

THE  
OPERATIONS OF WAR

EXPLAINED AND ILLUSTRATED

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TO

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

FIELD-MARSHAL THE DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE,

THE GENERAL OF DIVISION

UNDER WHOSE IMMEDIATE COMMAND THE AUTHOR HAD

THE HONOUR TO SERVE IN THE FIELD,

AND THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF UNDER WHOSE ADMINISTRATION

THE STAFF-OFFICERS OF HER MAJESTY'S ARMY

HAVE FIRST BEEN REGULARLY INSTRUCTED IN THE

HIGHEST BRANCHES OF MILITARY SCIENCE,

THIS BOOK

IS, WITH HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS'S GRACIOUS PERMISSION,

DEDICATED.



## P R E F A C E.

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AN experience of six years as the Instructor, in Military Operations and Military History, of a class of officers selected from numerous competitors, could scarcely fail to show the Author what kind of information is most wanted by students who, joining ability to professional training, approach these subjects. Probably most of those who have investigated the matter carefully will agree with him, that less has been done hitherto in strategy than in most sciences to clear the difficulties on the threshold. Modern writers generally follow in the track of their predecessors, adopting their phraseology, and accepting their inferences; and it is not hypercritical to say of essays on the subject, that, while those which are elaborate are mostly vague from diffuseness, those which are succinct are equally vague from incompleteness. The present work is the result of an effort to go to the root of the matter, and lay the basis of a theory which shall be logically sound, so that the student may find his difficulties dealt with in the order in which they present themselves, the way cleared with each step forward, and firm grounds established on which to argue questions in his own mind. It is by no means pretended that the work is at all exhaustive of the



subject; numerous problems may be cited which are not discussed, numerous campaigns which are not alluded to, in the following pages. But the design has been to impart such information, and to support it by such examples, as shall enable the student to read military history, and to investigate military problems, with the confidence of one who does not grope and guess, but surveys and judges.

Bearing in mind how necessary it is for the historian to understand war in the abstract, in order to treat justly the operations which come within his scope, technical phraseology has been almost discarded in this book—partly, indeed, from a conviction of its frequent awkwardness and inefficiency.

All who have attempted it must know the difficulties of following campaigns on ordinary maps. They are generally of inconvenient size; and, while confused with details which (otherwise valuable) are irrelevant to the subject, they are frequently deficient in essential particulars. Readers must have been often puzzled to find armies taking flight, like birds, across spaces where the illustrative maps showed obstacles, but no roads; while occasionally roads are laid down which exist only on paper.

These difficulties, as well as that of following the same set of operations on maps of different scales, have been obviated by preparing illustrations containing all that is wanted and no more, and by consulting the best maps, in which the Author has been cordially aided by Captain Bailey, of the Topographical Department of the War Office.

The marginal paragraphs are intended to connect the threads of the arguments, and to direct attention to the main points of the examples.

If officers should be found to demur to opinions expressed by the Author respecting the operations of either arm to which he does not belong, he would reply, that the objection would apply

equally to a member of any branch of the service; and that, far from maintaining his opinions dogmatically, he would with pleasure find them ably disputed, seeing that the matters he treats of cannot but become clearer by consideration and argument.

E. B. H.

DOVER CASTLE, *20th March* 1866.



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THE  
OPERATIONS OF WAR  
EXPLAINED AND ILLUSTRATED.

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PART I.  
THE MODERN CONDITIONS OF WAR.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

No kind of history so fascinates mankind as the history of wars. No kind of record, other than sacred, appeals at once to the deep sympathies of so wide an audience. Great social, political, or philosophical enterprises may produce more extensive results than can follow from the conflict of arms; but a certain amount of acquired knowledge is necessary in order to render them intelligible. The contests of philosophy, of art, or of statesmanship, demand from the spectators some of the power which is displayed by the disputants; but everybody can watch with interest the game of war, for all can feel how earnest is the struggle where individuals stake their lives and nations their territories. Brilliant exploits, deeds of valour and of self-devotion, frequently relieve the weightier course of the narrative; and all the surrounding incidents, the pomp and circumstance, the actual conflict, the changing scenery, even the horror

Military history essentially popular,

and devastation, are so picturesque, that the gravest historian must feel how much of the interest of his work will be centred in those pages which glow with the lurid light of war.

but read chiefly for its romantic interest.

Very numerous, then, are the readers, both military and civil, of military history. But they read it as they read a romance. They read Napier when they are men as they used to read Plutarch when they were boys. They choose a side, drift with the course of the narrative, and accept the opinions of the historian. And formerly an officer who had read much in this way, and remembered it, passed for well-informed in his profession.

More scientific study demanded.

But this is no longer sufficient. We have recently played a part in a great war. Other great wars are in progress, and more are, or lately were, in prospect. The inquiring spirit of the time has been impelled into military channels by the deep interest the people have felt in contemporary conflicts. It is expected from those who now write about war, that they shall be something more than mere chroniclers; and newspaper writers and others who discuss campaigns still in progress, aim at giving us some of the philosophy of the business; while the student of military history feels that his reading can be profitable only in proportion to the means he may possess of judging of the events of the past, and deducing from them lessons for the future.

The difficulties it presents.

Any one who has set thus about the study of military history seriously and honestly, will probably admit that he found himself at once involved in great perplexity. The map shows the theatre of any series of great operations to be immense. Of that vast and various complication of roads and rivers, plains and mountains, is he to take all into account? or, if not, how much, and what can he venture to neglect? How reduce that seeming confusion to manageable limits? how deduce from it order and design? And in a general history of a certain epoch, such as that of Thiers, he finds that not only are events recorded, but opinions are freely given. But on what principles, he asks, are these opinions, generally dogmatic in expression, based? Why was a certain movement judicious, though unsuccessful? Why did a certain action of a certain leader show him to be a great commander? And, when historians differ, which is right?

Clearer prospects are opened to the student in military histories written by experienced soldiers, such as the works of Napier, Jomini, and the

Archduke Charles. He has here a detailed military narrative by aid of which he can follow on the map all the movements of all the troops throughout a series of campaigns; and so far he has tolerably firm footing. But he does not find the comments and scientific expositions of these historians by any means so easy to understand, for an amount of knowledge greater than he possesses seems always to be presupposed in the reader. These writers had made military science the subject of deep and protracted consideration, had formed theories about it for themselves, and they argue, perhaps unconsciously, on grounds which are, to the beginner, inaccessible. Here too, then, he is often at a loss, and feels that he must by thought and study increase his knowledge if he would thoroughly understand his author.

Anxious to acquire the requisite rudiments, the student betakes himself to elementary works. But (unless his experience is very uncommon) he will by no means find that they greatly diminish his difficulties. For their fault almost always is that they treat their subject in too abstract a form, and become obscure in attempting to be scientific. It is common, for instance, to find military treatises affecting a mathematical precision, commencing with definitions, and illustrated with diagrams like propositions of Euclid. Now, most military terms are easy enough to understand; and they do not require to be defined formally, because the solution of military problems does not depend on the exactitude of the definitions. Thus the subject is at the very outset uselessly encumbered—worse than uselessly indeed, for the definitions are often much more difficult to understand than the original phrase, and are therefore confusing. Everybody knows, for instance, sufficiently well what is meant by the term “Theatre of War.” Is anything gained, or rather is not something lost—namely, simplicity and clearness—in defining it as “the whole area of ground which it is necessary to take into consideration at any time during a campaign, in order to construct correctly a strategical combination”? And when in this way plain terms are transmuted into elaborate definitions no use can be made of them. It is a method which, in exchange for a good shilling, gives you a pocketful of bad halfpence.

The fault of the diagrams is just the opposite of this. It is that they affect too much to simplify what is in reality complicated. The student who is presented with a page of simple figures, squares, angles, or semi-



circles with a few radii, and told that these are explanations of the art of war, is apt to ask if military problems can really be dealt with in this compendious fashion. He is told perhaps that when two strokes representing armies are placed in a certain way within two lines forming an angle, the one army has a great advantage over the other. But when he comes to apply this proposition to an actual campaign, which he follows on a map embracing extensive territories, covered with a network of roads, and diversified with innumerable accidents of ground, he finds (especially if the course of the campaign be not in unison with the principle laid down) that he is at least as much bewildered as aided by his diagram. Not that the diagram is necessarily untrue; it may state a fact (though it does not always), and the fact may be valuable; but the beginner wants the knowledge necessary to understand the fact in its very abstract form—for that form has only been attained by a process of evaporation, by knowing what matters are really superfluous, and may be left out of the complex problem which a military operation always presents. He must be already somewhat familiar with military records and military topography before he can perceive the application of the diagram, just as a deep knowledge of anatomy is necessary to him who would base a theory upon two or three bones of a skeleton. If, on the other hand, he is one of those facile disciples who accept implicitly whatever they find laid down by authority, it is evident that, in imagining he understands the art of war because he perceives the relations between sets of mathematical lines, he is in a fair way of becoming a pedant.

The earnest student is then in this dilemma, that he requires a knowledge of theory to understand the facts, and a knowledge of facts to understand the theory. The only mode of extrication would appear to be, to read military history until he can form theories for himself. But what a task is this for one to enter on who does not yet know what it is that he wants to know! When the works of single military authors extend over a dozen volumes, where shall he begin to enter on the trackless expanse before him? And it must be remembered that the reading is a small part of the labour compared with the exertion of thought necessary to perceive and generalise the significant facts. It is not to be wondered at, then, that when no other inducement was offered to the military student than his own desire for knowledge (as was the case till within these few

years), the efforts of those who wished to accomplish themselves in the records and theory of their profession were neither very numerous nor very fruitful.

In the question of what authors he shall read, the perplexities of the student have been enormously increased by the directions given to him by his guides. The task of reading all works of authority on a single military epoch is very formidable. The wars of Napoleon, for instance, are narrated by Jomini, Alison, Thiers, Gourgaud, Mathieu Dumas, Pelet, Ségur, and many others. The various accounts of the Waterloo campaign alone form a small library. And for Wellington's operations in the Peninsula we must turn not only to the Despatches and to Napier's History, but to the biographies of Massena, Ney, and Soult, the works of Foy, Jomini, and Marmont. Still any of these subjects might be fairly mastered in a few months. But most of the writers on war who claim to be not so much historians as instructors in the art, sweep over an horizon that includes almost the history of the world. They sketch the wars of the Greeks and Romans, or perhaps still more ancient peoples—they quote Polybius and Xenophon and Cæsar, and their modern commentators—make their way through Froissart, Machiavelli, Brantome, Sully, and proceed through the chroniclers of the wars of Louis XIV., Marlborough, Eugene, and Frederick, down to the campaigns of our own day;—leaving it to be inferred that an acquaintance with each of the epochs which were thus illustrated by the genius of great captains is equally valuable to the student who wants first, and above all, to understand something of Modern War. Now, without undervaluing ancient military history, or deeming time to be thrown away when employed in investigating wars which in old days changed the face of the world, it is evident that the facts of importance to be gathered from narratives which are often, from their remoteness, so meagre and obscure, and which relate to systems so different, are few in comparison with the time spent in endeavouring to discover them. When such copious records exist of the wars of the present century, it seems absurd to carry the reader back to times when the face of the earth was different, when armies were equipped and organised after another fashion, and when operations were conducted on methods long ago obsolete.

Taking our stand, then, on modern military history, let us suppose that

the field were *not* trackless. Let us suppose that paths were traced on it which should all lead to a result. Let us suppose, in fact, that from amidst the mass of records certain campaigns and battles should be selected which should be *representative* operations, each involving and illustrating a principle or fact, which, when elicited and fully recognised, will serve for future guidance. Here we should have the matter at once greatly simplified; and this is what has been aimed at in the present work. The reader will be required to take no opinions on trust: certain operations will be selected, detailed, explained, and what lessons they afford deduced, till in this way a theory shall be formed on facts and experience which the student may confidently use for general application. And these comments and selections are intended to follow each other in such order that with each step footing may be gained for a further advance.

Method pursued in this work.

The subject of the First Part of this work necessarily preliminary to the study of military operations.

The advantages of organisation and discipline taken for granted.

But before entering on an actual narrative of the operations of armies, it is necessary to know the conditions under which armies operate. We must understand the primary laws of the game before we can begin to follow its progress. Modern armies have gradually become very complex machines, and increased complexity has brought with it increased stringency of the conditions which govern their movements.

It is probably unnecessary to insist on the fact that organisation and discipline confer vast advantages on an armed force. In these days, when volunteers are drilling in every parish, it is needless to tell any one that an organised body of men amenable to the laws of discipline, accustomed to act together, mutually reliant, trained to perform in unison the movements best suited to the march and the battle, and directed absolutely at the will of a practised commander, is an engine of war vastly more formidable than any assemblage of individuals, however numerous and however skilled in the use of their weapons, but in whom this concerted action is wanting. It is true that, in particular circumstances, in rugged mountains or in pathless forests, untrained warriors may meet disciplined troops on favourable terms. But in all countries which admit of the movements of great bodies, a regular army is immeasurably superior to an armed population. In the tangled wildernesses of New Zealand, the Maori possibly counts for as much as the soldier. But on the plains of India, the compact small disciplined force advancing on the native

hosts easily loosens and dissipates the vast array. In the sierras of Spain the guerillas often held at bay the seasoned warriors of Napoleon. But in open battle the half-disciplined levies of Spaniards, individually not less brave and strong than their adversaries, were scattered almost invariably before the onset of the steady troops of France.

Discipline, in fact, is a union of very different qualities, each of which is an important element in war. It means cohesion of the units and suppleness of the mass—it means increased firmness and increased flexibility—it means the most efficient combination of many and various parts for a common end. “A hundred thousand soldiers,” says Macaulay, “well disciplined and commanded, will keep down ten millions of ploughmen and artisans. A few regiments of household troops are sufficient to overawe all the discontented spirits of a large capital.”



## CHAPTER II.

## THE NECESSITY OF A SECURE STARTING-POINT.

Military system of the feudal period.

THE advantages of organisation and discipline are great, but they have not been obtained except under strict conditions. In saying we have a powerful engine in a disciplined army, it must be admitted also that its operations are subject to certain laws, and these laws were less stringent when armies were less organised—perhaps, indeed, in proportion to their degree of organisation. In the wars of the middle ages, no great amount of preparation was demanded for a military expedition. Feudal chiefs summoned their retainers to the field from the farm or the workshop. Peasants and citizens, trained by frequent conflict in the use of their weapons, took up the bow or the pike and became at once soldiers. An invading army composed of such materials descended on the enemy's territory like a swarm of locusts, spreading itself to pillage, to devastate, and to subsist. For a special purpose, to meet the enemy, or to attack a town, it could assemble, living on the spoils it had collected; but the necessity of procuring fresh supplies would soon force it to spread again. This, however, it could safely do, so long as the enemy was under the same necessities as itself. Had it been opposed to a force that was always ready to move, and to fight in compact order, it would in its scattered condition have fallen an easy prey. But in those days the existence of such a force was impossible. The most powerful feudal sovereign could only make war with the aid of people of consideration and their retainers. The revenues of the crown would have been insufficient in any country for the maintenance of great standing armies. The taxation of the people for the constant supply of troops was impracticable under the feudal

system. In those days, then, the invader counted on living at the cost of the invaded territory; the defender was often of necessity driven to do likewise, and the unhappy district that was the scene of operations suffered from friend as well as foe.

The army of a feudal sovereign, then, whenever it advanced even one or two marches from the city or district in which it had been quartered, and was forced by the proximity of the enemy to keep together, was sure to be straitened for supplies. In Edward III.'s first expedition against the Scots, advancing from his rendezvous, Durham, he crossed the Tyne to seek the enemy. He was then between Newcastle and Carlisle, and only a few hours' journey from either town; yet his army fell at once into distress. Messengers were sent, as Froissart tells us, to Newcastle to make proclamation in the King's name, "that whoever wished to get money, he had only to bring provision, wine, &c., for which he should be instantly paid, and a safe conduct granted him. . . . The next day, the messengers which the lords had sent for provision returned about noon with what they had been able to procure for them and their households; but it was not much; and with them came people of the country, to take advantage of the situation of the army, and brought with them, on mules and small horses, bread badly baked, in baskets, and poor thin wine, in large barrels, and other kind of provision to sell, with which the army was tolerably refreshed, and their discontent appeased. . . . Thus they had remained for three days and three nights without bread, wine, candle, oats, or any other forage; and they were afterwards for four days obliged to buy badly-baked bread, at the price of sixpence the loaf, which was not worth more than a penny, and a gallon of wine for six groats, scarcely worth sixpence. Hunger, however, was still felt in the camp, notwithstanding this supply; and frequent quarrels happened from their tearing the meat out of each other's hands." Hearing tidings of the enemy, they then quitted their first camp, and moved to the foot of a hill twenty miles off where the Scottish army was posted. "The intention of the English lords," says the chronicle, "was to keep the Scots besieged there; for, as they could not well fight with them, they hoped to starve them. They knew from the prisoners that they had neither bread, wine, salt, nor other provision, except cattle, which they had seized in the country. Of these they might eat indeed without

Froissart's account of the military expeditions of his age.

bread, which would not be very palatable." Finally, the Scots decamped, by which time the English were in such a plight that, instead of pursuing, they turned homeward the same day. They halted, we are told, in "a beautiful meadow, where there was plenty of forage for their horses; and much need was there of it, for they were so weakened by famine that they could scarce move."

Froissart.

When the Black Prince made the incursion into France which ended with the victory of Poitiers, his troops subsisted on the pillage of the country. "They found the province of Auvergne, which they had entered and overrun, very rich, and all things in great abundance; but they would not stop there, as they were desirous of combating their enemies. They burnt and destroyed all the countries they passed through; and when they entered any town which was well provisioned, they rested there some days to refresh themselves, and at their departure destroyed what remained, staving the heads of wine-casks that were full, burning the wheat and oats, so that their enemies should not save anything. They kept advancing and found plenty everywhere, for the countries of Berry, Poitou, Touraine, and Maine are very rich, and full of forage for men-at-arms."

In such a country, such a system was practicable enough so long as the army acting on it was undisturbed in its depredations by a formidable force. At Issodun, which they took by storm, the Prince's army "found great plenty of wines and other provisions, and remained three days to repose themselves." But "news was brought there to the Prince of Wales, that the King of France was in the city of Chartres with a very large army, and that all the passes and towns on that side of the Loire were secured, and so well guarded that none could cross the river. The Prince then held a council, when it was resolved he should set out on his return to Bordeaux, whence he had come, through Touraine and Poitou, and destroy all the country as he passed." Accordingly he marched back, devastating as he went, and the French army, crossing the Loire at many points, followed hard upon his track. "The Prince of Wales and his army," says Froissart, "were ignorant of the exact motions of the French; but they supposed they were not far distant, for their foragers found great difficulties in procuring forage, of which the whole army was in extreme want. They repented of the great waste they had made in Berry, Anjou,

and Touraine, and that they had not more amply provisioned themselves." It is clear that the Prince had no magazines, but was dependent on the country he marched through: and as soon as the pressure of the enemy drove his army together, it could no longer find means of subsistence.

When the same Prince took part with Don Pedro, the exiled King of Castile, and set out from Bordeaux to aid him, he passed with his army through the territories of the King of Navarre. This sovereign was friendly to the Prince of Wales and Don Pedro, yet the troops pillaged his country. On entering Castile and coming near the enemy we find "the Prince and his brother were in great want of provisions for themselves and their horses, as they had entered a very barren country. A loaf of bread—and of no great size—was sold in the Prince's army for a florin, and many were very eager to pay this price whenever they were able to get it." Then crossing the Ebro "they found there a richer country than that which they had left; but even here they were much distressed for provision."

This improvident and barbarous system of warfare is not to be attributed altogether to the difficulties of transport in times when both roads and vehicles were of very rude construction. In one of Edward III.'s great invasions of France, his march was followed by a train of six thousand waggons, "stretching," says Froissart, "upwards of two leagues, and laden with tents, pavilions, mills and forges to grind their corn and make shoes for their horses, and everything of that sort which might be wanting." But we are presently informed why this unusual provision was made. "The country had been so pillaged and destroyed, that the ground had not been cultivated for the last three years; and there was such distress and famine in the kingdom of France, that (if corn and oats had not been sent from Hainault and the Cambresis into Artois) Vermandois, the bishopric of Laon and Rheims, must have perished with hunger. It was upon this account that the King, who had been informed of the poverty and distress in France, had made such ample provision before he quitted England. Each lord had done the same according to his rank, except in the articles of straw and oats, and for that they did with their horses as well as they could." The King's baggage-train was then intended to supply his army while passing through the desert which war had created. On reaching a more productive region "his people



overran the country to the right and left, and took provisions wherever they could lay hands on them." Arriving at Rheims, the capture of which city was the primary object of the expedition, he besieged it for seven weeks, when "he began to tire; and as his army found great difficulties in obtaining forage and provisions, their horses perished. He broke up his camp and marched off towards Chalons."

The manner  
in which feu-  
dal armies  
made war.

The picture presented by the armies of the feudal period, is that of an assemblage of knights, barons, and squires, with their retainers, all vassals or auxiliaries of the belligerent powers, who made the quarrels of kings the pretext for enriching themselves by plunder. While moving in the enemy's territory they occupied a great extent of it, pillaging villages and farms, sacking cities, and ransoming captives of consideration. Leaders were esteemed according to their inventiveness and skill in making sudden incursions, in attacking castles, devising stratagems, and drawing up their motley forces in order of battle before charging into the mêlée at their head. If a rich town, or district affording abundant supplies, were within reach, and unprotected, these were sufficient reasons for leading the army thither. The idea of a highly organised force, making many long marches in succession, with the utmost rapidity, towards certain points, holding itself always prepared for immediate battle, and aiming to bring the adversary to terms, not by ravaging his territories, but by defeating his armies, and manœuvring, wherever possible, against his communications as his most vital points, could not possibly enter the mind of a sovereign or leader of those days, since the first condition of such a mode of warfare was wanting. The collection of all kinds of stores and munitions necessary to an army, and the incessant forwarding of these to great distances throughout a long campaign, was a task beyond the resources of the wealthiest feudal monarch. All he could do was to raise, by mortgaging royal revenues or territories, by loans, or by such exactions as his subjects could be induced to submit to, the sums necessary to assemble the army and set it in motion, after which the war was left to maintain itself.

Change in the  
military sys-  
tem produced  
by the aug-  
mentation of

But in the incessant wars of the middle ages it happened that the power of the nobility which used to stand between king and people became extinct in some of the great kingdoms of Europe. In others the sovereign had gradually acquired such large territories as placed him

beyond the reach of the most powerful coalition of nobles. In either case the power of the crown became absolute; and the monarch, thus able to tax the people at his will for the payment of troops, proceeded to environ his throne with a standing army—a body of men apart from the general population, trained to act in concert, to operate by system, animated by a military spirit, and looking to the crown as the source of reward, of honour, and of advancement. And the competition, in warlike efficiency, that of necessity exists between rival states, would have hastened the steps by which the present condition of armies has been reached, had not the surrounding circumstances opposed limits to their progress. In earlier times the population was sparse, the infertile tracts of land frequent, the roads few and bad, while the artillery and trains which accompanied the march would have been cumbrous and difficult of transport even had the ways been good. Thus many conditions were still wanting to the development of the science of strategy.

the power of the sovereign, and the consequent formation of standing armies.

But, in course of time, the change in the features of a country consequent on the advance of civilisation affected the conditions of war. At all periods the population of districts forming the frontiers of bellicose neighbours had been accustomed to seek shelter from the first rush of an invasion in the great towns, which were fortified to resist an attack. So long as artillery was ineffective and difficult of transport, a strong wall was sufficient for defence; but as roads improved with increasing commerce, and a formidable artillery was enabled to accompany an army, the art of fortification grew in importance. Great engineers appeared, who turned cities into huge fortresses; and as these strongholds were certain to be at the meeting of great roads, they became obstacles in the way of an invader that he could not neglect. They were very different from the castles of ancient barons, which, though they might be strong for defence by reason of their position, yet were for that very reason less useful as obstacles to an enemy's progress, since the loftier the hill on which they were perched the less likely was it that they should command a great road. They differed also from the walled towns of the middle ages, inasmuch as they were calculated to resist for a long siege improved artillery. These fortresses then sprang up all over Europe. The richer and more populous the territory, and the more industrious the inhabitants, the more numerous were the towns and the greater the necessity

Further changes which civilisation caused in the system of war.

for fortifying them. From the opposite banks of the Rhine great fortresses watched each other, and on the open frontier of France and Belgium they were thickly set. An advancing army dependent on its communications could neither pass by one of those obstacles nor easily take it. Therefore, in the wars of Louis XIV., whole armies were for months occupied in besieging towns, and Marlborough's battles bear but a small proportion to the number of his sieges. Territories were thus captured and recaptured bit by bit; and the conquest of a province, a country, even of a town, was sufficient object and end for a campaign, and great battles were often fought to cover or to raise a siege. It was not, then, because the leaders of those days were less active and enterprising than their successors, but because they fought under different conditions, that their actions were less striking and decisive.

Change in  
the composi-  
tion of armies.

However, though military movements were still slow, in the composition of the armies of that time we see a great change from the feudal period. The French leaders—the Villarses, Boufflers, and Tallards—were very different from the Du Guesclins and Clissons. There were no officers in Marlborough's army answering to the Mannys, the Chandoses, and the John Talbots. Officers and men alike were the servants, not the auxiliaries, of their respective governments, and an army was an integer and not an aggregate. As the military machine grew more manageable, and the means of supplying it improved with increasing wealth and population, enterprises became more extensive and operations more systematic. It was discovered that it was more profitable to occupy an enemy's territory than to devastate and plunder it, and that the readiest way to bring him to terms was to beat his armies. Improved roads and vehicles enabled large bodies to move more freely—improved cultivation gave them more abundant means of subsistence. Fortresses were watched, or "masked," by detachments; and Frederick and Napoleon, preferring manœuvres in which they were confident of their skill, to the tedious process of sieges, moved deep into the heart of the theatre of war.

Consequent  
elaboration of  
the system of  
supply.

As the power of an army on a distant enterprise depended on its united and concerted action, it was necessary to its full efficiency that it should be able to assemble at any time. It must, therefore, be accompanied by everything requisite for its maintenance. Food, ammunition,



shelter, clothing, medicine, and recruits, must find free access to it; and the stream of these supplies must be unceasing. The first preparation for war was the establishment of great depots and magazines, and these were collected in places that were secured from the enemy's attacks, either by natural defences or artificial fortifications. Frontier lines, strengthened for the defence of countries from the aggressions of their neighbours, of course, afforded the most favourable points for the establishment of the magazines destined to supply an army of invasion. Thus, if France were at war with Germany, the Rhine offered a natural screen, behind which might be collected the necessary stores; and, when this barrier was further strengthened by a line of fortresses, a French army in Germany could operate in full confidence that the supplies necessary for its maintenance were safe, and that, if compelled to retreat, it would find amidst these fortified depots both subsistence and protection from disaster. Or, again, if Italy were to be the scene of French operations, behind the barrier of the Alps must be collected the vast stores on which the army would rely.

It would be of great importance to the military student to know for certain what particular points the generals on each side relied on for their supplies at all the stages of a campaign. But on this matter history is too often silent, and silent of necessity. For it is generally politic, if not imperative, to collect and deposit these supplies in secrecy, otherwise they would indicate the direction of an intended operation; and though the papers frequently brought to light at the conclusion of a war may reveal the sources of supply, yet such details, which would possess no interest for readers in general, will always be disregarded by the historian, who desires to render his pages splendid and attractive with the description of marches and battles. Hence, such records, if they exist, are generally unattainable by contemporary writers, and of too little value to those who come after to insure their preservation. But a costly work has lately been published in France, containing amplest details of the campaigns of 1859 in Italy; and a few particulars gathered from its pages will show what enormous preparation is indispensable for the movements of modern armies.

*Campagne de l'Empereur Napoléon III. en Italie, rédigée au Dépôt de la Guerre, d'après les documents officiels, &c.*

“ On the 1st January 1859, France could produce in arms, without any effort more than usual, 640,000 men; a numerical establishment which,

*Extract from a review of*



the above in  
'Blackwood'  
by the author.

besides furnishing troops for home service and for Algeria, maintained the army of Italy, from the time of the battle of Magenta to the time of the battle of Solferino, at the force of about 130,000 men. Of these about 10,000 were cavalry ; and the force of field-artillery was, at various epochs, from 312 to 400 guns.

“ These guns, nearly all rifled, carried with them ammunition for a great battle. Every corps of the army was accompanied by 110 carriages, containing a second supply of ammunition for artillery and infantry. Finally, a grand park of 430 carriages, organised at Lyons, carried fresh supplies to St Jean de Maurienne, from whence artillery-horses drew them over the Mont Cenis to Susa.

“ The arsenals in France were in full operation, converting the old Napoleon field-gun into a rifled weapon. The whole army was supplied with rifled muskets. Besides the field-artillery, 200 guns and 70 mortars were provided for the siege of the Italian fortresses, each supplied, on the average, with 900 rounds of ammunition.

“ Tents were provided to contain nearly a million of men—almost enough to house the population of Paris, and covering an area much greater than the city.

“ For the necessary supplies of forage and grain the French markets were exhausted, and the vast total was completed by purchases in other countries. The civil bakeries of France were charged with the supply of the troops in the interior, and the Government establishments were thus free to devote all their resources to providing bread for the army of Italy, and to amassing reserves for its future subsistence. But these conversions could not take place in a moment ; and to give time for the organisation of supplies, provisions for 100,000 men and 10,000 horses, for twenty days, were collected at various towns in Piedmont.

“ Thus far, then, the French soldiery might survey with great satisfaction the enormous provision made for its comfort and efficiency. But there is another set of items in the account, very interesting and significant, though by no means equally cheering to contemplate. For instance, 363,000 kilogrammes of lint were provided, being 10,000 dressings a-day for more than three months. About 1000 cases of surgical instruments also figure grimly in the list. Every battalion was followed by a mule bearing surgical instruments and dressings for 200 wounded. Every divi-

sion, besides instruments, was provided with 2000 dressings. 'In view of ulterior wants,' we are told there was a reserve of lint and bandages representing 2,800,000 dressings. The medical arrangements comprised everything necessary for 15,000 sick for three months. Besides the field-hospitals which first received the wounded and diseased, military and civil establishments were organised in the interior of France, to relieve the army of such encumbrances by accommodating 17,000 patients. Such are some of the colours used in painting the gloomier pictures that hang in the temple of Fame, where the bright eye of glory is covered with a patch, and where the exulting tread of conquest is exchanged for a painful hobble upon wooden legs.

"At risk of being tedious, we have given some of these details, because, for want of them, readers of military operations are often insensible to the vast preparations required for the commencement of war between great Powers, and to the nature of certain facts which must enter into military calculations, and which, though they seldom appear on the surface of history, form the great elements of perplexity for governments and generals. Sending forth an army is like sending forth a city equal to the capital of a great state, transporting it, with all its means of food and shelter, from place to place at uncertain times and in unforeseen directions, and leaving it all the time entirely dependent on the territory from which it set forth for the maintenance of its numbers and the supply of its daily wants."

The Duke of Wellington's correspondence after the battle of Talavera sets in the strongest possible light the essential importance of magazines, and the consequences of operating without them. The English army, leaving its depots in Portugal, had moved into the valley of the Tagus to co-operate with the Spanish forces which were opposing the French corps in front of Madrid. The junction of the allies effected, they had engaged and beaten the enemy at Talavera. As the commander of an auxiliary force, acting in conjunction with a native army, in a country which, though sterile in parts, yet afforded ample supplies, Wellington could not have anticipated any difficulty in procuring provisions, for which full value would have been readily paid; and he had accordingly entered Spain relying on the promises of the Spanish Government to provide ample subsistence and means of transport for his army. Yet, victorious as he was, he speedily found that army crippled for want of food and forage;

and, after numerous remonstrances, he was driven to execute what he had frequently threatened, and marched his troops back to Portugal.

‘Wellington’s  
Despatches’  
(1809) on the  
necessity of  
a system of  
supply.

“A starving army,” he says to his brother, in narrating the privations of his troops, “is actually worse than none. The soldiers lose their discipline and spirit. They plunder even in the presence of their officers. The officers are discontented, and are almost as bad as the men; and with the army which a fortnight ago beat double their numbers, I should now hesitate to meet a French corps of half their strength.

“To carry on the contest with France to any good purpose, the labour and services of every man and of every beast in the country should be employed in support of the armies; and these should be so classed and arranged as not only to secure obedience to the orders of the Government, but regularity and efficiency in the performance of the services required from them. Magazines might then with ease be formed and transported wherever circumstances might require that armies should be stationed.

“But as we are now situated, 50,000 men are collected upon a spot which cannot afford subsistence for 10,000 men, and there are no means of sending to a distance to make good the deficiency.”

Again he says, “If we had had 60,000 men (British) instead of 20,000, in all probability we should not have got to Talavera to fight the battle for want of means and provisions. But, if we had got to Talavera, we could not have gone further, and the armies would probably have separated for want of means of subsistence, probably without a battle; but certainly afterwards.”

And, lamenting the opportunities thus lost, he tells Lord Castlereagh: “If we could have fed, and have got up the condition of our horses, we might probably after some time have struck a brilliant blow upon Soult, at Placencia, or upon Mortier in the centre.” “I have no motive,” he says to a Spanish minister, “for withdrawing the British army from Spain, whether of a political or military nature, excepting that which I have stated to you in conversation—namely, a desire to relieve it from the privations of food, which it has suffered since the 22d of last month; privations which have reduced its strength, have destroyed the health of the soldiers, and have rendered the army comparatively inefficient.”

Sherman’s  
march in

Many preceding passages of this chapter will show that the recent march of Sherman across Georgia is neither a novelty in war nor a

refutation of what has been said respecting the necessity of a secure base. Like the Black Prince, he marched through the unprotected country of an enemy, whom he sought to injure by ravaging the district which he traversed; and like Edward III. he carried with him a great train of supplies, not because the territory did not afford them, but because the appearance of a hostile force, or of a formidable obstacle of any kind, might, by obliging him to assemble his army, deprive him for a time of the power of subsisting by plunder. But the object and duration of the movement were definite and limited. A certain extent of country was to be traversed in order to exchange a precarious for an assured base. There is evidently nothing in the operation which can modify existing theories, for it remains as impracticable as before to explain or to conceive how sustained operations can be conducted in the face of an enemy without a secure starting-point. Georgia not exceptional.



## CHAPTER III.

THE NECESSITY OF GOOD ROADS FOR THE OPERATIONS OF  
A MODERN ARMY.

THE fortified line of magazines constituting the base being formed, it is indispensable to a sustained and dubious enterprise that good roads should exist between the magazines and the army as it moves away from its base. In mountainous districts where the roads are so rugged and steep as to be unfit for wheeled vehicles, the necessary supplies must be carried on pack-horses or mules. But the quantity which an animal can draw is so much greater than that which it can carry, that the numbers of animals and the extent of road they occupy must be immensely increased. It is therefore very difficult, almost impossible, to supply a very large army, under such circumstances, for a long campaign, and roads practicable for carriages are indispensable to all operations, except those which aim at attaining their results in a brief and definite time. And not only must the roads be good in the ordinary sense, but they must be great main arteries of the region, solidly constructed. Anybody who lives in the neighbourhood of a newly-established brickfield, will see how quickly the parish roads are broken and wrought into hollows by the passage of the heavy brick-carts. The trains that follow an army, laden as they are with ammunition, pontoons, platforms for guns, siege-artillery, and other ponderous materials, soon destroy all but the best roads. In order, then, that the enormous streams of supply may be uninterrupted, it is necessary that the roads should be of the best construction, like our own highways and the great paved chaussées of the Continent. The proof of this is found in the difficulties under

Carriage roads  
indispensable  
to sustained  
operations.

which armies begin to labour directly they are thrown on bad roads for their supplies. Our own experience in the Crimea shows that even seven miles of soft soil interposed in winter between an army and its depots, may be almost a fatal obstacle; and General McClellan, in his Report of his campaign in the Yorktown Peninsula, tells us—"On the 15th and 16th, the divisions of Franklin, Smith, and Porter, were with great difficulty moved to White House, five miles in advance; so bad was the road that the train of one of these divisions required thirty-six hours to pass over this short distance." And again, speaking of the movement from the York River to Williamsburg, he says, "The supply trains had been forced out of the roads on the 4th and 5th to allow the troops and artillery to pass to the front, and the roads were now in such a state, after thirty-six hours' continuous rain, that it was almost impossible to pass even empty waggons over them."

McClellan's  
Report on dif-  
ficulties from  
bad roads.

But it is not only on account of the supplies that great armies operate by great roads. It is also because the march of the troops and artillery becomes on bad roads so slow and uncertain that all the calculations on which a general bases a combined operation are liable to be falsified, and the rapidity necessary for a movement intended to surprise or foil an adversary is lost, so that the design is foreseen and frustrated by the enemy. An example of the different rate at which troops move over a good and a bad road, is afforded by the campaign of Waterloo. Napoleon following Wellington, and Grouchy following Blucher, both quitted the field of Ligny on the afternoon of the 17th June. The Emperor, marching by the great paved chaussées of Namur and of Brussels, assembled his army that night in the position of Waterloo, seventeen miles from Ligny. Grouchy, moving by country roads, had great difficulty in bringing his 30,000 men to Gembloux, five miles from Ligny, by ten o'clock the same night. And, to quote more modern instances, General McClellan says, "On the 14th of March, a reconnoissance of a large body of cavalry, with some infantry, under command of General Stoneman, was sent along the Orange and Alexandria Railroad to determine the position of the enemy, and, if possible, force his rear across the Rappahannock; but the roads were in such condition that, finding it impossible to subsist his men, General Stoneman was forced to return." And on another occasion, when the Confederates suddenly fell back from near

See Map  
No. 12.

See Map  
No. 1.

the Potomac, just as he was commencing to advance upon them, he speaks of their retreat as "unfortunate, in that the then almost impassable roads between our position and theirs deprived us of the opportunity for inflicting damage, usually afforded by the withdrawal of a large army in the face of a powerful adversary."

Operations of  
brief duration  
may be ac-  
complished by  
inferior roads.

While, however, impressing on the reader the absolute necessity of good roads for the sustained operations of a campaign, it is not asserted that considerable bodies of troops never move by indifferent roads. Many instances of the contrary would appear in a short course of military reading. Thus, Napoleon carried 40,000 men from Switzerland to Italy over the St Bernard; but this was for the sake of obtaining by surprise an advantage of position over the Austrians, and, that position attained, he had the great roads of Italy for his future movements, and the territory between the Alps and Po, friendly to him and hostile to the Austrians, was available for supplies. Again, Wellington, following the French in 1813 on the great road of Valladolid and Burgos, quitted it to throw his army across difficult mountain-paths; but he did so for the purpose of shifting his base from Portugal to the northern ports of Spain, with which he presently opened new communications. And McClellan, crossing the Potomac after Lee, subsequent to the battle of Antietam, moved by the road from Harper's Ferry along the foot of the Blue Ridge, which is probably hilly and broken; but as soon as he reached the Manassas Railway he came into direct communication by that railway with Washington. Thus each of these movements was of brief duration, and made with the definite object of immediately attaining a new and more convenient communication with the depots of supply.

See Map  
No. 7.

See Map  
No. 2.

See Map  
No. 1.

## CHAPTER IV.

## ARMIES OPERATE GENERALLY BY SEVERAL ROADS AT ONCE.

THE reader, then, should acquire the habit of thinking of an army, not as capable of being moved anywhere in the theatre of war, but as dependent for its efficiency on a line connecting it with points in its rear—the line being a good and practicable road, and the points secure magazines.

The next step is to consider the army, not as, in general, collected on the main road, but as distributed in parts on several roads.

When hostilities begin between nations, one of them at the outset almost always finds reason for standing on the defensive, and allows the other to make the attack. Declaring war against Napoleon in 1815, the allies were reduced of necessity to await the attack, because their forces, greatly superior in numbers, were scattered over an immense space. Only Wellington's and Blucher's armies were ready to meet the first onset. They were in Belgium, and three great roads cross the frontier leading from French fortresses upon Brussels, by either of which Napoleon might advance, after concentrating on it, behind the screen of the fortresses, his whole army; therefore Wellington and Blucher were forced to guard all these avenues to Brussels by placing on them portions of their forces. But these portions were liable, each or any, to be attacked by the whole French army—in fact, only one Prussian corps was assembled at the point where Napoleon's whole force broke in. Under such circumstances, all which that corps, or any of these fractions of the allied armies, could do was to take advantage of the fact, that the heads only of the great French columns as they advanced on the roads were available for imme-

See Map  
No. 12.



Why armies on the defensive operate by several roads.

diate attack, and to dispute the advance till the French front should so grow in extent, by accessions from the rear, as to be irresistible, and then to withdraw with as good a face as could be maintained. In this way time would be gained for the concentration of the remainder of the allies upon the threatened line. Whereas had any line been entirely neglected, the enemy, being unopposed there, might be in Brussels before any adequate force could have time to interpose. It is very easy to understand, therefore, why an army on the defensive is spread over a large front, on lines which radiate from the point they seek to cover, like the spokes of a wheel from the nave.

Why invading armies do so likewise.

It is not at first so manifest why an *invading* army operates by many roads; but a brief calculation will suffice to show the reason.

In round numbers 30,000 infantry on the march extend over about 5 miles of road; 60 guns with their attendant carriages occupy  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles; 8000 cavalry, on a front of threes, giving 3 yards of length to each horse, 8000 yards—nearly 5 miles.

If Napoleon's army had entered Belgium by one road instead of three it would have extended as follows:—

90,000 infantry, . . . . .	15 miles.
20,000 cavalry, . . . . .	12 „
350 guns, &c., . . . . .	14 „
	—
Total, . . . . .	41 „

irrespective of intervals between the columns, of losses of distance, of stores of any description. Therefore, on a single road the head of the column must have been marching *two days* before the rear could have quitted the place of rendezvous. An army moving thus would manifestly lay itself open to defeat by a very inferior force, which, by enveloping the head of the column, might inflict a succession of crushing blows before the rear could arrive on the point of action. And, in fact, though Napoleon's columns moved by three roads, the divisions in rear, moving from the same bivouacs as those in front, failed to deploy on the field of Ligny till the afternoon of the following day.

When General McClellan moved from Washington to attack the Confederates, who, having defeated Pope, had invaded Maryland, he thus replied to some comments on his method of advancing, addressed to him

by the Commander-in-Chief: "If," he says, "I had marched the entire army (about 100,000 men) in one column along the banks of the river instead of upon five different parallel roads, the column, with its trains, would have extended about fifty miles, and the enemy might have defeated the advance before the rear could have reached the scene of action."

McClellan's  
Report on the  
difficulties of  
a single road.

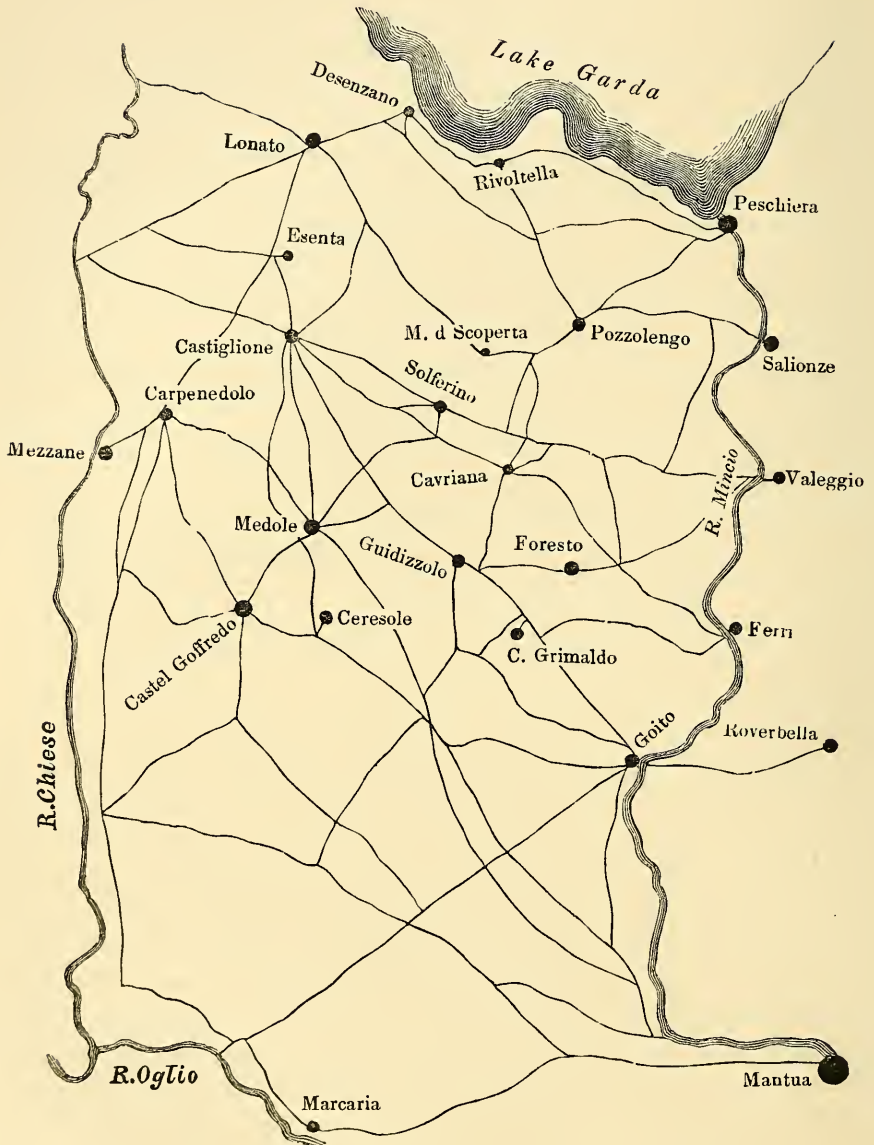
Now we will suppose, on the other hand, the extreme case that an army, on quitting its bivouacs, could find separate roads for every brigade, all converging on the point where an engagement might be expected, and all sufficiently near each other for constant communication and concert. The whole army would then be assembled simultaneously on the space to be occupied by the line of battle. In no case, of course (except in limited marches on great plains), are such facilities to be expected, but the illustration will serve to show why an army always marches by as many roads leading towards its destination as are sufficiently near to each other to admit of mutual support.

As the different portions of an army on the defensive must unite as quickly as possible on the line by which the enemy advances, it is, of course, indispensable that there should be good intercommunications, or lateral roads, by which they can readily approach each other. And these should be not coincident with the front of the army, but in rear of it—otherwise, if a division or corps were pushed back by the rapid advance of the enemy, the line of intercommunication would be broken.

Necessity of  
good lateral  
communica-  
tions.

Also, if an army were advancing towards the enemy, and using, for the sake of facility, several adjacent roads, these, however near, should not be separated by any impassable obstacle, such as a great swamp, a mountain-ridge, or a river without fords or bridges; otherwise, one portion of the army might be merely spectators of an attack upon the rest, as happened at Rivoli, where an Austrian column, moving on the left of the Adige, witnessed the defeat of the army on the other bank; and as occurred more notably in 1796, when the Austrians, advancing into Italy on both sides of Lake Garda, were beaten in succession by the same French army.

Thus the line by which an army moves is not necessarily, nor frequently, a single road, but several roads tending in the same direction, and united by a sufficient number of cross-roads. For instance, the French army moved to Solferino thus:—



1st Corps,	from	Esenta	towards	Solferino.
Imperial Guard,	„	Castiglione	„	Solferino.
2d Corps,	„	Castiglione	„	Guidizzolo.
4th Corps,	„	Carpenedolo	„	Medole.
3d Corps,	„	Mezzane	„	Castel Goffredo.

Sardinians from Lonato and Desenzano { by Madonna della } on Pozzolengo. Pozzolengo  
 { Scoperta and Rivoltella } to Medole,  
 8 miles.

And the Austrians reached the same field from the Mincio thus:—

8th Corps	crossed	Mincio	at	Salionze	on	Pozzolengo.
5th	„	„	„	Valeggio	„	Solferino.
1st	„	„	„	Valeggio	„	Cavriana.
7th	„	„	„	Ferri	„	Foresto.
3d	„	„	„	Ferri	„	Guidizzolo.
9th	„	„	„	Goito	„	Ceresole.
10th and 11th	„	„	„	Roverbella	„	Castel Grimaldo.

2d Corps from Mantua to Marcaria on the Oglio to turn the French right.

The two armies, each of which was advancing in ignorance of the movement of the other, thus occupying on the march the space from flank to flank which was necessary for the formation of the line of battle.

When armies approaching each other are still many marches distant, as may happen at the outset of a campaign, it is not, of course, necessary that the various columns, as they quit their own frontier, should be within supporting distance. It is when an engagement may be imminent that the lines of intercommunication become of such special importance. Moreover, it then becomes necessary to shorten as much as possible the distance between the head and the rear of each column by widening its front. A narrator of the Waterloo campaign says, that when Wellington retired from Quatre Bras upon Waterloo, his troops moved in the open fields on each side, leaving the road for the artillery and trains. But before the French, following him, passed Genappe, a violent rain had rendered the fields impassable; consequently their troops were restricted to the road, and the column was lengthened, entailing these consequences, that Wellington's compact march was beyond reach of pressure from the enemy, and that; while his troops filed into their destined positions in the line, the rearmost French divisions did not reach the field till long after dark.

No better illustration of this part of the subject can be found than in



the orders for the movement of the French army upon Casale in 1859, when about to cross the Po. They run thus:—

Camp. de  
Nap. III.—  
Compactness  
of movement  
on the march  
prescribed.

“As the army is about to operate in a country cut up with canals and rivers, the troops on the march will be nearly always in column on the causeways, and the heads alone will be at once ready for action. It is essential, then, that one division, for example, shall be so organised as to be ready to enter into line as soon as possible. To this end a division of four regiments, one battalion of chasseurs, two batteries, and two squadrons, shall be thus divided into four movable columns—

“1. A peloton of cavalry to clear the way.

“2. 20 sappers and pioneers with pickaxes to destroy obstacles, and throw small bridges of felled trees over canals.

“3. Two guns without waggons.

“4. A company of chasseurs to protect and flank the guns.

“5. A regiment of infantry.

“6. The rest of the battery; and so for the remainder.

“In spite of the inconvenience of prolonging the columns, a great distance will be left between them to avoid confusion.

“When a road is parallel to the railway, the infantry will march on the railway, guns on the road.

“On arriving at crossings, horsemen will be sent on all the roads to preserve communication with columns that move parallel, and to look out for the enemy.

“Whenever a halt is made, and the fields at the side of the road are practicable for infantry or guns, the troops will form up on as wide a front as possible, to diminish for the moment the depth of the column.

“It need not be said that generals will take all the lateral roads which conduct to the same end, provided their columns will not thereby be too much separated.

“Should a column be attacked, the trains will be parked at once, to leave the road free for troops.”

(To “park” trains is to form them in compact order in fields or open spaces adjoining the road.)

