; for, as he was the fountain of wealth, he was pleased to see the constant necessity of their recurring to it, and with thus directing all their hopes and regards to himself. He had, therefore,

drawn his generals within a circle, from which they could not without difficulty extricate themselves, forcing them alternately from want to prodigality, and from prodigality to want, which want he only was able to supply.

Many of them had nothing but their pay, and yet accustomed themselves to a style of living far beyond what that would support, and which by habit was become indispensable to them. If he granted them lands, they were in the conquered territories, which war afterwards exposed to danger, and which war alone could preserve.

But to retain them in due dependence, glory, with some a habit, with others a passion, and with all a necessary condition of existence, was fully sufficient ; and of that glory, Napoleon, the dictator of his own age and to history, was the dispenser. Although he set upon it a high price, none ventured to object to it, or despaired of paying it. Before his strength none could admit their own weakness, none could stop short before a man, who, notwithstanding his immense elevation, was still ascending.

The great and general sensation, moreover, excited by the expedition, was no slight attraction ; its success appeared certain ; it would be a military procession to Petersburg and Moscow. This one effort more, and all would probably be finished. It was a last opportunity, and those who did not avail themselves of it would bitterly repent, and listen with anguish to the glorious recitals that would be made of it by others. The victory of to-day would make that of yesterday old, and who would like to grow old with it ?

Moreover, as the war was universally extended, how could any avoid engaging somewhere in it ? The

choice of the field of battle was by no means a matter of indifference: on this Napoleon would command in person; on others, a man would fight indeed in the same cause, but it would be under another leader. The renown participated with that other would be deemed foreign by Napoleon. Yet he was the source both of glory and fortune; and it was well known that, from inclination or policy, he was lavish of his favours on those only whose glory recalled his own, and but scantily recompensed achievements in which he had not been himself personally concerned. The army commanded by him, therefore, was that to be preferred: hence the eagerness with which young and old rushed forward to join it. What leader ever possessed such means of power! There were no hopes, however ambitious, which he was not able both to excite and satisfy!

In short, in him we loved the companion of our toils; the leader who had conducted us to renown. The admiration and astonishment which he inspired flattered our vanity, for with him we seemed to have every thing in common.

With respect to the young *elite*, who at this season of our glory filled our camps, their enthusiasm was natural. Who among us did not kindle in early life when reading the splendid achievements of the ancients, or of our own ancestors? Should we not all have then wished to have been the heroes whose real or fabulous history we were perusing? In that lofty excitement of our feelings, if, instead of reading the records of those events, we had really beheld them, had been on the very places historically so renowned, and could have fought by the side of those illustrious Paladins whose marvellous adventures and

brilliant fame had roused such emulation in our youthful and ardent imaginations, which of us would have for a moment hesitated? which of us would not have been transported with joy and hope, and have scorned a hateful and ignominious repose?

Such was the new generation of French military. They were then free to cherish ambition. It was a season of prosperity and intoxication, when the French soldier, having mastered every thing by victory, appreciated himself more highly than the lord or even the monarch through whose territory he was passing. He considered the monarchs of Europe as reigning only by the permission of his leader and his own arms.

Thus some were influenced by habit, others by the dulness of cantonments; the greater number by novelty, and, above all, by glory; all by emulation; and, lastly, by their confidence in a leader who had been always fortunate, and by the hope of a speedy victory, which would terminate the war by a *coup-de-main*, and restore us shortly to our domestic hearths: for, with respect to the whole army of Napoleon, as was the case with some volunteers at the court of Louis XIV., a war was often no more than a single battle, or a rapid and brilliant journey.

We were at present advancing to the confines of Europe, where no European army had been before! We were going to set up the pillars of Hercules! The greatness of the enterprise; the agitation of all Europe co-operating to accomplish it; the imposing equipment and array of four hundred thousand infantry and eighty thousand cavalry; the clash of arms, the trampling of horses, and the notes of martial

music; the incessant warlike reports and military sounds, kindled even the veterans into enthusiasm! The most insensible could not escape the animating influence; the contagion was universal.

Finally, without so many motives to ardour, the constitution of the army was good, and every good army is disposed for war.



BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

NAPOLEON was satisfied, and expressed himself as follows :—“ Soldiers, the second Polish war is begun. The first was terminated at Friedland and Tilsit. At Tilsit, Russia swore to an eternal alliance with France, and war against England. She has violated her oath ; she will give no explanation of her singular conduct till the French eagles have repassed the Rhine, and consequently left our allies at her discretion. Russia is driven onwards by fatality ; her destinies are about to be accomplished. Does she believe we have degenerated ? Should we be no longer the soldiers of Austerlitz ? She has placed us between disgrace and war ; the choice cannot be for an instant doubtful ? Let us then march forward, cross the Niemen, and carry the war into her territory. The second Polish war will be glorious to the French arms like the first ; but the peace which we shall conclude will carry with it its own guarantee, and will put an end to the fatal influence which for the last fifty years Russia has had on the affairs of Europe.”

This address, which was then regarded as prophetic, was well adapted to an expedition that seems almost fabulous. It was appropriate enough to invoke destiny, and to believe in its empire, when so many men and so much glory were about to be consigned over to it.

The emperor Alexander also harangued his army,

but in a very different style. Some persons imagined that they saw in these proclamations the difference between the two nations, the two emperors, and their relative situations. In fact, one, being on the defensive side, was simple and moderate; the other, being on the offensive one, was full of audacity, and breathing victory in every line; the former reposed on religion, the other on fate; the one on patriotism, the other on glory; neither of them, however, spoke of the liberation of Poland, which was the real subject of the war.

We directed our march easterly, with our left to the north and our right to the south. On our right, Volhynia invoked us with its most ardent prayers; in the centre, actuated by similar feelings, were Wilna, Minsk, and the whole of Lithuania and Samogitia; before our left, Courland and Livonia awaited their fate in silence.

Alexander's army, three hundred thousand strong, kept these countries in check. From the banks of the Vistula, from Dresden, and even from Paris, Napoleon had surveyed it, and decided upon it. He had seen that its centre, commanded by Barclay, extended from Wilna and Kowno as far as Lida and Grodno, resting its right on the Vilia and its left on the Niemen.

That river covered the front of the Russians by the winding which it makes from Grodno to Kowno; for it is only between these two cities that the Niemen running towards the north crossed the line of our attack, and served as a frontier to Lithuania. Before arriving at Grodno, and after leaving Kowno, it flows towards the west.

To the south of Grodno, Bagration, with sixty-five thousand men, near Wolkowisk; and to the north of Kowno, at Rossiana and Keydani, Wittgenstein with

twenty-six thousand men supplied the want of that natural frontier with their bayonets.

Another army, fifty thousand strong, called the army of reserve, was formed at Lutsk, in Volhynia, to keep that province in check, and watch Schwartzenberg: it was intrusted to Tormasof, till the treaty, ready to be signed at Bucharest, should permit Tchichakoff and the greater part of the army of Moldavia to join it.

Alexander, and under him Barclay de Tolly, his minister of war, directed the whole of these forces. They were divided into three armies, called the first army of the west, under Barclay, the second army of the west under Bagration, and the army of reserve under Tormasof. Two other corps were formed, one at Mozyr, in the environs of Bobruisk, and the other at Riga and Dunaberg. The reserves were at Wilna and Swentziany. Finally, a vast intrenched camp was raised before Drissa, in a bend of the Duna.

The French emperor considered that this position behind the Niemen was neither fit for attack nor defence, and that the Russian army was not better situated for effecting a retreat; that, being extended over a line of sixty leagues, it might be surprised and dispersed, which actually happened: that, more obviously still, might the left of Barclay, and the whole army of Bagration at Lida and Wolkowisk, in front of the marshes of the Berezina, which they covered instead of being covered by them, be driven back upon those marshes and taken; or, at least, that a sharp and direct attack upon Kowno and Wilna, would cut them off from their line of operation, which was indicated by Swintziany and the intrenched camp at Drissa.

In fact, Doctorof and Bagration were already separated from that line, and, instead of remaining in mass with Alexander before the roads leading to the Duna

in order to defend them, or avail themselves of them they were forty leagues to their right.

Napoleon, therefore, divided his forces into five armies; while Schwartzenberg coming from Galicia with his thirty thousand Austrians (whose number he was ordered to exaggerate) kept in check Tormasof, and called the attention of Bagration to the south; while the king of Westphalia, with his eighty thousand men, gave employment to that general in front, near Grodno, without attacking him at first very violently; while the viceroy of Italy, near Pily, held himself in readiness to interpose between Bagration and Tolly; and finally, while on the extreme left, Macdonald, debouching at Tilsit, invaded the north of Lithuania, and poured in upon the right of Wittgenstein; Napoleon, with two hundred thousand men was to precipitate himself upon Kowno, upon Wilna, and upon his rival, and overthrow him by a single shock.

If the Russian Emperor gave way, he would press hard upon him; he would throw him back upon Drissa and the commencement of his line of operation; then, instantly despatching detachments to the right, he would surround Bagration and all the corps of the left of the Russians, which by this sudden irruption he would have separated from their right.

I hasten to give a summary account of our two wings, being eager to return to the centre, and to apply myself without distraction to depicting the grand scenes which were there exhibited. Macdonald commanded the left wing. His invasion rested on the Baltic, and, opposed to the Russian right wing, threatened Revel, then Riga, and, even Petersburg itself. He soon appeared before Riga. War was for some time stationary under its walls: although not of great moment, it was maintained by Macdonald with judg-

ment, science, and glory, even during his retreat; to which he was not compelled either by winter or the enemy, but solely by the command of Napoleon.

With respect to his right wing, Napoleon had depended upon the support of Turkey, in which he failed. He had concluded that the Russian army of Volhynia would follow the general movement of Alexander's retreat; whereas Tormasof, on the contrary, advanced in our rear. The French army then found itself uncovered and threatened with being turned in these immense plains. Nature presenting no security in that part, as she did for our left wing, it was requisite to make it strong enough to rest on itself. Forty thousand Saxons, Austrians, and Poles remained there in observation.

Tormasof was defeated; but another army which the peace of Bucharest rendered disposable, united with the remains of the first. From that time the war on that point became defensive. It was carried on supinely, as was naturally to be expected, and although along with that army of Austrians a number of Poles also were left, and likewise a French general, that general was held in high estimation, notwithstanding reverses, and not so held without good foundation.

No success or reverse was here decisive. But the position of that corps, which was almost wholly Austrian, became of more and more importance, when the grand army retreated upon it. It will be seen, whether Schwartzenberg deceived the confidence placed in him; whether he permitted us to be surrounded on the Berezina, and whether it is true that he then appeared desirous of being only an armed spectator of the momentous contest.

Between these two wings the grand army marched

towards the Niemen, in three separate masses. The king of Westphalia, with eighty thousand men, took the direction of Grodno; the viceroy of Italy, with seventy-five thousand, that of Pilyony; Napoleon, with two hundred thousand, that of Nogaraiski, a farm situated three leagues beyond Kowno. On the 23rd of June, before day, the imperial columns reached the Niemen, but without seeing it. The border of the great Prussian forest of Pilwisky, and the hilly ground which lines the river, concealed that grand army which was about to cross it.

Napoleon, who had thus far travelled in a carriage, mounted on horseback at two o'clock in the morning. Without disguising himself, as has been falsely stated, he reconnoitred the Russian river to enable himself, under the cover of night, to cross that frontier which five months afterwards he was enabled to repass only by means of the same obscurity. When he had nearly reached the river, his horse fell and threw him upon the sand. "That," said a solitary voice, "is a bad augury; a Roman would go back!" It is uncertain whether this was said by himself or one of his suite.

Having finished his *reconnaissance*, he ordered that, at the close of the next day, three bridges should be thrown over the river, near the village Poniemen; he then went to his quarters, where he passed the whole of that day, sometimes in his tent and sometimes in a Polish house, reclining at his length in the midst of a motionless and burning atmosphere, and in vain seeking repose.

When night returned he proceeded towards the river. Those who crossed it first were some sappers in a skiff. They landed on the Russian side in great

surprise at finding no impediment opposed to them. There they found peace; it was on their own side that there was war; every thing was quiet on that foreign land which had been depicted as so menacing. A subaltern Cossack officer, however, who commanded a patrol, soon made his appearance. He was alone, and seemed to consider himself in perfect peace, and not to know that all Europe was in arms before him. He inquired of the strangers, who they were? They replied, "Frenchmen."—"What do you want," resumed the officer, "and what has brought you to Russia?" One of the sappers instantly replied, "To make war upon you! To take Wilna! To liberate Poland!" The Cossack then withdrew. He disappeared in the woods, into which three of our soldiers, hurried on by their ardour, and also wishing to sound the forest, discharged their fire-arms.

Thus the feeble sound of three muskets, to which no reply was given, informed us that a new campaign had opened, and that a great invasion was begun. That first signal of war produced in the emperor a high degree of agitation, arising either from prudence or presentiment. Three hundred Voltigeurs immediately passed the river, to protect the establishment of the bridges.

Then all the French columns issued from the valleys and the forest. They proceeded to the river's side in perfect silence, and under cover of complete darkness. It would have been necessary to touch them in order to discover them. All fires, and even sparks, were forbidden: and they lay down to sleep with their arms in their hands, as in the presence of an enemy. The green corn, wet with a copious dew, served as a bed for the men and as food for the horses.

On that night, its coldness which prevented sleep, its darkness which lengthened the hours and augmented our wants, finally, the dangers of the ensuing day, all imparted to our position a degree of seriousness and solemnity. But the expectation of a great battle afforded us consolation. The proclamation of Napoleon had just been read; its most remarkable passages were repeated in a low voice, and our imaginations were kindled by the genius of conquests.

The Russian frontier was before us. Already were our eager eyes attempting to pierce through the shades of night, and catch a view of the "promised land" of our glory. We seemed to hear the shouts of the Lithuanians at the approach of their deliverers. We figured to ourselves the river's bank lined by their supplicating hands. Here we were in want of every thing; there we should have every thing in profusion! Our friends would eagerly provide for our necessities: we should be surrounded by affection and gratitude. Of what consequence was one unpleasant night? The day would soon return, and bring back with it its warmth, and its delightful illusions! The day came! But it disclosed to us only a dry and sandy desert, and dark and gloomy forests! We then turned to ourselves for consolation and resource, and felt our spirits and hopes revived by the imposing spectacle of our united army.

About three hundred paces from the river, on the most elevated point of ground, we perceived the tent of the emperor. Around it the tops and declivities of the hills, and the intervening valleys, were completely covered with men and horses. As soon as the sun had risen upon these moveable masses, glittering in arms, the signal was given, and the vast multitude instantly moved off in three columns towards the three

bridges. They were seen winding as they descended the short plain which separated them from the river, drawing every moment nearer to it, taking possession of the three passages, narrowing their ranks for more conveniently traversing them, and at last reaching that foreign land which they were about to ravage, but which they were destined to overspread in a short time with their own prodigious ruins.

So great was the eagerness of the men on this occasion, that two divisions of the advanced guard, while contending for the honour of passing over first, nearly proceeded to violence, and were not quieted without difficulty; Napoleon hastened to place his foot on Russian territory; thus, unhesitatingly, making the first step towards his ruin. He took his station at first near the bridge, surveying the men with looks of encouragement. They all saluted him with the usual acclamation. They expressed more animation than himself, who perhaps felt at the time this momentous aggression weighing heavily upon his heart, or was oppressed by the excessive heat operating upon his enfeebled frame, or daunted by the discouraging observation that there was nothing for him to conquer.

At length he became impatient, and suddenly darted off into the country, along the forest which lay on the river's bank. He galloped as fast as his horse could carry him; and appeared eager to meet and contend with the enemy although alone. He went in that direction more than a league, finding uniform solitude throughout; it then became necessary to return near the bridges, from which, following the course of the river, he proceeded with his guard down to Kowno.

Some of us thought we heard the sound of distant cannon. We listened as we still marched forward, in

order to discover where the engagement was going on. But, with the exception of some troops of Cossacks, on that day, as on many following ones, the only enemy we had to contend with was the weather. The emperor had, in fact, scarcely passed the river, before the air became agitated by a hollow sound. The day was overclouded, and the wind rose, and brought with it ominous peals of thunder. This menacing sky, and the bare and unsheltering waste in which we then were, greatly depressed us. Some, even with all their late enthusiasm, considered the storm as a fatal presage. They imagined that those combustible masses were accumulated over us, and about to be discharged upon our heads, to defend the country against our invasion.

The storm was certainly prodigious as our enterprise. For several hours its black and ponderous clouds continued to thicken and impend over the whole army. From the right to the left, for the space of fifty leagues, the whole of its extent was menaced by its flashes, and drenched by its torrents; the roads and fields were inundated; and the previously insupportable heat of the atmosphere was suddenly changed to a distressing coldness. Ten thousand horses perished on the march, and more especially in the *bivouacs* which followed. A great quantity of equipments were abandoned on the sands; and numbers of men, afterwards, sunk under their difficulties.

The emperor found shelter from the first fury of the storm in a convent. He soon departed thence for Kowno, which was in a state of the greatest disorder. The peals of thunder were no longer attended to; those threatening sounds, which still murmured in the distance, seemed forgotten. For, although the phenomenon, usual as it is at that season of the year, had

struck some minds with consternation, yet, generally speaking, the reign of presages may be considered as past. A scepticism, with some acute and ingenious, with others thoughtless and brutal, earthly passions, and imperious wants, have detached the human soul from that heaven whence it originally proceeded, and to which it should return. Accordingly, in that dreadful disaster the army saw nothing more than a natural accident most inconveniently occurring; and, far from recognising in it the reprobation of their hostile incursion, for which, it is to be remembered, they were by no means responsible, they only found in it occasion for inveighing against that fortune, or that climate, which from whatever cause, had presented them with so terrible a presage.

On the same day a particular misfortune was added to the general disaster. Beyond Kowno, Napoleon became incensed against the Vilia, of which the Cossacks had broken down the bridge, and which opposed the passage of Oudinot over it. He affected to despise it, as he did every thing that resisted him, and ordered a squadron of Poles, of his guard, to throw themselves into it and swim it. This, being excellent and choice troops, they did without a moment's hesitation.

At first, they advanced in good order; and when they could no longer feel the bottom they redoubled their efforts. They soon reached the middle of the river by swimming. But the current being there most rapid disunited them. Their horses then became terrified, and, being forced down the stream, were irresistibly carried away by its violence. They no longer swam, but merely floated, in a state of complete dispersion. Their brave riders manfully but vainly struggled against the difficulty till their strength gave way, and then firmly re-

signed themselves to their fate. Their destruction was certain ; but it was for their country, and in their country's presence ; they had devoted themselves for their great deliverer ; and, just in the very crisis of sinking, they suspended for a moment their dying struggles, and, turning their last looks towards Napoleon, exclaimed, " Long live the emperor !" Three of them were particularly noticed, who, barely able to keep their heads above the surface, repeated the cry, and were swallowed up immediately. The army looked on with admiration and horror.

With respect to Napoleon, he gave orders with quickness and precision for every thing necessary to save the greater number of them, but without showing any emotion : whether this arose from the habitual mastery of his feelings, or from his considering in cases of war all sensibility as a weakness which ought to be subdued, and of which he should be the last to give an example ; or finally, from his contemplating in prospect other misfortunes, in comparison with which this was trifling.

A bridge was soon after thrown over that river, which carried marshal Oudinot and the second corps towards Kedani. During that time, the rest of the army was still passing the Niemen. It occupied three entire days. The army of Italy did not cross it till the 29th, before Piloni. The army of the king of Westphalia did not enter Grodno till the 30th.

From Kowno, Napoleon arrived in the course of two days at the defiles which defend the plain of Wilna. He waited before he made his appearance there to receive intelligence from his advanced posts. He hoped that Alexander would dispute that capital with him. The report of fire-arms was actually flattering this hope in him, when information was

brought him that the city was evacuated. He moved forward to it in gloom and displeasure. He accused his generals of the advanced guard of having suffered the Russian army to escape. This reproach was addressed to Montbrun, the most active of them; and such was his irritation that he proceeded even to menaces. His reproaches, however, and his menaces, were equally without effect, and are mentioned, not so much for their deserving censure, as for their evincing the importance he attached to a speedy victory.

In the midst of his exasperation, he made dispositions, with considerable address, for entering Wilna. He was immediately preceded and followed by Polish regiments; but, dwelling more on the retreat of the Russians than on the grateful and admiring shouts of the Lithuanians, he rapidly passed through the city, and hastened on to the advanced posts. Many of the finest Hussars of the 8th, having been engaged unsupported in a wood, had been just cut to pieces by the Russian guard; Segur,* who commanded them, after a desperate defence, fell covered with wounds.

The enemy had burned his bridges and magazines; he was retreating by various routes, but all of them in the direction of Drissa. Napoleon ordered all that the fire had spared to be collected together, and the communications to be re-established. He pushed on Murat and his cavalry in the track of Alexander; he at the same time threw Ney upon his left to support Oudinot, who on the same day defeated and drove back Wittgenstein from Develtowo as far as Wilkomir; he then returned to occupy Alexander's place at Wilna.

There his unfolded maps, military reports, and a crowd of officers requiring his orders were ready

* The author's brother.

for his arrival. He was on the immediate theatre of war, and at the instant of its most intense action; he had prompt and momentous decisions to form; orders for putting in motion to give; and hospitals, magazines, and lines of operation to establish.

He was obliged to question, to read, to compare, and finally to discover and appropriate that truth which, in the midst of innumerable and contradictory replies and reports, always appears to retreat and conceal itself.

Nor was this all. Napoleon, at Wilna, had to organize a new empire; and to direct the politics of Europe, the war in Spain, and the government of France. His political, military, and administrative correspondence, which had been many days in arrear, now imperatively demanded his attention. For it was a practice with him thus to suspend it while in expectation of any great event which would determine many of his answers, and more or less affect them all. On returning to Wilna, therefore, he in the first place threw himself upon a bed, less with a view to rest than meditation; and soon after, suddenly starting upon his feet, he rapidly dictated the orders which he had just conceived.

Intelligence was then received from Warsaw and the Austrian army. The address at the opening of the diet displeased the emperor. Throwing it from him, he exclaimed, "It is French; it ought to have been Polish." With regard to the Austrians, he was explicitly informed, that of their whole army he could depend only on their leader. That appeared to him sufficient.

CHAPTER III.

IN the meanwhile every thing tended to rouse in the hearts of the Lithuanians a patriotism still living although enfeebled: on the one hand the precipitate retreat of the Russians and the presence of Napoleon: on the other, the enthusiastic ardour for independence displayed by Warsaw; and above all, the sight of those Polish heroes who re-entered in the train of liberty that country whence they had been banished with her. Accordingly, the first days were devoted to joy; the happiness appeared general; the transport universal.

In every part the same sentiments seemed observable; in the interior of houses, at the windows, and in the public places. The inhabitants stopped to congratulate and embrace each other in the streets and on the roads; the aged re-appeared, after long seclusion, clothed in the ancient costume, which recalled ideas of glory and independence. They wept for joy at sight of the national banners which had just been erected; they were followed by an immense multitude, who rent the air with acclamations. But this exultation, unreflecting in some, stimulated in others, was of short duration.

The Poles of the grand duchy were always animated by the most noble enthusiasm. Worthy of liberty, they sacrificed to it all those advantages to which the greater part of mankind sacrifice liberty itself. On the present occasion they maintained their consistency. The diet of Warsaw formed itself into a general confederation; declared the kingdom of Poland to be re-established; convoked the dietins; invited all Poland to confederate; ordered all Poles in the Russian army to leave Russia; appointed a representative of

itself in a general council ; provided against any disturbance of the established order ; and, finally, sent a deputation to the king of Saxony, and an address to Napoleon.

The Senator Wibicki presented this address to him at Wilna. He said that " The Poles had not been subjected by peace or by war, but by treason ; that they were therefore by right free, in the sight of God as well as man ; that, at present, having it in their power to be so in fact, that right became a duty ; that they demanded independence for their brethren the Lithuanians, who were still slaves ; that they offered themselves as a centre of union to the whole Polish family ; but that it belonged to him who dictated to the age its history, and in whom the power of providence resided, to support the efforts which that providence must approve ; that, accordingly, they were come to request Napoleon the Great merely to pronounce the words, '*Let the kingdom of Poland be,*' and it would be ; that all Poles would devote themselves to the commands of the chief of the fourth French dynasty, before whom ages were but a moment, and space only a point."

Napoleon replied, " Gentlemen deputies of the confederation of Poland, I have heard with interest what you have just addressed to me. Were I a Pole, I should think and act as you do ; I should have voted like you in the Assembly of Warsaw. The love of his country is the first duty of civilized man.

" In my situation I have many interests to conciliate, and many duties to perform. Had I reigned during the first, the second, or the third Partition of Poland, I should have armed my people for its defence. As soon as victory enabled me to re-establish your ancient laws in your capital, and in a part of your

provinces, I did so, without seeking to prolong the war, which would have continued to shed the blood of my subjects.

“ I love your nation ! For sixteen years I have seen your soldiers at my side in the fields both of Italy and Spain. I applaud what you have done ; I authorize the efforts which you wish to make ; I will do all that depends upon me to second your resolutions. If your endeavours be unanimous, you may cherish hopes of compelling your enemies to acknowledge your rights ; but, in countries so remote and so extensive, it is solely from the united efforts of the population with which they are covered that these hopes can be derived.

“ From my first entrance into Poland I have held the same language to you. I must now add, that I have guaranteed to the emperor of Austria the integrity of his dominions, and that I cannot sanction any manœuvre or movement which may tend to disturb the peaceable possession of the Polish provinces still remaining to him.

“ Only let Lithuania, Samogitia, Witepsk, Mohilef, Volhynia, the Ukraine, and Podolia be animated by the same spirit as I have observed in Great Poland, and Providence will crown your good cause with success. I will recompense the devotion of your several countries, which is so interesting to my feelings, and gives you so many titles to my esteem and protection, by all that is in my power in the circumstances in which I am placed.”

The Poles had conceived they were going to address the sovereign arbiter of the world, him whose every word was a decree, and whom no accommodating maxims of ordinary policy could check in his course. They knew not to what they could attribute the cir-

cumspection of this answer. They doubted the intentions of Napoleon: the zeal of some was chilled; the indifference of others was justified; all were astonished. Even those about him questioned each other what could be the motives of a caution evidently so unseasonable, and which was so foreign to his habits. "What then was the object of the war? Was he afraid of Austria? was he disconcerted by the retreat of the Russians? was he become doubtful of his fortune, and unwilling to bind himself before Europe by engagements which he was not sure of being able to keep?"

"Had the coldness of Lithuania affected him? or rather, was he apprehensive of the explosion of a patriotism which he might no longer be able to control, and with respect to which he had not yet decided for what fate he should reserve it?"

Whatever were his motives, he was desirous that the Lithuanians should appear to bring about their own freedom themselves; and as, at the same time, he created a government for them, and dictated to them even the direction and irruptions of their patriotism, he placed both himself and them in a false position, which led perpetually to mistakes, contradictions, and half measures. They did not mutually understand each other, and hence arose mutual distrust. In return for so many sacrifices to be made by the Poles, they were desirous of engagements more positive and binding. But their union in one kingdom not having been pronounced, the fear that usually operates at the instant of momentous decisions increased, and the confidence which they had just lost in him they lost also in themselves.

It was at that time that he appointed seven Lithuanians to constitute the new government. Tha

choice was in some respects unfortunate : it disgusted the jealous pride of a nobility never easy to be satisfied.

The four Lithuanian provinces of Wilna, Minsk, Grodno, and Bialystock, had each of them a commission of government, and national sub-prefect. Every commune was to have had its municipality ; but Lithuania was in fact governed by an imperial commissioner, and by four French auditors under the title of intendants.

From these faults, perhaps inevitable, and especially from the excesses of an army placed in the alternative of plundering its allies, or itself perishing by famine, there resulted a general coldness and indifference. Of this the emperor could not entertain a doubt. He calculated that the Lithuanians amounted to four millions ; but he was seconded by only a few thousands of them ! Their pospolite, which he had estimated at more than a hundred thousand men, had decreed him a guard of honour ; three cavalry soldiers only attended him ! The large population of Volhynia remained immoveable ; and Napoleon again appealed from them to victory. While fortunate, such coldness did not annoy him sufficiently ; and when he became unfortunate, whether from a feeling of pride or justice, he never complained of it.

The dispositions of the Lithuanians had at first but little effect upon the French army, as we had always entertained full confidence in the emperor and in ourselves ; but when our forces were diminished, we began to look around us, and the more we examined, the more clearly we saw our exigency. Three Lithuanian generals, eminent in name, in property, and in sentiments, followed the emperor. The French generals upbraided them with the coldness of their coun-

trymen. The ardour of the people of Warsaw in 1806, was proposed as an example to them. The animated discussion which followed, as also many others, (and I shall here give a summary of the whole together) passed in the presence of Napoleon, near the place where he was transacting business; and as there was truth on both sides, as in these conversations the opposite allegations contested without destroying each other; in short, as the original and more recent causes of the indifference of the Lithuanians are developed by them, it would be inexcusable to omit them.

The Polish generals, then, replied to the reproach, "That they conceived they had received properly the liberty which we had brought them. That every one, it should be considered, loved according to his peculiar character: that the Lithuanians were of a colder nature than the Poles, and consequently less social and communicative. That, after all, the sentiments might be the same, although the expression of them might be different.

"That, besides, the circumstances of the two cases were totally different. That in 1806, the French had liberated Poland after having conquered the Prussians; while, in the present instance, if they freed Lithuania from the Russian yoke, it would be before they had subjugated Russia. That, accordingly, the one party would naturally accept with transport a liberty which was victorious and certain; but the other with some degree of gravity a liberty which was doubtful and perilous; that a man did not purchase a commodity with the same air with which he received it gratuitously. That, at Warsaw, six years ago, the inhabitants had nothing to do but to prepare for festivals and galas; but that now, at Wilna, where they had just seen displayed all the power of the

Russians, where their army was known to be untouched, and the motives of its retreat merely prudential instead of festivals, they had rather to equip themselves for battles.

“And with what means? Why had not liberty been brought to them in 1807? Lithuania was then rich and populous. Since that time the continental system, by sealing up the only passage for her productions, had impoverished her, while the wary policy of the Russians had depopulated her by recruitings, and, more recently, by the removal of an immense multitude of nobles, peasants, carriages and cattle, which the Russian army had carried off with it.”

To these causes they added the scarcity which arose from the inclemency of the weather in 1811; and the accidents and damage to which the peculiarly rich corn of those countries is subject. “But why were not the southern provinces applied to? There, were to be found men, horses, and every description of food in abundance. Nothing more would be required than to drive out Tormasof and his army. Perhaps, indeed, Schwartzenberg was marching thither. But would it be wise to intrust the liberation of Volhynia to Austrians, the uneasy and fearful usurpers of Gallicia? Would such men establish liberty on the very confines of slavery? Why were not Frenchmen and Poles employed on such a mission? But, in that case, it would have been necessary to stop short, to carry on the war more methodically, to take time for arranging and organizing; and Napoleon, influenced unquestionably by the distance from his own territory, by the expense in which every additional day involved him for the support of his army, depending upon that army with unbounded confidence, and eager to obtain with it one great victory, sacrificed every thing to the

nope of finishing the war by a single, speedy, and decisive conflict."

Here they were interrupted: these reasons, although true, were considered as insufficient excuses. "They said nothing about the most effective cause of the inactivity of their countrymen, which was the interested partiality of the nobles to the adroit policy of the Russians, who flattered their vanity, respected their usages, and confirmed their rights over the peasantry, whom the French came to liberate. No doubt, it was added, they considered national independence too dear at such a price."

This reproach was well founded, and although there was nothing personal in it, the Lithuanian generals felt hurt. "You talk," said one of them, "of our independence, but it must surely have been highly critical, since, although at the head of four hundred thousand men, you were afraid to compromise yourselves by acknowledging it; for you have not really recognised it, either by word or act. Our provinces are governed by your own auditors, entirely new men, and upon an entirely new system of administration. They exact from us imperiously and enormously, and leave us ignorant for whom we in fact make sacrifices which we should willingly make only to our country. They show us the emperor everywhere, and the republic nowhere. You present no object or end for our exertion, and yet are surprised that we do not make it. Those whom we do not like as fellow-citizens, you appoint as our chiefs. Wilna, notwithstanding our supplications, remains separated from Warsaw: thus disunited from each other, you require of us that confidence in our strength which union alone can supply. The soldiers whom you expected from us are offered you; thirty thousand men are all ready to join you,

but you refuse them arms, clothing, and pay which we cannot ourselves supply."

All these imputations might, perhaps, have been contested; but he added, "Certainly, we do not consider liberty as an affair of bargain and sale, but we find, in fact, that it is not offered to us with perfect disinterestedness. The report of your excesses has every where preceded you; they are not trifling and local, for your army marches in a line of fifty leagues' extent. Even at Wilna, notwithstanding the multiplied orders of your emperor, the suburbs have been plundered; and men naturally distrust the liberty which is brought to them by licentiousness.

"What is it, moreover, that you really expect from our zeal? looks of satisfaction; exclamations of joy; effusions of gratitude? when every returning day informs us that our farms or villages are laid waste? for the little that the Russians were unable to carry off with them is devoured by the half-famished columns of your army. In its rapid marches, crowds of marauders of all nations stray from their flanks, from whom we are constantly obliged to defend ourselves.

"What is it then that you require? that our countrymen should hasten to meet you on your march, bringing you their corn, presenting you with their flocks, and offering themselves, completely armed and clothed, to your service? Alas! what have they left to give you? Your brigands take every thing by violence; there is no time afforded for offering it. Look at that avenue to the imperial quarters. Do you see that man there? he is nearly naked; he groans with bitterness, and is as you see stretching out his hands to you in supplication! That very man, whose misery now so strongly excites your compas-

sion, is one of those same nobles from whom you expected assistance ; only yesterday, full of ardour, he was hastening to join you, with his daughter, his vassals, and his property ; he was coming to present himself and his services to your emperor, but he fell in with the Wirtemberg brigands, and was despoiled of every thing : he is no longer a father ; he is scarcely a man."

Every one was struck with horror, and hastened to the unhappy victim's relief ; Frenchmen, Germans, Lithuanians, all joined in deploring those excesses, but none could find a remedy for them. In fact, how was it possible to re-establish discipline in such immense masses, pushed forward with such precipitation, commanded by so many leaders of different manners, characters, and countries, and compelled to live by plunder.

In Prussia, the emperor had ordered his army to take with them provisions only for twenty days. This was what they would want to gain possession of Wilna by a single battle. Victory was to effect the rest. But the flight of the enemy postponed that victory. The emperor might have waited for his convoys ; but, having surprised the Russians, he had disunited them, and he was reluctant to let go his hold, and lose his advantage. He therefore pushed on in pursuit of them four hundred thousand men, with twenty days' provisions, over a country which, in the time of Charles XII., was found unable to maintain his twenty thousand Swedes.

It was not through want of foresight ; for immense convoys of bullocks followed the army, the greater part in droves, and the rest harnessed to the provision-waggon. Their drivers had been organized in battalions ; but, irritated by the slow movements of these heavy cattle, they had killed great numbers of

them, or suffered them to die from inanition. Many were seen at Wilna, and at Minsk, some even reached Smolensk, but at a very late period; they were of no use but to the recruits and reinforcements by which we were followed.

Moreover, Dantzic alone contained grain enough to supply the whole army. It supported Königsberg. Provisions had been sent from it up the Pregel, in large lighters, as far as Wehlaŭ, and in smaller ones, as far as Insterberg. The other convoys went by land from Königsberg to Labiau, and were to proceed thence, by the Niemen and the Vilia, to Kowno and Wilna. But the Vilia, being nearly dried up, could be of no use for such conveyance, and that deficiency, therefore, was to be supplied.

Napoleon hated professional contractors. He ordered the administration of the army to organize Lithuanian carriages: five hundred were accordingly collected; but when he saw them he was disgusted with them. He then permitted a bargain to be made with Jews, who are the only merchants in the country; and the provisions which had been stopped at Kowno, arrived at last at Wilna: but the army had then left it.

CHAPTER IV.

IT was the grand column, that of the centre, which suffered most: they followed the track which the Russians had nearly ruined, and of which the French advanced guard had completed the destruction. Those columns which took lateral routes found what they wanted in them; but they collected and managed it with great carelessness and disorder.

The calamities, therefore, occasioned by that rapid march, are by no means to be imputed entirely to Napoleon; for order and discipline were kept up in the army of Davoust; it suffered less from scarcity; and it was nearly the same with that of Prince Eugene. In these two corps, when recourse was had to marauding, it was with method and care; no more evil was committed than was necessary; the soldiers were obliged to carry many days' rations; they were prevented from squandering and wasting them. The same precautions might, therefore, have been acted upon elsewhere; but, whether from their having been used to carry on war in fertile countries, or from mere military ardor, many of the other leaders thought more of fighting the enemy than of managing properly their resources.

Accordingly, Napoleon was often obliged to shut his eyes to a course of pillage, which he had prohibited in vain; he, also, was well aware of the attraction which that mode of subsisting holds out to the soldier; that it makes him fond of war as a source of wealth, that it gratifies by the authority it often gives him over classes superior to his own; that it carries with it all the charm of a war of the poor against the rich; and, finally, that the pleasure of both feeling and displaying the power of the strongest is incessantly experienced in it.

Yet, on hearing of these excesses, he was highly indignant. He issued menacing proclamations, and charged the moveable columns composed of French and Lithuanians, to put them in execution: and, exasperated as we were against these marauders, we engaged in the service with great good will. But when, at any time, we forced from them the bread or the cattle which they had seized, and saw them quit us,

sometimes with an expression of despair, sometimes even in tears, and heard them muttering in anguish, "that, not content with giving them nothing, we took every thing from them, and must certainly intend that they should perish by hunger," we then accused ourselves of barbarity towards our own party and connexions, we called them back to us, and restored to them their prey ; considering that imperious necessity urged to these irregularities, and that the officer himself was sustained only by sharing with his soldiers what they had thus acquired.

A position so excessive naturally induced excesses. These rough and rugged men, with arms in their hands, assailed by so many uncontrollable wants, could no longer observe, on many occasions, any moderation or control at all. They reached the habitations at which they applied in a state of nearly half-starvation ; they at first asked for what they wanted ; but, whether for want of being understood, or because the inhabitants refused or were unable to satisfy them, and they could not or would not themselves wait, an altercation began, in the course of which, irritated every moment more and more by hunger, they became at length savage, and ransacking cottages or castles, just as it happened, without finding the sustenance they wanted, they, in the frenzy of their despair, accused the inhabitants of being hostile to them, and wreaked their revenge on the owners by the destruction of their property.

There were some, however, who destroyed themselves rather than proceed to such extremities ; and others after they had committed them ; these were the youngest of the men. They rested their heads on the muzzles of their muskets, and blew their brains about the road. But many became hardened in the

practice of plunder and destruction; one excess led to another, as a man often becomes more eager and heated by the blows which he inflicts. Among these some depraved wretches revenged their own calamities upon the persons of individuals who fell into their hands. Physical nature around them appearing cruel and relentless, they became relentless and cruel themselves; at so great a distance, and abandoned to their own guidance, they thought every thing allowable to them, and that, as they endured sufferings, so they might inflict them.

In an army so very numerous, and collected from so many nations, more offenders might naturally be expected than in others. The causes of so many calamities brought new ones in their train; weak as they were, through want of food, it was necessary for them to hasten onward by forced marches, that they might more speedily terminate that dreadful want, and reach the constantly retreating enemy. When night came, there was a halt, and the soldiers entered the houses of the place in crowds and confusion, and threw themselves on the dirty and disgusting straw prepared for them, overcome equally by hunger and weariness.