## CHAPTER V.

## SUPPLY OF ARMIES AT A DISTANCE FROM THEIR BASE.

IN order to complete the general idea of the conditions under which armies operate, it only remains to consider the manner in which they are supplied when at a distance from their original base, frontier, or starting-point. For, although a large force might be supplied with sufficient ease and certainty when separated from its magazines by only 20 or 30 miles of good roads, yet it is evident that, with every march in advance, the stream of supply would become more and more precarious, till at length the commander would be unable to base any calculations for future movements on so dubious a foundation. And of such importance is this question of supplies, that in a little book attributed to the Prussian General Bulow, which appeared in 1801, on 'The Spirit of the System of Modern War,' the author commences by saying, that he considers the system to be founded on the fact that modern armies are entirely dependent on their magazines. But he speaks expressly of modern war, evidently pointing to the fact which has been discussed in the preceding chapters, that at an earlier period, when armies were not dependent on their magazines, the whole system of war was different. And the change has affected not merely military operations, but the condition of the populations of Europe.

In the days when armies subsisted of necessity on the pillage of the country they made war in, the rigours of war were inseparable from the fact of war. The theatre of hostilities, like the English lines of invasion in France, like parts of Germany in the Thirty Years' War, became a hell, the soldiers demons. Any narrative of the time will show that life was to the wretched inhabitants filled with elements which make no part of

Evils attendant on a rude system of warfare.

the existence of any modern European people—terror ending in recklessness, the absence of all that provision for the future which hope and security induce, a greedy snatching at any present enjoyment or respite from evil, and a general impression that the world was a scene of injustice, given over to the dominion of devils. These rigours naturally reacted on the character of those who inflicted them: soldiers grew remorseless indifferent to suffering, fond even of inflicting it; friends as well as foes were subject to outrage, war was licensed devastation, and the territories which were the scene of hostilities became frightful deserts.

These evils modified by the establishment of standing armies.

With the establishment of standing armies and the necessity for supplying them from their own resources, these horrors in great measure ceased. They were no longer inflicted by an army on its own or a friendly territory, but were used as a weapon against the enemy. But enough of the former spirit of cruelty still identified itself with war, to cause commanders of high honour and reputation to commit deeds which from our point of view must always stain their names. Turenne ravaged the beautiful cultivated territory known as the Palatinate; and Marlborough, after marching from Flanders across Germany, supplied by the contributions of friendly states, resorted, on entering Bavaria, to what he calls "military execution," or systematic devastation, as a means of detaching the Elector from the interests of France, by compelling him to witness the sufferings of his subjects and the ravage of his dominions.

System of supply grows in importance with discipline and organisation.

A little later than this, when discipline grew into paramount importance, when movements were quicker, and when armies in the presence of a ready foe found they must be always prepared to fight, the question of supplies came to be a still more considerable element in war. A curious calculation exists, made by Tempelhoff, a Prussian general, the historian of Frederick's wars, which shows how rigorously the operations of his master were fettered by the necessity of providing assured subsistence for his army.

Tempelhoff on the supply of Frederick's armies.

"A hundred thousand men," he says, "consume daily 150,000 pounds of flour, equal to 200,000 pounds of bread.

"Bread and forage are seldom to be had in sufficient quantities on the spot—hence magazines are established along the line of operations.

"The bread-waggons carried a supply for 6 days—the men for 3 more.

"In commissariat-waggons, flour for 9 additional days could be con-

veyed—1 waggon to 100 men for 9 days: thus 1000 waggons supplied the army for that time.

“An operation of 18 days’ duration could thus be conducted without an intervening magazine; but field-ovens were required to make the flour into bread. But bread for 3 days requires 2 days to bake it. At the end of 6 days, therefore, a halt must be made to bake, or else the ovens would fall behind-hand with the supply. So that, advancing into an enemy’s country, before magazines could be formed there, 6 days was the extent of march practicable without a halt.

“But when the ovens were at a greater distance from the magazines than the commissariat-waggons could perform, going and returning, in 9 days, the army fell short.” Sixty miles was therefore the maximum distance to which the field-ovens could advance from the magazines. If we add to this 40 miles, for the space which the bread-waggons (which held 6 days’ rations) could traverse in 6 days, going and returning, we have the full extent to which an army could venture to advance in an enemy’s country without forming magazines there—namely, 100 miles.

As at this time an army, instead of being an assemblage of bands or companies, each under its own immediate leader, had become an integer which did not admit of ready separation into parts; so the system of supply had also been highly organised in order to maintain this somewhat cumbrous machine in working order. Communications, to manœuvre against which scarcely entered into the combinations of the generals of a preceding age, had now come to be of the first importance, and the capture of a great magazine or a great convoy was a matter serious enough to derange a whole plan of campaign.

The organisation of armies in the 18th century rendered them unduly dependent on magazines.

This ultra-methodical method of campaigning continued till the time of the French Revolution. Confronting all Europe, and destitute of all the material of war except men, France poured forth armies half-clad, half-fed, half-armed, but filled with valour, intelligence, and zeal. Old traditions of methodical war, where troops slept under tents and were fed from magazines, were of no value to armies which possessed neither tents nor magazines. A new organisation became necessary to meet these new conditions. An army, no longer itself an integer, was resolved into divisions, each complete in itself in all arms, and capable either of fighting alone or of taking its place readily in line of battle. The amount of



Increased mobility of armies brought greater facility of supply,

independence thus gained rendered the task of supplying them comparatively easy. Alike in the plains of Flanders and on the summits of the Alps, the soldiers of the Republic learned to bivouac, and to maintain themselves in the country they made war in. What they lost in method they gained in mobility; taught by always present and always pressing necessity, they acquired the secret of spreading in order to subsist; but, being opposed to disciplined troops, they were forced also to preserve a due facility of reassembling for battle. They were at once the most accomplished of marauders and the most intelligent of soldiers. And it was this combination of seemingly adverse qualities that distinguished them from the armies of the middle ages, where the troops were indeed skilful in the art of plundering, but had neither the discipline nor intelligence necessary for forming out of the scattered units a combined force that could oppose a regular army.

Formed by this rough training, the French army became an instrument in the hand of the most subtle, inventive, and audacious leader in the world. The old system of Frederick met the new system directed by Napoleon, and was shattered to pieces. And at the root of this new system lay the new method of procuring supplies.

but did not enable them to dispense with magazines.

Pt. iii. ch. 4.

'Principes de la Strategie' on the French revolutionary system of supply.

But it would be a great mistake to suppose that Napoleon, when he became both chief of the state and head of the army, led on to conquest merely a horde of plunderers, who lived from hand to mouth. No general was ever more careful in accumulating great magazines and in protecting his communications. All his precepts prove that he felt more strongly even than the strictest generals of the old school the necessity of holding fast to the links which united him with his base. After Jena, for instance, when he had broken in a single day the power of Prussia, his first thought, after providing for the pursuit of the defeated enemy, was to establish a fresh and shorter line of communication with France, and to station on it great hospitals and depots of stores. In what, then, it may be asked, did the advantage of the French system consist, since it did not free him from the restrictions which hampered others? This question has been answered by one of the greatest of the generals who confronted Napoleon, the Archduke Charles. After saying that "he who in his plan of campaign counts on the resources of the country he is about to traverse to support his troops, abandons himself to chance, and often runs the risk

of subordinating his operations to his subsistence," he thus discusses the new system :—

"Since the revolutionary war, the French armies have introduced what they call the system of requisition ; and it is not to be denied that this mode, joined to the coercive measures which they permitted themselves to use, has fed their troops at the expense of the territory occupied, and at places where want of time, means, or defence, hindered them from establishing magazines.

"But the system of requisition is not new, for in all times during war forced contributions have been raised ; only this system has received in our time an extension prompter in its results, in this way, that instead of apportioning the burden on the countries occupied according to their resources, and re-entering them only after expeditions, to replace the provisions consumed in the interval, or to form stores for future wants, all the supplies are seized on entering a territory in order to use them for daily consumption, without prejudice to subsequent more regular requisitions which the victor has incontestably the right to order.

"This mode of subsistence gives doubtless more facility to rapid and sustained operations, and offers, above all, advantages for the detached divisions ; but it does not, for all that, dispense with the necessity for forming secure magazines on convenient and secure points ; besides, the system of requisitions, especially since it has been so extended, must ruin a country, and is applicable only to that of an enemy. It is in its nature more proper to wars of invasion than to those of position, because in the first it matters little that the country traversed is wasted and devastated, whilst for stationary armies, foresight demands that their supplies should be assured, which requires that the necessary provisions should be stored in magazines on points previously arranged. . . . .

"If then the system of requisition, magazines being excluded, cannot be adopted as an immediate base of the subsistence of armies, it is nevertheless true that it gives certain facilities for replacing daily consumptions, establishing new magazines, and keeping in reserve for unanticipated needs supplies already formed. Thus this system carries with it of itself the necessity of establishing magazines on strategic points."

"The Archduke's maxims on magazines," Jomini remarks, "are in general very just ; in fact, the more formidable armies are, the more neces-

Jomini's comments on the Archduke's remarks.

sary are magazines. All is subordinate, however, to the nature of the country, to the resources which it offers as you pass through it, and to the respective forces of the parties. Besides, to establish magazines is not to give up the power of making sometimes ten or twelve marches without carrying them with you when a decisive operation is in question, and armies of 80,000 to 100,000 men are in a fertile country. But to enter on a barren region already ruined, or which the enemy lays waste as he abandons it, and where the points of support and of arrival are far distant from those of departure, is to expose the army to disasters such as the French experienced in Russia and Portugal. It was not that they had neglected to form magazines and to organise trains; but these were so far from the corps employed that the advantages of them became illusory."

It will be easily seen that this republican system could not be applied by an army acting either in its own or in friendly territory. It was equally impracticable for the British in Spain, and for the Austrians in Germany and in Italy. These armies could only draw their subsistence either from their own countries or from the willing contributions, duly paid for, of the people in whose countries they were operating. But however supplies may be obtained, the storing of them in magazines along the lines on which the army operates is indispensable—and it is therefore necessary to inquire what is the method of forming depots to which all generals must resort. This is evidently a matter on which it is in vain to theorise, and on which nobody is entitled to be heard on whom has not rested the responsibility of providing for the subsistence of armies. Let us hear the Archduke Charles on it:—

'Principes de la Strat.' on the establishment of magazines.

"As every line of operation ought to be covered by the movements and positions of the army, it follows that the most favourable points for depots of stores ought to be on that line; and as this line determines at the same time the direction of all movements progressive or retrograde, it also indicates the most convenient roads for the transport of subsistence.

"To limit to a single line the establishment of depots and the arrival of convoys of materials necessary to the wellbeing of an army, is very difficult. They should therefore be placed upon many points which have sure communications with the line of operation—the more these points



are multiplied, the more free will be the circulation and the surer the subsistence.

“The extent of country covered by an army increases with the distance from that army. It is right, then, only to establish some magazines close, and the majority at a greater distance in rear—the first to supply the needs of a few days, the others great depots. In the case of convoys, also, in order that they may be well covered, all the roads they move on should close towards the line of operation in proportion as they approach the army, and end by joining it. The concentric direction of the convoys may be good; but it will be so only against the attacks of great regular bodies. Good partisans will annoy the convoys always, whatever the direction of their routes, even if perpendicular from the centre of the base to the centre of the front, the case in which they are the least exposed to an assailant.

“Even fortresses cannot safely be made depots of, if the communications with them are precarious, for it is very seldom that an escort can defend a convoy against serious attacks. Strategic points only are proper for the establishment of great magazines, because generally they are at the centre of communications and offer every facility for the arrival of stores and their transport to the front, even should unforeseen circumstances cause a change of direction. Magazines, then, must not be established off the line of operations on points which are not united to it by many roads and in different directions.

“The relations between an army and the country behind it change according to the march of events and the successive occupation of the strategic points aimed at: so that the line of magazines must be modified by the movements of the army that there may be no break in the convoys; this applies to offensive movements as well as to retreats. To develop these principles we will take as an example the case of an army that marches from the Moldau to the Wernitz, following the line Budweis, Neumarkt, Ratisbon, Donauwerth. And we will suppose—

“1st, That when the army quits Budweis the enemy is so distant that the principal magazines can be established on the line of operation, so that supplies will be available throughout the progressive movement.

“2d, That great magazines will be established on the first line only, at



a convenient distance from the army; from which others will be placed at intermediate points up to the front, where depots of immediate distribution will be formed for eight or ten days at most.

“3d, That neither these advanced magazines nor those at the greatest distance in rear are here spoken of, nor the direction taken by the convoys, which would be superfluous.

“Under these conditions, the establishment of magazines follows the movements of the army at the following stages :

See Map  
No. 8.

“1st stage.—When the army advances from Budweis towards Klattau, the magazines are at Prague, Budweis, Ufar-Linz (opposite Linz).

“2d stage.—Army at Klattau :—magazines at Pilsen, Horazdiwitz.

“3d stage.—Army at Ratisbon :—magazines at Waldmunchen, Cham, Straubing.

“4th stage.—Army at Ingolstadt :—magazines at Ratisbon and Stadt-am-Hof.

“5th stage.—Army on the Wernitz :—magazines at Kufferberg, Kiesching, Vohburg.

“In retreating, the evacuation of magazines is accomplished on the same principles, thus :—

“1st stage in retreat.—Army quits the Wernitz :—magazines at Stadt-am-Hof, Ratisbon.

“2d stage—Army quits Ingolstadt :—magazines as in 3d stage,” &c. &c.

From this elaborate arrangement, we see how much of a general's time and thoughts must be occupied with matters which are quite cast into the shade by his marches and battles, but without which his marches and battles would be impossible.

Jomini's  
'Précis' on  
magazines.

Jomini, without entering into such minute details as the foregoing, also touches on the subject. After remarking that soils, the seasons, the force of armies, the spirit of the population, are all variable causes influencing the supplies, he says the following general maxims may be established :—that in fertile and populous countries, the inhabitants of which are not hostile, an army of from 100,000 to 120,000 advancing towards the enemy, but still far enough distant from him to be able to include without danger a certain extent of country, may march during the time required for an operation, say one month, drawing its resources from the country; that during this time all possible activity must be used to collect all the

resources of the country to form magazines of reserve, and to supply the wants which the army will experience after the success of the operation, whether to concentrate in positions for repose, or to start anew on fresh enterprises; and that the magazines which shall have been collected by purchase or requisitions ought to be placed as much as possible on three different radii of communication, which will facilitate, on the one hand, the supply of the wings, and, on the other, the widest extension possible of the sphere of successive requisitions.

It has been thought necessary to dwell so strongly on this part of the subject, because it is absolutely essential as a foundation to any solid superstructure of military theory, and because its importance is apt to be overlooked by those who form estimates of warlike operations. It is extremely difficult to persuade even intelligent auditors that two armies are not like two fencers in an arena, who may shift their ground to all points of the compass; but rather resemble two swordsmen on a narrow plank which overhangs an abyss, where each has to think not only of giving and parrying thrusts, but of keeping his footing under penalty of destruction. The most unpractised general *feels* this at once on taking a command in a district where his troops are no longer supplied by routine; or, if he does not, the loss of a single meal to his army would sufficiently impress it on him. While distant spectators imagine him to be intent only on striking or parrying a blow, he probably directs a hundred glances, a hundred anxious thoughts, to the communications in his rear, for one that he bestows on his adversary's front. Perhaps no situation is more pitiable than that of a commander who has allowed an enemy to sever his communications. He sees the end of his resources at hand, but not the means to replenish them. Is he to spread his troops to find subsistence for themselves? How then shall they be assembled to meet the enemy? Shall he combine them for a desperate attack? How, if that attack fails, are they to be fed? He will then have no alternative but to make the best terms he can, or see his army dissolve like snow. Even should there be near him large available stores of food, still if the communication with his base be cut, his fate is merely postponed, for he can neither procure cartridges and balls for his rifles, shot and shell for his cannon, nor recruits for his ranks, to replace the waste of battle. All leaders, then, must feel how stringent are the conditions under which they

Condition of  
an army  
whose sup-  
plies are inter-  
cepted.

move, and how considerable must be the prospective advantages for which they will venture, even remotely, to risk the loss of their communications.

Matters to be noted on beginning to study a campaign.

It will be necessary, then, for the student who prepares to follow on the map the operations of a campaign, to begin by ascertaining the bases, or points on both sides on which the armies ultimately relied for the supplies of munitions of war, and for the reinforcements which their respective governments furnished; constantly to note and bear in mind the main roads by which, moving from their bases, they approached each other; and lastly, to mark the positions of the fronts of the armies in all their changes.

Without these preliminaries he cannot hope to acquire a clear idea of the merits, object, or effect of a single movement.

## PART II.

### THE CONSIDERATIONS WHICH MUST PRECEDE THE OPENING OF A CAMPAIGN.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE WAR.

BEFORE the commencement of hostilities, a belligerent government which knows its own resources and those of its enemy must decide whether its army shall make or await the attack. And though it has sometimes happened, as in the Italian campaign of 1849 (Novara), that both parties simultaneously advance across the frontier or region which separates them into the territory occupied by the adversary, yet it is far more usual, as might be expected, for one to dispose its forces on the defensive and leave it to its antagonist to commence operations. The considerations which induce a power to choose between a defensive and an offensive attitude may be political, or geographical, or dependent on the relative strength of the belligerents.

It is for governments to choose between the offensive and defensive.

Reasons for choosing.

At the beginning of the American civil war the Confederates stood on the defensive. That this attitude was not chosen from weakness is proved by the successes they met with in the first operations. In separating from the Union they had declared that they sought only their own independence, not the subjugation of other states. Had they made war



in the North, as the Federals made war in Virginia, Louisiana, and Georgia, they would have falsified the principles for which they took up arms. And it is said that their President prevented them from advancing upon Washington after the victory of Bull's Run, lest an invasion of the North should injure the cause of secession. At any rate, sufficient *political* reason may be assigned for their defensive attitude.

See Map  
No. 2.

In 1812 and 1813 Wellington held the fortresses which close the only highroads between Portugal and Spain—namely, Ciudad-Rodrigo and Badajos. Thus he possessed an impregnable frontier, and also the means of issuing from it. These *geographical* circumstances gave to him and denied to his adversaries the power of becoming the assailant.

When Denmark in 1864 was assailed by united Germany, it was out of the question that she should do more than defend her own territory as best she might. The fact of her *inferior force* reduced her to the defensive.

But the reason for introducing this subject is not to discuss the various cases where belligerents have chosen a part, but to point out the conditions which attach respectively to offensive and defensive war.

It is evident that when one belligerent power feels secure behind an unassailable frontier, and holds many issues into the enemy's territory, either by command of the sea or otherwise, it can assemble its forces unknown to its antagonist upon some point selected by itself, from whence to make an irruption into the theatre of war. And if the belligerents be divided only by a frontier line,—a river such as the Rhine or Potomac, or a mountain-range such as the Alps,—the army that passes it will nearly always find itself immensely superior to the force that can immediately interpose. For the defender's army has by the conditions of the defensive been spread so as to guard all possible avenues by which the attack might be made. Thus, in the Waterloo campaign, Wellington and Blucher, being on the defensive, were guarding all the roads from the French frontier into Belgium, along a front of a hundred miles. Napoleon suddenly assembled his whole army upon the centre of their line, and, on first entering Belgium, was greatly superior to any force which the opposing generals could interpose between him and his object, Brussels.

In the American civil war, Richmond being the point aimed at by

the principal Northern army, the Federals could, behind the screen of the Potomac, concentrate their forces and advance either from the upper Potomac down the Shenandoah Valley; from Washington along the Orange Railroad to the Rappahannock; from Acquia Creek, by the Fredericksburg and Richmond Railway, by the Peninsula between the York and James Rivers, adopting either streams as a base; or from the south side of the James River by Petersburg. They used all of these lines, and frequently advanced at first with numbers greatly superior to those which the Confederates could assemble to oppose them. Thus the great advantage conferred by the offensive is the *Power of Concentration*. And if this advantage be not neutralised by artificial or natural defences, behind which the enemy can, with such forces as may be at hand, retard the advance of the assailant till the whole defensive army be also concentrated, it entails enormous chances of success. For the defensive cordon being ruptured, and the concerted action of the parts of the army lost, the assailant deals his blows right and left on the scattered fragments, till his road to his object is clear.

The advantage of assuming the offensive.

At the outset, then, the assailant, when operating in a country suitable for military movements, and defended only by an army—not by fortifications—has great chances in his favour. Nor does his advantage end with the first onset; for the defender is obliged to follow his lead, and to parry his blows, instead of actively assailing him; and while the invader is executing designs already laid down in their minute particulars, and knows what he is aiming at, and what steps the enemy will probably take to foil him, which, being foreseen, may be provided for, that enemy is operating to a certain extent in the dark, and perhaps neglects even to use what power of concentration he may possess till too late, fearing lest the attack should be a feint. Dislodged from his first positions, and disconcerted by finding that his troops are still scattered in presence of a concentrated enemy, he will probably be too completely absorbed in the essential measure of collecting them in some position between the invader and his object, to devise offensive measures against him. Thus the first success will lead to others, and each will more and more confirm the invader in the possession of the advantage called by military writers *the initiative*—that is, the power of compelling your adversary to make his movements dependent on your own.

Cost of invasion to the invader.

But it is evident that the power which commences operations in this decisive way must not only possess great resources, but must also be able to render them immediately available in the district wherein lies the destined starting-point. And great preparations must be made, not only for the collection of supplies, but for causing them to follow the forward movements of the army. The most abundant stores will be of no avail if there be deficiency of transport. The army, checked in its career, must halt to await its supplies, or spread to gather them from the country. In either case the impulse of the advance will be lost, and the initiative will be seized by a ready adversary.

Advantage of the defensive.

On the other hand, the defensive army, being distributed over a wide area, is much more easily supplied. The resources of each district are probably adequate to maintain the troops occupying it. The necessary stores, instead of being directed at great cost of transport upon some particular focus, are collected at many central points. The roads by which the army is supplied from the rear are numerous, and transport is thus immensely facilitated; and when compelled to retire, it falls back amidst its magazines, and the requirements of transport are more likely to diminish than to increase. Thus, comparing the tax which war levies on belligerents, the greater strain evidently falls at the outset on the power that undertakes offensive operations; and, in modern times, none but a highly organised system for developing and administering the resources of a state, directed by a paramount and concentrated authority, such as that of a despotic government, can be adequate to begin and maintain them effectually.

If, however, a belligerent has the means to sustain the offensive effectually, it is evidently the least expensive course in the long-run, since decisive success will throw the burden of the war on the conquered territory. Thus Napoleon, in several offensive campaigns, almost without a check, ruined the military power of great monarchies, and imposed on them what terms he pleased. But such rapid successes are exceptional where armies are not very unequal in force, and it is necessary to consider the position of an invader who advances continually from his base against strong opposition.

An army operating in its own territory is not restricted, like the in-

vader, to a single line. It is true that its efforts may all be directed to cover a single point aimed at by the enemy, as the efforts of the army of Virginia had for their grand object to defend Richmond. But to defend a point it is not necessary to interpose directly between it and the enemy. Provided supplies can be obtained in other directions, the defensive army may assume a front on one side of the line by which the assailant is advancing, and parallel to it; and so long as it is undefeated, it is evident the enemy cannot advance except under penalty of being cut from his base. Thus McClellan advances upon Richmond from the Pamunkey at White House, while the Confederates are spread over a front extending from Richmond to Winchester in the Shenandoah Valley. But the force in the Valley under Jackson, drawing its supplies probably from Lynchburg, advances in an easterly direction upon Hanover; the troops before Richmond join it; the front of the Confederates thus no longer looks north but east; and McClellan, fearing at the next move to be cut from his base, lets go his hold of the Pamunkey and transfers his stores to the James River just in time to save his army from destruction.

Advantages  
of an army  
operating in  
its own  
country.

This mode of operating, then, which is open to the whole defensive army, is also open to a part of it. A single corps drawing its subsistence for a time from points on the prolongation of the flanks of the general line may operate on either side against the roads which connect the invader with his base. The enemy must protect these roads either by occupying all the avenues by which they could be assailed with adequate forces, in case those avenues are few; or should the exposed points of the line of communication be numerous, then by detaching movable corps to guard it throughout its length, and to protect the convoys. With each step that the invader makes in advance, the difficulties of guarding the line increase in proportion to its length, and the force detached for its protection increases also. Nothing except the disabling of the enemy by heavy defeats can prevent these enterprises against the communications; but the force which can be collected for battle is constantly decreasing with the length of the line, till the defender may find himself, notwithstanding the losses he may have suffered earlier in the campaign, superior in number on the point of collision in the later stages, and, snatching the initiative, may force his adversary to defend himself in retreat.



A notable illustration of the dangers of a long line of communication is furnished by Napoleon's Russian campaign. During his advance upon Moscow, two Russian corps were moving, the one from Finland, the other from the south of the empire, towards his line of communications. They struck it where it crossed the Beresina, and caused the horrible disasters of that famous retreat.

Impolicy of operations absolutely defensive.

If a defensive army were to restrict itself entirely to parrying blows, the enemy, feeling secure in his communications from the inertness of his opponent, would be enabled to keep his fighting power undiminished by detachments in the rear. To pursue such a course, then, even when very inferior in force, is suicidal in a defender; since a detachment judiciously menacing the enemy's communications may hold in check (or let us say, in military parlance, may *contain*) a much greater number of the enemy, and proportionably diminish the disparity between the main armies. It does not follow, then, that because an army is defending a territory it must confine itself to the defensive; on the contrary, it will best effect its purpose by actively threatening its adversary, and by taking the lead whenever an opportunity offers.

Balance of advantage.

Such are some of the advantages and disadvantages which attach respectively to offensive and defensive warfare, and which mainly depend on the question of magazines and lines communicating with them. The offensive confers, at the outset, the power of concentrating on the flank or centre of the enemy's line of defence, and so turning or breaking it. The defender must either oppose the enemy with an inferior force at first, or abandon territory in order to assemble his forces at some point farther back. On the other hand, offensive war demands great resources, and success itself, if not absolute and decisive, entails fresh difficulties on the invader. And when he has penetrated far within the defender's territory, the situations of the antagonists differ greatly, inasmuch as the army on the offensive is bound to its base, be that base wide or narrow, while the defensive forces may base themselves on any part of their territory which will supply them, and which their front protects. Thus Sherman advanced from his immediate base at Chattanooga by the single line of Dalton, pressing the Confederate army beyond Atlanta. But the Southern troops could draw their subsistence not only from Macon, which was directly behind them, but from Augusta and Mobile.

Accordingly, they let go their hold of Macon, drew their subsistence from Mobile, and threw themselves upon Sherman's communications with his base. That leader was compelled to quit his hold of the line Chattanooga-Atlanta, detaching a portion of his army to cover the great magazines in Tennessee on the one side, while on the other he marched the remainder of his force through Georgia to the coast.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE SELECTION OF AN OBJECT.

What are generally the objects of military operations.

Conquest of territory.

It is clear that offensive operations cannot be conducted with unity, or directed with precision, unless the object to be gained by them is kept distinctly in view by those who plan and execute the campaign. Where territory easily accessible to the power that assumes the offensive is the subject of dispute, the object will generally be to occupy the country in question. Thus Louis Napoleon rested satisfied with driving the Austrians beyond the Mincio, and adding the country westward of that river to the dominions of Sardinia. But whether in such a case hostilities will terminate with the occupation of the province must depend on the ability of the other belligerent to continue the struggle. Frederick II. began the Silesian wars by seizing Silesia, the primary object of desire; but the conflict that ensued thereupon lasted twenty years. Whenever the *causa belli* is something less definite and tangible than disputed territory, the undeniable superiority of one belligerent and the acquisition of some material guarantee can alone be expected to bring the adversary to terms. That guarantee is generally sought in an enemy's capital. The occupation of its chief city paralyses a civilised country. As all great roads meet there—as it is the centre of trade, the focus of wealth and of civilisation, and the seat of government—its occupation by an enemy is so ruinous that any terms he may impose will generally be less pernicious than his presence.

Occupation of an enemy's capital.

But it is not sufficient to enter the capital unless possession of it can be maintained. In 1757 an Austrian general of hussars entered Berlin and levied a contribution on the city, but being forced to quit it on the

approach of the Prussian King, the incident produced no result. Napoleon held Madrid for four years, and set up his brother as King of Spain, yet the Peninsular war went on in half the provinces of the kingdom. He seized Vienna in 1805, and again in 1809, yet in each case a great subsequent victory was necessary to the overthrow of the enemy's power. The mere possession of the capital, then, is not final so long as the enemy can still make head in the field. It is when the seizure of the capital is coupled with such ascendancy over the defensive armies that they can never hope to retake it, that further resistance is felt to be hopeless, as leading only to national extinction, and that any terms not absolutely unendurable are accepted by the vanquished. Recognising these truths, Napoleon's first efforts were directed to disorganise and ruin the enemy's armies in the field; his next step, when the way was clear, was to seize the capital, and then, with his clutch on the heart of the country, with the public opinion of all nations strongly influenced by his commanding attitude, and with the opposing armies disheartened by misfortune, he advanced to deal the stroke that was finally to lay the antagonist power prostrate.

Defeat of the defensive armies also necessary.

It sometimes happens that a point may assume an adventitious importance, sufficient to make it the object of a campaign. Sebastopol is a remarkable instance. Situated at the extremity of an obscure and unimportant province, the conquest of which would be no step towards the invasion of Russia, this city, formidable by reason of its docks and arsenals, was, from its proximity to Constantinople, characterised as a standing menace to Turkey, and as such was of sufficient importance to be the object of the vast efforts made in that war by France and England.

Sebastopol an exceptional object.

Such cases are, however, exceptional, and the general course of a campaign between two great powers is a series of manœuvres and engagements for the possession of the capital or other specially important town of the power that stands on the defensive. And it is evident that the course of the war must vary with the distance of the invader's frontier from the menaced point. If France were to make war upon Italy, the invading army might, as soon as it had secured the passage of the Alps by the Mont Cenis, reach Turin in a single march. But if Austria were at war with Italy, the Italian capital is much more secure from an adversary whose armies must traverse the breadth of North Italy to at-



Intermediate  
object found  
in a defensive  
line.

tain it. The proximity of Richmond to Washington caused the Federal Government in each campaign in Virginia to base its calculations on the assumption that the operations of a few days, or at most a few weeks, must wrest from its adversary's hold the city from the possession of which it expected such decisive results. And no doubt early in the war, before the capital was fortified, a single crushing defeat sustained by the Confederates in the field would have given Richmond to the Federals. But in cases where a great distance separates the invader from his object, he cannot expect to attain it in a single effort. Thus, if France were at war with Austria, she could scarcely expect, in the most favourable circumstances, to reach Vienna in one campaign. Her first object would be to attain a position in Austrian territory which would form a secure starting-point for a fresh effort. If she were aiming at Vienna through Germany, and a French army could advance between the Danube and the Tyrol, securing the passages of the Danube on the one side and of the mountains on the other, till it could rest on one of the great streams flowing across the space between, such as the Iser or the Inn, it might establish itself there, and collect its strength for a fresh effort in another campaign. If France were at war with Spain, the first object of a French army might be the line of the Ebro, the next the line of the Douro or of the Guadarama mountains—then Madrid and the Tagus. Thus the object of an invading army may be either a point from the possession of which it expects decisive results, or a strong defensive line such as will be an important step towards that point.

## CHAPTER III.

THE SELECTION OF A THEATRE OF OPERATIONS, AND  
LINE BY WHICH TO OPERATE.

WHEN great powers are at war there will generally lie along their extensive frontiers many portions of territory by any of which the belligerents can pass towards their object. In America, Eastern Virginia, Western Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and many points on the seaboard, have been entered by invading armies from the North. French campaigns against Austria have been made in Italy, in the Tyrol, in Suabia, and Bavaria, and along the Mayne. Napoleon made war in Spain by the east side of the Pyrenees in Catalonia and Aragon, and by the west side in Castile, Leon, and Estremadura.

Evidently there is much scope for selection among the regions that may become the theatre of war. And each of these regions generally affords many lines by which the invader may aim at his object. The main Federal army of the Potomac in various campaigns advanced, or attempted to advance, upon Richmond by the lines Alexandria-Centreville, Acquia-Fredericksburg, White House, Malvern Hill, and Petersburg. And in aiming at the valley of the Danube, the French have penetrated to it by many different routes. In 1796 Moreau crossed at Kehl, and directed his army by the northern border of the Black Forest upon Ulm. In 1800 the same general advanced from the Swiss portion of the Rhine along the southern skirts of the Black Forest. In 1805 Napoleon crossed the Rhine at Carlsruhe, Spire, and Mannheim, marching on Donauwerth.

Several alternatives may offer.

When England sends forth an army, the command of the sea enables

her to select as her base of operation any part of a coast from which she can reach the enemy. English armies operated during the Peninsular war from Mondego Bay, from Lisbon, from the coast of Andalucia, from parts of the eastern coast, and from harbours in the Bay of Biscay. At the outset of the Russian war, in 1854, the Allies landed at Varna for operations on the Danube; later, they passed the Black Sea for the campaign of the Crimea. If it is necessary for great Continental nations to make a wise choice between many alternatives when considering what their territorial line shall be, much more is it incumbent upon England to summon her most sagacious chiefs to council before committing herself to one of the numerous avenues which her maritime ascendancy will offer for her choice.

Considerations for selection of a theatre.

Many considerations will commonly enter into this question of selection. The convenience and security of the base—the position of the enemy's forces—the facilities, in the shape of good and practicable roads, for reaching the object—the proximity to the object—the fitness of the topographical character of the theatre to the army destined to operate in it,—will all be elements in the problem. If that portion of the invader's frontier which is contiguous to the territory occupied by the main army of the defensive power be impregnable, that will be good reason for making some other region the theatre of war. If, on the contrary, the invader's frontier be extensive and open, it will generally be expedient for him to base himself on that portion of it which will be covered from a counter-invasion by his advance. Thus the most vulnerable part of the French frontier in 1815 was opposite Belgium; and had Napoleon crossed the Rhenish or Alpine boundary, making Germany or Italy the theatre of war, Blucher and Wellington could have marched on Paris; whereas, by advancing into Belgium, and trusting to the strong natural boundaries to keep the enemy from invading France at other points, the Emperor covered with his army, so long as it remained undefeated, the otherwise exposed part of his territory.

The power meditating the offensive must also consider the fitness of the theatre to its own army. If that army have a preponderating strength in cavalry, an open country will suit it best; if infantry be its chief reliance, a hilly or wooded region, which may neutralise the enemy's superiority in the other arms; if artillery, good roads and positions which

command sufficient expanse of country, will be indispensable to its most effective action. To determine this point a broad and general survey will suffice. But a more intimate acquaintance with the topography of the theatre, and a knowledge of strategy, are required, in order to determine the further questions of what points in that theatre are most important as steps towards the object, and what are the chances of gaining possession of them.

As an example of the way in which, after admitting all these various elements of the question of selecting a theatre, a balance may be struck and a decision formed, let us take the case of the campaign of Marengo.

Example of selection in Marengo campaign.

While Moreau operated from the Rhine on the Danube, Napoleon was to attack the Austrians in Italy. They were besieging a French garrison in Genoa; they had advanced and occupied the passes of the Alps on the Italian side from Lake Maggiore down to the junction of the Apennines; and they had a considerable force south of the Apennines endeavouring to force their way into France across the Var, which river was defended with inferior numbers by Suchet. Thus the Austrian front extended along the whole Italian frontier of France.

See Map No. 7.

Napoleon's objects were, to deliver the besieged garrison of Genoa, and to strike a decisive blow against the Austrians in Piedmont and Lombardy.

The Austrian lines of communication with their base and of retreat led from the various points of their front to Mantua and Verona, and, owing to the geographical features of North Italy, all the roads by which they could gain those cities were compressed laterally into the space between Milan and Piacenza. If Napoleon could throw his army across that space, he would effect a double object—he would cut the communications of the enemy, and, by forcing them to concentrate for action, would deliver Genoa.

The object of his campaign, then, was the space from Milan to Piacenza; and his first task was to choose the line by which to advance to it.

North Italy is divided into three unequal portions by the Po and the Apennines. And as it would be manifestly unwise to advance on both sides of either of these obstacles, Napoleon had to determine which of the three intervals of space he would operate in.

The space between the Apennines and the sea being narrow, was favour-



able to an inferior force; and Napoleon's army was inferior in number to the Austrian. The region was mountainous, and therefore the French army, strongest in its infantry, would there meet the enemy, whose great superiority lay in cavalry and artillery, under the most favourable conditions. But successes here must be slow; the Austrians, when pushed back, would constantly be reinforced through the passes of the Apennines; and, in retiring, they would still cover the siege of Genoa. If beaten, they would be driven along their proper line of retreat to the shelter of their fortresses on the Mincio and Adige.

In the space between the Apennines and the Po three fortresses existed, those of Turin, Coni, and Alessandria, each a stumbling-block in the way of an advancing army. This, too, was the centre of the Austrian line, and the centre of a line can manifestly be reinforced by the rest more easily than either extremity. The fortresses would bar the way to the French long enough to give the Austrians time to concentrate. By holding the passes of the Apennines they would prevent the French force on the Var from advancing to the relief of Genoa; and, if defeated, they would still, in falling back, cover the siege, and would, as in the former case, retire on their proper line of retreat.

In both these regions, then, the Austrian army would interpose between Napoleon and his object, and, in the second case, with great advantages for opposing his advance. Moreover, it was a part of his plan that his insufficient numbers should be recruited by a detachment sent from Moreau's army on the Danube. The road from thence to the French frontier of Italy was long and difficult, and the junction of this co-operative force could not be hoped for in time to be effective.

In the remaining space between Switzerland and the Po, the Austrians, besides being far weaker in numbers than at any other part of their line, were most widely extended; and no fortresses existed here. This space, therefore, in which lay the most direct road to Milan, offered the most favourable conditions; and, once at Milan, the main army might be joined by the corps sent by Moreau, which, crossing Switzerland, would descend the St Gothard Pass to Bellinzona. But this region was also by far the most difficult of attainment of the three, sheltered as it was by the Alps, the rugged passes of which, though but weakly guarded, seemed to forbid the passage of an army. The other parts of the frontier were crossed by

the roads which formed the regular communications between France and Italy, while in this northern corner the high mountains, covered with perpetual snow, and passable only by steep and perilous tracks, seemed an insurmountable barrier. But beyond this obstacle Napoleon beheld his object ready for his grasp. Disregarding difficulties, he pushed his troops over the Alps, and was at Milan almost before the Austrians knew of his presence in Italy. Joined there by the detachment from the army of the Rhine, he guarded the passages of the Ticino with half his forces facing westward, and with the rest crossed the Po and occupied the road to Piacenza. He was too late to save Genoa, which had been forced by famine to capitulate; but, on the other hand, the Austrians, unwilling to abandon the siege when on the verge of success, delayed the retreat of the investing force, which, by a more rapid march, might have held the south bank of the Po against the French, and secured the road there by which to regain Mantua. Thus the capture of Genoa only assured the defeat of the Austrians by depriving them of their one chance of escape. Cut from their line, they were forced to fight at Marengo with their faces to their proper rear, and, when defeated, nothing remained for them but to capitulate.

But the selection of a line is not decided always on military grounds alone. Political considerations frequently complicate the problem. That which is of most importance is the effect which the war may have on the policy of nations whose territories are between, or adjacent to, the frontiers of the belligerents. In the wars of the French Revolution, Austrian armies were sometimes forced to hold the line of the Rhine, when good military reasons would have dictated a different course, because of the effect which would certainly be produced on the German powers bordering on the river—Baden, Wirtemberg, &c.—by leaving them uncovered. In the campaign of Jena, the Prussian army would have found the Elbe a secure and convenient line of defence, but Saxony and Hesse-Cassel would be thus left unprotected, whereas Prussia, by covering their territories with her army, would secure their co-operation and add their contingents to her numerical force. For that reason she was induced to take up a line which was the cause of all her disasters. At the outset of the late war with Russia, the first design of the Allies was to engage their armies in the defence of Turkey south of the Danube; and when the Turks,

Political elements in selection.

single-handed, beat off the invaders, it seemed most natural that all the Allied forces should combine to carry the war beyond the Danube. But in such a case it became of primary importance to consider what side Austria would take, because her position on the flank of what would then be the theatre of war gave her the power of decisive action. Her policy was a question for the Allied Governments to consider, and the result of their deliberations was to transfer their armies to the Crimea.

Selection of  
theatre  
should rest  
with the  
government,

Demanding, then, as this question does, diplomatic as well as military sagacity, it will be most effectually solved when the chief of the State combines the characters of ruler and soldier ; and it is not the least of the advantages which a military autocrat, like Frederick or Napoleon, possesses in war, that all the circumstances are apprehended by a single mind, and the decision has all the force and coherence which unity imparts. But when generals are commissioned by their governments to execute warlike enterprises, the questions which depend chiefly on diplomacy must of necessity be solved by statesmen, who, having thus given to the campaign its original impulse and direction, will do well to leave the formation and execution of the military plan in the hands of the general.

execution of  
the campaign  
with the  
general.

## PART III.

### OPERATIONS ILLUSTRATING THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE FRONTS OF OPPOSING ARMIES AND THEIR RESPECTIVE LINES OF COMMUNICATION WITH THEIR BASES.

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## CHAPTER I.

### OBSERVATIONS ON THE MODE OF TREATING THE SUBJECT OF THE WORK.

THE Theatre of War is the province of Strategy—the Field of Battle is the province of Tactics. All operations must ultimately rely for success upon power of fighting; for it is of no avail to conduct an army into situations which it cannot maintain in battle. It is the object of Strategy so to direct the movements of an army, that when decisive collisions occur it shall encounter the enemy with increased relative advantage. If two armies advance towards each other till they meet, both equally covering their own communications, and equally ready to concentrate for action, it is evident that strategy has no share in the result; for all that has been done is to bring them face to face, and leave it to force or tactical skill to decide the issue. But when the movements of one of two armies have been so directed as to increase the chances in its favour, by forcing the enemy either to engage at a disadvantage, or to abandon territory under

General  
object of  
strategy.



Kinds of advantage to be attained by strategy.

penalty of worse disaster, there is proof of a power which differs from the mere ability to fight. The purely military advantages to be attained by strategical operations are of two kinds: 1st, *The Probabilities of Victory*; 2d, *The Consequences of Victory*. Two armies may incur equal risk of disaster in case of defeat, but the chances of victory may be greatly in favour of one. Thus, of armies whose communications are equally secure, one may be scattered while the other is concentrated within striking distance, and the first may thus be defeated piecemeal. Or the probabilities of victory may be evenly balanced, while the consequences of defeat may be much more disastrous to one than the other. For instance, if a French army have placed itself between an Austrian army and its base without relinquishing its own communications, and the Austrian has no alternative but to break through, in the battle which ensues the chances of victory may be evenly balanced (in fact at Marengo, a case in point, the probabilities of victory were on the side of the Austrians); but defeat will be to the French army merely defeat—to the Austrian it will be ruin. A general may succeed in combining on his own side both these kinds of advantage, and the triumph of strategy is complete when the commander of one of two originally equal forces succeeds, by the combinations of the campaign, in bringing his adversary's army into a position where the chances of victory are greatly against it, and where defeat will entail disasters beyond the loss of the battle.

Particular objects of strategical movements.

In the following chapters strategical movements will be considered as having the following objects:—1st, *To menace or assail the enemy's communications with his base*; 2d, *To destroy the coherence and concerted action of his army, by breaking the communications which connect the parts*; 3d, *To effect superior concentrations on particular points*. And as, whichever mode a general may adopt, it is essential that he should always maintain his own communications with his base, so the part of the subject first discussed will be the circumstances by which the security of those communications will be specially affected.

It is evident to the least instructed that the presence of rivers, mountains, and other obstacles in the theatre of war, must exercise a powerful modifying influence on the operations. A part of the work is therefore devoted to the discussion of OBSTACLES—the nature of the difficulties

they interpose, and their effect in various circumstances. It may be said, that as no theatre of war can well be devoid of such features, this chapter should have preceded the others; but it has been judged otherwise, for these reasons: that they greatly complicate and increase the difficulty of appreciating campaigns, and that campaigns illustrative of the broader principles of strategy may be found which are intelligible without reference to the obstacles; whereas, for the appreciation of obstacles, it is quite necessary to have an idea of the relations between the fronts of hostile armies and their respective lines of communication. These and other relations are therefore discussed first in the simplest form practicable—then the obstacles; and the student ought after that to be prepared to enter on the discussion of any strategical operation whatsoever.

Military problems involving obstacles are deferred.

Battles, besides being incidents which may occur at any period of a campaign, bear also in their objects and manœuvres a close relation to the operations of strategy; and in a course of lectures on military art it is well to treat of both subjects simultaneously; but in this work it has been thought better to keep them separate, and to give strategy the precedence. In the strategical chapters, therefore, battles will be adverted to merely as incidents in the campaign.

Battles.

The plan of arrangement followed in the narrative of campaigns is one that is recommended to all students of strategy. The circumstances which it is necessary to know in order to understand the position of the opposing armies at the outset of a campaign, are first briefly recounted; then the fronts, the bases, and the lines connecting them are defined; next the plans of the generals on each side are discussed. Then the operations of the campaign are related in the simplest and most methodical form, without comment; for not only is the course of the operations rendered clearer by keeping the commentary separate, but the student is thus at liberty to exercise his own faculties in accounting for the movements. Lastly, the situation at each stage is commented on; and as every campaign furnishes examples of many points of war besides that which it has been specially selected to illustrate, these are noted and discussed. Deductions, which seem to be of particularly wide application, are presented in a definite form for future use; but nothing is offered in that shape, unless it is so far supported by fact and argument

Plan followed in narrating campaigns.

as to have a title to the reader's assent. Nothing is more common than to find in writings on military matters reference to "the rules of war," and assertions such as that some general "violated every principle of war;" or that some other general owed his success to "knowing when to dispense with the rules of war." It would be difficult to say what these rules are, or in what code they are embodied; and an inquirer who is somewhat puzzled, perhaps, to understand how the highest proficiency can be displayed in a science by defiance of its principles, had better resolve to base his own conclusions upon fact and reason alone, when he will probably discover that such criticisms have only very vague ideas for their foundation.

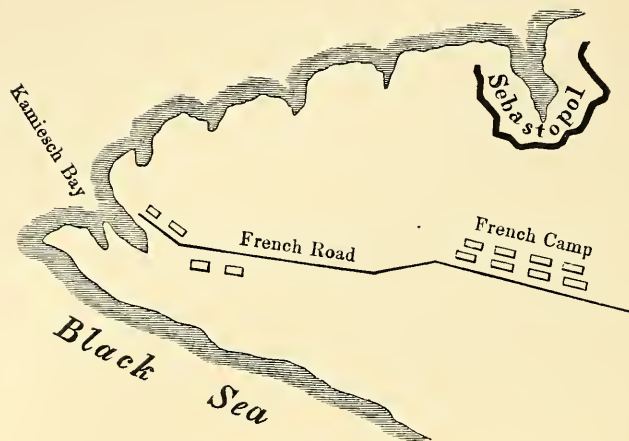
## CHAPTER II.

THE EFFECT OF OPERATING ON A FRONT PARALLEL TO THE  
LINE OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE BASE.

REVERTING to the account given in Chapter IV. of the positions of the Austrian and French armies at Solferino, we shall see that their fronts were parallel to each other, and that each covered its own lines of communication with the base. Had the French been defeated they would have retired on the roads by which they had advanced, and from which it was not in the power of the Austrians to sever them; and when the Austrians were defeated they retired to the other side of the Mincio on the roads by which they had quitted the river. There was no exhibition on either side of strategical art; none of the movements on either side since the battle of Magenta had altered the chances of success; and the result was altogether due to tactics. To find illustrations of the power of strategy to affect an army through its communications, we must seek elsewhere than in cases where the fronts of the armies are perpendicular to their lines of retreat.

For convenience of supply nothing can be better than a road which, coming direct from the base, passes along the rear of the army throughout its length. The harbour of Kamiesch, in the Crimea, was the base of the French army, from whence a road was made traversing the rear of the camp. Thus depots might be created at any point, and every part of the army was equally near to its supplies. Had the army changed front to the right upon its centre so as to be perpendicularly across the road, the wings would no longer have been supplied with the same facility as before.





So far, then, it is convenient for an army to operate parallel to its communications with the base. But is it *safe*? Is it a matter of indifference whether the front of an army is perpendicular or parallel to the line in question?

The campaign of Novara, in 1849, between the Sardinians, under their king Charles Albert, and the Austrians, under Marshal Radetzky, has been selected to illustrate this matter, because it was very brief, is clear as an example, and free from any difficulties which a complicated theatre of war would entail at this stage on the reader, since it took place in the space between the Sesia and Ticino, which was equally open to the movements on both sides, for the Terdoppio and Agogna streams are inconsiderable obstacles.

#### CAMPAIGN OF NOVARA, 1849.

See Map  
No. 3.

When hostilities (suspended after the campaign of 1848) recommenced, the opposing armies faced each other on the Ticino, a deep swift stream about 70 yards wide. On the 12th March the Sardinians gave notice that the armistice then existing was to terminate on the 20th of the same month.

Their army in the space which was the theatre of operations formed six divisions, with two brigades detached. The King was the nominal leader, but the real command was vested in a Pole named Chzarnowsky.

Charles Albert had invited several of the best known French generals, Bedeau, Lamoricière, Changarnier, and Bugeaud, to take the command, but all had declined. Chzarnowsky was supposed to have been recommended from Paris. He had served on the Russian staff against the Turks in 1829, and had taken part in the Polish insurrection of 1831, rising from the rank of lieutenant-colonel to the command of a division in a few months. There was nothing apparent in his career to justify the slight thus cast on the claims and abilities of the Sardinian generals, who now commanded divisions under his orders as follows:—

1st division,	.	Durando,	.	Vespolate and Vigevano.	Disposition of the Sar- dinians.
2d, ,,	.	Bes,	.	Cerano and Casalnuovo.	
3d, ,,	.	Perrone,	.	Romentino and Galliate.	
4th, ,,	.	Duke of Genoa,	.	Trecate and Buffalora.	
5th, ,,	.	Ramorino,	.	La Cava.	
Reserve,	.	Duke of Savoy,	.	Near Novara on the Mortara Road.	

Of the two detached brigades, one under Colonel Belvedere was near Piacenza, guarding the right bank of the Po from an advance in that direction. The other under General Solaroli was at Oleggio, on the left of the Sardinian line. As the operations were all on the left bank of the Po, Belvedere's brigade may be left out of the reckoning. In all, the Sardinians on the Ticino numbered about 65,000 men and 140 guns. Buffalora to Pavia, 28.\*

The point to which all the operations of the Sardinians must specially refer was their capital Turin. It no doubt formed their real base of supply, though they might also depend in a secondary degree on Alessandria. The roads from their front to Turin were— Sardinian base and lines of communication.

Vigevano - Mortara - Casale.  
Trecate - Novara - Vercelli.

The 5th division could communicate either with Mortara through Garlasco, or with Alessandria by Casatisma across the Po.

We may conclude that their immediate depots of supply were in Mortara and Novara; and that these were in part filled from the produce of the surrounding district; that there were more permanent depots with reserves of ammunition in Vercelli and Casale, which were at once at a convenient distance, and protected by the Sesia; and that the great magazines were at Alessandria and Turin. Vercelli to Novara, 14.  
Casale to Mortara, 18.

\* All distances are given in English miles.

Austrian  
front, base,  
and commun-  
ications.  
(See Map  
No. 7.)

The Austrian army, commanded by Marshal Radetzky, who had been a colonel on the staff at the battle of Marengo forty-nine years before, extended along the other bank of the Ticino from Turbigo on the right to Pavia on the left. Its base was the space between the Mincio and Adige guarded by the fortresses of the Quadrilateral. The roads between the front and base were

Milan - Lodi	}	Lonato - Peschiera.
Pavia - Lodi		
Pavia - Pizzighitone - Cremona - Mantua.		

A great road leads from Milan to Peschiera by Brescia, but the populations of the towns there were very disaffected; and ten years afterwards the Austrians did not use it in retreating from Magenta. It is therefore probable that Radetzky did not rely on it.

For the immediate supply of his right he would depend on Milan; for that of his left on Pavia; and Crema, Pizzighitone, and Cremona would form an intermediate line of magazines.

Nature of the  
theatre.

The country between the Sesia and Ticino is much cut up with canals of irrigation; and the mulberry plantations, where vines are trained in festoons from the trees, and the deep soft rice-fields, are serious obstacles to the movements of troops, especially of cavalry, who can rarely find there ground on which to act in a body; hence the columns moving there must chiefly keep the roads, which are bordered with wet ditches, and often pass along causeways raised above the swampy fields.

Plans of  
campaign.

By the Sardinian leaders it was considered an object of the first importance to advance on Milan and raise an insurrection there. It was expected that as soon as the advance on the capital should be begun, Radetzky, as in the previous year, would fall back at once towards his base. Should he halt on the Adda, he was to be attacked at Lodi. But it was considered more probable that he would retire beyond the Mincio.

On the Piedmontese left Solaroli's brigade was to operate against the extreme Austrian right in the hilly country about Como and Varese; much as Garibaldi's corps acted in 1859. Five divisions were to move on Milan; the remaining one (the 5th) at La Cava, was to seize if possible the island of the Ticino opposite Pavia; if all went well, it was to push on and attack Pavia itself.

It was expected that these operations would be executed against an enemy who would either retreat or stand on the defensive. There was a third alternative—namely, that he would assume the offensive. This, though not expected, was provided for in the Piedmontese plan. Should the enemy advance by the line Milan-Novara, he would be met by the mass of the Piedmontese army; should he cross from Pavia, the 5th division was to fall back either on San Nazzaro or on Mortara, according to the direction of the attack, retarding the Austrian march till Chzarnowsky, directing his other divisions down the right bank of the Ticino, should attack the Austrians in the difficult intersected country in the angle of the two rivers, while some of their forces might still be on the other bank.

Radetzky, confident in the superiority of his troops, had resolved, on his part, on an offensive campaign of the most decisive kind. To this end he had begun before the termination of the armistice to assemble his army (5 corps in all, numbering 70,000 men and 180 guns) about San Angiolo, on the road between Pavia and Lodi, 4000 men being left to garrison Milan and prevent an insurrection in the city. No care was taken to conceal the intention of an advance on Turin, for it was announced in the proclamations of the Marshal; and no provision was made for converting the offensive into a defensive campaign (as in the case of the enemy), for, except the garrison of Milan, and some detachments left to watch the passages of the Ticino, the whole army was directed to concentrate on San Angiolo,—the point of passage, however, being kept secret. There are passages over the river at Sesto Calende, Oleggio, Turbigo, San Martino, Vigevano, Bereguardo, and Pavia. Radetzky meant the main body to pass at Pavia. The detachments along the Ticino moving down the bank were to cross at Bereguardo. The march was to be direct on Mortara; on arriving there, the many roads of which the town is the centre would enable Radetzky to adapt his movements to circumstances, whether against the Sardinian capital or the Sardinian army.

Passages of  
the Ticino.

Both armies, then, were about, simultaneously, to assume the offensive, and to that end each was massed on its left on one of the two great roads to Turin.

*20th March.*—At noon the Austrians, who had thrown two bridges of boats over the Ticino below the permanent bridge of Pavia, began to pass



“Right” (or  
“left”) bank  
—always  
looking *down*  
the stream.

to the right bank. It was to provide for such a movement that Ramorino had received his instructions. But that general was no longer opposite Pavia. Intelligence had reached him the day before that the Austrians were passing to the right bank of the Po to attack Alessandria, and that any attempt made by the enemy at the bridge of Pavia would be only a feint. Leaving three battalions on the Ticino, he had carried the remainder across the Po to Casatisma to oppose the movement of the enemy. Such was his defence of his breach of orders; but it did not avail—the court-martial which judged his offence condemned him to be shot.

Austrian  
movements.

At the approach of the Austrians two of the battalions left by Ramorino followed him across the Po; the third retired on Mortara. The Austrians posted a brigade of the 4th corps at the bridge of the Po to prevent Ramorino from recrossing. Their other movements were as follows:—

Pavia to  
Zerbolo and  
Gropello 8.

The rest of the 4th corps marched on La Cava.				
The 2d corps	marched on	.	Zerbolo.	
„ 3d	„	„	Gropello.	
„ 1st	„	„	Zerbolo.	

Reserve opposite Pavia, with a brigade at Pavia on the left bank in case of an attack on the Austrian communications on that side of the Ticino.

The detachments which had guarded the length of the river assembled for passage (two brigades) at Bereguardo.

The same day and hour the Duke of Genoa's division, led by the King, crossed the Ticino at San Martino and the canal at Buffalora, and halted at Magenta. Had Chzarnowsky found an Austrian rearguard on the Milan road he would doubtless have briskly attacked it. But he found no enemy on that road; and as was natural in a general new to command and doubtful of his own plan, he grew nervous and halted for information.

The intelligence which had probably reached him of the concentration of the Austrians on San Angiolo was calculated to confirm him in the belief, which that operation was designed to inspire, that the enemy was retreating beyond the Adda. Fearing to advance, yet unwilling to retrace his steps without positive reason, he suspended his forward movement till at ten that night he heard of the events that had occurred on his right. He immediately ordered—

1st division }  
 — reserve } through Mortara on Trumello.  
 2d division }  
 3d ,, } on Vigevano.  
 4th ,, }

Novara to  
 Vigevano, 18.

The 2d division from Cerano, which was nearest to Vigevano, would arrive first, and was to push an advanced-guard to San Siro. Thus the right wing would bar Radetzky's path on Mortara, while the left wing would be ready to fall on his flank. Should this cause the Austrians to halt for concentration during the 21st, Chzarnowsky proposed to extend his wings inward till they touched, and so form line of battle from Trumello on the right to the Ticino on the left, and then to attack the enemy, whose columns were moving in a close country where they would be unable to deploy.

Sardinian  
 movements as  
 ordered,

*21st March.*—The 1st division, for some unexplained reason, halted just beyond Mortara.

but imperfectly  
 executed.

The reserve was deployed on the Casale road on the western side of Mortara, apparently to guard the line Mortara-Casale from an attack by the San Giorgio road.

On the left, the advanced-guard of the 2d division met at San Siro, at two in the afternoon, the advanced-guard of the 2d corps marching on Gambolo, and was pushed back on Sforzesca. The brigades from Bereguardo reinforced the Austrian advanced-guard. A Sardinian brigade came up on the other side, and an action ensued in which both claimed the advantage. The 3d and 4th Sardinian divisions did not arrive at Vigevano till evening.

Radetzky's orders for the 21st were these:—

2d corps from Zerbolo by Gambolo, through Mortara.  
 1st ,, from Zerbolo by Gambolo, on Mortara.  
 3d ,, from Gropello by Trumello, to occupy Mortara.  
 4th ,, from La Cava by San Nazzaro and San Giorgio, on the left of Mortara.  
 Reserve by Garlasco on the rear of Mortara.

Austrian  
 movements as  
 ordered.

Gropello to  
 Mortara, 14.  
 La Cava to  
 S. Giorgio, 21.

Austrian  
 movements  
 as executed.

In executing these movements, the head of the Austrian 2d corps, leading, came upon Durando outside Mortara. The Sardinian division was badly posted, and the reserve was forced to file through the narrow streets in order to reinforce it. Before that tortuous movement could be

accomplished, Durando was defeated, and the Austrian corps pushing on drove both divisions out of Mortara on the roads of Robbio and Novara.

The real positions of the Austrian corps on the night of the 21st were these :—

Two brigades from Bereguardo near Sforzesca.  
 2d corps in Mortara.  
 1st „ „ Gambolo.  
 3d „ „ Trumello.  
 4th „ „ San Giorgio.  
 Reserve, Gropello.

That night Chzarnowsky, hearing of the disaster to his right wing, resolved to concentrate on Novara.

22*d.*—Sardinians concentrating on Novara.

Austrian 2d corps towards Vespolate.  
 The rest closed on Mortara.

23*d.*—The Sardinian wings had met and taken position outside Novara in the angle between the Treocate and Vercelli roads.

Mortara to  
 Novara, 16.

Austrian 2d corps, followed at intervals by the 3d and reserve, on Novara.  
 1st corps by Robbio on Borgo Vercelli.  
 4th „ remained at Mortara.

Mortara to  
 Borgo  
 Vercelli, 18.

Results of the  
 Austrian  
 operations.

The Austrian 2d corps attacked on arriving near the enemy. It fought singly with loss till supported successively by the 3d, the reserve, and the 4th corps—the 1st being too far off to take part in the action. The Sardinians were defeated at all points, and pushed off the Vercelli road ; masses deserted during the night ; and next morning the Austrians, advancing through Novara, pursued along the roads of Momo and Oleggio. The same night the King abdicated, and Victor Emmanuel, the new sovereign, concluded an armistice with the victor as the preliminary of peace.

#### COMMENTS.

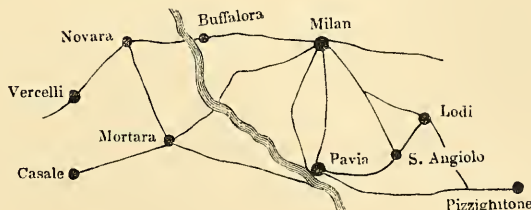
At the outset the two armies, by the positions of their fronts on the Ticino, covered the two lines which they respectively possessed to their bases. What, then, were the circumstances which so completely changed the relations of their fronts and lines in favour of the Austrians ?

Each army concentrated on its own left, the Austrians on the Pavia-Mortara line, the Sardinians on that of Novara-Milan. The aim of Radetzky was Mortara, the object of Chzarnowsky was Milan, and from their points of concentration they would have about the same distance to traverse to their objects.

But let us suppose that each had executed his design ; that the Austrians had concentrated at Mortara at the same time as the Sardinians concentrated at Milan. The Austrians would have actually been on one of the two Sardinian lines of communication, namely, that of Mortara-Casale-Turin. And they would be within a single march of the second and last line, that of Novara-Vercelli-Turin.

On the other hand, the Sardinians would still be a long march from the first Austrian line at Lodi, and a considerable distance from the second Austrian line of Pizzighitone.

Thus the circumstances were not reciprocal. If Chzarnowsky were to continue to advance, his own communications would be absolutely lost, while he was still only aiming at the enemy's. In fact, in the first movement, by which each uncovered to a certain extent one line to concentrate on the other, the Sardinian communications were compromised in far greater degree than those of the Austrians, and this was owing to the direction of the lines of communication through the theatre of war. To render this more easily intelligible, an abstract of the essential features of the situation is given in the accompanying sketch ; and students will find it useful to make such in other cases, whenever they have ascertained what the essential features are.



The following points are to be specially noted with reference to the movement of each army against the communications of the other :—



1st. Its comparative *directness*. The Austrians had the shortest possible line from Pavia to Mortara. The Sardinians, on the contrary, must perform a long circuit through Milan to Lodi or S. Angiolo.

2d. Its comparative *security*. To secure their flank the Austrians needed only to guard the small angle between the river and the Pavia-Mortara road, in which there was only one avenue whereby they could be attacked, namely, that of Vigevano. On the other hand, in order to secure the Sardinian flank from an attack from Pavia, it would have been necessary to guard the wide angle, of which Milan is the apex, and the roads from thence to Lodi and Buffalora are the sides.

The Polish general did what generals will always be found to do under such circumstances—he abandoned his designs upon his enemy’s communications in order to secure his own. To this end the new front on which he wished to place his army was that of Vigevano-Trumello. By so doing he would cover both his lines so long as he could maintain his front. And if his Right Wing could maintain itself between Trumello and Mortara, while his Left defeated the Right Wing of the enemy, he would actually sever the Austrian communications. If his Right held its ground while his Left was defeated, still the disaster would not be fatal, since the beaten Wing could make good its retreat to the Sesia, while the Right held Mortara, and they might reunite behind the river. But the most disastrous circumstance would be that the Right Wing should be defeated, whether the Left did or did not hold its ground; for, by gaining Mortara, the enemy would be nearer to the last line of retreat at Vercelli than the Left Wing was. In fact, the Left Wing would increase its peril by maintaining its position.

The great object of each general must then be that his right should not be defeated while his left should be successful.

Let us see what steps Radetzky took to secure this result.

Radetzky’s  
movements  
explained.

It was essential to carry his army as soon as possible to the other bank of the river, lest a part should be attacked while isolated. To this end he threw two additional bridges. Between 50,000 and 60,000 men occupied about fourteen hours in crossing. Had they passed by one bridge the operation would have occupied nearly two days. The detachments crossed at Bereguardo: 1st, because that was a point which they would reach sooner than Pavia; 2d, because it gave an additional

Bereguardo to  
Pavia, 9.

point of passage ; 3d, because they would there be within easy reach of aid from the main army. And they to a certain extent covered the army by menacing the flank of an enemy attacking from Vigevano.

To hasten the advance it was necessary to use all the roads available, but it was also necessary to keep the columns that moved on them ready to concentrate for battle. Two corps, therefore, moved by the line Zerbololo-Gambolo, and two by Pavia-Mortara. Had all moved by the latter they would have been too scattered to form an effective line of battle, and should the enemy pierce any point of it, say Garlasco, all the troops beyond would be cut off. As it was, it might be expected that the two corps and the two brigades on the right would be able to oppose the enemy on the side of Vigevano till the other two from Gropello, Garlasco, and Trumello could come up, supposing the enemy were to throw his whole weight on that side ; and, if defeated in a battle there, the Austrians could retreat on Pavia by Gropello and Zerbololo. There was little risk while the four corps were within supporting distance on the two roads.

Garlasco to  
Sforzesca, 5.

But the march on Mortara was further hastened by moving one corps by the line San Nazzaro-San Giorgio. That movement, however, entailed a certain risk, for the corps would be too distant to take part in an action between Garlasco and Vigevano ; and should the main army, thus weakened by a fifth, be defeated, the corps would be cut off. On the other hand, its advance threatened the line Mortara-Casale ; and should the Sardinians advance to Trumello it would be in a position to cut them from Mortara. This movement, then, probably caused both Durando's halt, and the bad disposition of the reserve, on the 21st.

Lomello to  
Sforzesca, 14.

The arrangements, then, so far, were very well suited to the object. The advance on Mortara could be rapidly continued, and the right flank was strong against attack. And on the 21st, after the 2d corps had reached Mortara and was engaged there, and the 1st corps had followed it to Gambolo, still the Sardinian left wing would have found it difficult to penetrate to the Pavia-Mortara road. For in first line it would have encountered the 1st corps at Gambolo, and the brigades at San Siro ; in second line the 3d corps and reserve ; in all 40,000 men. If it had advanced on Trumello, its way would have been barred by the first line, supported, during the engagement, by the second ; if it had advanced on Garlasco it would have been opposed at first by the brigades, which

would have been supported by the second line, while the 1st corps would fall on its flank. Chzarnowsky could scarcely have hoped to break through these 40,000 men, with the 30,000 which he might have assembled at Vigevano on the afternoon of the 21st.

Nevertheless, as will presently be shown, Radetzky's dispositions for the security of his advance were not perfect; because he might, in his orders for the 21st, have given a direction to some of the troops on his right which would have been equally good in the actual, and far better in the possible circumstances.

We have seen that the line which the Sardinians really occupied was that of Vigevano-Mortara. This line is parallel to the line Novara-Vercelli. And when the Austrians had driven the right wing from Mortara, their left was nearer to the Vercelli road than the Sardinian left. Using reasonable speed the Austrians would reach it first. Thus the fact that the front of the Sardinians was considerably in advance of their last line of retreat did not prevent, but only postponed, the catastrophe.

It was impossible for Chzarnowsky, after he knew of the loss of Mortara, to continue the offensive movement of his left wing. For not only must he contend with the Austrians in his front, but the corps at Mortara might turn back and hem him in against the Ticino. But a manœuvre that really was open to a general of unusual readiness and promptitude was to move the left wing from Vigevano direct on Mortara, and break through the Austrian corps there, thus balancing the amount of disaster, and recovering the communications with Casale. And this design, though scarcely to be expected from an inexperienced leader, was said to have been actually entertained by Chzarnowsky. At all events the attempt was practicable, and, though the boldest, it was also the most prudent course; and as such it should have been foreseen and provided for in the plans of Radetzky. Now his right wing, at San Siro, or Sforzesca, did not guard his left from such an attempt. But supposing his right wing in *Vigevano*, it is at once seen how much additional security is conferred upon his position. His wings would thus have been in connection by a straight and good road—he would have precluded the enemy from attempting any but front attacks; and he would have been equally ready to concentrate on Mortara. His 1st corps, therefore, instead of continuing to move on Gambolo during the 21st, leaving it to the

advanced-guard and the two brigades to oppose the Sardinians, should have been pushed on Vigevano supported by the 3d corps, and, if necessary, by the reserve.

No definitions nor explanations would have availed to prove the superior importance which certain points in a theatre derive from their position, so clearly as the examples of the two towns Mortara and Vigevano, the former giving access to all the lines which the enemy could use, the latter giving, while occupied, absolute security to the Austrian advance.

In a greater degree this is also true of the points Pavia and Milan. When the Austrians were concentrated at Pavia, they occupied a centre from whence to move by short radii to all possible points on the lines of operation, whether for offence or defence. And had the Sardinians held Milan at the outset, it would have afforded them reciprocal advantages.

On the 23d, Radetzky knew that the enemy must be either at Novara, or making for Vercelli, but probably at Novara. Therefore he directed three corps thither, and sent one corps by Robbio to close the road. Supposing the enemy to be making for Vercelli, that single corps would be sufficient to arrest their progress till the reserve from Mortara could move to its support, while the other corps, crossing the intervening space, would come on the flank and rear. When the leading corps found the enemy at Novara, all were directed thither; but that which had been detached on Robbio did not arrive to share in the action. Whatever risk there might be in the absence of a fifth of his army from the battle-field was thus incurred by Radetzky.

It may be asked, Why did he not direct his whole army on Vercelli, since he would thus effectually cut the enemy from the base without incurring the risk of dispersing his corps? But had he done so, he would have opened the Novara-Mortara road to the Sardinians, who, crossing his rear, might have passed the Po and gained Alessandria. The risk of this was prevented by moving his several corps along the road to Novara.

Finally, the Sardinians, to meet the attack, formed on a front parallel to the Vercelli road, with their flank on the road. Beaten in the battle, they naturally and inevitably retired to their rear; they thus lost the only road that led to Turin, and their defeat was absolute and decisive.

On the other hand, had the Austrians been defeated in the battle, they,



retiring to their rear, would have followed the road by Mortara to Pavia, and could either have defended the Ticino, or continued their retreat to the Mincio.

General de-  
ductions.

With reference, then, to the subject of this chapter, it may be assumed, as a step towards future investigations,

1st. That when one of two opposing armies is operating on a front parallel to the line communicating with its base, and the other on a front perpendicular to the line communicating with its base, the latter has acquired a great advantage over its adversary.

2d. The advantage is of the same kind whether the armies are concentrated or operating on extended fronts.

3d. The distance of the front of the army from its parallel line of communication, when the front is extended, and when the space between is devoid of defensible positions, does not prevent, but only postpones, the catastrophe.

4th. That it must be a great error to place an army in such a position, without reasonable prospect of a counterbalancing advantage.

But it will be demonstrated in the following chapter that the disadvantage is of a kind that will be annulled by a tactical success, and that it does not necessarily render a tactical success less probable.

In order to avoid the circumlocutory phrase, "an army operating on a front parallel to the line communicating with its base," let us in future say, "forming front to a flank." The term "flank position" would not answer the purpose, since it properly belongs to an army concentrated in one space, and not extended on a wide front.

## CHAPTER III.

## CONTINUATION OF THE SUBJECT.—CAMPAIGN OF SALAMANCA.

As an instance of success achieved in the position which has been described as so unfortunate, let us take the case of Wellington at Salamanca. See Map  
No. 4.

The hostile armies in July 1812 faced each other on the Douro. Marmont's line, in case of retreat, lay through Valladolid and Burgos. Wellington could regain his base in Portugal only by the road from Salamanca to Ciudad-Rodrigo. The French front extended from Toro on the right to the Pisuerga on the left, and was there thrown back along the course of the river. Wellington's right was at Rueda, his left on the Guarena. Thus each army, in the existing position, covered its communications with its base. Rueda to the  
Guarena, 23.

Marmont, on the 15th and 16th, suddenly moved his army upon Toro, and began to cross there. Wellington knew of this movement on the 16th, and prepared to meet it by uniting his centre and left at Canizal during the night.

Marmont, then, had turned Wellington's left, and by persisting in an advance from Toro upon Salamanca he would reach that place as soon as his adversary. Wellington must therefore break through or be lost. He would attack the French on the march; they would form in order of battle to meet him, and the fronts of both armies would be parallel to the road from Toro to Salamanca. Both armies would be in a flank position—either would be ruined by defeat. A French victory would cut Wellington from Portugal, and throw him back on the Castilian mountains and the army of King Joseph. An English victory would cut Marmont

from Toro, and drive him back on the Douro, and the difficult hostile country of the *Tras-os-Montes*.

Toro to Tordesillas, 23.

Tordesillas to Nava del Rey, 13.

It was not Marmont's design to bring matters to such a desperate issue. His movement on Toro had been a feint to induce Wellington to make a corresponding movement, and so leave the bank of the river at Pollos and Tordesillas open. He countermarched on the 17th behind the river, crossed it at those two places, and occupied Nava del Rey, where his whole army was concentrated that night.

The Trabancos to the Guarena, 10.

Wellington, doubting his antagonist's object, had left his Right on the Trabancos, to guard against such an operation as that which Marmont had effected. At midnight the English general, then at Toro, heard that his Right Wing on the Trabancos was in presence of the French army. As he could neither keep it there till the Centre and Left could march to its support, nor hope to withdraw it safely to any considerable distance, he adopted the obvious measure of concentrating his army on an intermediate line of defence. At daybreak his Right retreated towards the Guarena, closely followed by the heads of Marmont's columns: it reached and crossed the river—met there the rest of the army; an attempt of the French to cross was defeated, and they remained facing each other throughout the 19th.

Both now covered their lines of retreat. But, on Wellington's right, roads led to the fords of Huerta and Alba on the Tormes, and thence to his line of communication below Salamanca. Wellington did not expect Marmont to attempt to turn his right by that line, because he believed the fort which guarded the ford at Alba to be held by a Spanish garrison, and he therefore remained covering Salamanca, a point which was very essential to his campaign; for should the French regain it with its forts and bridges, Wellington's first step towards resuming the offensive must be to attack Marmont, thus strongly posted on the river, in order to open the road for a further advance.

The English leader therefore held his position, covering Salamanca. But Marmont—knowing, what Wellington did not know, that the Spanish garrison had been withdrawn from Alba—concentrated his army on its left, on the 20th, moved in several columns up the Guarena, and crossed it, moving to the Tormes. The stroke was aimed directly at Wellington's communications, and he was constrained to follow the movement, march-

ing parallel to his adversary on an opposite range of heights within musket-shot. All the country between the Douro and Tormes appears to be so open that the columns were not restricted to the roads, but moved freely, as they do at Aldershott. The march was conducted by both generals with such regularity, that though on each side vigilant eyes watched for an opening to attack to advantage, neither found it. Such movements can be made only by practised and self-reliant leaders.

At Cantalpino the British found themselves outmarched and outflanked. Finding it impossible to be first on the river, Wellington fell off towards some heights on his right, while Marmont's left reached Huerta.

Huerta from  
the Guarena,  
13.

Napier tells us that on the evening of this day Wellington was deeply disquieted. He might well be: for the French had proved their superiority in marching power, and if the parallel march of that day were repeated, they would strike a lower point than Wellington on the Ciudad-Rodrigo road, and sever his communications. On the other hand, if he retreated precipitately he would have the mortification of seeing his adversary regain Salamanca. With these menacing alternatives before him, he took position on the hills covering Salamanca on the 21st.

On that day Marmont began to cross at Huerta and Alba, and placed a garrison in Alba, his leading divisions encamping at Calvariza-Arriba. Wellington met this movement by crossing also, at Santa Marta and Aldea Lengua. On that night Wellington's right was at the village of Arapiles, his left at Santa Marta, where a division remained on the right bank covering Salamanca from a possible advance on that bank by Marmont. The French left had been extended, threatening the Ciudad-Rodrigo road.

It may appear that Marmont in thus manœuvring to his left was to a certain extent uncovering his own communications. But in reality he ran no risk. For though the great road, the only one, back to France lay through Valladolid, yet French armies occupied both Madrid and Andalusia, and the King was then moving through the mountains towards Blasco to co-operate with him. Thus supported he might feel confident of regaining the Douro.

In the series of manœuvres just described, one skilful general had sought to assail and the other to defend a line of communication. And the strategical advantage remained entirely with the French leader,



who had pressed his antagonist back from the Douro to the Tormes, and now compelled him to form front parallel to his line of retreat. But to gather the fruits of his success he must still defeat his enemy in battle. Next day, however, saw Wellington win the battle of Salamanca, and with the victory he not only regained all the ground of which the previous operations had deprived him, but by the mere impetus of success, and without another engagement, his left wing pushed the beaten army back on Burgos, while his right chased the French court from the Spanish capital. Nevertheless, the disparity of loss between the victors and vanquished at Salamanca was not considerable. Marmont's army, far from being ruined, presently made head again and turned on its pursuers, following them once more to the Tormes.

These examples will probably be sufficient to illustrate the case of a flank position in an open country. The general who by manœuvres or otherwise places his enemy in such a position, is within one vigorous stride of decisive success ; and if his confidence in himself and his troops be such as to render him eager to fight for an adequate object, he must esteem himself fortunate indeed to be able, at no more than ordinary risk to himself, to force on his antagonist the alternative of victory or ruin.

On the other hand, an army which is inferior in fighting power to its adversary, will not gain much by forcing that adversary to form front to a flank, for its chance of victory will be as slight as ever.

And a great superiority in fighting power, such as larger force, or a strong position, may justify a leader in forming front to a flank in order to give battle.

CAMPAIGN OF SALAMANCA,  
1812.





## CHAPTER IV.

CASE OF BOTH ARMIES FORMING ON A FRONT PARALLEL TO THE  
LINE OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE BASE. — CAMPAIGN OF  
JENA.

It sometimes happens that both opposing armies form front to their natural flanks; for instance, the lines to their bases running east and west, the armies front north and south. This may happen from many causes: because both are confident in the issue of a battle, and are more careful of assailing the enemy's communications than of guarding their own; or because one army has established such a superiority as to risk little by the movement, to which the adversary is compelled to conform; or because of geographical circumstances which will be discussed hereafter; or because political reasons are paramount in the plan of campaign. Reasons for  
operating  
thus.

During the campaign of Austerlitz, in 1805, causes of dispute and hostility existed between Napoleon and the Prussian Government.

If Prussia had then joined the coalition against the Emperor, her position on the flank of his line of march down the Danube to Vienna would have enabled her seriously to embarrass, perhaps to destroy, the plan of his campaign. He could hardly have persisted in advancing while a powerful army was descending through Franconia upon his rear. By joining Austria and Russia at that time, Prussia might have checked at their outset the victories of the Empire.

But the result of that campaign was to force Austria to conclude a peace on Napoleon's terms. And it was not till the Emperor was leading his victorious troops back to France that Prussia declared war. Nor was this the only error she committed in choosing a time for hostilities. For



Russia had made a treaty of alliance with her, and a few weeks would have brought the forces of this powerful auxiliary on the theatre of war. As it was, with untried troops, antiquated generals and equipments, divided counsels, and a meagre exchequer, she was about to enter the lists, single-handed, with the experienced leaders, the tried soldiers, and the boundless resources of Napoleon.

See Map  
No. 5.

It had been the Emperor's policy to cause the several corps of the army returning from Austerlitz to halt along the course of the river Mayne. For at this time he was engaged in forming the Confederation of the Rhine, by which the territories of his German allies were to be increased at the expense of his German enemies, and the eastern bank of the great river, thus in his hands, would give him free admission to the rest of Germany. To spare France as much as possible, he had stationed his army in the territories about to be thus transferred, feeding it by forced contributions. The different corps were posted on the 3d October 1806 as follows:—

Positions of the French corps.	Corps.	Commander	Station.	Force.
	1st, .	Bernadotte, . . .	Lichtenfels, . . .	20,000
	3d, .	Davout, . . .	Bamberg, . . .	27,000
	4th, .	Soult, . . .	Ainberg and Bamberg,	32,000
	5th, .	Lannes, . . .	Schweinfurt, . . .	22,000
	6th, .	Ney, . . .	Nuremberg, . . .	20,000
	7th, .	Angereau, . . .	Wurtzburg, . . .	17,000
	Cavalry, .	Murat, . . .	between Wurtzburg and Kronach,	32,000
	Imperial Guard,	Bessières and Lefebvre,	Wurtzburg, . . .	20,000
				190,000

Stationed thus along the Mayne, the French corps, looking northwards, saw before them the hills of the Thuringian Forest, part of the range of central Germany, which extends from the Rhine to the frontier mountains of Bohemia. Beyond that range is the great plain of northern Germany, the vast levels of Prussia, Hanover, and Westphalia, merging on the one side into the flats of Poland and Russia, on the other into the gentle slopes of the Netherlands and France.

Possible  
French lines  
of operation.

Three roads lead from the Rhine into northern Germany.

The first, from Wesel across Westphalia and Hanover, by which the mountains would be avoided.

The second, the main post-road of Germany from Frankfort along the

valley of the Mayne to Hanau, thence northward by Fulda, Eisenach, Gotha, Weimar, to Leipsic.

The third, from Mayence along the valley of the Mayne to Bamberg and Baireuth, thence by three defiles to the valley of the Saal—namely, Baireuth to Hof, Kronach to Schleitz, Coburg to Saalfeld.

Napoleon's newly-acquired fortress of Wesel gave him admission to the first road; but, although by traversing it he would turn the obstacle of the mountains, his path would be crossed by great rivers which, by the volume of their waters in the lower portions of their courses, would render the passage in the face of an enemy a formidable problem. Moreover, during the long circuit which his troops must perform from the Mayne to Wesel, his design would become apparent, and the enemy would be prepared to meet him on that line.

The choice of a line of operation seemed, therefore, to lie between the roads which passed the Thuringian Forest, the one on its western, the other on its eastern extremity. That of Fulda-Eisenach would bring the French and Prussian armies into opposition on the Saal and Elbe, each covering its communications with its base. That of Bamberg would bring the French on the upper portion of the Saal, where it is an inconsiderable obstacle, and on the Prussian communications.

A glance at the map shows that the Elbe forms the great natural defence of Prussia against an attack from the west. The passages of the river are guarded by the fortresses of Magdeburg, Torgau, Wittenberg, and Dresden, closing the principal roads to Berlin and to East Prussia.

Here, then, Prussia might await the onset till joined by her Russian auxiliaries; but such was the influence of the traditions of Frederick's exploits on the spirit of the people, that nothing was thought of but an offensive campaign. It was said in Prussia that the success of the Napoleonic system of war was due to the supineness of his adversaries, who had chosen to await in a defensive attitude the development of his plan, and that by anticipating his attack the most effective weapon in his armoury would be wrested from him. Another and more substantial, if not more potent, reason for taking a position in advance of the Elbe, was that Saxony and Hesse-Cassel would send strong con-

tingents to the Prussian army if their territories were covered, but not otherwise. Indeed, if Saxony were left defenceless it was possible that she might save herself by submitting to conditions, one of which would be a free passage over the Elbe for the French at Dresden.

Owing to these considerations the hostile armies now faced each other on opposite sides of the Thuringian Forest. The Duke of Brunswick, a veteran of the Seven Years' War, was commander-in-chief of the Prussian army; but it was divided into two main portions, and the lesser was placed under Prince Hohenlohe, one of the sovereigns who had just been deprived of his territories by the Confederation of the Rhine. He had acquired some reputation in 1792, and exercised a certain independence of command.

Position of  
the Prussian  
forces.

The main Prussian army was at Erfurt; on its right about Gotha was the Westphalian contingent under General Ruchel; the advanced-guard was under the Duke of Weimar, whose business was to reconnoitre the defiles towards the enemy. Hohenlohe's main body was near Jena on the Saal, and his advanced-guard under General Tauenzin watched the defiles leading to the Upper Saal from Hof to Saalfeld. The numbers were—

Duke of Weimar's force, . . . . .	10,000
Main body, . . . . .	66,000
General Ruchel's Westphalians, . . . . .	17,000
Hohenlohe's corps, including Saxons, . . . . .	50,000
Reserve under the Prince of Wirtemberg, . . . . .	15,000
Total in the field, . . . . .	158,000

Prussian base  
and front.

The base of the Prussian portion of the army was the Elbe from Magdeburg to Torgau—that of the Saxon contingent was Dresden; and the general front of the army was parallel to the roads from Dresden to the Saal.

French base  
and front.

Napoleon had collected his supplies at Mayence, making Wurtzburg his immediate depot; and the general front of the French was parallel to the road Mayence-Wurtzburg.

In October both sides meditated immediate offensive operations, and up to the 7th the Duke of Brunswick believed that Napoleon intended to concentrate his army behind the Forest and await the attack. The Prussian generals differed in their plans of action. Hohenlohe wished

to throw his own corps against the French right through the defiles of the Upper Saal. He calculated on surprising and throwing back the corps successively, and forcing the grand army to the Lower Mayne, while Brunswick's corps advanced through the passes in its front to second him. Prussian plans.

The Duke of Brunswick's plan was to move Hohenlohe's army by Saalfeld and his own by Gotha, so as to bring them into communication in the Forest, the first at Hildburghausen, the other at Meiningen, on the 12th October. Tauenzlein's corps, of Hohenlohe's army, towards Baireuth was to cover the left, while Ruchel on the right was to move on Eisenach, and, by threatening Fulda, direct the attention of the French to a false point. The main armies were then to fall on the centre of the line of the Mayne, and cut off from Mayence all the French who were in Franconia.

This movement was to commence on the 10th, and, as a preliminary, the Duke of Weimar's corps was sent into the Forest to reconnoitre and form the advanced-guard. On the 9th, he reported that the French were concentrating about Coburg, and the Prussian general, abandoning his offensive intentions, began to concentrate his army about Weimar.

Napoleon had made his dispositions to advance thus :—

The Right Column—Soul't's and Ney's corps in advance of Baireuth towards Hof.

The Centre—Bernadotte and Davout, with the cavalry reserve, and the Foot Guard at Kronach, to move by Lobenstein on Saalburg and Schleitz.

The Left—Lannes and Augereau, after feigning to move towards Hildburghausen, were to countermarch from left to right through Coburg towards Saalfeld by Grafenthal.

The army was ordered to cross the frontier of Saxony on the 8th October. Murat's cavalry in the centre advanced to Lobenstein. The Prussian detachment, observing the defiles, made a slight demonstration of resistance and fell back to Schleitz, without disputing the passage of the Saal, which at this part of its course is an insignificant obstacle. Emerging from the defile, the cavalry spread right and left. Towards Hof they saw no enemy to stop Soul't's march; but on the left towards



Saalfeld they saw two bodies of Prussian troops, which were in fact Hohenlohe's advanced-guard under General Tauenzlein.

*9th October.*—The Centre crossed the Saal at Saalburg, moving upon Schleitz. Tauenzlein's corps made a stand here, and were driven in by Murat.

Napoleon's headquarters were at Schleitz.

Lannes was approaching Saalfeld.

Soult was at Plauen.

Napoleon's  
views of the  
situation.

On the 10th the Emperor wrote a letter to Soult, from which we learn his view of the situation. He believed that on the 5th the Duke of Brunswick's army had moved towards Fulda to attack, and that Hohenlohe, in executing his share of the plan, would attempt to advance through the defiles which Napoleon had just traversed. He inferred that Brunswick's army had committed itself so deeply to the forward movement that many days must elapse before it could countermarch to rejoin the Prussian left wing on the Saal. He believed, therefore, that he should have only Hohenlohe to deal with, and he imagined, from the direction in which the Prussians retired (especially after hearing from Soult that the Saxon horse driven out of Plauen had retreated towards Gera), that Gera would be their point of concentration. Whether they made or awaited the attack, he was equally confident of victory; and he intended, if they should retreat by Magdeburg (a contingency which he expected probably, as the result both of his own manœuvres to shoulder them off the Leipsic road, and of the necessity they would naturally feel of keeping in communication with Brunswick), to push Soult on Dresden, the road from whence to Plauen he presumed to be clear of the enemy.

Such were his anticipations, and to realise them he pivoted his left on the Saal, and swung round his right in order to cast his weight on Hohenlohe, and to sever both him and Brunswick from the Elbe except by the long circuit of Magdeburg.

*10th October.*—Lannes attacked Prince Louis (commanding part of the advanced-guard) at Saalfeld, and drove him back upon Jena.

*11th October.*—Lannes moved on Auma. Augereau filled the space between Lannes and the Saal. Soult upon Gera. Ney towards Auma. The army was thus concentrated between the Elster and Saal, covering

the defiles it had issued from, and cutting the Saxons from Dresden. Immense quantities of their baggage were taken by Soult's cavalry.

12th.—Napoleon heard that Brunswick, countermarching from Erfurt to Weimar, was approaching the Saal. The two principal roads to the Elbe from Weimar cross the Saal at Jena and Kosen. Kosen to Jena, 18.

Lannes and Augereau were ordered to Jena.

Davout, followed by Bernadotte, moved on Naumburg. Thus the centre became the right.

Murat's cavalry patrolled the river between and beyond Jena and Naumburg.

Soult was at Gera.

Ney at Auma ready to reinforce either point at need.

Lannes seized Jena.

Davout and Bernadotte seized Naumburg and the bridge of the Saal with large magazines.

Murat's light cavalry pushed on to the gates of Leipsic. Naumburg to Leipsic, 25.

At this time the Prussians were concentrating towards the Saal. The Duke of Brunswick's army, not so deeply committed to the Forest as Napoleon had supposed, assembled about Weimar on the 12th, except the Duke of Weimar's advanced-guard of 10,000 men, which had not yet rejoined it. Hohenlohe's army, assembled between Weimar and Jena, was to stand fast and cover the general movement. The main body was to march through Weimar to the defile of Kosen, on the left bank of the Saal, but not for the purpose of crossing, for to pass by that road to Leipsic would be to lend an uncovered flank to the attack of whatever force Napoleon might have assembled on the right bank. He intended to hold the issue of the defile from the bridge of Kosen on the left bank, and to push two divisions on to secure the passage of the Unstrutt, a tributary of the Saal. He would then feel secure of his retreat on Magdeburg, his march to the Elbe being covered by the Saal, and the two main passages blocked by himself and Hohenlohe. General Ruchel was to remain at Weimar to rally to him the Duke of Weimar, and was then to rejoin the main army. These movements accomplished, Hohenlohe was to follow, and the army was then to move entire behind the Saal on Magdeburg. And it would appear that the Prussian generals conceived the French army to be advancing not as it really was, entirely on the right bank, but partly on Weimar to Jena, 12.  
Weimar to defile of Kosen, 18.  
Prussian movements of concentration and retreat.

both banks; for Hohenlohe's front, instead of being towards the river, was parallel to the Weimar-Jena road, as if he expected an attack along the left bank from Saalfeld; only Tauenzlein's corps was thrown back at an angle along the heights above Jena to observe the passage there.

On the 12th Lannes had not only seized Jena, which is on the left bank, but had pushed his light troops through the ravines on to the heights which overlook the left bank, where they were almost in presence of Tauenzlein.

13th.—Napoleon, hearing that the Prussians were definitely advancing to the Saal to fight a great battle, moved on Jena, followed by all his corps except those of Davout and Bernadotte.

The valley, hitherto enclosed by the Thuringian range, widens at Jena. The right bank is flat, but behind Jena, on the left, are steep hills ascended by winding ravines. Between Jena and Kosen were two other passages of less importance, because not on main roads—namely, at Lobstedt, three miles from Jena, and at Dornberg. Lannes's skirmishers, pressing on supported by a division, reached the plateau by the ravines. Napoleon followed, and from the highest hill, called the Landgrafenberg then, and since the Napoleonsberg, he saw the undulating plain as far as Weimar, and the Saal running in a deep gorge to Kosen, twenty miles distant. Hohenlohe's army was visible on the road to Weimar; but Ruchel's troops at Weimar were hidden from view, and the valley of the Ilm concealed the march of Brunswick's army towards the defile of Kosen, whither it was moving in five divisions, separated by intervals of three miles.

Napoleon's  
anticipations  
and orders.

Napoleon, seeing only the troops of Hohenlohe, and unable from the inequalities of ground to estimate their numbers, believed that the whole Prussian army was before him, and resolved to fight it next day. Before ascending the hill, he had sent orders to Davout to guard the bridge of Kosen, and to Bernadotte to move on Dornberg, thus closing the passage there. In the night of the 13th, expecting to fight the whole Prussian army next day, and considering that the French force at Naumburg would rejoin him as speedily and much more effectually by the left than by the right bank, he had sent fresh orders to Davout, not merely to bar the way at Kosen, but to cross the Saal there and come down by Apolda on the Prussian rear. The despatch added, "If the Prince of

Naumburg to  
Dornberg, 13.

Pontecorvo (Bernadotte) is with you, you may march together; but the Emperor hopes that he will be already in the position assigned him at Dornberg." Bernadotte had joined Davout at Naumburg, but on seeing the new despatch towards morning on the 14th, he construed it to express the Emperor's desire that he should be at Dornberg rather than with Davout, and to Dornberg he marched.

Murat, ordered on the 13th to assemble the cavalry at Dornberg, received a further order in the night to move on Jena.

Soult, arriving from Gera in the night, was to cross at Lobstedt, debouching on Closewitz, and on the rear of Tauenzein.

Ney and Murat were to ascend the Landgrafenberg by the route which Lannes had followed.

Augereau was to move his corps partly on the Weimar road, partly on the Landgrafenberg. The reason for this concentration on the hill instead of on the road was, that the road wended steeply up a hill to the plateau, and being strongly guarded was very difficult of access.

Hohenlohe, still imagining on the night of the 13th that he was menaced only by Lannes and Augereau, and that Napoleon's main army was moving on Leipsic and Dresden, did not think it necessary to drive from the Landgrafenberg the French troops that had established themselves there, but had contented himself with reinforcing the corps on the left which faced the river. His main body remained as before parallel to the Weimar road, facing the point from which he still expected the attack of the two marshals.

Owing to his incorrect estimate of the position of the Prussian army, which he imagined to be assembled before him, Napoleon had massed at Jena a force double the number of the enemy. On the other hand, Davout, advancing in compliance with Napoleon's order with his corps 27,000 strong, met Brunswick's army, numbering 66,000, at Auerstedt. Hohenlohe's army was routed. Brunswick's, notwithstanding its superiority of force, was defeated in a battle more glorious to the victor than any other ever fought independently by a marshal of the Empire. The beaten army of Auerstedt was retreating to Weimar to join Hohenlohe, ignorant of his fate, when the appearance of Bernadotte's corps at Apolda, where it had arrived towards evening, completed its discomfiture. Finding their retreat on Weimar thus intercepted, the Prussians in the greatest

Auerstedt to  
Jena, 12.



disorder turned to the right, the two streams of fugitives crossed and intermingled, and the country was covered with scattered bands heading towards Magdeburg.

Movements  
in pursuit.

On the night of the battle, Napoleon, from his headquarters at Jena, directed the following movements in pursuit, with the double object of preventing the enemy from rallying, and of reaching the Elbe before them :—

Bernadotte by Halle towards Magdeburg.

Davout back to Naumburg to cover the passage, to be within reach of Leipsic, and to be ready to reach the Elbe before the enemy.

Soult on Buttstedt, between Weimar and Naumburg.

Weimar to  
Erfurt, 14.

Murat with the reserve cavalry to pursue towards Erfurt and to capture it next day ; then to turn northward and continue the pursuit towards Weissensee.

Ney's corps to support Murat.

Lannes and Augereau to assemble their corps before Weimar.

Imperial Guard in Weimar.

While Bernadotte, Soult, and Murat pressed the enemy on three roads to Magdeburg, the corps of Davout, Lannes, Ney, and Augereau, were allowed to rest till the 17th. Then Ney followed Murat and joined Soult before Magdeburg.

Lannes moved by Naumburg on Merseburg, observing Halle.

Augereau followed Lannes.

Davout through Leipsic on Wittenberg.

At Halle, Bernadotte found the Prussian reserve under the Prince of Wirtemberg, attacked, and drove it back on Dessau.

*20th October.*—Davout seized the bridge of the Elbe at Wittenberg on the highroad to Berlin.

Lannes passed at Dessau.

Augereau followed Lannes—all three moving on Berlin.

Meanwhile Hohenlohe with the remains of the Prussian armies had reached Magdeburg, which on the 21st he quitted, marching for the Oder by roads north of Berlin. Blucher acted as his rearguard : and both moved slowly, partly from the necessity of spreading to procure food, partly because they desired to rally to them the Duke of Weimar's corps. On the 15th its commander, then at Erfurt, had heard of the result of the

battles, and to avoid the French he took the Brunswick road, and on the 26th passed the Elbe at Sandow. Hohenlohe had delayed for him till the 24th, then gave up the expectation of effecting a junction with him, and moved rapidly for the Oder.

25th.—Davout entered Berlin, and passed through on the Custrin road to attack the fortresses on the Oder.

Lannes surprised the fortress of Spandau (near Berlin).

26th.—Murat's cavalry, followed by Lannes's corps, marched to intercept Hohenlohe.

Intercepting movements (described, but not included in map).

Bernadotte, from Brandenburg, pursued Blucher by Nauen.

Soult passed the Elbe to cut off Weimar's corps.

Augereau held Berlin.

Ney blockaded Magdeburg.

Murat and Ney headed Hohenlohe at Prentzlow, beat him, and captured his whole force.

Blucher, thus cut from the Oder, joined Weimar's corps, and attempted to march back to the Lower Elbe, intending to base himself on fortresses there, and thence operate on the French rear. But, constantly pressed in rear by Bernadotte and on his flanks by Soult and Murat, Soult cutting him always from the Elbe, Murat from the ports of the Baltic, he was hemmed in upon the neutral town of Lubeck. Driven from thence, and having in his rear the Danish frontier, he surrendered to Murat, 7th November.

Stettin capitulated, 29th October.

Ney took Magdeburg, 8th November.

The whole Prussian army with its fortresses had thus fallen into the hands of the conqueror.

Results of the campaign.

The movements subsequent to the 14th October have been stated only briefly, because the campaign was in reality decided by the victories of that day, which left the French masters of a line to Berlin and the Oder, shorter than any that was open to the Prussians.

#### COMMENTS.

Napoleon's three columns marched with great rapidity to the Saal. They were very little encumbered with supplies, taking only the bread

and brandy necessary for the first marches; and after the defeat of the Prussian armies there was no difficulty in subsisting on the country. The radiation of the several corps of the pursuing army from the neighbourhood of Weimar insured the supplies. As soon as the victories had opened the direct road to Frankfort by Erfurt, that was adopted as the line of communication with France; points on it were fortified and provisioned; and as soon as the passage of the Elbe was secured, a bakery and arsenal were established at Wittenberg for present needs, and another at Erfurt in case of retreat.

In the march to the Saal the principle of concentration is very evident. The columns moved as near each other as possible; they communicated by means of the cavalry at the first opportunity; and the army was collected in a space suited to its numbers with the least possible delay. The Prussian plans for offence were, on the other hand, faulty in this respect; the project of Hohenlohe, and that of Brunswick, alike entailed the separation of the two Prussian armies during the movement, by the formidable obstacle of the Thuringian Forest.

When the movement was begun the French army at Schleitz left their communications along the Mayne uncovered. It may be asked, then, Why did the Prussian army abandon its own movement against the French left to meet the threatened attack? Why did it not persist in that attempt, and thus reciprocally sever the communications of the French on the Mayne.

It has been said that the Prussian advance was to begin on the 10th. But on that day the Prussian left was already turned, and the French were on the Dresden road. To persist in the advance would be to abandon the Prussian communications and magazines while engaging in an enterprise against a line which was still distant, and which might never be pierced. It would be an attempt to balance a certainty by an uncertainty. Any general in the situation of the Prussian leader, feeling the whole weight of his enemy either on his flank or his communications, will naturally seek rather to meet the danger than to engage in dubious reprisals. It may be assumed, then (and other instances will hereafter be cited in confirmation), that *when two armies are manœuvring against each other's flanks or communications, that army whose flank or communications are most immediately threatened will abandon the initiative and conform to*

Similar case  
of Chzarnows-  
ky and Rad-  
etzky, Chap.  
II.

Important  
deduction.

*the movement of its adversary.* The importance of this fact is immense, for the commander who finds himself on his enemy's flank or rear, while his own is still beyond his adversary's reach, may cast aside all anxiety for his own communications, and call up every detachment to the decisive point, certain that the enemy will abandon his own designs, in order, if possible, to retrieve his position.

The fact also relates immediately to the subject of this chapter, as exhibiting a modification of the disadvantage of a flank position. The French communications were by their direction even more exposed than the Prussian—certainly more than the Leipsic line; yet Napoleon, once on the Saal, felt so secure that his adversaries would presently retrace their steps, that he actively continued his own advance though he believed the counter-attack to be more forward than it really was.

Nothing could prove more clearly how false strategically was the Prussian position in advance of the Elbe at the outset of the campaign than the fact, that before any considerable action had been fought, and though nothing had occurred but what had been foreseen as possible, yet the army was now, by a difficult, complicated, and doubtful movement, and a long circuit, attempting to regain the line of that river at its most distant extremity.

Napoleon's dispositions, up to the battles, were all of the same general character, being in the form of two wings and a central reserve. On the 10th the Centre was at Schleitz, the Left Wing at Saalfeld, the Right at Plauen. He then expected to find the enemy assembled at Gera; therefore the Left is brought into the space between Auma and the Saal, the Centre is still at Schleitz, the Right is moved from Plauen upon Gera. Finding he had miscalculated, and that the enemy was on the other bank, he resolved to bar both the direct roads to the Elbe. The Centre, having rested two days, pushes on to Naumburg, and becomes the Right; the Left concentrates upon Jena; the Centre (Ney at Auma, Soult at Gera) was ready to reinforce either wing; but the Left at Jena could be far more easily reinforced by the Centre than the Right at Naumburg. This was because the Left was the Wing which it was most important to render secure, for the Prussian armies were concentrating in order to recover their lost communications, and this must be done either by attempting to reach the Elbe by Magdeburg faster than the French could

Why Jena was a more critical point than Naumburg for Napoleon.



by Leipsic, or by a desperate effort to break through the opposing ranks. That effort might be made on either of the two roads—that of Jena or that of Naumburg. If it were made successfully at Naumburg, the French Right would be defeated; but, supported by Bernadotte and connected with the main line by the cavalry, it would probably succeed in rejoining the main body; while the retreat of the rest of the army would, if necessary, be secure. But if it were made successfully at Jena, the defeat of the French Left Wing would not end the mischief, for the retreat of a great part of the army would be cut off; therefore Napoleon so disposed his corps as to concentrate most readily on Jena.