The stoutest among them had only energy enough left to knead the flour which they found, and heat the ovens with which all those houses were provided, while the others dragged themselves a few paces to kindle the fires necessary for cooking their meal. Their officers, like themselves, almost exhausted, feebly ordered more precautions than before to be observed, but neglected to examine how far they were obeyed. In these circumstances, a spark from these ovens, or a flake from these bivouac fires, sometimes occasioned the conflagration of a chateau, or village, and the

destruction of many unhappy soldiers who had taken up their refuge there. These disasters, however, were not common in Lithuania.

The emperor was not ignorant of these details, but he felt it impossible, in existing circumstances, to prevent the evil. Already, at Wilna, all these disorders had taken place: the duke of Treviso, among others, had informed him of them. "From the Niemen to the Vilia, he had seen nothing but houses laid waste, and carriages and caissons abandoned; they were found dispersed on the roads and in the fields, overturned, broken open, and their contents scattered every where about, and the best part of them plundered, as if they had been taken by the enemy. It seemed as if he had been pursuing a routed army. Ten thousand horses had been killed by the chilling rains of the great storm, and by eating the green corn which they had been unused to, but which alone could now be procured for them: they lay on the road, which they now impeded: their carcasses exhaled a mephitic odour that was insupportably offensive; it was a new plague, which some compared to famine; famine, however, was inexpressibly more terrible; many soldiers of the young guard had already died of hunger."

Napoleon had heard thus far with calmness, but at that passage he hastily interrupted the reader, and seemed desirous of escaping from his pain by incredulity. "It is impossible!" he cried. "Where are their twenty days' provisions? Soldiers well-officered never die of hunger."

A general, who was the author of this last report, being present, Napoleon turned round to him, and put a variety of pressing questions to him; and that officer, either through weakness of character or uncertainty,

replied that the unfortunate men had not died from hunger but intoxication.

The emperor then remained persuaded that the privations of his soldiers were exaggerated to him. With respect to other points, "We must bear," he said, "as well as we can the loss of a few horses, and a few equipments, and even the destruction of a few habitations; it is a passing and a momentary torrent; it is the unfavourable aspect of war; an evil leading to a good; misfortune must have her share in every thing; my riches and benefits will repair any losses; one grand result will compensate for all; I only want one victory; if I have enough remaining to obtain that, it is sufficient."

The duke remarked, that that might be attained by a more methodical march, attended by the magazines; but he was not listened to. Some to whom the marshal, who had come from Spain, complained of this neglect at the time, observed to him in reply, "that the emperor was, in fact, irritated by the recital of misfortunes which he considered irremediable, his policy absolutely requiring a success prompt and decisive."

They added, "that they clearly perceived the health of their leader was impaired; and that, in the mean time, compelled to throw himself into positions more and more critical, he could not without a degree of vexation and ill-humour, contemplate the difficulties which he too hastily evaded, and which he suffered to accumulate behind him: difficulties which he would at the moment cover with contempt or scorn, to disguise the importance of them, and in order himself to preserve that energy of mind necessary to surmount them. Uneasy and harassed by the new and very

critical situation into which he had just thrown himself, and impatient to escape from it, he incessantly proceeded with his march, pushing his army perpetually and impetuously forward, in order to have done with the crisis as soon as possible."

Thus Napoleon felt a sort of necessity for self-delusion. It is well-known that the greater part of his ministers were no flatterers. Facts and men both spoke. But what could they teach him? What was he ignorant of? Had not all his preparations been dictated by the clearest foresight? What could any one suggest to him that he had not himself said and even written times without number? It was after he had foreseen and provided for even the minutest details, after having prepared against every inconvenience, after having arranged every thing for a slow and systematic war, that he threw off all his precautions, abandoned all his preparations, and suffered himself to be carried away by the influence of habit, by the necessity of short wars, rapid victories, and sudden treaties.

CHAPTER V.

IN circumstances thus serious, Balachoff, a Russian and a minister of the emperor of Russia, presented himself with a flag of truce before the French outposts. He was received with due respect; and the army, whose ardour was already somewhat abated, hoped for peace.

He brought Napoleon a verbal communication from Alexander. "There was," said that emperor, "still time to treat. A war, which the soil, climate, and character of Russia would render interminable,

had begun; but reconciliation had not become impossible, and from one bank of the Niemen to the other they might still come to a mutual and good understanding." Balachoff added, "that his master declared solemnly before Europe that he was not the aggressor; that his ambassador at Paris, in demanding his passports, by no means meant to imply the rupture of peace, and that the French, therefore, had made their appearance in Russia without any declaration of war." No new propositions were communicated through this minister, whether written or verbal.

The choice of the individual selected for this mission had been remarked. He was the Russian minister of police. That office requires a talent for observation; and it was thought probable that he was come to exercise that talent upon us. That which excited the more distrust of the character of the negotiator was, that the negotiation itself appeared to have no character, unless indeed that of extreme moderation, which was then deemed nothing more than weakness.

Napoleon did not hesitate a moment. He had not been able to prevail upon himself to stop at Paris; could he recede at Wilna? What would Europe think then? What result could he have to present to the French and allied armies as an equivalent in return for such harassing fatigues, such mighty derangements, such national and individual expenditure? It would be confessing himself conquered. Besides, the language he had held to so many princes ever since his departure from Paris bound him as strongly as his actions; and he found himself as much compromised with his allies as with his enemies.

It is stated that, even at this period, he suffered himself to become heated in conversation with Balachoff,

and asked, "For what purpose had he come to Wilna? What was it the emperor of Russia wanted with him? Did he pretend to resist him? he was merely a parade general. With respect to himself, his own head was his counsellor; he took no advice but from that. But, as for Alexander, who is to advise him? Whom will he oppose to me? he has but three generals; Kuto-soff, whom he does not like because he is a Russian; Beningsen, who was too old six years ago, and is now in his dotage; and Barclay; the last can manoeuvre, is brave, and understands war; but he is merely a general for retreat." He added, "You all think you understand war because you have read Jomini; but, if his book could have taught it you, should I have permitted him to publish it?"

In that conversation, which the Russians reported as it is just given, it is certain that he added, "That Alexander had friends at the French imperial quarters." Then, pointing out Caulaincourt to the Russian minister, "There," says he, "is one of your imperial champions; he is a Russian in the French camp."

Caulaincourt probably, was not sufficiently aware that Napoleon was merely desirous, by this language respecting him, to prepare the way for his becoming an acceptable negotiator for him with Alexander. For, as soon as Balachoff was gone, he abruptly addressed the emperor, and inquired, in a tone of great irritation, why he had insulted him? He declared himself a Frenchman, and an honest and loyal Frenchman; that he had proved it before; that he would now prove it again, by repeating once more that the present war was both impolitic and dangerous; that it would destroy the army, France, and himself. That,

as to any thing further, since he had just been insulted by him, he resigned his situation about his person, and requested the command of a division in Spain, where none were eager to serve, and as far from his immediate presence as possible."

The emperor endeavoured to appease him, but, not being listened to, withdrew; while Caulaincourt followed him with his reproaches. Berthier, who was present at the scene, had interposed without success. Bessieres, who was farther behind, had in vain attempted to keep back Caulaincourt by laying hold of his clothes. On the ensuing day, nothing could effect the attendance of the grand-equerry upon Napoleon, but positive and reiterated orders. At length, however, the emperor soothed and calmed him by his caressing assiduities, and by the expression of that esteem and attachment which Caulaincourt justly deserved. He dismissed Balachoff with propositions merely verbal and inadmissible.

Alexander made no reply. The full importance of the step he had just taken had not been comprehended. It was not incumbent upon him again to apply to Napoleon, or even to answer him. It was, previous to a dreadful rupture, a last application; which gave it a solemn and momentous importance.

In the mean time, Murat was attempting to obtain that victory which was so much desired and wanted: he commanded the cavalry of the advanced-guard; and, having come up with the enemy on the road to Swentziani, drove him before him upon Druia. Every morning the Russian rear-guard seemed to have escaped him; every evening he had again discovered it, and attacked it, but in a strong position, after a long march, at too late an hour, and before his soldiers

could take any refreshment. There was a series of daily combats, but unattended with any important results.

Other commanders, through other routes, followed the same direction. Oudinot had passed the Vilia at Kowno, and, having reached Samogitia to the north of Wilna, at Deweltowo and at Vilkomir, had come up with the enemy, whom he drove before him towards Dunabourg. He was thus advancing, therefore, on the left of Ney and the king of Naples, whose right was flanked by Nansouty. On the 15th of July the Duna had been reached, from Disna to Dunabourg by Murat, Montbrun, Sebastiani, and Nansouty, by Oudinot and Ney, and by three divisions of the first corps which had been placed under the command of Count Lobaŭ.

It was Oudinot who presented himself before Dunabourg ; he made an attempt upon that place, which the Russians had uselessly exerted themselves to fortify. This rather eccentric march of the duke of Reggio displeased Napoleon. The river separated the two armies. Oudinot reascended it, to be near Murat ; and Wittgenstein, to unite with Barclay. Dunabourg remained unattacked and unprotected.

Wittgenstein, in the course of his march, perceived from the right bank of the river, that the town of Druia was occupied by an advanced guard of French cavalry, who appeared rather too confident in their security. As night was coming on, he conceived that there was great prospect of success from an attack upon them, and ordered one of his corps to pass the river ; and early in the morning of the 15th, the advanced posts of one of our brigades were surprised, and either cut to pieces or taken prisoners: after which Wittgenstein recalled his troops to the right

bank, and pursued his route with his prisoners, among whom was a French general. This *coup de main* gave Napoleon some hope of a battle; and, thinking Barclay seemed to be assuming the offensive, he suspended, for a few moments, his march upon Witepsk, in order to concentrate his troops, and arrange them as circumstances might require. His hope was of short continuance.

While these events were passing, Davoust, at Os-miana, to the south of Wilna, had observed some scouts of Bagration, who was already anxiously seeking for an outlet towards the north. Thus far, excepting as to the one grand and decisive battle which had been expected, the plan formed at Paris had succeeded. Aware that the enemy was extended to too long a line of defence, Napoleon had broken it by a violent attack on a single part, and had thus repulsed and pursued the largest mass of his force upon the Duna, while Bagration, against whom he had directed no attack till five days later, was still upon the Niemen. It was during many successive days, and over eighty leagues of front, that the same manœuvre which Frederic II. had often executed over a space of two leagues, and in the course of a few hours, was performed.

Already Doctorof, and many divisions of the hostile army, straying between one and the other of these two masses, had escaped falling into our hands, merely from the extent of country, from chance, and from all the various causes of that ignorance which ever exists in war, of what is going on among the enemy even in our own immediate neighbourhood.

Some have observed that there was in this first movement of invasion, too much either of circumspection or of negligence; that, from the Vistula, the invading army had been ordered to march with all the

precautions of an army exposed to attack ; that, after the aggression had commenced, and Alexander had fled, Napoleon's advanced guard ought to have re-ascended the two banks of the Vilia, more rapidly and farther than they actually did, and the army of Italy to have followed as closely as possible in their train. Perhaps, in that case, Doctorof, who commanded the left wing of Barclay, being forced to traverse our attack, in order to retreat from Lida to Swentziani, might have been taken prisoner. Pajol repulsed him at Osmiana, but he escaped by Smorgoni. He only lost his baggage ; and Napoleon ascribed no little blame to prince Eugene, although all the movements of the latter had been prescribed by himself.

But in a short time, the army of Italy, that of Bavaria, the first corps and the guard, occupied and surrounded Wilna. In that city, Napoleon stooping over his maps (which, on account of his short sight, wherein he resembled Alexander the Great, and Frederic II., he was obliged to have almost close to him), followed with his eager eye the Russian army. It was divided into two unequal masses, one with its emperor, near Drissa, the other with Bagration, still near Myr.

About eighty leagues in advance of Wilna, the Duna, and the Boristhenes, separate Lithuania from old Russia. At first these two rivers flow parallel to each other, from east to west, leaving a space between of about twenty-five leagues of very unequal ground, woody and swampy. From the interior of Russia, they thus reach its confines; when, as if by mutual concert, they deviate, one with a sharp and sudden turn towards Orcha to the south, the other near W.-tepsk towards the north-west. It is in this new direction that their course defines and constitutes the frontiers of Lithuania and old Russia.

The narrow interval which these rivers leave between them before they take a direction so opposite, seems to constitute the entrance, and as it were the gates of Muscovy. It is the point from which the roads diverge, which lead to the two capitals of that empire.

Upon this point the looks of Napoleon were intensely fixed. From the retreat of Alexander upon Drissa, he foresaw that which Bagration was about to attempt from Grodno towards Witepsk, through Osmana, Minsk, and Dockzitz, or through Borizof: he determined to oppose it, and immediately sent Davoust towards Minsk, between these two corps of the enemy, with two divisions of infantry, the cuirassiers of Valence, and several brigades of light cavalry.

While, on his right, the king of Westphalia should drive Bagration upon Davoust, who would cut him off from Alexander, oblige him to lay down his arms, and become master of the course of the Boristhenes; while, on his left, Murat, Oudinot, and Ney, already before Drissa, should keep Barclay and his emperor in check in front of them, he himself, with the *elite* of the army, the army of Italy, the Bavarian army, and three divisions detached from Davoust, would press on to Witepsk, between Davoust and Murat, in readiness to unite with either; thus dividing and placing himself between the two armies of the enemy, throwing himself not only between them but beyond them, in short keeping them in a state of complete separation, not merely by this intervening position of his own, but also by the uncertainty in which he should involve Alexander, with regard to which of his two capitals he should have to defend. The rest was to have depended upon circumstances.

Such was his plan on the 10th of July, at Wilna;

just such was it written down on that very day, under his dictation, and corrected by his own hand for one of his commanders, him who was to co-operate most effectively in the execution of it. The movement, already commenced, became immediately general.

CHAPTER VI.

THE king of Westphalia then crossed the Niemen, at Grodno, to repass it at Bielitza, in order to fall upon the right of Bagration, and effect his flight and rout.

That army, composed of Saxons, Westphalians, and Poles, had before it a general, and a country, not easy to be conquered. It was under the necessity of invading the vast and elevated flat of Lithuania, in which rivers have their source which pour their waters into the Black and Baltic Seas. But such is the general level of the country, that their current is extremely slow and heavy, and they frequently inundate the surrounding territory to a very considerable extent. Some narrow causeways have been raised on these woody and marshy plains, forming in them long defiles which Bagration easily defended against the king of Westphalia. The latter attacked him negligently and listlessly; his advanced guard alone engaged three times with the enemy at Nowogrodech, at Myr, and at Romanof. The first encounter was completely in favour of the Russians; in the two others, Latour-Maubourg remained master of a field of battle which had been both sanguinary and well contested.

Davoust, at the same time, having quitted Osmiana, extended his force towards Minsk and Vigumen, in

the rear of the Russian general, and possessed himself of the outlet of the defiles in which the king of Westphalia was compelling Bagration to involve himself.

Between that hostile general and his retreat, there is a river which originates in a pestilential marsh, and of which the uncertain, slow, and heavy course over a rotten soil, is perfectly suitable to its origin; its feculent waters flow south-easterly, and its name has a baleful celebrity, which it owes to our misfortunes.

The wooden bridges, and the long causeways, which, in order to make it practicable, it was requisite to throw over the marshes which bordered it, terminate in a town called Borizof, situated on its left bank, on the Russian side. That bank is in general of less depression than the right; a remark which applies to all the rivers which in that country flow in the direction of either pole towards the other, their eastern bank commanding their western, as Asia predominated over Europe.

This pass was of importance, and Davoust precluded Bagration from availing himself of it by taking possession of Minsk, on the 8th of July, as well as of all the country from the Vilia to the Berezina; accordingly, when that Russian prince, and his army, which Alexander summoned towards to the north, pushed on their piquets at first upon Lida, and then, successively, upon Ol ania, Vieznowo, Troki, Bolzoi, and Sobsnicki, they came into collision with Davoust, and were forced to fall back for support. They then, in a direction somewhat more in the rear and to the right, made a new attempt upon Minsk, but there again they found Davoust. A feeble platoon of that marshal's advanced guard entered by one gate, when the advanced guard of Bagration presented itself at

another; and the Russian again fell back to the south, upon his marshes.

On receiving this intelligence, and perceiving Bagration with forty thousand Russians cut off from communication with Alexander, and surrounded by two rivers and two armies, Napoleon exclaimed, "I have them!" In fact three marches would have placed Bagration in a complete and inextricable circle. But Napoleon, who afterwards imputed to Davoust the escape of the left wing of the Russians, through his having remained four days at Minsk, and subsequently with more justice to the king of Westphalia, had just placed that monarch under the command of the marshal. It was that change which, being made too late, and in the very midst of an operation, destroyed the whole effect of it.

The order for this change had arrived at the moment when Bagration, repulsed from Minsk, had no retreat left but by a long and narrow causeway, which was raised over the marshes of Nieswig, Shlutz, Glusck, and Bobruisk. Davoust wrote to the king to drive the Russians vigorously into that defile, the outlet of which he was himself going to Glusck to secure. Bagration would never have been able to extricate himself from it. But the king, already irritated by the reproaches which the hesitation and slowness of his first operations had drawn down upon him, could not endure a subject as a commander, and quitted his army without nominating any one to take his place, and even, if we may credit Davoust, without communicating the order he had just received to any one of his generals. He was permitted to withdraw into Westphalia, without his guard; which he accordingly did.

In the mean time, Davoust was vainly expecting

Bagration at Glusck. That general, not being sufficiently pressed by the Westphalian army, was enabled to take a new course to the south, to reach Bobruisk, cross the Berezina there, and gain the Boristhenes near Bickof. There, again, if the Westphalian army had possessed a commander, if that commander had pressed the Russians more closely, if he had occupied his place at Bickof when the Russian commander stumbled at Mohilef against Davoust, it is certain that Bagration, finding himself between the Westphalians, Davoust, the Boristhenes and the Berezina, would have been compelled either to conquer or surrender. For we have seen that the Russian prince could have passed the Berezina only at Bobruisk, or have reached the Boristhenes only near Novoi-Bickof, forty leagues to the south of Orcha, and sixty leagues from Witepsk, which was his destination.

Being thrown thus far out of his proper direction, he hastened to regain it by passing up the Boristhenes as far as Mohilef. But he there again found Davoust, who, as at Lida, had preceded him, having passed the Berezina at the very point where it had been crossed by Charles XII.

The marshal, however, did not expect the Russian prince on the road to Mohilef. He concluded that he was already on the left bank of the Boristhenes. Their mutual surprise turned at first to the advantage of Bagration, who took from him a whole regiment of light cavalry. Bagration had at this time thirty-five thousand men; Davoust twelve thousand. On the 23d of July, the latter selected an elevated spot of ground defended by a ravine, and confined between two woods. The Russians had no room to spread themselves on so narrow a field of battle; but they nevertheless accepted it. Their numbers were in such

circumstances useless; they attacked like men sure to conquer. They did not even appear to think of availing themselves of the woods in order to turn Davoust's right.

The Russians engaged on that occasion stated, that, in the heat of the engagement, terror at finding themselves, as they supposed, in the presence of Napoleon had had a great effect upon them: for each of the enemy's generals thought him present in the battle, Bagration at Mohilef and Barclay at Drissa. He was supposed to be seen everywhere at once. Thus does the renown of a man of genius amplify him, occupy the world with his energies, and almost change him into a supernatural being, by exciting the belief of his presence in every place, and upon all occasions.

That conflict was violent and obstinate on the part of the Russians, but without skill and combination; and Bagration, severely beaten, was obliged once more to turn back. He went to pass the Boristhenes at at Novoi-Bickof, whence he withdrew into the interior of Russia, to unite, at length, with Barclay beyond Smolensk.

Napoleon scorned to attribute the disappointment he experienced in the escape of the enemy to the talent of the hostile general: he blamed those of his own army. Already he found that his presence was requisite in every part, which rendered it in every part impossible. The circle of his operations was so greatly enlarged, that, compelled to remain in the centre, he was wanted at every point of the circumference. His generals harassed like himself, too independent of one another, too far separated from, and at the same time too dependent upon him, dared less than they would have done in other circumstances, and frequently lost valuable time and opportunity in waiting for his

orders. His influence in so extensive a scene of action became enfeebled. So vast a body required a soul of proportional magnitude; his own, with all its distinguished and superior powers, was insufficient.

At length, however, on the 16th of July, the whole army was in motion. While every thing was thus exhibiting haste and effort, he was still at Wilna, which he ordered to be fortified. He commanded the levy of eleven Lithuanian regiments. He appointed the duke of Bassano to the government of Lithuania, and to be the centre of communication, administrative, political, and even military, between him, Europe, and the generals commanding those *corps d'armée* which were not destined to follow him to Moscow.

This apparent inaction of Napoleon at Wilna lasted twenty days. Some concluded that, being there in the centre of his operations with a strong reserve, he awaited the event, ready to fly to the assistance either of Davoust, Murat, or Macdonald; others thought that the organization of Lithuania and the politics of Europe, which were more accessible to him at Wilna, retained him in that city, or that he did not foresee any obstacles worthy of his presence before the Duna was reached, in which he was not mistaken, but which somewhat too highly elated and flattered him. The precipitate evacuation of Lithuania by the Russians seemed to dazzle his understanding. Europe was enabled to form a judgment on this subject. His bulletins repeated his words.

“Behold, then, this same empire of Russia, at a distance so formidable! It is a desert, in which its scattered hordes are insufficient for protection; they will be conquered by that very extent which ought to be their safeguard. They are barbarians! They scarcely have even arms! They have no recruits in readiness. It

would require more time to collect them than he should take in going to Moscow. It is true that since the passage of the Niemen, the unsheltered and unsheltering waste had been either inundated or parched up, but such calamities are less an obstacle to the rapidity of our invasion, than an impediment to the Russians in their flight; they are conquered without battles by their own mere weakness, by the remembrance of our victories, and by the pangs of remorse which urge them to restore that Lithuania, which they obtained neither by peace nor war, but by perfidy alone."

To these reasons for the perhaps too protracted stay of Napoleon at Wilna, those who were most about his person added one more. They whispered to each other "that his genius, so wonderful in extent, and so constantly advancing in the activity and daring of its views, was now no longer seconded as formerly by a vigorous constitution. They were surprised to find their leader no longer insensible to the temperature of a burning climate: and they noticed to each other with regret, the tendency to corpulence recently manifested in his figure, as an indication of premature debility."

Some attributed pernicious effects to his frequent use of the baths. They little knew that far from indulging in this instance in a habit of luxury, these were of indispensable relief to him under a complaint* of a serious and very painful character, which his policy carefully concealed, lest it should excite or increase the unfeeling hopes of his enemies.

Such is the inevitable and malignant influence of the minutest causes upon the destiny of nations. We shall soon see, when the most profound combinations which were intended and calculated to ensure the

* Dysury.

success of the most daring enterprise ; and, perhaps, an enterprise of the highest benefit to Europe, come to be developed, how at the decisive moment, in the plains of Mosqua, nature paralysed genius, and the man was wanting to the hero. The numerous battalions of Russia were unable to defend her : a day of storm, a sudden fever, were her preservation.

It will be proper and useful to recal to mind this observation, when, on reading the description which I shall find myself compelled to give of the battle of Mosqua, the reader will find me repeating all the complaints and even reproaches which an unusual languor and inaction extorted from the most devoted friends, and ardent and steady admirers of this great man. The greater part of them, like those who have since given a history of that day, knew nothing of the physical sufferings of a leader, who in the midst of his humiliation struggled hard to conceal its cause. That which was above all things a misfortune, these witnesses have denominated a fault.

Moreover, at the distance of eight hundred leagues from their country, and after such dreadful fatigues and sacrifices, at the moment when men perceive the hope of victory vanish, and a futurity of horror opening to their view, they too naturally become severe in their judgments, and suffer too deeply to be strictly just.

For my own part, I will not suppress what I have seen, convinced as I am, that of all species of homage, that of truth is alone worthy of a great man, of that illustrious captain who constituted a prodigious part of every thing, even of his own reverses ; of that man who raised himself to so high an elevation, that posterity will with difficulty detect the spots thinly scattered on such overpowering splendour.

CHAPTER VII.

IN the mean time he was informed that his orders had been executed, and his army united, and that a battle required him in the field. He, therefore, at length, on the 16th of July, left Wilna at half-past eleven in the evening. He stopped at Swentziani during the extreme heat of the day on the 17th; and on the 18th arrived at Klubokoe: he there took up his abode in a monastery, from which the small town immediately under its view and protection appeared to him more like a collection of huts of savages than the habitations of civilized Europeans.

An address from the Russians to the French had been just circulated in his army. It contained a great deal of empty abuse, worked up with an ineffective and clumsy invitation to desertion. He was much irritated on reading it, and in great agitation dictated a reply, which, however, he immediately tore to pieces: he dictated a second, which experienced the same fate; and at last a third, with which he was satisfied. This was the paper which was published at the time in the journals under the signature of a French Grenadier. He was in the habit of thus dictating even the most unimportant letters that were despatched from his cabinet or his staff. His ministers, and Berthier, were incessantly thus reduced to be mere secretaries. Although his body was languid, his mind continued in full activity; a perfect and healthful sympathy between them was now wanting, which was one cause of the misfortunes that soon befel us.

While he was engaged about this answer, he was apprized that, on the 18th, Barclay had abandoned his camp at Drissa, and was marching towards Witepsk.

That movement disclosed much to him. Withheld by the check which Sebastiani had received near Druia, and still more by the heavy rains and the dreadful state of the roads, he at length had discovered, although perhaps too late, that the occupation of Witepsk was of the most pressing and decisive urgency, and that the station, by its locality, was eminently aggressive, considered merely as separating the two rivers and two hostile armies. From this position he would have it in his power to turn the incomplete and disunited army of his rival, to cut off his communication with the south of his empire, and effectually to crush his weakness by his own massive and irresistible strength. Moreover, if Barclay should have reached that capital before him, he would unquestionably undertake to defend it, so that there, perhaps, he might well expect to find that victory which had just escaped him on the Vilia.

He immediately directed all his corps upon Beszenkowiczi; he ordered Murat and Ney to that place from the neighbourhood of Polotsk, where they then were, and where he left Oudinot. He proceeded himself from Klubocoe, where he had been surrounded by his guard, the army of Italy, and three divisions detached from Davoust, to Kamen, in a carriage, but after night, being obliged to travel in that way, and probably wishing at the same time to conceal from his soldiers the incapacity of their commander any longer to participate in all their fatigues.

Thus far the greater part of the army had gone on marching in astonishment at not finding any enemies. They became, however, at length, habituated to it. During the day their attention was engaged by the novelty of the places through which they passed, and more still by their eagerness to reach their destina-

sion : when night came on, they were fully occupied in selecting or fabricating places of shelter and repose, and in finding and cooking food. So various and so harassing were their cares, that they appeared less like an army of warriors than like men pursuing amidst many privations a comfortless and embarrassing journey. But if war and the enemy should thus persevere in retreating from them, how far should they advance in the pursuit? At length on the 25th a cannonading was heard; and the army as well as the Emperor hoped for a victory and peace.

The sound came from the quarter of Beszenkowiczi. Prince Eugene had just encountered Doctorof, who commanded the rear-guard of Barclay. While following Barclay from Polotsk to Witepsk he had cleared his passage on the left bank of the Duna to Beszenkowiczi, on withdrawing from which he burnt the bridge. The viceroy, on taking possession of the place, was within view of the Duna, and restored the passage over it; this was feebly resisted by a few troops who had been left in observation on the other bank. Napoleon hastened to the spot, and for the first time beheld that river, his new conquest. He very justly and somewhat pointedly censured the vicious construction of the bridge, which gave him the command of the two banks.

He then passed over the bridge; not however from any puerile vanity, but from his eagerness to discover from his own observation what progress the Russian army had made in its march from Dryssa to Witepsk, and ascertain whether he could advantageously attack it on its passage, or could enter that city before it. But the direction taken by the enemy's rear-guard, and the answers received from some prisoners, convinced him that Barclay had outstripped him, that he had

left Wittgenstein in front of Oudinot, and that the Russian general-in-chief was at Witepsk. Already, in fact, he was prepared to dispute with Napoleon the defiles which cover that capital.

Napoleon, having observed nothing on the right bank of the river but a remnant of the rear-guard, entered Beszenkowiczi. His armies arrived there at the same moment by the north and west roads. His orders of march had been executed with such complete precision, that all these corps, after leaving the Niemen at different periods and by different routes, notwithstanding every species of impediment, after a separation of a month's continuance, and after traversing a hundred leagues from the point of their departure, were all completely re-united at Beszenkowiczi, where they arrived on the same day, and at the same hour.

In consequence, however, it may be said, of this regularity, the greatest disorder now prevailed in that place. Numerous columns of cavalry, infantry, and artillery presented themselves on every side; they disputed with each other the priority of passage; all were irritated by fatigue and hunger, and all were eager to reach their destination.

The streets were at the same time obstructed by crowds of orderlies, staff-officers, valets, and saddle and baggage horses. Multitudes were hastening forward and backward through the city, some in search of victuals, others of forage, and others still of lodging; crossing and jostling against each other every instant; the rush into the place was perpetually increasing, and it soon became a complete chaos.

Aides-de-camp, bearing the most important and urgent orders, vainly struggled to open for themselves a passage; the soldiers were deaf to their re-

presentations, and even to their commands; quarrels broke out every moment and in every part, the clamors of which were mingled with the beating of drums, the swearing of drivers, the sounds of tumbrils and cannon, the orders of officers, and with the sounds of contention even within the houses themselves, some endeavouring to force an entry, while those already in possession stood firmly on their defence.

At length, before midnight, all these masses which had appeared inextricably intermingled gradually cleared away; the vast collection of troops flowed off towards Ostrowno, or was absorbed in Beszenkowiczi; and the most frightful tumult was succeeded by the profoundest silence.

This union of forces, the multiplied orders which arrived from every part, the rapidity with which all the corps were pushed forward even during the night, all announced a battle on the ensuing day. In fact, Napoleon, not having been able to gain Witepsk before the Russians, was resolved to expel them from it; but they, after entering it by the right bank of the Duna, had passed through the city, and presented themselves in front of him to defend the long defiles by which it is covered.

On the 25th of July, Murat marched towards Ostrowno, with his cavalry. At the distance of two leagues from that village, Domon, de Coëtlosquet, Carignan, and the 8th hussars, were advancing in column on a wide road, distinguished by a double row of large birch trees. These hussars had nearly reached the top of a hill, on which they could just distinguish only a very weak portion of a corps composed in reality of three regiments of cavalry of the Russian guard, and of six pieces of cannon. Not a single rifleman covered this line.

The commanders of the 8th thought they had been preceded by two regiments of their division, who passed through the fields on the right and left of the road, and who were concealed from their view by the trees with which the road was lined. But these corps had halted, and the 8th which had already advanced considerably beyond them, still moved forward at the same rate as before, fully persuaded that the troops they saw through the foliage of the trees, at about a hundred and fifty paces in front, were the two regiments, which, without being in the slightest degree aware of it, they had in fact left a good way behind.

The immobility of the Russians was a circumstance which completed the delusion of the commanders of the 8th. The order to charge appearing to them to be a serious mistake, they despatched an officer to reconnoitre the force in front of them, still moving forward without any suspicion. In an instant, however, they observed their officer sabred, thrown down, and taken prisoner, and the cannon of the enemy mowing down their hussars. They no longer hesitated a moment, and without losing time in extending their force under so destructive a fire, they darted between the trees and ran forward to extinguish it at once. With a single effort they took almost instant possession of the cannon, drove back the regiment, which was the centre of the enemy's line, and completely overwhelmed it by the impetuosity of their attack. Under the impulse of this first success, they perceived the Russian regiment of the right, which they had just outstripped, motionless through absolute astonishment; they attacked them on their return, and completely defeated them. In the midst of this second victory they observed the third regiment, constituting

the enemy's left, evidently disconcerted, dismayed, and endeavouring to retreat; and in a moment wheeling round upon these, and collecting all that they could at such a crisis add to their strength, they vigorously attacked this third enemy in the midst of their intended operation, and were once more successful, and dispersed them.

Inspired by this success, Murat pushed into the woods of Ostrowno in search of the enemy, who seemed to be concealed there. That prince endeavoured to penetrate even into their recesses, but was then checked by a formidable resistance.

The position of Ostrowno was well chosen. It was commanding. It was a place for observing without being observed. It intersected a high road, had the Duna on its right, a ravine in front, and thick woods on its surface and on its left. It was moreover within reach of the magazines; it covered them as well as Witepsk, the capital of those countries. Ostermann was hastening to defend it.

On his part, Murat, equally reckless of his life since he had become a victorious monarch as he had ever been while an obscure soldier in the ranks, persisted in his attack upon these woods, notwithstanding the heavy firing that proceeded from them. But he found that it was no longer a case of sudden sally and surprise. The ground hastily conquered by the 8th was now fiercely contested with himself: and his advance-column composed of the divisions Bruyeres, and Saint Germain, and the 8th regiment of infantry, were obliged to defend themselves upon it against an army.

They defended themselves according to the well-known practice of conquerors, by attacking. Every corps of the enemy that presented itself on our flanks as an assailant was assailed in its turn; the cavalry

were trodden back into the woods, and the infantry discomfited by the blows of the sabre. However, they were becoming fatigued and weakened by conquering, when the division Delzons came up to their assistance. The king used it with great promptitude on the right, to harass the retreat of the enemy, who became extremely annoyed in consequence, and was no longer inclined to dispute the victory.

These defiles extend for several leagues. On that same evening, the viceroy rejoined Murat, and on the following day they saw the Russians in a new position. Pahlin and Konownitzin had united with Ostermann. After having repressed the left of the Russians, the two French princes were actually indicating to the troops of their right wing, the position which they were to consider as their *point d'appui* for attacking, when on a sudden an immense clamour was raised on their left: they turned their eyes towards the spot, and observed the cavalry and infantry of that wing make two separate attacks on the enemy, by whom each time they were decidedly repulsed, and beheld the Russians issuing with the utmost intrepidity, and in large masses, out of their woods in the midst of those deafening war-cries which had first drawn their attention. The ardour and audacity of attack were now with them, and with the French all the uncertainty and consternation of defence.

A battalion of Croats and the 84th regiment attempted in vain to resist the torrent: their line constantly diminished; the ground in front was strewed with their slain; behind, the plain was covered with their wounded withdrawing from the conflict, with those who were supporting them to a place of safety, and with many who successively quitted their ranks under pretext of being themselves wounded, or of support-

ing such as were; accordingly a rout soon followed. Already were the artillery, who are always select men, seeing themselves no longer relieved or in hope of being so, retreating with their cannon; within a few moments more, the troops of different descriptions, flying towards one defile, would actually have struggled and fought with each other for priority of entrance into it; hence arose a confusion in which the exhortations, commands, or exertions of the officers could be of no avail, and all the elements of resistance became utterly useless.

It is stated that, at this important moment, Murat, in a state of high agitation, suddenly placed himself at the head of a regiment of Polish lancers, and that these men, stimulated by the presence of a king, animated by his language, and above all roused even to rage by the sight of the Russians, followed his lead with one unanimous and energetic rush. Murat's object had been merely to excite and animate them, and then launch them in spirits and confidence against the enemy: it was neither suitable nor convenient for him to mingle in the torrent, which must prevent his seeing what occurred, and disqualify him for the command: but the Polish lances were in their rests and closely filed behind him; they occupied the whole width of the ground; they pushed him onward with the utmost speed of their horses. He could neither deviate on one side, nor stop in front; he was thus absolutely compelled to charge with the regiment before which he had placed himself merely to harangue it, and he did it with a truly admirable grace.

At the same time, general d'Anthouard ran towards his cannoneers, and general Girardin to the 106th regiment, whom he stopped, rallied, and led back against the Russian right wing, forcing it to abandon

at once its position, two pieces of cannon, and victory. On his side, general Piré attacked and turned the enemy on the left; they retrieved the fortune of the field, and the Russians fell back upon their forests.

However, on their left, they persevered in defending a thick wood, the advanced position of which broke our line. The 92d regiment, confounded by the firing that proceeded from it, and stunned by a shower of balls, remained motionless, neither venturing to advance nor retreat, restrained by the two opposite fears of shame and of danger, and avoiding neither the one nor the other: but general Belliard, who soon followed general Roussel, hastened to encourage them by his exhortations and example; and the wood was carried.

In consequence of this success, a strong column, which had advanced for the purpose of turning our right, became turned itself. Murat instantly perceived this, and sword in hand, exclaimed, "Let those who are bravest follow me." But the ground was furrowed by ravines which protected the retreat of the Russians, and they all proceeded to plunge into a forest two leagues in depth, which constituted the last curtain that concealed Witepsk from our view.

After so smart a conflict, the king of Naples and the viceroy were hesitating about trusting themselves on ground so well protected, when the emperor himself arrived. They hastened to receive him, and informed him in few words of what had just been done, and what still remained undone. Napoleon instantly went to the highest point of ground and the nearest to the enemy; and from that spot his comprehensive and ardent genius, levelling all the obstacles in its way, soon pierced both the shades of the forests and the depth of the mountains; he gave his orders without the slightest hesitation, and these same woods which

had arrested the audacity of the two impetuous princes were traversed from one extremity to the other. In short, on that very evening, from the top of her double hill, Witepsk might see our riflemen debouche into the plain by which it is surrounded.

Here every thing induced, or rather obliged, the emperor to halt. Night, the multitude of the enemy's, fires which covered the plain, the unknown nature of the ground, which was necessarily to be reconnoitred in order to direct the several divisions over it, and above all the time required for the extrication of such an immense mass of military from the long and narrow defile in which they were now involved. A halt was therefore ordered to recover breath, to reconnoitre, to rally, to refresh, and to enable the soldiers to prepare their arms for the ensuing day. Napoleon slept in his tent, on a spot of rising ground to the left of the high road, and behind the village of Kukowiaczi.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON the 27th, the emperor appeared at the advanced posts before day-break. Its earliest rays showed him, at last, the Russian army encamped on an elevated plain which commanded all the avenues of Witepsk. The river Luczissa, flowing in a channel of extraordinary depth, marked the foot of this position. In front of it, ten thousand cavalry and a body of infantry showed an apparent intention of defending its approaches: the infantry was in the centre on the high road; its left on woody eminences; and the whole of the cavalry on the right, in double line, supported by the Duna.

The front of the Russians was no longer directly opposed to our column, but on our left. It had changed its direction in conformity to the course of the river, a bend in which carried it to a greater distance from us; it became necessary, therefore, that the French columns, after having passed on a very narrow bridge over a ravine which separated it from this new field of battle, should deploy by a change of front to the left, with the right wing forward, in order to preserve the support of the river on that side, and be directly face to face with the enemy. Already an insulated hill on the banks of the ravine, near the bridge and to the left of the high road, had attracted the emperor's notice. Thence he could survey both armies, placed, like seconds in a duel, on the side of the field of battle.

The first who debouched were two hundred Parisian *voltigeurs*, belonging to the 9th regiment of the line: they were immediately ranged on the left, in front of the whole Russian cavalry, supporting themselves like that upon the Duna, and indicating the left of the new line. The 16th regiment of horse-chasseurs came next, and then some light pieces of artillery. The Russians looked on with great coolness, while we defiled before them, and prepared our attack.

This inaction on their part was a favourable circumstance for us. But the king of Naples, intoxicated at the view of so immense an assemblage of spectators, and following the natural impetuosity of his temperament, precipitated the chasseurs of the 16th on the whole of the Russian cavalry. At that moment it was absolutely dreadful to see this feeble French line, broken in its march over ground intersected by deep ravines, thus advancing against the vast masses of the enemy. The unfortunate men, perceiving themselves

thus made absolute victims, proceeded with hesitation to a destruction apparently inevitable. Accordingly, at the first movement made by the lancers of the Russian guard, they turned their backs; but the ravines which had interrupted their advance, now impeded their flight. The enemy soon came up with them, and drove them into those narrow gulphs, where many of them perished.

Murat, agitated and distressed beyond expression at perceiving this result, threw himself sword in hand into the very midst of this rout and confusion, with the sixty officers and cavalry by whom he was surrounded. His audacity confounded the Russian lancers, who immediately halted. While the prince was thus actively engaged, and the orderly who attended him saved his life by cutting down the arm of an enemy who aimed a fatal blow at his head, the remains of the 16th rallied, and hastened for refuge towards the 53d regiment, by whom they were protected.

This successful charge of the lancers of the Russian guard had led them on nearly to the foot of the hill, whence Napoleon was giving their direction to the different corps of his army. Some chasseurs of the French guard had just dismounted, according to custom, to form a circle around him, and by discharges of their carbines they drove back the enemy's lancers, who on their return to their main body fell in with the two hundred Parisian *Voltigeurs* whom the flight of the 16th horse-chasseurs had left alone between the two armies. They attacked them, and every eye was attracted to the conflict.

On both sides the infantry thus engaged were considered as inevitably lost. But, although alone, they had themselves no feeling of despair. Their com-

manders in the first place conducted them, desperately fighting all the while, to a spot of ground interspersed with thickets and deep gaps, which bordered the Duna: all were formed in an instant on this ground, in consequence of their prompt tact at warlike manœuvres, of the necessity they felt for supporting each other, and of a just sense of the urgency of the danger. Then, as is ever the case when great perils are impending over bodies of men, they surveyed each other with searching and eagle glances, the young looking intently at their senior comrades, all directing their investigating gaze to their officers, and endeavouring to read in their countenances what they had to hope, to fear, or to perform. They saw reflected one general feeling of confidence; and, all perceiving that they could depend on one another, each consequently felt more dependance on himself.

The ground was selected and managed with judgment. The Russian lancers embarrassed by the brambles and brushwood, and impeded by the many refts and openings in the field, stretched out their long lances for destruction in vain; while they were endeavouring to surmount these obstacles, they were struck by our bullets, and fell wounded to the earth; their own and their horses' bodies then increasing the obstacles originally presented by the nature of the ground. At length they were repulsed; their flight, the applauding shouts of our army, the *insignia* of the order of honour which the emperor instantly despatched for the most distinguished in the contest, the words he employed on the occasion which have been read by the whole of Europe, every thing contributed to show these valiant troops the glory with which they had covered themselves; glory, however, which they seemed themselves to estimate at first far more lightly

than any others, as noble achievements always appear simple end easy to those in the habit of performing them. They had considered themselves on the very point of being killed or taken, and almost at the same instant felt victorious and rewarded.

In the mean time the army of Italy, and the cavalry of Murat, followed by three divisions of the first corps, which had been confided, from the time of quitting Wilna, to Count Lobau, attacked the high road and the woods which supported the enemy's left. The action was at first sharp, but was soon abruptly terminated. The Russian advanced guard withdrew precipitately behind the ravine of the Luczissa to avoid being driven into it. The enemy's army was then united on the opposite bank, presenting a force of eighty thousand men.

Their assured and even audacious aspect, in a strong position, and in front of a capital, deceived Napoleon. He imagined that they would make a point of honour of standing on their defence. It was not later than eleven o'clock. He put an end to the attack, that he might be able quietly to survey the whole front of the line, and prepare for a decisive conflict on the following day. At first he went and stationed himself on a hillock among the riflemen, in the midst of whom he breakfasted. Hence he made his observations on the enemy, one of whose balls wounded an individual in his suite who was very near his person. The succeeding hours of the day were occupied in reconnoitring the ground, and in waiting for the other corps to arrive.

Napoleon announced a battle for the ensuing day. His adieu to Murat was in these words, "To-morrow at five, you will see the sun of Austerlitz." They explain the cause of his suspending hostilities in the

middle of the day, and even in the midst of a success which had produced in his troops animation and confidence. The army were perfectly astonished at this inactivity, at the very moment they had got up with an enemy, by whose continued flight they had been so dreadfully exhausted. Murat, who had been so long from day to day disappointed in the same hopes as were now indulged by the emperor, observed to him that Barclay presented the appearance of such audacity then, merely with a view to accomplish his retreat quietly during the night. Being unable, however, to convince the emperor of this, he rashly proceeded to fix his tent on the bank of the Luczissa, nearly in the very midst of the enemy. This position suited his eager curiosity to catch the first sounds of their retreat, his hopes of harassing it, and his adventurous and romantic character.

Murat was right as to the event, but wrong in concluding that it would take place; Napoleon was right in his conclusion, but wrong in the event. Such are the caprices of fortune. The emperor of the French had correctly developed the intentions of Barclay. The Russian general believing Bagration near Orcha, had made up his mind to a battle, in order to give that prince time to come up with him: and his determination was changed solely in consequence of his receiving in the course of the night intelligence of the retreat of Bagration towards Smolensk.

In fact, on the 28th at daybreak, Murat sent to inform the emperor, that he was going in pursuit of the Russians, who were no longer within sight; Napoleon persevered in his opinion, insisting that the whole Russian army remained in the same situation, and that it was necessary to advance with caution. This occasioned the loss of time. At length he

mounted his horse. Every step now served to dissipate the illusion; and he soon found himself in the midst of the camp which Barclay had abandoned.

Every thing in this camp bore testimony to the commander's science of war; its admirable position, the symmetry of all its parts, the consummate precision with which they were exclusively adapted to their respective destinations, and the order and neatness resulting from such arrangement; with regard to other points, nothing had been forgotten and left behind, not a single weapon or utensil; in short, no one thing or circumstance could be observed by which, even in a march thus sudden and at night, the track followed by the Russians after quitting their camp could be at all indicated. There appeared to be more order in their defeat than in our victory! Conquered as they were, they left us in their flight some valuable lessons, of which conquerors, however, never avail themselves; whether it be that success despises them, or that misfortune is the only medium of reformation.

The capture of a Russian soldier, who was asleep in a thicket, was the only result of the day which was expected to be so decisive and brilliant. The army entered Witepsk, and found it as deserted as the Russian camp. No persons were to be seen there but a few dirty Jews and Jesuits. These men were interrogated, but completely in vain. All the roads were tried, but without effect. Were the Russians gone in the direction of Smolensk? Had they re-ascended the Duna? At last, a band of marauding cossacks determined us to take the last direction, while Ney examined the first. We proceeded for six leagues through a deep sand, amidst clouds of dust, and under a suffocating heat; night put an end to our progress in the neighbourhood of Aghaponovchtchina. . .

The army, burning as it was with thirst, and exhausted by fatigue and hunger, on reaching this place, could obtain nothing but muddy water; and, while they were employed in procuring it, Napoleon, the king of Naples, the viceroy, and the prince of Neufchâtel, held a council under the imperial tents, which were raised in the court of a chateau on a spot of elevated ground to the left of the high road.

“ Thus, then, had the victory so ardently desired, so actively pursued, and which it became every day more essential to obtain, once again, as at Wilna, slipped through their hands! They had, indeed, had an action with the Russian rear-guard; but was it the rear-guard of their main army? Was it not more probable that Barclay had fled to Smolensk by the way of Rudnia? How far then would it be necessary to pursue the Russians, in order to bring them to an engagement? Surely the necessity for organizing reconquered Lithuania, for forming magazines and hospitals, for establishing a new point of repose, of defence, and of departure for a line of operation so fearfully extended, every thing, in fact, pointed out the propriety of halting on the confines of Old Russia.”

A skirmishing was now observed to take place not far from this spot, at which Murat instantly paused. Our advanced-guard had been defeated: some of the horsemen had been obliged to dismount and continue their retreat on foot, and others had not been able to conduct back their extenuated horses from the contest but by dragging them on by the bridle. The emperor then questioned general Belliard, who frankly declared that the regiments were already greatly enfeebled, that they were dreadfully harassed, and absolutely required rest; that, after six days' marches more, he

would have no cavalry left, and that it was time to halt.

To these observations was added the influence of a burning sun, reflected from a dazzling sand. The emperor, excessively fatigued, made up his mind in conformity to these suggestions. The course of the Duna and that of the Boristhenes defined the French line. The army was cantoned on the banks of these two rivers, and the space between them, in the following order: Poniatowski and his Poles at Mohilef; Davoust and the first corps at Orcha, Dubrowna, and Lucbowicze: Murat, Ney, the army of Italy, and the guard, from Orcha and Dubrowna as far as Witepsk and Suraij. The advanced posts at Lyadi, Inkowo, and Velij, having in front of them those of Barclay and Bagration; for these two armies of the enemy, one after flying from Napoleon across the Duna, by Drissa and Witepsk, the other after escaping from Davoust across the Berezina and the Boristhenes by Bobruisk, Bickof, and Smolensk, had at length effected a reunion on the spot between those two rivers.

The grand corps detached from the central army were, at that time, stationed in the following manner: on the right Dombrowski before Bobruisk, and in front of the corps of twelve thousand men under the Russian general Hoertel.

On the left, the duke of Reggio and Saint-Cyr, at Polotsk and at Bialoe, on the road to Petersburg, which was defended by Wittgenstein and thirty thousand men.

On the extreme left, Macdonald and thirty-eight thousand Prussians and Poles in front of Riga. They extended themselves to the right upon the Aa and towards Dunabourg.

At the same time, Schwartzenberg and Regnier, at the head of Saxon and Austrian corps, occupied towards Slonim the space between the Niemen and the Bug, covering Warsaw and the rear of the grand army, which Tormasof kept in some uneasiness and alarm. The duke of Belluno was advancing from the Vistula with a reserve of forty thousand men; and finally, Augereau was collecting an eleventh army at Stettin.

With respect to Wilna, the duke of Bassano remained in that city surrounded by the envoys of various courts. That minister governed Lithuania, corresponded with all the principal commanders, despatched to them the instructions which he received from Napoleon, and pushed forward the provisions, recruits, and stragglers, as fast as they arrived.

As soon as the emperor had formed his resolution, he returned to Witepsk, with his guards. On entering his imperial quarters in that city on the 28th of July, he took off his sword, and laying it down upon the maps with which his tables were covered, "Here," he exclaimed, "I halt. I want to reconnoitre, to rally, to rest my army, and to organize Poland. The campaign of 1812 is over! that of 1813 will do the rest."

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

By the conquest of Lithuania the ostensible object of the war was attained, yet hostilities hardly appeared to have begun. We had conquered places, but not men. The Russian army was still entire; the two wings, which had been separated by the impetuosity of our first attack, had just been reunited. It was the finest season of the year. In this posture of affairs, Napoleon persuaded himself that he had formed an irrevocable determination to halt on the banks of the Duna and the Boristhenes.

It was the more easy for him at this time to deceive others as to his designs, since he had deceived himself. His line of defence was already traced on the maps, his battering train was marching upon Riga. The left of the army was to be supported by that strong place. At Dunaburg, and Polotsk, it was to maintain a menacing and defensive posture. Witepsk, so easily fortified, and its woody heights, were to serve as an entrenched camp for the centre. From thence to the South, the Berezina and its marshes, covered by the Boristhenes, are only passable through some few defiles, so that a small number of troops would be sufficient for their defence. Further on, Bobruisk marks the right of this great line, and an order was accordingly given to take possession of that fortress. Besides this, he relied upon an insurrection of the

populous provinces of the South. They were to assist Schwartzenberg in driving out Tormasof, and the army was to be increased by their numerous Cossacks. One of the largest land-owners of these provinces, a noble in whom every thing, even his person and countenance, bore an appearance of distinction, had hastened to join the liberators of his country. The emperor marked him out to head this insurrection.

In this position nothing was to be deficient. Courland was to support Macdonald; Samogetia, Oudinot. The fertile plains of Klubokoe were to furnish supplies for the emperor; whilst the provinces of the South were to provide for the rest. In addition to these resources, the grand magazine of the army was at Dantzic; and its great entrepôts at Wilna and Minsk. In this manner the army would be established in the country which it had just traversed; and upon that country the river, the marshes, the productions, the inhabitants, every thing would unite with us, and would co-operate for the common defence.

Such was Napoleon's plan. Accordingly we now saw him examining Witepsk, and its environs, as if he were reconnoitring a place in which he intended to reside for a considerable time. Establishments of all kinds were formed. Thirty-six ovens were constructed, in which twenty-nine thousand pounds of bread were baked at a time. He did not confine himself to what was useful, he wanted even embellishments. Some houses of stone deformed the square of the palace! these the emperor commanded his guard to remove. He already began to contrive amusements for the winter. Actors were to come from Paris to Witepsk: and, as that town was deserted, the female part of the audience was to be attracted from Warsaw and Wilna.

His star now enlightened his path, and happy would it have been for him if he had not afterwards mistaken the restlessness of an impatient temper for the inspiration of his genius. Whatever may have been said to the contrary, he was never led away by others. In him, all proceeded from himself; he was not to be seduced from what his own judgment dictated. In vain did one of his Marshals predict the rising of the Russians, on reading the proclamations which the officers of his advanced-guard were ordered to distribute. This general had been intoxicated by the inconsiderate promises of some Polish officers; promises dictated by that delusive hope common to all exiles, with which they mislead the commanders who trust to their representations.

But of all those who tried to excite him to change his determination, Murat was the most vehement and persevering. That king, weary of repose, insatiable of glory, could not control his impatience to reach an enemy whom he knew to be at hand. He left the advanced-guard to come to Witepsk, and, as soon as he was alone with the emperor, gave vent to his irritation. He accused the Russian army of cowardice. He talked as if it had broken an appointment before Witepsk; as if it had been an affair of honour—a duel. It was a terrified army, which he would put to the rout with his light horse. Napoleon smiled at this burst of ardour; to calm him he replied, “Murat, the first Russian campaign is finished: let us plant our eagles here. Two great rivers mark out our position; let us construct blockhouses upon this line; let there be a cross fire in every direction; let us form a square battalion, cannon at the angles and at the exterior. The interior shall contain cantonments and magazines:

1813 will see us at Moscow; 1814 at Petersourg. The Russian war is a three years war."

His genius thus conceived every thing in masses, and he looked upon an army of four hundred thousand men as a regiment.

That same day he addressed one of the commissaires aloud in the following remarkable words. "As for you, Sir, mind that we have enough to live on here," for added he, raising his voice, and turning to his officers, "we will not commit the same folly that Charles XII. did." His actions however, soon belied his words, and every body was astonished at his indifference about giving orders for the maintenance of so vast an establishment. On the left, he sent Macdonald neither the instructions nor the means necessary for taking Riga. On the right, Bobruisk was to be taken. This fortress stands in the midst of a deep and extensive marsh. It was by cavalry that he ordered it to be besieged.

Formerly Napoleon gave no orders but what it was possible to execute, but the wonders of the Prussian war had taken place, and from that time the plea of impossibility was no longer admitted. Orders were issued; at all events every thing must be attempted, since, hitherto, every thing had succeeded. This led to immense, but not always successful exertions. They were then made reluctantly: but the emperor insisted; he acquired the habit of commanding every thing, his troops that of omitting to execute all that he commanded.

Dombrowski was however left before this place, with his Polish division, which Napoleon called eight thousand men, although he perfectly well knew that it did not then consist of more than twelve hundred;

but such, either from the idea that his words would be repeated and would deceive the enemy, or from a desire, by this exaggerated valuation, to make his generals feel what he expected from them, was his custom.

There remained Witepsk. From the houses of that town the eye plunges perpendicularly into the Duna, or to the bottom of the precipices which surround its walls.

In this climate the snow lies long upon the ground, It filters through the least solid parts of the rocks, penetrates to a great depth, and causes them to rift, and crumble down. To this cause are to be attributed those deep ravines which occur so unexpectedly, and for which no inequality of the surface prepares the eye. They are imperceptible at a few paces from their sides, and have surprised and suddenly arrested charges of cavalry in the midst of these vast plains.

A month would have sufficed for Frenchmen to put this town in a state to stand even a regular siege; even the slight addition to the means afforded for its defence by nature was neglected. At the same time some millions of francs indispensable for raising the Lithuanian troops were refused. The insurrection of the South was to be headed by prince Sangutsko; he was detained at the imperial quarters. The moderation of Napoleon's recent language had not, however, deceived those immediately about him. They remembered that, at the first sight of the empty Russian camp, and of the deserted town of Witepsk, hearing them rejoice at this conquest, he turned round abruptly, and exclaimed, "Do you think then, that I came thus far to conquer stone walls?" They knew also, that when he had a great object in view he never formed any but a vague plan, that he loved to take

counsel of circumstances, to rely upon the promptitude of his genius.

The whole army now received the most abundant proofs of the favour of their leader. If he met any parties of wounded men he stopped them, inquired about their state, their sufferings, the actions in which they were wounded, and never left them without having cheered them by his expressions of sympathy, and relieved them by his bounty. He was observed to pay particular attention to his guards, he reviewed them every day himself, he was lavish of praise, sometimes of blame, but that fell only on the commissaries. This pleased the soldiers, and silenced their complaints.

He went daily to inspect the ovens, to taste the bread, and to ascertain the regular distribution of the rations. He often sent wine from his table to the sentinel nearest to him. One day he assembled the *élite* of his guards; they were to have a new commander; with his own voice, with his own hand and sword, he presented their officer to them, and embraced him in their presence. These numerous attentions were attributed by some to gratitude for past, by others to the hope of future services.

The latter saw distinctly that Napoleon had at first flattered himself that he should receive fresh proposals of peace from Alexander, and that he was now struck by the distress and the growing weakness of his army. It was necessary to give time not only for the long train of stragglers and of sick to join their corps, and to reach the hospitals, but even to create these hospitals, to collect provisions, to refresh the horses, and to wait for the hospital-waggons, the artillery, and the pontoons, which were still painfully toiling through the sands of Lithuania, to come up to us. His correspon

dence with Europe must also occupy much of his attention ; lastly, he was stopped by a burning sky ; for such is this climate ; the weather is extreme, immoderate ; it dries up or inundates, scorches or freezes the soil, and the inhabitants, even when it seems most favourable ! This treacherous atmosphere relaxed our bodies by its heat, only to render them more sensible to the frost by which we were soon to be penetrated. The emperor was not less affected by the climate than his troops, but, as soon as he was refreshed by rest, having looked in vain for the appearance of a messenger from Alexander, and having completed his arrangements, he was seized with impatience. Whether it was that to him, as to all active men, inaction was burdensome, and that he preferred danger to the tedium of expectation, or whether he was stimulated by that hope of acquiring which, in the minds of most men, is stronger than the satisfaction of retaining, or than the fear of losing, he was obviously restless. Now, more than ever, was his imagination possessed by the idea of Moscow captive ; this was the term of all his fears, the object of all his hopes. In the possession of that city he was to find every thing. From this time it was foreseen that an ardent restless spirit, accustomed to prompt and rapid measures, would not wait eight months, when he felt his object within his grasp, when, in fact, it required only twenty days to reach it.

Let no one be too eager to judge this extraordinary man, for weakness is common to all men. He will be heard himself ; and it will then be seen to what a degree his political position embarrassed his military movements. The resolution he was now about to take will be still less blamed hereafter, when it will be seen that the destiny of Russia depended upon a single

day's health, which was refused to Napoleon upon the field of the Moskwa.

Nevertheless, he appeared at first not to dare to confess, even to himself, such extreme rashness; by degrees he wrought himself up to contemplate his project. He then deliberated, and the great irresolution that agitated his mind was visible in every feature and gesture. He wandered about his apartments as if pursued, beset by this dangerous temptation. Nothing could fix him; one moment he sat down to work, the next he abandoned it, and presently began again. He walked about without any visible object; asked what o'clock it was; observed the weather; then stopped, completely absorbed; then hummed a tune with an air of absence, and then walked again.

In this state of perplexity he sometimes addressed a few broken words to the people he met. "Well, what shall we do? Shall we stay here? Or shall we go on? How can we stop in the middle of such a glorious career?" He did not wait for their answer, but wandered away; and appeared as if he were looking about for something or some person that might force him to come to a decision.

At length completely overloaded with the weight of his mighty thoughts, and worn out by so tremendous an uncertainty, he threw himself upon one of the couches which were stretched upon the floor of his apartments. His person exhausted by the heat, and by the contention of his mind, was covered only with a light garment. It was thus he passed a part of the time he spent at Witepsk.

When, however, his body was in a state of repose, his mind was in still greater activity. "How many motives towards Moscow urge him on? How can he bear the *ennui* of seven winter months at Witepsk?"

Shall he who until now had always been the assailant be reduced to the defensive, to play a part so unworthy of him, one for which he is equally disqualified by want of experience and by the character of his genius? Besides, at Witepsk nothing is decided, and yet at what a distance is he from France already! Europe is then to see him stopped—him, whom nothing could ever stop! Will not even the duration of this enterprise augment its dangers? Shall he allow all Russia time to arm herself? How long can he maintain this uncertain position without lessening the *prestige* of his infallibility, which the resistance of Spain had already weakened? He might awaken dangerous hopes in Europe. What would be thought on hearing that a third of his army were absent from their colours, either from sickness or dispersion? It was necessary instantly to dazzle men by the *eclat* of a great victory. Such misfortunes must be hidden under a thick shade of laurels.”

He now thought of nothing but the *ennui*, the expense, the inconveniences, the disquiet of a defensive position at Witepsk. At Moscow are peace, abundance, money for the maintenance of the war, and immortal glory. He persuaded himself that there was no prudence for him but in boldness; that hazardous enterprises were like faults, which, though invariably begun with risk, are frequently advantageous if followed up; that the less there was to excuse such undertakings, the more absolutely necessary was it to make them succeed. This enterprise then must not be merely achieved, it must be exceeded. The universe must be astonished. He must astound Alexander by his boldness, and extort from him ample compensation for all his losses.

Thus it was that the very danger which perhaps

ought to have called him back to the Niemen, or at least to have fixed him upon the banks of the Duna, urged him forward to Moscow! Such is the consequence of taking up a false position. All is danger; rashness is prudence; nothing is left but a choice of faults. The mistakes of the enemy, or accident, alone afford hope.

Having thus decided, he suddenly rose up, as if not to allow time for reflection to bring back his painful indecision, and already full of the plan which was to ensure his conquest he ran to his maps. He saw nothing but Smolensk and Moscow. The great Moscow, the holy city—names which he repeated with satisfaction, and which seemed to increase his eagerness. At the sight of them, inflamed by his formidable project, he appeared possessed by the genius of war. His voice became harsh, his glance fiery, and his whole air stern and fierce. His attendants retired from his presence from fear, no less than from respect; but at length his plan was fixed, his determination taken, his march traced: immediately the tempest is calmed, and having given consistency and utterance to his tremendous conceptions, his features resumed their character of sweet and serene cheerfulness.

CHAPTER II.

HAVING taken his resolution, it was important that it should not disgust those around him; he thought that they would serve him more zealously from conviction than from obedience. By their sentiments, moreover, he judged of those of the rest of the army: lastly, he, in common with all men, felt constrained by the

silent dissatisfaction of those immediately about him ; he was uneasy, surrounded by looks of disapprobation, and opinions at variance with his own. By obtaining their concurrence in his project, he made them sharers in the responsibility, which, perhaps, he felt too weighty. But those around him expressed their opposition to his determination, each in the manner suited to his character ; Berthier by a melancholy air, complaints, and even tears ; Lobau and Caulaincourt with a frankness which, in the one, was marked by a haughty and cold bluntness pardonable in so brave a warrior, and in the other by obstinate perseverance and violent impetuosity. The emperor received their observations with displeasure ; and addressing himself more particularly to his aids-de-camp, and to Berthier, he exclaimed, “ that he had made his generals too rich, that they no longer cared for any thing but the pleasures of the chase, and the display of their sumptuous equipages in Paris, and that they were doubtless disgusted with war.” To this attack on their honour there was no reply ; they hung down their heads, and submitted. In one of his fits of impatience, he said to a general of his guard, “ You were born in a *bivouac*, and you shall die in one.” Duroc expressed his disapprobation at first by a cold silence, and afterwards by clear and precise answers, authentic reports, and short remarks. To this the emperor replied, “ that he saw clearly that the Russians only wished to draw him on, but that nevertheless he must still proceed to Smolensk ; that he would establish himself there, and that, if Russia had not made peace by the spring of 1813, she was lost ; that Smolensk was the key of the two roads of Petersburgh and Moscow ; that he must take possession of it ; that he might then march at the same time upon these capitals, to effect

the complete destruction of one, and preservation of the other." The grand marshal remarked "that he was not more likely to find peace at Smolensk, or even at Moscow, than at Witepsk, and that, at such a distance, it was very unsafe to leave the Prussians between the army and France;" to which the emperor replied, "that, if that should be the case, when the Russian war ceased to offer him any advantage, he would abandon it; that he would then turn his arms against Prussia, and make her pay the expenses of the war." Daru spoke in his turn; this minister is remarkable for rigid integrity, and inflexible firmness: the great question of the march upon Moscow was under discussion. Berthier alone was present—the debate lasted eight hours consecutively; the emperor asked his minister his opinion as to this war; "that it is not national," replied Daru; "that the introduction of a few English manufactures into Russia, that even the erection of Poland into a kingdom, are not sufficient reasons for so remote a war; that your troops, that ourselves can neither conceive the object nor the necessity of it; and that every thing renders it advisable at least to stop here." The emperor exclaimed, "Did they think him a madman? Did they think that he made war as a matter of taste? Had they not heard him say that the war of Spain, and of Russia, were two cancers which were corroding France, and which she could not support at the same time? He wished for peace, but two were requisite to form a treaty, and he was alone. Had he received a single letter from Alexander? What should he wait for at Witepsk? The rivers, it is true, marked out a position there, but in winter there were no rivers. The line indicated by them was illusory; a demarcation rather than a separation. It would be necessary, therefore, to

form a factitious line, to construct towns, and fortresses proof against the elements, and all the scourges of the climate ; they must create a new world around them, for there was an absolute want of every thing, even of the bare means of subsistence, unless by draining and thus exasperating Lithuania, or by ruining himself ; since if every thing could be seized in Moscow, here every thing must be bought. Thus," continued he, " at Witepsk you can neither feed me, nor I defend you. Neither of us can exercise our functions here." He added, " if he returned to Wilna, he could indeed be more easily provisioned, but not better defended ; that he would then be compelled to retire to the Vistula, and to lose Lithuania ; whereas, at Smolensk, he would find either a decided battle, or at least a fortified town, and a position on the Dnieper ; that he saw clearly that they had Charles XII. in their minds ; but that if there were no instance of a successful expedition to Moscow, it was because no man had yet appeared fit for the undertaking ; that, in war, half the results are always to be ascribed to fortune ; that those who waited for a perfect combination of favourable circumstances would never undertake any thing ; that before they finished they must begin ; that there was no enterprise to the success of which every thing concurred, and that chance influenced all human projects. Lastly, that the rule does not occasion the success, but the success creates the rule, and that if he succeeded by new marches, new principles would be drawn from a new example of success. As yet," added he, " no blood has been shed, and Russia is too vast to yield without combat. Alexander can treat only after a battle. If it be necessary, I will go in quest of this battle, even to the holy city, and I

will gain it. Peace awaits me at the gates of Moscow. But having once secured my honour, if Alexander still persists, I will treat with the Boyards, or with the population of the city: it is considerable, compact, and consequently enlightened; it will understand its own interests; it will know what liberty is." He concluded by saying that Moscow hated Petersburg: that he would take advantage of this rivalry; that the results of such a jealousy were incalculable." Thus did the emperor, when warmed by conversation, disclose the hopes he entertained. Daru replied, "that war was a game at which he played well, and at which he always gained, and that it was natural to conclude that he delighted in it. But that, in the present instance, he had to contend rather with nature than with men. That either from sickness, desertion, or famine, the army had diminished by a third; if there were a scarcity of provisions at Witepsk, how would they fare farther on? The officers whom he sent in quest of them did not return, or returned empty-handed. The little corn, or the few cattle which they succeeded in collecting together, were immediately devoured by the guard. The other corps openly complained that the guard exacted and absorbed every thing, that it was a privileged class. Every thing then rendered it advisable to stop; the more so, because, having once turned their backs on Witepsk, they could no longer reckon on the good-will of the inhabitants: that, in pursuance of his instructions, they had been sounded, but with no effect: how could they be stirred up to revolt for that liberty of which they knew not even the name. What hold could they have on these half-civilized people, without riches, without wants? Of what could we deprive them? With what could we tempt them? They possessed nothing

beyond their mere existence, with which they could escape into their almost boundless wilds." Berthier added, "that if we marched forward, the Russians would have the advantage of our lengthened flanks, of famine, and more especially their formidable winter; whereas, by stopping, the emperor would have the winter in his favour, would keep the war within his reach, instead of pursuing it, delusive, wandering, and indeterminate." Such were the opinions expressed by Berthier and Daru. The emperor interrupted them with subtle arguments, stating the question in the way which favoured his inclinations, or evading it whenever it pressed too hard upon him. But, however disagreeable were the truths he was compelled to hear, he listened, and answered with patience. Throughout this discussion, his words, his manners, his gestures, were remarkable for an ease, a simplicity, a kindness which indeed were habitual to him in private life; and which explain why the attachment of those who lived on terms of intimacy with him outlived all his faults and all his misfortunes.

The emperor, who was far from satisfied, sent for several of the generals of his army; but his questions pointed out the answer they were expected to give; and some of his officers who had passed their lives in the camp, and were accustomed to obey his voice, were as submissive to him in the council as they were on the field.

Others waited till the event should justify them in declaring their opinion: they thought it wiser to conceal their fears before a man whom fortune had always favoured, and to suppress sentiments which might perhaps soon be belied by success.

Most of them approved, well knowing that, even if they ran the risk of offending, by advising the empe-

ror to remain, he would not the less pursue his own inclination, and march. Since they must encounter fresh dangers, they wished to appear to meet them willingly. On the whole, the evils of being in the wrong with him, were less than those of being in the right against him.

But there was one, who, not content with assenting, instigated him to this fatal course. Acting from the suggestions of a base ambition, he increased the emperor's confidence, by exaggerating the strength of his own division. After so many fatigues, unattended with danger, it was esteemed a great merit in the commanders to have retained a large proportion of their men around their eagles. The emperor was thus addressed on his weak side, and the time for rewards was at hand. The general in question, to ingratiate himself yet farther, confidently answered for the ardour of his soldiers, whose emaciated countenances accorded but ill with the flattering reports of their leader. The emperor believed in this ardour, because it fell in with his own wishes, and because he only saw the soldiers at reviews; on those occasions when all spirits were raised by his presence, by the pomp of war, and by the contagious enthusiasm of large assemblies of men, when, indeed, every thing, even the secret orders of their officers, rendered a display of ardour inevitable.

Neither did he pay any extraordinary attention, except to his guards. The soldiers of the main army complained of his absence. They never saw him now, but on days of battle; he only cared about their lives when he wanted them to be ready to sacrifice them. They were all brought hither for his sake, but he no longer seemed to care about them. Thus did they suffer and complain; but they did not sufficiently reflect that this

was one of the evils inseparable from such a campaign. The dispersion of the corps was rendered indispensable by the difficulty of finding subsistence in these deserts. This necessarily separated Bonaparte from his troops. Even his guard could scarcely find food and shelter around him; the rest were out of his reach. It is true that several acts of great imprudence had just been committed. It was not known by whose order, but it is certain that several loads of provisions which belonged to other corps were detained for the guard at the imperial quarters. This act of violence, joined to the jealousy which *corps d'élite* never fail to inspire, disgusted the army.

The emperor was ignorant of these grievances, but he was a prey to the utmost grief and anxiety; he knew that at Witepsk alone three thousand soldiers were attacked by dysentery, which was extending its ravages to the whole army. The chief cause of this disorder was the rye of which they made their broth. Their stomachs, accustomed to bread, rejected this cold and raw sort of food, and the emperor urged the physicians to find a remedy. One day he appeared less anxious; "Davoust," said he, "has found out what the medical men could not discover; I have just received the intelligence of it; it is only necessary to roast the rye before preparing it." Napoleon's eyes sparkled with hope as he questioned his physician, who only replied that experience would decide the efficacy of the plan. The emperor immediately called two grenadiers of his guard, he placed them at his table close to him, and made them begin the trial of food so prepared. It succeeded ill, although he added some of his own wine, which he poured out for them himself.

Nevertheless the men's minds were supported under

so many privations by their habitual respect for the conqueror of Europe, and by a sense of inevitable necessity ; they felt that they had gone too far to recede ; nothing but a victory could enable them to extricate themselves promptly ; this Napoleon alone could obtain : besides, misfortune had purified the army ; what remained of it could be only the *élite* both in body and mind. How many trials must those have undergone who had reached this point ? Men like these were worn out by ennui, and by the utter discomfort of the miserable cantonments. To remain appeared to them intolerable ; to retreat impossible ; nothing then was left but to advance.

The great names of Smolensk and of Moscow did not alarm them. In ordinary times, and to ordinary men, an untried soil, new tribes of people, a distance which magnified every thing, would have appeared insuperable obstacles : to such men, these were precisely the attractions ; they delighted only in hazardous situations, which became the more exciting in proportion as their peril and their novelty gave them an air of singularity and of adventure. This strong excitement is extremely captivating to active spirits who have tasted of every thing life affords, and thirst after untried situations.

Ambition was now let loose from all restraint. Every circumstance tended to inspire a passion for renown ; they had plunged into a boundless career. How, indeed, was it possible to estimate the ascendancy gained, and the impulse given by a powerful emperor, who could say to his soldiers after the victory of Austerlitz, " Name your children after me ; I give you leave ; and if one among them shall prove himself worthy of us, I will bequeath him my property, and declare him my successor."

CHAPTER III.

THE union of the two wings of the Russian army, near Smolensk, had now compelled Napoleon to draw together the scattered corps of his army. As yet no signal for attack had been given, but war was all around him. It seemed to tempt his genius by future success, and to stimulate it by past disasters.

On his left Wittgenstein, fearing at once Oudinot and Macdonald, had halted between the two roads of Polotsk and Dunaburg, which meet at Sebez. The Duke of Reggio was ordered to take up a defensive position.

But no indication in this unfriendly land had, either at Polotsk, or at Witepsk, discovered the position of the Russians. The marshal, impatient at finding no traces of them, determined to go in quest of them himself.

On the 1st of August, he accordingly left General Merle and his division on the Drissa, to guard the baggage and the grand park, and to cover his retreat; he sent Verdier forward towards Sebez, and stationed him on the high road, in order to mask the movement he projected. He himself turning on the left, with the infantry of Legrand, the cavalry of Castex, and the light artillery of Aubry, advanced as far as Jakowvowo, on the road to Ousveia.

It happened that Wittgenstein, coming at the same moment from Ousveia, also marched upon Jakowvowo; they met unexpectedly in front of this village. It was late; the encounter was animated, but short; night put an end to the conflict, and postponed the decision of it.

The marshal, with only one division, found himself

in a deep and narrow gorge, surrounded by woods and hills, which all took an unfavourable direction. He was hesitating whether to quit their confined position, upon which all the enemy's fire was about to be concentrated, when a young officer of the Russian état-major, scarcely out of his childhood, rode heedlessly into our posts, and was taken with his despatches. From them we learnt that Wittgenstein was marching with whole corps to attack and destroy our bridges over the Dwina. The Duke of Reggio was therefore obliged to retreat, to rally and concentrate his forces in a less disadvantageous position ; and, as often happens in these retrograde marches, the stragglers, and some of the baggage fell into the hands of the Russians.

Wittgenstein, elated by this easy success, followed it up without moderation. In the ardour of what he fancied a victory, he despatched Koulnief, with twelve thousand men, across the Drissa, in pursuit of Albert and Legrand. The officers had halted ; Albert hastened to call the marshal. They took up a position under cover of a hill, watched all the movements of the Russian general, and seeing him imprudently enter a defile between them and the river, they suddenly rushed upon him, attacked and killed him. The enemy likewise lost eight cannon, and two thousand men.

Koulnief is said to have died heroically ; a ball broke both his legs, and threw him down upon his own guns ; when, seeing the French approaching, he snatched off his decorations ; and, indignant at his own rashness, he resolved to die on the very spot where he had erred, and commanded all his men to abandon him. He was regretted by the whole Russian army. The blame of this disaster was universally imputed to one of those men whom the caprice

of Paul had converted into generals, at the time when that newly made emperor thought he might take possession of his peaceful inheritance like a triumphant conqueror.

Rashness fled with victory from the Russian to the French camp. By this unexpected success, Casa-Bianca and his Corsican battalions were intoxicated; they forgot the error to which they owed it; they disregarded the advice of their general, and without recollecting that they were imitating the imprudence by which they had just profited, they commenced an eager pursuit of the Russians. They rushed on headlong, a distance of two leagues, and only awoke to a sense of their temerity when they found themselves in front of the hostile army. Already had Verdier, who was forced to come to their assistance, endangered the safety of the rest of his division, when the Duke of Reggio came up, drew his men out of danger, led them back behind the Drissa, and the next day took up his former position under the walls of Polotsk. He found there St. Cyr and the Bavarians, who increased the number of his troops to thirty-five thousand. Wittgenstein quietly resumed his former position at Ousveia. The result of these four days did not satisfy the emperor.

Nearly at the same time intelligence was received at Witepsk that the advance-guard of the Viceroy had obtained some advantages near Suraij, but that in the centre, at Tukowo, near the Dnieper, Sebastiani had been surprised by numbers and beaten.

At this juncture, Napoleon wrote to the Duke of Bassano orders to make daily reports of fresh victories to the Turks; true or false—it did not signify, provided these communications did but suspend the conclusion of a peace between the Porte and Russia.

They were still employing every means for this end, when the deputies of Red Russia came to Witepsk, and informed Duroc that they had heard the Russian cannon proclaim the peace of Bucharest. This peace signed by Kutusof, was ratified on the 14th of July.

On receiving this intelligence, which was transmitted by Duroc, Napoleon evinced the most violent displeasure. He no longer wondered at Alexander's silence. One while, he blamed the slowness of Murat's negotiations; another, the blindness and imbecility of the Turks, who always made peace on such terms that it was a greater evil than war; then he accused the perfidious policy of his allies, who doubtless had all taken advantage of his remoteness, and of the mysterious obscurity of the Seraglio, to conspire against the domination they all feared.

This event rendered a speedy victory still more necessary to Bonaparte. He read the Russian proclamations. They might have been expected to have been as rude as the people; the following are some passages in them. "The enemy, with unparalleled perfidy, threatens the destruction of our country. Our brave soldiers wish to rush upon his battalions, and to annihilate them; but we will not sacrifice them on the altars of this Moloch. There must be a general rising against the universal tyrant. He comes with treachery in his heart, and honour on his lips, to reduce us to subjection by means of his myriads of slaves. Let us drive out this race of grasshoppers. Let us bear the cross in our hearts, and the sword in our hands. Let us draw the teeth out of this lion's head, and overthrow the tyrant who wishes to overthrow the whole earth."