If he could have known exactly the position and direction of the Prussian armies on the 13th October, he would no doubt have directed Soult and part of the cavalry to join Davout and Bernadotte, for, as matters really happened, he exposed Davout to encounter single-handed more than double his force, while Napoleon himself had a preponderance over Hohenlohe, which was entirely unnecessary, and Bernadotte was lost to both fields. But in the absence of such certainty he followed the safest course when he directed the whole of his centre on the side of Jena.

Historians are fond of ascribing to successful generals such endowments as “prescience” and “intuitive divination of their enemy’s designs.” There will be evidence in subsequent pages that these gifts, in the preternatural extent implied, exist only in the imaginations of the chroniclers, and in this campaign Napoleon had in three days made three erroneous calculations of the Prussian doings. On the 10th he thought Hohenlohe was about to attack him; on the 10th also he judged that the Prussians were concentrating on Gera; and on the 13th he took Hohenlohe’s army for the entire Prussian force. Still his plan made on these suppositions was in the main quite suitable to the actual circumstances. And this, as is mostly the case, was owing to *the right direction given to his movements at the outset*. The preliminary conditions of a campaign seldom offer more than three or four alternatives: an attack by the centre or either flank, and some combination of these. If the enemy has made such false dispositions as to render one of these alternatives decidedly the best, the general who has the faculty of choosing it thereby provides in the best possible way for all subsequent contingencies. A

Napoleon’s  
miscalculations.





right impulse once given to the army, it is in a position to turn events not calculated on, or miscalculated, to advantage; and this is probably the true secret of the "divination" of generals.

The Prussians, in contemplating an attack on the French Left, were behindhand, compared with the French, not only in time but in space. Napoleon had massed his troops in his preliminary dispositions so close to the Saxon frontier that a single march carried them to the Saal; but, judging from the time when the Prussian advanced-guard, which had preceded the main body into the Forest, reached Erfurt on its return, the Prussians would have required several days to arrive in force on their enemy's communications. Hence it may be seen how great are the chances in favour of that army which is nearest its enemy's communications. The least instructed reader will discern in Brunswick's purblind and disjointed movements the anticipation of defeat, and in Napoleon's swift and concentrated march the confidence of assured success.

Had the Prussian army been all assembled on the Saal on the 9th or 10th, it would clearly have been in a much better position by taking post, as Napoleon thought it would, about Gera, for it would thus have had the option of retiring through Leipsic to the Elbe. But Hohenlohe alone could not take post there, or he would have lost his communications with Brunswick by a forward movement of the French left. He was therefore obliged to await Brunswick's arrival on the left bank, and it was inevitable that he should occupy the heights of Jena, for nowhere else could he cover the march of Brunswick through Weimar.

Why Hohenlohe occupied the heights above Jena.

Such are the matters chiefly to be noted in this campaign; but the reason for which it is specially quoted in this place is to show that the position of an army parallel to its communications with its base is not to be presumed invariably to be disadvantageous, since the relations of the two armies may considerably modify the effect of that circumstance. The successful assumption of the initiative by one of the combatants relieves him from all anxiety for his communications; but the campaign also puts in the strongest light the fact, that when an army in such a position suffers a decisive defeat, and surrenders to the adversary the shortest line to the object of the enterprise, it will probably be ruined by the blow.

Special reference of the campaign to the subject of this chapter.



## CHAPTER V.

HOW THE CONFORMATION OF A BASE MAY ENABLE THE ARMY POSSESSING IT TO FORCE ITS ADVERSARY TO FORM FRONT TO A FLANK.—MOREAU'S CAMPAIGN OF 1800.

IN former years the base of the Republican armies operating in Germany had been some part of the straight course of the Rhine, from its corner at Basle to Dusseldorf. Their eminent adversary, the Archduke Charles, says that the strong line of the Rhine, and the lines of French fortresses behind it, can only be assailed by the Austrians in circumstances unusually favourable. All that can be done is to approach and choose a position where the plans of the enemy may be defeated, his advance stopped, and the country behind covered.

See Maps  
No. 8 and  
No. 6.

The armies on the Rhine had hitherto been on parallel fronts; the Austrians generally on the defensive, since the exceptionally favourable circumstances which could alone enable them to assume the offensive by passing the Rhine had not existed. The French, breaking out at one or other of the bridge-heads which they possessed on the river, would try to press forward into Germany; the Austrians, drawing together on the threatened points, would oppose them, and the result was that, in 1800, the river still formed the frontier line between them.

Bridge-head :  
a fortification  
securing the  
passage of a  
bridge.

But in 1800 a new condition had entered into the problem of a campaign on the Rhine. The French had occupied Switzerland—an act which, like many of Napoleon's measures, was in itself unscrupulous and oppressive, but which entailed military results such as few generals of that time had the foresight to appreciate. One was to carry the French base onward from Basle, round the angle to Schaffhausen. Thus that

base, originally straight, was now rectangular, and enclosed within it a part of the theatre of war.

France held all the places on the Rhine, and three bridge-heads at Basle, Kehl, and Cassel. The different parts of Moreau's force were thus stationed. Positions of the French.

The right wing, General Lecourbe, 29,000 strong, was posted along the Swiss portion of the Rhine, from Lauffenberg to beyond Lake Constance. Schaffhausen to Basle by the Swiss bank, 55.

Next on the left was the reserve, 26,000, occupying the intrenched camp at Basle, and extending from thence to Seckingen on the right, and on the left to Upper Alsace.

The centre, under General St Cyr, 30,000, stretched from Brisach to near Strasbourg. Basle to Brisach, 35.

The left wing, General Ste Suzanne, 19,000, occupied Strasbourg and the bridge-head of Kehl on the opposite shore. Brisach to Strasbourg, 40.

Besides Moreau's army, a force of 30,000 French occupied Switzerland.

The opposing forces were thus posted: The Austrian right wing, General Starray, 16,000, from the Mayne (where it observed the bridge-head of Cassel) to Renchen, and General Kienmayer, 15,000, the defiles from Renchen to the Höllenthal. Renchen to Donaueschingen, 55.

Main body, under the Austrian commander Kray, 40,000, at Villingen and Donaueschingen. Positions of the Austrians.

Reserve at Stokach. Donaueschingen to Stokach, 28.

On Lake Constance was an Austrian flotilla, and beyond the lake, in the Grisons and Rheinthal, was what the Austrians termed their left wing, under the Prince de Reuss, communicating by a brigade in the Italian Alps with the Austrian army in Italy. But as this left wing acted almost altogether independently, and the campaign was fought out by the armies on both sides then between Lake Constance and the Mayne, it is not necessary to perplex the subject by further adverting to these forces, or to the French troops occupying Switzerland.

The Austrians were of course far from their natural base, which was the Bohemian mountains and the Enns river. From thence roads led through Ratisbon along the Danube, while a more southern line lay by Steyer, Munich, Landsberg, Memmingen, Stokach, Engen, to Brisach. Austrian communications.

The initiative lay with the French, who held all the passages over the river. It was for Kray to watch and defeat their attempts. He might

have found a much safer position farther in rear; but experience had proved to the Austrians, that to uncover the territories of the small German powers, such as Baden and Wirtemberg, was not merely to lose the contingents they lent to Austria, but to transfer their resources to the enemy. Kray therefore kept as forward a line as possible, but held his masses together about Stokach and Donaueschingen, that he might be ready to meet an attack on that side.

Roads of the  
Black Forest.

His troops were spread along the region known as the Black Forest. The valley of the Rhine, narrow at Basle, begins a little below to widen, till it reaches a breadth of about fifteen miles. Good roads lie along its course on both banks, but the great tumbled barrier of hills on the right seems to forbid all passage to Germany that way; yet there are fissures in the mountain-ranges in which lie roads passable for troops though difficult, and which lead through the forest into the valley of the Danube. From Heidelberg, Bruchsal, Karlsruhe, Rastadt, roads to Ulm pass round or pierce the Black Forest. Opposite Strasburg the Kinzig valley, opposite Brisach the valley of Waldkirch and the Höllenthal, give admission to the region in which lie the sources of the Danube. These passes it was Kray's business to guard. He had spread his right wing so far, because the French, collecting in overwhelming numbers behind the screen of the Rhine at Mayence, might from thence pass round his right, if there were nothing to observe or stop them. All along the valley of the Rhine he doubtless had his cordon of cavalry posts observing the river—bodies of infantry at the entrance of the different passes—and other bodies in support at points where those passes intersected in the Forest, such as Haslach. Then his main body at Villingen and Donaueschingen covered the two roads by Rothweil and Mosskirch upon Ulm; while his reserve at Stokach might either support the main body in opposing an attack from the side of Alsace, or, in conjunction with the main body at Donaueschingen, form front to the south to meet an advance from Schaffhausen.

Different  
plans of  
Moreau and  
Bonaparte.

Bonaparte, who depended on Moreau's success for the execution of his own campaign in Italy, wished the attack upon Kray to be made in the most decisive manner. He desired to take the fullest advantage of the conformation of the French base, by concentrating the army between Schaffhausen and Lake Constance, and directing the march straight on the

neck of the Austrian communications at Ulm. To this Moreau objected, on the ground that the Left and Centre of his army must make a long circuit to join the Right; that a movement so extensive would become known to the enemy, who would prepare to concentrate and crush the columns as they passed the Rhine, and who being on the base of the triangle round the sides of which the French must march, would be ready to intercept them.

Bonaparte responded that the broad stream of the Rhine afforded exactly the kind of curtain that was desired to screen the operation, while the results offered by success would probably be decisive, as the whole French army would be brought against Kray's left, and the forcing of that wing would cut him from his base, and from the secondary point of Ulm.

Moreau, however, considered the risk too great. Like most generals, he desired at almost any cost to avoid the risk of having to force a considerable river in face of a concentrated enemy. His own plan was this :

With his Left Wing (Ste Suzanne) he meant to cross the Rhine at Kehl; with his Centre (St Cyr) at Brisach; with his Reserve at Basle. Ste Suzanne and St Cyr were to attack the defiles of the Kinzig and the Elz on the same day. This would induce Kray to believe that the French were massing opposite his right; and he might be confirmed in that false impression by the extension of one of the brigades of the Centre *down* the valley of the Rhine towards the French Left Wing, as if to connect the two corps.

Moreau's plan  
detailed.

As soon as Kienmayer should be driven into the defiles, and so excluded from knowing what was going on in front or on each side of him, the Left Wing was to recross at Kehl, march up the left bank, and cross again to the German side at Brisach.

During this movement, St Cyr was to move the infantry of the Centre across the hills to St Blazien, sending his artillery and trains along the high-road on the right bank of the Rhine towards Schaffhausen. The Reserve, crossing the river by the bridge of Basle, was to push detachments up the valley of the Weiss from Basle to maintain connection with St Cyr, and was then to march along the Rhine to Schaffhausen, where the Right, under Lecourbe, was to be assembled on the left bank of the river. Bridges were then to be thrown, and Lecourbe's corps was to pass, protected by the Reserve.



Thus two corps—namely, the Reserve and Right—would be in mass between the Lake of Constance and the Austrian main body; while the long march of the Reserve in the defile between the mountains and river was to be covered and screened by St Cyr's infantry. Lastly, as soon as these three corps should be reunited on the Upper Danube, Ste Suzanne was to pass through the Höllenthal and join them.

In the mean time, Starray with the Austrian Right would be altogether excluded for the present from the sphere of operations. Kray having just been induced by the false attacks of Ste Suzanne and St Cyr to strengthen Kienmayer, would be in no condition to oppose the real advance on his Left. The Prince de Reuss would be cut off and left in Switzerland.

It must always be a doubtful policy to oblige a general charged with the conduct of a campaign to adopt a plan other than that which he has himself originated and matured, even though it be manifestly better than his own. Recognising this fact, Napoleon, who might as First Consul have exercised considerable control over all the military movements, and who was quite convinced of the superiority of his project, nevertheless left Moreau to the undisturbed execution of his own conceptions; and operations commenced on the 25th April 1800.

French  
operations.

*25th April.*—Ste Suzanne's corps from Kehl pushed Kienmayer's posts into the Kinzig valley, and occupied the Rhine valley in front of that avenue.

St Cyr simultaneously passed at Brisach. One division pushed down the Rhine valley towards Kehl, as if to connect the two attacks. His other divisions advanced on Friburg, drove in the Austrian brigade there, and occupied the entrance of the Höllenthal.

Austrian  
movements.

*26th April.*—Kray at Donaueschingen heard of this. Kienmayer reported that he had been attacked by 40,000 men (as he was). Kray believed that the design was to force the Höllenthal and the Kinzig valley, and thus to gain the sources of the Danube.

Kienmayer's left brigade, under Giulay, occupied Waldkirch and the Höllenthal. The rest of his force was in the Kinzig valley. Kray reinforced him with 9 battalions and 24 squadrons from Villingen. To replace these he drew 9 battalions from Stokach. He drew in his extreme right under Starray by ordering it to move into the valley of the Murg, but it was still at a great distance.

The two French corps remained in their positions.

*27th April.*—Ste Suzanne repassed at Kehl and marched for Brisach.

St Cyr from Friburg, ascending the mountain barrier on his right with his infantry, followed the paths leading on St Blazien, excepting one division which remained to block the entrance of the Höllenthal. Friburg to  
St Blazien, 25.

The Reserve, directed by Moreau, debouching from Basle by the bridge-head there, one division was pushed up the Weiss to give a hand to St Cyr, and the other two divisions were directed on Lauffenberg. Basle to Lauf-  
enburg, 24.

*28th April.*—St Cyr came into communication on the mountains with the division of the Reserve, which had moved through the valley of the Weiss, and St Blazien was occupied.

The other two divisions of the Reserve forced and turned the passage of the Alle against an Austrian brigade intrenched there, which fell back towards Donaueschingen, halting at Bonndorf. The other Austrian posts along the Rhine, threatened by the French advance, withdrew to a position about Stuhlingen.

Kray ordered Giulay to withdraw his brigade through the Höllenthal, but to guard its inner gorge. Thus the present Austrian front towards the French was on the line Neustadt-Bonndorf-Stuhlingen, and to support this advanced line, reserves were moved from Villingen and Geisingen to Loffingen and Zollhaus. But Kienmayer was left in the Kinzig valley. Neustadt to  
Stuhlingen,  
15.

*29th, 30th April.*—The advanced-guard of the Reserve was at Thiengen—Main Body about Waldshut—Left towards St Blazien, which was occupied by St Cyr, whose left prolonged the line in the mountains. On the 30th Ste Suzanne entered the Höllenthal. On the night of the 30th Lecourbe had concentrated his corps on the road which runs along the left bank of the Rhine, a few miles above Schaffhausen.

*1st May.*—To cover the passage of the Right Wing, the Reserve advanced towards Schaffhausen. The advanced-guard forced the passage of the Wutach on the Schaffhausen road, while St Cyr, moving east from St Blazien, rested his right on Stuhlingen.

The Reserve finally halted near Schaffhausen.

The first battalions of the Right Wing passed the Rhine in boats, at two points, and moved up the river to Stein, where they covered the construction of a bridge, by which Vandamme's division passed, and pushed up the valley of the Aach to the Schaffhausen-Stokach road. The next

division that crossed made for an intermediate point of that road, where the Engen road joins it. The third division moved on Schaffhausen.

Thus Moreau's army, *minus* Ste Suzanne's corps, was united on the desired routes between the lake and the Danube, opposite the left of Kray. Ste Suzanne's leading division, having passed the Höllenthal, was at Neustadt.

*2d May.*—Moreau, apprehensive that the Austrians in Switzerland might cross Lake Constance and fall on Lecourbe, brought his Reserve closer to his Right by placing it in the space Thayngen-Schaffhausen, while the Right Wing occupied the space between the small bay of Constance and the Engen road, and St Cyr's corps extended from Thayngen to Stuhlingen.

On the other side, the Austrian outposts had quitted the banks of the Rhine when Lecourbe crossed, drawing towards the advanced line which stretched from a point north of Thayngen to Steisslingen (near Stokach on the Schaffhausen road); Giulay's brigade, pushed from Neustadt by Ste Suzanne's advance, moved to Bonndorf—the troops at Bonndorf to Zollhaus—the troops at Zollhaus to Geisingen—main body and reserves at Geisingen. Kray meant to unite next day at Stokach.

*3d May.*—The French Right Wing moved on Stokach in two columns, with two brigades on its left in the Aach valley, connecting it with the Reserve which moved on Engen. St Cyr to the left of Engen extending towards Zollhaus.

Lecourbe, with about 20,000, attacked and enveloped the division on the left of the Austrian line, about 9000 strong, driving it through Stokach, with great loss, on the roads of Mosskirch and Memmingen. Immense magazines were taken in Stokach.

Stokach to  
Engen, 12.

The armies  
concentrating  
towards the  
threatened  
point.

While this passed on his Left, Kray arrived with his Main Body at Engen. The right of the Austrian advanced line near Thayngen was driven in on Engen by the superior weight of the Reserve and the brigades in the Aach valley. Kray had now about 45,000 men in position from Engen to Zollhaus. The French attacked the position before Engen, while St Cyr engaged the troops at Zollhaus. The battle was severe and well contested, and was not decided at nightfall. But the news from Stokach alarmed Kray for his communications, which the capture of Mosskirch by Lecourbe would sever, and he retreated.

*4th May.*—Covered by his rear-guard, Kray withdrew his troops on Tuttlingen, Liptingen, Mosskirch. A strong position existed in front of the road Tuttlingen-Mosskirch, behind which the army withdrew to Mosskirch. Austrians lose one line of communication by Stokach.

Starray was on the march for Hechingen.

Kienmayer was moving to join Kray by the left bank of the Danube.

This day Moreau reinforced his right.

Reserve on the Engen-Stokach road.

St Cyr at Geisingen.

Ste Suzanne at Donaueschingen.

*5th May.*—Kray with about 40,000 men took position at Mosskirch. The remains of his Left, beaten at Stokach, had joined him, but his Right at Tuttlingen was still distant, and Kienmayer and Starray were still beyond the Danube.

The French Reserve and Right (50,000) attacked Kray, who, driven from Mosskirch, retired towards Sigmaringen. Anxious for the safety of his Right, which had been left at Tuttlingen, he halted, and, throwing forward the right of his line, drove the French from the road Tuttlingen-Mosskirch, thus reopening communications with his Right and with Giulay's brigade, which latter joined him. With his Right thus reinforced by these new troops, he attacked the left flank of Moreau and attempted to seize the Stokach road, but he was himself outflanked by one of the rear divisions, and withdrew to another position behind Mosskirch.

This battle was indecisive and the losses equal; but St Cyr (who had been called towards Liptingen, to be near Moreau, and to hinder the junction of Kienmayer) was now approaching the main army; and Ste Suzanne, who entered Donaueschingen on the 4th, came into line on St Cyr's left towards Geisingen; therefore Kray resumed his retreat. He passed the Danube on a line of which Sigmaringen was the centre.

*6th May.*—Kienmayer joined Kray at Sigmaringen, and the Austrian army moved towards Rietlingen.

*7th May.*—Austrians to Biberach. This movement, deviating from their object, Ulm, was probably made in order to evacuate the magazines at Biberach and Memmingen.

Moreau continued to manœuvre by his right—not to cut the enemy from Ulm, which he could not now prevent them from reaching, but



to divide them from Munich and from Reuss's army in Switzerland.

Here the campaign ceases to exemplify the particular condition which it was selected to illustrate. For the French front, which up to the battle of Mosskirch had been perpendicular to the roads leading back to Schaffhausen, was now, as it faced the Danube, parallel to the road Biberach-Stokach-Schaffhausen. Hence, not being covered by a river (as the Austrian line to its base was by the Danube, as soon as the army reached Ulm), Moreau's communications were even more exposed than Kray's.

#### COMMENTS.

The effect of the angular base of the French is visible on the dispositions of the Austrians even before the campaign commenced. Had the French only possessed the straight Rhine frontier up to Basle, as formerly, Kray, under no particular apprehensions for his left flank, might have posted his main body and reserves at points whence they could with equal facility have reinforced any of the detached bodies guarding the defiles on whom an attack might have been made; but, as the case really stood, he was obliged to dispose his main body and reserves far away to his left rear on the line Villingen-Donaueschingen-Stokach, in order to be ready to meet an attack on that side, which, if unopposed, would sever his communications.

The plans of campaign of Napoleon and of Moreau had this in common, that both aimed at the communications of the Austrians by an advance from the extreme point of the angular base; but in the mode of effecting the common object they differed materially, and the difference was the result of the individual characters of the projectors. When Napoleon's glance was once fixed on the point where decisive success lay, the obstacles in his way lost, in his mind, much of their importance, and were viewed merely as difficult steps to his object. Hence, though he neglected no provision nor precaution which prudence and experience could suggest for overcoming them, yet he never allowed them to assume an importance sufficient to deprive his plan of campaign of its fullest significance. Disregarding, therefore, the fact that he must throw his army entire at one point across a great river which was observed by the

enemy, he looked only to the great results that must flow from the advance of that army, concentrated, upon the vital point of an enemy whose forces would still be in greater or less degree dispersed.

Moreau, cautious and forecasting by nature, saw in his mind's eye the Austrian army assembled opposite Schaffhausen to oppose his passage—baffling the whole plan. All his precautions, therefore, were framed to obviate the danger of crossing in face of the enemy. Only one corps was to cross at Schaffhausen—another, the Reserve, was to cross at Basle to cover the passage; this entailed the movement of a third through the mountains to cover the long flank march of the Reserve along the river; and a fourth was to make a false attack in order to detain the Austrian troops in the defiles as long as possible, and prevent them from reinforcing the left.

The great objection urged against this combination is the long flank march of the Reserve between the mountains and the river; but this appears to diminish on an inspection of the map, for no road traverses the Black Forest leading into the space between Basle and Waldshut, by which a large Austrian force could move with artillery so as seriously to menace the French. Any attempt against them which the country admitted of would probably be checked by St Cyr, who would also flank, at St Blazien, any attempted movement on Waldshut. It was sufficiently certain, therefore, that the Reserve would make good its march on Schaffhausen, would cover the passage there, and would be ready to move forward in conjunction with the Right.

The advantages to be expected were by no means so decisive as would follow the successful execution of Napoleon's plan. For only two corps would be ready at once to operate on the decisive point, and their subsequent movements must be hampered by the necessity of waiting for the Centre and Left. Whereas Napoleon would have assembled the whole army ready to fight with a superiority, and a victory would at once open the way into the valley of the Danube. And, granting that the Rhine were safely passed, no French general could desire better than that Kray without Starray should be forced to give battle in a flank position to the whole French army.

It is probable that Napoleon's plan would have miscarried in the hands of Moreau; but looking at other achievements of Bonaparte,—his descent

on the Austrian rear in Italy a few weeks later—his decisive march to the Danube in 1805 on the other side of the present theatre—and his march to the Saal, already described,—it is not to be denied that, executed by himself, the design might have fulfilled all his expectations.

The false attacks of Ste Suzanne and St Cyr had the effect not only of detaining Kienmayer's 16,000 men in the defiles, but of causing Kray to move thither 6000 or 7000 additional troops. But they had no influence in detaining Starray, who was already so distant on the right that it would be impossible for him in any case to join Kray in time for the first operations. We find, then, that at first 49,000 French were employed in detaining less than half their number; and when St Cyr had joined the Reserve, still Ste Suzanne did not probably neutralise a greater number of the enemy than his own corps. The detached operations of Ste Suzanne appear, therefore, dangerous and fruitless.

On the 28th April Kray might have divined the real design of Moreau. He must have known that Ste Suzanne had repassed the river; that St Cyr was in the mountains; that the reserve had driven in his outposts on the Upper Rhine; and he should have learnt from Reuss that Lecourbe was moving on Schaffhausen. Putting these pieces of information together, the design against his left was apparent. He might have met it in two ways: he might have fallen on St Cyr with his reinforced right, thus utilising the troops which he had falsely moved in that direction, or he might have concentrated his army between Engen and Stokach before the French left wing could have joined the other corps,—ready to give battle with his whole force, and closing the space between the lake and the Danube by which Moreau desired to penetrate. That he made no counter-attack on St Cyr might be owing to the difficulties of the country; or it may be a confirmation of what has been already asserted in a former chapter—that a general, threatened in his communications, thinks of protecting them rather than of making a counter-attack on his adversary. But the second plan—the concentration on the left—was quite practicable; and had it been executed, Moreau, *minus* Ste Suzanne, advancing on Engen, would have met Kray, *minus* Starray. And as Starray's absence was owing to distance, and not to Moreau's precautions, the French general's combination was a failure, inasmuch as it deprived him of the support of his Left without any corresponding advantage.



As matters actually happened, Kray, not interpreting events rightly, neglected to call in Kienmayer, and was outnumbered on the 3d May, not on his Centre or Right, where he fought a drawn battle, but on the vital point—namely, his Left, where Lecourbe easily defeated the inferior force opposed to him. In order to turn the situation to the fullest account on this day, Moreau should have borne in mind that the important business was to reinforce and push forward his own right, for the object of the campaign was to cut Kray from Ulm. Instead, therefore, of drawing troops, as he did, from right to left, the reverse of that process would have been more consonant with the general design. St Cyr should have been weakened to send troops to the Reserve, the Reserve should have despatched troops to the Right, and St Cyr, instead of being seriously engaged on a point where nothing decisive could be effected, should have been kept back, and restricted to the task of covering the communications with Schaffhausen against a counter-attack. Kray, dislodged by the advance of Lecourbe, would have been forced to retreat without a battle, and ought to have been anticipated at Mosskirch, when he would have been in great danger of being cut off from Ulm. As it was, he made good his retreat; and having gained Mosskirch while the French centre and left were still westward in the Forest, he was secure of reaching Ulm.

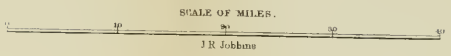
In this campaign, then, is exemplified the use of an angular base in causing the enemy to form front to a flank. Kray was obliged at Moreau's approach to front southwards, parallel to his communications. The French front meanwhile completely covered the line to Schaffhausen and advanced securely and confidently, while the Austrians were hastening, with doubtful purpose and in straggling array, towards the menaced quarter. Though the battle of Engen was indecisive, yet the direction of the French attack compelled Kray to retreat, and the whole of the Black Forest was lost to the Austrians, though they had not sustained a defeat. If such results followed from the imperfect combination of Moreau, it may be imagined how complete would have been the success of Napoleon's plan. And by supposing that the French had possessed a fortified bridge at Schaffhausen, by which they could have passed at once to the other bank with certainty and security, it may be perceived how important an influence may be exercised by the possession of an angular base.

So far, then, as may be, without reference to Obstacles, the various cases



have been enumerated in which an advantage of a certain kind is obtained over an enemy by forcing him to form front to a flank. This may be the result of *manœuvres* between armies which were originally on parallel fronts, as was the case in the campaigns of Novara and Salamanca, when *the direction of the roads in the theatre* enabled one general to assail his adversary's communications without exposing his own. It may be the result of *a prompt assumption of the initiative*, as at Jena, where the communications of the offensive army were secured by menacing the adversary's; and in this last example of 1800, *the configuration of the frontier line* was made subservient to the same end.

CAMPAIGN ON THE DANUBE, 1800.  
FIRST PERIOD.



Strasbourg

Kehl

Reichen

Reichen  
New

Old

Freiburg

Waldkirch

Villingen

Rothweil

Rehingen

Rottlingen

Biberach

Ulm

Memmingen

Hohenstaufen

Neustadt

Löffingen

Bondorf

S. Blazien

Stuhlingen

Thuningen

Waldehut

Seckingen

Lauffenberg

Domerschingen

Göppingen

Zoffhau

Engen

Aach

Stokach

SchöfThausen

Thuningen

Stain

Püttlingen

Mosskirch

Laptingen

Sigmaringen

St. Leck

Stokach

Stokach

Stokach

Stokach

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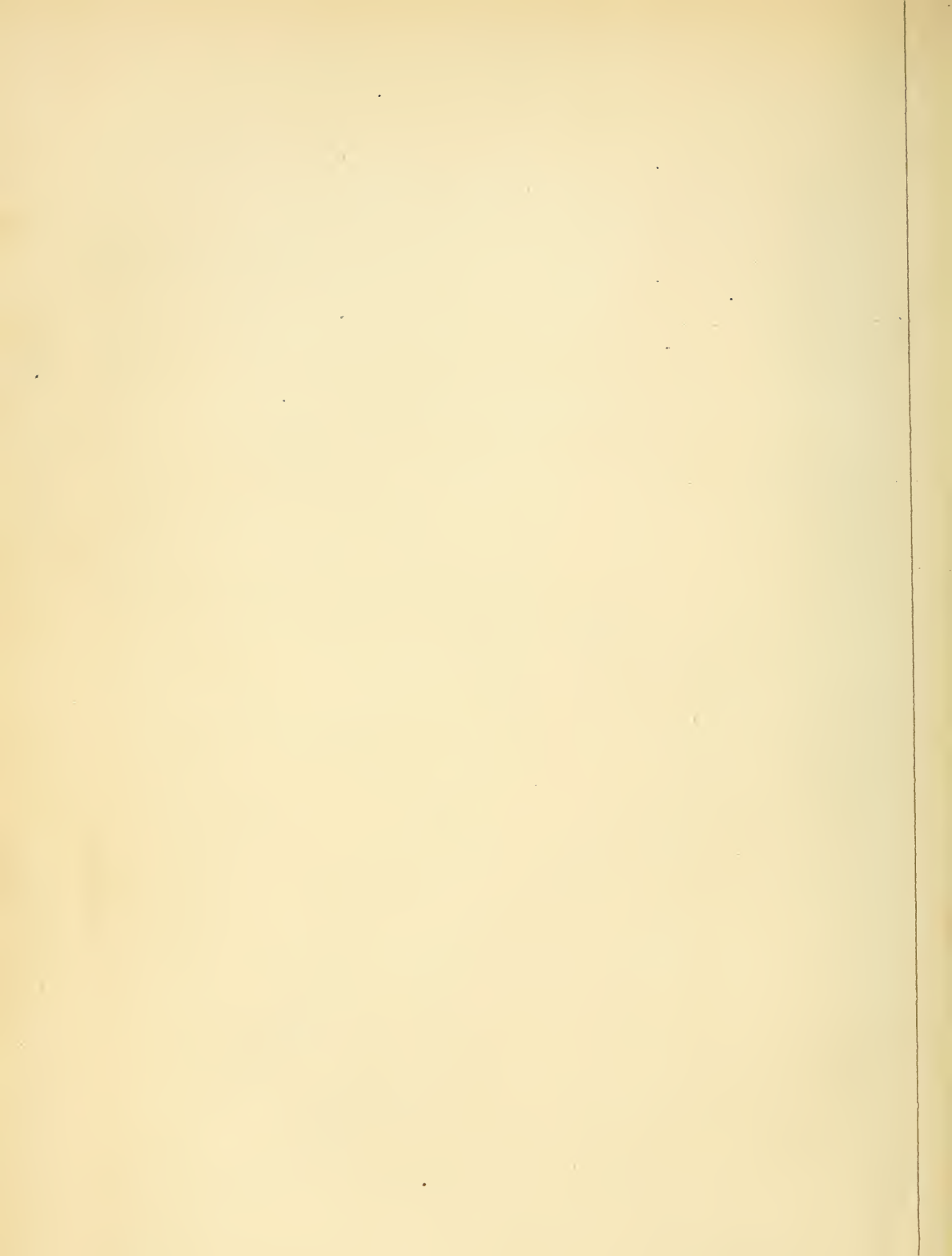
Stokach

Stokach

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Stokach

Stokach



## CHAPTER VI.

## THE CASE OF AN ARMY PROLONGING ITS MOVEMENT AGAINST THE ENEMY'S COMMUNICATIONS BY PLACING ITSELF ACROSS THEM.

IN discussing the operations of Radetzky in 1849, it was said to be more judicious in that general to advance as he did upon the road Mortara-Novara, than to throw himself across the road Novara-Vercelli ; because, in the second case, the Sardinian army, being totally intercepted, might take the resolution of marching to the Po across the Austrian communications with Pavia, and would thus not only extricate itself, but inflict some passing injury upon its adversary. But there are cases where a general, having succeeded in turning the flank of the opposing line, has not been content with compelling the enemy's forces to form front to that flank, but has thrown his army across their line of retreat. In two notable instances this was done by Napoleon—namely, at Marengo and Ulm—and once by Moreau in 1800 on the Danube, subsequent to the operations described in the last chapter. Were these, then, exceptional cases ? or were the French generals, in operating thus, giving the enemy that chance of escape which Radetzky would, in the case supposed, have offered to the Sardinians ?

As it is impossible that hostile armies can be operating from the same base, it follows that an army which throws itself across the communications of its adversary cannot directly cover its own. If the two bases are parallel, then the army operating thus must make a complete countermarch, and must ultimately front its own base, with which it can retain communication only by a circuitous route ; while the adversary, by a flank or oblique movement, can render the interception reciprocal—and,



taking the most favourable case, namely, that the army thus operating starts from a base parallel to its adversary's line of retreat (as the French base from Basle to Lake Constance in 1800), it must, in throwing itself across its enemy's communications, *form front to a flank*, and so far endanger its own. In that case a great opportunity of improving his position is offered to the adversary, since, by traversing, in a retreat towards his own base, the line by which the enemy's army advanced, he will probably re-establish his own communications by his flank, while he severs the enemy's, and will thus reverse the position.

It may happen that the connection of an army with its base is by a single road. If the base be a point only, not a line—as, for instance, a harbour where a landing has been effected—this will, most likely, be the case. And even when a great army is operating from an extensive base, the nature of the intermediate country may be such as to force the principal routes to meet in some defile which forms the only practicable thoroughfare. Had the Allies in 1813 succeeded in their design of throwing their army across Napoleon's rear, west of Leipsic, he would have had no alternative but to break through or be ruined. For the Harz Mountains on the one side, and the Thuringian Forest on the other, had narrowed the channel by which he communicated with France to the single road Leipsic-Erfurth-Hanau.

See Map  
No. 5.

In general, however, an army thus cut from its base will have two or three alternatives. 1st, It may march directly on the opposing force, and try to drive it off the line or rout it; 2d, It may march to one flank across the communications of the enemy; 3d, It may attempt by a march to the other flank to evade a collision. And it must be remembered that these flank marches entail none of the usual risk, which is, that they uncover the communications; for an army that has lost its communications is at any rate free to move in all directions, and cannot well change its position for a worse.

It will generally be very difficult for a commander who aims at his adversary's rear, to know how soon the enemy may be informed of his design, and how promptly steps may be taken to frustrate it. He will therefore, when practicable, direct his movement so far to the rear as to insure the interception of the enemy. It is to be presumed that he will, on reaching the point aimed at, be ignorant of the movements of the in-

tercepted army, and must either await its approach, or advance to close with it. The only certainty he can feel will be that the enemy cannot pause or delay, but must act at once as soon as he can concentrate his forces.

On the other hand, the intercepted commander must directly experience all the doubt, confusion, and discouragement which follow the loss of communications. If he evades the assailing force by marching round its outward flank, he must undergo the humiliation of abandoning territory without a blow. If he marches straight upon it, a victory may retrieve all, but a repulse will be ruin. If he marches upon its communications and succeeds in anticipating it there, he may reverse the position.

## CAMPAIGN OF MARENGO.

See Map  
No. 7.

In May 1800, the Austrian army in Italy, numbering 100,000, under General Melas, was engaged in three different operations. 1st, A corps of 25,000 men under Ott was besieging Genoa; 2d, Between the Alps and the sea another corps under Elsnitz was covering the siege from the efforts which a French corps, 14,000, under Suchet, was expected to make for the relief of the place, and an Austrian success there might be expected to transfer the war into French territory; 3d, The remainder of the army was spread along the foot of the Alps watching the issues from the Apennines to the St Gothard. The Austrian lines of communication with the base on the Mincio have been already specified (page 62).

Austrian  
positions.See also  
Part ii. ch. 3.

Napoleon's object was to descend into Italy by the St Bernard, with 35,000 men, drive back the portion of the Austrian line north of the Po (about 10,000 strong), and enter Milan, where Moncey's corps of 15,000, which had left Moreau's army on the 10th May, would join him by the St Gothard. If this design could be concealed till he had thrown a force across the Po at Piacenza, the Austrian army would be cut from the Mincio; and the concentration of their forces which must precede their subsequent movements would relieve Genoa, and leave Suchet free to form a junction with its garrison.

Object of  
Napoleon.

On the 24th May the head of the main French column issued from Ivrea. Here branch the roads to Milan and Turin. Lannes's division, forming the advanced-guard, was pushed along the Turin road.

Ivrea to  
Milan, 70.  
Ivrea to  
Turin, 33.

Susa to Turin,  
33.

Meanwhile, on the 22d May, the head of another French column had shown itself from the Mont Cenis on the Susa road. It was in reality only 4000 strong, but it might be the advanced-guard of the French army; and so the Austrian general judged it to be, while he considered Lannes's division merely as a detachment employed for the purpose of making a diversion. On this false calculation he placed the greater part of the force of his Centre, assembled round Turin, on the Susa road, and sent only a division to oppose Lannes on the side of Ivrea.

Feints on  
Turin cover  
the advance  
on Milan.

*26th May.*—Lannes drove back the Austrian division and advanced to Chivasso, where he seized boats as if for the passage of the Po.

*27th.*—The rest of the French army began the movement from Ivrea towards Milan.

*28th May.*—Lannes again attacked the Austrian division, and immediately afterwards began to move towards the Ticino on the Pavia road.

*28th to 30th.*—The main French army under Napoleon pushed the Austrians from the defensive lines of the Sesia and Ticino.

*29th.*—Melas learned the advance on Milan, but believed the Austrians on the Ticino under Wukassowitch would check it.

Austrians,  
threatened in  
rear, obliged  
to concen-  
trate.

*31st.*—He prepared to advance with the troops of the centre (about 20,000), crossing the Po at Casale, and cutting the French communications at Vercelli, while the same movement would isolate Lannes from Napoleon. But on the same day he learnt the reverses of Kray on the Danube, the retreat of Wukassowitch beyond the Adda, and the arrival of the head of Moncey's column on the Ticino. He therefore felt the necessity of assembling his forces before attempting to break through the formidable array opposed to him on the Ticino, and, suspending the advance, gave orders for a concentration round Alessandria. Elsnitz was to quit the Var and march on Asti, leaving rearguards to close the Apennines against Suchet. The forces covering Turin were to wait there till Elsnitz's column should have reached its destination, in order to protect its march from the French on the Mont Cenis, and were then to move on Asti also. Ott was to raise the siege of Genoa, and hasten with his corps to seize the important point Piacenza and defend the line of the Po. But Ott awaited the capitulation then pending.

*2d June.*—Napoleon entered Milan, and there awaited the arrival of

Moncey's forces, which, delayed by the difficulties of the route, did not all assemble on the Ticino till the 6th.

French astride  
Austrian com-  
munications.

*6th June.*—Lannes's and Victor's divisions passed the Po at Belgiojoso.

*7th June.*—Lannes and Victor, turning westward, passed Stradella.

Murat passed near Piacenza, and took the place.

Duhesme passed at Cremona.

Meanwhile the movements of the Austrian corps under Elsnitz and Ott were these :—

*3d June.*—Elsnitz, executing Melas's orders of the 31st, was retreating on Ormea.

*5th June.*—Two of his brigades were cut off by Suchet in the Apennines.

*7th June.*—He reached Ceva with only 8000 of his late force of 18,000 men.

On the 4th June Genoa capitulated.

*5th and 6th.*—Ott, placing a garrison in Genoa, sent a brigade of infantry towards Piacenza by Bobbio, and marched with the rest of his corps on Tortona for Piacenza.

Genoa to  
Tortona, 35.

*7th and 8th.*—He reached Tortona.

*9th.*—Continuing his march on Piacenza, he encountered Lannes and Victor at Montebello, was defeated, and driven back upon Alessandria.

Tortona to  
Montebello,  
15.

*10th, 11th, and 12th.*—Napoleon awaited the movements of the enemy in the following attitude :—

The four divisions of Lannes, Victor, Murat, and Desaix, 28,000, were assembled about Casteggio.

Moncey's force on the other bank of the Po guarded the line of the Ticino from any attempt Melas might make to break through.

The rest of the French army was also on the left bank of the Po employed in pushing Wukassowitch back to the Mincio, in blockading the garrisons of Austrian forts in Lombardy, and in guarding the communications between the Ticino and the St Bernard.

*12th.*—Melas's army was assembled round Alessandria.

*13th.*—Napoleon, impatient to learn the movements of the enemy, crossed the Scrivia, pushed his advanced-guard to the Bormida, and detached Desaix with a division to seek intelligence towards Rivalta.



14th.—The Austrians issued from their bridge-head on the Bormida, and fought the battle of Marengo. The French were at the end of the first period of the battle driven back to S. Giuliano, but the return of Desaix from Rivalta changed the fortune of the day, and the Austrians were driven in rout over the Bormida.

15th.—Melas capitulated, abandoning the country and its fortresses, as far as the Mincio, but saving his troops. For Napoleon, considering that Melas's army was yet formidable, and might in another effort succeed in breaking through his cordon, permitted them to pass.

#### COMMENTS.

Ivrea is an example of the importance of particular points without regard to their capability of defence. The fact that from thence there was a road to Milan, whither Napoleon wished to go, and another to Turin, whither he desired Melas *to believe* that he wished to go, was of great moment. For, so long as Lannes threatened Turin, so long was the march on Milan screened.

Thurreau's force, being entirely separated from the main army throughout the operations, was useful only as leading the enemy to a false conclusion. But its value in that respect was incalculable. There were sufficient Austrian troops round Turin to check Thurreau and crush Lannes, thus laying bare the rear of the French army. But the road of the Mont Cenis was both more practicable and more direct than that of the St Bernard; moreover, Thurreau had artillery, and Lannes, at first, had not, for his guns had been delayed by the difficulty of passing the Austrian fort of Bard. It was but a natural error, therefore, for Melas to believe that Thurreau was backed by the whole French army.

The critical part of Napoleon's movement lay between Ivrea and the Ticino. For, during that march, his communications were by the St Bernard, and an advance, such as that which Melas intended on the 31st May, would have cut off his retreat. But on passing the Ticino, he not only gained the addition of Moncey's force, but a new line of retreat, in case of need, by the St Gothard.

Next what he had most to fear was a speedy concentration of the Austrians. Against this he might confidently count on the reluctance

which Melas would naturally feel to withdraw his forces from Genoa and the Var, whereby the fruits of the whole campaign would be abandoned. Moreover, the time which must elapse between the transmission of orders from Turin or Alessandria, and the assembling of the Austrian corps on the Po, could not be less than five or six days. Melas actually ordered the concentration on the night of the 31st May. Ott probably received the order on the 2d June. Had he obeyed at once he would have reached Montebello on the 7th instead of the 9th. On the 7th Lannes was just across the Po and moving by Stradella. It was therefore a question of a few hours, whether the Austrians should or should not close the line of the Po between Casale and Piacenza against the French, and so secure their own retreat.

This crisis passed, we find Napoleon dividing his army. One half only is on the south of the Po; most of the remainder is employed in guarding the communications. And here is seen the danger of this kind of operation. For Melas's army of 32,000, with superior cavalry and artillery, was assembled at Alessandria on the 12th; on the 14th it might have broken through Moncey's feeble cordon and have reached Milan while Napoleon was seeking it on the Bormida.

There was a special circumstance in this campaign which should have induced Napoleon to bring his whole army to the south bank. For if Melas moved through Milan he would leave the country south of the Po clear for Napoleon to establish another and better communication with France by the south of the Apennines, and moreover a junction with Suchet would be effected, and the territory which was to be the prize of the campaign would be lost to the Austrians. But Napoleon could not be satisfied to let the enemy escape even at such a sacrifice of territory, and therefore it was that he left the Ticino guarded. But there was another alternative open to Melas. He might not only retreat by the north of the Po, but by the road from Alessandria to Genoa; and he actually contemplated the movement; expecting to maintain himself there with the aid of the fortress, of the strong position in the Apennines, and of the English fleet. The prisoners captured by Lannes at Montebello would inform Napoleon that Genoa was now Austrian, and that a retreat thither was offered to the foe. Therefore it was that his eager and grasping ambition led him to seek a superior enemy in the great plain of

Marengo (a field altogether favourable to the army, which was superior in cavalry and artillery), and therefore it was also that the victory was further jeopardised by the detachment of Desaix towards Rivalta.

Looking at the position of the French army throughout this short campaign, it is evident that Napoleon might have been obliged to fight an equal enemy in a situation where, in case of defeat, he would have been cut off from the St Bernard (which, bad as it was, was the best line of retreat he possessed), and must have retired by the St Gothard at the sacrifice of his artillery. Such must have been the result had Melas sought and defeated him north of the Po, or had he been beaten at Marengo. His confidence was justified, not by the excellence of his precautions in case of defeat, but by the calculations which assured him that his most critical movements would be unmolested.

#### CAMPAIGN OF 1805.

See Map  
No. 8.

The Austrians wished to dispose their own forces in Germany on the defensive while awaiting the junction of the Russian army.

To this end the Austrian army, nominally commanded by the Archduke Ferdinand, but really directed by General Mack, and numbering 84,000, marched through Bavaria to Ulm. Covered in front and on the right by the mountains of the Black Forest, Mack probably expected to maintain his position against any available French force till the Russians should arrive; and, with Ulm, he would gain the grand primary object in all wars between France and Austria in Germany, namely, the possession of the valley of the Danube thence to Ratisbon.

Austrian base  
and com-  
munications.

Taking the Austrian base as extending from Egra on the north to Steyer on the south, the army at Ulm had three main lines of retreat—namely, that of Nuremberg north of the Danube; that of Ratisbon along the river; and that of Augsburg-Munich south of the Danube.

Napoleon's  
object.

Napoleon's object was to interpose between Mack and the approaching Russian army, and to destroy the Austrians while thus isolated.

His different corps were thus directed from the Rhine on the 26th September:—

The cavalry under Murat, supported by part of Lannes's corps, entered

the defiles of the Black Forest, pushing through to Freudenstadt, Rothweil, Neustadt. This was to induce Mack to believe that the French army would advance in that direction.

Feints on the Austrian front cover the advance against the flank.

Lannes passed the Rhine at Kehl,		moved on Stuttgart-Neresheim.	
Ney           "           "	Carlsruhe,	"           Stuttgart-Heidenheim.	
Soult       "       "	Spire,	"       Heilbroun-Ellwangen.	
Davout     "     "	Mannheim,	"     Neckar-Els-Oettingen.	
Marmont   "   "	Mayence,	"   Wurzburg-	} Eichstadt.
Bernadotte,       from	Hanover,	"   Wurzburg-	
Bavarian corps,       "	Bavaria,	"   Wurzburg-	
Total, 180,000.			

March of the French columns.

The columns of Lannes, Ney, and Soult were masked by the cavalry of Murat, which skirted the Black Forest, and occupied the defiles leading from Ulm to the Stuttgart-Heidenheim road.

The next movements to the Danube were:—

Right wing,	{ Ney Soult Lannes Murat The Guard }	on	Donauwerth.
Centre,	{ Davout Marmont }	"	Neuburg.
Left,	{ Bernadotte Bavarians }	"	Ingolstadt.

French form front to the Danube.

Ulm to Ingolstadt, 77.

When Mack learned the approach of the French army to the Danube, he changed front to the right on that river—Left at Ulm, Centre at Gunzburg, Right at Rain.

Austrians change front to the Danube.

6th October.—Soult seized the bridge of Donauwerth.

7th October.—Murat passed there, forced the Lech and moved on Rain.

The Austrian Right (lately the rearguard), under Kienmayer, fell back on Aicha.

French cross Austrian communications,

Davout and Marmont issued from Neuburg towards Aicha.

8th October.—Soult from Donauwerth towards Augsburg.

Ney up the left bank of the Danube to Dillingen.

Murat and Lannes moved up the right bank, and at Wertingen defeated an Austrian corps which was marching to support the Right.

and close upon the enemy.

Kienmayer, far outnumbered by the approaching corps, fell back to the Iser.

9th October.—Soult at Augsburg.



Marmont at Augsburg.

Davout moved by Aicha.

Murat at Zumarshausen.

The Russian army had passed Lintz on the Danube 180 miles east of Munich.

Austrians  
change front  
to the proper  
rear.

Mack now changed front to the right, thus facing his base.

Right towards Memmingen.

Centre between Gunzburg and the Iller.

Left at Ulm.

French movements :—

Bernadotte and Davout on Munich.

Soult by Landsberg on Memmingen.

Lannes, Murat, and Marmont, under the Emperor, moved on Ulm by the right bank.

See Map  
No. 9.

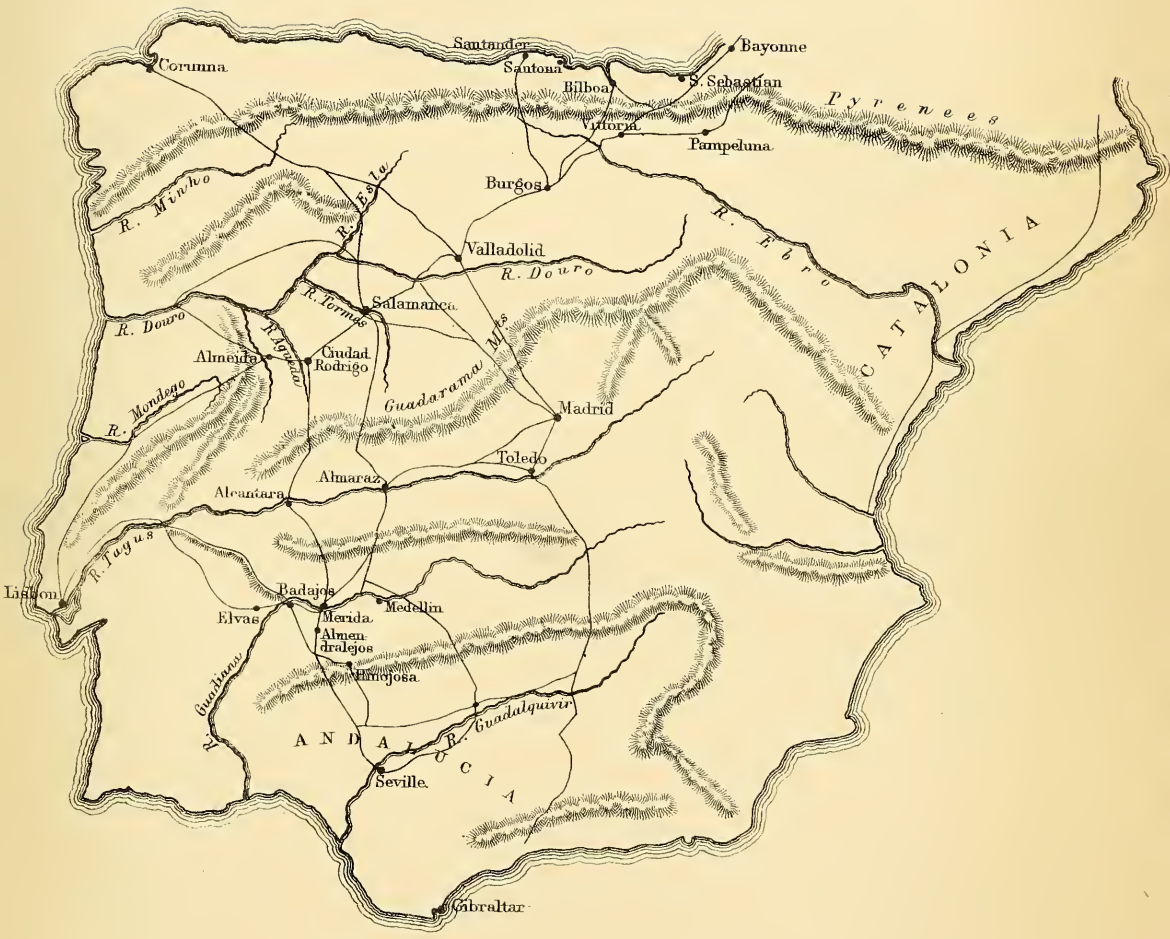
Ney, on the other bank, was reinforced to 40,000. He was ordered, 1st, To close the roads to the Bohemian frontier; 2d, To cover the French communications with Wurzburg against an irruption of the Austrians from Ulm; 3d, To approach and mask Ulm by closing the issues from that town on the left bank. At the same time he was to secure his communications with the Emperor by occupying the bridges on the Danube as he moved up the bank.