The emperor was greatly moved. The abuse, the successes, the reverses, every thing excited and agri-

tated him. The march of Barclay upon three columns, near Rudnia, which the check at Tukowo had uncovered, and the vigorous defence of Wittgenstein, seemed to promise a battle. The choice lay between that and a long, fatiguing, bloody, and unusual course of defence, difficult to maintain at such a distance from our reinforcements, and encouraging to the enemy.

Napoleon decided—and his decision, though not rash, was grand and bold as the enterprise. He separated himself, indeed, from Oudinot, but not without ordering St. Cyr to reinforce him, and directing him to attach himself to the Duke of Tarentum; nor did he march against the enemy, without changing his line of operation from Witepsk to Minsk. He effected this in face, and within reach, of the enemy, yet unknown to them. His manœuvres were so well concerted, his lieutenants were accustomed to such punctuality, precision, and secrecy, that in four days, while the astonished enemy was vainly seeking a Frenchman in their front, he would suddenly appear with a mass of a hundred and eighty-five thousand men on the left flank, and on the rear of this very enemy who had dared to conceive the project of surprising him.

Nevertheless, the extent and multiplicity of the operations, which required his presence in every direction, still detained him at Witepsk. It was by letters alone that he could be present everywhere. His head was in constant activity, while his body continued stationary; he flattered himself that his reiterated and pressing orders would be efficient to subdue nature herself.

The army could only obtain subsistence by its exertions, and from day to day. It had not provisions for

four-and-twenty hours; he ordered provisions for a fortnight to be carried with them; he dictated incessantly. On the 10th of August he was observed to address eight letters to the prince of Eckmuhl, and nearly as many to each of his lieutenants. In some of these he ordered that every thing should move towards him, in conformity with his principle, "that the art of war is merely the art of collecting more men upon any given point than the enemy." He wrote to Davoust: "Send Latour-Maubourg to me. If the enemy defends Smolensk, as I am tempted to believe he will, we shall have a decisive engagement there, and we cannot have too large a force. Orcha will become the central point of the army. Every thing induces me to believe that there will be a great battle at Smolensk. I must therefore have hospitals; they must be established at Orcha, Dombrowna, Mohilef, Kochanowo, Bobre, Borizof, and Minsk."

He now betrayed the most intense anxiety about the provisioning of Orcha. On the 10th of August, the very day on which he dictated these letters, he gave the order to march. In four days his whole army was to be assembled on the left hand of the Boristhenes, near Liadi. On the 13th he set out from Witepsk, after having halted there a fortnight.

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER I.

THE check received at Inkowo decided Napoleon's resolution. Ten thousand Russian horse, in an action with the advanced guard, had overthrown Sebastiani and his cavalry. The valor and merit of the defeated general, his report of the engagement, the audacity of the attack, the hope, and, indeed, the urgent want of a decisive battle, all induced the emperor to conclude that numbers alone had carried the day, that the whole Russian army was united between the Duna and the Dnieper, and that it was marching against the centre of his cantonments. This was, in fact, the case.

The grand army was dispersed, and it was necessary to collect it. Napoleon decided on defiling, with his guard, the army of Italy, and three divisions of Davoust, before the front of attack of the Russians, on abandoning his line of operation by Witepsk and substituting that of Orcha, and finally, on throwing himself with a hundred and eighty-five thousand men on the left of the Dnieper and the hostile army. Protected by that river, he resolved to outmarch that army, and reach Smolensk before it; if he succeeded, he would have cut off the Russian army not merely from Moscow, but from the whole of the centre and the south of the empire: it would be strictly confined in the north; and he should have accomplished,

against Bagration and Barclay united, what he had vainly attempted, at Witepsk, against the army of Barclay alone.

The line of operation of this immense army was accordingly now to undergo a sudden change. Two hundred thousand men scattered over a space of fifty leagues were now to be rapidly united, without the knowledge or suspicion of the enemy, within his means of annoyance, and on his left flank. Here was, unquestionably, one of those grand resolves, which, when executed with the precision and rapidity with which they are formed, instantly change the aspect of war, decide the fate of empires, and proclaim the genius of conquerors.

We commenced our march ; and, from Orcha as far as Liadi, the French army proceeded in a long column on the left bank of the Dnieper. In this mass, the first corps, which had been formed by Davoust, was distinguished by the order and completeness which prevailed throughout its several divisions ; the soldierly aspect and demeanor of the men, the care with which they were supplied with provisions, the caution employed to induce them to husband and preserve those allowances which the improvident soldier seems to delight in wasting ; and, finally, the numerical and physical strength of his divisions, the happy consequence of the strictness of his discipline, were circumstances which commanded universal admiration, and occasioned them to be held up as models for the whole army.

The division Gudin was wanting : an ill-written order had occasioned its wandering out of its proper route for four-and-twenty hours through swampy woods ; it did, however arrive, but weakened by the loss of three hundred from its ranks ; for such errors

can be repaired only by forced marches, under which the weakest sink.

The emperor traversed the mountainous and woody country lying between the Duna and the Boristhenes in a single day, and crossed the latter river in front of Rassasna. Its distance from our native country, its historical celebrity, the antiquity of its name, were circumstances which not a little roused our curiosity; for the first time since its current flowed, the waters of this Muscovite stream were about to bear an army of Frenchmen, and reflect the splendour of our victorious arms. The Romans had known it only by their defeats. These were the waters on which the savages of the north, the children of Odin and of Rurick, had descended to sack the city of Constantinople. Long before we could actually see it, our looks were searching for it with ambitious impatience. We, at length, perceived a river, narrow in its stream, and confined by banks lined with brushwood and brambles. Under this humble appearance was the celebrated Boristhenes presented to our view. All our soaring imaginations were humbled at the sight, and soon entirely vanished before the necessity of supplying the first wants of nature.

The emperor slept in his tent in advance of Rassasna: on the following day, the army marched together, ready to fall promptly into order of battle, with the emperor on horseback in the midst of it. The advanced-guard drove before it two pulks of Cossacks, who resisted only long enough to allow time for the destruction of some bridges and stacks of forage. The villages through which we followed the evacuating enemy were immediately pillaged; the troops passed through them in the greatest haste and disorder.

The streams we met with as we advanced, we passed

by fords which were soon broken up, and rendered unfit for the purpose. The regiments which came afterwards crossed at other parts, just, in fact, as they were able: little attention and concern were felt about them; the officers of the staff paid no regard to such details; no persons were stationed to point out danger when any existed, or to show the proper road when several presented themselves. Each separate corps seemed to be there only for itself; every division entertained the same selfish and exclusive feeling; and even every single individual, as if the fate of one had not been involved in that of the others.

Stragglers, and men who had missed their way, were left behind nearly at every step, whom the officers passed almost close by with perfect indifference. It would have required too much time or trouble to have reprimanded them. Each was too much occupied with himself to pay any attention to others. Many of these individuals were marauders, who pretended sickness or wounds, merely to have an opportunity for deserting their ranks, which there was, in fact, no time for preventing, and which will always happen where large bodies of men are hurried forward with rapidity and precipitation, as order can, with difficulty, if at all, be preserved in parts after disorder has begun to prevail in the mass.

As far as Liadi the villages bore rather a Jewish than a Polish aspect. The Lithuanians sometimes fled at our approach; the Jews remained; nothing could have prevailed upon them to quit their wretched habitations. They were distinguishable by their lisping pronunciation, their voluble and rapid elocution, the quickness of their movements, and their complexion, lighted up by the vile lust of gain. They

were more especially remarkable for their rapacious and searching looks, the length and angularity of their faces and features, which their malignant and perfidious smile can never open; their tall, supple, and meagre figure; their urgency and eagerness of manner; their beard, which is generally red, and their long black robes, bound about their loins by a leathern girdle: in fact, every thing, except filth, distinguishes them from the Lithuanian peasants; every thing about them suggests the idea of a degraded people.

They seem to have subjugated Poland, where they rapidly increase and multiply, and whose substance and nourishment they prey upon. In former ages their religion, and in modern times the bitter sense of that ignominy which is unfortunately attached to them by almost every nation of the earth, have rendered them hostile to mankind. Formerly they attacked them with arms, at present they do it by fraud. These peculiar people are held by the Russians in perfect horror, possibly, in some degree, in consequence of their religious aversion to images, for which the Muscovites entertain a reverence approaching to idolatry. In fact, whether through superstition, or rivalry in interest, they have forbidden their residing in their territory. The Jews were compelled to endure their contempt. Their impotence returned hatred for the scorn, but they detested still more our pillage. Enemies to all mankind, spies in both the opposing armies, they were incessantly selling one of them to the other, from resentment, or from fear, on any opportunity that offered, and from a habit of selling every thing.

Beyond Liadi old Russia commenced, and the Jews were seen no more. The eye was relieved from their disgusting presence; but other circumstances induced

us to regret them; we regretted the loss of that interested and persevering activity, from which, for money every thing might be obtained; we regretted even their German jargon, the only language we could understand in those remote and savage deserts, and which they all speak, as it is the necessary medium of their commercial transactions.

CHAPTER II.

ON the 15th of August, at three o'clock, the army was in sight of Krasnoe, which a Russian regiment seemed disposed to defend; it detained Marshal Ney, however, only as long a time as was required to get up with it and defeat it. On taking possession of the town, six thousand Russian infantry were observed beyond it in two columns, with several squadrons covering their retreat. This was the corps of Newrowskoï.

The ground was unequal in its surface, but clean and bare. It was well adapted for cavalry, and Murat took possession of it. But, the bridges of Krasnoe being broken down, the French cavalry were obliged to turn to the left and defile for a long time through miserable fords before they could come in contact with the enemy. When they actually arrived in front of them, the difficulty of the passage which they had just left behind them, and the firm attitude of the Russians, excited something of hesitation: time was consumed in waiting for all the troops to come up, and in forming and deploying them; at last, however, the enemy's cavalry were dispersed, and on the first onset.

Newerowskoi, as soon as he found himself uncovered, united his columns, and formed of them a complete square, of such thickness, that Murat's cavalry several times penetrated it, without being able to traverse it completely, or to throw it into disorder.

In fact, our first charges fell short of reaching the front of the Russians by twenty paces: whenever they felt themselves severely pressed, they faced about, awaited us with intrepid firmness, and repulsed us by discharges of musketry; then, instantly profiting by the disorder into which they had thrown us, they continued their retreat.

Their Cossacks were seen dealing out heavy blows, with the wooden part of their lances, on those of their infantry who did not keep the regular step or correct line of march, for our squadrons harassed them without intermission, watched all their movements, dashed into the smallest intervals that were inadvertently furnished, and instantly carried off whatever was separated from the main body; they even penetrated that on two occasions, but only a very little way, the horses being, as it were, stranded against a mass so thick and unyielding.

Newerowskoi was at one moment in the utmost danger. His column was marching on the left of the high road, amidst some standing corn, when suddenly its progress was impeded by a row of strong palisades, which extended nearly round the whole enclosure; his soldiers, pushed on violently by our troops had not time to effect a gap in it, and Murat ordered the Wurtemburghers to rush upon them, and make them lay down their arms. But while the advanced column of the Russians was rapidly removing the obstacle, their hindmost ranks faced about, and stood their ground firmly. They fired, inaccurately indeed, chiefly in the

air, and like men under great agitation, but at so small a distance, that the smoke, and fire, and sound of their numerous small arms, frightened the Wurtemburgh horses, and threw them into complete confusion.

The Russians availed themselves of this fortunate instant, and placed between them and their pursuers that barrier which had been so nearly fatal to themselves. Some French cannon at length arrived, which alone were able to make a breach in this living fortress.

Newerowskoï hastened to attain a defile which Grouchy had received orders to reach before him; but, deceived by a false report, Murat had sent off the greater part of that general's cavalry in the direction of Jelnia, and Grouchy had only six hundred horse remaining with him. He despatched the 8th Chasseurs towards the defile, which, however, were too weak against so powerful a column. The vigorous and reiterated charges of that regiment, of the 6th Hussars, and the 6th Lancers, against the left flank of this firmly-compacted mass, strengthened by the double row of birch-trees which lined each side of the road, were insufficient for the purpose, and Grouchy demanded assistance, but in vain; the general who followed him was either detained by the difficulties of the ground, or was not sufficiently aware of the importance of the contest. That importance was indeed great, as, between Smolensk and Murat, there was merely this single Russian corps, after defeating which, Smolensk would have been surprised without defenders, and taken without resistance, and the enemy's army have been cut off from his capital! But this corps succeeded, at length, in reaching a woody tract of country where its flanks were protected.

Newerowskoï accomplished his retreat like a lic.

He left, however, twelve hundred killed on the field of battle, and lost a thousand prisoners and eight pieces of cannon. The French cavalry gained the glory of the day. The attack was as animated as the defence was firm: it had the more merit, from having only employed steel in opposition to fire and steel united. The enlightened courage of a French soldier, moreover, is of a more refined and exalted character than that of Russian soldiers, who are merely obedient and willing slaves, and expose to danger a far less happy life, and bodily frames nearly hardened by frost into insensibility.

It accidentally happened that this victory occurred on the emperor's birth-day. The army had not the slightest idea of celebrating it. In the disposition of the men, in the situation of the places, there was nothing adapted to a festival, and the loudest acclamations would have been lost in those immense solitudes. In our actual position there could be no other day of festival than that of a complete victory.

Murat and Ney, however, on delivering in their report of this success to the emperor did homage to the anniversary of his nativity. They ordered a salute to be fired from a hundred pieces of artillery. The emperor, somewhat displeased, observed that in Russia it was necessary to be economical of French powder. But he was informed, in reply, that it was Russian powder and had been taken the night before. The idea of having his anniversary celebrated at the expense of the Russians made Napoleon smile. This species of refined flattery was considered as well-accommodating with the character of the men.

Prince Eugene also thought it his duty to pay his compliments on this occasion. The emperor said to

him, "Every thing is preparing for a battle; I will gain that, and we shall then see Moscow." The prince was silent; but, on quitting the imperial tent, he observed, in answer to the questions of Marshal Mortier, "Moscow will destroy us." Thus an opening was made for the expression of disapprobation. Duroc, a man of the most habitual reserve, and the friend, the confidant of the emperor, said aloud, "that he could anticipate no period for our return." However, such remarks were made only in confidence; for every one felt that, when a decision was once formed, all ought zealously to co-operate in the execution of it; that the more perilous their position became, the greater courage and energy were required, and that a single word tending to abate the zeal and ardour of the troops would amount to nothing less than treason. Thus it was that some, who by their silence, and even by their language, opposed the decision of the emperor within his tent, appeared out of it full of hope and confidence in its success. This demeanour was dictated to them by honour; but the multitude ascribed it to flattery.

Newerowskoï, in a state of complete discomfiture, hastened to shut himself up in Smolensk. He left behind him some Cossacks to burn the forage; but habitations were respected.



CHAPTER III.

WHILE the grand army was thus reascending the Dnieper, on its left bank, Barclay and Bagration, stationed between that river and the lake Kasplia, towards Inkowo, believed themselves still nearly in

the presence of the French army. They were in a state of great hesitation. Twice yielding to the advice of the quarter-master-general Toll, they had resolved to force the line of our cantonments; and twice, confounded at the boldness of the enterprise, they had stopped short after the operations necessary for that object had begun. At length, too timid to take counsel of any but themselves, they seemed to confide their decision to events, and to wait for our attack, in order to render their defence conformable to it.

It was evident, also, from the uncertainty of their movements, that a misunderstanding existed between the two chiefs. In reality, their position, their character, and even their origin, were in direct opposition to each other. Barclay was a man of cool courage, of a genius scientific, methodical, and tenacious, and whose mind, German in its character as in its origin, endeavoured to calculate every thing, even the chances of hazard themselves; persisting in ascribing all to his tactics and nothing to fortune. Bagration, on the other hand, was a warrior of instinct, audacious and violent, an old Russian of the Suwarrow school, irritated at the idea of obeying a general younger than himself, terrible in battle, but acquainted with no book but that of nature, no instruction but his own experience, no counsels but his own suggestions.

This Russian veteran, on the frontiers of ancient Russia, shuddered at the very idea of retreating further without trying a battle. In the army all were actuated by the same ardour as himself. It was supported on the one hand by the patriotic pride of the nobility, by the success experienced at Inkowo, by the inactivity of Napoleon at Witepsk, and by the sarcastic taunts of those who encountered no responsibility:

and, on the other hand, it was the feeling of the general population, consisting of peasants, traders, and soldiers, who contemplated the idea of our trampling on their sacred soil with a horror like that excited by sacrilege. All, in short, called aloud for battle.

Barclay alone opposed it. His plan, falsely attributed to England, had dwelt on his mind ever since the year 1807, but he had to contend not only with our army, but also with his own; and, although he was general-in-chief and a minister, he was neither sufficiently Russian, nor sufficiently successful to obtain the confidence of the Russians. He had only that of Alexander.

Bagration and his officers hesitated to obey him. The question was how best to defend their native soil, and devote themselves for the good of their country: it was a subject in which all were interested, and which all thought they had a right to examine. Thus it happened, that the calamities which they experienced led them to distrust the prudence of their general, while, with the exception of a few chiefs, our successes induced a blind confidence in the audacity, hitherto unflinchingly fortunate, of ours. For in success command meets ready obedience; no one critically investigates whether prudence or fortune is at the helm. Such is the position of leaders—when events are favourable and fortunate, all blindly obey them; when misfortunes thicken, all judge them.

Barclay, however, had at length yielded for an instant to the general feeling, united his forces near Rudnia, and attempted to surprise the French army, in its state of dispersion. But the feeble blow which its advanced-guard had just struck at Inkowo had thrown him into consternation. He trembled, stopped short, and, believing every moment that Napoleon was

in his front, on his right, and in short in every quarter but on his left, which he considered protected by the Dnieper, he lost many days in marches and counter-marches. He was in this state of uncertainty, when suddenly Newerowskoï's cry of distress, and for assistance, echoed through his camp. There was no longer any question about attack; all ran to arms, and rushed towards Smolensk for its defence.

Murat and Ney had already commenced an attack on that city; Murat with his cavalry, on that quarter in which the Boristhenes passes within its walls; Ney, where it quits them, with his infantry, and on ground interspersed with wood and deep ravines. The marshal supported his left on the river, and Murat his right, which Poniatowski came directly from Mohilef to reinforce.

At this place the Boristhenes is confined between two steep hills, on which Smolensk is built. That place presents the appearance of two cities, separated by the river, and united by two bridges. That on the right bank, which is most modern, is entirely devoted to trade; it is open, but it commands the other, of which it is, at the same time, only a dependency.

The old city, that which occupies the level and declivities of the left bank, is surrounded by a wall twenty-five feet high, eighteen thick, and three thousand toises long, and defended by twenty-nine large towers, by an ill-constructed citadel of earth, of five bastions, commanding the road to Orcha, and by a wide ditch, serving as a covered way. Some outworks and suburbs conceal the approaches to the Mohilef and Dnieper gates; they are defended by a ravine, which, after having surrounded a great part of the city, becomes more deep and precipitous as it approaches the Dnieper on the side of the citadel.

The deluded inhabitants were returning from their temples, in which they had been assembled to give God thanks for the victories of their troops, when they beheld them bleeding and conquered, flying before the victorious French. The calamity was unexpected, and the consternation it produced proportionally greater.

In the mean time, the view of Smolensk had kindled the impatient ardour of marshal Ney. It is impossible to say whether his mind was, somewhat unseasonably, adverted to the miracles of the Prussian war, when citadels fell before the sabres of our cavalry, or whether his object at first might be merely to reconnoitre the first Russian fortress that he had seen ; but he approached too near it, and a ball struck him in the neck ; irritated at the circumstance, he rushed at the head of a battalion against the citadel, through a dreadful storm of balls and bullets, which destroyed not less than two-thirds of his soldiers : the remainder still pressed on, and nothing but the Russian walls could stop them : only a very few, however, returned : little was said of the heroic effort which these men had made, because it justly implied blame on their commander, and was absolutely useless.

The marshal, whose ardour was now somewhat cooled, withdrew to a sandy and woody eminence on the river's bank. He was examining the city and surrounding country, when, on the other side of the Dnieper, he thought he could perceive considerable masses of troops in motion : he hastened to take the emperor to the spot, and conducted him through underwood, and along the hollows, in order to protect him from the fire of the place.

Napoleon having arrived at the eminence, perceived, in the midst of clouds of dust, long and black columns

interspersed with the glittering of innumerable arms. These masses were advancing with such rapidity, that they appeared to run. They were, in fact, Barclay and Bagration at the head of a hundred and twenty thousand men; in short, the whole Russian army.

At this sight Napoleon clapped his hands, in a transport of joy, and exclaimed, "At last, I have them!" There could be no room for further doubt: that army, taken by surprise, was hastening to throw itself into Smolensk, to pass through it, deploy under its walls, and offer us the so much desired battle. Thus the moment that was to decide the fate of Russia had at length arrived!

He immediately passed along the line, and appropriated to each his station. Davoust, and next count Lobau, were to deploy to the right of Ney; the guard in the centre, in reserve; and further on, the army of Italy. The place to be occupied by Junot and the Westphalians was pointed out; but a false movement had led them astray. Murat and Poniatowski formed the right of the army; these chiefs were already menacing the city: he made them fall back to the edge of a coppice, and leave unoccupied, in their front, an extensive plain, which reached from the coppice to the Dnieper. This he offered to the enemy for a field of battle. The French army, in this position, was backed by defiles and precipices; but Napoleon felt no anxiety about retreat; he thought of nothing but victory.

In the mean time, Bagration and Barclay were returning to Smolensk with hasty steps, one to save it by a battle, the other to protect the flight of its inhabitants, and the evacuation of its magazines: he was resolved to leave us nothing but its ashes. The two Russian generals arrived in an almost breathless state,

on the eminences on the right bank, and did not recover from their agitation till they perceived that they were still masters of the bridges which united the two cities.

Napoleon then annoyed the enemy by a cloud of riflemen, in order to draw him to the left bank, and secure a battle for the following day. It is asserted that Bagration would have committed himself on this point, but that Barclay did not expose him to the temptation. He despatched him towards Elnia, and undertook himself the defence of the city in person.

According to Barclay, the greater part of the army was marching upon Elnia, in order to place itself between Moscow and the Russian army. He was deceived by the practice, so common in war, of ascribing to the enemy intentions contrary to those which he apparently evinces. For the defensive party, being in its nature full of restlessness and alarm, frequently aggrandizes the skill and power of that which is offensive, and fear, co-operating with imagination, attributes to the enemy a thousand plans which he never entertained. It is possible, also, that Barclay, having his mind filled with the idea of a colossal enemy, expected corresponding and gigantic movements. The Russians themselves have since reproached Napoleon with not having actually executed that manœuvre: but they do not seem to have sufficiently considered, that by thus going and stationing himself beyond a river, a strong city, and an hostile army, he must, in fact, in order to cut off from the Russians the road to their capital, have at the same time cut off from himself all communication with his reinforcements, his other armies, and Europe! Those who feel surprise, that, without any preparation, it should not have been attempted and accomplished in the limited period of only

days, across a river and an unknown country, with such immense masses of men, and also with another operation of great complexity going on at the same time, are little qualified to appreciate the difficulties of such a movement.

But, whatever opinion may be entertained on that point, on the evening of the 16th Bagration began his march towards Elnia. Napoleon had just had his tent erected in the middle of his first line, almost within reach of the cannon of Smolensk, and on the edge of the ravine which encircles the city. He sent for Murat and Davoust: the former had just been observing among the Russians movements which indicated a retreat. Every day since quitting the Niemen he had been in the habit of seeing them thus escape. He had no reliance, therefore, on a battle on the next day. Davoust was of the contrary opinion; as for the emperor, he did not hesitate to believe what he so ardently desired.

CHAPTER IV

ON the 17th, Napoleon awoke at the break of day, in the eager hope of seeing the Russian army drawn up in front of him; but the field of battle which he had prepared for it remained unoccupied. He still, however, persevered in the illusion, and Davoust shared the illusion with him, which indeed in that quarter originated or at least gained strength. Dalton, one of that marshal's generals, had seen some of the enemy's battalions quit the city, and draw up in order of battle. The emperor laid hold of this as a point on which to rest his hope, which Ney, who coincided with Murat, combated in vain.

But while he was still hoping and expecting, Belliard, annoyed by this suspense and contrariety of opinion, ordered a few cavalry to follow him, and after driving into the Dnieper a band of Cossacks, above the city he perceived, on the opposite bank the road from Smolensk to Moscow covered with artillery and troops on their march. There could be no longer a doubt. The Russians were in full retreat. The emperor was informed that he must renounce all hope of a battle, but that, from one bank to the other, his cannon might greatly harass the retrograde march of the enemy.

Belliard even proposed that a part of the army should pass the river in order to cut off the retreat of the Russian rear-guard who were charged with the defence of Smolensk. But the horsemen sent to discover a ford travelled two leagues without finding any, and drowned a number of horses in their attempts. There existed, however, a wide and convenient passage about one league above the city. In the agitation of his mind, Napoleon pushed his horse forward on that side, and, after riding several wersts in that direction, became fatigued and turned back.

He then seemed to consider Smolensk only as a passage, which ought to be forcibly taken possession of at that very instant. But Murat, who possessed considerable prudence when not thrown off his guard by the presence of the enemy, and who likewise could have no employment for his cavalry in an assault, opposed that resolution.

So violent an effort appeared to him useless, as the Russians were voluntarily retreating: with respect to the idea of getting up with them, he was heard to say, "that as they were determined not to fight, they

had been pursued far enough ; and that it was time to stop."

The emperor made some reply : but the remainder of the conversation could not be collected. However, as the king was afterwards heard to remark " that he had been down upon his knees to his brother conjuring him to stop, but that Napoleon could see nothing but Moscow, and imagined that honour, glory, peace, every thing good for him could be only there," adding " that Moscow would be our destruction ;" it was very clear what had been the subject of their disagreement.

It is an undoubted fact that, on leaving his brother-in-law, Murat's features bore the impression of deep vexation : his movements were rapid and restless, and he seemed to labour under a concentration of ominous forebodings : he uttered frequently the name of Moscow.

Not far from this spot, on the left bank of the Dnieper, at the place where Belliard had first ascertained the retreat of the enemy, a formidable battery had been erected, to which the Russians had opposed two batteries more formidable still. Every moment our cannon were dismantled, and our caissons blown up. Into the very midst of this volcano the king urged his horse ; there he halted, dismounted and remained immovable. Belliard suggested to him that he would thus sacrifice himself uselessly and ingloriously ; the king made no reply but by advancing still farther. No one in his train then doubted his object ; he had despaired of the result of the war, he foresaw only a futurity of disasters, and he sought death in order to avoid them. Belliard, however, persisted, and observed that his temerity would be the destruction of those who surrounded him. " Well then," said Murat, " do you all go back, and leave me here alone." But

this they all refused. The king, then, turning about, in great agitation, tore himself from the scene of carnage, like a man yielding only to compulsion and violence.

The general assault had just been ordered. Ney had to attack the citadel; Davoust and Lobau the suburbs which cover the walls of the city. Poniatowski, who was already on the banks of the Dnieper with sixty pieces of cannon, was to re-descend that river as far as the suburb which adjoins it, destroy the enemy's bridges, and cut off the retreat of the garrison. Napoleon ordered that at the same time the artillery of the guard should batter the great wall with its twelve-pounders, which against so thick a mass would have been of course totally ineffective. The artillery disobeyed, and continued its fire on the covered way, which it completely swept.

Every thing fully succeeded at once, except the attack of Ney, the only one which would probably have been decisive, but which unfortunately was neglected. The enemy was vigorously driven back within the walls. All who had not time to gain entrance into the place perished; but in mounting to the assault, our attacking columns left a long and wide train of blood, wounded, and killed behind them.

One battalion was observed, which, in consequence of presenting itself in flank before the Russian batteries, lost an entire row of one of its companies by a single ball. Twenty-two men fell at the same moment.

In the mean time the army, on an amphitheatre of hills, surveyed in silent anxiety the struggles of its brave comrades in arms; but when they perceived them dash through a storm of balls and grape-shot, and persevere with firmness, and in truly admirable

order, they all clapped their hands in a burst of enthusiasm. The sound of this welcome and glorious applause reached our columns of attack, and fully recompensed those intrepid warriors for their self-devotion; and although in a single brigade, that of Dalton, and in the artillery of Reindre, five chiefs of battalion, five hundred men, and the general himself had fallen, the survivors declared that the enthusiastic homage which had been paid to their exertions was a satisfactory reward for all they had endured.

Having reached just as far as the walls of the place the assailants protected themselves from its fire by means of the out works and buildings which had just been carried. The discharge of musketry continued, and its sharp sounds reverberating from the city walls, seemed to become every moment more animated and severe. The emperor was annoyed by it, and was desirous of withdrawing his troops. Thus the fault which Ney had committed the evening before, in the case of a single battalion, had been just repeated by the whole army. In the first instance the loss amounted to between three and four hundred men, in the second to between five and six thousand. Davoust, however, persuaded the emperor to persevere in the attack.

Night now came on; Napoleon withdrew to his tent, which had been stationed with more circumspection than on the evening before; and Count Lobau, after having obtained possession of the fossé, which however he was unable to retain, ordered some shells to be thrown into the city to dislodge the enemy from it. Almost immediately were seen rising thick and black columns of smoke, exhibiting occasionally gleams of light, and then sparks and burning flakes; at length, pyramids of flame ascended from every part. It ap-

peared as if there was an assemblage of distinct fires. Soon, however, they became united, forming one vast conflagration, which rose in whirling and destructive grandeur, covered nearly the whole of Smolensk, and consumed it amidst ominous and awful crashes.

This dreadful disaster, which Count Lobau very naturally imputed to himself, threw him into momentary consternation. The emperor, seated in front of his tent, viewed the terrific spectacle in silence. Neither the cause, nor the result, could be yet discovered; and the night was passed under arms.

About three in the morning, a subaltern officer belonging to Davoust, ventured to go to the foot of the wall, and scaled it, without giving the least alarm. Emboldened by the silence which reigned around him, he made his way into the city; there suddenly he heard a number of voices, speaking with the Slavonian accent, and the Frenchman, surprised and surrounded, concluded that he must be inevitably killed or taken prisoner. But at the same moment the first rays of the sun discovered to him, in those whom he first imagined to be enemies, the Poles of Poniatowski. They had been the first to penetrate into the city, which Barclay had just abandoned.

Smolensk having been reconnoitred, and its gates cleared and laid open, the army entered within its walls. It passed over the smoking and bloody ruins in martial order, and with all the pomp of military music and displayed banners; triumphant over deserted ruins, and the solitary witness of its own glory! A spectacle without spectators, a victory scarcely better than fruitless, a glory steeped in blood, and of which the smoke by which we were surrounded and which seemed indeed to be our only conquest, was the best and most characteristic emblem.

CHAPTER V.

WHEN the emperor understood that Smolensk was in the full occupation of his troops, and its fires nearly extinguished, and the light of day and the several returns of the state of his army had given him a clear view of surrounding circumstances; when, in short, he at last saw, that here, as at the Niemen, as at Wilna, and as at Witepsk, that phantom of victory which decoyed him onward, and which he ever believed himself on the point of grasping, had again eluded his hopes and efforts, he proceeded slowly towards his barren conquest.

According to his usual practice, he first examined the field of battle, in order correctly to estimate the intrepidity of the attack, the merit of the resistance, and the respective losses.

He found it strewed with a great number of Russian dead, and but few on our side. The greater part, particularly of the French, had been stripped naked. The latter were distinguished by the whiteness of their skin, and by their less bony and muscular figures than those of the Russians. Here was a sad review of the dead and dying; and a dreadful account to be made up and delivered! The emperor's contracted brow and evident agitation gave some idea of his sufferings. But in him policy was a second nature, which always silenced the suggestions of the first.

The enumeration of the dead, on the day following the battle, was, however, it must also be observed, in this instance, as in many others, as deceptive as it was disgusting; for the greater part of our killed had been removed in the course of the night, and those of the enemy all left, thus indicating a highly favorable contrast. This removal was effected, in order to prevent

desponding impressions on the minds of our soldiers, and also from the natural preference shown by every army, in succouring the wounded and performing the last duties to the dead, to its own troops before those of the enemy.

The emperor, notwithstanding, publicly announced that his losses on the preceding day were greatly inferior to those of the Muscovites ; that the conquest of Smolensk made him master of the Russian salt-pits, and that his minister of finance might expect the payment of twenty-four millions of francs into the treasury, in addition to his estimate for the current year. It is neither true nor probable that he really entertained such illusions himself. However, the power of imposing upon others, of which he well knew how to make the most valuable use, he was thought, in this instance, to employ to his disadvantage.

In continuation of this inspection, he arrived at one of the gates of the citadel, near the Boristhenes, in front of the suburb on the right bank, which was still occupied by the Russians. There, surrounded by Marshals Ney, Davoust, and Mortier, the grand-marshal Duroc, Count Lobau, and one of his other generals, he sat down on some matting in front of a cottage, less with a view to watch the motions of the enemy than from the necessity he experienced of relieving the pressure he felt on his mind, and seeking, in the attentions or the attachment of his generals, some support against facts and against himself.

He spoke at considerable length, with animation, and without any interruption. " What a disgrace was it to Barclay to have delivered up the keys of Old Russia without a battle ! and yet what a noble field for that battle he had himself offered him ! with what advantages it had abounded ! a strong city to support

and to co-operate with his efforts ! that same city to receive and protect the ruins of his army, in case of a defeat !

“And what would he have had opposed to him in that battle? an army numerous, it was true, but cramped by too narrow a field of action, and with no possible retreat but among precipices. It had been as it were delivered up into his hands. Barclay had wanted nothing but resolution. It was now all over with Russia. Her army, instead of defending her cities, only assisted in destroying them. For, in fact, what ground more favourable could Barclay ever find? what position could that man make up his mind to contest who had abandoned that of Smolensk, Smolensk the holy, Smolensk the strong, the key of Moscow, the bulwark of Russia, the predicted grave of Frenchmen ! The effect would be soon seen of that loss upon the Russian people. The Lithuanian soldiers, and even those furnished by Smolensk herself, would be soon seen to desert their ranks in indignation at the abandonment of their capital without a conflict.”

Napoleon added “that he had undoubted information of the enfeebled state of the Russian divisions; that the greater proportion of them were already dreadfully cut down; that they were hastening to destruction in detail; that Alexander would soon have no army left. The mobs of peasantry armed with pikes which had been just seen in the train of their battalions clearly manifested the difficulties to which their generals were reduced.”

While the emperor was thus engaged in discourse the bullets of the Russian riflemen were whistling round his head; but he was wholly absorbed by his subject. He poured out the most severe and bitter

sarcasms on the hostile general and army, as if, not having been able to exterminate them by arms, he could do it by invective. No one made any reply; it was evident that his object was not advice; it was clear that nothing could be suggested to him which he had not himself fully thought of; that he was, in fact, carrying on a debate in his own mind, and that by the torrent of conjectures in which he indulged he was in reality endeavouring to impose upon his understanding, and striving to involve in illusions both others and himself. Besides, he did not allow any time for interruption. With respect to the weakness and disorganization of the enemy's army, no one individual gave any credit to it. But what reply could be made? he cited positive communications. They were those which had been transmitted to him by Lauriston; but they had been altered, under the idea of rendering them more correct; for the returns of the Russian force made by Lauriston, who was the French minister in Russia, had been quite accurate; but, in conformity to other information, less certain but more gratifying, they had been reduced one third.

After discoursing for about an hour, the emperor, glancing his eye at the heights on the right bank which were nearly evacuated by the enemy, concluded with exclaiming, "that the Russians were women, and that they acknowledged themselves conquered." He was eager to persuade himself that these people, by coming into contact with Europe, had lost a portion of their wild and savage valour. But their former wars had taught them valuable lessons, and they were, in fact, just in that stage at which nations still retain all their primitive virtues, and have already made some progress in acquired ones.

He, at length, remounted his horse. It was then that the grand-marshal remarked to one of the party, "that if Barclay had been so very wrong in refusing battle, the emperor would not have taken such pains to convince us of it." At the distance of a few paces from this spot, an officer, who had been recently sent to the prince of Schwartzberg, presented himself to the emperor's notice; he reported that Tormasof and his army had advanced towards the north, between Minsk and Warsaw, and that they had marched upon our line of operation. A Saxon brigade taken prisoners at Kobrynn, the invasion of the grand-duchy, and the consternation of Warsaw, had been the first results of that aggression; but Regnier had summoned Schwartzberg to his assistance. Tormasof had then fallen back as far as Gorodeczna, where he had stationed himself on the 12th of August, between two defiles in a plain surrounded by woods and marshes, but accessible in the rear of his left flank.

Regnier was singularly judicious in the choice and management of ground, and admirable in all the preparations for battle; but when the field was animated by combatants, and covered with men and horses, he became lost and bewildered by the rapidity of the movements; accordingly, that general saw at a glance the weak side of the Russians, and to that immediately applied himself; but instead of penetrating it by impetuous masses, he contented himself with making partial and distinct attacks.

Tormasof, aware of his situation, thus had time to oppose first, regiments against regiments, then brigades to brigades, and at last divisions to divisions. In consequence of the contest being thus protracted, he obtained the advantage of night, and withdrew

his army from the field of battle, on which one rapid and simultaneous effort must have proved his absolute destruction. He lost, however, some cannon, a great deal of baggage, and four thousand men, and retreated behind the Styr, where Tchitchakof, who was hastening to his aid with the army of the Danube, joined him.

This engagement, although far from decisive, saved the grand-duchy; it reduced the Russians in that quarter to the defensive; and gave the emperor time for gaining a battle.

During this recital, the tenacious disposition of Napoleon was less struck by these advantages in themselves considered, than by the encouragement they lent to the illusion in which he had just been endeavouring to involve us; and, always adhering to his first idea, and without putting any questions to the aide-de-camp, he turned round to his hearers, and said, as if in continuation of his previous discourse, "You see there, the wretches; they even suffer themselves to be beaten by Austria." Then looking round him, with an advertent and hurried eye, "I hope," he added, "none but Frenchmen hear me." He then inquired, whether he might depend upon the fidelity of the prince of Schwartzemberg; the aide-de-camp pledged himself for it: and he was not mistaken; although the event appeared to prove the contrary.

The whole discourse which the emperor had thus delivered proved nothing more than his own heavy disappointment, and that his mind was again labouring under a state of fluctuation: for with him success was not apt to be communicative, nor decision talkative. He at last entered Smolensk: as he was passing through the gateway in its immensely thick walls,

Count Lobau observed, "Here are capital head-quarters for cantonments!" But he noticed the suggestion only by a glance of reproof.

His looks, however, soon changed to a different expression when he could fix them only on the ruins amidst which our wounded soldiers were dragging themselves along, and the heaps of smoking ashes, in which lay human skeletons dried and blackened by the flames. This accumulated and hideous destruction struck him with horror! What a bitter fruit of our victory! That city in which our soldiers were to have found shelter, provisions, the most valuable plunder, the promised indemnity and boasted remuneration for all their misfortunes, was nothing but an absolute ruin on which they must bivouac! Undoubtedly his ascendancy over his troops was great; but could it pass the bounds of nature? what must be their opinions and feelings on the occasion?

Here it is our duty to observe, that the miseries of the army found a faithful interpreter. He was apprized that his soldiers asked each other, "for what object they had been conducted to a distance of eight hundred leagues to obtain nothing but muddy water, famine, and bivouacs upon ashes. For these were the substance and summary of all their conquests: they had nothing but what they brought with them. If it had been necessary to drag every thing they wanted with them, to convey France, in fact, into Russia, where was the object of their leaving France at all?"

Some even of the generals began to get weary and exhausted; others were laid up by sickness; others complainingly asked, "Of what use was it for him to have so enriched them, if they were never to enjoy their wealth? to have engaged them happily in marriage, if he made them widowers by a perpetual ab-

sence ; to have conferred on them palaces, if he compelled them incessantly to sleep abroad, upon the bare ground, in the midst of frost and snows ? for every succeeding year the hardships of war were aggravated ; new conquests obliging them to go to a greater distance in order to find out new enemies. Europe, in a short time, would be insufficient, and Asia would be wanted."

Among our allies particularly, there were many who ventured to think that less would be lost by defeat than by victory ; a reverse might possibly disgust the emperor with the war ; or, at least, would place it more within our reach.

The generals who were most in Napoleon's intimacy were astonished at his confidence. " He might be almost said, already, to have left Europe behind him ; and if she should rise in insurrection against him, his only subjects would be his soldiers, his only empire his camp ; and the third part of that consisted of foreigners, who would, in the case supposed, of course become enemies." Such was the language held by Murat and Berthier. Napoleon, irritated at perceiving in his two principal lieutenants, and at the moment of action, the same apprehensions that he was struggling against in his own breast, gave way before them to all the fitful crossness of temper, and absolutely overwhelmed them with his chagrin and reproaches ; a circumstance frequently occurring in the households of princes ; those on whose attachment they can most depend being the very persons whom they are least solicitous to please ; an inconvenience of favouritism outweighing its advantages.

After his peevishness had flowed off in a torrent of words, he recalled them : but on this occasion they kept aloof in sullen displeasure. The emperor, how-

ever, repaired his sallies of ill-humour by kind and caressing attentions, calling Berthier "his wife," and his fits of passion "family quarrels."

Murat and Ney left him full of ominous presentiments of the results of that war, which at the first sight of the Russians they had vigorously recommended and pursued. For in these men, made up as they were of action, instinct, and feeling, nothing was regular and consistent, every thing was unexpected; they were driven by opportunity and circumstances; and, full of impetuosity and versatility, they changed their objects, means, and arrangements, at every step of their progress, as the landscape shifts before the eye of the traveller.

CHAPTER VI.

ABOUT this time Rapp and Lauriston presented themselves before the emperor, the latter of them from Petersburg. Napoleon did not ask a single question of that officer, who had just arrived from the capital of his enemy. Perfectly well acquainted with the frankness and sincerity of his old aide-de-camp, and his opinion on the subject of the war, he was apprehensive of receiving intelligence far from satisfactory.

But Rapp, who had been following in our own footsteps, was unable to remain silent. "The army had not advanced more than a hundred leagues beyond the Niemen, and yet already every thing in it was changed. The officers who posted from the interior of France to get up with it arrived in consternation. They had no conception that a successful march, a march which

had been attended by no fighting, could leave more ruins in its track than a defeat.

“They had fallen in with whatever parties had been marching to join the large masses of force, and whatever had been detached from them; with all, in short, that had not been under excitation from the presence of the chiefs, from example, or from the war. The countenances of each group, according to the distance at which they found themselves from their native soil, inspired hope, anxiety, or pity.

“In Germany, as far as the Oder, where innumerable objects were perpetually recalling France to the memory of these young soldiers, they fancied that they had scarcely, in fact, quitted it, and were observed to be full of ardour and joy; but, after passing the Oder, in Poland, where the soil, produce, and inhabitants, costume, manners, and even the form and furniture of habitations wear a strange and foreign aspect; where nothing, in short, brought back to the mental eye that land which they so deeply regretted, they began to be astonished at the extent of ground which they had traversed, and their countenances bore the impression of fatigue and melancholy.

“By what an enormous distance, then, were they obliged to become separated from France, since they had reached unknown countries where every thing exhibited to them an aspect of melancholy novelty! After traversing so immense an extent of country, to find that they had a vast deal more to traverse! Even the idea of return itself carried some discouragement about it; and yet to march on was the order, incessantly and for ever to march on! They complained that from the time of their leaving France their fatigues had been increasing, and the means of supporting them diminishing.”

In reality, first the wine failed, then the beer, and even brandy; and at last they were reduced to water, which, in its turn, sometimes failed also. It was the same with food, and all the various necessaries of life; and in the course of this gradual deprivation, dejection of mind kept pace with increasing weakness of body. Agitated by vague and dismal apprehensions, they passed through the mournful uniformity of the vast and silent forests of black pines. They dragged themselves along by the side of those lofty trees, bare and leafless to the very summit, and in the midst of such immensity felt a painful and perhaps superstitious sense of their own littleness and weakness. Then, they would sometimes form ominous and extravagant ideas of the geography of countries thus unknown to them, and under some impression of secret horror hesitate to advance farther into such profound solitudes.

From these physical and moral pains, these privations, these continual bivouacs, equally dangerous near the pole as under the equator, and from the infected state of the atmosphere, occasioned by the numerous putrid carcasses of men and horses which lay unburied on the road, arose the two dreadful epidemics dysentery and typhus. The Germans were the first to sink under them. They have less nerve, and are less sober than the French; and they were less interested in the object of the expedition, which appeared foreign to their feelings. Of twenty-two thousand Bavarians which had passed the Oder, only eleven thousand had reached the Duna, and yet up to that time they had not been in action. This military march cost the French a quarter, and the allies a half, of their army.

Every morning the regiments left their bivouac in regular order; but after the few first paces their ranks were unlocked and lengthened into loose and broken

files; the weakest, not being able to keep up, were soon passed by their less enfeebled comrades, whom with their eagles they anxiously watched as they diminished in the distance, and, after a vain struggle to get up with them, saw at last completely vanish from their view. They then yielded to despondency. The roads, the edges of the woods, were lined with these unhappy victims; some were observed tearing off the ears of corn to devour the grain; they then attempted, and frequently without success, to reach the nearest hospital or village. Numbers of them perished.

But the sick soldiers were not the only ones who quitted the army: many actuated by disgust for the service on the one hand, and by the love of independence and plunder on the other, voluntarily deserted their colours; and these were by no means the least effective and intrepid: they soon became numerous, as the seductive power of evil is increased in proportion as examples of it multiply. They organized themselves into bands, and took up their stations in the chateaus and villages near the grand military route. There they lived in abundance: there were among them fewer French than Germans; but it was remarked that the chief of each of these little independent corps, consisting of individuals of various nations, was always found to be a Frenchman.

Rapp had seen all these disorders: he had now arrived at the imperial quarters, and his soldierly bluntness was not sparing of these details to the emperor; but Napoleon satisfied himself with observing, "I will strike a great blow, and then all will rally again."

With Sebastiani, he entered somewhat farther into the subject. That general availed himself of Napoleon's own words; for the emperor had declared to him at

Wilna, "that he would not go beyond the Duna, and that to decide on proceeding farther that year would be to incur inevitable destruction."

Sebastiani, like others, dwelt strongly on the state of the army. "It is frightful," replied the emperor, I am fully aware. On quitting Wilna, one-half had become stragglers; now two-thirds are so: no time therefore must be lost: I must extort peace from the enemy; and that can be done only at Moscow. Besides, it is now impossible for the army to stop: composed of such materials, and disorganized to such an extent, it is motion alone that keeps it together: it is an army of attack, and not of defence, an army of operation, not one of position."

He expressed himself in this manner only to those in his confidence. To the generals who commanded divisions he held a different language. To the former he disclosed the motives which urged him forward; from the others he cautiously concealed them, and appeared to agree with them on the necessity of halting. This policy explains the contradictions observable in his language.

In fact on that very day, in the streets of Smolensk, in the midst of Davoust and his generals, whose corps had suffered most in the assault of the day before, he observed "that he was indebted to them for an important success in the capture of Smolensk, and that he considered that city as furnishing good headquarters for cantonments."

"Here," said he, "you perceive my line well covered: here we stop! behind this rampart I can rally my troops, give them rest, receive reinforcements, and obtain provisions from Dantzic. The whole of Poland is conquered and defended: this result is sufficient; it is, in the course of two months, reaping

what might be considered the fair fruit of two years of war. That, therefore, is enough. From this point, in the spring, we shall have to reorganise Lithuania, and re-create an invincible army; and then, if peace do not come to look for us in our winter quarters, we will go and conquer her at Moscow."

Then, apparently in confidence, he informed the marshal that in ordering him to advance beyond Smolensk, his object was merely to remove the Russians to a convenient distance from it, but that he strictly enjoined him not to engage in any action of consequence. Yet at the same time he confided his advanced-guard to Murat and Ney, who were distinguished for their temerity; and, without communicating the fact to Davoust, had just placed that methodical and cautious commander under the orders of the impetuous king of Naples. Thus did his mind appear to fluctuate between two momentous decisions, and the inconsistency of his language find its way into his conduct. However, in this mental conflict, the ascendancy of his spirit of enterprise over his caution was decidedly observed, as well as the manner in which he arranged every thing, in order to create circumstances by which he should necessarily become committed.

CHAPTER VII.

IN the mean time the Russians were still defending the suburb on the right bank of the Dnieper. On our side, the day of the 18th of August and the ensuing night were employed in re-constructing the bridges. On the 19th, before day, Ney crossed the river by the light of the burning suburb. At first, he saw no other

enemy than the flames; and he began to mount the steep acclivity on which it is erected. His troops advanced very slowly, with great precaution, through innumerable windings, in order to avoid being scorched by the fire. The Russians had judiciously conducted it; it presented itself on every side, and obstructed the principal avenues.

Ney and his front men proceeded in silence through the fiery labyrinth, with watchful eye and attentive ear, not knowing as yet whether from the top of the acclivity the Russians might not be waiting to rush down upon them suddenly, and precipitate them into the flames and the river. But when they saw on the crest of the ravine, where the roads diverge to Petersburgh and Moscow, only a band of Cossacks, who almost instantly disappeared by those different roads, they began to breathe freely, and were relieved from the pressure of extreme apprehension. There being no prisoners, inhabitants, or spies, it was necessary, as at Witepsk, to consult for information the appearance of the ground. But one of the two directions exhibited as many traces of the enemy as the other, and the marshal, remaining in a state of doubt, halted till noon between them both.

During this time the passage of the Boristhenes was effected at several points; the roads to the two capitals of the enemy were reconnoitred to the extent of a league, and the Russian infantry were discovered on that to Moscow. Ney would have soon got up with them; but as that road closely followed the course of the Dnieper, he was obliged to cross the streams running into it. Each of these had excavated for itself a channel which formed the bottom of a valley, the opposite side affording a station on which the enemy established himself, and whence it was necessary to

dislodge him. The first, which was that of the Stubna, did not detain him long; but the hill of Valoutina, at the foot of which flows the Kolowdnia, became the subject of a most severe contest.

The cause of the resistance experienced on this spot has been attributed to an ancient tradition connected with the national glory, which represented it as ground consecrated by victory. But this superstition, which is still suited to the understanding of the Russian soldier, is already far beneath the more enlightened patriotism of his generals. It was merely through necessity that they engaged in this contest. We have seen that the Moscow road, on leaving Smolensk, runs parallel with the Dnieper, and that the French artillery, placed on the other bank, crossed it with its fire. Barclay did not venture to risk his artillery, his baggage, and his travelling hospitals, along this road, although by night, as the rolling of the carriages would have proclaimed his retreat.

The Petersburg road left the river somewhat abruptly. Two marshy roads turned off from it to the right, one about two leagues from Smolensk, and the other about four; they conducted through woods, and after a long circuit, led again into the great Moscow road, one of them at Bredichino two leagues beyond Valoutina, the other farther on at Slobpnewa.

To these defiles Barclay did not hesitate to commit himself, with all his immense train of horses and carriages. This long and heavy column had, therefore, to pass through two great arcs of a circle, of which the high road from Smolensk to Moscow, which Ney soon attacked, was the chord. As always happens in such circumstances, either an overturned carriage, a stranded wheel, a single horse inextricably plunged in the mire, or even a broken trace, was every instant

occurring to halt the whole column. In the mean time, the sound of the French cannon was heard more and more distinctly ; they appeared to have already passed the Russian column, and almost to have reached and closed up the pass which that column was struggling to obtain.

At length, after a most harassing march, the head of the enemy's convoy arrived within sight of the high road just at the instant when the French, in order completely to block up their entrance into it, had merely to force the height of Stubna and the passage of the Kolowdnia. Ney had just successfully stormed the height ; but Korf, repulsed on Valoutina, had summoned to his assistance the column which preceded him. It is stated that that column, being in a state of disorder and ill-commanded, hesitated, but that count Woronzow, comprehending the full importance of the position, prevailed on its commander to go back.

The Russians defended themselves, in order to defend every thing ; their artillery, their wounded, and their baggage. The French attacked, in the eager hope of taking every thing. Napoleon had stopped at the distance of a league and a half behind Ney ; and, considering the reports which he heard as indicating merely an affair with the advanced-guard, he despatched Goudin to the marshal's assistance, rallied the other divisions, and went back to Smolensk. But the contest soon became a battle. On both sides thirty thousand men were successively engaged in it ; they assailed each other with the utmost violence, soldiers, subalterns, and generals ; the conflict was long, and the fury of it dreadful : even night itself did not put an end to it. Having, at length, obtained possession of the *plateau*, and become exhausted by the loss of strength and blood, and also perceiving around him

nothing but the dead and dying, and increasing darkness, Ney, at last, yielded to overpowering fatigue and ordered the firing to cease, and bayonets to be presented in silence. The Russians hearing no further discharges were equally silent, and availed themselves of the darkness to effect their retreat.

There was nearly as much glory attending on their defeat as on our victory. Both commanders, indeed, were successful; the one by actually conquering, the other by saving his artillery, his baggage, and his wounded, notwithstanding his being conquered. One of the enemy's generals, who alone, excepting those who had fallen, remained on this field of carnage, attempted to escape the recognition of our soldiers by repeating the French words of command; the light of the musketry, however, occasioned him to be discovered, and he was consequently made a prisoner. The enemy lost several other generals; but the loss of the grand army was greater still.

At the passage of the ill-repaired bridge over the Kolowdnia, general Goudin, whose well-regulated valour never affected to rush into useless danger, and who likewise was not an expert horseman, had alighted, in order to cross the stream, when at the very instant a ball grazing the ground broke both his legs. When the intelligence of this misfortune reached the emperor, it suspended, for a time, both language and action. Every one was struck with consternation; and the victory of Valoutina seemed rather a misfortune.

Goudin was removed to Smolensk, where he received from the emperor the kindest attentions; but all was in vain. His remains were interred in the citadel of that place on which they confer honour. A tomb worthy of the warrior, who was a good citizen, a good

husband, a good father, an intrepid, just, and humane general, and a man, who possessed at once probity and talent ; a rare assemblage of excellence in an age in which we too frequently see morals connected with imbecility, and talents with profligacy.

By a happy chance, the place of this admirable man was well supplied. Gerard, the senior general of brigade of the division, assumed the command of it ; and the enemy, totally unaware of our loss, obtained no advantage from the dreadful blow he had inflicted on us.

The Russians, astonished at having been attacked only in front, concluded that the military combinations of Murat consisted simply in following their grand route ; and sarcastically designated him, "the general of high roads:" thus forming their opinion of him merely from events, a mode of judgment far more fallacious than correct.

In reality, while Ney was making his attack, Murat cleared his flanks with his cavalry, without being enabled to bring it into action, as woods on the left and marshes on the right, impeded its movements. But, while the contest was proceeding in front, both were eagerly expecting the effect of a flank march of Westphalians, commanded by Junot.

After passing the Stubna, the high-road, with a view to avoid the swamps formed by the various streams flowing into the Dnieper, turned off to the left, took the direction of the heights, and removed to some distance from the basin of the river in order to approach it again over ground more favourable. It had been observed, that there was a cross-road, more exposed, but shorter, as they all are, passing directly over these swampy bottoms between the Dnieper and

the high-road, which it rejoined behind the *plateau* of Valoutina.

Junot proceeded along this cross-road, after having passed the river at Prudiszy. It soon conducted him behind the left of the Russians, upon the flank of the columns which were returning to the assistance of their rear-guard. He had only to attack in order to render the victory decisive. Those who were engaged with marshal Ney in front, confounded by the alarm of battle in their rear, would have been thrown into complete uncertainty and suspense, and the disorder which, in the very midst of the conflict, must have immediately involved the immense multitude of men, horses, and carriages all confined in a single road, would have been absolutely irreparable. But Junot, although brave as a man, was fearful as a commander. His responsibility harassed him.

In the mean time Murat, concluding that he must have arrived, was astonished at not hearing him commence his attack. The intrepidity of the Russians in front of Ney led him to a suspicion of the truth. He instantly left his cavalry, and traversing the woods and marshes almost alone, flew to Junot and reproached him with his inaction. Junot excused himself by saying, "he had no orders to attack; his Wurtemberg cavalry was timid; its efforts were all affected and insincere; it would never have resolution to close with the battalions of the enemy."

Murat replied to this only by action. He rushed in front of this body of cavalry. Under a different general they became different soldiers; he hurried them forward in a moment, threw them upon the Russians, trampled down their rifle-men, and, returning to Junot, said to him, "Now complete what is

begun; thy honour and thy marshal's baton are at stake." But he then left him to rejoin his own troops, and Junot, in consternation, remained immovable. He had been too long immediately under the eye of Napoleon, whose active mind arranged every thing, both in the design and the detail; he had learnt only how to obey; he had no experience of command; to which it must be added, that fatigues and wounds had prematurely superannuated him.

With respect to the choice of this general for the command of that corps, there was nothing in it surprising. It was well-known that the emperor was attached to him by habit; he was the oldest of his aides-de-camp, and, from a natural weakness, as the presence of that officer was connected with the recollection of all his successes and victories, he had felt an unwillingness to part with him. It is also not improbable that his vanity might derive gratification from seeing his armies commanded by men whom he had himself trained: he might, likewise, very naturally think that he might rely most firmly on their zeal and devotion.

Notwithstanding this attachment, however, Junot on this occasion incurred his severe resentment. On the day following the conflict, he examined the several places which had been the scene of it. When inspecting the bridge, on which Goudin had been struck down, he remarked, that that was not the place for debouching; and fixing his angry eye on the position which Junot had occupied, "There," said he, "the Westphalians should have made their attack! the whole battle rested there! what, then, was Junot doing?" his irritation now became so violent that no excuse could at first appease him. He summoned Rapp, and told him, that "he withdrew his command from the duke of Abrantes! that he dismissed him

from the army! that he had irrecoverably lost his marshal's baton! that this misconduct had perhaps closed against them the road to Moscow! That to him (Rapp) he committed the command of the Westphalians, that he would speak to them in their own language, and soon make them fight." But Rapp declined taking the place of his companion in arms, and gradually soothed the irritation of the emperor, whose anger indeed was always soon extinguished and easily evaporated in words.

But it was not merely on the left that the enemy was in imminent danger of being conquered; he had been in still greater peril on his right. Morand, one of the generals of Davoust, had been pushed on that side across some forests; he proceeded over some woody heights, and arrived at the commencement of the action on the flank of the Russians. After advancing a few paces farther, he must have debouched in the rear of their right; his sudden appearance at such a crisis must infallibly have decided the victory, and rendered it complete; but Napoleon, not being well acquainted with the local geography, had recalled him to the spot where Davoust and himself had halted.

It was a question frequently asked in the army, why the emperor when he appointed three independent chiefs to co-operate for so important an object, had not taken care to be himself present at the execution of it, in order to secure a unity indispensable to its success and which without him would be nearly impossible. But he had gone back to Smolensk, either overpowered by fatigue, or not at all expecting an engagement so serious, or from the necessity he felt of conducting many things at once, which prevented him from devoting himself entirely and personally for any length of time to any particular one. In fact the

labours of government, both of his own empire and of Europe, which had been suspended by the preceding days of conflict, were now heavily in arrear. It was become necessary to clear out his portfolios, and to decide cases of civil administration, and of policy, which had seriously accumulated. It was likewise both a matter of consequence and of gratification to date from Smolensk.

Accordingly when Borelli, deputy-chief of Murat's staff came to communicate to him intelligence of the action of Valoutina, he hesitated to admit him; and so complete was the absorption of his mind in business, that at last one of the ministers thought it necessary to go and state the urgency of the case, in order to procure his immediate introduction. The report of Borelli agitated him. "What is it you say?" said he, "why you are not enough! did the enemy show sixty thousand men? it was an absolute battle, then?" and he began to inveigh against the disobedience and inactivity of Junot, when Borelli informed him of the mortal wound of Goudin. His grief for that event was poignant, and indicated by a variety of particular questions, and of exclamations of regret: then, with a strength of mind peculiar to himself, he checked his grief, postponed his anger, suspended his vexation, and put off the care of battles till the morrow, for it was then night: afterwards, however, the hope of a battle again agitated his mind, and he appeared at the dawn of the following day on the fields of Valoutina.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE soldiers of Ney, and those of the division Goudin (bereaved now of their general), were there ranged around the dead bodies of their companions and of the Russians, in the midst of shattered and broken trees, on ground beaten down by the struggling feet of the combatants, furrowed by balls, strewed with fragments of arms, torn garments, military accoutrements, overturned carriages and scattered limbs. Such, alas! are the trophies of war! Such are the beauties of the field of victory!

The battalions of Goudin appeared to be reduced to mere platoons, they seemed, however, to feel a pride and glory in proportion to the decrease of their numbers; the smell of burnt cartridges was still strong in the atmosphere around them; the ground on which they stood, and their clothes, were impregnated with it, and their faces still blackened over with gunpowder. The emperor could not proceed in front of them without stepping over, or trampling upon, the bodies of the slain and bayonets absolutely wrenched by the violence of the conflict.

But over all these horrors he threw a drapery of glory. His gratitude transformed the field of death into a field of triumph, where, for several successive hours, honour and ambition reigned in uninterrupted and perfect satisfaction.

He felt that the time was now come in which his soldiers required the support both of praises and rewards. Accordingly, never were his looks more impressive and affectionate. As to his language, "this battle was the most brilliant exploit in our military history; the soldiers whom he was addressing were

men qualified to conquer the world; those who had perished in the contest were warriors who had died a death of immortality." He made this remark in the full knowledge that it is more especially in such scenes of carnage that men's minds are particularly directed to immortality.

In his rewards he was not merely liberal, but magnificent; the 12th, 21st, and 127th of the line, and the 7th of the light troops received eighty-seven decorations and promotions. These were the regiments of Goudin. Hitherto the 127th had marched without an eagle; for, at that time, it was the practice for every regiment to conquer its colours on a field of battle, in order to give satisfactory proof that it would preserve them there.

The emperor delivered to it an eagle with his own hands; he also rewarded and gratified the corps of Ney. His favours were valuable in themselves, and for the way in which they were conferred. He added to the worth of the gift by his manner of bestowing it. He was successively surrounded by every regiment, as by a family of his own. There he called upon the officers, subalterns, and privates to point to him those who were the bravest or the most successful among all those brave men; to those who were so described he immediately distributed rewards. The officers designated the proper objects of his favourable notice, the soldiers confirmed the selection, and the emperor sanctioned it. Thus, as he observed himself, the choice was effected at once, in a circle, in his own presence, and confirmed with acclamations by the troops.

These paternal manners, which had the effect of making the privates the companions in arms of the master of Europe; forms which brought back the long

regretted usages of the republic, delighted and transported them. He was a monarch, but he was the monarch of the revolution; and they were devotedly attached to a sovereign who had elevated himself by his own merits, and who elevated others in proportion to theirs. In him there was every thing to stimulate zeal and effort, nothing to excite offence or imply reproach.

Never was there a field of victory better adapted to stir and exalt the feelings: the gift of the eagle so nobly merited, the pomp of the promotions, the acclamations of joy, the glory of these warriors thus recompensed on the very spot on which it had been gained, their achievements proclaimed by a voice every accent of which was echoed by attentive and admiring Europe, by that great captain whose bulletins were about to carry their praise to the extremities of the world, but more particularly among their fellow citizens, into the bosom of their own families, who would derive from the intelligence both confidence and pride: what an assemblage of favours and advantages! they were fascinated and intoxicated by it. He himself, at first, evidently participated in their transports.

But when, out of the observation of the soldiers, the pensive attitude of Ney and Murat, and the remarks of Poniatowski, as frank and judicious in council as he was intrepid in the field, had subdued the tone of his feelings, when the oppressive heat of the day had produced its natural operation upon him, and the reports arrived that the enemy had been pursued for eight leagues without being overtaken, he became disenchanted. On his return to Smolensk, the joltings of his carriage over the ruins of the fight, the embarrassment occasioned on the road by the long

line of the wounded who were dragging themselves on or borne by others into the city, and in Smolensk by carts conveying the amputated limbs to a distance and out of sight; in short, the view of every thing odious and horrible out of fields of battle completely oppressed and dejected him. Smolensk was nothing but one vast hospital, and the groans of anguish which issued from it prevailed over the acclamations of glory which had been just heard on the fields of Valoutina.

The reports of the surgeons were absolutely hideous. In Russia, instead of wine and brandy made from grapes, the inhabitants use a brandy extracted from grain, with which they mix various narcotics. Our young soldiers, enfeebled by hunger and fatigue, conceived that this liquor would repair their strength; but its treacherous operation brought out at once their whole remaining vital warmth, when they sunk in absolute exhaustion and disease completely overpowered them.

Others, less sober or more reduced by weakness, were observed to be affected by dizziness, drowsiness, and lethargy, and seen lying along in the ditches and the high-roads. There with half-open and gradually dimming eyes, they quietly felt death advancing from the extremities to the vital parts of their frame, and expired in fixed melancholy without a groan.

At Wilna it was impossible to procure hospitals for more than six thousand sick. Convents, churches, synagogues, and barns, were applied to the accommodation of the suffering multitudes. In these wretched abodes, sometimes insalubrious and even noisome, always too few and too much crowded, the sick were often destitute of food, of beds, of covering even with straw, and of medicines. The surgeons soon became far too few for the duties that were required of them,

and in short every thing, even including the hospitals themselves, contributed to make patients, and nothing to cure them.

At Witepsk four hundred wounded Russians were left upon the field of battle; three hundred others had been abandoned in that city by their army; and, as that army carried off the inhabitants with them, these wretched victims remained three days unobserved, without relief, heaped together in confusion, the dying with the dead, and stagnating in filth and infection; they were at last discovered and mixed up among our own wounded, who were also just about the same number as the Russians. Our surgeons cut up their own shirts and those of their wretched patients for bandages and dressings; for the supplies of linen were already exhausted.

When, in course of time, the wounds of these unfortunate men began to heal, and when in fact they needed nothing but nourishing food to complete their cure, they died actually for want of subsistence. Frenchmen or Russians, few of them escaped. Those whom the loss of a limb or their general state of weakness prevented from going in search of food were the first to fall victims. These disasters were frequent wherever the emperor was not present, his presence drawing every thing to him and his departure hurrying every thing after him, and his orders being, in fact, never scrupulously executed but under his own inspection.

At Smolensk there was no want of hospitals. Fifteen large brick buildings had been saved from the fire, and were appropriated to this purpose; and there were found in the city brandy, wines, and medicines; and, after a time, our travelling hospitals arrived there; but there was not enough of any thing. The surgeons

laboured both night and day. Before the second night had passed over, every thing that had been prepared for dressing the wounded had been used. There was no linen left, and it was necessary to substitute for it the paper found among the city archives. The parchments were used to compress and bolster the fractured limbs, and tow or birch-cotton was applied instead of lint.

Our surgeons were overwhelmed and confounded; for three days a hospital containing a hundred wounded was completely forgotten, and was at length discovered by a mere chance. Rapp penetrated into this mansion of despair! I will spare my readers a description of its horrors! I will not inflict on them impressions which absolutely turn the current of the blood! Rapp, however, did not withhold the details from Napoleon, who ordered his own stock of wine and many pecuniary gratuities to be bestowed on the unfortunate men, who had thus survived only through peculiar tenaciousness of vitality and recourse to the most revolting food.

But, in addition to the strong emotion which these communications excited in the mind of the emperor, there was one consideration which he regarded as particularly important and alarming. The burning of Smolensk he could now no longer believe to be the consequence of one of those fatal accidents which frequently occur in war, nor even the result of a sudden feeling of despair. It was the effect of cool determination. The Russians had connected with this grand work of destruction the caution, arrangement, and seasonableness, which are in general exclusively reserved for purposes of preservation.

On that same day the manly replies of one of the priests (popes) of the Greek or national church, the only one who was met with in all Smolensk, gave him

a clear view of the blind and outrageous hatred against the French with which the whole Russian population had been purposely inspired. His interpreter, who was absolutely terrified at observing this hatred, conducted the priest to the emperor. The venerable man at first freely upbraided him for his alleged acts of sacrilege; he was not aware that it was through the Russian general himself, that the warehouses and churches of the city had been burnt, and that he imputed these horrors to the French to prevent the merchants and farmers from separating their cause from that of the nobility.

The emperor listened to him with attention: "But," said he at length to him, "was your church among those that were burnt?" "No, Sire," replied the priest; "God will be more powerful than you; he will protect it, for I have opened it as a refuge to those whom the burning of the city has left houseless!" Napoleon, with some emotion said, "You are right: God will indeed watch over the innocent victims of war, and will reward your courage. Return, my worthy and reverend friend, to your duties. If all your priests had imitated your example; if they had not pusillanimously betrayed that mission of peace which they received from heaven, if they had not abandoned the temples which would have been deemed consecrated even by their presence, my soldiers would have respected your sacred asylums: for we are all christians, and the God you worship is, only under a different name, our own."

With these words Napoleon dismissed the priest, with an escort and supply, to his temple. When the soldiers entered that sanctuary of the wretched there suddenly burst from it a heart-rending shriek, and a multitude of terrified women and children crowded for

safety round the altar: but the priest, raising his voice, said to them "Take courage; I have seen Napoleon, and spoken to him. Oh! my children, how completely have we been deceived! The emperor of France is not the man that he has been represented to you. He and his soldiers, be assured, acknowledge and adore the same God as ourselves. The war which he wages is no war of religion; it is merely a political difference between him and our emperor. His soldiers fight only against soldiers. They do not put to the sword old men, women, and children. Take heart then, and let us thank God that we are delivered from the painful duty of hating them as pagans, blasphemers, and incendiaries." The priest then delivered out a hymn of thanksgiving, in which the whole congregation followed him with tears.

But the words of the priest showed clearly to how great an extent the nation had been imposed upon. The rest of the inhabitants had fled. Henceforward, therefore, we should find not merely the army, but the population, the whole of Russia, retiring at our approach. Together with that population, the emperor saw gliding from his grasp one of his most powerful means of conquest.

CHAPTER IX.

IN fact, Napoleon while at Witepsk had employed two persons upon whom he could depend, to sound the dispositions of these people. The object was to gain them over to the side of liberty, and bind them in our cause by an insurrection which might be either more or less general. No impression, however, had been made but

upon a few dispersed and ignorant peasants, who might even, perhaps, have been purposely left behind among us by the Russians as spies. The attempt had produced no other effect than that of disclosing his project and putting the Russians on their guard against it.

These means, moreover, were repugnant to the feelings of Napoleon, who was by nature more inclined to the cause of kings than to that of the people. He employed them, therefore, with great languor and negligence. At a later period, when at Moscow, he received various applications from heads of families. The writers complained that they were treated by the territorial proprietors as herds of cattle, and sold or bartered by them at pleasure. They petitioned that Napoleon would proclaim the abolition of slavery; and they volunteered themselves as leaders for partial insurrections, which they engaged quickly to render general.

These offers were rejected. A barbarous people would have exhibited only a barbarous liberty, a boundless and frightful licentiousness! Some partial revolts had long since furnished a standard of what might on similar occasions be expected. The Russian nobles, like the landed proprietors of St. Domingo, would have been ruined and, perhaps, destroyed. These apprehensions guided the decision of Napoleon, as his language clearly evinced. They determined him to refrain from exciting a commotion which it might be beyond his power to control.

It is also to be observed that the proprietors distrusted their slaves. Among the various perils which surrounded them, they regarded that arising from their slaves as the most pressing. Their first object, therefore, was to work upon the minds of these wretched beings, who were reduced by every description of sla-

very to the grossest stupidity and degradation. The priests, whom they regard with the deepest awe, preached up to them the most absurd and ridiculous falsehoods, describing us as legions of demons commanded by Antichrist, as infernal spirits, the very sight of whom inspired horror and whose touch was actual pollution. Our prisoners saw in various instances that the utensils which they had employed were never applied by these deluded men to their own personal uses, but reserved exclusively for the most unclean animals.

However, we were now approaching, and all these gross fables were, it was supposed, necessarily about to vanish. But behold! the nobles withdrew with their slaves into the interior of the country, as if from a direful and sweeping pestilence. Riches, habitations, every thing which might naturally be expected to detain them, as well as benefit us, were completely sacrificed. They placed between them and us, famine, fire, and the wilderness; for this extraordinary and momentous resolution was executed as much against their own serfs as against Napoleon. The war, therefore, now necessary to be carried on was no longer a war of kings, but a war of classes, a war of parties, a war of religion, a war against a nation, in short every description of war at once.

The emperor then saw all the complicated and enormous character of his enterprise: the farther he advanced, the more it expanded and darkened before him. While he had encountered only kings, greater himself than the whole of them together, defeat was matter of the greatest facility and even sport; but the kings were now conquered, and he had to deal with the people. He had, in truth, to contend against another Spain, but a Spain distant, barren, and bound-

less, which he had found at the opposite extremity of Europe. He became confounded, he hesitated, and stopped.

At Witepsk, whatever decision he should eventually make, he considered it necessary for him to possess himself of Smolensk, and to his arrival at Smolensk he thought he would postpone his determination. There similar perplexity assailed him, but with so much greater violence, as the conflagration of that city, epidemic disease, and the numberless victims by whom he was surrounded, had aggravated all the previous circumstances. His hesitation now almost amounted to fear; he was divided between Kief, Petersburgh, and Moscow.

At Kief, he should envelope Tchitchakof and his army; he should relieve the right flank and the rear of the grand army, he should cover those provinces of Poland which were most productive of men, provisions, and horses; while fortified cantonments at Mohilef, Smolensk, Witepsk, Polotsk, Dunabourg, and Riga, would defend the rest of them. Behind that line, and during the course of the winter, he should effect and organise the insurrection of the whole of ancient Poland in order to precipitate her in the spring against Russia, opposing in this manner one nation to another nation, and thus rendering the contest equal.

Yet, at Smolensk he was situated on the spot whence the Petersburgh and Moscow roads diverged, twenty-nine days' march from the first of those capitals, and fifteen from the other. At Petersburgh he would be in the possession of the focus of the government, the centre in which all the radii of administration united, the brain of the Russian empire; there were the marine and military arsenals; there, in short, was the only point of communication between

Russia and England. The victory of Polotsk, of which he had just received intelligence, seemed to urge in that direction. By marching, in union with St. Cyr, upon Petersburgh, he should surround Wittgenstein, and cause Riga to fall before the forces of Macdonald.

On another side, that of Moscow, by gaining possession of that capital, he should attack both the nobles and the nation in their property, and in their ancient honour: the road to that city was shorter than the other, and presented fewer obstacles and more abundant resources; the grand Russian army, which it was impossible for him to neglect and of such importance for him to destroy, was to be found in that direction, as were also the chances of a battle, and of striking terror into the nation by inflicting a blow, in this national war, on its heart.

Of these three projects, the last alone seemed to him to be practicable, and he conceived it to be so notwithstanding the advanced state of the season. Yet the history of Charles XII. was before his eyes; not that of Voltaire, which he threw aside with impatience, considering it as both unfaithful and romantic; but the journal of Adlerfield, which he read, and which had no power to check him in his course. In comparing with each other the two expeditions, he discovered a thousand differences on which he dwelt in favour of his own; for who is qualified to be a judge in his own cause! and of how little use are past examples in a world where it is impossible to find two men, two cases, or two positions absolutely and in every point alike!

At this period, however, he was often mentioning the name of Charles XII.

CHAPTER X.

BUT the intelligences which now reached him from every side roused and kindled his ardour, as was before the case at Witepsk. His lieutenants seemed to have performed more than himself. The engagements of Mohilef, of Molodeczna, and of Valoutina were regular battles, in which Davoust, Schwartzenberg and Ney were conquerors: on his right, his line of operation appeared to be covered; in front of him the enemy's army was flying; on his left, at Slowna, on the 17th of August, the duke of Reggio was attacked by Wittgenstein, whom he had drawn upon Polotsk. The attack on the part of Wittgenstein had been animated and violent, but it had failed, although he still retained his offensive position, and Oudinot had been wounded. St. Cyr succeeded him in the command of that army, which consisted of about thirty thousand French, Swiss, and Bavarians. On the following day, that general, to whom command gave no gratification unless he had the entire and supreme exercise of it, availed himself of the accident which had placed him in that situation to enable his own troops and the enemy to form a correct estimate of his qualifications; with great coolness, however, in conformity to his habits and character, and with perfect system and combination.

From daybreak till five o'clock in the evening, he threw the enemy off his guard, by proposals for a truce in order to withdraw the wounded, and more particularly by manifesting indications of retreat. He was engaged, during the interval, in silently rallying his men; he arranged them in three columns of at

tack, and concealed them behind the village of Spas and in the neighbouring hollows and dingles.

At five o'clock, everything being in readiness, and Wittgenstein asleep, he gave the signal. The Russians, taken by complete surprise, offered an ineffectual resistance; at the first onset their left was broken through, and the centre soon fled in confusion; they left behind a thousand prisoners, twenty pieces of cannon, a field of battle covered with their dead, and a position of offence, which St. Cyr while he affected to avail himself of it was unable to use as such from the inadequacy of his force, and could employ only with a view better to defend himself.

In this short, but severe and bloody action, the right wing of the Russians, which rested on the Duna, resisted with obstinacy, and it became necessary to charge them with the bayonet through a violent storm of grape-shot; every thing succeeded; but when all that now seemed necessary was to pursue the enemy, all was on the point of being lost. A body of Russian dragoons, as some state the case, but of imperial-guards, according to others, having hazarded a charge against one of the batteries of St. Cyr, a French brigade, stationed to support it, advanced for that purpose, but all on a sudden turned their backs and fled across the mouths of our cannon, which, of course, prevented the discharge of them. The Russian troops arrived there at the same moment as ours, and completely intermingled with them; they sabred the artillery-men, overturned the cannon, and pushed our cavalry with such vigour, that, becoming more and more panic struck every instant, they rushed in perfect disorder and rout upon their own general and his staff, overthrowing all before them. St. Cyr was obliged to take to flight on foot and throw himself into the bot-

tom of a ravine, which preserved him from any further ill effect from this sudden and singular storm. The Russian dragoons had nearly reached the houses of Polotsk, when a prompt and skilful manœuvre of Berckheim, and the 4th French cuirassiers, put an end to the encounter. The Russians disappeared among the woods.

On the following day, St. Cyr ordered the pursuit of them, but merely for the purpose of ascertaining the extent and circumstances of their retreat, proving his own victory, and obtaining some additional advantages from it. During the two following months, down to the 18th of October, Wittgenstein made no attempt against him. On his side, the French general was no otherwise occupied than in observing the enemy, in maintaining his communications with Macdonald, Witepsk, and Smolensk, in fortifying himself in his position of Polotsk, and above all in procuring subsistence there.