In order to give coherence to the forces immediately opposing Mack, and to leave himself at liberty to move towards the Russians with the rest of the army, Napoleon placed the corps of Lannes, Ney, and Murat under Murat. That general, misconceiving the situation, and the object of his chief, ordered Ney to bring his forces across to the right bank. Ney only obeyed so far as to send one division.

Austrians  
attempt to  
traverse the  
French com-  
munications.

In a council of war the Austrians determined that the Archduke Ferdinand, with 25,000 men, should open a passage to the base by the route Heidenheim-Nordlingen. Mack held Ulm with the rest to protect the Archduke's movement, expecting afterwards to be able to throw himself on the other flank into the Tyrol.

On the day when the Archduke's movement was begun, one of Ney's divisions had passed to the right bank, another had left Gunzburg to join it; Dupont's was at Albeck. On the 11th October Dupont, moving towards Ulm with 7000, met the Austrian corps, and after a long conflict,





in which he inflicted great losses on his adversary, he fell back on Albeck, and thence on Langenau.

*12th October.*—Napoleon at Augsburg heard of the movement of Ney's corps to the right bank, and directed the following movements :—

The Guard on Gunzburg.

Marmont on the Iller.

Lannes opposite Elchingen on the right bank.

Soult to Memmingen.

Mack, learning Dupont's retreat, ordered a corps to pursue him, while another moved on Elchingen to close that issue on the flank of the Archduke's column against the French.

*13th October.*—Soult captured 5000 men of the Austrian right wing in Memmingen; and an Austrian division which had come from Ulm to reinforce that point retired by Kempten to the Tyrol.

The Austrian corps at Elchingen attacked and burnt the bridge there, driving the French to the other bank. Elchingen to  
Ulm, 7.

Ney rallied his two divisions on the right bank, and prepared to lead them back across the river.

Lannes's corps was to support Ney.

Marmont to relieve Lannes.

Soult to Achstetten to close the Biberach road (by which Mack might gain the Tyrol).

Dupont, who had quitted Albeck, to return thither.

*14th October.*—Ney having restored the bridge of Elchingen, forced the passage, and drove the Austrian corps into Ulm. French con-  
centrate round  
Ulm.

*15th October.*—Lannes and Murat passed the bridge of Elchingen.

Marmont replaced Lannes on the Iller.

Soult approached Ulm by the Biberach road.

The Austrian corps which had fought before Albeck was intercepted at Neresheim by Dupont and Murat, and capitulated. The Archduke, who had joined this corps with 3000 cavalry from Ulm, made good his retreat by the Nuremberg road.

*19th October.*—The Austrians in Ulm, 30,000, capitulated.

Mack capitu-  
lates.



## COMMENTS.

The line of the Mayne afforded to Napoleon the rectangular base necessary for securely operating against the Austrian flank or rear. The columns advancing from Wurzburg covered the roads on which they moved, and those which came from the Rhine, though they were moving to a flank, could always, if threatened from Ulm, form on the same front as the others, and covering roads which led towards the angle of the Rhine and Mayne. For instance, Ney found at the successive points of his march, namely, Stuttgart, Reichenbach, Goppingen, Heidenheim — and Lannes at Stuttgart, Schondorf, Aalen, Nordlingen—roads leading directly on Mayence or Wurzburg. The whole movement might have been made from those two last-named places; but to have assembled the army there would have betrayed the design, which was concealed, or rendered doubtful, by the approach of the right wing from the Upper Rhine.

Direction of  
the French  
march exactly  
calculated.

When Mack changed front to the line of the Danube from Ulm to Rain the French army was still entirely beyond his flank. Napoleon's movement had therefore been directed exactly on that part of the Austrian rear where Mack's retreat, had he attempted it, would have been completely intercepted.

So far, then, the operation had been assured. But now the difficulties began; for the Austrians might, on finding themselves intercepted on their main line to Ratisbon, retreat either by Augsburg-Munich, south of the Danube, thus evading their enemy, or by the line Heidenheim-Nuremberg, crossing his communications. It was to guard against both contingencies that Napoleon now made the change of front to his right, which was accomplished on the 9th October, by which the Austrians, with the exception of Kienmayer's corps, were completely intercepted. But this was not effected without exposing the French communications, which now lay in the prolongation of the right flank towards Wurzburg and Mayence. The situation is almost the same as that on the Po, when Napoleon advanced towards Marengo, except that he now possessed a great superiority of force over his adversary. Now, as then, the wings of the army were separated by a great river. By a rapid advance he was trying to close with his adversary, who, as at Alessandria, was resting on a fortress.

Operations of  
1805 com-  
pared with  
those of 1800.

Soult's corps, like Desaix's, was seeking to cut off his retreat on one flank; Ney's corps, like Moncey's, was covering the communications on the other. And in the earlier course of the two campaigns a similarity is evident. The line of the Mayne corresponds to the frontier of Switzerland, affording, with the Rhine, a rectangular base; the advance from Wurzburg to the march of Moncey; the approach of the right wing towards the Austrian front, to the feint of Thurreau, but with the difference that Lannes and Murat were not prevented, as Thurreau was, from joining the main body. This circumstance, joined to the excellence of the communications, and the complete security of the flank march, which had been in the former campaign so critical, gave to the later operations a much greater degree of certainty, security, and completeness. On the other hand, the much greater extent of the Austrian base in Germany than on the Mincio rendered the intercepting movements also much more extensive; and, powerful as was Napoleon's army, the effort to bar all the roads by which the Austrians could reach their base, had so attenuated his line, that if Mack had marched on Albeck with his whole force instead of a single corps, he would have broken through the toils. Jomini says of a concentrated retreat on that side by the Austrians, "This movement was the more to be feared, since the enemy, in directing his march on our rear, would have seized our parks, our depôts, and our means of transport."

Consequences if the Austrians had made a concentrated effort on the side of Nuremberg.

#### CAMPAIGN OF 1800 IN GERMANY.

The first period of this campaign, which has already furnished an example (Part III. chap. v.), ended with the retreat of the Austrians into Ulm, and behind the Danube. Moreau now attempted various manœuvres to dislodge Kray. On the 20th May he directed the Right Wing on Augsburg, and retired the Left and Centre, drawing them southward. Kray resolved to attack Richepanse's corps, which was posted between the Danube and Iller, to cover the communications with Schaffhausen. But the enterprise (5th June), badly combined, failed. Richepanse, reinforced in time, repulsed the attack, and the Austrians retired into Ulm.

See Map No. 9.

Austrian attack on French communications fails.

Moreau now advanced to the Danube. He was still based on Schaffhausen, with which he communicated by Memmingen; and his right,

moving from Augsburg towards Blenheim, was thrown forward to an extent that would have dangerously compromised his communications under ordinary circumstances. But all Kray's attempts against Moreau's left, the vital point, had been defeated. Therefore Kray was restricted to the defensive, and Moreau could extend his right without imprudence; for he might assume, after late experience, that the attempts of Kray against his left would not succeed.

Ulm to  
Blenheim, 35. To dislodge Kray from the intrenched camp of Ulm, he resolved to throw his Right over the Danube. He directed it from Augsburg on the portion of the river between Lavingen and Blenheim.

The Centre at Gunzburg.

The Left masked the passages from Gunzburg to Ulm, to hinder any offensive movement of Kray.

Richepanse's corps was placed at the confluence of the Iller and Danube, to cover the French communications through Memmingen to Schaffhausen.

Kray's army was about Ulm, except the corps of Starray, which was spread along the Danube as far as Donauwerth, to observe and prevent any enterprise against the communications.

*16th June.*—Starray's main force was at Lavingen with detachments at Gundelfingen and Donauwerth.

Lecourbe with the French Right was opposite Blenheim.

The Austrians had partially destroyed all the bridges down to Donauwerth.

*18th June.*—A French attack at Dillingen was repulsed; also one at Leipheim (above Gunzburg) by the French Left. But these attempts, though unsuccessful, had the effect of deceiving Starray as to the real point of attack, and of keeping his troops dispersed.

Reconnaissances had proved that the bridges of Kremheim and Blenheim had suffered least, and it was resolved to pass there.

*19th June.*—Two divisions of the French Right closed in opposite Blenheim behind a wood.

Centre moved towards the river.

Lecourbe's artillery silenced the Austrian guns in the villages.

A detachment swam across, followed by others on rafts, and established themselves in Kremheim. Sheltered by them, the workmen repaired the

bridge, and four battalions passed to make head in the villages against the enemy, till the bridge should be practicable for all arms. The divisions passed and captured three Austrian battalions which had come up piecemeal from Donauwerth.

Starray assembled 3000 or 4000 men at Hochstet.

Lecourbe, after passing, detached one brigade towards Donauwerth to cover his rear, and directed the rest on Hochstet. Starray was driven on Dillingen, and, by a second attack, behind the Brenz.

Austrian line of Ratisbon intercepted.

Moreau passed the Centre over during the night; and the Left was to join it on the morning of the 20th by Gunzburg if possible, but, if the enemy should be too strong there, two divisions were to move on Lavingen in order to cross with more certainty; one being left to mask Ulm and to keep up communication with Richepanse, who was then following the general movement to the right.

Kray left 10,000 men in Ulm, and drew his troops together, assembling them near Elchingen.

20th.—Kray having resolved to march round the enemy's right and so recover communications with Ratisbon, sent his park to Aalen for Nordlingen.

Park—Great train of carriages with heavy artillery, stores, baggage, &c.

Moreau had moved thus:—

Lecourbe on the road from Dillingen to Nordlingen.

Centre on the Brenz.

Left on Offingen to pass there, having been unable to pass at Gunzburg.

The detached division at Leipheim.

Richepanse towards Gunzburg.

Moreau was evidently quite unsuspecting of Kray's design, and had posted his troops to receive an attack down the Danube.

Kray marches round Moreau's outward flank;

21st.—Kray marched to Heidenheim.

French right at Dischingen.

Centre in second line.

Left—Brenz and Danube.

22d.—Kray to Neresheim.

Moreau sent a reconnoissance to Neresheim, and discovered the retreat.

Ulm to Neresheim, 35;

23d.—Kray on Nordlingen.

Lecourbe by Neresheim on Nordlingen, where he engaged the Austrian rearguard.

Dischingen to Neresheim, 3;



24th.—Kray remained at Nordlingen, and marched in the night to Eichstedt.

25th.—Moreau followed to the Wernitz.

26th.—Kray passed the Danube at Neuburg.

He had thus recovered his communications with Ratisbon and Vienna.

and recovers  
his communi-  
cations with  
Ratisbon.

#### COMMENTS.

When the armies fronted each other on the Danube, each was extended in the prolongation of the line by which it communicated with its base. Yet Moreau ventured to make an offensive movement with his right, or outer wing. He had concluded that, the enemy being by former repulses restricted to the defensive, *the reciprocity of the situation no longer existed*. For all the danger of the flank position lies in the risk of the adversary attacking the inner flank or wing. If it can be assumed that no such attack will be made, there is no more risk in operating from a flank position than is involved in the chance of a failure followed by a pursuit; nor need that necessarily entail the loss of communications on the part of the defeated portion of the army. Such was the reasoning on which Moreau based his operation.

His mode of executing it was uncommonly bold and hardy. So confident was he that Kray would make no counter attempt on the southern bank against the French communications, after he felt the pressure on his own, that all the army, except Richepanse's corps and one other division, were thrown across the Danube, and the road to Schaffhausen was left absolutely uncovered.

Had Kray attempted to retreat by the southern bank to Munich, Richepanse and Ney's division would have delayed his march till the rest of the army had recrossed. But in the battle which would have ensued, each party would have fought with its face to its proper rear.

All Moreau's operations on the left bank were based on the assumption that Kray would come directly down the Dillingen road to break through. In that case his dispositions for obtaining the support of his other corps were extremely good.

Kray evaded both alternatives of action by marching round the outer

flank of the adversary. Had Moreau extended his right to provide against such a movement, he would have weakened his line beyond what he was willing to venture. We have seen that Napoleon never hesitated in such a case to throw for the whole stake; but the different modes of action are due to the difference in the characters of the two generals. Expecting Kray to attack in the valley of the Danube, Moreau would have thought it foolhardy to extend towards the Neresheim road.

By marching his park through Aalen, Kray freed the direct line to Nordlingen from Heidenheim of impediments; and at the same time the army, moving by that line, completely covered at Neresheim the march of the park.

## CHAPTER VII.

## GENERAL CONCLUSIONS FROM THE FOREGOING EXAMPLES.

THE operations which have been described supply certain grounds for judging the merits of any enterprise against an enemy's communications.

First, we learn that it is not sufficient to seize *any* point in the enemy's rear. The choice of this point is very important.

Direction to  
be pursued by  
an army that  
aims at its ad-  
versary's rear.

When armies are manœuvring near each other, and the operations are restricted to a narrow space, as in Radetzky's campaign, the assailant can determine with certainty the small area within which he will come in contact with the enemy, and he can so direct his march as, at the same time, to intercept and to close with him. When the Sardinians retreated from Vigevano, the Austrian general might feel assured that he would find them between Novara and Vercelli.

But when the turning movement is begun at a distance of several marches from the enemy, no such exact calculation can be made; and if the movement were directed straight on the position of the hostile army, the latter might, by a single march to the rear, evade the blow.

On the other hand, if the movement be directed against a point of the communications far to the rear, the assailant, on reaching it, must not only spread his forces over a space great in proportion to his distance from the hostile army, in order to close the lines which radiate from that army to its base, but must, by the obliquity of his march, leave a long line of communication open to a counter-stroke. The necessity of secrecy will generally prevent the assailant from making reconnaissances until the desired point is reached, and being therefore almost in the dark as to the adversary's movements, he cannot concentrate his army on any par-

ticular line with the certainty of meeting the shock there. Meanwhile the pressure on the communications will have informed the enemy of the general direction of the movement, which he may take steps to frustrate by moving in mass in a direction where there is no adequate force to oppose him.

As a recent example of the impolicy of aiming a stroke too far to the enemy's rear, Hood's operations against Sherman's communications in 1864 are notable. When the Federal general began his march from Atlanta to the Georgian coast, Hood was operating against the communications on the Tennessee river, 200 miles off. Sherman's march was thus left unmolested; whereas had the Confederates, while menacing his communications, remained near enough to be aware of his movements, they might have followed and harassed the march through Georgia on the one side, or prevented Thomas from reaching Nashville on the other.

To give the greatest effect to such an operation, the movement should be directed *not more than a march or two in rear of the rearmost point which it is calculated the enemy can reach by the time it is completed*, giving him credit for obtaining early intelligence and of retreating with promptitude when his resolution is formed, but also taking into account the motives which may induce him to delay to form that resolution.

Having reached the point aimed at, it is essential not to await the enemy, but to close upon him with all possible celerity. This will not only relieve the assailant from uncertainty, and give him the power of operating to the best advantage in any case that may occur, but will, by narrowing the arc on which his front is extended, increase his means of concentration, and also enable him to secure his own communications against an effort of the intercepted army to break through. Thus, when Napoleon had drawn his forces close round Ulm, his right under Ney covered the roads to Wurzburg from Mack; whereas when he first crossed the Danube at Donauwerth, his Right Wing, in order to protect to an equal degree the communications with Wurzburg and bar Mack's retreat, must have extended from Donauwerth to Nordlingen; an extension which would have so weakened it that the Austrian army could not have been effectually opposed there. The difficulties of the French were in proportion to the extent of the space they must occupy between the river and the Ulm-Nuremberg road.

Necessity of closing on the intercepted army.

Donauwerth to Nordlingen, 18.



When part only of the enemy's army is intercepted, it will be better to close on the intercepted portion than to follow the other. We shall see an example of this hereafter in the campaign of 1814, when Napoleon turned from Champaubert on Montmirail.

The intercepting force must not be inferior to the enemy unless immediately supported.

Since to assail an adversary's communications is to challenge him to immediate battle, the force which performs the movement must be proportioned to the audacity of the step. An inferior force may menace its enemy's rear, as Sir John Moore's army menaced Napoleon's line from Madrid to France; or a corps may inflict for a time great damage on an adversary's army by interrupting convoys and destroying roads and supplies; but unless it have a retreat open, it will probably suffer heavily for its presumption. Thus, when the Allies in 1813 were defeated before Dresden, Napoleon sent Vandamme's corps up the Elbe to intercept the retreat of their columns in rear of the Saxon mountains; but the French force, throwing itself across the path of the retiring army, was enveloped and destroyed. In the same campaign, Wrede's corps, trying to cut Napoleon off from France after the defeat of Leipsic, was swept aside at Hanau without effecting any part of its purpose. An inferior force so engaged must, therefore, compensate for its weakness by extraordinary advantages of position, or must be certain of immediate and powerful support, such as a close pursuit on the rear of the coming foe, or an advance upon his flank by the main army. In any other case it is imperative that the intercepting force should be strong enough to engage on good terms wherever it may encounter the enemy.

Comparative advantages of partial and complete interception.

The operation of throwing an army across an enemy's lines of retreat as Napoleon did, is, in appearance, much more decisive and effectual than that of operating on a front parallel to those lines, as Radetzky did. But it is so chiefly in appearance. The troops, spread over a great space, cannot be strong enough at any point to resist the attack of the enemy in mass. Their front being parallel to their own line of communication with the base, a lost battle would be as disastrous to them as to the adversary. On the other hand, by retaining a front parallel to the enemy's communications, the assailant covers his own, and therefore preserves a relative advantage in case of battle; while, if the intercepted army seeks to evade an engagement by using a still unclosed line of retreat, it ought to be anticipated on that line and brought to action, for the assail-

ant will almost certainly be nearer to some point of that line than the enemy. For instance, had Napoleon, in 1805, halted on the Danube instead of crossing it, his whole army would have been assembled in the space between the river and the Ulm-Nuremberg road. It would thus have been ready to confront Mack there; it would have closed the main line of Austrian communication, that of Ratisbon; and had the enemy sought to escape from Ulm by Munich, the French from Ingolstadt and Neuburg might have arrived there in half the time.

Ulm to Munich, 80.  
Ingolstadt to Munich, 45.

In general, then, the better course would be for the assailant, on attaining the point of the communications aimed at, to move rapidly along them till close to the opposing army, and then to manœuvre so as to force that army to form front to a flank. It will thus be compelled to engage at the greatest relative disadvantage if it determines to fight, and, if it escapes by a line still open, the territory it had occupied will be gained without a blow.

Best course for the assailant in general.

The commander of an army that feels the grasp of a formidable enemy on its communications is not in a position which admits of pause or deliberation. His first step must be to concentrate his forces; till that is effected he can only attempt to retreat under penalty of sacrificing all the troops that have not joined him, and the more extended his front the greater will be his danger. But if the concentration be accomplished while the enemy is yet at a distance, his hope of safety must lie in the promptitude of his movements. Whatever course he resolves on, whether to break through the cordon or to evade it, it is indispensable that he should operate with his army entire. To divide his forces for any purpose will be to play the adversary's game. And the best course will generally be to strike boldly at the communications of the enemy, for a success there may retrieve the campaign. Had Melas moved promptly to the Ticino he might have been in Milan on the 14th June, while Napoleon was seeking him on the Bormida. And Mack might have recovered his base without loss of credit had he struck with his whole army towards Nuremberg. Still, meet it as he will, a sustained movement against his communications must cause a general to lose ground in the theatre, and to abandon his enterprises, though he save his army.

Best course for the general of the intercepted army.

Concentration indispensable.

## PART IV.

### OPERATIONS ILLUSTRATING THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE FRONTS OF OPPOSING ARMIES, WITHOUT SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE COMMUNI- CATIONS WITH THE BASES.

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## CHAPTER I.

THE MANNER IN WHICH PART OF AN ARMY MAY HOLD IN CHECK OR RETARD A SUPERIOR FORCE OF THE ENEMY DURING AN OPERATION: THIS MATTER BEING NECESSARY TO THE DISCUSSION OF THE GENERAL SUBJECT STATED ABOVE.

It has been already said that in very few countries can a large body of troops move in order of battle, even for a short march. It must of necessity, even when moving in the expectation of an immediate engagement, form lengthened columns on the roads. When in this formation, only the heads of the columns can be deployed for immediate action; and to bring the army from the order of march to the order of battle is a work of time. Therefore it may, in most countries, be checked for a short time by a force, deployed in order of battle, only a little superior to the heads of the advancing columns. And the uses to be made of this circumstance are manifold; it is not too much to say that, rightly employed, it is the most effective weapon in the military armoury; but only one or

The march of a column may be retarded by a very inferior force.

two modes of applying it need be adverted to, for the better understanding of this part of the subject.

If a body of troops were to remain drawn up to oppose the advance of a superior force, on a plain, where the whole formation was visible, the attempt would be futile and disastrous. The enemy would at once attack with superior force and compel a costly retreat under penalty of rout or destruction. But skilfully disposed, in a good position, across the path of an adversary advancing in an ordinarily broken and difficult country, the risk is greatly reduced. If the armies have been manœuvring near each other, with numbers and positions constantly changing, and plans and combinations only to be guessed at, the leader who comes on such an obstacle in his path cannot, at first, know the amount of force which bars his way, sufficiently well to begin an immediate battle. He will generally pause, reconnoitre, and feel his way; and will defer a general attack till he shall be ready to deploy a force sufficient to render him confident of success.

The retarding force must engage only partially,

In the meanwhile the commander of the smaller force must watch carefully the dispositions of his adversary, and combine, in an unusual degree, resolution with prudence. For if he were to engage the whole of his troops, throughout the extent of their front, it would be out of his power to withdraw when the adversary had deployed a superior force, and he would be outflanked and heavily defeated. On the other hand, if he were to give way before the enemy had made a considerable deployment, the advance which it was his business to check would not be retarded. He must occupy his ground to the last moment possible without committing himself to a general action, and must then effect an orderly retreat. At the first opportunity offered by the ground he must repeat the manœuvre. Meanwhile the adversary will have again formed order of march, and, on approaching him, must once more form for battle,—with more or less promptitude in proportion to the confidence he may feel that the obstructing force is still inferior to him. In this way the day's march, which, if unopposed, might have stretched to twenty miles, may be reduced to six or three; and time may thus be gained for employing to decisive advantage the rest of that army which uses the retarding force.

withdrawing when outnumbered.



See Map  
No. 10.

EXAMPLE OF A FORCE RETARDING THE ADVANCE OF A SUPERIOR ENEMY.

In 1815 Zieten's corps occupied the line of the Sambre, covering the road from Charleroi to Brussels; and when Napoleon advanced, it was the business of Zieten to oppose the progress of the French until Blucher and Wellington could concentrate their forces behind him.

The French columns advanced to the Sambre at three points, namely—  
Marchienne, Charleroi, and Chatelet.

Marchienne  
to Chatelet,  
6.

Zieten's 1st brigade was in and around Fontaine l'Éveque;  
The 2d in Marchienne, Dampremy, La Roux, Charleroi, Chatelet, and Gilly;  
3d in Fleurus, Farcennes, Tamines;  
4th in Moustier-sur-Sambre, nearly to Namur;  
Reserve Cavalry about Gosselies.

When the French columns approached the Sambre, and the direction of the movement was apparent, Zieten ordered

The 1st brigade to Gosselies;  
The 2d to defend the passages threatened, until the 1st should have traversed its rear, and then to retire towards Gilly;  
3d and 4th to concentrate as rapidly as possible on Fleurus.

Charleroi to  
Fleurus, 9.

Thus the weight of the advance was opposed by the 2d brigade, about 8000 strong.

The line of the Prussian outposts had extended on a front from Sossoie to Thuin on the Sambre. These were driven in about four in the morning. The advanced-guard of the left French column attacked the Prussian outpost in Thuin, and drove it on Marchienne, which was defended by a battalion and two guns. The bridge was barricaded and held against several attacks, after which the defenders, outnumbered, retired through Dampremy upon Gilly. In Dampremy was part of a battalion with four guns, which also retired upon Gilly, while the battalion from Marchienne marched upon Fleurus.

The advance  
checked.

A corps of light cavalry, 2500 strong, supported by the Imperial Guard, formed the advanced-guard of the French centre column, and drove in the Prussian outposts in front of Charleroi, capturing a company in a village on the Sambre. The bridge and dyke of Charleroi were defended against a first attack, but carried by a second, when the defenders (one battalion)

retired towards Gilly. By eleven o'clock the French held Charleroi, and Reille's corps was passing the bridge of Marchienne.

The passage of the French at these points rendered the situation of the 1st Prussian brigade, retiring from Fontaine l'Eveque, extremely critical. To facilitate its retreat, Zieten detached a regiment of infantry and a regiment of cavalry from the 3d brigade, in reserve at Fleurus, to Gosselies. A brigade of the French cavalry corps approached Jumet while the 1st brigade was still beyond the Piéton, and threatened to cut it off, but was attacked and defeated by the Prussian cavalry. The 1st brigade passed the Piéton, and filed through Gosselies, covered by the detachment from the 3d.

The repulsed French brigade was supported by a light cavalry division of the Guard and a regiment of infantry, and again advanced on Gosselies, in conjunction with one division of Reille's corps from Marchienne; and followed the 1st Prussian brigade to Heppignies, where it formed order of battle, and drove the head of the French attacking column back towards Gosselies. The Prussians then retired on Fleurus.

French advance checked at Gosselies.

About two o'clock the 2d brigade concentrated near Gilly, the right on Soleilmont, the left on the Sambre at Chatelet, where a detachment from the 3d corps defended the bridge. The nature of the country concealed the extent of the force; the French generals paused to reconnoitre before attacking; the Emperor himself made a reconnaissance, and ordered an attack, the dispositions for which were completed about six o'clock. The commander of the 2d brigade, threatened by overwhelming numbers, withdrew it to another position in rear, but not without considerable loss from the charges of the pursuing cavalry, which, however, was presently checked by Prussian horse from the reserve at Fleurus. The 2d brigade then took up a position in front of Lambusart, from whence, after again checking the French, it retired, protected by cavalry, to Fleurus. The 1st brigade reached St Amand about eleven at night; and the whole corps (four brigades) was at that hour concentrated between St Amand and Ligny.

French advance checked at Gilly.

French advance checked at Lambusart

In this way two columns—one, the left, of 45,000, the other, the centre, of 64,000 men—were retarded by two brigades, each about 8000 strong, so that between eleven o'clock in the morning and nightfall they only advanced four or five miles. And this was in a country more than commonly free from obstacles, and affording no marked advantages for defence.

Subject of the chapter continued.

When an army makes a compulsory retreat after a defeat, it is not in a condition at once to renew the contest. "A beaten army," says the Archduke Charles, "is no longer in the hands of its general." It no longer responds to his appeal. The troops that have been driven from the field will be slow to form front for battle—confusion, too, will be added to despondency, for regiments will be broken and mixed, artillery will be separated from its ammunition, supply trains will be thrown into disorder by the sudden reflux, and the whole machine will be for the time disjointed. It is partly to provide for this that generals usually keep part of their reserves out of action, in order to cover the retreat. The enemy must form columns to pursue—the heads of these may be checked, and the pursuit retarded; and time will thus be given to restore order, and to take advantage of favourable ground to make another stand.

Operation of a rear-guard.

Only part of an army need pursue.

On the other hand, it is not necessary for the victorious leader to launch his whole army in pursuit. If the enemy's entire concentrated force has been engaged, he will naturally follow it with his whole army. But if he has fought with only a portion of the enemy, and has other and better uses than pursuit of it for part of his own forces, he may detach a corps to press the rear of the beaten troops. The retreating general will be unable for some time to ascertain what amount of force is pursuing—for all he knows, the whole of the army that has just beaten him may be on his track—he is compelled, perhaps, to pass by positions which he might, indeed, with the troops in hand, hold against the real pursuing force, but which he could not venture to occupy with the chance of being again attacked by the whole weight of the enemy. And if at last he does rally his corps, and turn on the pursuer, the latter must at once take up the part of a retiring force, whose business it is to retard the enemy, and will fall back upon the main army, which, in the mean time, should have found time to effect its purpose.

Comparative strength of pursuing force.

As a rear-guard is seldom more than a fifth or sixth of the total force, especially if it be formed entirely of the troops of the reserve, it follows that the pursuing force, in order to press confidently on the rear-guard,

attacking boldly, and augmenting the disorder, need not be more than a third of the beaten army. Thus two-thirds of the victorious force (supposing it to have been equal to its adversary at first) will be disposable elsewhere.

The chance of the defeated general resuming the offensive will then depend partly on the nature of the defeat he sustained in the field, partly on the conduct of his rear-guard. But it may depend still more on what the main body of the enemy, operating elsewhere, may be able in the mean time to effect. If the defeated general fought the action with only part of an army, and is driven by his retreat more and more apart from the rest, his first endeavour will be to effect a reunion; and, if he finds that the other portion of the army has also been defeated, he will feel that the first object of the leaders of both parts must be to recombine the broken host, by anticipating the victor in arriving at some possible point of junction.

Let us assume, then, that part of an army may *occupy* a superior force of the enemy, while the remainder strikes a blow elsewhere; that a beaten army may be pursued for a time by an inferior force; and that the course taken by parts of an army which have been separately defeated will be to retreat in order to recombine.

Course of the  
defeated  
bodies.

Grounds  
established  
for pursuing  
the subject.



## CHAPTER II.

THE EFFECT OF INTERPOSING AN ARMY BETWEEN THE PARTS OF  
AN ENEMY'S EXTENDED FRONT.

It has been shown in former examples that operations against the communications of an enemy with his base, however decisive, are only practicable, except with corresponding risk, under certain geographical conditions. If these do not exist, such enterprises can only be undertaken under penalty of a reciprocal exposure of the communications of the assailant. Regard for these will generally induce commanders, unless unusually confident in themselves and their army, to seek safer methods of obtaining an advantage; and opportunities must be sought in the relations which the fronts of the hostile armies bear to each other at different junctures of the campaign.

There are various reasons, as has been already explained, why an army should, and generally does, operate on a front more extended than its line of battle. Thus in the Jena campaign, Napoleon's front from Saalfeld to Plauen extended 50 miles; the Prussians from Jena to Gotha, and thence towards Hildburghausen, were still more dispersed; and when the armies were assembled in presence of each other, the parts at Naumburg and Jena were separated by an interval of 20 miles. When, in 1805, Napoleon marched round Ulm, there were wide gaps between his columns; and in fact the case where great armies move for any distance on a front as contracted as their line of battle is comparatively rare. Under such circumstances opportunities must occur, amid the shiftings of the hostile bodies, for pushing into the intervals of an enemy's front and separating its parts; the front of a great army in motion being marked by a line passing through the heads of advancing columns.

## CAMPAIGN OF 1796 IN ITALY.

At the outset, the Western and Southern faces of the mountains of North Italy marked the fronts of the opposing armies, the French on the one side, the Sardinians and Austrians in alliance on the other.

See Map  
No. 7.

On the Western face, armies of about 20,000 men on each side occupied and neutralised each other during the active operations which took place on the Southern side of the theatre. An English fleet on the coast restricted the French to the land.

The part of the French army which Napoleon commanded, known as the Army of Italy, was extended along the mountains parallel to the coast between Nice and Genoa. Four gaps pierce this chain, leading from the strip of coast-line into Piedmont. On the left is the pass of Tenda—next that of Ormea—then the defile opposite Savona—and lastly the Bochetta pass, in which lies the road from Genoa to Alessandria.

Positions of  
the French.

On Napoleon's left, two of his divisions, together 7000 strong, held the pass of Tenda.

Tenda to  
Genoa, 80.

Next Serrurier's division (7000) was in and beyond Ormea, possessing therefore the issue of the mountain chain.

The division of Augereau (8000) was at Mont San Giacomo, from whence there is a hill-path along the northern slope communicating with the road of Cadibona.

The division of Massena (8000) was at Cadibona.

The division of La Harpe (8000) at Savona, one of its brigades, Cervoni's, being at Voltri.

The communications of the French with France were by the road through Savona to Nice.

French com-  
munications.

The army immediately opposed to Napoleon was under the Austrian general Beaulieu. It consisted of 20,000 Sardinian troops and 30,000 Austrians.

Positions of  
the Austro-  
Sardinians.

The Sardinians under Colli had their headquarters at Ceva, and extended from the valley of Coni on the right to Millesimo on the left.

Coni to Mil-  
lesimo, 35.

The Right Wing of the Austrians, or Centre of the Allied army, under Argenteau, was at Sassello.

Millesimo to  
Sassello, 20.

The Left Wing at Ovada and Voltaggio was under the immediate command of the general-in-chief, Beaulieu.

Sassello to  
Voltaggio, 25.

Bases and  
communica-  
tions of the  
Allies.

The base of the Sardinians was Turin, with which they communicated by Alba, Fossano, and Cherasco.

The ultimate base of the Austrians in Italy was the Mincio, with which they communicated by the lines—

Acquia-Casale-Milan;  
Acquia-Alessandria-Pavia;  
Novi-Tortona-Piacenza;

and, intermediately, their object was to cover Lombardy.

The issues of the mountain barrier into Piedmont at Tenda and Ormea were in possession of the French. At the Savona pass works were constructed by the French, but there were no obstacles on the Austrian side. The Austrians held the Bochetta pass; and the fortifications of Coni, Mondovi, and Ceva, held by the Sardinians, closed the principal valleys.

The French army guarding the passes leading on its communications was necessarily greatly extended; but was nevertheless collected on the different points already mentioned. The Austro-Sardinians, occupying an equally extended front, were much more disseminated along that front; for numerous ridges shoot out from the main chain, which frequently subdivide, and the valleys lie between them. As these ridges are mostly much easier of passage than the main chain, the French, descending from any of their passes, could from one valley pass to another. Therefore the Austrians, pursuing the system common at that time, sought to guard all the avenues by occupying all; and thus their forces were greatly subdivided and separated from each other by the intervening ridges, while the French had the Nice-Genoa road (the Corniche) by which to communicate. The numbers of the Austro-Sardinians in the field were diminished by the garrisons of the fortresses in Piedmont, and were probably about equal to those of the French.

French plan.

Napoleon's plan was to continue to hold the passes of Tenda and Ormea, but to draw together the divisions of Augereau, Massena, and La Harpe, for an attack upon the Austrian centre, and to push in between Beaulieu and Colli. This design was greatly favoured by an offensive movement which Beaulieu commenced, very opportunely for Napoleon.

Austrian plan.

The Austrian general, on finding that La Harpe's Right was extended to Voltri, conceived that the attack was about to be made on his Left against the line Genoa-Novì. Therefore he resolved to meet this by moving his

Left Wing on Voltri to attack in front ; while his Centre, under Argenteau, from Sassello, was to advance upon Savona, and enclose all the French eastward of that point, cutting them from Nice, and from their Left Wing at Ormea and Tenda. Voltaggio to Voltri, 20.

The pass opposite Savona is double. One path comes from Sassello, the other from Cairo ; and the Monte Legino stands between them. On the topmost ridge of that hill, works had been constructed to close the road from Sassello. Sassello to Monte Legino, 13.

10th April.—The Austrians moved thus : Argenteau, with 10,000 men from Sassello, by Montenotte towards Savona ; Beaulieu, with 11 battalions, in two columns, one by the Bochetta pass, one over the mountains, to Voltri, where the head of the first column attacked the brigade of Cervoni. Austrians extend.

Cervoni held his ground for the day, and at nightfall retired to a position in rear.

11th April.—Argenteau, resuming his advance, was stopped by the works in the pass occupied by 1200 men. He attacked them unsuccessfully all day, and at night bivouacked in front of them, detaching a battalion to cover his rear in the valley he had come by.

Beaulieu, still advancing, again attacked Cervoni, but without driving him from his position.

During the night Cervoni, retiring from before Beaulieu, joined La Harpe, whose whole division, marching to the Monte Legino, drew up behind the works there, facing Argenteau. Voltri to Monte Legino, 20.

Massena from Cadibona was directed into the Cairo valley ; then he was to cross the ridge into the Sassello valley, and was then (apparently by the same path by which Argenteau had advanced) to attack the Austrian flank and rear. French concentrate.

Augereau from San Giacomo was to move on Cairo, and push back the Sardinians there, so as to prevent them from reinforcing Argenteau : this done, he was to turn towards Massena.

12th April.—La Harpe in front, Massena in rear, attacked Argenteau, whose force was entirely broken and dispersed, the remnants rallying at Deگو.

La Harpe was directed to move first on Sassello, to drive back any troops there, and then to cross the ridge to a point between Cairo and Deگو.



Massena's division, after the action, was pushed into the valley, occupying it from Cairo to the heights looking on Millesimo.

Augereau, from the Cairo valley, crossed the ridge to Millesimo.

Serrurier made false attacks from Garessio to occupy Colli.

Beaulieu advanced again ; but encountering no enemy, and hearing the cannonade in the hills, halted for information.

Austrian  
centre broken.

13th April.—Augereau's division, and the brigades of Massena on the ridge, enveloped the Sardinians at Millesimo.

Beaulieu learnt what had befallen Argenteau. He turned back his own columns, and ordered such of the Austrian troops as were then north of the Apennines to concentrate on Dego.

Dego to  
Acqui, 20.

14th April.—La Harpe joined Massena's right, and together they drove the Austro-Sardinians at Dego (4 battalions) upon Acqui, defeating also, next day, four other battalions, directed by Beaulieu upon Dego.

Augereau mastered the ridge between the valleys of Millesimo and of Ceva.

Serrurier established communications with Augereau.

Beaulieu changed the point of concentration to Acqui.

Colli concentrated the Sardinians in the intrenched camp of Ceva.

French army,  
interposed  
between the  
Allies,  
throws its  
weight  
against their  
Right.

15th to 22d April.—Napoleon, posted on the principal spurs of the Apennines, had now interposed his divisions between the widely-separated wings of the Allies. He resolved to throw his weight against the Sardinians.

He posted La Harpe at San Benedetto, where he might watch Beaulieu, and at once prevent an offensive movement against Napoleon's rear, or anticipate the Austrians at some point, such as Alba, should they seek to join the Sardinians. And to cover his communications with Savona, he left a brigade at Cairo.

Millesimo to  
Ceva, 10.

Augereau then joined Serrurier before Ceva.

Massena crossed the ridge into the valley of the Tanaro below Ceva.

Colli retired to a position before Mondovi.

Sardinians  
retreat to-  
wards Turin.

The Sardinian general, after repulsing an attack, retired to Mondovi. Pursued and driven thence, he retreated to Fossano.

Ceva to  
Mondovi, 13.

The French communications with Nice were now established by the line Ceva-Ormea.

23d April.—Colli made overtures of peace on the part of the Sardinian Government. Napoleon, while treating, continued to advance.

- 24th April.*—Beaulieu, with the design of joining Colli, moved from Acqui by Nizza towards Alba. Austrians move to rejoin the Sardinians.
- 25th April.*—Colli retreated to Carignano.  
Serrurier occupied Fossano.  
Massena occupied Cherasco.  
Augereau occupied Alba. Acqui to Alba, 25.
- Communications were established with Tenda, and the divisions there were ordered to invest Coni.
- 26th April.*—The French united on Alba, and Napoleon resumed his advance on Turin. French mass still interposes.
- 27th and 28th April.*—The Sardinians concluded a separate peace, giving up the fortresses of Alessandria, Tortona, and Coni, and the citadel of Ceva, to the French, who obtained the line of the Mont Cenis for their communication with France in subsequent operations; and Napoleon now directed his army against Beaulieu, who fell back across the Po, at Valenza. Alba to Turin, 40.  
Result.

## COMMENTS.

The instructions given by the Directory to Bonaparte impressed on him “that the most immediate interest of the French Government should be to direct its principal efforts against the army and territories of the Austrians in Lombardy.” They go on to say,—“It is easy to perceive that every military movement against the Piedmontese or their territory is in some way indifferent to the Austrians, who, as was shown in the last campaign, trouble themselves very little about the disasters of their allies, and who in moments of danger, far from seeking effectually to protect them, immediately separate from them, and occupy themselves only with covering the country which belongs to them, and which furnishes them abundantly with the resources of which they stand in need.” Bonaparte's instructions.

There was, therefore, political as well as military reason for striking at the centre and separating the Allies. But, having separated them, Bonaparte wisely departed from the instructions of the Directory, in turning with his main force against the Sardinians, for, in compelling them to make peace, he secured the communications with France through Piedmont, which were necessary for a sustained campaign against the Austrians in Lombardy. Reasons for striking at the Centre.

In the first movements, the extension of the Austrian line was greatly increased by the march of their left from Voltaggio to Voltri. While Beaulieu and Argenteau were thus separating, the French forces immediately opposed to them were concentrating against the centre.

Massena's  
circuitous  
march.

Massena at Cadibona might, on the night of the 11th April, have readily joined La Harpe in directly opposing the Austrians in the Sassello-Savona route. But by defeating them there by a front attack they would be merely driven back on Sassello. It was always a characteristic of Napoleon to direct his troops where their action would be most effective. As Argenteau had already been stopped by the garrison of the works on the Monte Legino, it was certain that when La Harpe's whole division had come to the support of that garrison, the defence of the pass was amply secured. Therefore Massena was directed by the western path, on the Austrian flank and rear.

Austrian  
offensive  
movement  
disconcerted.

Upon the defeat of Argenteau at Montenotte, Beaulieu was compelled to pause. For though he was prepared to attack the French in front of him, yet it was on the assumption that Argenteau would co-operate by an attack on their flank or rear; and this was only possible on condition that the French should be concentrating towards Voltri. Therefore, when Beaulieu found they had retired from that point, he knew that they must be either beyond the reach of Argenteau, by retreating westward beyond Savona, in which case he would presently be apprised of it by the advanced-guard of his colleague issuing from the pass—or that they had concentrated for an attack on Argenteau, in which case he might, if he should advance, find himself single-handed in the presence of a victorious enemy, as would indeed have been the case. Therefore, as soon as he was certified of disaster to his colleague, he hastened to recover his communications with Lombardy, which he might else find to be endangered.

Why the  
divided army,  
though super-  
rior, could  
not attack.

Upon the defeat of Colli at Millesimo and his retreat to Ceva, the mass of the French was interposed between the wings of the Allies. Deducting losses on both sides, Napoleon's four divisions (Serrurier being in line on the 14th April) numbered about 30,000—while Beaulieu had only about 20,000 at Acqui, and Colli about 15,000 at Ceva. Therefore, unless they could concert a simultaneous attack, either allied force, if it assumed the offensive, might, and probably would, find itself opposed by superior



numbers. The only course then was a joint retreat with a view to reunion—and this was what La Harpe at San Benedetto was meant to discover and to retard or prevent.

Speaking of the evacuation of the strong position before Mondovi by Colli, Jomini says,—“ His only aim was to gain time for the arrival of the army of Beaulieu; if he were to engage in an unequal conflict he ran the risk of a serious disaster and of being ruined; a methodical retreat, executed in time, seemed to lead most surely to his end.” This remark shows very clearly what must be the object of that portion of a divided army on which the enemy throws his weight,—namely, to make a retreat which, while it is so slow as to secure the arrival of the other portion of the army at the point of reunion, is also sufficiently prompt to avoid the risk of a general action with a superior force. Whether Colli, in this case, rightly estimated the strength of the position which he abandoned, is not to the present purpose.

Object of the assailed force.

It is not enough to pierce and divide the enemy's army; the advantage thus gained must be promptly followed up, or a subsequent reunion of the parts may nullify all the previous operations. Thus, while Bonaparte was held in check by the position of Colli before Mondovi, once unsuccessfully assailed, we learn that he called his generals to a council of war. “ Convinced that the army would be lost,” says Jomini, “ if the enemy had time to recover, they decided unanimously for a second attack notwithstanding the fatigue and discouragement of the troops.” That is to say, the first stroke must be followed up by successive blows on one or both sides, which shall, at once, keep the enemy asunder, and destroy his force.

Necessity of pressing a divided enemy.

There was no doubt ample time after Beaulieu reached Acqui, on the 15th, for him to move behind the Tanaro to the aid of his ally, who was not driven from Mondovi till the 22d. But it is probable that, besides the indisposition to help his ally adverted to in the instructions of the Directory already quoted, he felt hampered by the fact that in thus operating parallel to his communications with his base on the Mincio, he would be dangerously exposing them. This fact—that the Allies when separated had divergent lines of communication and of retreat, and that their movements were influenced by the circumstance—is to be noted.

Effect of the parts of a separated army having divergent bases.

When Napoleon was advancing on the line Ceva-Fossano, the whole of the Sardinian forces, namely, those opposing Kellermann and those



New combina-  
tion open to  
the Sardin-  
ians.

Why ne-  
glected.

opposing Napoleon, were interposed between the two French commanders. It was therefore possible to repeat against Napoleon the game of combination which he had just played against Beaulieu. A small containing force might have been left before Kellermann, and the remainder combined against Napoleon. It was to guard against such a contingency that Bonaparte, on the 25th, from Fossano pressed the commander of the right of Kellermann's army to issue from the Alps towards him. But, besides the want of military skill to perceive and execute this, it is also to be observed, first, that, even when thus combined, the Sardinians would have been inferior to Napoleon in numbers—having been only equal to his single army at the outset; and, secondly, that the distance from Mont Cenis to Turin is so short that Kellermann, unless strongly opposed, might reach it in a single march and enclose their armies while he seized their capital. They were influenced by the same reasons which caused Mr Lincoln to spoil M'Clellan's combination in 1862. The Federal general wanted to combine M'Dowell's forces from Fredericksburg with his own, at Hanover Court-House, interposing between Johnstone at Richmond and Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley, and concentrating for an attack on the former. But the Northern President, fearing to leave the capital uncovered, retained M'Dowell, and M'Clellan, left unsupported, was defeated.

Greater ad-  
vantage  
gained by  
breaking the  
centre than  
by turning  
the flank.

Lastly, it is to be noted, that when an army is extended over a space beyond its strength, the most fatal way of attacking it is on the centre. Had Napoleon executed the design which Beaulieu attributed to him of advancing through the Bochetta pass to turn the Austrian left, however successful might have been his first attacks, they could only have insured that which it was his aim to avoid, namely, the concentration of the enemy.

#### CAMPAIGN OF ECKMUHL (1809).

See Maps  
8 and 11.

The maintenance of the war with France by the English in Portugal seemed to afford Austria an opportunity of effacing the results of Ulm and Austerlitz, and of breaking the power of Napoleon. So menacing was the aspect of the great German power, that the French Emperor, abandoning the pursuit of Sir John Moore's army to Soult, had returned to France to prepare for the anticipated campaign.



ITALIAN CAMPAIGNS,  
of 1796, 1800, 1849 & 1859.





Early in the year the Austrian armies were behind their frontier lines of the Bohemian mountains and the river Inn; and most of the French forces were on their own side of the Rhine. But when war was imminent, the Austrians, leaving 50,000 men under Bellegarde in Bohemia, assembled most of the troops which they had ready for the field, south of the Danube, on the frontier of Bavaria. On the other hand, the Confederation of the Rhine, by which compact the German territories along that river were open to Napoleon, gave him free access to the Danube. When the war began, the troops already assembled within the immediate sphere of operations were as follows:—

Armies  
assembled in  
the theatre.

The Austrian corps on the Inn were those of  
Hohenzollern,  
Rosenberg,  
Archduke Louis,  
Hiller,  
Lichtenstein,  
Kienmayer,——Total, 140,000.

The Inn to the  
Isar, 40.

Bellegarde, who was to operate north of the Danube, debouching from Pilsen and Saatz towards Amberg, 50,000. Behind these, great bodies of militia covered Vienna.

Napoleon's corps were thus distributed:—

Bavarians, . . . .	on the Isar, . . . .	30,000
Davout, . . . .	Ratisbon, . . . .	50,000
Oudinot, . . . .	Augsburg, . . . .	30,000
Massena, . . . .	Ulm, . . . .	30,000
Wurtembergers, . .	on march for Ingolstadt, . .	12,000
Reserve cavalry, . .	Ingolstadt, . . . .	15,000
	Total, . . . .	167,000

Behind the front of the French, the roads of Germany were covered with columns marching from the Rhine, including the Imperial Guard, and with the reserves of the German allies of France.

Napoleon, based on the Rhine and Mayne, had for communications any or all of the roads leading from the Danube, between Ulm and Ratisbon, to Wurzburg, or to the fortresses on the Rhine. Those mainly relied on, as most secure, were probably the roads from Strasburg, Mannheim, and Mayence, to Ulm.

French bases  
and communi-  
cations.

The Archduke Charles had for immediate lines of supply those of Steyer-Braunau and Lintz-Passau. If he should operate north of the

Austrian base  
and communi-  
cations.



river, he must of course rely on the northern portion of his base, Budweis-Theresienstedt.

Napoleon's object was Vienna; but as the Austrians took the initiative, his plan must depend on the opportunities which their movements might offer.

Austrian plan. The Archduke's design was to pass the Inn, push the Bavarians from the Isar, and, crossing the Danube between Donauwerth and Ratisbon, cut Davout from the French army, and form a junction with Bellegarde on the northern bank.

10th to 16th April.—The Austrians crossed the Inn thus:—

Hiller,	}	at Braunau;
Archduke Louis,		
Kienmayer,	}	at Scharding;
Hohenzollern, below Braunau;		
Rosenberg,		
Lichtenstein,		

and reaching the Isar on the 15th, forced the passage thus, on the 16th:—

Moosburg to  
Dingolfing,  
28.