In this action of the 18th, four generals, four colonels, and many of the subaltern officers had been wounded. Among them were particularly noticed the two Bavarian generals, Deroy and Liben. They died on the 22nd. These generals were of the same age, had belonged to the same regiment, had served in the same wars, and had advanced nearly by equal steps in the career of promotion and of danger, to which the same death in the same battle put a glorious termination. The tomb was not permitted to separate two warriors whom life and death itself had not been able to disunite: one grave received them both.

On receiving intelligence of this victory, the emperor despatched the baton of marshal of the empire to general St. Cyr. He placed also a great number of crosses at his disposal; and not long after, gave

his sanction to the greater number of the promotions requested.

Notwithstanding this success, the determination to go beyond Smolensk was of too much moment and danger for Napoleon alone positively to resolve upon it; it was more desirable to him to feel, as it were, forced into it. After the affair of Valoutina, the corps of Ney, quite worn down with fatigue, had been succeeded by that of Davoust. Murat, as a king, and as brother-in-law of the emperor, and by his order, was to have the command of it. Ney submitted to this appointment, less in the way of concession or condescension, than in consequence of congeniality of character. They were united by their ardour.

But Davoust, whose methodical and tenacious disposition was in perfect contrast with the impetuosity of Murat, and in whom the recollection of two great victories, and the titles he had derived through them, had increased a naturally proud and lofty bearing, was hurt by this dependence. These chiefs, who possessed high notions of their own merits, who were about the same age, had been companions in war, had observed each other's gradual advance to distinction, and who had been used to obey only one very extraordinary man, where by no means suited either of them to command the other; more particularly Murat, who frequently was unable to command himself.

Davoust, however, obeyed, but with a very bad grace, as is ever the case with obedience springing from wounded pride. He affected immediately to give up all direct correspondence with the emperor, who, in no little surprise, ordered him to resume it, alleging his distrust of the reports of Murat. Davoust availed himself of this acknowledgment; and reassumed his

independence. From that time the advanced guard had two chiefs. Thus did the emperor, borne down by fatigue, and pain, and anxiety, and the pressure of business of every description, and compelled to humour and manage his lieutenants, divide his power as well as his armies, in express opposition to his own maxims and former examples. Circumstances, which he had so often commanded, were become stronger than he was and now in turn commanded him.

Barclay, however, having retreated without fighting as far as Dorogobouje, Murat was under no want of Davoust's services, and no opportunity was, therefore, afforded for their misunderstanding: but, about a few wersts from that town, on the 23rd of August, at eleven o'clock in the morning, a slight wood which the king wanted to reconnoitre was vigorously disputed with him; it became necessary to carry it twice.

Murat, surprised at this resistance and at such a time of day, persisted in his object, and, having pierced through the wood, saw beyond it the whole Russian army drawn up in order of battle. The narrow ravine of the Luja separated him from them; it was mid-day, and the extension of the Russian lines, particularly upon our right, the preparations, the time, the place which was the spot on which Barclay had rejoined Bagration, the choice of the ground, which was well adapted for a grand encounter, every thing led him to conclude that a battle was intended: he immediately sent to the emperor to inform him of it.

At the same time he ordered Montbrun to pass the ravine on his right with his cavalry, in order to reconnoitre and fall upon the enemy's left. Davoust and his five divisions of infantry extended themselves on

that side ; he protected Montbrun ; the king recalled them to his left, on the high road, intending, it is said, to support the flank movement of Montbrun by some demonstrations in front.

But Davoust replied, that " this would be abandoning our right wing, through which the enemy would get behind us on the high road, which was our only retreat ; that he would thus compel us to a battle which he had strict orders to avoid ; and which he would avoid, his forces being inadequate, the position bad, and the chief under whose orders he was by no means one who inspired him with confidence." He then immediately wrote to Napoleon, urging him to hasten forward if he wished to prevent Murat from engaging without him.

At this intelligence, which he received in the night between the 24th and 25th of August, Napoleon started from his state of indecision with transport. To a disposition so enterprising and determined, suspense was torture. He pressed on with his guard, and proceeded twelve leagues without stopping ; but on the evening of the day before, the enemy had disappeared.

On our side, its retreat was ascribed to Montbrun's movement ; on the side of the Russians, to Barclay, and a false position taken by the chief of his staff, who had also laid out the ground highly disadvantageously instead of favourably for him. Bagration was the first to discover this ; his anger had no bounds, and he did not hesitate to impute treason.

Discord existed in the camp of the Russians, as well as in our advanced guard. Confidence in the commander, which constitutes so much of the life and strength of armies, was there wanting ; every step taken by him was made a ground of censure ; every

scheme he formed was considered the worst that could be formed of all possible ones. The loss of Smolensk had aggravated all these bitter feelings: the union of the two armies augmented the evil; the more powerful that united mass felt itself to be, the greater weakness it imputed to its general. The outcry against him became at length universal. A new commander was loudly demanded. However, some judicious individuals interfered with their influence; Kutusof was announced; and the humbled pride of the Russians waited for that general to lead them to battle.

The emperor, on his side, who had already reached Dorogobouje, was no longer in a state of fluctuation. He knew that wherever he went he carried with him the destiny of Europe, that the spot where he was would ever be that on which the fate of nations would be decided; and that he might, therefore, advance without apprehending any formidable consequences from the defection of the Swedes and the Turks. Accordingly, he neglected the hostile armies of Essen at Riga, of Wittgenstein before Polotsk, of Hoertel before Bobruisk, and of Tchitchakof in Volhynia. They comprised a hundred and twenty thousand men, and would inevitably augment every day; he advanced, however, between them, and suffered them to surround him without any anxiety, from a conviction that every obstacle, both of arms and policy, would vanish at the first sound of the thunderbolt which he was just ready to launch.

And yet his column of attack, which, when he quitted Witepsk still consisted of a hundred and eighty-five thousand men, was, within the short interval from that period, reduced to a hundred and fifty-seven thousand. It was thus weakened by the loss of twenty-eight thousand, one half of whom occupied Witepsk,

Orcha, Mohilef, and Smolensk. The rest had been killed or wounded, or were straggling in his rear, and plundering the allies and even the French themselves.

But a hundred and fifty-seven thousand men were sufficient to destroy the Russian army by a complete victory, and gain possession of Moscow. With respect to their base of operation, notwithstanding it appeared to be menaced by the hundred and twenty thousand Russians, it seemed to him to be secure. Lithuania, the Duna, the Dnieper, and lastly Smolensk, either were, or were on the point of being, protected, towards Riga and Dunabourg by Macdonald and thirty-two thousand men; towards Polotsk by St. Cyr and thirty thousand; at Witepsk, Smolensk, and Mohilef, by Victor and forty thousand; in front of Bobruisk by Dombrowski and twelve thousand; and upon the Bug, by Schwartzenberg and Regnier, at the head of forty-five thousand. Napoleon depended also upon the divisions Loison and Durutte, consisting of twenty-two thousand, who were already advancing from Konigsberg and Warsaw and likewise on reinforcements to the amount of eighty thousand, all of whom would have entered Russia before the middle of November.

Thus, including the Lithuanian and Polish levies, he supported himself on two hundred and eighty thousand men, while he effected with a hundred and fifty thousand others an invasion to the extent of ninety-three leagues; for such was the distance from Smolensk to Moscow.

But these two hundred and eighty thousand men were commanded by six different chiefs, independent of each other, and the highest of whom, the one who occupied the centre, the one who, from his intermediate position, seemed to be charged with the duty of

giving a unity and consistency to the operations of the five others, was a minister of peace, and not of war.

Moreover, the same causes which had already diminished by one third the French forces which had first entered Russia would inevitably disperse or destroy, in a much greater proportion, the expected reinforcements. The greater part of them arrived by detachments, formed into provisional marching battalions, under officers quite new to them and whom they would leave the first day, under no strictness of discipline, possessing nothing of the *esprit de corps*, actuated by no lofty aspiration for glory, and traversing a country nearly exhausted and desolate, which the season and climate would now, every day, render more wild and savage.

In the mean time Napoleon found Dorogobouje in ashes, just as he had Smolensk; particularly the trading quarter, the residence of those who had most to lose, whom their wealth might possibly have detained or brought over to our side, and who by their position formed a species of middling class, a commencement or nucleus for a "third estate," and who might have been seduced by the sounds of liberty.

He was fully sensible that he was quitting Smolensk just as he had entered it, still entertaining the hope of a battle which the indecision and discord of the Russian generals had again adjourned: his determination, however, was fixed; and he listened to nothing but what tended to confirm him in it. He followed up with the utmost eagerness the track of the enemy; his audacity increased with their caution; he termed their circumspection pusillanimity, their retreat flight, and cherished contempt because it gave encouragement to hope.

BOOK VII.

CHAPTER I.

THE emperor had advanced so rapidly to Dorogobouje that he was obliged to wait there for his army, and let Murat go on in pursuit of the enemy. He left that place on the 24th of August. The army marched in three columns abreast; the emperor, Murat, Davoust, and Ney in the middle, on the great road to Moscow; Poniatowski on the right; and the army of Italy on the left.

The principal column, that of the centre, could obtain no supplies on a road, on which the advanced guard had found nothing to subsist upon but the leavings of the Russians; and in so rapid a march it was scarcely possible, for want of time, to deviate from that route. Besides which, the right and left columns were collecting and devouring all they could meet with on each side of him. In order to obtain more adequate supplies, it would have been necessary to set out every day at a later hour, to halt at an earlier one, and then to extend their flanks considerably farther during the night; a plan which could not have been acted upon so near the enemy without gross imprudence.

At Smolensk, as at Wiazma, orders had been given for the troops to take with them, on quitting it, a stock of provisions for several days. The emperor well knew the difficulty of accomplishing this; but he re-

lied on the care and assiduity of the chiefs and of the soldiers. They had had notice given them; that he conceived to be sufficient. They would be sure to look well to providing for their first necessities. They were now formed to the habit of doing it; and, in reality, it was curious to see the willing and unre-mitted efforts made by such a number of men to enable them to follow a single individual to so vast a distance. The existence of the army was a prodigy, which the active, clever, and prudent dispositions of the French and Polish soldiers, their habit of surmounting almost every difficulty, and their relish of the chances, surprises, and vicissitudes even of so terrible a life of adventure, presented and regenerated every day.

Every regiment had attached to it a multitude of those dwarf horses with which Poland abounds, a great number of its country-carts, which required incessant repair or renewal, and a drove of oxen. The baggage was conducted by soldiers as drivers, for they were ready to make themselves useful in every way. There were of course a certain number fewer in the ranks: but, in the present circumstances, the want of provisions, and the necessity the army were under of taking every thing along with them was a sufficient excuse for the adoption of this system. A second army, as it were, might be said to be necessary to carry or conduct what was absolutely indispensable for the first.

In this organization, rapidly formed and applied in the course of the march, the different usage and peculiar difficulties of the several places and districts through which they passed were judiciously conformed to; and the soldiers had, with admirable tact, turned the feeble resources of the country to the best possible account. With respect to the chiefs, as the general

orders always presumed the regular distribution of rations, which, in fact, never took place, each of them, according to the degree of zeal, talent, and firmness possessed by him, had drawn the marauding more or less within his own regulation and management, and substituted regular contributions for individual pil-lage.

For it was only by excursions on the flanks of the army, and by penetrating into an unknown country, that any provisions at all could be obtained. Every evening, after the army halted and the bivouacs were established, a number of detachments, which were commanded very rarely by divisions, occasionally by brigades, but generally by regiments, went out on discovery, and plunged into the country. At the distance of a few wersts from the road, they found the villages inhabited, and were received in them with little or no hostility; but as neither party understood the language of the other, and as, also, the applicants wanted every thing that could be had promptly and peremp-torily, the peasants soon became terrified and fled into the woods, from which they afterwards issued in parties by no means formidable.

The detachments, after having fully refreshed and entertained themselves, set off with all that they had been able to collect, and rejoined their corps on the following day, or, as it happened, not till several days after; and it not unfrequently occurred, that the pil-lagers were plundered in their turn by their own com-rades, belonging to other corps, with whom they fell in. Hence originated animosities, which would infal-libly have kindled intestine warfare, and been at-tended with much bloodshed, if what afterwards took place had not levelled all in one common difficulty, and

united them in one feeling of horror at their common disaster.

While waiting for the return of their detachments, the soldiers that remained with their eagles subsisted on what they could find on their route, which consisted principally of grains of new rye, which they crushed and then boiled. They were in less want of meat than of bread, as they were followed by a drove of cattle; but the length, and more particularly the speed of their marches, occasioned the loss of many of these animals. The heat and dust also injured and suffocated many of them; and when, under the raging of their thirst, they at length reached a stream or pool of water, they plunged into it with such fury that numbers of them were drowned, while others of them drank to such excess that they became blown and were unable to proceed farther.

It was remarked here, as on the advance towards Smolensk, that the divisions of the first corps retained the fullest complements of men; their detachments, being under better discipline, brought back larger supplies, and at the same time inflicted less injury upon the inhabitants. Those who stayed with their colours, lived upon the contents of their knapsacks, the clean and well-husbanded stores of which afforded relief and refreshment to the eye, which was absolutely harassed by the view of the general disorder; each of these knapsacks, limited to what was strictly necessary in the article of clothing, contained two shirts, two pairs of shoes with nails and soles to repair them, a pair of canvass pantaloons and also of gaiters, some utensils for cleaning, a strip of linen for dressing wounds, some lint, and sixty cartridges.

In the two sides were placed four biscuits, weighing sixteen ounces each; beneath, and at the bottom, a

long and narrow canvass-bag was filled with ten pounds of flour. The whole knapsack thus constituted and filled, together with the straps and oil-case covering, weighed thirty-three pounds twelve ounces.

Each soldier carried, besides, attached to a belt, a canvass-bag, containing two loaves, weighing each three pounds. Thus, with his sabre, his loaded cartridge-box, three flints, turnscrew, belt, and musket, he carried fifty-eight pounds weight, and had bread for four days, biscuit for four days, flour for seven days, and sixty musket-charges.

In his rear there were carriages containing provisions for six days; but little dependence could be placed on these vehicles, which were taken up in the different places which the army came to in the state in which they were found, and which indeed would have been extremely convenient in a different country, with a smaller army, and in a more slow and regular system of warfare.

When the flour-bag was empty, it was filled again with any grain that could be procured, and which was ground at the first mill that was found on the road when any occurred, or otherwise by hand-mills, which followed in the train of every regiment, or were to be met with in the villages, for these people in fact scarcely have any others. At one of these mills the labour of sixteen men was required for twelve hours to grind one day's supply of corn for a hundred and thirty men.

In this country, every house being provided with an oven, the army felt but little want in that respect. Bakers abounded; for the regiments of the first corps comprised artisans of every description, so that victuals, clothes, every thing, in short, could be prepared or mended among themselves in the course of the march. They, in fact, constituted colonies combining

civilized with pastoral life. The original suggestion was the emperor's, and the prince of Eckmuhl acted upon it. Opportunities, situations, and men, had been eminently favourable to him for accomplishing the object; but the other chiefs had these elements of success less at their disposal. Besides which, their more impetuous and less methodical character would probably have prevented their acting on the same plan, with any thing like the same advantage. With a genius less organizing and systematical, they had, therefore, greater obstacles to surmount. The emperor had not paid sufficient attention to these distinctions; and the consequences of this neglect were highly injurious.

CHAPTER II.

FROM Slawkowo, a few leagues in advance of Doro-gobouje, Napoleon, on the 27th of August, sent orders to Marshal Victor, then on the Niemen, to repair to Smolensk. The marshal's left was to occupy Witepsk, his right Mohilef, and his centre Smolensk. In that position he would be able to give assistance to St. Cyr if it should be wanted, he would serve as a *point-d'appui* to the army of Moscow, and would be able to maintain his communications with Lithuania.

It was also from the same imperial quarters that he published the details of his review at Valoutina, desirous of informing both the present age and posterity of the names even of the private soldiers who had there distinguished themselves. But he added, that at Smolensk "the conduct of the Poles had astonished the Russians, who had been accustomed to

despise them." These words raised among the Poles a general burst of indignation ; and the emperor mentally smiled at the intended and expected exasperation which he well knew would only redouble their hatred and efforts against the Russians.

In the course of this march he seemed delighted with dating from the middle of Old Russia a multitude of decrees which would find their way into the smallest French hamlet ; wishing to appear present everywhere at once, to fill the world more and more with his power, through the natural tendency of the human mind to extend indefinitely its faculties and views, and gratify that ever-growing ambition which begins with the pursuit of a child's toy, and ends with aiming at the empire of the world.

It is at the same time certain, that at this period, at Slawkowo, so little order was observed around him, that his guard, in order to keep themselves warm during the night, actually burnt the bridge which they were appointed to guard, and the only one by which he could next day quit the imperial quarters. This disorder, however, like numberless others, proceeded not from insubordination but from thoughtlessness ; and the injury was speedily repaired.

On the same day Murat pushed the enemy beyond the Osma, a narrow river, but deep, and with very high banks, like the greater number of the rivers of that country ; an effect of the melting snows, and which at the time of their most rapid and heavy torrents prevents their overflow. The Russian rear-guard deriving protection from what was thus to us an obstacle, turned back, and took up a position on the heights of the opposite bank. Murat had the ravine explored, and a ford was found through it ; and through this narrow and doubtful defile, he ventured to march against the

Russians, and place himself between the river and their position, thus cutting off the possibility of his retreat, and converting a skirmish into a desperate engagement. In fact, the enemy descended upon him from their heights in great strength, attacked him with great violence, and drove him back almost to the edge of the ravine, but neglected to pursue their advantage and precipitate him into it. But Murat persisted in his fault, carried it to its extreme point, and converted it into a success. The 4th lancers carried the position of the Russians, who went to a small distance farther for a new position, well satisfied with having had the opportunity of selling us so dearly a quarter of a league of ground which in the course of the night they would have gratuitously abandoned to us.

At the moment of greatest danger a battery of the prince of Eckmuhl refused to fire. Its commander alleged his instructions which prohibited him, under pain of being dismissed the service, from fighting without an express order from Davoust. That order arrived, according to some, in good time, but to others, too late. I mention the circumstance, merely because this incident was the subject of a violent altercation the next day between Murat and Davoust, in the presence of the emperor himself, at Semlewo.

The king upbraided the prince with slow and dilaatory circumspection, and more particularly with a hostility against him which he dated from Egypt. He told him, under the violent impulse of his irritation, that whatever personal differences existed between them, they had better settle in private, and that the army ought not to suffer in consequence of them.

Davoust, irritated in his turn, charged the king with temerity. "His unreflecting ardour," he said, "was incessantly compromising the safety of his troops, and

squandering their ammunition, their strength, and their lives. It was high time that the emperor should be made acquainted with what passed every day in the management of his advanced guard. Every morning the enemy had disappeared before it; but the experience of this fact had produced no change in the order of the march. They set off constantly at a late hour, all on the high road, forming a single column, and proceeded in this manner over the evacuated country till noon.

“ They then perceived the rear-guard of the enemy ready for action, behind some marshy ravine, the bridges over which they had broken down, and which was commanded by the bank which they occupied. The riflemen were immediately engaged; then the foremost regiments of cavalry that had come up; and afterwards the artillery, but most frequently at too great distance, or against the Cossacks who were dispersed over the ground, and who were not worth the expense of the powder. At length, after a number of vain and slaughterous attempts in front, the king would begin to think of better reconnoitring the strength of the enemy's position, and of manœuvring. He, accordingly, then called up his infantry.

“ After long waiting in this endless column, the ravine was passed on the right, or on the left of the Russians, who then retired, still discharging their pieces till they took up a new position, where the same resistance and the same mode of march and attack led to just the same losses and delays.

“ Such was the case with respect to one position after another, until it happened that they came in contact with one stronger or better maintained than usual. This was usually about five o'clock, sometimes later, seldom earlier: but here the tenacity and con-

fidence of the Russians, and the time of the day, clearly indicated that their whole army was on the spot, and resolved to pass the night there.

“ For it was impossible not to admit that the retreat of the Russians was conducted in truly admirable order. The course of it was dictated to them by the nature of the ground, not by Murat. The positions were so judiciously chosen, taken up so seasonably, and defended successively in such fair proportion to their strength and to the value of the time which it was so much and so properly the object of the general to gain, that their movements seemed in fact to be the result of a settled and long-matured plan, traced out with care, and executed with precision.

“ They never abandoned a position till the moment when it became certain that they must be beaten if they stayed in it.

“ At night they established themselves, at an early hour, in a good position ; leaving none of the troops under arms but such as were absolutely necessary for its defence, while the rest were taking food or sleep.

“ So far,” added Davoust, “ was the king from profiting by such an example, that he paid no attention to the hour, nor to the strength of places, nor to the degree of resistance made to him, but persisted in the midst of his riflemen bustling and storming in front of the enemy's line, exploring it almost in contact on all sides, foaming with heat and passion, and vociferating his orders with such vehemence and frequency, that he often absolutely lost his voice by repeating them, exhausting all around him, cartridge-boxes, caissons, men, horses, soldiers, and civilians, and keeping all under arms till night completely closed around him.

“ Then it became necessary to suspend their vain

exertions against the enemy, and take up their quarters for the night where they were. But they no longer knew how or where to find the means. It was perfect misery to observe our soldiers wandering in the darkness, groping about for forage and water, for wood, straw, and provisions, and then, unable to find their way back to their bivouacs, loudly calling out to each other for recognition and assistance, almost during the whole of the night. They had scarcely time to prepare their food, and much less to rest : overwhelmed with exertion, they cursed the fatigues which they had no power to repair, till daylight and the enemy again appeared to kindle them to their habitual animation and pursuit.

“ Nor was it only the advanced guard that suffered in this manner ; it was the whole of the cavalry. Every night Murat had left far behind him twenty thousand horsemen on the high road, and under arms. This long column had remained the whole day without eating or drinking, amidst thick clouds of dust, under a burning sky, completely ignorant of what was going on in front of them, advancing a few paces from one quarter of an hour to another, then stopping to deploy among the growing corn, but without daring to draw the bridles of their famished horses, as the king required them to be every moment on the alert. Thus were sixteen dreadful hours consumed in accomplishing five or six leagues, and more particularly by the horses of the cuirassiers, which were more heavily loaded than the others, more weak, as the largest sized horses generally were, and for which nourishment, therefore, was most necessary. Accordingly their frames, formerly so powerful and muscular, were now hollow and emaciated ; they rather dragged themselves on than marched, and every moment some were

seen reeling, and others actually sinking under their riders, who instantly abandoned them as hopeless.

Davoust concluded with saying, "that the whole of the cavalry would, in this manner, in a short time perish; and that Murat might certainly dispose of them as he pleased; but that as for the infantry of the first corps, while he had the command of it he would never suffer it to be so prodigally wasted."

The king did not remain without reply. The emperor listened to them; at the same time slowly pushing one of the Russian bullets before him with his foot. It appeared as if there was something in the misunderstanding between these chiefs, not altogether displeasing to him. He ascribed their animosity merely to their ardour, well knowing that of all the passions glory is the most jealous.

The impatient fervour of Murat was congenial to his own present feelings. As the troops had nothing to live upon but what they found, every thing was devoured almost as soon as seen: on this account it became necessary to come to an issue with the enemy as soon as possible, and to hasten the pursuit. Besides, the general state of Europe was too dangerous, the position in which he stood was too critical, to remain long in it, and his own impatience was too great; he was determined to put an end to it at any price, in order to be relieved from the torture of it.

The impetuosity of the king, therefore, much better corresponded with the object of his own immediate anxiety, than the methodical caution of the prince of Eckmuhl. Accordingly, when he dismissed them, he said mildly to Davoust, "that it was impossible to combine all descriptions of merit; that he knew much better how to conduct a battle than to pursue a rear-guard, and that if Murat had pursued Bagration in

Lithuania, that general would not probably have very easily escaped." It is stated, that he even upbraided the marshal with a restless spirit, that was eager to appropriate every command to itself, less certainly from ambition than from zeal, and merely that affairs might proceed with more smoothness and success; zeal, however, carried too far, had its inconveniences. He then dismissed them, enjoining them to be in future on better terms.

The two chiefs returned to their command, and their hatred. As no fighting occurred but at the head of the column, they disputed with each other the direction of it.

CHAPTER III.

ON the 28th of August the army traversed the vast plains of the government of Wiazma. They passed hastily onward, all at a time, over fields, several regiments abreast, each forming a short and close column. The high road was given up to the train of artillery, and the hospital waggons. The emperor appeared at every part on horseback. Murat's letters, and his approach to Wiazma, still flattered him with the hope of a battle. He was engaged in calculating as he went forward how many thousands of cannon balls would be required to destroy the enemy's army.

Napoleon had appropriated a certain station for the baggage; he had an order published for burning all carriages that should be found among the troops, even those which contained provisions, for they would have impeded the movements of the columns, and in case of attack have endangered their safety. The carriage of general Narbonne, his aide-de-camp, being met

with in his progress, he had it set fire to on the spot, in the presence of the general, and without suffering any thing to be taken out of it, an order which was merely strict, but which seemed severe, because he himself commenced the execution of it, which however was not rigidly enforced.

The baggage of all the corps, therefore, was collected in the rear of the army: there was from Dorogobouje a long train of bat-horses, and of carriages, called kibicks, drawn with rope traces. These carriages were loaded with plunder, provisions, military effects, men appointed to guard them, sick soldiers, and the arms both of these guards and soldiers, which were rusting in them. There were seen in this column a number of the tall cuirassiers, who had been dismounted, and were now riding on horses about the size of asses, for they were unable to proceed on foot, either from the want of use, or from the state of their boots. Among this confused and disorderly multitude the Cossacks might have made many a successful attack. They might thus have dreadfully harassed the army, and retarded its march. But Barclay seemed cautious to avoid disheartening us too much. He contented only with our advanced guard, and that only so far as he thought he could safely go towards delaying our progress without inducing us to abandon it.

This determination of Barclay, the enfeebled state of the army, the quarrels among its chiefs, and the approach of the decisive moment not a little disturbed Napoleon. At Dresden, at Witepsk, and even at Smolensk, he had vainly been expecting a communication from Alexander. At Ribky, about the 28th of August, he seemed to ask for it; a letter from Berthier to Barclay, not in any other respect remarkable, concluded with these words: "The emperor com-

mands me to entreat you to present his compliments to the emperor Alexander, and to say to him that neither the vicissitudes of war, nor any other circumstances, can ever impair the friendship which he feels for him."

On that same day, the 28th of August, the advanced guard drove the Russians into Wiazma. The army rendered extremely thirsty by the march, the heat and the dust, was in want of water : a few muddy pools were violently disputed ; and blows were actually exchanged at the sources, which, however, soon became turbid or exhausted ; the emperor himself was obliged to content himself with a draught of this puddled liquid.

In the course of the night the enemy destroyed the bridges of the Wiazma, and, after pillaging the town, set fire to it. Murat and Davoust hastened to extinguish the flames ; the enemy defended them. But the Wiazma was fordable near the bridges, and one part of the advanced guard soon combated the incendiaries, and the other the conflagration, which was soon subdued.

On this occasion some picked men were sent forward to the advanced guard, with orders to get as near their enemies as they could in Wiazma, and to ascertain whether they or our own soldiers were the incendiaries. Their report was such as to dissipate all the emperor's doubts respecting the fatal resolution of the Russians.

There were found in this town a few resources, which pillage, however, soon wasted. Napoleon, as he passed through, observed this disorder. He became violently irritated, urged his horse in among the groups of his soldiers, struck some, threw down others, and,

ordering one of the suttlers to be seized, he commanded that he should be instantly tried and shot. But the meaning of such an order from him was fully understood, and it was well-known that the more violent his anger was, the more speedily it was succeeded by clemency. Instead, therefore, of depriving the offender of life, those about Napoleon contented themselves with stationing him a few minutes after, on his knees, where the emperor was to pass, with a woman and several children kneeling by his side, who were to pass for his wife and family. Napoleon, who had already turned his attention to other objects, and was completely cooled, inquired what they wanted, and readily granted the delinquent his liberty.

He was still on horseback when he saw Belliard, his companion in arms during fifteen years, and at this time the head of Murat's staff, riding up to him. Painfully surprised at first, he concluded that some misfortune had happened. Belliard instantly made his mind easy on that point, and then proceeded to state, "that beyond Wiazma, on an advantageous position and behind a ravine, the enemy had shown himself in force, and ready to engage; that the cavalry on both sides had immediately come to action, and that, the infantry becoming necessary, the king had placed himself at the head of one of Davoust's divisions, and put it in motion against the enemy, when that general hastened to the spot, and commanded the troops to halt, blaming severely the intended manœuvre, violently reproaching the king with it as absurd and ruinous, and forbidding his generals to obey him. That Murat had then appealed to his royal dignity, to his rank in the army, and to the urgency of the moment, but all in vain: that, at length, therefore, he

had sent to declare to the emperor his dissatisfaction with so disputed a command, and to desire he would make his option between him and Davoust."

At this intelligence Napoleon was exasperated. He exclaimed, "that Davoust had forgotten all subordination; that he disclaimed, it seemed, the authority even of his brother-in-law, whom he had appointed to be his lieutenant;" and he sent off Berthier with an order to place thenceforth under the command of the king the division Compans, which was that which gave rise to the altercation. Davoust did not attempt to defend his conduct on the point of discipline, but either from his prejudice against the king's habitual temerity, or from perverseness of disposition, or in consequence of his having formed a more correct judgment of the ground, and the manœuvres suitable to it, which was by no means improbable, he maintained that he was substantially in the right.

In the mean time the contest was just over, and Murat, whose attention was no longer occupied and diverted by the enemy, was now absorbed in his recollection of the quarrel. Shut up with Belliard, and under the concealment, as it were, of a tent, in proportion as the words of the marshal returned to his memory, his blood almost boiled with shame and indignation. "He had been treated with contempt, publicly insulted, and yet Davoust still lived! and he should see him again! Of what benefit to him was the emperor's anger and decision against the marshal? He was himself the proper avenger of the insults that had been offered him! What signified his royal rank! His sword alone had made him king; and to that alone he would appeal;" and he instantly seized his arms to go and attack Davoust, when Belliard stopped him, and objected to him, the peculiar circumstances of the

case, the example he ought to furnish to the army, the enemy at the present moment in full flight and requiring the most ardent pursuit, and that he ought not to afflict his friends and delight his enemies, by seeking a false and fatal glory.

The general stated that the king actually cursed his crown, and after a time endeavoured to swallow the affront, but that tears of vexation flowed from his eyes and rolled over his garments. While he was thus tormenting himself, Davoust, still persisting in his opinion, said that the emperor had been deceived, and remained tranquil within his quarters.

Napoleon re-entered Wiazma, where he found it necessary to stop for a time in order to reconnoitre his new conquest and apply it to the best advantage. The intelligence he received from the interior of Russia informed him, that the Russian government appropriated to itself the credit of our successes, and endeavoured to spread the belief that the abandonment of so many provinces, was the effect of a general and previously adopted plan of retreat. Some papers seized at Wiazma stated, that *Te Deum* had been repeatedly celebrated at Petersburg for the victories of Witepsk and Smolensk. He exclaimed in astonishment, "*Te Deums!* They dare, then, to lie not only to men but to God!"

The greater part of the Russian letters that were intercepted expressed the same astonishment. "While our towns are in flames," was the language of one of them, "we have here nothing but ringing of bells, hymns of gratitude, and publications of the triumph of our arms. It seems as if we were eager to thank God for the victories of the French. Thus they lie to the air, they lie to earth, they lie with their lips and with their pen, they lie to heaven and to earth. Lies are

every where the practice and the fashion. Our statesmen treat Russia like a child; however, they themselves show no little credulity in thinking us credulous enough to believe them."

These reflections are certainly just, if such gross means were actually employed to deceive persons capable of writing such letters. And it must undoubtedly be admitted that, although political lies are employed more or less by perhaps all governments, yet, when carried to such an extent as in the present instance, they constitute a bitter satire on the governors or the governed, and perhaps, indeed, on both.

During this time the advanced-guard pursued the Russians as far as Gjatzen, exchanging with them a few balls, an exchange almost always to the disadvantage of the French, as the Russians took care to use only long pieces, and which would carry considerably farther than ours. It was moreover remarked, that, in the course of their retreat from Smolensk, the Russians had neglected to burn the villages and seats along their route. As they are a people who appear to study effect, they probably thought these comparatively obscure evils would be attended with no advantage the conflagration of their cities appeared sufficient for their purpose.

This designed deviation, however, from their general system, if the omission in question is to be ascribed to such design, like all similar deviations in war, turned considerably to the advantage of their enemies. The French army found in the villages, forage, grain, ovens and shelter. Some have observed in relation to the present subject, that all these ravages and devastations were intrusted to the hands of the Cossacks, who are a species of barbarians, and

that these wretched hordes, either from hatred or contempt of civilization, seemed most highly to gratify their savage taste by the burning of the towns.

CHAPTER IV.

ON the 1st of September, at noon, Murat was separated from Gjatz only by a coppice of pines. The appearance of the Cossacks obliged him to deploy his foremost regiments ; but soon afterwards, urged on by his impatience, he called up some horsemen, and, after having himself driven the Russians from the wood which they had occupied, he passed through it and arrived nearly at the gates of Gjatz. At this sight the French were delighted, and instantly took possession of the town as far as the river, which divides it into two parts, and to the bridges over which the enemy had already set fire.

In this place, as at Smolensk and Wiazma, whether from mere chance or originating in some Tartar usage, the mercantile or trading quarter was on the side nearest Asia, on the bank opposite to us. The Russian rear-guard, therefore, secured by the river, had time to burn the whole of that quarter. It was only the promptitude of Murat that preserved the rest.

Our troops passed the Gjatz just as they could, on rafts, by a few boats, and by means of a ford. The Russians had disappeared behind their flames, and the foremost of our light troops were pursuing them, when one of the inhabitants came out and ran towards them, exclaiming that he was a Frenchman.

His transports and his accent confirmed the truth

of his words; he was conducted to Davoust, by whom he was interrogated.

According to his statement a complete change had just taken place in the Russian army. A violent clamour against Barclay had begun among the troops, which had been loudly echoed back by the nobility, the merchants, and indeed the whole of Moscow. "That general, that minister," they said, "was a traitor: he caused all their divisions to be destroyed in detail; he had brought disgrace on the army by an endless flight! and in the mean time, they were subjected to the shame of invasion, and their towns were laid in ashes! If it had been really necessary to determine on such voluntary ravage and ruin, at least it would have been desirable to make the sacrifice themselves: in that there would, at least, have been some honour, while permitting themselves to be made victims by a stranger was losing every thing, even the honour of the sacrifice."

"But why should they resort to a stranger? Was not the contemporary, the companion in arms, the rival of Suwarrow, still living? Russia was to be saved only by a Russian!" All called aloud, all decided that they must have Kutosof and a battle. The Frenchman added, that Alexander had yielded; that the insubordination of Bagration, and the universal clamour had obtained from him the concession of the required general and battle; and that, in reality, after having drawn his enemies so far into the country, the Russian emperor himself had considered a grand struggle as indispensable.

Finally, he asserted, that on the 29th of August, between Wiazma and Gjatz, at Tzarewo-zaimizcze, the arrival of Kutosof, and the announcement of a battle

had been doubly and exquisitely gratifying, and had absolutely intoxicated the army with joy; that they had all immediately marched on to Borodino, no longer on the detested system of retreat, but to station themselves on that frontier of the government of Moscow, to bind themselves as it were on that spot to the soil, to defend it to the very utmost of their power, in short, either to conquer there or to die.

An incident, not otherwise worthy of notice, seemed to corroborate this intelligence. This was the arrival of an officer with a flag of truce. He had so little to say that it was soon obvious that he came to make his observations. Davoust was particularly disgusted with the expression of his countenance, which, he thought, indicated more than assurance. One of the French generals having inconsiderately asked this officer what they should meet with between Wiazma and Moscow, he sternly replied, "Pultowa." This reply announced an intended battle; it gave pleasure to the French, who are fond of sprightly repartee, and gratified by meeting enemies worthy of their prowess.

The officer was escorted back without any precaution, just as he had been conducted to us. He saw that there was no obstacle to penetrating even so far as our head-quarters: he passed through our advanced posts without meeting with a single *vidette*, and observed everywhere prevailing the same negligence, and the temerity so natural to Frenchmen and to conquerors. Every one was asleep; there was no watchword; there were no patrols: our soldiers seemed to regard these precautions as too minute, and beneath their attention. Why should they exercise any such caution? They were assailants; they were victors; the Russians were the defensive party. The officer

remarked afterwards, that he was strongly tempted to take advantage that very night of our imprudence, but that no Russian corps was within his reach.

Our enemies, in their haste to burn the bridge over the Gjatz, had abandoned some of the Cossacks: these were conducted to the emperor, who was now approaching on horseback. Napoleon resolved to question them himself. He called for his interpreter, and ordered to be placed at his side two of these modern Scythians, whose strange costume and wild physiognomy were strikingly remarkable. In this manner he entered and passed through the town of Gjatz. The answers of the two barbarians corresponded with the communications of the Frenchman, which, during the night between the first and second of August, were confirmed by every express from the advanced posts.

Thus had Barclay persevered down to the latest moment possible, in opposition to the whole army and nation, in that plan of retreat which in 1807 he had boasted of to one of our generals as the only means of saving Russia. By us he was highly commended for having persisted in this judicious defensive system, notwithstanding all the clamours of a high-spirited nation irritated by misfortunes, and before so aggressive an enemy.

He had doubtless committed an error in suffering the enemy to surprise him at Wilna; and also in not recognizing the muddy and marshy course of the Berezina, as the frontier of Lithuania; but it was observed that afterwards at Witepsk, and at Smolensk, he had anticipated Napoleon; that on the Loutcheza, on the Dnieper, and at Valoutina his resistance had been judiciously proportioned to times and places; and that the detailed warfare carried on between the combatants, and the losses it occasioned, had but too frequently turned to

his advantage, every step that he took in retreat increasing our distance from reinforcements, and diminishing his own : he had, therefore, well adapted his measures to his circumstances in what he had hazarded, what he had defended, and what he had abandoned.

And yet this was the man who had drawn upon himself the general censure ! In our apprehension, however, this censure carried with it his highest eulogy. We admired him for having defied the public opinion when it had decidedly gone astray ; for having contented himself with watching all our motions to turn them carefully to his own advantage, and for being fully aware that if nations are saved it must frequently be in despite of themselves.

Barclay during the remainder of the campaign displayed higher *traits* of greatness still. That general-in-chief, and minister-of-war, who had just had the command of the army taken from him to be given to Kutusof, willingly served under the orders of the new chief, and obeyed with the same steadiness and zeal as he had commanded.

CHAPTER V.

At length the Russian army halted. Miloradowitch, sixteen thousand recruits, and a vast multitude of peasants bearing the cross and shouting aloud, " It is the will of God," hastened to join his ranks. We received intelligence that our enemies were breaking up the whole plain of Borodino, forming intrenchments in every part, and apparently resolved to root themselves to the soil, and retreat not a step farther.

Napoleon announced to his army an approaching battle. He allowed them two days to rest, prepare

their arms, and collect provisions. He contented himself with warning the detachments sent off for supplies, "that if they were not returned on the morrow they would deprive themselves of the honour of fighting."

The emperor was then desirous of knowing something of the character of his new adversary. Kutusof was described to him as an aged warrior whose reputation had originated very many years ago in the circumstance of his receiving a very singular wound. He had since shown no little tact in availing himself of circumstances. Even the defeat experienced at Austerlitz, as it had been foreseen by him, had increased his renown, which had been still farther enhanced by his recent campaigns against the Turks. His valour was unquestionable. But he had been reproached with regulating its exertions by mere personal interests: for he was a cool and selfish calculator. He was dilatory, vindictive, and above all, artful; the genuine Tartar character! exercising the greatest pliability and patience, and displaying the most caressing attention, while preparing the most implacable war.