Hiller at Moosburg.	}	at Landshut.
Archduke Louis,		
Hohenzollern,	}	at Landshut.
Rosenberg at Dingolfing.		
Reserves in rear of the centre.		

On the right a brigade (5000) moved on Straubing.

On the left 10,000 from Wasserburg towards Munich.

The Bavarians, at Landshut, attacked in front and turned on both flanks, fell back to the Danube behind the Abens, between Neustadt and Kelheim, where they were reinforced by 12,000 Wurtembergers.

17th April.—The Austrians moved thus:—

Austrians  
approach the  
Danube.  
Moosburg to  
Mainburg, 14.

Hiller, . . .	from Moosburg to Mainburg.
Louis, . . .	Landshut towards Neustadt.
Hohenzollern, }	. . . Landshut towards Kelheim.
Lichtenstein, }	
Kienmayer, }	
Rosenberg, . . .	

Bellegarde was to draw down on Davout's rear.

French movements:—

Massena moved from Ulm to Augsburg, and took command of the Right Wing.

Napoleon arrived at Donauwerth from Paris, and ordered the following movements of concentration on the centre :—

Right Wing—Augsburg to Pfaffenhofen.

Left Wing—Ratisbon to Abensberg.

Napoleon orders concentration.

Augsburg to Pfaffenhofen, 34.

Ratisbon to Abensberg, 22.

18th.—Austrian front—

Left,	{	Hiller, .	Mainburg.	}	Abensberg.
		Louis,			
		Kienmayer,			
Centre,	{	Hohenzollern,	Rohr.	}	Rohr to Ratisbon, 22.
		Lichenstein,			
Right,		Rosenberg—	Langquaid.		

Rohr to Ratisbon, 22.

French movements :—

Massena from Augsburg towards Pfaffenhofen.

Davout to the right bank at Ratisbon.

19th.—Austrian movements :—

Hiller to Siegenburg.

Centre, } towards Ratisbon.  
Right Wing, }

Austrians separate.

French movements :—

Davout placed a regiment in Ratisbon, and left the highroad along the Danube free for his baggage and trains. His infantry divisions marched in two columns, each of two divisions, one by Teugen, the other by Saalhaupt, by country roads, from whence they were to gain by cross roads the highroad to Abensberg by Feking. His cavalry protected the movement by advancing on the road Ratisbon-Eckmuhl, and then following, through Dingling, the general direction on Abensberg.

French Left Wing joins the Centre.

At the same time the Archduke's columns were moving from Rohr by Hausen and Teugen, and from Langquaid by Schneidart and Saalhaupt, towards Ratisbon.

The inner flanks of the hostile columns necessarily encountered ; and they sidled round each other, fighting principally with the rearmost divisions, while the leading troops continued their advance. Davout's two leading divisions made good their communications with Abensberg by Feking, and the other two held Teugen. The Austrian march on Ratisbon was stopped, and the Archduke remained facing the French front.

Austrian Right Wing halts.

Combination  
against Aus-  
trian Left  
Wing.  
Abensberg to  
Rohr, 7.  
Pffaffenhofen  
to Landshut,  
36.

20th April.—French movements :—

Davout with half his corps to hold Teugen.  
The other half under Lannes on Rohr.  
Bavarians on Arnhofen.  
Wurtembergers between Lannes and the Bavarians.  
Massena from Pffaffenhofen on Landshut by Freising and Moosburg.

The result of the attacks against the Austrian Left Wing which followed this last combination was, that the French reached Rottenburg—the Austrians were driven on Pffaffenhausen—and continued their retreat in the night upon Landshut.

French pur-  
sue the beaten  
Wing.

21st April.—

Part of the Bavarians by Pffaffenhausen, }  
Lannes by Rottenburg, } on Landshut,  
Massena by Moosburg, }

where they drove the Austrian Left Wing across the Isar.

The Austrian Right Wing took post across the Eckmuhl road, backed on Ratisbon, facing Landshut.

French re-  
tarding force  
interposes.

French movements :—

Davout from Teugen to Paring and Schierling.  
Part of the Bavarians and cavalry from Rottenburg to join Davout.  
Ratisbon surrendered to Bellegarde.

Eckmuhl to  
Abach, 9.

22d April.—Kollowrath's division of the Bohemian army joined the Archduke, who, leaving his Left at Eckmuhl, attempted to throw his Right to Abach, so as to issue from thence on the French rear.

On the French side, Bessières with two divisions of infantry to pursue the beaten Austrian Left Wing from Landshut by Braunau. Two divisions moved between the Isar and Danube as a Reserve.

Combination  
against the  
Austrian  
Right Wing,  
which,  
defeated, re-  
treats apart.

Massena from Landshut, Lannes, and the cavalry joined the French forces towards Eckmuhl, and the left of the Archduke's immediate forces was attacked and defeated in the battle of Eckmuhl.

23d April.—The Austrian Right Wing, covered by Kollowrath, crossed the Danube at Ratisbon.

Napoleon took Ratisbon by assault, after bombarding it.

Ratisbon to  
Straubing, 24.

Massena to Straubing.

*24th to 27th April.*—

Movements in  
pursuit.

Davout to follow the Archduke Charles towards Bohemia.  
Bavarians to occupy Munich.  
Lannes to follow Bessières by Landshut.

Austrian movements :—

Archduke Charles and Bellegarde to Cham.  
Archduke Louis and Hiller from Neumarkt towards the Inn.

Ratisbon to  
Cham, 33.

*28th to 30th April.*—

Archduke Charles from Cham to Pilsen.

Davout having seen the Archduke's retreat to Bohemia begun, returns to Ratisbon to follow Massena down the right bank.

French pursuing columns from Landshut arrive on the Inn and its tributary at Salzburg, Burghausen, Braunau.

Massena to Passau.

There were but two bridges between Passau and Vienna—namely, at Mauthausen (just below Linz), and at Krems, by which the Archduke Charles could cross to the right bank, join the other corps, and cover the capital.

Passau to  
Vienna, 140.

*1st to 3d May.*—The French columns from the Inn to the Traun.

Massena at Ebersburg attacks the Austrian rear-guard, and pushes it past Mauthausen, where there was a bridge over the Danube, thus rendering it impossible for the Austrians to communicate from one bank to the other above Krems.

Archduke Charles at Budweis.

*3d to 8th May.*—The French columns to St Polten.

Part of the Austrians were seen crossing to the left bank at Krems, breaking the bridge behind them, part retreating on Vienna.

Detachments had been left by Napoleon to guard the passages at Passau and Linz. The Archduke Charles had marched from Budweis southward to Freystadt to cross at Linz. Finding the bridge destroyed, and the right bank in possession of the French, he had marched for Krems, but, owing to the circuit he had made, he was anticipated there also.

*11th May.*—Napoleon pushed the Austrian garrison out of Vienna, and occupied the capital. Result.



## COMMENTS.

Both armies at the outset were operating on extended fronts, their right wings (Bellegarde and Massena) being indeed beyond the sphere of immediate action. Setting these aside, the Austrian front on the 18th from Mainburg to Eckmuhl, and the French from Neustadt to Ratisbon, each covered about the same distance.

When the Archduke on the 19th advanced on Ratisbon to attack Davout, he was obliged to leave a strong force at Abensberg, for he knew that a great part of Napoleon's army was collected there, and had he withdrawn his *whole* force towards Ratisbon, the enemy from Abensberg would have cut him from the line Landshut-Braunau by the single march on Rottenburg. Hence he could only perform the movement by dividing his army.

But while he was making a movement of separation, Napoleon was making one of concentration. On the night of the 18th, Davout by his own right was connected with the Centre.

Next day the successful march on Rohr interposed the main French army between the parts of the Austrian front. While Napoleon was defeating the Left Wing, Davout was left in front of a very superior enemy; and it would seem at first as if an attack upon him would have balanced the fortunes of the day. But Davout, if compelled to retreat, would have approached Napoleon, whereas the Austrian Left Wing, when defeated, was receding from the Archduke Charles. The result of the Archduke pressing back the force in front of him would have been that the main French army, supporting Davout, would have fought on the 20th or 21st the battle of the 22d, without the trouble of going to seek the enemy.

Having, then, first strengthened his Right for a blow against the Austrian Left Wing, Napoleon now diminished the Right to the amount of force necessary to pursue the beaten corps, and concentrated on his Left for a second blow. This successful, the consequent retreat widened the gap in the Austrian front.

On the 20th, Massena being beyond the sphere of action, the sum total of the armies actually in presence of each other was greatly in

favour of the Austrians by about 140,000 to 110,000. Yet Napoleon was superior to the force *immediately* opposed to him by about 80,000 to 70,000. And, without Massena, he could still, after detaching 20,000 in pursuit on Landshut, have made the force on Davout's side next day superior to the Archduke's. Thus we get something like an approximate idea of the actual equivalent in force of the advantage enjoyed by the army whose action is concentric over that which is divided.

Approximate value of the advantage of concentric over divided action.

All these advantages were on the 18th within reach of the Archduke. If, instead of marching from Rohr on Ratisbon, he had moved on Kelheim for a grand attack along a front extending from thence to Abensberg, he would have brought a greatly preponderating force against the French, and if, as was to be expected, they were driven over the river, he would have turned with his mass on Davout approaching from Ratisbon, and pushed him back on the lower Danube.

These operations of 1796 and 1809 also prove how powerful an influence is exercised upon commanders of parts of armies by uncertainty as to what is passing elsewhere. So long as there is constant communication between the supreme directing authority and his dispersed subordinate leaders, so long may a coherent impulse be given to *all* the portions of an army. But when the intervention of a hostile force destroys this communication, the action of every part is checked. Combined action is the aim of a commander-in-chief, and combination is impossible when concert is destroyed. Nor is the apprehension which paralyses a commander who is thus separated from his colleague the result merely of uncertainty. For had Beaulieu from Voltri, or the Archduke from Teugen, advanced boldly on the enemy, each would have encountered a victorious and superior army. It would seem, therefore, that, under such circumstances, the only prudent course is to effect a reunion with the utmost promptitude, and that the advantages of the concentric position of the interposing army are substantial, and are only augmented, not altogether caused, by the moral effect of the situation.

Advantage of the concentric against the divided army not due to the moral effect only.

There is one especial point of difference between Napoleon's operation of 1809 and that of 1796. In the first case the containing force (Davout's) *was left in front of the Austrian wing*. In the second case the containing force (Cervoni's) *was altogether withdrawn*, and joined to the divisions which attacked on the side of Montenotte. It may be asked,

why was not Davout withdrawn like Cervoni? or why was not Cervoni kept in front of the enemy like Davout? Very useful questions to consider.

Different ways of employing the containing force.

The answer is, that *the sole use of the containing force is to prevent a reunion of the enemy's parts.* If it is not necessary to this purpose, it will be better employed at the point of attack. Had the Archduke Charles suddenly resolved, on the evening after the action of Teugen, to retrace his steps and rejoin the Left Wing, he might, if unopposed, have effected the concentration, and would have had, on the field of Abensberg, a great preponderance of numbers over the united forces of Napoleon and Davout. It was to prevent this that Davout was left in front of him. But had Beaulieu suddenly resolved, on the night of the 11th or morning of the 12th, to rejoin Argentau, he could only have done so by retiring again through the passes and making a circuit round the other side of the mountains which separated them. But, long before he could make this circuit, the action at Monte Legino must be decided; and if he did make the attempt, Cervoni was powerless to prevent it, for he could not interpose—he could only follow Beaulieu. Therefore Napoleon rightly drew Cervoni towards that point where the action of his force would be most decisively important. We may, therefore, assume, that *when distance alone will prevent the separated wing of the enemy from joining the other, before that other may be attacked and defeated, the containing force should be withdrawn to the point of attack, unless it is required to cover the communications.*

General deductions.

To sum up the effects of a successful operation of this kind, it appears—  
1st, That either part of the separated army which stands to fight may find itself exposed to the blows of the full force of the antagonist, *minus* a detachment left to contain the other part; as is seen by the examples of Millesimo, Ceva, and Eckmuhl.

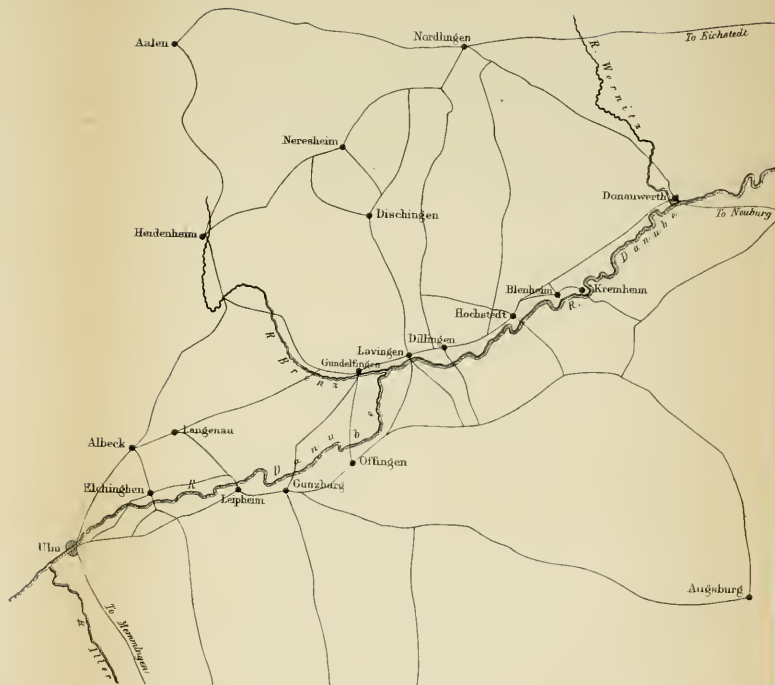
2d, That by alternating such blows, the assailant may continue both to weaken his antagonist and to interpose between the parts.

3d, That as the commander of a separated part of an army will be playing the enemy's game if he stands to fight, his best course will be retreat for reunion; and that this will be best effected by taking advantage of every position to retard the enemy on both lines.

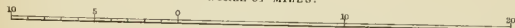
4th, That a commander who perceives an opportunity for separating

## CAMPAIGN OF 1800 IN GERMANY.

## SECOND PERIOD.

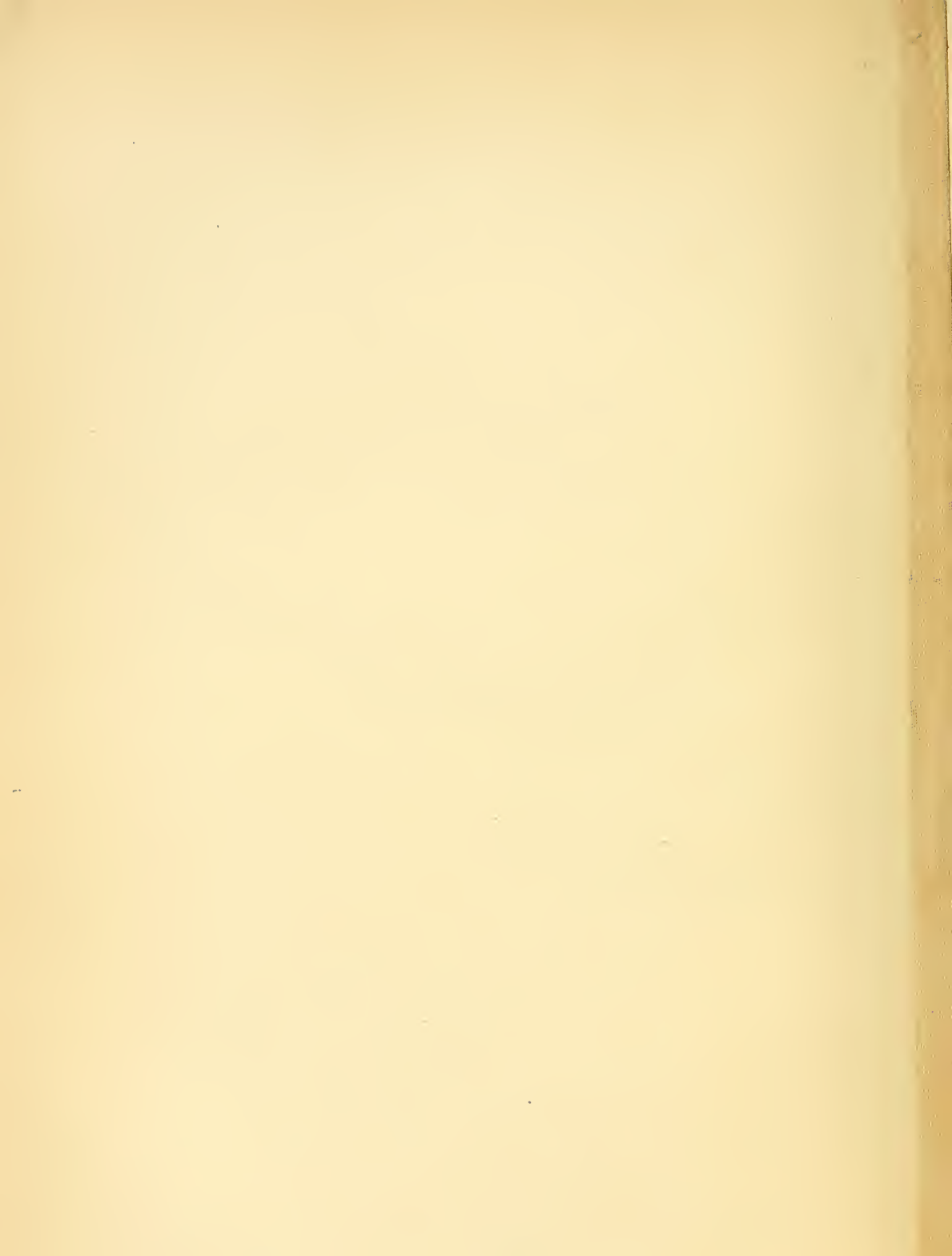


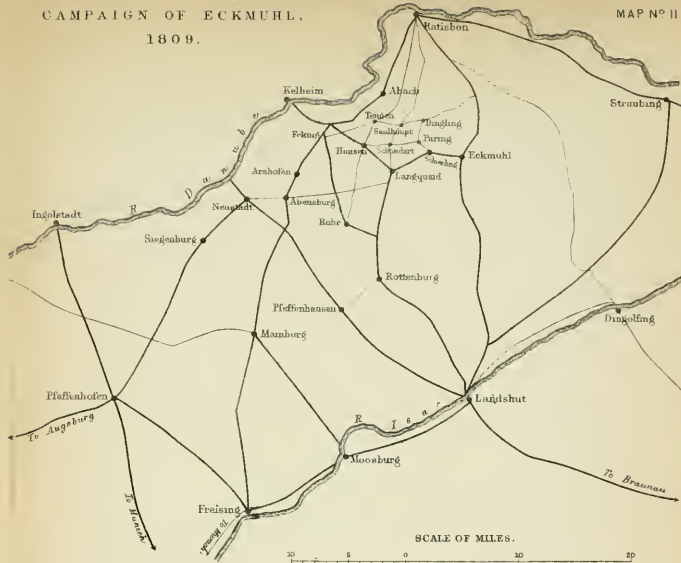
SCALE OF MILES.



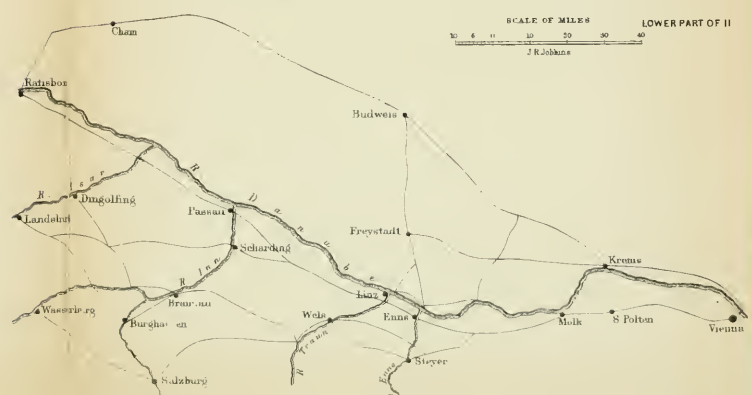
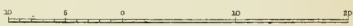
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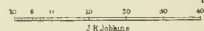


SCALE OF MILES.



SCALE OF MILES

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J R Johnson



the enemy, and overwhelming a portion of his force, need not generally be solicitous to cover his own communications during the operation, since the enemy will be in no condition to assail them.

Lastly, It is necessary to remark that the force which aims at separating the parts of an enemy should be so superior to either part singly, as to *preserve a superiority after detaching a force in pursuit of the portion first defeated*; and that if the attacking force does not fulfil this condition, it will have no right to expect success.

Necessary  
proportion of  
the hostile  
forces.



## CHAPTER III.

## THE CASE OF INDEPENDENT AGAINST COMBINED LINES OF OPERATION.—CAMPAIGN OF 1796 IN GERMANY.

HAVING investigated the consequences which follow when parts of an army are separated and driven asunder, we come to the apparently different case of two armies allied, or of the same nation, which, when about to act against the common enemy, voluntarily separate, and operate against him by independent paths, and without concert.

See Map  
No. 8.

The campaign of 1796 in Germany, besides illustrating this matter, has other advantages ; for it took place in the same theatre as those of 1800, 1805, and 1809, which have already been discussed ; and it is very useful to read in succession several campaigns which have been enacted in the same region, since we thus become aware both of the fixed value of certain points, and of the various methods by which different generals with various means and under diverse circumstances will operate for the same end. Everywhere glimpses are opened of new relations between different features of the ground, till at last we may be said thoroughly to *know* the theatre of war ; that is, to understand all its conditions under every aspect, and to be able to deal with any problem it can offer.

Hostile fronts. The Austrians and French confronted each other at the outset on the Rhine, from Basle to Dusseldorf.

French base. That portion of the Rhine formed the base of the French when they entered Germany.

Austrian base. The base of the Austrians, as in other campaigns in this theatre, was the Enns river as far as the Danube—beyond the Danube, the mountains and the Moldau.

Two roads unite the extremities of the hostile bases ; namely—

1. Old Brisach-Memmingen-Landsberg-Munich-Braunau-Steyer.
2. Mayence-Egra-Theresienstedt.

Roads from one base to the other.

In the centre there is a third great road, by—

Carlsruhe-Mannheim-Heilbronn-Nuremberg-Amberg-Klattau, to Budweis.

And several roads lead from the Rhine upon Ulm, thence by Donauwerth, Ingolstadt, to Ratisbon ; from whence there are communications with both parts of the Austrian base.

The plain of the Rhine valley, straitened by the hills of the Black Forest, begins to widen a little below Basle till it reaches a breadth on that bank of ten to fifteen miles. The best passages over the river are at Huningen, Brisach, Strasburg, Selz (opposite Rastadt), Lauterbourg, Germersheim (opposite Philipsburg), Spire, Mannheim, Worms, Mayence. There are others between Strasburg and Spire, but they have the same issues.

Passages over the Rhine.

Before the active campaign commenced, two generals on each side faced each other on the Rhine. The Austrian army of the Upper Rhine from Basle to Mannheim was commanded by Marshal Wurmser, to whom was opposed Moreau. The army of the Archduke Charles extended from below Mannheim to the Sieg river, to which was opposed the army of the Sambre-and-Meuse under Jourdan. The advantage in numbers disposable for the field was at the outset on the side of the Austrians, especially in cavalry.

The French possessed only one fortified bridge, that of Dusseldorf. The Austrians had one at Mayence, another at Mannheim. Elsewhere, if either party wished to cross, they must force a passage or throw bridges.

Means of passage by either party.

The Austrians had intended to assume the offensive, advancing towards the Moselle. But the successes of Napoleon in Italy had their influence in this other theatre. Early in June, Wurmser, with 25,000 men was detached to aid Beaulieu ; and after this diminution of strength, the offensive plan was no longer practicable.—(See page 92.)

The French Directory, anxious to transfer the burthen of the war to Germany, ordered their generals to cross the Rhine. The first combination of the French had for its object to secure the passage of the river for Moreau's army.

First object of the French.

Jourdan, throwing part of his force across at Dusseldorf, pressed back the Austrian Right; and the right bank down to Neuwied being thus opened, he crossed there with his main force, and pushed the Austrian force north of the Lahn, back upon that river.

This movement was meant to draw the Archduke from Mayence; and it had the desired effect. Leaving 20,000 men in the intrenched camp there, he marched with the remainder of his army to the Lahn and turned Jourdan's left flank. The French general thus threatened, finding that the object of his advance was gained, retired beyond the river.—(19th to 21st June.)

Mannheim to  
Strasburg, 86.

Moreau passes  
the Rhine.

The thin Austrian cordon from Basle to Mannheim, weakened by the draft for Italy, and deprived of the support of the part of the Archduke's army withdrawn from Mayence, now invited an attack. Moreau, after making (20th June) a false attack with his Centre and Left on the works covering Mannheim, marched 12,000 men up the Rhine, under pretence of aiding Bonaparte in Italy. Near Strasburg they were joined by 18,000 of the Right Wing marching down the river; and the whole, under the orders of Desaix, passed above Kehl, by flying bridges and boats, on the 23d and 24th June.

The Austrian Left Wing of the army of the Upper Rhine above Kehl was cut off by this movement, and assembled about Friburg.

The mass of the Centre was between Rastadt and Mannheim.

The Right was marching from Mannheim to join the Centre.

The Archduke, with a portion of the other army, began his march from the Lahn to reinforce the army of the Upper Rhine, when he heard of Moreau's passage, 26th June.

Pending his arrival, the position was this—

Austrian  
positions.

The Austrian Left Wing was at Haslach.  
A detachment under Stein guarded the Kinzig valley.  
A detachment under Starray the Rensch valley.

The defiles to the Danube thus closed, Latour, who commanded in the Archduke's absence, awaited his arrival behind the Murg.

French  
positions.

Moreau, after pushing the scattered Austrians back into the defiles, waited in the Rhine valley, posted from the Kinzig to the Murg, till the remainder of his Centre and Left from Mannheim should cross. A division of the Right Wing, under Laborde, was still on the French bank, from

Brisach to Basle. It was opposed by a small Austrian corps; and throughout the advance into Germany, these corps neutralised each other on the side of the Tyrol, and may be left out of the general account.

On the 10th July, the Archduke having then come up, Moreau attacked him at Malsch; and having defeated his immediate left in the mountains, the Austrians retired on Pforzheim.

It was at Pforzheim that the Archduke determined on his general plan. His first object was to regain the Danube, for he had great magazines about Ulm, and he was desirous of recovering communications with his Left Wing, under General Frölich, then retreating on a separate line through the Forest, followed by Moreau's Right Wing, under General Ferino. The Danube gained, his next object may be best expressed in his own words: "To dispute the ground foot by foot, without accepting battle; to profit by the first opportunity to reunite his divided troops; and to cast himself with superior, or at any rate equal, forces, on one of the two armies of the enemy." General Austrian plan.

The "divided troops" he alludes to are not merely his main body and Left Wing. He had left, of his own original command, about 30,000 infantry and 15,000 cavalry, under General Wartensleben, to oppose Jourdan in the northern portion of the theatre. The French general, considerably superior in numbers, had recrossed the Rhine, and pushed Wartensleben back across the Lahn and Mayne; and then, with his army considerably diminished by detachments to a corps under Marceau, left to besiege or mask Austrian garrisons in places on the Rhine, he continued to drive the enemy opposed to him along the course of the Mayne. Frankfort to Pforzheim, 100.

The historians of the war have left the numbers on both sides at different junctures in hopeless confusion; so that, taking any statement of them at the outset as a basis, it is impossible to reconcile subsequent accounts. The armies on both sides were probably reinforced frequently from the interior of their respective states; and both were greatly diminished—the Austrians to garrison places on the Rhine, the French to invest them, and to cover their own points of passage.

It is doubtful whether the French armies, after the first combination for securing the passage of Moreau had succeeded, were guided by any definite concerted plan beyond the continual advance on both lines against the



General  
French plans.

Austrian armies. Some writers ascribe to them a comprehensive design of uniting the two armies of the Rhine and the army of Italy upon the Inn, for a combined advance on Vienna. But the accomplishment of this was dependent on the progressive advance of each of the three armies against all resistance, across a large portion of the theatre; and a check to any one would destroy the combination. However this may be, the French generals in Germany appear to have been instructed to operate against the *outward* flanks of the Austrian armies: that is, Jourdan was to turn Wartensleben's Right, and so press him out of the theatre; Moreau on attaining the Danube was to operate between the river and the Tyrol, so as to be ready to combine with the army of Italy. At any rate, this was the course followed, and the Archduke's design of combining his forces for an attack on one army was thereby greatly favoured.

Wartensleben's orders (he being inferior to Jourdan by 14,000) were to contest all practicable ground, retiring as slowly as possible, so as to afford opportunities for the projected junction.

Frankfort to  
Wurzburg, 70.

13th to 19th July.—Wartensleben evacuating Frankfort retired upon Wurzburg.

The Archduke retired from Pforzheim across the Neckar to Cannstadt and Esslingen.

18th July.—Moreau's Centre on Stuttgart—his Left on the line of the Austrian retreat.

The Archduke's retreat on Ulm was now secure. But his army was enfeebled by two causes—1st, by the garrisons he had thrown into Mayence, Ehrenbreitstein, Königstein, Mannheim, Philipsburg—in all, 30,000 men; 2d, by the defection of the contingents of Saxony, Suabia, and Baden, which states withdrew their forces when their territories were uncovered by the retreat of the Austrians. His numbers were thus reduced to—

Numbers of  
the hostile  
forces.

24,000 infantry—11,000 cavalry,  
Against 45,000 infantry— 5,000 cavalry;

not counting the respective wings of the two armies operating in the Black Forest, where the French had also a superiority.

Aalen to  
Wurzburg, 80.

Resuming his retreat, he fell back to a position where he covered the road, Aalen-Wurzburg, by which a junction with Wartensleben might

be effected. But on the 26th, when he took position there, this junction was no longer practicable, since Wartensleben had retired from Wurzburg, followed by Jourdan, on the 22d. The Archduke had therefore no longer any reason for retaining his strong position in the defiles—in fact, he had good reason to hasten his retreat. For there was still hope of effecting the desired junction by Ingolstadt or by Ratisbon; but if he were to linger too long, Wartensleben might be driven quite out of the theatre, when nothing would be left for the Archduke but to fall back to Enns or Budweis. Therefore he recommenced his retreat through the defiles on the north bank of the Danube, till his Left rested on the river between Gunzburg and Dillingen, and his line stretched thence by Heidenheim, Neresheim, towards Nordlingen; and he destroyed all the bridges on the Danube between Ulm and Donauwerth, except that above Gunzburg, left to facilitate his junction with the Left Wing, then near him on the south bank.

The two armies faced each other for some days, the Archduke covering the evacuation of the magazines on the Danube; while Moreau reconnoitred the country (at that time very imperfectly known) before venturing to advance.

*11th August.*—The Archduke, seeing an opportunity in the disposition of Moreau's army, part of which was still in the defiles, attacked him at Neresheim. The action was indecisive.

*13th August.*—The Archduke crossed the Danube and joined his Left Wing.

*14th and 15th August.*—He moved down the Danube.

*16th August.*—He recrossed the river at several points near Ingolstadt.

Meanwhile, Wartensleben had quitted Bamberg on the 2d August, sending his baggage to Egra; and being constantly outflanked on the right, had taken the direction of Nuremberg. The French followed, and, on the 9th, Wartensleben retired towards Amberg, where he arrived on the 12th. He had orders from the Archduke, with whom he was now in communication by the line Eichstadt-Neumarkt, to remain there as long as possible; and Jourdan, finding himself in a difficult country of woods and ravines, and seeing his policy of outflanking the Austrian Right scarcely feasible, since there was but one road fit to operate by, halted to rest his army between Nuremberg and Amberg till the 16th.

Bamberg to  
Nuremberg,  
36.

Nuremberg to  
Amberg, 38.

Eichstadt to  
Neumarkt, 36.

17th August.—Jourdan from Amberg towards the Naab.

Bernadotte with a division at Neumarkt to cover the right flank.

Wartensleben retreating to the Naab.

Archduke  
reinforces  
Wartensle-  
ben.

Archduke, taking with him 20,000 infantry and 8000 cavalry, was marching from Neuburg towards Neumarkt.

He left General Latour, with 30,000 men, on the Lech to contain Moreau, who had 60,000.

Moreau, in doubt as to the Archduke's movements, was still on the north bank of the Danube.

18th to 22d August.—Jourdan, with 45,000 (9000 of whom at Neumarkt); and Wartensleben with 34,000, faced each other on the Naab.

22d August.—Archduke attacked Bernadotte at Neumarkt, and drove him towards Nuremberg.

19th August.—Moreau passed the Danube at Dillingen, advancing to the Zusam.

23d August.—The Archduke, sending a detachment to pursue Bernadotte, and another towards Nuremberg, turned towards the Naab. He ordered Wartensleben to be ready to push Jourdan on the least appearance of a retrograde movement; and in any case to attack him on the 24th, when the imperial army would certainly debouch on the right flank of the French.

That night Jourdan, apprised of the retreat of Bernadotte and the advance of the Archduke, quitted the Naab to take position in rear of Amberg.

24th August.—Jourdan took position at Amberg.

Wartensleben advanced upon him.

Jourdan  
retreats.

The two Austrian armies joined, numbering in all 62,000, against 45,000 French; and Jourdan, after a partial action, commenced his retreat by Nuremberg, Bamberg, Schweinfurt, whence there was a road to the Lahn north of the Mayne.

Moreau  
advances.

Moreau forced the passage of the Lech between Rain and Augsburg, with considerable loss to Latour.

25th to 28th August.—Jourdan retreated to the Rednitz, followed by the Archduke.

Latour to the Iser followed by Moreau.  
Austrian Right and French Left before Ingolstadt.

*29th August.*—The Archduke detached 10,000 men under Nauendorf to reinforce Latour.

*30th to 31st August.*—The Archduke forced the Rednitz, and Jourdan fell back by Zeil to Schweinfurt. The Archduke followed to Bamberg. Zeil to Schweinfurt, 18.

*1st Sept.*—Latour, reinforced by Nauendorf, attacked Moreau's left at Geisenfeld in an indecisive action.

Jourdan at Schweinfurt.  
Archduke advancing on Wurzburg.

*2d to 3d Sept.*—Jourdan, trying to gain the Wurzburg road as shorter and better to retreat upon, brought on an action, in which he was defeated and forced to retreat by the north bank. Each army made for the Lahn, the French by Arnstein-Giessen, the Austrians by Aschaffenburg-Frankfort.

*3d to 8th.*—The Austrians entered Frankfort.

Moreau, raising the blockade of Cassel, opposed them with the investing corps.

Moreau advanced his Centre to Freising and Moosburg—Wings before Ingolstadt and Munich.

*9th Sept.*—Jourdan arrived on the Lahn, and was pushed thence over the Rhine, which he recrossed on the 21st. Jourdan recrosses the Rhine.

Moreau, ignorant of the fate of Jourdan's army, from which he had no intelligence except rumours, resolved to concentrate his army in a position on the Danube, where he could at once check Latour and be ready to move to the assistance of his colleague. Moreau, in doubt,

*11th to 12th Sept.*—Moreau moved to his left on Neuburg, sending Desaix towards Nuremberg as a diversion on the chance of favouring Jourdan. sends his Left across the Danube.

Latour followed. Nauendorf crossed to left bank.

*13th to 18th.*—Moreau halted on the Lech. Latour's Right crosses.

On the 18th, Kehl, Moreau's point of passage on the Rhine, was attacked by the Austrian garrison of Mannheim, set free by the Archduke's success. The French force covering the communications with the Rhine, at first defeated, rallied and repulsed the attack. Archduke assails Moreau's communications.

*19th to 24th.*—Moreau retreated to the Iller, where he took post from Ulm to Memmingen. Latour fronted him on the line Gunzburg-Augsburg. Moreau retreats.



Nauendorf was near Ulm on the north bank to prevent Moreau from moving towards the Archduke. Frölich with Latour's Left Wing was at Memmingen, and thence to Kempten, to keep Moreau from moving over the Alps towards Italy.

Austrians  
manœuvre  
widely on his  
flanks.

*29th Sept. to 1st Oct.*—Moreau in position behind the Lake of Buchau covering the roads into the Forest. Latour's centre at Biberach. Nauendorf from Ulm by Reutlingen to join the troops which had attacked Kehl, and which were now occupying the defiles of the Forest in rear of Moreau.

The Archduke, bringing 16,000 men from the Lahn, had crossed the Neckar, 29th September.

Thus threatened in rear, Moreau resolved, before entering the defiles, to disembarass his retreat of Latour, who, by the wide dispersion of his forces, invited attack.

He defeats  
them, and  
retreats  
through the  
Forest,

*2d Oct.*—Moreau defeated Latour with heavy loss at Biberach.

*4th Oct.*—Moreau resumed his retreat, entering the defiles in three columns at Siegmaringen, at Stokach, and between Stockach and Lake Constance, followed by Latour.

*5th Oct.*—The Austrian detachments seeking to close the Villingen road were defeated by Moreau's leading division. The detachments retreated into the valley of the Kinzig.

and emerges  
in the Rhine  
valley.

*11th.*—The Austrian posts guarding the Höllenthal were driven on Friburg.

*12th to 15th Oct.*—The French passed the Höllenthal.

Archduke  
concentrates  
there.

The Austrian detachments from the Forest, and the Archduke's force, united in the Rhine valley on the lower Elz.

*16th and 17th.*—Nauendorf and Latour joined the Archduke. Moreau manœuvred ineffectually to reach Kehl by the Kinzig.

*19th.*—The Archduke attacked the French at Emmendingen and forced them to retreat.

Brisach to  
Kehl, 50.

*21st.*—Moreau threw a bridge at Brisach, and a division crossed the Rhine with orders to march to Kehl, recross there, and make a diversion on the enemy's rear, which might still enable the French army to remain on the right bank of the Rhine, and took with the remainder a strong position at Schliengen next day.

The Archduke advanced and was joined by Frölich issuing from the Höllenthal.

24th.—The Archduke attacked Moreau's position.

25th.—Moreau recrossed the Rhine at Huningen.

The Austrians besieged and took during the winter the fortifications of Huningen and Kehl.

Moreau  
recrosses the  
Rhine.

#### COMMENTS.

As the columns of a single army, destined for combined action, are often separated by considerable intervals while approaching their object, it is evident that the fact of separation alone cannot constitute a double line. It is when the separation is so complete—whether owing to distance, to obstacles, or to want of communication—that no concert exists between the armies, and the action of each is independent, that the case of the double line is presented. The Austrian were nearly as far apart as the French armies; but when once united under the Archduke, all their movements were directed with a purpose of constant co-operation and ultimate junction. Jourdan and Moreau had equal facilities for communicating and combining their forces against the enemy; the fact that they did not use them, while the Austrians did, thereby gaining a campaign with inferior numbers, fully displays the advantages of concerted action, and of interposing between the parts of an enemy's front.

What consti-  
tutes a double  
line of opera-  
tion.

When the Archduke moved on the 26th June with part of his army to reinforce the army opposed to Moreau, he took with him a force which left Wartensleben inferior to Jourdan, without giving himself a superiority over Moreau. Criticising this operation, he says himself that he ought to have left with Wartensleben only a force sufficient to observe Jourdan, and to have transferred to the other side of the theatre such numbers as would have enabled him to drive Moreau over the Rhine again. In fact, a consideration of the remarks at the beginning of this Part will show that if an army is not intended to fight, but only to retard the enemy, any increase of numbers beyond what is necessary will only serve to embarrass its own retreat rather than the advance of the enemy. For the essence of the retarding operation is, that the force performing it shall withdraw promptly before it is outnumbered. But with the extent of front occupied the difficulty of withdrawing without a battle increases, and with it the risk of loss. Consequently, if a retarding force

Limitation of  
the contain-  
ing force.

be only just so inferior to the enemy as to be unable to accept battle, a great part of it will be always in column on the roads, and will therefore be only an encumbrance. The Archduke might have taken 15,000 additional troops from the Lahn to the Neckar, and still have enabled Wartensleben to fulfil his part, especially by leaving him strong in cavalry in that open country.

Transverse lines necessary for combination.

For the purpose of combination, good and direct roads between the Austrian armies were indispensable. Consequently the transverse lines, Frankfort-Heilbronn, Aalen-Wurzburg, Eichstedt-Neumarkt, Ratisbon-Amberg, became of vast importance. In order to combine, it was necessary that both Austrian armies should cover one of these transverse lines, or be in a condition to open it. Hence the difficulty of securing the opportunity of junction.

Circumstances in favour of the Austrian combination.

It may be said that when the Archduke left Latour on the Danube, the situation merely became reciprocal; for though he was about to outnumber Jourdan, yet Moreau equally outnumbered Latour, and therefore a blow struck on one side might be balanced on the other. But there were two circumstances in favour of the Austrian commander. The first was, that Moreau remained for many days ignorant of the Archduke's design, and conceived himself still to be opposed by the same numbers as before, thus giving the Austrian general time to strike his first blows. And secondly, the direction of the Archduke's march menaced Jourdan's communications, and compelled him to retreat *apart* from Moreau; whereas, if Latour were compelled to retreat, he would fall back *towards* the Archduke, giving and receiving support.

As the Archduke, on arriving at Neumarkt, was already on Jourdan's flank, it would at first sight appear that he would have done better to retain that advantage by calling Wartensleben towards him, when together they might have anticipated Jourdan at Nuremberg, and cut off his retreat. But Jomini suggests two very probable reasons why Wartensleben was not ordered to manœuvre by his flank towards the Prince. One was, that apparently no practicable road existed from Wartensleben's left to the Archduke's right. The other was, that Wartensleben, in so manœuvring, would uncover the direct road to Ratisbon, and that Jourdan, despairing of effecting a retreat, might join Moreau on the Danube. In fact, he would thereby be resorting to the alternative that

has already been indicated as being frequently the best which a commander cut from his base can adopt—namely, to traverse the communications of the enemy.

As it was, Jourdan, at Amberg, formed front to a flank, and, when defeated, still found the enemy aiming at his base on the Rhine by a shorter road than he possessed himself. It was owing to this that Jourdan's retreat was so precipitate; fearing to be anticipated on the Lahn, he passed in twenty-nine days over the same distance between the Naab and the Rhine which it had cost him fifty-six days to traverse when following Wartensleben.

Jourdan once beyond the Rhine, the Archduke, by a march parallel to his own base, struck at the communications of Moreau. And even had Jourdan, on learning his departure, been in condition to recross the Rhine, still the containing force left there, backed on the Archduke, would have kept him beyond the Mayne till the blow against Moreau had taken effect.

When, therefore, the parts of a combined force are interposed between independent armies advancing from a common base, the advantages of the former consist, first, in the power of mutual reinforcement and support; 2dly, in the ignorance of the enemy as to the side on which the blow will fall; 3dly, in the *direction* of the attack which both keeps them asunder and threatens their lines of retreat. And as the best remedy for the disadvantages of the situation is for the forces thus menaced to retire in order to combine; so the present case will be worse than that of an originally combined force, the front of which has been pierced, inasmuch as the absence of preconcert for such a contingency will render the junction still more uncertain.

General deductions.

For these reasons, then, it seems that for two armies to operate against a combined enemy by lines where, from distance or want of concert, they are independent of each other, *is to confer on the enemy an advantage greater than that which has been demonstrated to follow from interposing between the parts of an extended front*, and that advantage will therefore be such as to compensate for considerable inferiority of numbers.

Disadvantage of separation enhanced in the present case.

The advantage of concentrating an army whose communications are threatened is displayed in Moreau's retreat; when the Austrians, seeking



to close all the issues, laid themselves open to frequent disasters without preventing him from regaining the Rhine.

Archduke  
Charles on  
the duties of  
a containing  
force.

The objects to be kept in view by the commander of a retarding or containing force are well explained by the Archduke in his criticisms on Latour's operations. "If," he says, "Latour was too feeble to stop his adversary and hinder him by force from advancing, he should have sought to attain the same end by the direction of his movements and the choice of his positions. . . . If, instead of spreading his troops along the Lech, he had concentrated the greater part near Rain, and had rested always on the Danube without allowing himself to be separated from the Archduke, he would have fulfilled perfectly the object with which he was detached. If Moreau had advanced upon him, he had only to avoid the engagement, retiring upon Ingolstadt, where the bridge gave him the power of passing the Danube, establishing himself on the other bank and sending a detachment only on the Iser to stop the enemy's parties. Finally, there would remain to him the impracticable defile of the Altmuhl.

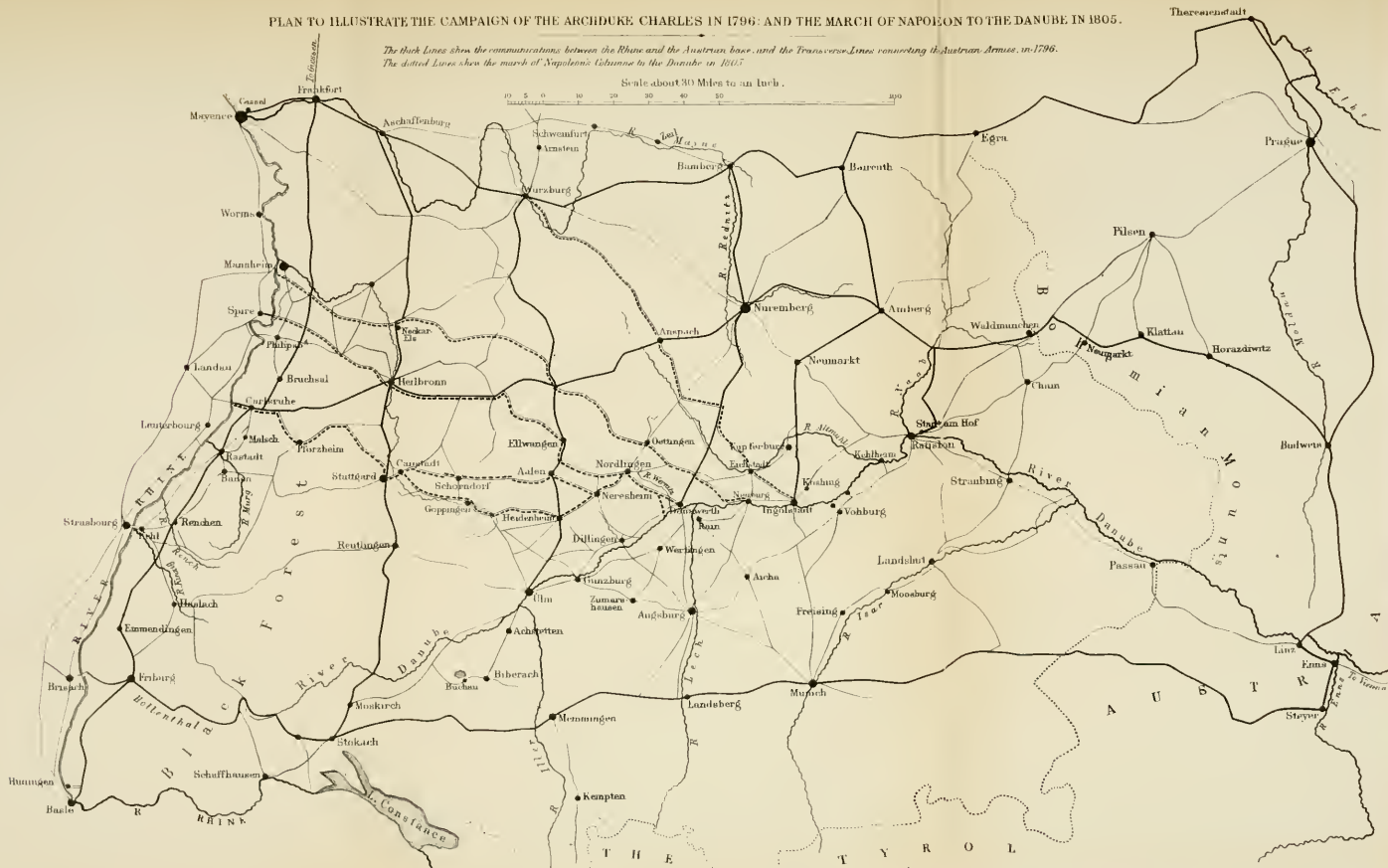
"In calculating the time which was necessary for Moreau to pass the Danube and arrive on the Altmuhl, it is evident that the conflict between the Archduke and Jourdan would be decided first. If victory remained with the Archduke, he might detach sufficient troops towards the Altmuhl to reinforce Latour—or better still, draw Latour half way towards him, to undertake, conjointly, an operation against the flank and rear of Moreau. The consequences of a check while so operating would not be disastrous; Latour covering the retreat, the army, composed of all the troops of both corps, might in the last resort retire honourably into Bohemia: might even perhaps steal some marches on Jourdan, and, falling in force on Moreau, beat him, throw him back on Ingolstadt, pass the Danube there, and thus gain the Iser and the Inn before the enemy."

While gathering these lessons from the campaign, it is not to be inferred that it was perfect of its kind. The Archduke in narrating it has frankly owned his errors. The Austrian armies were driven to their very last line of possible junction, and had traversed great part of the theatre, before they combined. The retreat of Wartensleben from point to point might have been better timed, and its direction would have been more judicious by being more concentric, for by keeping so distant a line

PLAN TO ILLUSTRATE THE CAMPAIGN OF THE ARCHDUKE CHARLES IN 1796; AND THE MARCH OF NAPOLEON TO THE DANUBE IN 1805.

The thick Lines show the communications between the Rhine and the Austrian base, and the Transverse Lines connecting the Austrian Armies in 1796.  
The dotted Lines show the march of Napoleon's Column to the Danube in 1805.

Scale about 30 Miles to an Inch.





he jeopardised the maintenance of communications with the commander-in-chief. And the measure of the force transferred to either wing for the decisive blows was not judiciously estimated.

Had the French armies operated each against the *inner* flank of the opposing force, driving the Austrians asunder, without however combining or concerting operations against them—Moreau, for instance, aiming to drive the Archduke back upon the Tyrol, Jourdan manœuvring to hem Wartensleben against the Mayne—the case would have borne the aspect of two distinct campaigns, where each general, on both sides, must have relied on himself for opposing his adversary. But had the French armies, besides interposing, also combined their operations, they would have commanded all the advantages which their actual measures left to their opponents.

At the moment of separating from Latour, the Archduke said, “Let Moreau go even to Vienna: that will matter little, provided I beat Jourdan.” At first it would seem as if such an advance by Moreau would balance any success against Jourdan. But the fact is, that no success of Moreau *south of the Danube* would deprive the Archduke of his *base in Bohemia* or prevent him from forcing Moreau to retreat by falling on his rear. His prevision, therefore, was fully justified.



## CHAPTER IV.

## SUBJECT CONTINUED.

A VARIETY of the same problem is offered by the case of an army which, in covering some point, such as the capital of an empire, is assailed by armies whose general aim is to reach that point, and who, so far, act in concert, but who follow distinct paths towards it.

The great example of this is the campaign of 1814 in France, when Napoleon with a single army covered Paris against the Allies, who were converging on the capital by three lines, namely, from the Upper Rhine, from the Lower Rhine, and from Holland. But as that campaign affords also the best illustration of a problem of *obstacles*, it is reserved for a subsequent chapter.