He was more able as a courtier than a general; but he was formidable by his renown, and by the address with which he had increased it and obtained the concurrence of others in it: he had found the means to flatter the nation at large, and every individual in it, from the general down to the common soldier.

It was added, that there was, in his exterior, in his language, and even in his dress, in his superstitious usages, and also in his time of life, a considerable resemblance to Suwarrow; that he bore the stamp of the ancient Muscovite, an air of nationality, which strongly endeared him to the Russians. At Moscow the joy

that was felt at his nomination mounted almost to delirium. The inhabitants stopped to embrace and congratulate each other in the streets. They considered themselves saved.

After Napoleon had received these sketches of character, and despatched his orders, he waited the event with that tranquillity which characterizes extraordinary minds. He employed himself in surveying quietly the environs of his head-quarters. He remarked the advance which they exhibited in agriculture; but at the sight of the Gjatz, which pours its current into the Wolga, the early and habitual feelings of glory superseded in the mind of the conqueror of so many rivers every other sentiment, and he expressed a lofty complacency in having become the lord of those waters which were destined to visit Asia; as if they were proceeding to announce to that quarter of the world his fame and conquest, and to open for him a passage into it.

On the 4th of September, the army, still divided into three columns, left Gjatz and its environs. Murat had advanced a few leagues before him. Since Kutusof's arrival, troops of Cossacks had incessantly hovered about the heads of our columns. Murat was vexed at seeing his cavalry compelled to deploy against so weak an obstacle. It is asserted that on this day, under one of those impulses which would have done honour to the age of chivalry, he darted suddenly and alone towards their line, halted at only a few paces from it, and there, waving his sword, intimated his orders for them to withdraw with an air and gesture so commanding that the barbarians instantly retired in astonishment.

This incident which we heard related almost immediately after its occurrence, was believed without any

hesitation. The martial carriage of that sovereign, the brilliancy of his chivalric costume, his high renown, and the novelty and suddenness of the scene made this momentary ascendancy appear by no means incredible, unlikely as, without a reference to these circumstances, it might appear. For the character of Murat was precisely that which might lead to such a result: he was in elaborateness and splendour of dress a theatrical monarch; a real one in undaunted valour and unwearied activity; daring as attack; and always armed with that air of superiority, that menacing and terrific audacity, which of all weapons of offence is the most effective.

He proceeded, however, but a little way farther in his march before he was compelled to halt. Between Gjatz and Borodino, at Griednewa, the high road suddenly descends into a deep ravine, whence it also on a sudden emerges on a vast *plateau*. Kutusof had committed the special defence of this spot to Konownitzin, who at first maintained his position against the foremost troops of Murat with vigour and success; but, the army having nearly come up with Murat, every moment now strengthened the attack and impaired the defence. In a very short time the advanced guard of the viceroy was engaged against the right of the Russians. A charge was made in that quarter by the Italian chasseurs against the Cossacks, who, to the surprise of all, for a moment actually sustained it, and were really intermingled with the charging enemy.

Platof himself has since related that in this affair an officer near him was wounded, who, though apparently not much surprised at the circumstance, immediately ordered the sorcerer who accompanied him to be soundly drubbed in the presence of the whole body of

Cossacks, reproaching him bitterly for not turning aside the balls by his conjurations, as he had been expressly charged to do.

Konownitzin was overpowered and withdrew, and on the 5th his bloody track was followed as far as the enormous monastery of Kolotskoi, a fortified building like almost all those religious houses in former ages, those Gothic times, too favourably depicted by many, when intestine hostilities raged with frequency as well as fury, and even the sacred asylums of peace were converted into stations of war.

Konownitzin, exposed to an overwhelming force both on the right and left, did not attempt to maintain his ground either at Kolotskoi or at Golowino; but when the advanced guard debouched from that village it found the whole plain infested by the Cossacks, the corn spoiled, the villages sacked, and the devastation general. These were signs which clearly indicated the field of battle which Kutusof was preparing for the grand army. Behind these clouds of Scythians three villages were perceived, presenting a line of about a league in length. The spaces between them, which were broken by ravines and coppices, were covered with the enemy's riflemen. Hurried away by their military ardour, a few of the French cavalry dashed into the very midst of this force, and were cut off.

Napoleon then made his appearance on an eminence, from which he surveyed the whole country around with that piercing and comprehensive view characteristic of conquerors; that rapid glance which sees all at once, and all without confusion, which penetrates through all obstacles, throws aside all inferior and merely accessory circumstances, seizes on the grand point of attention and effort, and there fixes a steady

gaze, like the eagle on the quarry on which he is going to pounce with all his strength and all his impetuosity.

He knew that about a league in front of him, at Borodino, the Kologha, a ravine river along the bank of which he had advanced for some wersts, turned sharply to the left, and in that direction poured its waters into the Mosqua. He concluded that a chain of hills could be the only cause that thus impeded and suddenly changed its course. Those hills, then, were undoubtedly occupied by the enemy, and on that side he would be scarcely assailable.

But while the centre and the right of that position were protected by the Kalogha, both banks of which he followed, the left remained uncovered by it.

The maps of the country were insufficient to give the desired information: however, as the ground necessarily inclined on the side of the principal stream, which indeed was largest only because it was lowest, it was clear that the ravines which discharged their waters into it must rise and become more shallow, and gradually more unimportant and indistinct, in proportion to their distance from the Kalogha. Besides, the old road from Smolensk, which is on its right, clearly pointed out their origin. Why should that road have been ever carried to such a distance from the principal stream, and consequently from the most fertile and habitable spots, but with a view to avoid ravines and the hills which they traversed. The demonstrations of the enemy corresponded with the conclusions thus derived from his own experience! They had applied few precautions, few means of resistance in front of their right and their centre; but in front of their left were posted vast numbers of troops; peculiar care had been obviously taken to turn to advantage

every chance of aiding its defence that was afforded by the ground ; and finally, they had constructed there a formidable redoubt. That, therefore, was their weak side, as they had employed so much anxiety and effort in protecting it. Moreover, this redoubt was formed on the flank of the high road, and that of the grand army. Every thing, therefore, indicated that it was necessary to carry this, if we meant to advance farther. Napoleon accordingly gave orders for that purpose.

How inadequate are words to express the keen and comprehensive views of genius !

The villages and woods were immediately taken possession of. On the left and in the centre were the army of Italy, the division Compans, and Murat ; on the right Poniatowski. The attack was general ; for the army of Italy and the Polish army appeared at once on the two wings of the grand imperial column. These three masses drove back the Russian rear-guards upon Borodino, and the struggle was concentrated on one point.

This curtain being removed, the first Russian redoubt was discovered. Too detached in advance of the left of their position, it defended it without being defended by it. The nature of the ground had rendered this insulation of it compulsory.

Compans skilfully availed himself of the undulations of the ground ; its elevated points served as platforms for his cannon from which to batter the redoubt, and as a shelter for his infantry, where he might range them in columns of attack. The 61st marched foremost, and the redoubt was taken at the first onset, and at the point of the bayonet ; but Bagration sent reinforcements which retook it. Three times did the 61st wrest it from the possession of the Russians, and three times were they driven from it by them. At last,

however, they maintained their conquest, although covered with blood, and nearly half of them destroyed.

On the next day when the emperor passed this regiment in review, he inquired where its 3d battalion was. "It is in the redoubt," replied the colonel. But the conflict did not stop there: a neighbouring wood was still swarming with Russian riflemen who were every instant quitting their asylum, and renewing their attacks, which were supported by three divisions. At length the attack of Schewardino by Morand, and that of the woods of Elnia by Poniatowski, completely disheartened Bagration's troops, and Murat's cavalry swept the plain. It was principally through the efforts of a Spanish regiment that our enemies were repulsed; they gave way; and the redoubt which had been their advanced post then became ours.

At the same time the emperor appointed its station to every corps; the remainder of the army entered in line, and a general discharge of small arms interrupted by the firing of some cannon took place. It continued till each party had fixed its limit, and till night rendered all aim uncertain.

One of Davoust's regiments then made an effort to take its rank in the foremost line. Deceived by the darkness it passed that line, and marched into the very midst of the Russian cuirassiers, who furiously attacked it, threw it into disorder, carried off three of its cannon, and took and killed three hundred men. The rest immediately formed in platoon, constituting a somewhat irregular mass, which, however, defended itself on every side with steel and fire. The enemy were unable now to penetrate it; and with seriously diminished numbers, it was enabled at length to gain the station it had so unfortunately missed

CHAPTER VI.

THE emperor encamped behind the army of Italy on the left of the high road; the old guard having formed in square around his tents. As soon as the discharge of small-arms had ceased, the fires were kindled. On the side of the Russians, they exhibited a vast and uniform semicircle of flame: on ours a pale, unequal and interrupted light, as the troops reached the place not till late, in great haste, and unacquainted with the ground, where nothing had been prepared for them, and where there was a great deficiency of wood, more particularly in the centre and on the left.

The emperor slept but for a short time. General Caulaincourt arrived from the captured redoubt. Not a single prisoner had fallen into our hands; and Napoleon much surprised asked a great number of questions. "Had not his cavalry, then, charged at the proper moment? Were the Russians determined either to conquer or die?" He was answered "that they had been wrought up to a state of fanaticism by their chiefs, and that, being accustomed to fight with the Turks who destroyed all their prisoners, they would rather be killed than surrender." The emperor on hearing this fell into a profound meditation; and concluding that a battle of artillery would be the surest he despatched numberless orders to hasten on those parks which had not yet joined.

On that night a thin cold rain began to fall, and autumn proclaimed its arrival by violent gusts of wind. This was one enemy more, and was by no means to be considered an unimportant one; for this season of the year corresponded to the stage of life on which Napoleon was now entering; and the influence of the

seasons of the year on the similar seasons of life is generally known.

On that night what various agitations existed! The soldiers and officers were busily engaged in preparing their arms, in repairing their clothes, and in struggling with cold and hunger, for their life was now become an incessant struggle. The generals, and even the emperor himself, felt no little apprehension lest the success of the preceding day should have disheartened the Russians, and they might have availed themselves of the night to steal away from their position. Murat had strongly predicted that result from it; and several times during the course of the night their fires were fancied to be on the wane, and the sounds of their retreat seemed to fall upon the listening and watchful ear. However, the light of the enemy's bivouacs was extinguished only by that of the returning day.

For once there was no occasion to go far in search of them. The sun of the 6th of September rose again upon the two armies, and exhibited them to each other in the same position in which the preceding day had left them. This excited among us a general joy. At last, this desultory, languid, and vagrant war, by which our efforts had been wasted and paralyzed, in which we had hitherto only been plunging daily more and more into difficulty and danger, would be brought to a conclusion! we could now feel the ground under our feet! we had nearly reached the goal! the day of decision had arrived!

The emperor took advantage of the earliest dawn to advance between the two lines, and examine, by passing over a succession of eminences, the whole front of the enemy's army. He observed the Russians in possession of all the heights on a semicircle of two leagues extent from the Mosqua to the old Moscow

road. Their right bordered the Kalogha, from where it discharges itself into the Mosqua as far as Borodino; their centre, from Gorcka to Semenowska, formed the salient part of their line. Their right and their left receded. The Kalogha rendered their right unassailable.

The emperor instantly perceived this; and, as from its distance it was not more formidable than it was vulnerable, he paid no attention to it. He considered the Russian army, so far as he was now to deal with it, as beginning only at Gorcka, a village built on the high road, on the point of a level height which commands Borodino and the Kalogha. This sharp projection is surrounded by the Kalogha and by a deep and marshy ravine. Its elevated crest, to which the high road mounts from Borodino, was strongly intrenched, forming a work apart and detached on the right of the centre of the Russians, of which it constituted the extremity.

On its left, and within reach of its fire, there was an eminence which commanded this plain, which was crowned with a formidable redoubt having twenty-one pieces of cannon. The Kalogha and some ravines surround it in front and on its right, its left inclined towards and supported itself on a long and wide *plateau*, the foot of which rested in a muddy ravine which pours its stream into the Kalogha. The crest of this *plateau*, covered with Russians, gradually lowered and receded for a long way towards the left, in front of the grand army; it then rose again till it reached the still smoking ruins of the village of Semenowska. That salient point terminated the command of Barclay, and the enemy's centre. It was armed with a strong battery, covered by an intrenchment.

Here began the command of Bagration, and the left

wing of the Russians: the less elevated crest which it occupied diminished and receded gradually as far as Utitza, a village on the old Moscow road, where the field of battle ended. Two hillocks armed with redoubts, and in a diagonal direction with the intrenchment of Semenowska which flanked them, indicated the front of Bagration.

From Semenowska to the wood of Utitza there was an open space of about twelve hundred paces. It was the nature of the ground that determined Kutusof to refuse his left. For at this spot the ravine in which the *plateau* of the centre terminated just commenced; it constituted only a very slight impediment; the slopes of its banks were easy of ascent, and the summits, which were well adapted for artillery, were at a distance from its brink. This side was decidedly the most accessible, since the redoubt of the 61st, which that regiment had carried the day before, could no longer defend the approaches to it. These approaches were even favoured by a wood of large pine-trees which extended from the conquered redoubt as far as the one which appeared to terminate the Russian line.

But their left wing did not stop there. The emperor knew that beyond this wood was the old Moscow road, that it turned round the left wing of the Russians, passed behind their army, and rejoined at length the new Moscow road before Mojaisk. He concluded that this must be occupied by the enemy; and in fact Tutchkof, with his *corps d'armée*, was stationed across it at the entrance upon a wood; he was protected by two heights which he had planted with artillery.

But this was of little consequence, because between this detached corps and the last Russian redoubt, there was a space of five or six hundred toises in extent, and a covered ground. If, therefore, no attempt were

made in the first instance to overwhelm Tutchkof, we might yet occupy this space, pass between him and the last redoubt of Bagration, and take the left wing of the enemy in flank. The emperor, however, could not completely satisfy himself on this point, as his progress and his survey were now stopped by woods and by the Russian advanced posts.

Having concluded his reconnoitring, he formed his decision. "Eugene," he said, "should be the pivot! the battle must be begun by the right. As soon as under the protection of woods it shall have carried the redoubt opposed to it, it must turn to the left, and march on the Russian flank, overthrowing and driving back their whole army upon their right and into the Kalogha."

Having thus determined on his general plan, he employed himself on the details. In the course of the night, three batteries, of sixty pieces each, must be opposed to the Russian redoubt, two in front of their left, and the third in front of their centre. As soon as daylight broke, Poniatowski and his army, now reduced to five thousand men, must advance upon the old Smolensk road, turning the wood on which the French right wing and the Russian left wing were supported. He would flank the one and harass the other; and the first discharge of his cannon should be the general signal for battle.

The whole of the artillery were then to pour upon the left of the Russians; and as soon as this fire had made sufficient breaches in their ranks and redoubts, Davoust and Ney were to precipitate themselves into these openings, supported by Junot and his Westphalians, by Murat and his cavalry, and lastly by the emperor himself with twenty thousand guards. The first grand efforts were to be directed against the two

redoubts; through them they must force a passage into the enemy's army, which, then mutilated and disjointed, would have their centre and their right uncovered, and nearly surrounded.

However, as the Russians appeared in redoubled masses in their centre and on their right, menacing the Moscow road, the only line of operation of the grand army; and also as, while throwing his principal forces and himself on their left, Napoleon must place the Kalogha between himself and that road, which would be his only means of retreat, he considered it necessary to reinforce the army of Italy which was in occupation of it, and accordingly added to it two of Davoust's divisions and Grouchy's cavalry. As for his left, he thought that one Italian division, and the Bavarian cavalry, together with that of Ornano, about ten thousand men, would be sufficient for its protection. Such were the plans of Napoleon.

CHAPTER VII.

THE emperor was on the heights of Borodino, taking one last survey of the destined field of battle, which confirmed him in the judiciousness of his plan, when Davoust hastily approached him. The marshal had just been examining the left of the Russians, and with the more attention and minuteness, as it was the scene on which he had been appointed to act, and as he somewhat mistrusted his eyes.

He requested the emperor to leave with him his five divisions, which were thirty-five thousand strong, and to join with them Poniatowski, who was too weak to turn the enemy with his own corps alone. He would

then, the next day, set in motion this mass of force ; he would conceal his march under the last shades of night and by means of the wood against which the left wing of the Russians supported itself, which by taking the old road from Smolensk to Moscow he would pass, and then turning suddenly round, he would, by a rapid manœuvre, deploy on the flank and rear of that wing forty thousand French and Poles. There, while the emperor would give employment to the Russians in front by a general attack, he would rush on from one redoubt to another, from reserve to reserve, driving back and overthrowing all before him from left to right on the high road to Mojaïsk, where an end would thus be put at once to the Russian army, the battle, and the war.

The emperor listened to the marshal with great attention. But after silently considering the proposition for a few minutes, he said, "No! it is too extensive a movement ; it would put me too much out of my way, and would occasion me the loss of too much time."

The prince of Eckmuhl, however, in full confidence of the value of his plan, persisted ; he pledged himself to have accomplished his manœuvre before six in the morning ; and affirmed that in the course of an hour after the greatest part of the expected result would be produced. But Napoleon somewhat vexed by this perseverance and opposition, exclaimed rather sharply, "Ah! you are always for turning the enemy : It is too dangerous a manœuvre !" The marshal after this check was silent ; and soon afterwards returned to his post, murmuring against a prudence which he thought not a little unseasonable, to which he had been by no means accustomed, and which he could not conjecture what to attribute to, unless, possibly, Napoleon might

have become less enterprising in consequence of so many allies looking on whose fidelity he had some reason to distrust, of the great reduction of his army, of a position so remote from France, and also of the advance of age.

The emperor, having formed his decision, had re-entered his camp, when Murat, whom the Russians had so often deceived, endeavoured to persuade him that they would still retreat before they actually fought. In vain was it that Rapp, who had been despatched to observe their aspect and indications, stated on his return, that they were more strongly intrenching themselves; that they were numerous, ardent, and apparently determined rather to make an attack, if they should not be anticipated in one, than to retreat. Murat still persisted; and the emperor, in no little agitation, returned to the heights of Borodino.

Thence he perceived long and black columns of troops covering the high road, and spreading themselves over the plain, then vast convoys of provision and ammunition waggons, in short all those arrangements which announce an intended stay and a battle. At this moment, although he had taken very few attendants in order to avoid attracting to him the enemy's fire, he was recognised by the Russian batteries, and the discharge of one of their cannon broke the silence of the day.

For, as is frequently the case, nothing was so calm as the day which preceded that grand battle. It was, as it were, an understood case! Why should the parties inflict on each other any useless evil? Would not tomorrow decide all doubts and difficulties? Besides, each side was under the necessity of making its preparations. The different corps had their arms, their numbers, their ammunition to look to; they had to

collect together all the various articles exclusively theirs, which a march always more or less deranges. The generals had to make themselves acquainted reciprocally with their dispositions for attack, defence, or retreat, in order to combine their operations correctly, and adapt them to the nature of the ground, and that they might leave as little as possible to the determination of chance.

Thus, previously to the commencement of their dreadful conflict, did these two colossal powers observe each other's movements with the utmost attention, measure each other with glances of keen inspection, and prepare in silence for the tremendous shock.

The emperor, now no longer entertaining the slightest doubt about a battle, returned to his tent to dictate the order of it. There he meditated on the seriousness and critical nature of his position. He had surveyed the two armies, and considered them nearly equal; about a hundred and twenty thousand men, and six hundred pieces of cannon on each side. The Russians had the advantages of position, of one common language, of one uniform, of being a single nation, fighting in a common cause; but had too many irregular troops and recruits. The French had an equal number of men, but more soldiers; for the returns of his corps had just been delivered in to him: he had before him the account of the strength of each division; and, as in the present circumstances it was not a case of a review or of rations, but of a battle, on this occasion the statements were not overcharged. His army was reduced, it was true, but it was sound, active, vigorous, and abounded in those manly forms which, after losing the roundness and fullness of youth, display outlines of a more masculine and mature character.

For the several days, however, that he had marched

in the midst of them, he had remarked the silence observed by them; the silence of solemn expectation, or of great astonishment; like that of nature at the moment of an impending storm; or like that of immense crowds exposed to some common and overwhelming danger.

He felt that they wanted rest of some description or other, and that they could obtain none but either by death or victory: for he had placed them under so urgent a necessity to conquer that they were obliged to triumph at any cost. The temerity of the position into which he had brought them was evident; but he well knew that, of all faults, this was one which Frenchmen would be most ready to pardon; in short, that they felt no want of confidence either in themselves, or him, or the general result, whatever might be the individual affliction or loss attending it.

Besides, he depended upon their habitual pursuit and insatiable appetite for renown, and in some degree even upon their curiosity. Undoubtedly they must be eager to see Moscow, to be able to say that they had been there, to receive the recompenses of which the distribution had been promised there, possibly even to pillage there, but above all to find repose there. He had no longer seen enthusiasm, but he had seen something firmer and better; an entire faith in his guiding and guardian star, in his genius, in their own superiority to the enemy, and the lofty assurance which conquerors feel in the presence of the conquered.

With his mind under the impression of these feelings he dictated a proclamation, simple, serious, and frank, such as suited the circumstances of the crisis, and was well adapted to men who were not now about to make their debut in war, and who after such various suffer-

ings and services could be considered as wanting no artificial stimulus to duty.

Accordingly, he appealed merely to the reason of those he addressed, or to their true interest, which in fact is precisely the same thing. He ended with a reference to glory, the only passion to which he could appeal in these deserts, the last and highest of noble motives by which it was possible to impress the minds of soldiers always victorious, enlightened by an advanced state of civilization, and a long and active experience; in short, of all generous illusions the only one which they could have brought unimpaired to such a distance. At a future period this harangue will be deemed admirable. It was worthy of the chief and of the army. It did honour to them both.

“Soldiers,” said he, “you have now before you the battle which you have so long desired. From this moment the victory depends upon yourselves. It is necessary for us; it will bring us abundance, good winter-quarters, and a speedy return to our country. Act as you did at Austerlitz, Friedland, Witepsk and Smolensk; and let remotest posterity cite your conduct on this day. Let it be said of each of you, ‘He was at the great battle under the walls of Moscow.’”

CHAPTER VIII.

ABOUT the middle of that day Napoleon had remarked an extraordinary movement in the enemy's camp. The whole Russian army were standing and under arms. Kutusof, surrounded with all the pomp of religious and military *insignia*, advanced into the midst of

them. He had induced the popes and archimandrites to appear in their most costly and splendid garments, which they had inherited from the Greeks. They walked before him in solemn procession, carrying the revered symbols of religion, and above all that sacred image so recently the protectress of Smolensk, and which was said to have been withdrawn by nothing less than a miracle from the profanations of the sacrilegious French.

When the Russian saw his soldiers wrought up to the desired pitch by this extraordinary spectacle, he raised his voice; he addressed them on the subject of heaven, the only country which slaves can be considered as having left to them. In the name of the religion of equality he endeavoured to excite the serfs to defend the property of their masters; but it was more especially when exhibiting that sacred image to their view that he invoked their courage and roused their indignation.

“ Napoleon, according to him, was a universal despot! the tyrannical disturber of the world! a miserable worm! an arch-rebel, who overthrew their altars and defiled them with blood, who exposed the ark of the Lord, represented by the holy image, to the profanation of men, and to the severity of the seasons.”

He then directed the attention of his hearers to their towns laid in ashes; appealed to their regard for their wives and children, added a few words about their emperor, and concluded by invoking their piety and their patriotism. These virtues were in those ignorant and uncivilized people, who had not advanced beyond sensations, mere virtues of instinct; but possibly, on this very account, such men might be better soldiers; less diverted from habits of obedience by reasoning; confined by slavery within a narrow circle in which they

are reduced to a small number of sensations which are the only sources of wants, desires, and ideas.

They are, moreover, proud from the want of comparison, and credulous as they are proud from ignorance; adorers of images, and thus, as far as christians can be so, idolaters; for christianity, which is a religion of the mind and heart, they have made entirely physical and material, to bring it within the range of their scarcely more than brutal capacity.

The solemnity, however of the spectacle, their commander's discourse, the exhortations of the officers, and the benedictions of their priests, had the effect of combining fanaticism with courage. All present, down to the lowest in the ranks, considered themselves as consecrated by God himself to the defence of heaven and their sacred soil.

With regard to the French no religious or military pomp, no review, no means of stimulating the feelings by awful or splendid pageantry were employed. Even the address of the emperor was not distributed till very late, and was read in the morning so near the commencement of the battle, that numbers were engaged before they could hear it. In the mean time, the Russians, kindled as they ought naturally to have been by the most animating motives, invoked in addition to every thing else, the sword of Michael, thus borrowing their strength, as they thought, from all the powers of heaven; while the French, for theirs looked only to themselves, persuaded that men's real strength exists in their hearts, and that in them alone the celestial army is to be sought and found.

It happened by mere chance that on this day the emperor had received from Paris the portrait of the king of Rome, of that child whom the empire had welcomed into the world like the emperor himself, with

the same transports of joy and hope. Since that period, in the interior of the palace, Napoleon had been observed every succeeding day abandoning himself to the expression of the most paternal affection for this child; and accordingly when, in regions thus remote, and amidst all the menacing preparations around him, he beheld the image of this object of his fond attachment, his martial spirit melted at the view! He himself exhibited the picture in front of his tent, and called up his officers, and even some of the soldiers of his old guard, desirous of having these veteran grenadiers sympathise in his emotion, eager to introduce his private family to his military one, and to display in this crisis of danger so animating a symbol of hope.

In the evening one of Marmont's aides-de-camp, who had been sent from the field of battle at Salamanca, arrived at that of the Mosqua. It was no other than Fabvier, who has since so distinguished himself in our domestic dissensions. The emperor gave a gracious reception to the aide-de-camp of the vanquished general. On the eve of a battle so uncertain he felt inclined to look with lenity on a defeat; he listened to all that was said respecting the dispersed state of his forces in Spain, and on the number of generals in chief there; and admitted the truth of all; but he also assigned his reasons, which, however, do not require to be noticed here.

Night now returned, and together with it the apprehension that the Russian army might yet escape from the field of battle. This apprehension prevented or interrupted Napoleon's sleep. He repeatedly called out to know the hour, to inquire whether any sounds indicative of retreat had been heard, and to send to ascertain whether the enemy still continued in front of him. So strong had his doubts been on this subject

that, on occasion of distributing his proclamation, he ordered that it should not be read till the following morning, and in case there should actually be a battle.

Being, however, for a short time, satisfied upon this subject, anxiety from an opposite source again assailed him; this was the dreadful destitution of his soldiers. Weak and almost famished as they were, how could they sustain so dreadful a shock? In this danger he viewed the guard as his only resource. He seemed to consider that as a guarantee for both armies. He sent for Bessieres, on whom he had more reliance than on any other of his marshals for the management and command of it. He wished to know if nothing were wanting to that select reserve; he several times called him back when retiring, and repeated his urgent questions. He ordered that those veterans should have immediately distributed among them three days' supply of biscuit and rice, to be taken from their reserve waggons; and finally, fearful of not being obeyed, he rose and inquired himself of the grenadiers of his guard at the entrance of his tent, whether they had received this supply. Being answered in the affirmative, he re-entered and composed himself to sleep.

In a short time, however, he called again. His aide-de-camp found him with his head resting on his hands. From the remarks he made, he seemed to be reflecting on the vanity of human glory. "What, in fact was war? It was the occupation of barbarians, the whole art of which consisted in being the strongest on any given point!" He then complained of the inconstancy of fortune, which he observed he was then himself beginning to experience. Then appearing to recur to more consolatory and animating thoughts, he adverted to what had been told him on the dilatoriness

and negligence of Kututof, and expressed astonishment that Beningsen had not been preferred to him. He next reflected on his own highly critical circumstances, and added, "It will be an eventful day; a dreadful battle!" He asked Rapp, whether he thought they should gain the victory? "Undoubtedly," replied Rapp, "but it will be a bloody one!" On which Napoleon remarked, "I know it; but I have eighty thousand men. I shall lose twenty thousand of them, and with sixty thousand shall enter Moscow. The stragglers will there rejoin us, and afterwards the battalions of recruits now on their march, and we shall be stronger than before the battle."

He appeared not to comprehend either his guard or his cavalry in this calculation. Then, his former subject of uneasiness again recurring to his mind, he sent once more to examine the appearance and attitude of the Russians, and word was brought him that their fires were still bright and full, and that, judging from the number of them and the moving shadows before them, there could be no doubt that it was not merely a rear-guard but an entire army that occupied the ground. The continued presence of the enemy tranquillized his mind; and he again sought for rest.

The marches, however, which he had just made with his army; the harassing fatigues of the preceding nights and days, so many anxious cares, so momentous a suspense had weighed heavily upon him. The cold air had checked his perspiration: and he laboured under an irritating fever, a dry cough, and extreme thirst. For the remainder of the night he endeavoured in vain to quench its violence. This new attack of disease became complicated with his old complaint; for on the preceding day he had been seized with a fit

of that painful malady by which his life had been so long afflicted and threatened.

At length five o'clock arrived. One of Ney's officers came to announce that the marshal had the Russians still in view, and to request leave to begin the attack. This intelligence appeared to restore to the emperor his strength, which the fever had much reduced. He immediately rose, summoned his officers around him, and, leaving his tent, exclaimed, "At last we have them! March! We will to-day open for ourselves the gates of Moscow!"

CHAPTER IX.



It was half-past five in the morning when Napoleon arrived near the redoubt which was captured on the 5th of September. There he waited for the first beams of day and the first sounds of Poniatowski's opening fire. The day appeared, and the emperor pointing to the east said to his officers, "There is the sun of Austerlitz." But its rays came directly in our faces. It rose on the side of the Russians, giving a clearness of object to their aim, and dazzling us. It was then discovered that, in the darkness, the batteries had been so stationed that the enemy was beyond the reach of their fire. They were therefore to be pushed forward. This movement the Russians did not interrupt. They seemed fearful of being the first to break the awful silence.

The attention of the emperor was then fixed on the right, when on a sudden, about seven o'clock, the battle opened on his left. He was soon apprized that

one of the regiments of prince Eugene, the 106th, had just gained possession of the village of Borodino, and of its bridge, which they ought to have destroyed, but that in the ardour of success they had rushed over it, notwithstanding all the efforts of their general, to attack the heights of Gorcki, from which the Russians had just poured upon them a tremendous fire both in front and in flank which had nearly overwhelmed them.

It was added, that the general who commanded that brigade had been killed, and that the 106th would have been entirely destroyed if the 92nd regiment had not promptly hastened to their relief and brought off in safety those who remained of them.

It was Napoleon himself who had just given the order to his left wing to make a violent attack. Perhaps he expected to be only half-obeyed, and merely wished to detain the attention of the enemy on that side. But he multiplied his orders, and pushed to excess his instructions and excitations, and brought on a battle in front, while his plan had been to conduct it in an oblique direction.

During this action the emperor, presuming that Poniatowski was engaged on the old Moscow road, had given the signal of attack. Then suddenly from the previously peaceful plain and silent hills burst forth flashes of fire and clouds of smoke which were instantly followed by a multitude of explosions and the whizzing of innumerable bullets which rent the air on every side. In the midst of this thunder Davoust, with the divisions Compans, Dessaix, and thirty cannon at their head, advanced rapidly upon the first redoubt of the enemy.

The fusillade of the Russians now commenced, which was answered only by a brisk discharge from the can-

non of the French. Their infantry advanced without firing. They hastened as fast as possible to reach the fire of the enemy, and at once silence it. But Compans, the general of the column, and the bravest of his men fell down wounded; and the rest, somewhat disconcerted, halted amidst the storm of balls in order to answer it, when Rapp instantly hastened up to take the place of Compans: he urged on the men, and without suffering them to stay and fire made them advance charging with their bayonets and at a running pace against the enemy's redoubt.

He was himself the first to reach it, when he also was wounded. It was the twenty-second wound that he had received. A third general, who had instantly succeeded him, fell also. Davoust himself was struck. Rapp was conveyed to the emperor, who said to him, "What! Rapp, always wounded! but how are they going on above there?" the aide-de-camp replied, that the guard was wanted to finish the business. "No," said Napoleon, "I will take good care of that; I will not have that destroyed. I will gain the battle without it."

At this time Ney, with his three divisions, reduced now to ten thousand men, threw himself into the plain; he hastened to succour Davoust, and the fire of the enemy was thus diverted; Ney rushed on. The 57th regiment of Compans, finding themselves now supported, felt their spirits and confidence revive, and by one vigorous effort soon reached the enemy's intrenchments: they instantly scaled them, came into immediate contact with the Russians, and with the point of the bayonet drove them back, overthrew them, and killed the most intrepid and persevering of them. The rest fled, and the 57th kept possession of its conquest. At the same time, Ney attacked the two other

redoubts with such impetuosity as to wrest them also from the enemy.

It was now mid-day. The left of the Russian line being thus forced, and the plain open, the emperor ordered Murat to hasten thither with his cavalry, and complete the business of the day. That prince was almost in the same instant visible on the heights, in the very midst of the enemy who was again making his appearance there ; for the second Russian line and some reinforcements conducted by Bagawout, and sent by Tutchkof, had come up to the assistance of the first. All were advancing with rapidity, supporting themselves on Semenowska, in order to retake their redoubts. The French were still in all the disorder which at first attends on victory ; they were taken by surprise, and retreated.

The Westphalians, whom Napoleon had just sent to succour Poniatowski, were at this time traversing the wood which separated that prince from the rest of the army, and through the dust and smoke had an indistinct view of our troops thus retreating. From the direction of their march they supposed them to be enemies, and accordingly fired upon them. This mistake, which continued for some time, augmented the disorder.

The enemy's horse pushed their success with great vigour. They surrounded Murat, who had forgotten himself, while endeavouring to rally his men. They were even stretching out their arms to take him prisoner, when he escaped by throwing himself into the redoubt. There, however, he found no soldiers that could be depended upon, none but such as were giving themselves up for lost, and running forward and backward in consternation on the parapet. They

would all have fled could they have found a possibility of doing it.

The presence of the king, and his rallying calls to duty instantly brought back confidence to some of them. He seized upon the first weapon he met with, and fought with one hand, while he waved his plumed hat in the air with the other, summoning all to exertion and hope, and infusing into them their former valour by the commanding influence of an intrepid example. At the same time Ney had re-formed his divisions. His fire stopped the enemy's cuirassiers, and threw their ranks into disorder. They quitted their hold, Murat was at length extricated, and the heights were reconquered.

The king had scarcely escaped from this danger before he rushed into another. He threw himself upon the enemy, with the cavalry of Bruyere and Nansouty; and by obstinate and reiterated charges overthrew the Russian lines, drove them back, precipitated them upon their centre, and effected within the course of an hour the entire defeat of their left wing.

But the heights of the ruined village of Semenowska, where the left of the Russian centre commenced, were still untouched. They were supported by the reinforcements which Kutusof was incessantly drawing from his right. Their commanding fire poured with dreadful effect upon Ney and Murat. It stopped their victory. It became necessary to carry that position. At first Maubourg with his cavalry swept the front of it. Friand, one of Davoust's generals, followed with his infantry. Dufour and the 15th light troops were the first to mount the acclivity. They dislodged the Russians from the village, the ruins of which had been ill intrenched. Friand supported this attempt, and, although wounded, secured the success of it.

EXPEDITION TO RUSSIA.

CHAPTER X.

THIS vigorous action opened for us the road to victory. It was necessary to follow it up without loss of time, and with energy: but Murat and Ney were now exhausted. They had halted, and while they were rallying their troops, they sent to desire reinforcements. Napoleon was now observed to show a hesitation hitherto totally unknown to him; he pondered for a long time; and at length, after a number of orders and counter-orders reiterated to his young guard, he concluded that the presence of the forces of Friand and Maubourg upon the heights would be sufficient to maintain them. The decisive moment did not seem to him to have yet arrived.

But Kutusof profited by this demur and delay, which were beyond his expectation. He summoned to the assistance of his uncovered left all his reserves, and even the Russian guard. Bagration, with all these reinforcements, was enabled to re-form his line. His right was supported by a great battery, which prince Eugene was attacking; his left by the wood, which terminated the field of battle towards Psarewo. His fire mowed down our ranks. His attack was violent, impetuous, and simultaneous; infantry, artillery, and cavalry all engaged in one grand and mighty effort. Ney and Murat withstood with firmness and intrepidity the rushing tempest. It was no time for them to think of following up their victory; they had enough to do to preserve it.

Friand's soldiers, ranged in front of Semenowska, repulsed the first charges; but, being attacked by a storm of balls and grape-shot, they were daunted, and

one of their chiefs, completely disheartened, commanded a retreat. At that critical moment Murat rode up to him, and seizing him by the collar exclaimed, "What are you about!" The colonel pointing to the ground on which half of his men lay dead or wounded, replied, "You see that we can stay here no longer." The king rejoined, "I can stay here very well myself." The officer checked by these words, and looking fixedly at the king, coolly replied, "It is right! Soldiers, about face! Let us advance to be killed!"

In the mean time Murat had just sent Borelli again to the emperor, to request assistance. That officer pointed to the clouds of dust now raised by the charges of cavalry on the heights, which had hitherto, since their capture, remained tranquil. Some cannon-balls from that quarter, the first instance of the kind in the course of the day, came and stopped nearly at Napoleon's feet; the enemy was advancing; Borelli persisted; and the emperor promised to send his young guard; but it had scarcely begun to move, when he himself called to it to halt. However, count Lobau kept on pushing it forward, under pretence of correcting some inaccuracy in its line. Napoleon saw through the intention, and repeated his order.

Fortunately the artillery of the reserve advanced at that moment to take a position on the conquered heights. Lauriston had obtained the consent of the emperor to this manœuvre, who at first rather permitted than ordered it. But in a short time it appeared to him so important that he urged its being as speedily as possible carried into effect with the only indication of impatience that he had showed during the whole day.

It is not known whether his uncertainty respecting the actions of Poniatowski and prince Eugene on

his right and left did not produce much of his hesitation; but he certainly seemed apprehensive lest the extreme left of the Russians, escaping from the Poles, should come back and take possession of the field of battle behind Ney and Murat. This, at least, was one of the causes which induced him to keep his guard in observation on that point. He replied to those who urged him, "that he must first see his way more clearly; that the battle had not yet begun; that it would be a long conflict; that it was important to know how to wait; that time was mixed up with every thing; that it was the element of which all other things were composed; that things were not yet sufficiently unravelled." He then asked what o'clock it was; adding "that the hour of his battle had not arrived, and that it would begin in two hours."

But, in fact, it did not begin at all. Almost the whole of the day he sat on his chair or walked slowly forward and backward in advance and a little to the left of the redoubt taken on the 5th, on the bank of a ravine far from the field of battle, which he could scarcely see any thing of after it had passed beyond the heights: showing no agitation on its reappearance, and no impatience with respect to his own troops or the enemy. He merely exhibited a few gestures indicative of melancholy resignation, when every now and then, in quick succession, he was informed of the loss of his best generals. He rose many times, in order to take a few steps, and then sat down again.