## CAMPAIGN IN VIRGINIA, 1861.

See Map  
No. 1.

The campaigns in Virginia being directed against Richmond, and generally by more than one line, afford several instances of the case under discussion.

Various lines  
of operation. ☐

In June 1861 the Confederate capital was menaced by two armies. One under General Patterson, about 20,000 strong, was on the Upper Potomac, about Williamsport; the other under M'Dowell was preparing to advance from Alexandria towards Centreville. Opposed to Patterson was the Confederate general Johnston, with 11,000, at Harper's Ferry; and General Beauregard was organising a force on the Bull Run stream to oppose the advance of M'Dowell. West of the Alleghanies, M'Clellan,

with a great superiority of force, was operating against the Confederates under Garnett.

Beauregard's position covered the junction of two railroads at Manassas. One running south-west to Gordonsville, branched there to Richmond and Lynchburg; the other ran westward into the Shenandoah Valley. And the only safe communication between the two Confederate armies thus separated by the Blue Ridge of the Alleghanies, was up the valley, to Strasburg or Front Royal, and thence by the Manassas Railroad. Therefore, when Patterson, crossing the Potomac, advanced on Martinsburg, he threatened not only to cut Johnston from Beauregard, but also to seize the road leading on Beauregard's flank. Should both Federal armies advance simultaneously, Johnston's force would be isolated, and Beauregard's exposed to their combined attack. Nor was this all: for on reaching Winchester, Patterson might be joined by M'Clellan. Winchester and Manassas Junction were therefore points absolutely necessary to the Confederates for mutual defence and support, the occupation of either being dependent on the possession of the other.

Confederate  
transverse  
line.

Consequences  
of losing it.

Winchester  
to Manassas  
Junction, 60.

Accordingly, when Patterson advanced, Johnston, on the 16th June, fell back from Harper's Ferry towards Winchester. He thus maintained his communications with Beauregard, and prevented the combination of Patterson and M'Clellan.

Johnston, in  
falling back,  
covers this  
line.

16th July.—After various indecisive manœuvres and movements to and fro in the valley, Patterson, again advancing towards Winchester, paused, and began to extend his left eastward as if to combine with M'Dowell.

Harper's  
Ferry to Win-  
chester, 28.

That day M'Dowell, 60,000 strong, advanced from Alexandria to Fairfax Court-House.

M'Dowell  
advances.

17th.—Beauregard's troops, about 20,000, were assembled at the various passages over Bull Run which might be approached by roads from Fairfax Court-House.

Alexandria to  
Fairfax C.H.,  
16.

18th.—M'Dowell made a partial attack on the line of Bull Run, which was repulsed.

Johnston, quitting his camp, marched through Winchester to Millwood, on his way to reinforce Beauregard; masking the movement by an advance of cavalry towards Patterson's position, as if menacing an attack. Passing the Blue Ridge at Ashby's Gap, he halted at its eastern base.

Johnston  
moves to  
combine with  
Beauregard.

19th July.—Jackson's brigade, of Johnston's force, moved by rail to Manassas. The cavalry and guns marched by the road.

20th July.—M'Dowell spent this day, as he had spent the 19th, in reconnoitring Beauregard's position. The rest of Johnston's troops were still detained near the Blue Ridge by an obstruction on the railway which prevented transport.

Confederates  
combine  
against  
M'Dowell.

21st July.—M'Dowell, leaving his Left in Centreville, to cover the road to Alexandria from a counter-attack, threw his Centre and Right forward to the river at various points. Outflanking the enemy by the extent of front occupied by his superior numbers, his right passed the stream and turned the Confederate Left. Beauregard met the onset with his immediate reserves, which, though successful in repulsing some of the continual attacks on that side, were on the whole pressed back. But the railroad being now clear, Johnston's troops began to arrive on the field. The direction of their advance brought them on the flank and rear of the Federal Right Wing, already stoutly opposed. The result was the well-known panic flight of the Federal army.

Patterson  
recrosses the  
Potomac.

Patterson, on finding Johnston gone from his front, retired on Harper's Ferry.

#### CAMPAIGN IN VIRGINIA, 1862.

Federal lines.

In 1862, Richmond was again threatened on several lines.

White House  
to Richmond,  
20.

M'Clellan, with the main army, 85,000, landing on the Yorktown peninsula, and establishing his depots at White House, on the Pamunkey, was advancing on the capital by the roads leading across the Chickahominy.

Fredericks-  
burg to Rich-  
mond, 55.

On his right, M'Dowell, with 35,000, advanced from Fredericksburg towards the Upper Pamunkey to combine with him.

Fredericks-  
burg to  
Manassas  
Junction, 35.

Sigel was at Manassas Junction, connected by a brigade at Front Royal with Banks in the lower part of the Shenandoah Valley.

Franklin to  
Manassas  
Junction, 120.

Fremont, with the army of Western Virginia, was entering the upper part of the Shenandoah Valley from Franklin.

Confederate  
positions.

Norfolk, in Virginia, and several points in North Carolina, were also threatened by detachments landed on the coast.

On the Confederate side, 12,000 men under Magruder opposed M'Clellan's advance.

Jackson, with 15,000, was in the Shenandoah Valley covering the issues through the mountains from Franklin on the one side, and also fronting Banks towards Winchester and Front Royal.

At Norfolk, and the threatened points in North Carolina, were considerable detachments.

Johnston, with the main Confederate army, was in and around Richmond. And a Confederate corps under Anderson faced M'Dowell on the Rappahannock.

Early in May, and before M'Clellan was established on the Pamunkey, Jackson, concentrating superior forces between Woodstock and Harrisonburg, had defeated successively two of Fremont's brigades, forming the advanced-guards of his columns, as they issued from the mountains, and driven them back on Franklin. Fremont, thus repulsed, remained in Western Virginia. Jackson defeats Fremont.

*22d May.*—M'Clellan's army, pushing back Magruder, was assembled on the Chickahominy. At this time the Confederate detachments in North Carolina, and the garrison of Norfolk, had been called in to Richmond, and Johnston's main army, reinforced by these troops and by Magruder's, opposed M'Clellan's further advance. M'Clellan advances on Richmond.

*23d May.*—Jackson attacked and destroyed Banks's detachment at Front Royal. Jackson defeats Banks.

*24th May.*—Jackson continued his march down the valley to attack Banks.

*25th May.*—Jackson attacked Banks at Winchester, and drove him down the valley and over the Potomac with severe loss.

*26th May.*—The Federal President, learning Banks's disaster, and fearing for the safety of Washington, instead of allowing M'Dowell to continue his movement towards M'Clellan, recalled the troops which were already on the march, and despatched the corps to close the avenues to the capital, by Front Royal and Centreville, against Jackson. The President retains M'Dowell's corps.

The Confederate force under Anderson, which had been opposed to M'Dowell, under the joint menace of his advance and of M'Clellan's position, had withdrawn towards Richmond, and was this day at Hanover Court-House, where it might still oppose the junction of those generals, and also form a connecting link between Johnston and Jackson through Gordonsville. Anderson falls back to Hanover.



M'Clellan  
seizes Hano-  
ver C.H.

*27th May.*—M'Clellan, seeing his right thus threatened and his further movements embarrassed by Anderson's position, detached from his Right a body of troops, under Porter, who drove a Confederate division from Hanover Court-House upon Richmond.

*31st May.*—Johnston from before Richmond attacked M'Clellan's Left Wing on the right bank of the Chickahominy, and, after a partial success, was repulsed. Lee succeeded to the command, Johnston being wounded.

M'Clellan now occupied himself with strengthening his own position on the Chickahominy, and bridging the stream at many points before finally advancing upon Richmond.

Gordonsville  
to Richmond,  
74.

Jackson, reinforced from Richmond, was at Gordonsville, from whence, by feints on all sides, he checked Fremont, Banks, Sigel, and M'Dowell.

*21st June.*—Jackson's troops began to move along the Virginia Central Railroad towards M'Clellan's Right.

*25th June.*—M'Clellan began his final advance upon Richmond.

Jackson's advanced troops reached Hanover Court-House.

Jackson com-  
bines with  
Johnston.

*26th June.*—Jackson, in concert with Johnston, part of whose army was transferred from before Richmond to the left bank of the Chickahominy, fell upon M'Clellan's Right.

M'Clellan  
changes his  
front and  
base,

*27th June.*—M'Clellan's troops on the left of the Chickahominy were thus compelled to form front to a flank. He let go his hold of the York river, and by means of his flotilla established a new base on the James river, in rear of both his wings.

and retreats  
to the James.

The series of attacks which forced him through seven days of continual battle back upon the James, now commenced, and lasted till the 3d July, when he gained the shelter of his gunboats on the river.

The other  
Federal army  
advances  
under Pope.

The troops of Sigel (who had also Fremont's corps), Banks, and M'Dowell, were now united into an army under General Pope, whose instructions were to advance upon Gordonsville and take the pressure off M'Clellan. On the 18th July his advanced-guard reached Orange Court-House. Opposed there by Confederate troops from Richmond, he halted.

Meanwhile M'Clellan had been fortifying his position, and meditating another advance by the line of the James, on Richmond, which was still covered by the main Confederate army.

*5th Aug.*—Jackson's corps, detached by Lee, approached Pope's front,

and the Federal general withdrew beyond the Rapidan towards Fairfax. His divisions, some of which guarded the gaps of the hill-range in his rear, were spread over a space of 30 miles. Jackson opposes Pope.

*9th Aug.*—Jackson, whose object was to induce Pope to keep a forward position till the main Confederate army should arrive, fell back over the Rapidan to await Lee.

*17th Aug.*—Lee, from Richmond, arrived on the Rapidan.

M'Clellan's troops were now embarking for Alexandria.

Lee and Jackson, together, had 70,000 men.

Pope, who had 50,000, retired over the Rappahannock.

*25th and 26th Aug.*—Jackson, with his corps, 18,000, moved up the Rappahannock, and thence along the eastern slope of the Blue Ridge, by Orleans and Salem, covered by the hills of Bull Run. Having completed his circuit round Pope's Right, he descended by Thoroughfare Gap upon Bristow Station of the Orange Railway, in rear of the Federals. Lee combines with Jackson.  
M'Clellan embarks for Washington.  
Pope retires.  
Jackson turns Pope's Right.

*27th Aug.*—Pope, thus menaced, advanced by the Warrenton road and by the railway upon Jackson, to clear the line to Alexandria.

At his approach, Jackson retired along the railroad to Manassas Junction, destroying a Federal brigade there.

Pope was reinforced by two of M'Clellan's divisions from Alexandria.

*28th Aug.*—Jackson continued his retreat across Bull Run, and held the line of the river. Pope continued to close upon him. M'Clellan reinforces Pope.

*29th Aug.*—Jackson in position, Left near Centreville, Right towards Thoroughfare Gap, was attacked on his Right by Pope's Left column which had marched from Warrenton.

Lee's army, following Jackson's march, began to issue from the Gap.

Pope's Right entered Centreville. Lee supports Jackson.

*30th Aug.*—Lee's army, having defiled through the Gap, formed line on Jackson's Right, reaching beyond Pope's Left.

Pope formed his Right Wing obliquely across the Alexandria road at Centreville.

Lee attacked and defeated Pope, who, with heavy loss, retreated entirely on Centreville. Pope, defeated, retreats.

Two other divisions of M'Clellan's army, 20,000, arrived to reinforce Pope.

*31st Aug.*—Both armies remained in position.

1st Sept.—Jackson, moving by his left along the hills, threatened the Centreville-Alexandria road.

Pope retreats  
on Washing-  
ton.

Pope resumed his retreat.

2d Sept.—The remains of Pope's army, greatly disorganised by retreating under constant pressure, regained the lines of Alexandria.

#### COMMENTS.

These operations differ from those of 1796 only in the fact that there was so much concert between the assailants as resulted from their having a common and definite object.

But in all these cases the advantage of operating *from* a common centre against widely separated bodies advancing *towards* that centre is apparent. Against one line of invasion a retarding and inferior force is used, while on the other a preponderating force is brought into action; and the first victory is the signal for the general derangement and failure of the enterprise.

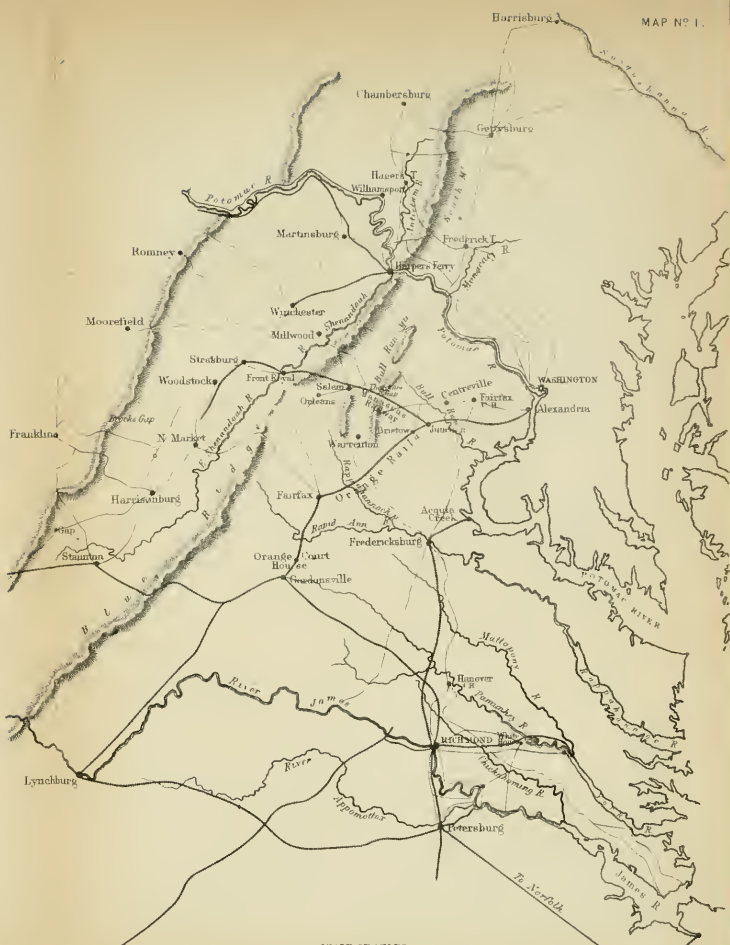
Concentric  
army gene-  
rally forms  
two wings  
and a central  
reserve.

To operate methodically to the best advantage, the covering army, if assailed on two lines, should place on each of these a retarding force at first, considering these as wings, while the mass in reserve is held ready to give a preponderance to either wing, or to both in succession. In all Napoleon's operations against a divided enemy this principle is apparent—at Jena for example, at Millesimo, at Eckmuhl, at Rivoli, and in the cases yet to be quoted of Waterloo, and of the campaign against the Allies on the Seine and Marne.

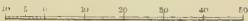
Proportion of  
force on each  
line.

If then, in such a case, the covering army were to be disposed on the two lines in exact proportion to the hostile numbers advancing on them, it would be operating on a false principle. For if in total numbers inferior to the enemy, it would be inferior on each line, and would therefore, presumably, be defeated on each: whereas, as already shown, the situation ought to be made to compensate for inferiority.

As the first movements will generally be in retreat towards the common centre, and as there can only be a limited number of transverse lines which will afford the opportunity of co-operation and combination between centre and wings, it becomes important to inquire to what dis-



SCALE OF MILES.







tance from the point covered the parts of a covering army can operate without risk to the general principle.

If the parts of the covering army should fall back so far before striking a decisive blow, that the enemy's forces, converging, communicate and form one force, all the advantage of the situation is lost, and the defenders are thrown on their tactical resources. Thus, in 1864, Lee on the Rappahannock and Breckenridge in the Shenandoah Valley, opposed Grant on the one side, Sigel on the other; while Beauregard on the side of Petersburg confronted Butler. Breckenridge defeated Sigel, and then reinforced Lee against Grant at Coal Harbour; and Beauregard successfully opposed Butler. But Grant, by a flank march to the James, came into communication with Butler; henceforward they formed one force; and Lee, notwithstanding his fortifications, could never subsequently shake them off. We can, then, form an idea of the minimum distance at which the concentric army can advantageously operate in front of the point it covers—namely, such as will keep the enemy's forces, as they gradually approximate on the converging lines, from uniting.

Minimum of radii of operation.

The maximum distance is less determinate. Yet it is desirable that it should be fixed in some degree, since a natural wish to protect as much territory as possible from the presence of the enemy might lead an army to operate on a frontier very distant from the capital, or other point specially covered. It is evident that space alone, when very long radii are used, will effectually destroy concert between parts of an army, even if those parts be nearer to each other than are the parts of the enemy. For instance, if two days are necessary for communication between the parts, it will avail little, for purposes of *general concert*, that the enemy requires three days, though it may avail much for an *immediate* combination. A general must be very confident in his colleague, who could base a far-seeing design on intelligence of a state of things which existed two days before, a hundred miles away, unless he were certified that the colleague was marching to join him and could not be prevented. At the beginning of the campaign of 1796 there was no real concert between the Archduke and Wartensleben, owing to the distance that separated them. Therefore, if the lines of operation are very divergent, their extension will, by the distance interposed between the concentric forces, render the execution of a concerted plan doubtful.

Radii must be short in proportion to their divergence.

Losses of the  
retarding  
force also  
limit its  
radius.

But there is also another reason why the lines of operation should be limited in extent. It has been pointed out that the retarding force should be strictly limited, since a superfluous number would be an encumbrance on the one line, while its aid would be vitally important on the other. But a force thus retarding a superior enemy performs its duty with a certain loss. For the troops which the enemy first brings into action, being assured of immediate support from the army in rear, can manœuvre to a flank with unusual boldness, and may moreover feel confident that no sustained offensive operation will be attempted against them. On the other hand, if the troops on the flanks of the deployed retarding force are slow in withdrawing towards the line of retreat, they are apt to be cut off—or, if they withdraw too soon, they may lay bare the rear of the centre; and it cannot be expected that on all occasions their movements should be exactly timed. Thus Zieten, in effecting his object of retarding the French columns on the Sambre, lost, in his retreat upon Fleurus, 1200 men. Were there not a reserve to make good these losses, the force would in a few days be so reduced as to be unable to make a stand, and could only be driven in perpetual retreat. According to the length of time that the force will probably be called on to act separately, must its numbers be increased; and on a very extended line, therefore, either the principle of the campaign would be lost sight of by the undue increase of numbers, or else the retarding force would be practically destroyed.

It must not of course be forgotten that an invading army uses as many roads for its advance as are conveniently near and sufficiently direct. In proportion to the number of these which are available will be the difficulties of the retarding force. For if it were to neglect any of them, the enemy's column on that road would turn its flank and arrive in its rear. Supposing, then, that 50,000 men are advancing along two roads; the example of Zieten shows us that, in an ordinary country, 7000 or 8000 men should be disposable on each road, with a general reserve, say of 4000, for casualties. Thus 20,000 men will perform the duty on that line. Supposing, further, that the invaders are in two armies, 50,000 each; that, on the other side, 20,000 are at first thrown out to oppose them on each line, and the mass of the defensive army assembled at some central point; then 40,000 reinforcing one wing will give sufficient supe-

riority to insure victory in a battle on that side, and, after detaching a pursuing force, will also bring a superiority on the other, and probably strike also in a fatal direction. Thus, 80,000 operating concentrically will be successful against 100,000 divided, in an ordinary country; but of course, if circumstances admit (as at Monte Legino and Bull Run) of the whole retarding force being withdrawn, and its weight cast on the other side, this increases the odds in favour of the combined army.

Advantage of the situation is at least 5 to 4.

It is clear also, that *when one line lies through an open country, and the other is difficult, offering few roads to the advance, and many natural obstacles, the retarding force should act on the latter.*

Choice of a line for the retarding force.

Also, when an invaded frontier is very distant from the object, and the defensive army decidedly inferior to the total forces advancing on a double line, it will be better, on military grounds, to make no serious stand near the frontier, but to direct the first efforts to keep the enemy on separate lines, and to fall back to a point where, his forces being diminished by the necessary conditions of invasion, the parts of the combined army shall be near enough to each other to strike concerted blows.

See Pt. II. ch. i.

Lastly, it is evident that the situation is of decisive advantage only when turned to account by a leader who acts with promptitude and resolution. Slowness and indecision will be fatal to the inferior army, the commander of which must be swift to perceive and to use his opportunity.

Swiftness essential.



## CHAPTER V.

CASE OF COMBINED ARMIES OPERATING FROM DIVERGENT BASES.—  
CAMPAIGN OF WATERLOO.

See Maps  
No. 10 and  
No. 12.

THE Duke of Wellington while at the Congress of Vienna, foreseeing that Belgium would probably become the scene of hostilities, had indicated some measures necessary to be taken for the defence of the capital. There were many reasons why this territory should be the theatre of war selected by Napoleon. On other sides—on the Rhine frontier and along the barrier of the Alps—France was already strong against invasion, and comparatively few troops might, for the present, render her secure there. But the frontier adjoining Belgium was open, except for fortresses, which had not prevented the advance of a hostile army in the preceding year; and around Brussels lay the forces of Wellington and Blucher, which by their proximity were the most menacing to Paris. The advance of the Allies on that capital in 1814, and the occupation of the east and south of France by hostile armies, had so much contributed to produce the state of public feeling which compelled the Emperor to abdicate, that he could not, when he entered France in 1815, venture to await, as in the preceding year, in a defensive attitude, the chances of invasion. He was compelled to become the assailant; it only remained to select the point of attack. The Allied armies in Belgium were now unsupported, but a few weeks would enable Russia and Austria to bring overwhelming forces into action. Could he, by a prompt attack, defeat the English and Prussians and gain Brussels, another stride would carry him to the Rhine, and with that great obstacle between him and his enemies, and its passages in his hands, he might, in the most favourable attitude, political as well as

Reasons for  
assuming the  
offensive.

military, await his enemies ; while France, rendered by these first successes forgetful of late disasters, would be arming with new enthusiasm for the struggle. It is true he had but 125,000 men, while the opposing generals, exclusive of garrisons, could bring more than 200,000 into the field. But his army of veterans was one of the finest he had ever led ; the French were accustomed to beat the Prussians ; and Wellington's forces, besides being chiefly young soldiers, were made up of mixed and discordant materials. There was sufficient reason, then, for his selection of Belgium as a territorial line ; but, looking to the circumstances and position of the hostile armies, he saw other grounds for expecting success.

Selection of a Theatre of War.

The Prussian army drew its supplies from Cologne. Its nearest communication lay through Liege. The English were based partly on Antwerp, partly on Ostend ; and from the anxiety which Wellington displayed for the safety of his communications with Ostend, it is evident that they were essential to him. When both armies met in front of Brussels, their communications stretched right and left almost parallel to their front. If Napoleon, from the frontier between Lille and Rocroy, were to operate by his right, and on the right bank of the Meuse, he would come directly on the Prussian communications through Liege. If by his left, between the Lys and Scheldt (as Wellington expected), he would sever the English communications with Ostend. Therefore the Allies were obliged so to dispose their forces as not only to interpose on the main lines to Brussels, but also to protect the roads which linked them to their bases.

Allied bases and communications.

Extension of the Allied front.

Three great roads lead across the frontier upon Brussels, from French fortresses, namely—

Charleroi to Brussels, 35.

Lille-Tournay.  
Valenciennes-Mons.  
Beaumont- } Charleroi.  
Philippeville- }

Had the Allied armies been both of them based on Antwerp, they would, by forming front on *any* arc of which these roads were the radii, have covered both Brussels and their base. As it was, their front extended from Oudenarde to Liege, that is, on an immense arc ; and still covered their communications with their bases very imperfectly.

Prussian positions. The headquarters of Blucher were at Namur, and his corps were thus posted :—

Namur to Charleroi, 24.	Zieten's headquarters,	.	.	.	Charleroi.
Namur to Liege, 35.	Pirch's "	.	.	.	Namur.
Namur to Ciney, 20.	Thielemann's "	.	.	.	Ciney.
	Bulow's "	.	.	.	Liege.

British positions. Wellington's headquarters were at Brussels. His army, in two corps and a Reserve, was thus distributed—

Corps.	Divisions.	Stations.	
Enghien to Quatre Bras, 24.	1st. {	2d. Dutch-Belgian, . . . . .	Quatre Bras, Nivelles.
		3d. do. do. . . . .	Rœulx to Binche.
		3d. British, . . . . .	Soignies to Rœulx, Braine, Enghien.
		1st. do. . . . .	Enghien.
Ath to Oudenarde, 21.	2d. {	2d. British, . . . . .	Ath.
		4th. do. . . . .	Oudenarde.
		1st. Dutch-Belgian, . . . . .	Road of Grammont to Ghent.
		Indian Brigade, . . . . .	Thence to Alost.
Reserve.	{	5th. British, . . . . .	Brussels.
		6th. do. . . . .	Brussels.
		Brunswick, . . . . .	Brussels.
		Nassau, . . . . .	Brussels road to Louvain.
Cavalry.	{	Main body, . . . . .	Grammont, Ninhoë.
		Brunswick, . . . . .	Brussels.
		1st. brig. Dutch-Belgian, . . . . .	Rœulx.
		2d. do. do. . . . .	Rœulx to Mons.
		3d. do. do. . . . .	opposite Maubeuge and Beaumont.

The headquarters of the different corps and divisions being at the places indicated, the troops were so stationed between the frontier and the headquarters as to form a chain of posts towards the enemy. Thus, brigades of Zieten's corps observed the course of the Sambre, and the detachments on their right overlapped those of the Dutch-Belgian division whose headquarters were at Nivelles. The Prussian cavalry videttes were pushed beyond the Sambre ; and their line was taken up and extended by Dutch-Belgian cavalry, till these touched the outposts beyond Mons. In this way a cordon of sentries and videttes was formed throughout the extent of frontier ; the outposts which furnished and supported them were in neighbouring farms or hamlets ; the supports on which these relied

were at other central points in rear of them ; and the posts and supports were thus on concentric lines, the headquarters forming the final centre and point of assemblment of each division.

Napoleon, having assembled the Army of the North behind the screen of the cordon of posts extending along the line of the frontier fortresses, had three courses open to him : 1st, He might move from his right into the space between the Meuse and Moselle (which runs to the Rhine east of the Meuse and nearly parallel), aiming at the Prussian communications ; but this would compel the Prussians and English to concentrate, when the French must give battle with their backs to the Moselle, that is, fronting to a flank. Moreover, the roads in the valleys of those rivers were so bad at that time that such a measure was scarcely feasible. 2d, He might choose one of the three roads leading directly on Brussels ; this was the course which he actually took, and therefore it need not be discussed in this place. 3d, He might advance from Lille between the Lys and Scheldt, turning Wellington's Right, and severing his communications with Ostend ; but this would compel the Allies to unite by throwing Wellington back on Blucher, when in an engagement the French must form front parallel to their communications, and with their backs to the sea. And it was a great advantage to Napoleon that Wellington expected him, even after the campaign was begun, to take the third course.

Choice of a  
line of operation.

Napoleon having, then, resolved on the second alternative, it remained for him to choose between the roads already named. Those of Tournay and Mons were closed by those fortresses which Wellington had caused to be put in a condition to resist a sudden attack. The French army advancing on either of them must either have delayed to besiege them, which would have given the Allies ample time to assemble on the threatened line, or have detached troops to mask them, thereby weakening the army for battle. On the Charleroi road no such obstacle existed ; and, moreover, it led directly on the junction of the English Left and Prussian Right. If unable to oppose the advance, the Allied armies would, the Emperor calculated, incline each to its own base, and thus leave a gap through which he would penetrate to Brussels.

But there was yet another circumstance in favour of this line of operation. The lateral communication of the two armies from Zieten's



headquarters to General Perponcher's was by the road Nivelles-Namur. In rear of that road, behind the point of junction, is the country watered by the Dyle: a tract marshy, intersected, and traversed by none but country roads. If the Allies should lose the communication Nivelles-Namur, the next good road by which they could join would be Wavre-Brussels, or Louvain-Brussels, where their fronts would be on the line uniting the two bases Ostend and Cologne. Was it not probable that, rather than seek so perilous a junction, the Allies would retire each towards his own base?

Such were the conditions under which Napoleon, with his fine army of 125,000 veteran Frenchmen, of whom 20,000 were splendid cavalry, prepared confidently to assail two armies—one nearly equal to his own (Blucher had 116,000 men), and the other also formidable in numbers; for Wellington, exclusive of garrisons, could place about 90,000 men in line of battle.

Allied plans.

The general plan of the Allies—the only plan, indeed, which their defensive posture permitted them to form—was to retard as much as possible the French advance, and then to concentrate for battle on the menaced line. If Napoleon's attack were on the Allied Right, Wellington must try to detain him on the Scheldt till the Prussians should come into line: if on the Allied Left, Blucher must occupy him on the Meuse till the English could come up: if on the Centre, the troops of both armies already on that line must combine to delay him till the Allied forces could unite to deliver battle.

Concentration  
of the French.

On the night of the 14th June the French army was concentrated on the Charleroi-Brussels line as follows:—

	Right Wing,	.	16,000,	.	Philippeville.
Beaumont to	Centre,	.	64,000,	.	Before Beaumont.
Charleroi, 18.	Left Wing,	.	45,000,	.	Leers and Solre-sur-Sambre.

During the day the Dutch outposts between Mons and Binche, and those on the Prussian Right, had observed and reported that French troops had moved through Beaumont towards Philippeville. The commander of a brigade on the Sambre, reconnoitring on the right bank, apprised Zieten at Charleroi of the concentration of the enemy about Beaumont. Later in the day Zieten ascertained through his outposts,

## THEATRE OF THE WATERLOO CAMPAIGN.



SCALE OF MILES.

10 5 0 10 20 30 40 50

MILES



which extended to the borders of the forest surrounding Beaumont, that strong French columns of all arms were assembled in his front, and that everything portended an attack for the following day.

Meanwhile National Guards had replaced the regular troops in the French fortresses, and had for a few days previous to the assembly of the army made such marches and shows of movements along the line of fortresses from Dunkirk (on the coast) to Maubeuge as might seem to indicate an attack on Wellington's Right. These movements were seen by the Duke's outposts, especially by those in front of Tournay, and doubtless tended to confirm his opinion as to the direction in which the expected attack would be made.

*15th June.*—Before daylight the three columns of the French advanced; the Right, which reached the river later than the others, on Chatelet, five miles below Charleroi on the Sambre; the Left, on Marchienne, a mile above the town; the Centre on Charleroi. The Prussians defending these bridges were driven from them, and the heads of the French columns passed the river. Thus the front of the army, which from Philippeville to the Sambre had extended about eighteen miles, was contracted to six miles—not more than enough for the line of battle.

Advance of  
the French.

It was Zieten's business to delay with the troops of his corps the advance of these columns till the Prussians could concentrate. Accordingly he disputed the ground at all favourable points, till at nightfall his brigades, falling concentrically back, united behind Fleurus.

Zieten's corps  
a retarding  
force.

During this time, two other Prussian corps had been marching to concentrate on the previously chosen field of Ligny. Thielemann, from Ciney, reached Namur; Pirch, from Namur, reached Mazy, six miles from Ligny; Bulow had received orders to concentrate his corps, and then march, but as he had not been made acquainted with the urgency of the case, he had delayed to march.

Prussians  
concentrate.

Opposite was the head of the French central column, about half of which was still beyond the Sambre on the Charleroi-Beaumont road. Half of the Right Wing had crossed, and was between Chatelet and Gilly. The whole of the Left had crossed; the head of the column was at Frasne, the rear on the Sambre at Marchienne.

Charleroi to  
Frasne, 10.

Wellington, on first hearing of the French advance in the afternoon, issued these orders:—



“General Dornberg’s brigade of cavalry and the Cumberland Hussars to march on Vilvorde, and bivouac on the highroad near that town.

“The Earl of Uxbridge will please to collect the cavalry this night at Ninhove, leaving the 2d Hussars looking out between the Scheldt and Lys.

“The first division to collect this night at Ath and adjacent, ready to move at shortest notice.

“Third division at Braine-le-Comte, ready, &c.

“Fourth division at Grammont, except the troops beyond the Scheldt, which are to move to Oudenarde.

“Fifth division, 81st Regiment and Hanoverian brigade of the sixth division, to be ready to march from Brussels at a moment’s notice.

“Duke of Brunswick’s corps to collect this night on the road between Brussels and Vilvorde.

“The Nassau troops to collect at daylight to-morrow morning on the Louvain road, ready to move at shortest notice.

“The Hanoverian brigade of the fifth division to collect at Hal, ready to move at daylight towards Brussels, and to halt between Alost and Assche for further orders.

“The Prince of Orange is requested to collect at Nivelles the second and third divisions of the army of the Low Countries, and should that point have been attacked this day, to move the third division British upon Nivelles as soon as collected.

“This movement is not to take place till it is quite certain that the enemy’s attack is on the right of the Prussians and left of the British.

“Lord Hill will be so good as to order Prince Frederick of Orange to occupy Oudenarde with 500 men, and to collect the first division of the army of the Low Countries, and the Indian Brigade at Sotteghem, ready to march at daylight.”

On receiving other information these further orders were issued at ten o’clock at night :—

“The third division to continue its movement from Braine-le-Comte on Nivelles.

“The first division to move from Enghien on Braine-le-Comte.

“The second and fourth divisions from Ath and Grammont and also from Oudenarde, and to continue their movement on Enghien.

“The cavalry to continue its movement from Ninhove on Enghien.

“The above to take place at once.”

16th June.—While the heads of the French columns of the Centre and Right Wing passed Fleurus towards Ligny, the rear portions closed on them and came into line. The Left Wing also, consisting of the corps of Reille and D’Erlon, began to advance and to close up to its front.

The General commanding the Dutch-Belgian division, the brigades of which were at Nivelles and Quatre Bras, took upon himself, on learning Ney’s advance on the evening of the 15th, to concentrate his division at Quatre Bras instead of at Nivelles.

Nivelles to  
Quatre Bras,  
7.

Zieten’s corps at Ligny was reinforced at six in the morning by Pirch’s from Mazy, and at noon by Thielemann’s from Namur.

Meanwhile Napoleon’s views of the state of affairs were thus explained in a despatch to Ney, dated Charleroi, eight in the morning of the 16th:—

Napoleon’s  
estimate of  
the situation.

“I shall be at Fleurus in person before noon. I shall attack the enemy there if I encounter them, and clear the road as far as Gembloux. There, after what may take place, I shall adopt my course, perhaps at three in the afternoon, perhaps this evening. My intention is that, immediately after I shall have chosen my course, you will be ready to march on Brussels: I will support you with the Guard which will be at Fleurus or Sombref, and I shall expect you to arrive at Brussels to-morrow morning. You will march this evening if I form my plan early enough for you to be informed of it to-day, and to accomplish three or four leagues this evening, and to be at Brussels at seven o’clock to-morrow morning.

“You can then dispose your troops in the following manner:—The first division at two leagues in advance of Quatre Bras, if there is no hindrance; six divisions of infantry about Quatre Bras, and one division at Marbais, in order that I may draw them to me at Sombref if I want them; besides, it will not retard your march: Count de Valmy’s corps (3d corps reserve cavalry) at the crossing of the Roman road with that of Brussels, so that I can draw it towards me if I want it; as soon as I have done my part, I will send him the order to rejoin you. I wish to have with me General Lefebvre-Desnouettes’s division of the Guard (light cavalry), and I send you Count de Valmy’s two divisions to replace it. But in my actual plan I prefer to place Count de Valmy where I may recall him if I want him, and not cause General Lefebvre-Desnouettes to

make useless marches, since it is probable that I may decide this evening to march on Brussels with the Guard. However, cover Lefebvre-Desnouettes's division with D'Erlon's and Reille's two divisions of cavalry, so as to spare the Guard, and because if there is any warm work with the English, it had better fall on the Line than on the Guard.

"You perceive thoroughly the importance attached to the taking of Brussels. That will, besides, throw open some chances; for a movement so prompt and sudden will cut off the English army from Mons, Ostend, &c.

"I desire your dispositions may be made so as to march your eight divisions at the first order on Brussels."

At two o'clock the same afternoon he writes thus to Ney through Soult:—

"The Emperor charges me to inform you that the enemy has assembled one corps of troops between Sombref and Bry, and that at half-past two Marshal Grouchy will attack it with the third and fourth corps.

"His Majesty intends that you also should attack whatever is in front of you, and, having pressed the enemy vigorously, that you should manœuvre towards us, to aid in enveloping the corps of which I have spoken. If this corps is driven back first, then his Majesty will manœuvre in your direction, to facilitate in like manner your operations."

Ney had also been informed in the morning by the commander of the first corps, Reille, who was at Gosselies, that the Prussian cavalry was still about Fleurus, and that large columns from Namur were advancing, and forming at St Amand.

He put the Left Wing in motion, in obedience to the Emperor's orders, and, pushing back the Dutch-Belgian detachment at Frasne, continued to advance, till at two o'clock the head of his column was in presence of Perponcher's division at Quatre Bras.

Wellington arrived at Quatre Bras from Brussels between 11 and 12 o'clock. From thence he reconnoitred Ney's position, and, concluding the enemy was not in force there, rode off to concert with Blucher, whom he found at a windmill between Ligny and Bry. He then saw the French dispositions for attack, and concluded that Napoleon was bringing his main force against the Prussians. To assist them the Duke proposed to concentrate a sufficient force as soon as possible at Quatre Bras,

march it upon Frasne and Gosselies, and from thence operate against the enemy's flank and rear. However, on calculating the time that must necessarily elapse before this sufficient force could be concentrated, and finding that Blucher might be defeated in the interval, it was agreed that, in order to save time, the Duke should move this supporting force down the Namur road, and thus come directly to the aid of his colleague.

Quatre Bras  
to Ligny, 8.

About 11 o'clock Napoleon arrived on the field beyond Fleurus. By 1 o'clock he had formed all his troops that had then arrived (60,000, with 204 guns) in order of battle. After making a reconnaissance in person, and receiving reports from his generals of the assembling of the Prussians for battle, he still thought that only one corps, that of Zieten, was before him. He directed Grouchy, with two corps of infantry and three of reserve cavalry, to attack it about half-past 2, and thus commenced the battle of Ligny. The three Prussian corps numbered more than 80,000 men, with 224 guns. About half-past 5, Lobau, bringing the rear of the Centre from Charleroi, augmented the French force to 71,000, with 242 guns.

Battle of  
Ligny.

During the battle Napoleon, becoming better aware of the force he was engaging, sent an order to Ney to direct D'Erlon's corps on St Amand. But Ney, after getting Napoleon's first orders (dated 8 o'clock), had directed D'Erlon on Frasne. He was near that place with the advanced-guard of his corps when an aide-de-camp from Napoleon reached him, who said that the Emperor, hotly engaged, needed aid, and that he had taken on himself to turn the head of the column towards St Amand by Villers Perruin. D'Erlon, sending to apprise Ney, followed to direct the movement of his corps (20,500 men and 46 guns). He arrived on the flank of the Prussians, and the head of his column had entered into the action of Ligny when he received from Ney a peremptory recall. Accordingly he countermarched towards Frasne, and reached Ney at nightfall, after the action at Quatre Bras was ended.

Frasne to St  
Amand, 7.

It was almost night when the battle of Ligny drew to a close with the defeat of the Prussians. The corps of Zieten and Pirch retired to Tilly and Gentinnes; that of Thielemann, which covered the retreat, to Gembloux.

Retreat of  
the Prussians.

Meanwhile Ney, approaching Quatre Bras about 2 o'clock, had in hand 17,000 men and 38 guns to attack Perponcher's division of 7000

Battle of  
Quatre Bras.



men and 16 guns. The Dutch-Belgians sustained the first attack made with the head of the French column till half-past 3, when 2000 Dutch-Belgian cavalry which had assembled at Nivelles, in falling back from the country between Rœulx, Mons, and Binche, came on the field at the same time as Picton's division, which, detained for further orders at the junction of Mont St Jean, had been summoned to Quatre Bras by an order of the Duke, who had returned from his interview with Blucher in time to confront Ney. Brunswick's corps followed Picton's, when the Duke had 18,000 infantry, 2000 cavalry, 28 guns; Ney, as before, 15,700 infantry, 1800 cavalry, 38 guns.

The next reinforcement was to the French. Kellermann joined Ney, who now had 3700 cavalry, 44 guns.

At 5 o'clock Halkett's brigade of Alten's division from Braine-le-Comte, and Kielmansegge's Hanoverian brigade with two field-batteries, joined Wellington, raising his force to 24,000 infantry, 2000 (defeated) cavalry, 40 guns.

Ney was also then reinforced by Kellermann's remaining division of heavy cavalry and troop of artillery. He now had 15,700 infantry, 5000 cavalry, 50 guns. Thus the battle was continued with a sufficiently even balance of force—the French counting 3000 cavalry and 10 guns against the Duke's excess of 8000 infantry.

At half-past 5, Ney, aware of the last reinforcement to the English, ordered D'Erlon up. Between 6 and 7 he learnt that his general had been directed on St Amand. He sent to recall him. Meanwhile the Anglo-Belgians had been reinforced as follows:—12 guns of Alten's division, 6 of the King's German Legion, 1 Hanoverian, 2 Brunswick battalions, the 1st British division from Enghien, with 12 guns. Wellington now had 30,000 infantry, 2000 cavalry, 68 guns. The French remained as before. Ney relinquished the conflict at nightfall. Both sides bivouacked on the ground.

*17th June.*—Wellington remained ignorant of Blucher's fortunes all night. But daylight showed him that Ney was still in position in his front, which would hardly have been the case had Napoleon been defeated. A reconnoissance along the Namur road ascertained that the French were upon it, between Quatre Bras and Ligny; and an aide-de-camp from Blucher shortly afterwards reached the Duke, having come

by a road farther in rear. Wellington sent his ally word that he would fall back towards Waterloo to effect a junction with him; and that, if Blucher would join him with two corps, he would await Napoleon's onset there.

Uxbridge's cavalry from Ninove had come in in the night. Covered by it, Wellington began in the forenoon to withdraw his forces from Quatre Bras through Genappe upon Waterloo. This movement was almost completed when in the afternoon Napoleon's advanced-guard from Ligny appeared, and pressed the rear of the British cavalry as it retired through Genappe.

Ninove to Quatre Bras, 35.  
British retreat.  
French Centre combines with Left.

The British troops from the right, then at Nivelles and Braine-le-Comte, were directed on Mont St Jean.

From Waterloo the Duke sent the following despatch to General Colville:—

“The army retired this day from its position at Quatre Bras to its present position in front of Waterloo.

“The brigades of the 4th division at Braine-le-Comte to retire at daylight to-morrow upon Hal.

Hal to Wellington's Right, 10.

“General Colville must be decided by the intelligence he receives of the enemy's movements in his march to Hal, whether he moves by the direct route or by Enghien.

“Prince Frederick of Orange is to occupy with his corps the position between Hal and Enghien, and is to defend it as long as possible.

“The army will probably continue in its present position in front of Waterloo to-morrow.”

On the side of the Prussians, Zieten and Pirch retired from Tilly and Gentinnes by Mont St Guibert. Zieten's corps crossed the Dyle at Wavre and took up a position; Pirch's halted on the right bank.

Gentinnes to Wavre, 10.

Thielemann, arriving at Gembloux, found Bulow near that place. Receiving orders for the general concentration, Bulow's corps moved on Wavre, followed by Thielemann's.

Napoleon's army remained at Ligny till the afternoon, when Grouchy with 33,000 men was sent in pursuit of the Prussians. His orders were to follow them, complete their rout, and never lose sight of them. He followed in the direction of Gembloux, and arriving there at nine in the evening, many hours after the Prussians had left, reported to Napoleon at

French Right pursues the Prussians.

ten that he believed the Prussians to be divided into three columns, one retreating to Wavre, one to Perwez, the third to Namur.

Quatre Bras  
to field of  
Waterloo, S.  
Napoleon quitted the field of Ligny with the rest of his army about the same time as Grouchy, and moved by the Namur road to Quatre Bras, where Ney was still in position. Their combined forces then followed Wellington's march to Waterloo, where the Duke was in position in front of the junction of the Nivelles and Genappe roads, with his centre across the latter.

18th June.—Between 11 and 12 the French commenced their attack on Wellington.

Prussian movements :—

Wavre to  
Frischermont,  
10.

Bulow at daybreak, through Wavre to St Lambert.  
Zieten at noon, by Ohain towards Frischermont.  
Pirch at noon, through Wavre to follow Bulow.

Thielemann's  
corps a re-  
tarding force.  
Allied armies  
combine.  
At 8 in the morning Grouchy, who had been reconnoitring on several roads for intelligence, began his advance by Sart-à-Walhain upon Wavre, and at noon his advanced-guard attacked Pirch's rear-guard on the right bank of the Dyle. Thielemann's corps, which was to have followed Zieten, was left on the Dyle at Wavre to oppose Grouchy.

At 5 in the afternoon Bulow's advanced troops issued on the French right at Planchenoit.

At 7 in the evening Zieten's advanced troops joined Wellington's Left at Frischermont.

French de-  
feated.

At 7 also Pirch arrived in rear of Bulow, and was directed on Maransart. The arrival of the Prussians decided the battle, and their attack being on the French flank and rear, while the English advanced on the front of the enemy, the defeated army was completely routed, and fled over the frontier by the great road of Charleroi, pursued by the Prussians.

19th June.—The main French army, almost dispersed, continued its flight.

French Right  
Wing, though  
successful, re-  
treats.

Grouchy, who had spent the preceding day in attacking Thielemann on the Dyle, renewed the engagement at daybreak, and drove Thielemann's corps towards Louvain; but intelligence reached him at eleven o'clock of the defeat of Napoleon the day before. Masking the move-

ment by troops on the Dyle, he at once began his retreat by Mont St Guibert, upon Gembloux, for Namur.

Pirch's Prussian corps marched on the night of the 18th to intercept Grouchy. It reached a point between Tilly and Gentinnes on the 19th at mid-day, but failed to advance further, or to discover that Grouchy's force was crossing its front. Wavre to  
Namur, 28.

Next day Thielemann and Pirch pressed the rear of Grouchy, who, leaving a division in Namur, made good the retreat of his corps along the Meuse by Dinant, and passed the frontier in good order.

#### COMMENTS.

Former chapters will have made the reader acquainted with the grounds on which Napoleon framed the design of this campaign, and threw himself with a force very inferior to that of the Allies upon their Centre.

In 1796, as in 1815, the armies opposed to him had advanced from divergent bases till they united ; and when he pierced their Centre and destroyed their concert, Beaulieu had retired upon Acqui, Colli upon Turin. It was to be expected, therefore, that if the Centre of the Allies in Belgium were pierced, they also would retire towards their bases ; that is to say, Blucher would take the direction of Liege, Wellington of Ostend or of Antwerp. And in their case a far greater difficulty would be offered to reunion than in that of Beaulieu and Colli, owing to the greater divergency of the bases and the lines that led to them. For if Blucher, driven from the line Sombref-Liege, should attempt to rejoin his colleague by that of Wavre-Liege, he would be operating on a front parallel to his line of communication ; and the risk he ran is evident from the fact that, on the 19th, Grouchy, by defeating Thielemann on the Dyle, actually cut him from that line. Supposing, then, that Napoleon had beaten Wellington before Blucher's arrival on the field, the Prussian general would have found himself in the presence of a victorious enemy, with his own retreat cut off. Had he attempted to recover his communications with Cologne by Louvain-Maestricht, the French from Wavre would have been on that line before him, when another lost battle would have been ruin.

Disadvantage  
of divergent  
bases.



French operate in two wings and Reserve.

Remembering, then, the triumphs of his earlier campaign, and perceiving still greater advantages for an attack of the same kind upon the Allies in Belgium, Napoleon provided for it from the outset by dividing his army into two Wings, with which to feel the enemy on each side, and a Central Reserve to reinforce either at discretion. Thus, first, he joined his Centre to his Right against Blucher at Ligny; then, leaving his Right Wing to pursue the Prussians, he joined the main body to the Left Wing for the attack on Wellington. The recollection of what he aimed at, and of the result which precedents had led him to expect, furnishes a key to the incidents (many of them still disputed and misinterpreted) of the whole campaign.

Reasons for attacking Blucher first.

Why did Napoleon throw his weight in the first instance on the Prussians at Ligny rather than on the English at Quatre Bras?—the intention to do which was made evident by the direction of his Centre upon Fleurus before he knew what the proportions of the hostile forces at those points might be.

The essential conditions of Napoleon's plan were, to keep the Allies from uniting, and also to separate them in such a way as to open the road to Brussels.

The separation and consequent retreat of the Allies would be accomplished with equal certainty by seizing either of the two points, Quatre Bras or Sombref. So far it would seem almost a matter of indifference which might be the chief object of attack. But the Allied generals would then seek to reunite on the next available line. If either of them would attempt this movement with greater difficulty and risk than the other, it would be good policy to attack him first, since defeat added to his other disadvantages might render a junction impossible before his colleague should be defeated also.

The other Prussian corps were marching to join Zieten's by the roads Ciney-Namur and Liege-Hottomont. Pirch from Namur would be the first to join Zieten. Were Pirch and Zieten defeated, or Zieten only, before being supported, they would, by retiring on Hottomont, be separated from Thielemann, or, by retiring on Namur, be separated from Bulow. If hotly pursued, it might be necessary to retreat to Hannut or Liege. For, as already stated, the course proper for the parts of an army thus separated is to retreat in order to recombine; and Blucher must

unite his own forces before he could aid his colleague. But at Hannut, Liege, or even Hottomont, he would still be very far either from Wellington or Brussels.

On the other hand, supposing that Napoleon had reversed the actual order of events, and had first brought his Centre to aid Ney against Wellington, and, leaving his Left Wing to pursue the British, had next brought his Centre to the aid of Grouchy against Blucher, Wellington, driven from Quatre Bras, would have retreated, as he did, towards Waterloo; his troops, then on the march to join him, would have been directed, as they were, on Hal, whence Ney could not have prevented them from marching to join Wellington. Meanwhile Blucher (who could not have been prevented by the small force in his front from assembling his army), aware of his colleague's retreat, would have marched to Wavre on the 17th, followed by the main French army. Posted on the Dyle, he could have maintained the battle till Wellington, leaving a force to contain Ney, should bring the rest of his army to La Hulpe or Wavre to overwhelm Napoleon. The great battle which was fought at Waterloo would have been fought at Wavre by the Allies united.

If, then, Blucher were attacked *before he could assemble his corps*, he would be driven apart from his objects; if Wellington were so attacked, he would not lose his hold either of Brussels or of his colleague. The general plan of Napoleon was perfectly calculated for success, and it was good policy to attack Blucher first.

But this plan failed in execution. Now we have already seen how much depends on promptitude of movement in operations of this kind. Napoleon did not attack at Ligny till two in the afternoon, when Pirch and Thielemann were with Zieten in line of battle, and when Bulow, but for his delay, should also have been on the field. And the reason why he did not attack sooner was, that only the heads of his columns were before the enemy. Now, as all the French troops started from the same bivouacs, there was no reason why, on those fine roads, the rear of the columns, which marched but did not fight, should not have accomplished the same distance as the heads, which both marched and fought. Had the army bivouacked in order of battle instead of in order of march, it would have been ready next day to defeat Zieten perhaps before Pirch had joined, certainly before the arrival of Thielemann.