Every one around him observed him with astonishment. Hitherto, in such momentous issues, he had displayed a calm activity; but, in this instance, it was the coolness of indolence, or the calm of lethargy. Some thought it attributable to that exhaustion which is a frequent consequence of violent sensations; others

imagined that he had perhaps become weary of all sublunary things, and that even the scenes of battle, therefore, could no longer interest him. Several remarked that the calm constancy and *sang froid* manifested by great men on these great occasions are, by the heavy and deadening hand of time, converted into dulness and indifference. Those most devotedly attached to him ascribed his immobility to the necessity, in a command of so great extent, for not changing his station too frequently, that the intelligence sent him might arrive with regularity. And, finally, there were some who with much more reason imputed it all to his impaired health, to a secret malady, and to the commencement of a violent fit of illness.

The generals of artillery, who also had been astonished at their inactivity, promptly availed themselves of the permission which had just been granted them to fight. They soon crowned the crests of the heights. Eighty pieces of cannon discharged their contents at once. The Russian cavalry advanced first against this brazen barrier, but in order to escape utter destruction from it were soon obliged to retire behind their infantry.

The infantry advanced in thick masses, in which our balls from the first made wide and deep openings; yet they constantly came on nearer and nearer, when the French batteries redoubling the rapidity of their fire absolutely mowed them down with grape-shot. Whole platoons fell at once. Their soldiers struggled to preserve their compactness under this terrible fire; and, divided every instant by death, they still closed their ranks over it, trampling it with defiance under their feet.

At last they halted, not daring to advance any farther, and yet resolved not to go back; whether they

were appalled, and, as it were, petrified with horror in this tremendous gulph of destruction, or whether it was owing to Bagration's being about that time wounded; or whether it might be that, a first arrangement being attended with failure, their generals felt incompetent to change it, not possessing, like Napoleon, the art of moving such vast bodies at once, with unity, harmony, and order. In short, these heavy and stationary masses stood to be crushed and destroyed in detail for two entire hours, without any other movement than that of the falling of the men. It was in truth a deplorable and frightful massacre; and the intelligent valour of our artillery-men admired the firm, resigned, but infatuated courage of their enemies.

The conquerors were in reality the party soonest fatigued and exhausted. The slowness of this contest by artillery was a trial of their patience. Their ammunition, moreover, now began to be exhausted. Ney, therefore, marched so as to extend his right which he pushed forward rapidly, in order to turn again the left of the new front opposed to him. Davoust and Murat seconded him in the effort; and the remnant of Ney's troops became the conquerors of the remains of Bagration's.

The battle was then over in the plain, and became now concentrated on the remainder of the enemy's heights, and near the great redoubt which Barclay, with the centre and right, still defended with obstinacy against prince Eugene.

Thus about the middle of the day the whole right wing of the French, Ney, Davoust, and Murat, after crushing Bagration and half of the Russian line, presented themselves on the half-opened flank of the remains of the enemy's army, of which they had a view

of the whole interior, the reserves, the abandoned rears, and even the actually commenced retreat.

Being however too weak to throw themselves into this opening, behind a line which was still formidable, they called loudly and repeatedly for the guard. "The young guard! Let it merely follow at a distance! Let it merely show itself! Let it succeed them upon the heights! They would themselves, then, complete the conquest."

Belliard was sent to the emperor with this request. He declared "that from their position they could clearly see as far as the Mojaisk road in the rear of the Russian army; that they perceived on it a confused multitude of stragglers, wounded soldiers and carriages in retreat, that a ravine indeed and a slight wood still separated them. but that the enemy's generals under their present state of consternation had no idea of availing themselves of these; in short, that one determined onset would carry them into the very centre of that scene of confusion, and decide at once the fate of the hostile army and of the war!"

However, the emperor, hesitated, doubted, and ordered the general to go and look again, and then return to him with an account.

Belliard, much surprised, hastened to make his observation, and returned as speedily as possible; he stated that "the enemy was recovering from his terror, and beginning to turn his circumstances to the best account; that his riflemen had already lined the wood; that the opportunity was rapidly passing away, that not a single instant was to be lost, as in that case a second battle would be necessary to terminate the first!"

But Bessieres had returned from the heights to which Napoleon had sent him to examine the attitude

of the Russians. That marshal affirmed, "that so far from being in disorder they had withdrawn to a second position, in which they appeared to be preparing for a new attack;" and the emperor then said to Belliard, "that the case was not sufficiently extricated and conclusive to induce him yet to part with his reserves; and that he must see more clearly the state of his chess-board." That was the expression he used, and which he several times repeated, pointing on one side to the old road to Moscow, which Poniatowski had not been able to make himself master of; and on another to an attack of the enemy's cavalry on the rear of our left wing; and lastly to the great redoubt against which the efforts of Prince Eugene were still exerted in vain.

Belliard in consternation returned to the king, and announced to him "the impossibility of obtaining from the emperor his reserve. He had found him, he said, in the same place, having an air both of pain and dejection, with haggard features, melancholy looks, and giving his orders languishingly in the midst of the dreadful thunders of war which seemed to be of scarcely the slightest interest to him." When Ney heard this statement his impetuous feelings broke out in a storm of passion. "Had they then come so far," he asked, "merely to be contented with a field of battle? What was the emperor doing in the rear of his army? In that situation he was within reach only of reverses, not of successes. Since he would no longer engage in war himself, act as general in his own person, and was resolved everywhere to act the part of emperor, let him go back to the Tuileries, and leave them as generals in his stead."

Murat was calmer. He recollected that he had seen the emperor the day before passing along the front of the enemy's line, and frequently halting, and

sometimes alighting and resting his head upon one of his cannon, in an attitude of severe suffering. He knew the agitation in which he had spent the night, and that a sharp and frequent cough had impeded his respiration. The king apprehended that great fatigue and the crisis of the equinox had given a shock to his frame, and that, in short, at that important moment the powers of his mind were fettered by his body, broken down under the triple weight of fatigue, of fever, and of a malady which perhaps of all diseases is most calculated to impair the physical and moral powers of those afflicted by it.

However, there was no want of application, and even of urgency, on the point in question; for immediately on Belliard's withdrawing, Daru, at the pressing solicitation of Dumas, and especially of Berthier, said in a low tone to the emperor, "That on all sides the cry now was, that the moment for the guard to act was come." But Napoleon replied, "And if there should be a second battle on the morrow, what shall I have to carry it on with?" The minister did not persist, astonished to see, for the first time, the emperor refer in such circumstances to to-morrow, and postpone his fortune till then.

CHAPTER XI.

IN the mean time Barclay, with the right, was obstinately struggling with prince Eugene. The latter, immediately after the taking of Borodino, had passed the Kalogha in front of the great redoubt of the enemy. There, more particularly, the Russians had relied upon their steep heights, surrounded by deep

and muddy ravines, on our state of exhaustion, on their intrenchments armed with heavy cannon, and, finally, upon eighty pieces which lined the heights, then exhibiting all the terrible array of steel and fire. But these powerful elements, art, and nature, all failed them at once. Assailed by one of those onsets which so highly distinguish the French military, they on a sudden saw Morand's soldiers in the midst of them, and fled with precipitation and dismay.

Eighteen hundred men of the 30th regiment, and general Bonnamy at their head, had just performed this great achievement.

In this attack, Fabier, the aide-de-camp of Marmont, who had arrived only the day before from the interior of Spain, particularly distinguished himself: he threw himself as a volunteer and on foot at the head of the foremost riflemen, as if he had come to represent the army of Spain in the midst of the grand army, and, animated by that rivalry of glory which constitutes heroes, had resolved to exhibit it at the head and in the extreme front of danger.

He fell wounded on that too famous redoubt, for the conquest just mentioned was but of short duration. The attack was deficient in unity, either from the precipitation of the first assailants, or the dilatoriness of the last. There had been a ravine to pass. Its depth secured from the enemy's fire, and it is affirmed that many of our troops halted there. Morand, therefore, found himself alone in front of several Russian lines. It was no more than six o'clock. On his right, Friand had not yet attacked Semenowska; and on his left, the divisions Gerard, Broussier, and the Italian guard were not yet formed in line.

Besides, that attack ought not to have been made so vigorously; the object was simply to keep Barclay in

check, and occupy him on that side, the battle being intended to begin by the right wing, and to pivot on the left wing. Such had been the plan of the emperor, and no one knew why he counteracted it at the moment of execution, for it was he who at the first report of cannon despatched various officers in succession to urge on the attack.

The Russians, having recovered from their first panic, hastened forward on all sides. Kutusof and Yermudof led them on in person, with a resolution worthy of the occasion. The 30th regiment, alone against an army, dared to attack it with the bayonet, and it was surrounded, overwhelmed, and driven from the redoubt, where it left behind one-third of its number, together with its intrepid commander who fell under innumerable wounds. The Russians, animated by this success, were not content with defending their acquisition; they in turn attacked. On this point were then directed all that war could display of skill, of effort, and of fury. The French preserved their station for four hours on the sloping sides of this volcano, and under the terrific storm of iron and lead. But to effect this required all the skill and perseverance of prince Eugene, and the almost insupportable horror against acknowledging themselves conquered which is felt by men who have been so long victorious.

Each division several times changed its generals. The viceroy went from one to the other, mingling entreaty with reproaches, and reminding them particularly of their former victories. He sent the emperor notice of his critical situation, but Napoleon replied, "That he could give him no relief; that it depended upon him alone to conquer; that he had only to make one great effort; that the battle was concentrated on

that point." And the prince was rallying all his forces to try a general assault, when on a sudden the most furious outcries proceeding from his left drew all his attention.

Ouwarof, two regiments of cavalry, and some thousands of Cossacks were falling upon his reserve, and had thrown them into disorder. He hastened to the spot, and, supported by generals Delsons and Ornano, soon drove off the assailants, who were more vexatious than formidable: he then returned to put himself at the head of a decisive attack.

This was the moment when Murat, compelled to inaction in the plain where he was complete master, had for the fourth time sent to his brother to complain of the losses which the Russians, supporting themselves on the redoubts that were opposed to prince Eugene, occasioned to his cavalry. He only asked of him that of the guard: supported by that, he would turn the intrenched heights, and take them together with the army which defended them.

The emperor seemed to consent to this. He sent for Bessieres, the chief who commanded the cavalry of the guards. Unfortunately the marshal was not to be found; he had, in consequence of orders for that purpose, gone to inspect as nearly as he could the state and progress of the battle. The emperor waited for him nearly an hour without any impatience, and without renewing his order. When the marshal at length returned, he received him with a satisfied air, listened tranquilly to his statement, and permitted him to advance as far as his judgment might induce him.

But the time was now passed. It was in vain now to think of getting possession of the whole Russian army (and perhaps also of the whole of Russia); it was as much as could be effected to keep the field of battle.

Kutusof had been allowed leisure for reconnoitring; he had strengthened himself on the points of difficult access which were still in his power, and had covered the plain with his cavalry.

Thus had the Russians for the third time re-formed a left flank in front of Ney and Murat. But the latter called up the cavalry of Montbrun. That general had been killed, and was succeeded by Caulaincourt. He found the aides-de-camp of the unfortunate Montbrun lamenting the fate of their commander. "Follow me," said he to them, "do not weep for him, but come and avenge him."

The king pointed out to him the new flank of the enemy: he was to break through it to the height of the gorge of their great battery; there, while the light cavalry was pushing its advantage, he (Caulaincourt) was to turn suddenly to the left with his cuirassiers, and take in the rear the formidable redoubt, the front of which was still overwhelming the viceroy.

Caulaincourt replied, "You shall see me there immediately, dead or alive!" He instantly departed, and overthrew all that opposed him. Then, suddenly turning to the left with his cuirassiers, he was the first man to penetrate the bloody redoubt, where almost at the instant a musket-ball mortally wounded him. His conquest became his tomb.

Intelligence of this victory and this loss was soon communicated to the emperor. The grand-equerry, brother of the unfortunate general, heard it. He was at first strongly affected: in a short time, however, he subdued his feelings, and but for the tears which still silently dropped down his cheeks, he might have been thought insensible to his loss. The emperor said to him, "Would you wish to withdraw?" and accompanied his words with an exclamation of grief. But

just at that moment we were advancing against the enemy, and the grand-equerry made no reply, nor did he retire. He merely lifted his hat, to indicate that he gratefully declined the permission offered.

While the cavalry were executing this decisive charge, the viceroy had nearly reached with his infantry the mouth of this volcano, when suddenly he perceived its fire extinguished, its smoke dispersed, and its crest shining with the moveable and polished brass which covered our cuirassiers. Those heights, which had been hitherto Russian, had at length become French. He hastened to share the victory, to complete it, and to secure himself in the new position.

The Russians, however, had by no means abandoned the hope of regaining it. They persisted in their efforts with zeal, and even fury. They formed into platoons in front of our ranks with order and perseverance. Incessantly conquered, their generals nevertheless incessantly brought them again to the conflict, and they appeared determined at least to die at the feet of the works which had been erected by their own hands.

Fortunately their last column of attack presented itself near Semenowska and the great redoubt without artillery, the advance of which had undoubtedly been impeded by the ravines. Belliard had barely time to collect thirty cannon to oppose this body of infantry. It approached to the very mouths of the guns which were discharged against them with such judgment and effect, that they appeared to be whirled round by the shock, and withdrew without having been able to deploy. Murat and Belliard have both declared, that if at that moment they had had ten thousand infantry of the reserve, their victory would have been decisive, but that being reduced to cavalry

only, they considered themselves fortunate in remaining masters of the field of battle.

On his side, Grouchy, by his sanguinary and reiterated charges on the left of the high road, confirmed the victory, and swept the plain of the enemy. He was, however, unable to pursue the remains of the Russians, whose retreat was protected by a succession of ravines and by armed redoubts. There they defended themselves with determination, and even rage, till night; thus protecting the high road to Moscow, their holy city, their magazine, their depôt, and their grand asylum.

From these second heights they could completely command the first, which they had abandoned to us. The viceroy was obliged to hide his panting, exhausted, and thinned lines in the refts and hollows of the ground, and behind the half-demolished intrenchments. The soldiers were compelled to remain on their knees and bent to the ground behind the shelter of these shapeless parapets. They continued several hours in this painful position, kept in check by the enemy, who was himself checked by them.

It was about half-past three that this last victory was gained. There had been several such in the course of the day. Each corps in succession vanquished what was opposed to it, without being able so to profit by its success as to decide the battle; for each of them, in consequence of not being supported at the time by the reserve, had halted from mere exhaustion. But at length all the first obstacles were surmounted. The sounds of the firing became weaker and weaker, and more distant from the emperor. Officers came in from every part of the field. Ponia-towski and Sebastiani, after an obstinate struggle, had also at last conquered. The enemy had halted

and was intrenching himself in a new position. The day was near a close, our ammunition exhausted, and the battle finished.

Belliard then for the third time returned to the emperor, whose sufferings appeared to be rather increased. He mounted his horse with effort, and advanced slowly to the heights of Semenowska. He there saw a field of battle incompletely obtained, and which the bullets, and even the musket-balls of the enemy were still contesting with us.

In the midst of these hostile sounds, and the still ardent zeal and activity of Ney and Murat, he appeared cool and comparatively indifferent, weak in voice, and languishing in manner. The sight of the Russians, however, and the sounds of their fire-arms, gave him a momentary animation; he proceeded to take a nearer view of their position; and was desirous of wresting it from them. But Murat, pointing to our nearly destroyed troops, declared that the guard would be necessary to accomplish that; upon which Bessieres failed not to remark, as he did on every opportunity, on the importance of that select and reserved corps. He adverted to the distance at which they were from reinforcements; he observed that Europe was now between Napoleon and France, and that particular care should be taken to preserve at least that small body of soldiers who alone were his security against it. And as it was at that time past four o'clock, Berthier added, "that it was now too late; that the enemy had established and strengthened himself in his new position; and that if the attempt were made to dislodge them, many thousands of men would be sacrificed for no corresponding and adequate advantage." The emperor then thought only of recommending to the conquerors prudence. He soon after

returned, still only walking his horse, to his tents which had been erected behind the battery taken two days before, and in front of which he had continued ever since the morning, a nearly motionless observer of all the vicissitudes of that dreadful day.

While thus slowly moving on, he called Mortier to him, and ordered him "to advance with the young guard, but on no account to pass the new ravine which separated the French army from the enemy." He added, "that he charged him with keeping the field of battle; that this was all that he required of him, and that to accomplish this he should do whatever was necessary, but no more." He almost immediately called him back, to know "whether he had distinctly understood him; enjoining him to engage in no action, and above all to keep possession of the field of battle." An hour afterwards, he caused the order to be reiterated to him, "neither to advance nor retreat, in any circumstances whatever."

CHAPTER XII.

WHEN he had reached his tent, great mental dejection appeared to be added to his prostration of physical debility. He had seen the field of battle. Places had spoken still more expressively than men. That victory so eagerly sought, so dearly purchased, had after all been incomplete! Had he been the man, he who had hitherto always urged on success to the verge of rashness, that had now been found by fortune cold and inactive when she had offered him the most valuable of her favours?

His losses had been immense, and without any proportional result. Every individual around him was lamenting the death of a friend, a relation, or a brother; for the mischances of the day had fallen more than usually upon the principal officers. Forty-three generals had been killed or wounded. What mourning would there be in Paris! What a triumph had he afforded his enemies! What a dangerous subject of meditation for Germany! In his own army, even within his own tent, his victory was silent, gloomy, unsocial, and absolutely destitute of flatterers.

These whom he had summoned to his presence, Dumas, Daru, had heard his observations without a comment; but their attitude, their downcast eyes, their silence, were as far as possible from being inexpressive.

It was now ten o'clock. Murat, whose activity had not been extinguished by twelve hours of fighting, came once more to request of him the cavalry guard. "The enemy's army," he said, "was passing the Mosqua in haste and disorder; and he wished to surprise and annihilate it." The emperor repressed this sally of extravagant ardour, and then dictated the bulletin of the battle.

He was pleased with informing Europe that neither himself nor his guard had been exposed to any danger. Some considered this as a mere ebullition of vanity; but better judges viewed it in a different light. They had never observed in him any vain and gratuitous display of passion. They conceived that, at so remote a distance, and at the head of an army of foreigners who could be bound to him only by the common tie of victory, the preservation of a *corps d'élite* zealously and exclusively devoted to his service appeared to him a matter of indispensable precaution.

His enemies, in fact, would now have nothing further to expect from fields of battle ; neither his death, as he was under no necessity of exposing his life in order to conquer ; nor a victory, as his genius was competent to ensure that, even although he was at a distance, and while he kept entire his reserve. While the guard remained untouched, his real power, and that also which he derived from public opinion, remained unimpaired. It seemed to him a security against his allies as well as his enemies. Such were the reasons they apprehended for his being so careful to inform Europe of the preservation of this formidable reserve ; and yet it amounted only to twenty thousand men, of whom nearly one third consisted of new recruits.

These motives were strong ; but they did not appear satisfactory to men who well knew that it is easy to find excellent reasons for committing the most serious faults. They accordingly remarked " that they had seen the battle, which had been gained in the morning on the left, stopped where it was going on favourably for us, to follow it up successively in front, upon the system of man against man, of a contest of mere physical strength, just as in the infancy of the art of war ! that it had been a battle without combination and unity, a victory of soldiers rather than of their general ! Why, then, had so much urgency and precipitation been exerted to come into contact with the enemy, with an army panting, reduced, and exhausted, and, after actually coming up with him, the opportunity of giving him a deadly blow been neglected in order to stay bleeding and mutilated in the midst of an exasperated population, surrounded by vast deserts, and at a distance of eight hundred leagues from their resources ?"

Murat was at this time heard to remark " that

throughout that eventful day, he had been unable to recognise the genius of Napoleon." The viceroy acknowledged "that he had no previous conception of the indecision shown by his adoptive father:" and Ney, when called on for his opinion by the emperor, advised him with peculiar perseverance and energy to retreat.

Those who had not left him on that day were the only persons who had perceived that the conqueror of nations was himself at that time subdued by a consuming fever, and more effectually still by a return of that afflicting malady which all violent exertion; or too powerful and long-continued emotion, was now apt to bring on upon him. These cited the very words written by himself in Italy, fifteen years before, "Health is an indispensable requisite in warfare, and for which there can be no substitute;" and also his exclamation, unfortunately too prophetic, "Orderer is worn out: there is but one season for war; I shall be fit for it six years longer: and then I shall myself be obliged to stop."

In the course of the night the Russians manifested their being at no great distance, by a number of annoying clamours and alarms; and in the morning there was an alert, even in the very tent of the emperor. The old guard was compelled to resort to arms; a circumstance which after a victory was rather mortifying, and carried with it the air of an insult. The army continued inactive till noon; or rather it seemed as if there were no longer an army, but merely an advanced guard. The others were dispersed over the field of battle in order to carry off the wounded, who amounted to no less than twenty thousand, and who were conveyed two leagues in the rear, to the large monastery of Kolotskoi.

The chief surgeon, Larrey, had just taken assistants

from all the regiments. The hospital-waggon had come up; but all that could be done for the conveyance was insufficient. He has since complained, in a printed narrative, that no troop was left with him to obtain articles of indispensable necessity from the surrounding villages.

The emperor then inspected the field of battle; and never was there any that exhibited a more frightful spectacle. Every thing concurred to increase the horrors of it; a lowering sky, a cold rain, a violent wind, habitations in ashes, a plain absolutely torn up and covered with fragments and ruins; all round the horizon the dark and funereal verdure of the trees of the north; soldiers roaming in every part among the bodies of the slain and emptying the knapsacks of their dead comrades to procure subsistence for themselves; wounds of a most hideous description made by the large bullets used by the Russians; noiseless bivouacs; no songs of triumph, no lively narrations, but a general and mournful silence!

Around the eagles were the rest of the officers and subalterns, and a few soldiers barely sufficient to guard the colours. Their clothes were torn by the violence of the conflict, and blackened with powder, and stained with blood: yet, notwithstanding all their rags, misery and destitution, they displayed a lofty carriage, and even, on the appearance of the emperor, received him with acclamations of triumph: these, however, seemed somewhat rare and forced; for in this army, which was at once capable of discrimination and enthusiasm, each individual could form a correct estimate of the position of the whole.

The French soldiers are seldom in this respect deceived. They were amazed to find so many of their enemies killed, such vast numbers wounded, and neverthe-

less so few prisoners. The latter did not amount in all to eight hundred. It was by the number of these that they estimated their success. The slain proved the courage of the conquered rather than the victory. If the rest retired in good order, under little discouragement, and even with a firm and warlike attitude, what was the advantage of gaining a mere field of battle? In a country of such immense extent there was ground enough to furnish these in endless succession!

With respect to ourselves we had already too much of this wild and savage territory, and much more than we were able to defend. Could this, then, be called conquering it? Was not the long and narrow furrow which we had traced with such difficulty from Kowno, across sands and ashes, almost instantly closed behind us, just like that of a vessel on the ocean? A few ill-armed peasants had been able to efface it!

They had, in fact, proceeded to carry off, in the rear of our army, both our wounded and our marauders. Five hundred stragglers had fallen into their hands. A few French soldiers, indeed, who had been thus surprised, pretended to join with these Cossacks, and assisted them in making other captures, till at length, the new prisoners becoming considerable in numbers, they availed themselves of the opportunity thus offered, and, suddenly uniting with them, extricated themselves from the power of their too confiding enemies.

The emperor could appreciate his victory only by the number of the slain. The ground of the redoubts was so thickly strewed with slaughtered Frenchmen that they appeared rather to belong to them than to those who still survived. There seemed on those spots to be more dead than living conquerors.

Among the numberless bodies over which it was necessary to pass in following Napoleon, the foot of

one of the horses struck an individual who was merely wounded, and drew from him an indication at once of life and pain. The emperor, who had hitherto been as silent as his victory, and whom the sight of so many victims had nearly overwhelmed with dejection, now broke out in exclamations of horror and indignation, and relieved his mind both by this expression of his feelings and by a number of humane attentions which he bestowed on the unhappy object before him. Some one, in order to assuage his irritation, remarked that it was only a Russian: to which he replied with animation "that, after victory, none were enemies, but all were men." He then dispersed the officers in his train, to give assistance to those who were heard calling for it everywhere around.

There were numbers found, in particular, in the bottom of ravines, into which a great part of our troops had been precipitated, and where also many had dragged themselves to obtain more effectual shelter from the enemy and the storm. Some in sighs and groans were calling upon the name of their country, or of their mother; these were among the youngest. The elder ones awaited death either with an impassive or sardonic air, without deigning to implore or to complain; others requested as a favour to be instantly killed: but such desperate cases were passed in haste as well as horror: the pity that would attempt to restore them seemed useless, and that which would have effectually relieved them by death seemed cruel.

One individual among the most mutilated of all, and who indeed had barely his trunk and one arm remaining, appeared so animated, so full of hope and even of gaiety that an attempt was made to save him. While the assistants were carrying him off the ground it was remarked that he complained of pain in limbs which he

no longer retained. This is far from an uncommon case in similar circumstances, and may be considered perhaps as a new proof that the soul remains in these instances unimpaired, and that feeling belongs to that only, and not to the body, which is unable either to think or feel.

Some Russians were observed dragging themselves onward to spots where they could find a horrible description of shelter afforded them by the accumulation of dead bodies. Many affirm that one of these unfortunate men lived for several days within the carcase of a horse which had been opened by a bomb-shell, and sustained nature by gnawing the flesh from its bones. Some were seen dressing their broken leg by binding to it the branch of a tree, and afterwards proceeding with the help of another branch to the nearest village. They did not suffer a single groan to escape them.

Possibly, distant as they were from their friends and comrades, they expected little or no compassion. It is certain, however, that they appeared to endure pain with greater firmness than the French; not that they suffered more courageously, but they suffered less. For they are less sensitive, in body as well as mind, a circumstance ascribable to their less advanced stage of civilization, and to their organs being also hardened by their climate.

During this painful review the emperor in vain sought for a gladdening illusion by ordering the prisoners that had been taken to be again numbered, and a few dismounted cannon to be collected: between seven and eight hundred prisoners, and a score of unserviceable cannon, were the sole trophies of this imperfect victory.

CHAPTER XIII.

MURAT had been during this time following up the rear-guard of the Russians as far as Mojaisk. The road by which it had retreated was clear and unencumbered by a single remnant of men, carriages, or even clothing. All their slain had been buried; for they entertain a religious respect for the dead.

Marat, on seeing Mojaisk, considered himself as master of it; and he sent to recommend it to the emperor to advance and sleep there. But the Russian rear-guard had taken up a position in front of the walls of that town, in the rear of which on an eminence appeared the whole of the Russian army. They thus covered the Moscow and the Kalougha roads.

Possibly Kutusof hesitated which of these roads he should take, or he might wish to leave us in uncertainty as to the one actually followed by him, which he really did. Besides, the Russians made a point of honour not to take up their quarters beyond the distance of four leagues from our field of victory. This likewise permitted them to disencumber the road behind them, and gather up all their fragments.

Their attitude was firm and imposing, as before the battle; which naturally excited our admiration, but which was partly to be accounted for by the slowness with which we quitted the field of Borodino, and by a deep ravine interposed between them and our cavalry. Murat did not discover this obstacle; but one of his officers, general Dery, suspected it. He went and reconnoitered the ground as far as the very gates of the town, under the Russian bayonets.

The king however, still impetuous as at the beginning of the campaign and of his military career, paid

little attention to the representation. He called up his cavalry, and ordered them to advance in furious onset, and dash through battalions, gates, and walls! His aide-de-camp in vain objected the impossibility. He pointed to the army on the opposite height, which commanded Mojaïsk, and the ravine in which our cavalry were on the point of being ingulphed. But Murat, only bent more inflexibly upon his purpose, repeated, "That they must advance; and that if there really were any obstacle they must inevitably see it!" He then absolutely taunted and insulted them to urge them forward; and they were proceeding to carry his orders into execution, although with some slowness; for in general there was an understanding among his officers to delay attempts of which they deemed the execution absolutely impracticable, that they might give him time to reflect, and that a counter-order might prevent a great calamity; a case which did not always happen, but which, in the present instance, happily took place. Murat contented himself with exhausting his cannon on the drunken and scattered Cossacks who surrounded him and attacked him uttering the most hideous yells.

This affair, however, proceeded far enough to add something to our losses of the preceding day. Beliard was wounded in it. That general, whom Murat afterwards greatly felt the want of, was engaged in reconnoitring the left of the enemy's position: it was assailable, and on that side the attack ought to have been made; but Murat seemed to think only of incurring gratuitous difficulties, and of dashing against whatever was before him.

The emperor did not arrive on the field of battle before night, and was then followed only by a very insufficient force. He advanced towards Mojaïsk, at

a slower pace than he had proceeded at on the day before, and in such a state of absorption, that he did not appear to hear the sounds of the engagement, or to observe how the bullets were tearing up the ground and whistling about his head.

One of his officers addressed him, and pointed out the rear-guard of the enemy, between him and the town; and behind, the fires of an army consisting of fifty thousand men. This spectacle proved the insufficiency of his victory, and the slight discouragement experienced by the enemy. He appeared, however, insensible to it. He listened to the reports made to him with the air of a man broken down and indifferent to almost every thing. He then returned to sleep in a village a few yards distant, and within reach of the enemy's fire.

The Russian autumn had prevailed against him. But for that perhaps the whole of Russia would have fallen under our power on the field of the Mosqua. Its premature inclemency came with singular seasonableness to the assistance of that empire. It was on the 6th of September, the eve of the great battle, that a tempest announced its fatal arrival. Napoleon was exceedingly chilled by it. We have noticed, that on the night which preceded that important battle a harassing fever dried up his blood, and agitated his spirits, and that he was oppressed by it during the continuance of the contest. This disease joined to another of a more cruel description checked his movements and fettered his genius during the five days which succeeded. After having preserved Kutusof from a total ruin at Borodino, it afforded him time to rally the remainder of his army, and to enable them to escape from our pursuit.

On the 9th of September, Mojaisk was still standing

uninjured, and uncovered; but the rear-guard of the enemy was on the heights beyond, which commanded it, and which their army had occupied the day before. Our troops advanced into the town, some to proceed through it in pursuit of the enemy, others for plunder and to obtain lodging. The latter description found neither inhabitants nor provisions, nothing in short but the killed whom they were obliged to throw from the windows into the street in order to make room for themselves, and the dying whom they collected together in one place.

The sick and wounded, indeed, presented themselves every where, and were in fact so numerous that the Russians had not ventured to set fire to the houses. However, their humanity, which had not always been so scrupulous as in this case, even now yielded to the eagerness they felt for firing upon the foremost French who entered, and that with shells, which soon set fire to the wooden town and burned a number of the unhappy wounded whom they had abandoned.

While some were endeavouring to save them from the flames, fifty *voltigeurs* of the 33rd climbed the height the crest of which was occupied by the enemy's cavalry and artillery. The French army, still halted under the walls of Mojaïsk, beheld with surprise the small party of disunited men who on that exposed slope were provoking and defying by their fire some thousands of Russian cavalry. Suddenly just what was expected took place. Several of the enemy's squadrons put themselves in motion; a single moment was sufficient to envelope the audacious assailants, who, however, formed themselves rapidly in square and directed their face and firing on every side. They were, however, so few, in the midst of such an immense plain, and surrounded by such an overwhelming

cavalry, that they soon completely disappeared from our view.

A general exclamation of grief was uttered by the whole army. Every one of our soldiers with stretched-out neck and eager eye followed each movement of the enemy, and strove to ascertain the fate of their comrades in arms. Some were regretting their distance from the scene, and at the same time calling out for rushing to their assistance; others mechanically loaded their muskets or crossed their bayonets with an air of menace against the enemy, as if they had been near enough to give their companions aid. Sometimes their eyes sparkled with animation, seeing the contest was continued; at others they indicated depression and dismay, when it was feared that all was over. Many uttered ejaculations of advice and encouragement, not considering that it was impossible they could be heard.

A few clouds of smoke which rose from amidst the black mass of horses prolonged the suspense. Our friends, it was said, were firing, they therefore were still defending themselves, and all was not finished yet. In fact, a Russian chief had just been killed by the officer who commanded the French party of riflemen. He had answered the summons to surrender only by this mortal discharge. This state of anxiety continued for several minutes, when suddenly the whole army joined in a shout of admiration on seeing the Russian cavalry, amazed at such daring resistance, moving back in order to avoid so well-sustained a fire, and permitting us to see once more this platoon of brave men now masters of the immense field of battle where they occupied not more than a few feet.

When the Russians perceived, from our manœuvres, that a serious attack upon them was intended, they

disappeared without leaving any traces behind them. This case was just a repetition of what had occurred at Witepsk and Smolensk, but much more remarkable, as it was only the second day after so great a disaster. There was at first a doubt between the roads of Moscow and Kalouga, but soon afterwards Murat and Mortier followed up at all hazards that to Moscow.

They continued marching on for two days, eating nothing but horse-flesh and pounded corn, without finding either men or circumstances to indicate the track of the Russian army. Although its infantry consisted now only of a confused mass, it left not a single article or fragment behind! So strong were the spirit of patriotism and the habit of order which prevailed both in the mass and in the detail of this army; and so completely destitute were we of all information, and all data for conclusion, as well as of all resources, in this desert and completely hostile country!

The army of Italy was advancing some leagues on the left of the high road, and surprised a few peasants in arms, but who in fact knew nothing of fighting. Their lord and proprietor, however, rushed with his poniard upon our soldiers like a madman. He exclaimed, that he had no longer any altar, any empire, or any country, and that life had become hateful to him: our troops nevertheless were well-inclined to leave him in the possession of it; but, as he made violent and repeat efforts to deprive of it the soldiers who surrounded him, pity gave place to resentment, and his wish was complied with.

Near Krymskoie, on the 11th of September, the enemy's army again appeared, having established itself in a very strong position. It had resumed its method of regarding, in the course of its retreat, the nature of the ground rather than the enemy. The

duke of Treviso at first convinced Murat of the impossibility of attacking it ; but the fumes of powder had soon intoxicated the monarch. He was absolutely bent on engaging, and obliged Dufour, Mortier, and their infantry to advance. They were the remains of the division Friand and the young guard. On this occasion there were lost, without any advantage, two thousand men of that reserve which had been kept back with such unseasonable thrift and caution on the day of the great battle ; and Mortier, almost in a state of frenzy, wrote to the emperor that he never again would obey Murat.

For the generals of the advanced guard communicated with Napoleon by letters. He had continued three days at Mojaisk, shut up in his chamber, tormented by a burning fever, overwhelmed with business, and torn to pieces by anxiety. A violent cold had taken from him the use of his voice. Compelled to dictate to seven persons at once, and being at the same time unable to make himself understood, he wrote upon different papers the summaries of his despatches. If any difficulties were raised, he explained his meaning by signs.

On one occasion Bessieres enumerated to him all the generals who had been wounded on the field of battle. That fatal list had so severe an effect upon him, that, recovering his voice by a violent effort, he interrupted the marshal by abruptly exclaiming, "After we have been eight days at Moscow that will be all over."

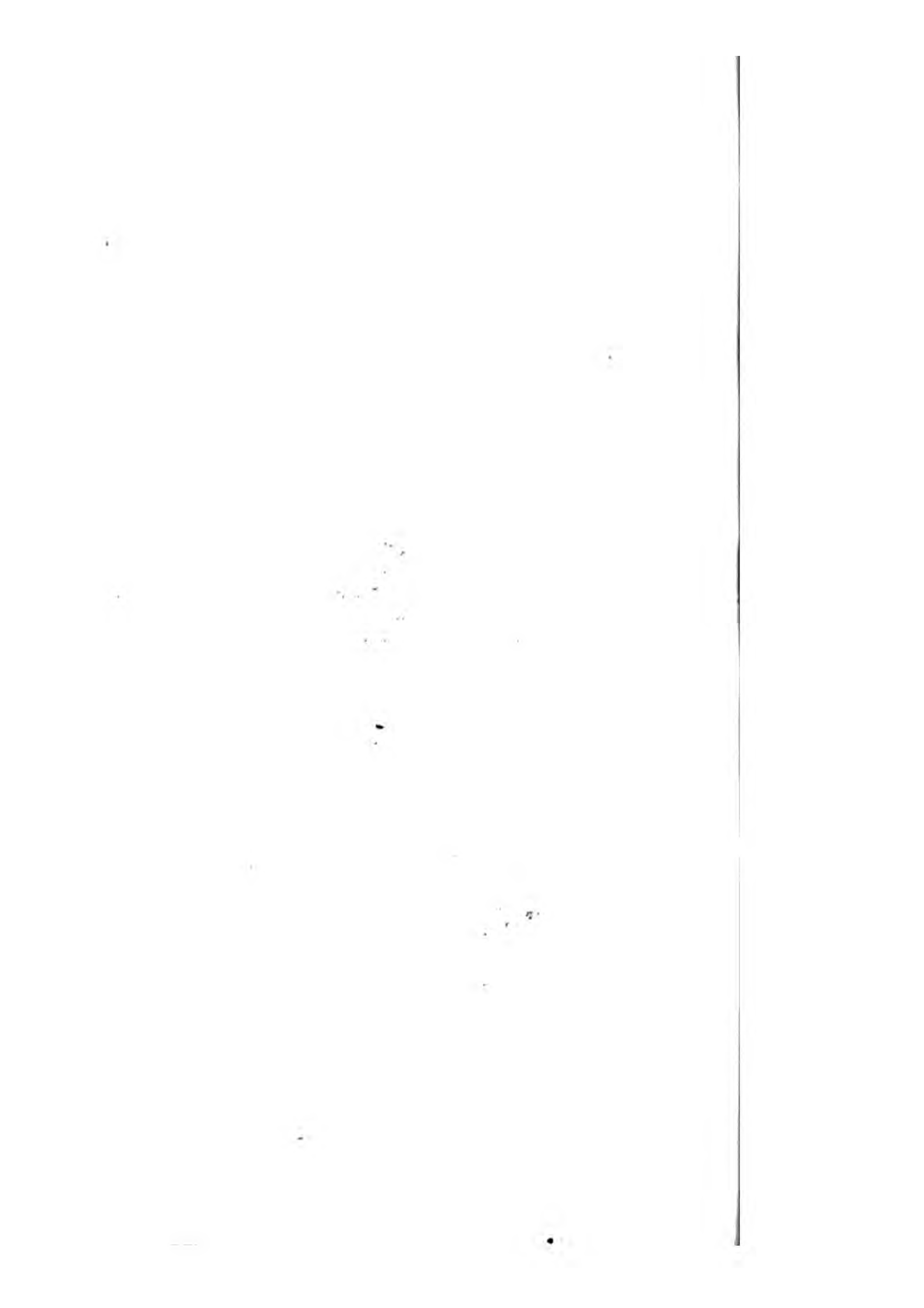
However, although up to this time his whole happy futurity had been associated with that capital, a victory at once so bloody and so indecisive had somewhat impaired his hopes. His instructions of the 11th of September to Berthier for marshal Victor manifested

his apprehensions. "The enemy, attacked in his heart, no longer plays about the extremities. Tell the duke of Belluno to order on every thing, battalions, squadrons, artillery, and all the absent men, to Smolensk, that they may be there within reach of Moscow."

In the midst of his bodily and mental sufferings, the sight of which he concealed from his army, Davoust obtained admission to him. His object was to offer his services, although he was wounded, for the command of the advanced guard; promising that he would march day and night to come in contact with the enemy and force him to fight, without wasting the strength and lives of his soldiers like Murat. But Napoleon replied only by eulogizing somewhat affectedly the daring and inextinguishable ardour of his brother-in-law.

He had just been apprized that the enemy's army had been discovered, that it had not retired on his right flank towards Kalougha as he had feared, but that it had been regularly receding, and that Murat was only two days' march from Moscow. That great name, and the great hope which he attached to it, rekindled his strength and spirits, and on the 12th of September he was well enough to set off in a carriage to rejoin his advanced guard.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



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