Cause of failure.

In spite of these considerations, M. Thiers, in his zeal for the character of Napoleon as a general, has not scrupled to assume that the Emperor delayed to attack at Ligny in order that all the Prussians might assemble, and thus give him an opportunity of crushing them at once. It is not necessary to point out to the readers of this work, nor to any one acquainted with Napoleon's method of making war, how absurd is this assumption.

Ney's containing force could not advance alone.

From the same motive the French historian severely blames Marshal Ney for not advancing towards Brussels before the battle of Ligny on the morning of the 16th, and afterwards on the morning of the 17th. It would of course have been extremely rash for Ney to have advanced beyond the Nivelles-Namur road till Napoleon had reached it with the main body, for he would have been exposing his flanks to the British from Nivelles, and to the Prussians from Sombref; and had the main French army been defeated at Ligny, his retreat would have been cut off. Under these circumstances nothing but an explicit order from Napoleon to advance at all hazards would have justified him in making the attempt. But the Emperor's orders of eight in the morning of the 16th were given under the supposition that Sombref and Quatre Bras would be occupied with little or no fighting, and that Brussels would be open to the French, and attainable in a single march. A chief in Ney's position must have discretionary power—and he is quite justified in using it when his instructions prove to have been given on a false theory of the facts. Moreover, Napoleon had attached to his orders the condition that "there should be no hindrance" to their execution. On the 16th, then, Ney did all that could be expected from a commander in his position, by preventing Wellington from aiding Blucher, and by covering the line of communication with France.

Whatever excuse may be made for Napoleon's inactivity on the 17th applies also to Ney, whose troops had marched, fought, and suffered in action, quite as much as the Centre and Right Wing. It was the object of the French to unite for the attack on Wellington, and their end would be best answered if the English should remain in their position at Quatre Bras till Ney's attack in front could be supported by Napoleon's in flank. As the retreat of the British was concealed till the last moment, Ney's best policy, under the apparent circumstances, was to await the Emperor's

arrival, rather than risk defeat by assailing a superior enemy who had already proved too strong for him.

The charges against Grouchy, made by various writers, resolve themselves into these:—

Movements of  
the pursuing  
wing.

1st, That he ought to have pursued the Prussians in the direction of Wavre instead of towards Liege and Namur.

It is a sufficient answer to this, that Napoleon himself indicated the direction of the pursuit. In the first despatch from Soult to Ney of the 17th is the following passage:—"The Prussian army is routed. General Pajol is pursuing it on the roads of Namur and Liege."

2d, That Grouchy ought to have manœuvred constantly towards Napoleon.

In giving Grouchy his final instructions on the 17th, Napoleon said, "Communicate with me by the paved road that leads to Quatre Bras." This injunction was consistent only with a movement towards Liege or Namur—not towards Wavre; and had the Prussians really, as Napoleon supposed, retreated towards the former places, Grouchy, by moving in the direction of Wavre, would have uncovered to them the communications of the main army with Charleroi—to guard which against an offensive return of the enemy was one principal object of detaching the Right Wing.

3d, That Grouchy, on the night of the 17th, had reason to suppose, as we learn from his report, that the Prussians were moving in three columns, one on Wavre, one on Perwez, one on Namur; that he inferred that one of these columns might be intending to join Wellington, and that he should therefore have moved towards Napoleon.

But this is founded on the supposition that Grouchy knew Wellington would stop to fight at Waterloo, whereas he knew nothing of the sort; and he thought the Prussians, if they were really moving on Wavre, intended to join Wellington at Brussels. For he says in the same report, "If the mass of the Prussians is retiring on Wavre, I will follow in that direction, so that they may not gain *Brussels*, and that I may separate them from Wellington." And were they so moving, he, by marching to Wavre, would threaten decisively their communications with their base by Louvain, and so either prevent the execution of their project or render it disastrous.



4th, That Grouchy, when he heard the cannonade of Waterloo, ought to have turned towards the field.

If Grouchy had known that Blucher was moving from Wavre upon Waterloo—and if he could have marched himself towards that field with a fair prospect of joining Napoleon—he certainly should have attempted the movement; but his belief probably was, and continued to be, that the march which Thielemann's rear-guard was covering, was on Brussels or Louvain by the high-road, not on Waterloo by country roads. It was in this persuasion that he continued to attack Thielemann on the 19th. When Napoleon detached him to pursue the Prussians, it was with the understanding that the Emperor would engage Wellington with the main body and Ney's force *only*, and it was no part of Grouchy's business to combine with his chief for that purpose. And had the theory entertained by Napoleon and himself of the Prussian movements been correct, it was clear that by seizing Wavre he would be in a commanding position. For should Blucher be moving on Brussels, Grouchy at Wavre would by an advance on Louvain cut him from his last line of communication. Should Blucher be moving on Louvain in order to cover this his last line, Grouchy would join Napoleon at Brussels after the defeat which Wellington might be expected to sustain in standing to fight alone, and the whole French army would continue to be interposed between the Allies.

In fact, all the criticisms passed on Grouchy have been founded on a false conception of the duties of a containing force, and of Napoleon's general plan, or else have sprung from a failure to appreciate the facts as they presented themselves at the moment of action. As was said in a preceding chapter, for the execution of an operation of this kind it is necessary that the army so employed should preserve a superiority over its immediate enemy *after* detaching a force in pursuit of the portion first defeated. Grouchy was so detached; that his operations were ineffective was due to the tardiness of his pursuit, which, as well as its wrong direction, was owing to the false theory formed by Napoleon of the Prussian retreat, and confirmed by the precedent of 1796.

As to the prospect of Grouchy joining Napoleon after he heard the cannonade of Waterloo, it is only necessary to remember that Zieten, marching from Wavre at noon, and unobstructed except by the difficulties

of the road, only reached the field between seven and eight in the evening; and that Thielemann's and part both of Pirch's and Zieten's corps would have been available to oppose Grouchy's march without diverting from the field of Waterloo a single man who fought there. The Prussian outposts extended along the Dyle all round Grouchy's left flank, so that he could not have attempted the movement unknown to the enemy.

The force with which Napoleon operated was scarcely sufficient. For though he defeated the Prussians at Ligny, and was superior to Wellington at Waterloo, yet the absence of Bulow from one field, and of the 17,000 men left by Wellington at Hal from the other, were advantages scarcely to be calculated on. No doubt the Emperor counted, and justly, on his own skill and renown to make good the deficiency. But in ordinary cases the existing odds—namely, 206,000 against 125,000—would be too great for the attempt.

Quatre Bras and Sombref (meaning by the last-named the junction of the Liege and Namur roads) furnish additional examples of points of no special topographical importance becoming decisive by their relations to the forces in the theatre.

Why did Wellington station at Hal a force which was useless there, and would have been so valuable to him at Waterloo? This question is only to be solved by remembering what Wellington thought of the facts *as they presented themselves to him at a given time*; and by limiting ourselves to his horizon, instead of embracing that which is widened by our knowledge of the real circumstances. *Wellington could not know on the 17th or 18th that the French Right Wing was detached to follow Blücher.* For all he knew, the entire French army might be following himself. And if a French force *had* been detached to operate against Wellington's communications with Ostend (of which he was so jealous), by seizing Hal, and from thence threatening even Brussels and the line to Antwerp, it would only be executing against the British a manœuvre corresponding to that which Grouchy was actually executing against the Prussians. But this, though it may account for the direction of this detachment on Hal on the 17th, does not satisfactorily explain its detention there during the whole of the 18th, at only ten miles from that field where it might have afforded such essential aid.

Having seen what are the disadvantages under which allied armies operate from divergent bases, let us consider what is to be said on the other side.

Advantage of  
divergent  
bases to com-  
bined armies.

When Wellington concerted with Blucher at Bry operations against Napoleon on the 16th, he proposed to aid him by advancing against Napoleon's left flank and rear by the Gosselies road. In doing so he would have covered his own line to Ostend.

When Napoleon followed Wellington to Waterloo, he detached Grouchy partly to cover his flank and rear, which were especially exposed, because if the Prussians should advance towards Quatre Bras or Charleroi, they would still cover their own line to Liege.

And, lastly, when Blucher approached Waterloo, he attacked Napoleon in the most fatal direction, being himself on a front which covered from the main French army the line through Wavre to Liege.

Thus the divergence of the bases of the Allied armies enabled them to deliver their blows in the most fatally decisive manner against the enemy's flank and rear; which, had they operated from a common base, such as Antwerp, they could not have done without exposing their own communications.

If, then, allied armies, operating from divergent bases, *can combine*, their operation will be more effective than if they had a common base. But from the moment that their concert is destroyed by the interposition of an adequate force, the chances are against them.

The reader will appreciate the loyalty of Blucher to his colleague and to the common cause, in advancing to Waterloo notwithstanding that Grouchy was descending perpendicularly on his line of communication with his base.

BRUSSELS

LOUVAIN

To Maestricht

MAP N° 10.



SCALE

0 3 4 5 10 MILES

J.R. Johnson





## CHAPTER VI.

CASE OF DISLODGING AN ARMY BY OPERATING WITH A DETACHMENT AGAINST ITS REAR.—CAMPAIGN IN GEORGIA, 1864. See woodcut on p. 197.

IN May, General Sherman commanded the Federal forces assembled at Chattanooga on the left bank of the Tennessee. He had 100,000 men in three corps.

On the Right, Macpherson commanded 25,000.	Federal
Thomas had 60,000 in the Centre.	forces.
Schofield 15,000 on the Left.	

The object was to gain possession of Atlanta.

Opposed was General Johnston; at first with 40,000 men, afterwards reinforced to 54,000. His object was to delay Sherman as much as possible, and to cover Atlanta to the last moment. Confederate forces.

Sherman held the country nearly as far as Dalton, where were Johnston's headquarters, and before which he was strongly posted.

Sherman's base was Chattanooga, with which he was connected by the line of Dalton. Bases.

Johnston was bound to the line from Dalton to Atlanta.	Dalton to Atlanta, 90.
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The Federal general considered the position too formidable to be attacked. He therefore detached his Right Wing to turn it on the 6th May. Macpherson was to make a circuit and come down on Resaca in Johnston's rear. Dalton to Resaca, 25.

Johnston had detached a force to cover this point, which was too strong for Macpherson to attack.

Sherman reinforced him to 50,000, keeping the rest of his forces on the main line.

*10th to 14th May.*—Johnston, thus menaced, fell back to Resaca, where he again took a strong position. Sherman again detached his right by a circuit, passed the river below, and threatened the Confederate rear.

Resaca to the  
Etowa, 32.

*15th to 30th May.*—Johnston again retreated to Kingston, where he was reinforced to 54,000, and drew up to deliver battle on the 19th; but he again retired behind the Etowa.

Sherman occupied Kingston and Rome.

Johnston took position behind the Etowa.

*31st May to 6th June.*—Sherman arrived in his front. The Confederate Left being secure, he aimed this time at turning the Right. He pushed out his own Left, pressed the enemy back there, and got on the railway beyond the Etowa, where he intrenched himself and formed a great depot.

Etowa to  
Kenesaw, 22.

*11th June.*—Johnston, having again retired, was in position on the Kenesaw Mountain, where Sherman fronted him. Bad weather for some time suspended the advance.

*27th June.*—Sherman attacked, and was repulsed with heavy loss.

Sherman now halted, and at length detached his Right Wing to turn the west of the mountain, and menace the rear of the enemy at Turner's Ferry.

Atlanta to  
Turner's  
Ferry, 10.

*1st to 17th July.*—The Federals reached Turner's Ferry. Johnston fell back fighting, and crossed the Chattahoochee. Sherman passed the river on both Confederate flanks. At the same time a body of Federal cavalry from Tennessee, having broken up the railway to Atlanta from Alabama, joined Sherman. Schofield's corps was on the Augusta Railway. The Federals completed the passage of the Chattahoochee. Johnston was superseded, and replaced by Hood.

*20th July.*—Hood attacked Sherman's Centre, and was heavily repulsed.

*22d July.*—He again attacked, this time on the Federal Left, and after a partial success was again repulsed.

*28th July.*—Hood again attacked, and was decisively repulsed. He had now about 34,000 men.

*28th July to 25th August.*—Sherman remained facing Hood till the latter date, when, leaving 20,000 men intrenched before Atlanta, he carried 60,000 by a circuit round to the south of Atlanta.

*29th August.*—Hood, leaving part of his forces to defend the city from

the north, attacked Sherman's main army at Jonesborough, and was defeated.

Thereupon he evacuated Atlanta.

Result.

In all the flanking movements, the Federal forces detached from the main line carried their supplies with them in waggon-trains.





## COMMENTS.

When Sherman detached his wings, reinforced, to turn the enemy's flanks, he kept in position across his main line to Chattanooga a force superior to Johnston's. Thus the Confederate leader had little opportunity of applying the principle of throwing a superior force on one of the enemy's parts. His best chance was probably before the 10th May, when Macpherson was first detached with 25,000 men. By leaving 10,000 men to garnish his position and maintain a show of strength, and marching the rest of his army to Resaca, or rather to some point north of it, from whence to descend on Macpherson's Left or inner flank, Johnston might have destroyed that corps. But afterwards, when there was a force superior to his own on each line, nothing was left but to retreat.

It appears, then, that the superiority of numbers in this case warranted a separation of the army, which, had the disproportion of force been less, might have exposed the Federals to disaster.

But notwithstanding the advantages of numbers, Sherman gained nothing beyond the slow dislodgment of the enemy, and Johnston reached the Chattahoochee without any serious loss. This alone is a reflection on Sherman's generalship, considering the odds in his favour.

It is evident that, when Sherman divided his army, he must have known that the enemy was inferior to him on both the menaced points. He should therefore have done one of two things—either have attacked boldly at both points, when a victory at either would insure the retreat of both parts of the enemy, probably with severe loss; or, what would perhaps have been still better, have reinforced his flanking Wing to an overwhelming superiority, with orders to attack whatever was before it, and meanwhile to employ the rest of his army in covering his own line, by taking up across it a strong position, and observing the enemy in his front. The success of this powerful attack in flank would cut off from Atlanta whatever Confederate force might be still before himself.

Johnston, however, withdrew from point to point without disaster, and the only attack made upon him failed.

Probably no commander ever obtained a reputation equal to Sherman's with so little actual fighting, and with such odds in his favour.

It appears, then, that in certain circumstances, and with great odds, it may be judicious, or indeed inevitable, to separate an army for the sake of dislodging an enemy by threatening his rear. But it is also clear that when a commander, tempted by the promise of a brilliant result, operates in this way, he is at any rate giving so much advantage to his adversary as may consist in the chance of fighting the whole hostile force with a part instead of the whole of his own. And it is evident that, by operating with his entire force on one line, he would deprive the enemy of that chance. Nevertheless, these flanking operations are frequently undertaken. It is useful, then, to consider under what circumstances they are judicious.

If, as in Sherman's case, the enemy is so strongly posted as to render a front attack on him inexpedient, there will be no other course than to detach a force to turn the position. And if the assailant also possesses a strong position on the main line, it will be best to reinforce the flanking wing till it is equal to the whole numbers which the enemy can possibly bring on that side, and order it not to halt till it has attained the point aimed at; holding, meanwhile, the aforesaid position with the rest of the army. Should the enemy detach a part only of his forces to meet this attack in his flank or rear, he will be beaten. Should he meet it with his whole army, he abandons the position in which his strength lay.

When Wellington advanced from Portugal in 1813, he knew that the French had a strong line behind the Douro, which they might hold against his whole army. But they could only bring to the defence of that line about 35,000 men. Therefore Wellington sent 40,000 men across to the northern bank of the Douro, within the Portuguese frontier, under Graham, who advanced to the Esla, while with the rest of his forces the English commander moved by Salamanca to the southern bank. Graham, crossing the Esla, came on the flank of the French, who thereupon abandoned the line of the Douro, and Wellington assembled his army on the northern bank unmolested. Had he followed Graham's movement with his whole army, he would have left Portugal, with all his depots and his base, exposed to an advance of the enemy.

It appears, then, that this separation is judicious :—

1st. When the front of a position is unassailable, and a movement against the enemy's flank with the entire army impracticable or unsafe.

Separation,  
when judi-  
cious.

*2dly.* When the roads do not admit of the entire army advancing in effective order.

Thus it was with great difficulty that a Northern army could advance to the Rappahannock by the line of Centreville-Warrenton, even with the aid of the railway; for the country was so wooded and broken that the troops could rarely move on an extended front, and the difficulties of supply were great and increasing. Consequently the line of march grew so extended that the superiority of numbers was lost. For this reason, if for no other, part of the great hosts assembled on the Potomac were always directed on some other line, such as Fredericksburg or the Shenandoah.

*3dly.* When the superior army possesses divergent lines of retreat to, and communication with, its own frontiers.

For, as in the case of the allied army of Wellington and Blucher, the risk in case of defeat will be greatly diminished, as compared with that of an army detaching a force from its single line; and the effect will be greater, for the direction of the combined armies must bring one of them on the enemy's flank or rear. It will depend on the relative proportions of the hostile forces whether the promise of decisive success will compensate for the risk of losing the power of concerted action, and being separately defeated.

## CHAPTER VII.

## GENERAL CONCLUSIONS FROM THE FOREGOING EXAMPLES.

THAT the disadvantages of separating the parts of an army, though foreseen, are often incurred, is evident from history. And this may happen from many causes. As at Eckmuhl, a commander ignorant of the exact position of the adversary may, in expectation of an immediate result, make a movement which lays him open to the penalty for dividing his army. In 1859 Louis Napoleon would doubtless have preferred to operate entirely from Genoa, where he possessed the advantage of a fine and fortified harbour, and whither his troops and stores could be conveyed *en masse* by the easy mode of water-transport. But in the mean time the situation of the Sardinian capital, imminently menaced, and covered only by a very weak army, afforded a pressing reason for sending part of the French troops by the Mont Cenis. The junction of the French army was to take place in the great plain between the Bormida and the Scrivia; but till it was effected, the French corps on the two lines were exposed to all the risk of being separately assailed.

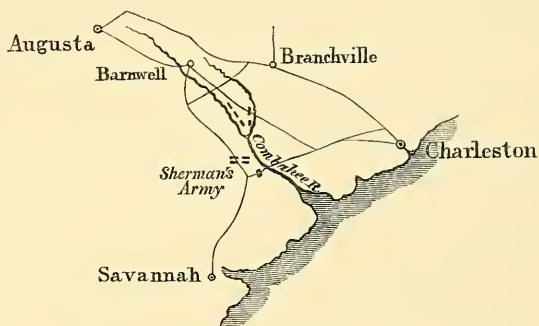
Risks of separation often incurred.

Another fertile source of separation is the attempt, so frequently made, to cover two distant and divergent objects. Territories, lying apart from the indispensable line, must perhaps be protected, else they would be overrun by the enemy, or, by revolting, would increase the difficulties of the situation. Or two cities far distant from each other may both be important enough to form an object for the enemy, and both equally urgent in demanding protection. Thus when Sherman, advancing from Savannah in 1865, was concentrated behind the Combahee, he threatened equally Augusta and Charleston; and by separating, to defend both, the Con-

Causes of this.



federates laid themselves open to a sudden blow dealt against a part of their front. The part to be taken by an army so threatened can scarcely ever be doubtful. It should adopt one point decisively, as its temporary base, and from thence, indirectly, cover the other. Thus the Confederates, if assembled in the fork of the Combahee and its tributary, and based on Augusta by the road through Barnwell, would have been prepared against a direct attack, and the enemy could neither have moved on Augusta or on Charleston without exposing a flank.



Decisive  
points.

In fact, what has been called "the principle of interior lines," as well as many instances of what are termed "decisive points," are simply a concurrence of circumstances which render it practicable to concentrate an army in opposition to an extended enemy. When an army approaches its object by roads which meet and then again divide, the possession of the point of junction or knot of the roads, by either party, cannot but afford opportunities of menacing at once several points, or roads, which the enemy may desire to cover. The possession of points of this kind—for example, Milan and Mortara in 1849, Gera in 1806, Ivrea in 1800, Charleroi, Quatre Bras, Sombref in 1815—is of itself an important step in the campaign.

An instance of the great advantage of *possessing several alternatives of action*—distinct from other cases already quoted, because that advantage was used by an army *on the defensive*—is afforded by the military situation in Portugal in 1810-11.

Massena, recoiling from the lines of Torres Vedras, had fallen back to

See Map  
No. 13.

Santarem. Wellington, following by the roads east of the Monte Junto, found him in a position of great natural strength. Reynier's corps about Santarem was posted on a lofty ridge, its left resting on the Tagus, its front covered by the swamps of the Rio Mayor, and accessible only by a long narrow causeway. Junot's corps was posted on the Alviella from Alcanhete to Pernes and Torres Novas. Ney's corps was in reserve at Thomar, with a division watching the Tagus between Santarem and the Zezere. The French held two bridges over the Zezere. A detachment with cavalry was at Leiria.

The alternatives open to Massena were these:—

*1st.* He might retreat, either by Leiria or Thomar, to Coimbra, finding a fertile country and strong line of defence on the Mondego.

*2d.* Crossing the Zezere he might retreat by Belmonte to his fortresses of Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo.

*3d.* He might reach the same fortresses by Castello Branco.

These were alternatives for retreat; but he might also take the offensive.

*4th.* By advancing from Leiria against the western half of the lines of Torres Vedras.

*5th.* Crossing the Tagus on his left, for which he possessed numerous boats, he might advance on Lisbon by the south bank.

*6th.* From Castello Branco he could concert operations with Soult in Andalucia, by Alcantara.

*7th.* Or, by Placentia, with King Joseph, whose army was on the Upper Tagus.

Wellington had 70,000 men against Massena's 50,000. Could he have collected these, he might have attacked Junot, routed him and Ney, and hemmed back Reynier against the Tagus. But he was forced to disperse his forces:—

*1st.* To watch the south bank of the Tagus and cover his depots opposite Lisbon, and the transports in the river.

*2d.* To occupy in sufficient force (two divisions) the western half of the lines of Torres Vedras; for Massena, by a march from Leiria, would be within a march of the lines there, and might force and turn them before Wellington could arrive by the eastern side of Monte Junto.

*3d.* While attacking Junot and Ney, Wellington must leave a force

before Santarem, lest Reynier should advance on the eastern half of the lines.

These diminutions of the force available for attack on an enemy who could speedily concentrate, prevented the enterprise; and Massena, though so inferior in force, maintained his position from November to the following March; and, when he did at last withdraw, gained sufficient start, from the uncertainty in which he kept his antagonist, to effect an organised retreat through a very difficult country.

Such advantages, then, are frequently open both to the general invading and the general defending a country; to recognise and to hold positions so commanding, will often compensate for a numerical inferiority.

Since all strategical successes resolve themselves into the two kinds discussed in this and the preceding Part, it remains to inquire under what circumstances it may be well to choose one mode of operating rather than the other.

Comparison of  
the advan-  
tages

Whenever an army, which is so confident in its fighting power as to desire to engage the entire concentrated forces of the enemy, possesses the faculty (either by reason of an angular base, or by such circumstances of obstacles as will hereafter be discussed) of striking at its adversary's flank or rear, it enjoys, in that circumstance, an advantage and opportunity which it might vainly seek in manœuvres against the hostile front. By a resolute advance it may even combine the different advantages of forcing the enemy to form front to a flank, and of separating his forces and engaging the parts successively, as will subsequently be seen in the example of Champaubert. At any rate, it will be highly advantageous to engage even his whole force in that situation.

of turning  
the flank,

But if an army be inferior in number, it will manifestly be wiser to seek to separate the hostile forces and engage them separately. For in striking at the flank it may compel that concentration which it should be its great aim to prevent; as Napoleon would have done, had he turned Wellington's Right in Belgium.

and breaking  
the front.

And even if, in the case of an army ready under any circumstances to bring the enemy to action, the option is offered of breaking his front or striking at his flank, the first alternative will generally be the best. Such a choice appears to have been offered to Napoleon in 1809. On the 17th April, when forming his plan, he might have left Davout at Ratisbon,

and have marched with his Centre by Siegenburg to combine with Massena coming from Pfaffenhofen, in order to advance together through Mainburg. He would thus have been on the flank and rear of the Austrian Left Wing, cutting it from its great line of supply by Landshut. But he would thereby have compelled the concentration of the Austrians. Therefore, though his own line to France would have been equally secure through Ulm in this flanking operation, he preferred to break in between the wings, even with all the risk of Davout's périlous flank-march along the river. And as in this case, so in most others, it will be found that to break the front is the readiest method as well as the most decisive.

The latter  
generally  
best.

When the superiority of one army is sufficient, and no more than sufficient, to warrant a detachment against the enemy's rear, the two modes of operation—namely, that of aiming a blow at the communications on the one side, and that of concentrating against a separated force on the other—come into direct opposition; when victory will remain with the general who best appreciates and improves the conditions of the situation.



## PART V.

### THE INFLUENCE OF OBSTACLES.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### GENERAL TOPOGRAPHY OF A THEATRE OF WAR.

THE first requisite for following military operations is a good map of the theatre. It is not often easy to find one that is at once minute in necessary particulars, and compendious enough to bring the essential features before us at one view. But any good map, however general (sometimes, indeed, the better for being general, as giving the main facts unconfused by secondary particulars), will afford a great deal of important information.

Reading of  
the Map.

Features of  
Italy.

For example, North Italy is seen at once to be a basin almost entirely surrounded by mountains. From these great watersheds a multitude of streams pour down to the plain, along the central depression of which the great main drain of the Po, collecting them in its channel, conducts their waters to the sea.

Therefore belligerents operating from the east and west, like Austria and France, will find their paths crossed by a multitude of streams running north and south, while a great river traverses the theatre from west to east. North of the Po the mountains leave a wide plain traversed by

many great roads ; but south of it the Apennines crowd upon the river, leaving space only for a single great road, which lies in a narrow defile between Piacenza and Voghera. On the seaboard are Genoa, which was the chief base of the French in 1859—a great port, opposite a gap in the mountain-barrier, and giving access to the valley of the Po ; and Venice, where the presence of a hostile force would seriously affect the position of an Austrian army on the Mincio—an element which proved to be of great importance in the negotiations of Villafranca.

In Spain we see a theatre the very reverse of North Italy in its essential features : for here the land rises from the coast towards the centre, and the line of the watershed traverses the country from the south-west in Andalusia to the north, where it merges in the western extremity of the Pyrenees. From this spinal ridge, ribs of mountain-ranges extend east and west—between these run the great streams thrown off by the watershed, mostly to the westward.

Features of Spain.

A French army entering Spain would therefore find its path crossed by barriers of mountains and rivers—which, when mastered, would become successive lines of defence against an enemy coming from the south. But they would form obstacles of a different character if an enemy should operate from Portugal, in the direction of their length ; and this was a mainly important feature in the Peninsular war.

In the theatre of war in America, the great feature was the line of the Alleghanies intersecting the Southern States, and pouring its streams right and left into the Atlantic and the Mississippi. Thus the rivers crossed the path of a Federal army operating from the Potomac in Eastern Virginia, and the mountains lay on its flank—circumstances the significance of which was exemplified at Bull Run.

Of America.

If we know, then, the precise nature of the difficulties offered by rivers or mountain-barriers, both when parallel and when perpendicular to the fronts of armies, even this cursory survey of a theatre will supply much matter for consideration respecting the chances of a campaign. The influence of these obstacles, under different conditions, will therefore form the chief subject of subsequent chapters.

Nature of obstacles must be appreciated.

More detailed maps and topographical descriptions will afford other important particulars. Respecting North Italy we shall learn from these what are the passes of the mountains into the country—what fortresses

guard them—what are the great roads, and where they cross the principal rivers; that is, in fact, *the relations between the avenues and the obstacles of the theatre of war.*

As to Spain we shall find that the Pyrenees form a barrier between it and France, forbidding the supply of great armies, except by roads which lie between the extremities of the mountains and the coast on each side; that the great rivers, far from marking the lines of the great roads (which in other countries so frequently lie along the banks), flow in broken rocky channels difficult of access; that the cultivated districts are few and small compared with the extent of the country; that the frontier of Portugal is so rigid as to admit of only two roads by which Lisbon can be reached from Madrid: and we shall then comprehend the situation of the French armies in Spain, how dependent they were on the one great road on each side of the Pyrenees, how disjointed was their front when it faced towards Portugal, how difficult it was to subsist on the resources of the country, and how perilous to draw together the scattered parts of the army, separated by rugged defiles which were held by guerillas. We see also the importance of the fortresses of Badajos and Ciudad Rodrigo, the doors between Spain and Portugal, and Burgos, on the main line back to France. To see and provide for such circumstances imparts vigour and unity of action to a campaign—not to see and provide for them is to carry on war by compromises and makeshifts, and to end it in disaster.

Effects of  
cultivation  
on military  
operations.

In England the country is so generally cultivated, and the arable and pasture lands are so intermixed, that the fields are fenced on every side to keep the cattle from the crops; and it would be difficult to find spaces of any extent where armies would not be restricted to the road while marching, or where they could easily form front for battle. But in large districts of the Continent cattle are kept in stalls, and the crops are not separated by fences, while the chief causeways are thrice the width of our main roads. In such countries armies move on a large front, the columns of infantry and cavalry in the fields in dry weather, the artillery and trains on the roads. Thus Belgium and the east of France are a succession of rolling plains, where the streams and ditches are the only impediments. In other parts of Europe whole districts are devoted to pasture, as in Hungary and parts of Spain, and these great plains are equally free from obstacles. On the other hand, North Italy is highly cultivated, and

scarcely any plains are to be found there. The numerous rivers feed a multitude of canals of irrigation; the rich soil of the fields is too soft for marching on; olive groves and festoons of vines add to the difficulties of forming on a large front, and troops on the march are for the most part restricted to the raised roads.

It is evident that a careful and sagacious reading of the map of the theatre will reveal to a great extent the character of the warfare of which it is to be the scene. Not only may a general plan be resolved on, but the nature of the marches and of the encounters may be foreseen and provided for, and the proportion of the different arms will be adjusted to the country in which they are destined to act. The cavalry, that would have been only an encumbrance in the Apennines or at Rivoli, found fitting fields at Eckmuhl, Borodino, and Ligny. The powerful artillery that was easily transported and manœuvred in Belgium, and which almost crushed the British at Waterloo, would have choked the narrow roads of Spain. Not only the army, but the character and extent of its supplies and equipments, must depend in great degree on the aspect of the country, its resources, fertility, and climate. These are matters to be dealt with by common sense, joined to experience of the requirements of armies. But without going into minute details of topography and statistics, the map of the theatre will suggest military problems of a purely scientific kind, first in order among which are those discussed in the following chapter.

Importance of preliminary study of the map.



## CHAPTER II.

## EFFECT OF THE CONFIGURATION OF BASES AND FRONTIERS.

THE effect of an angular frontier in enabling the army possessing it to operate against the enemy's flank was exemplified in Part III., Chapter V. But the reader may have observed subsequently, in the American campaigns, that the line of the Potomac, and the seaboard, gave the Federals the power of moving an army into Virginia in many different directions, conferring, indeed, greater latitude than Moreau possessed in 1800, but without producing any of the results which follow from obliging an enemy to form front to a flank. He may, therefore, be disposed to inquire why none of the Federal invasions, directed from various parts of their frontier, had the same effect as Moreau's. By investigating the difference between the two cases, the limit of the influence of a frontier of this kind may be determined.

See Maps  
No. 1 and  
No. 6.

Extent of the  
influence of  
an angular  
frontier.

That difference consists in the fact that, whereas the base of the Austrians lay considerably *beyond* the angle from the side of which Moreau operated, the base of the Confederates on the James lay entirely *within* the angle commanded by the Federals. Had some central point in the Black Forest, such as Rothweil, been Kray's base, Moreau's advance from Schaffhausen would have been of no more avail, as a menace to the communications, than if he had advanced from Strasburg. On the other hand, had the Confederates been bound to some point far south of Richmond—such as Augusta—a Federal advance on the line of the James would have forced the enemy either to abandon all that part of the theatre which lies north of the James, or else to give battle on a front parallel to their line of communication with the base. The truth of this was exemplified when

Lee abandoned Richmond. For his aim then was to join Johnston in Carolina; but Grant, advancing along the James, cut him from the south, hemmed him against the mountains, and compelled him to surrender.

Again, when Kray had reached Ulm, Moreau's line from Schaffhausen no longer gave him the power of threatening the Austrian communications, except by the exposure of his own; and that he succeeded in his enterprise against them was due to causes of a different nature.

Therefore we may infer that, if an enemy's base lies within the angle of a frontier, the only advantage which that angular frontier confers on its possessor is to afford a choice of lines by which to operate. Should he advance from several points too distant from each other for perfect concert, he will do so at all the risk which attends a disjointed, as opposed to a coherent, operation. Should he advance from a single point, he will find that the opposing army's front covers its line to its base.

On the other hand, if the hostile base lies far beyond the angle, this kind of frontier will confer all the advantage of forcing the enemy to form front to a flank, *so long as his army is within the angle*. But as soon as he has retreated beyond the extremity of the angular frontier the advantage ceases, or exists only in proportion to the degree of obliquity which the front of each army assumes in relation to its own line of communication.

When a maritime power which commands the sea makes war in a theatre largely bounded by a coast-frontier, it evidently possesses great advantages for the selection of a base; and if the frontier, besides being extensive, be angular, it will almost certainly confer the power of operating against a flank. Thus, when England made war against the French in Spain, the form of the Peninsula gave her the choice of numerous lines by which to operate. It remained to select the most effective.

Advantage of commanding an enemy's coasts.

Example of the Peninsula.

The Pyrenees, affording no great roads, restricted the French to the lines of communication between the mountains and the coast on each side. The main line was that of Bayonne-Vittoria-Burgos-Valladolid-Madrid-Seville. A British army, operating, let us say, from Gibraltar, would merely press back the French along their road to France. But it might easily select another base from which it could force the enemy to form to a flank. By seizing the road from Bayonne, where it passes between the coast and the Pyrenees, it would grasp the throat of the invasion; and the nearer to that point it could operate, the more

See Map No. 2.

effective would be the operation. Thus Sir John Moore, advancing from the north-eastern frontier of Portugal in 1808, struck at Napoleon's communications between the Ebro and the Douro. The movement forced the Emperor to quit the capital; he advanced with greatly superior forces, by the Guadarama, against Moore, who thereupon retreated, not on Portugal, which he could no longer calculate on being permitted to reach, but on the north-west corner of the Peninsula at Corunna. On that corner, then, his operation was based. But he wanted two conditions for success: first, *a secure starting-point*, which that part of the coast did not afford—hence, under great difficulties, he was forced to re-embark; secondly, *a force sufficient to contend with the enemy whom he menaced*—of the indispensability of which condition this case has already been quoted as an example.

As the only fortified posts on the northern coasts were occupied by the French, it remained for Wellington, in subsequent campaigns, to choose another base. Portugal offered one admirably suited to the purpose. It was guarded by a frontier naturally strong; for on the east was a range of mountains, on the north the river Minho and an impracticable hill-country; and it possessed, besides the great harbour of Lisbon, three rivers navigable for a considerable distance in Portugal—namely, the Douro, the Mondego, and the Tagus—by which to supply the army. And whenever Wellington should advance into Spain, the French armies opposing him must necessarily form front to a flank. Hence they were obliged to appropriate an army, called the Army of Portugal, expressly to cover their line from an attack on that side.

In 1812, Wellington advanced against that army, then commanded by Marmont. At that time another French force (Army of the Centre) held Madrid; a third, under Soult, was in Andalucia. The English general defeated Marmont, drove the French eastward from Madrid, and seized the capital. Soult was thus cut off; but, by a long circuit, he regained his communications with the Army of the Centre, and, in conjunction with the defeated army of Marmont, compelled Wellington to retire to Portugal. The substantial result to the English was the liberation of the whole of Spain south of Madrid.

In 1813 Wellington again advanced, and drove the French from the Douro towards the Ebro. But his line back to Portugal was now very

long, and the French, by withdrawing beyond its effective direction, had deprived him of the advantage of attacking their flank. On the other hand, their retreat, compromising the garrisons of the northern coast at Santander, &c., had left the ports there free. Therefore Wellington, letting go his hold of Portugal, threw his left forward beyond the sources of the Ebro, and basing himself anew on the northern coast, whither his fleet from the Tagus was transferred, came down upon the flank of the French line between the Ebro and Bayonne. To meet the attack, the enemy at Vittoria gave battle on a front in part parallel to that line,—defeated, they only regained the Pyrenees by the road of Pampeluna, with the loss of all their artillery and baggage.

Thus the chances which the configuration of a base may open, in all stages of a campaign, afford most important matter for the consideration of a government and a general.

When armies are in presence of each other at the outset, their frontier lines will be coincident; and thus the angular frontier of one party will be an angular frontier of another kind for the other—that is to say, whereas the angle of the one frontier includes the territory occupied by the enemy, which, borrowing a term from fortification, may be called a *Re-entering Angle*, the other army is operating in an angle which pushes itself within the enemy's frontier, and may be called a *Salient Angle*. Let us consider the effects of these positions respectively.

The present Austrian frontier in Italy is bounded by the Mincio throughout the length of that river, and by the Po downwards from their confluence. If Austria were at war with Italy, the Italians, on the one side, would enclose Venetia within their re-entering frontier. On the other, the Austrians would be in a salient angle. And it is evident that if they were concentrated between the Mincio and the Adige, they would threaten Italy south of the Po on the one side, or Lombardy on the other, and be within striking distance of both; so that, should the Italian army concentrate on one side of the angle, the enemy might invade its territory on the other. Thus, supposing the Austrians capable of crossing either the Po or the Mincio at pleasure, the Italians, if they wished to cover all their territory, must divide. But, by dividing, they would be giving the Austrians all the advantage of a concentrated against a separated force; and if the armies at the outset were equal, the parts of

Different kinds of angular frontiers considered.



the one would be liable to be defeated successively by the mass of the other.

Thus, while the advantages of a re-entering frontier are of the kind discussed in Part III., inasmuch as it favours an operation against a flank, those of the salient are of the kind discussed in Part IV., because it tends to separate the parts of the enemy's front.

But to end after saying so much would be to leave this question of frontiers in a very unsatisfactory state, and the case must be further investigated.

Importance of  
possessing the  
issues.

It is evident that, for the one party or the other to derive the kind of advantage peculiar to its position in its full extent, it must possess the means of passing the frontier on both sides of the angle. Now the Austrians have two fortresses on the Mincio, Peschiera and Mantua, giving them access to Lombardy, and excluding the Italians from Venetia. But the Po is not bridged below the confluence of the Mincio, nor could a bridge easily be thrown, therefore the Italian army might safely assemble in Lombardy to await the attack, assured of being able to arrive on the lower Po in time to confront the enemy, should he attempt to pass there. But if the Austrians possessed a great flotilla, or flying bridges, on the lower Po, by which to throw their army easily across, the Italians would be at a great disadvantage.

On the other hand, reverting to the case of Kray and Moreau, the French could pass the Rhine at Strasburg and Brisach at one side of the angle, and at Basle on the other—Kray was therefore reduced to the defensive, since he could not cross either side of the enemy's frontier without exposing his flank to the other; and when the passage of Schaffhausen was seized, the situation was altogether against him.

Thus we find that another element is necessary for the decision of the question—namely, *Which party possesses the issues of the frontier, or can most readily seize them?* After ascertaining this, we can proceed with some confidence to decide on the best plan of operation.

If the army whose frontier is re-entering possesses, or can seize, the issues of that side of the frontier which is parallel to the enemy's line of communication with his base, it should throw all its weight on that side in assuming the offensive; for even if the issues on the other side of the angle are open to the enemy, he cannot advance by them while his communications are thus threatened.

For example, in the second part of the campaign of 1796 in Italy, the Austrian army was on the defensive, behind the angle of the Po opposite Valenza, with its left towards Piacenza. Napoleon, whose object was to drive them from the Milanese, could cross at Casale, and advance by the Sesia on the one side of the angle, or could strike at the Austrian communications by crossing the Po below the Ticino, on the other. Though in following this latter course he was operating on a front parallel to his own line of communication with France, which was through Turin, yet, remembering that the successful assumption of the offensive would secure him against counter-attack, he moved down the Po beyond the Austrian front, and crossed at Piacenza, whereupon the Austrians in all haste retreated over the Adda.

See Map  
No. 7.

In 1859 the situation was the same. The Austrians, as before, were in the angle of the Po, extending towards Piacenza, the Sardinians were on the lower Sesia, the French faced the Austrians on the Po from Valenza to Voghera. But the issues of the Po below Valenza were in the hands of the Austrians; therefore the Allied army chose to operate by the other side of the angle, and, crossing at Casale, advanced by the Sesia and Ticino. Thus no strategical advantage was gained. The Austrians changed front, covering their line to the Mincio, and their retreat was caused by the *tactical* success gained at Magenta.

The question then of *who holds the issues* over the obstacles is of paramount importance. The angular frontier may be a line of mountains like that of Bohemia, or a river having a bend like the Rhine at Basle, or two rivers like the Ticino and Po, or a line of fortresses on one or both sides. In any case, what we mean by holding the issues is, possessing the means of certainly and securely passing the obstacle, either by fortified bridges, or fortresses or detachments commanding the passes of mountains.

For the sake of clearness of illustration, let us take, in preference to a mere diagram, the case of the Austrian frontier in Italy as it was in 1849 and 1859—that is, the line of the Ticino and Po. The Italian army would have a re-entering angle, the Austrian a salient angle, from which to operate.

The example of 1796 proves, that if the Italian army can cross at Piacenza the move is decisive. If, therefore, Italy possessed a fortress on the north bank of the Po, opposite Piacenza, it would be impossible for Austria, with equal forces, to keep her frontier on the Ticino.

And if the issues over the Ticino were in the power of the Austrians, still the result would be the same.

And if the issues were not protected by fortifications on either side, but open to either party that could seize them, the successful assumption of the offensive by the Italians on the side of Piacenza would be decisive.

But in all these cases it is presumed that the Austrians await the attack. Therefore, in addition to the power of holding or gaining the issues, *the assumption of the offensive* is necessary to secure the advantage of the re-entering frontier.

On the Austrian side, the disadvantage of a purely defensive attitude being apparent, whatever advantage the salient can confer must also depend on the assumption of the offensive.

The danger of dividing an army to cover territory on both sides of the angle, is exemplified by the distribution of Chzarnowsky's force in 1849. One of his brigades was posted towards Piacenza to guard against the passage of the Po. On the advance of the Austrians across the Ticino this brigade was beyond the possibility of aiding Chzarnowsky, and was lost to him.—(Page 61.)

Supposing the Austrians to possess the same frontier, with the power of passing the Ticino at Pavia and the Po at Piacenza, they would threaten Turin on the one side, and the Duchies and the Peninsula on the other. The separation of the Italian army in such a case, or the abandonment of one half of the territory and resources of the kingdom to the enemy, would seem almost inevitable. The best course in such a case would be for the Italians to take up a position near the angle, at Casale and Valenza, when they would threaten the flank of the enemy's advance on either line; and the power of the Austrians to persist in an offensive movement must depend on their ability, either to defeat the Italians in battle; or to guard their own flank at Piacenza on the one side, or opposite to Casale on the other.

See Woodcut,  
page 261.

Again, supposing Prussia, allied with Saxony, at war with Austria. An Austrian army within the angle of the Bohemian frontier, and possessing the issues of it, would equally threaten Saxony and Silesia—and it is improbable that either Saxony or Prussia would consent to leave its territories uncovered—while the line of the Elbe and the rocky country on its banks would preclude the possibility of concentrating near the

angle. Hence division would be inevitable should the Austrians be in a position to assume the offensive.

On the other hand, were the Austrians on the defensive, they might speedily be forced to quit the angle—as was proved in 1757, when an Austrian corps at Reichenberg was forced to retreat hastily to Prague at the approach of a Prussian corps from Silesia towards Turnau.

Generally then, and on the whole, the advantages of either position are conditional on the assumption of the offensive : the chances will be against either party that suffers the other to take the initiative: and the advantages will be greatest on the side of the army operating from the salient, provided the enemy be obliged to separate, under penalty of abandoning territory ; otherwise the salient will confer no strategical advantage, unless circumstances are very favourable to the defence of the flank of the army during an offensive movement.

General conclusions.

It may happen that the frontier line abuts into the territory occupied by the enemy from the *middle* of a base—thus giving a re-entering angle on two sides. For instance, the mountains of Switzerland and the Tyrol

Case of a double re-entering angle.



connect transversely the bases of Austrian and French armies in the two theatres of Germany and Italy. The advantage of the possession of Swit-



zerland by the French, against the Austrian armies within the angle on both sides, was fully exemplified in 1800, when Moreau from Schaffhausen first drove back Kray, and then detached a force over the St Gothard to turn the line of the Ticino and aid Napoleon in enveloping Melas at Marengo. And if an enemy, pushing the Austrians back in Italy, should penetrate into the territory beyond the Adige, the Tyrol would afford them the means of issuing by way of Verona on that adversary's flank and rear, and hemming him back against the shores of the Adriatic. Such a frontier confers the double advantage of concentrating against a divided enemy, and of obliging him to form front to a flank. This case has been quoted by Jomini as an example of a *salient* base—the reader must judge whether it does not more correctly belong to the class in which it is placed here. The configuration is manifestly widely different from that of the salient Austrian frontiers in Bohemia and Italy, and the advantages to be aimed at are different also.

Importance  
of an exten-  
sive base.

The lateral extent of a base, without reference to its configuration, is also an important matter. It affects the army that operates from it very considerably, whether the operation be offensive or defensive. For a very long base evidently supplies in some degree the place of a re-entering base. If an Austrian army were on the Neckar, a French army might move on its rear almost as easily from Mayence as from Wurzburg. And if the Austrian army were dependent on a very short base, it would be easily cut from it. But how difficult it was to cut it from its very long base, was shown by the perilous dispositions to which Napoleon was obliged to resort for the interception of Mack. And, indeed, the whole of the campaigns quoted, on the Danube, prove how great an advantage was the extent of the bases to their possessors.

In the American war, the extent of the Federal base gave the Northern armies a great advantage. Not only had they a variety of lines of invasion to select from, but when defeated in Virginia, it was almost hopeless to attempt to intercept them. In 1862, Jackson's bold flanking movement cut Pope from the Upper Potomac, but could not prevent him from reaching Alexandria—and, if cut from Alexandria, he could still have retreated on Acquia and the flotilla. And in 1863, when Grant was baffled on the line of the Rapidan, he shifted his base, as he moved round Lee's right, successively to the Pamunkey, and to the James.

The extent of a base is, then, a very important consideration in deliberating on the expediency of adopting it ; and the advantages it offers must be very marked in order to compensate for dependence on a single harbour, or narrow strip of frontier, where the army will be restricted to a single line, and that line precarious in proportion to its length.

Therefore, when a maritime power is based at first on a single harbour, as soon as its army, in advancing, masters a road which branches to another harbour distant from the first, that second harbour should be occupied and made part of the base.

And in all cases the depots should extend behind the flanks of the army as widely as is consistent with their due protection by natural obstacles, by fortresses, or by the front of the army.

## CHAPTER III.

OF OBSTACLES WHICH DIRECTLY TRAVERSE THE PATH BY  
WHICH AN ARMY ADVANCES.

Conditions  
of a military  
obstacle.

AN obstacle—in order to be such in a military sense—must present advantages for defence, and must also prevent the approaching columns from deploying while passing it. A single defile of any kind, a causeway on a swamp, or a bridge, leading to commanding ground, or a mountain pass, fulfils these conditions. For an enemy must advance on a narrow front against troops and artillery advantageously posted, and, in the two first cases, deployed. In the case of a mountain pass the defenders may not be able to deploy any more than the assailants, and their advantage will consist in being screened from the fire from below; while the advancing troops, besides being imperfectly covered, will, even should they arrive at the crest, be greatly fatigued and scattered by the difficulties of the ascent.

But the disadvantage, in such cases, is obvious; and the assailant will at once decide whether to attack or turn the position. It is when the obstacle is to a certain extent *continuous, and includes in its range several possibilities of action*, that it presents a strategical problem. The only natural impediments that fulfil this as well as the former conditions, are Rivers and Ranges of Mountains.

Its effect in  
limiting the  
number of  
roads.

In one respect the influence of both these obstacles is the same in kind though not in degree. The expense of throwing bridges over a wide stream, or of making roads over a high range of hills, causes the roads on each side to converge as they approach it, and to merge in a

few highways, by which alone can the communications of a great army be maintained. One of their effects, then, is to lessen the number of avenues through a theatre of war. But in many other respects they differ.

Although the supply of a large army, operating beyond a mountain range, can only be maintained by the high roads that cross the range, yet in all mountain districts there are numerous paths by which troops, unattended by cumbrous trains, and carrying supplies for a few days on the men's persons and on pack animals, can pass over the crests. But if the defensive army should spread itself to occupy all of these, the communications between the parts of its front must be broken and circuitous. An assailant mastering any of the passes would descend in the rear of the defenders of other points, who, necessarily very sensitive about their communications, could never hold their ground with confidence. Moreover, an army spread in this way, in barren roadless districts, on inhospitable summits, must suffer unusual privations. Evidently a prolonged defence conducted on such a system would be very costly in men and material, and of very uncertain advantage.

Defence of a long line of mountains difficult and dangerous.

Therefore, whenever the theatre of war is in part mountainous, like Southern Germany or North Italy, though bodies of troops may manœuvre in the hills, to protect a flank or to threaten an adversary's, yet the main action of the campaign will be in the districts which are practicable for great armies. And what is now the subject of discussion is not mountain warfare, such as is carried on against hill tribes, but the nature of the obstacle interposed by a long narrow range of mountains.

If, then, the defensive army, seeing the danger and futility of occupying all the passes, concentrates in the chief of them, the enemy would the more easily break through the front at unguarded points and descend upon the rear; and the fate of a body of troops attacked in front, and dependent on a single intercepted issue in rear, would generally be the same as that of the Austrians at the Monte Legino.

Defence of a few chief passes equally ineffectual.

It is more usual therefore, and more consonant with prudence, to hold the principal passes—that is to say, those which lie most directly in the line of operation, and have the best communications with the rear—with advanced-guards, keeping the mass of the army disposable at points in



rear where many valleys and passes unite; thus securing the retreat of the advanced posts, supporting them if necessary, and opposing with a formidable force the first hostile troops that cross.

Passage to be effected if possible by stratagem, not by force,

If a long line be held by the defender, the assailant, keeping his adversaries dispersed by feints on many points, will generally prefer to pass at an unguarded issue rather than force a passage, certain of seeing the whole system of defence rapidly fall to pieces when the front is broken. Thus, Frederick of Prussia wished, in 1757, to pass from Saxony to Bohemia, the object being Prague (see woodcut, page 261)—and the best and most direct road was that of Pirna and Aussig along the Elbe. But it was guarded by strong Austrian detachments; therefore a column from Chemnitz advanced first towards Egra, the station of an Austrian corps (a second being on the Eger at Budyn), and, after feigning to attack, rapidly countermarched on Auerbach, and passed over the ridge to Commotau and Linay. The detachments in the Elbe valley, thus threatened in rear, retreated in haste, leaving the road open to the king, whose columns united on the Eger as rapidly as the hostile body from Egra came to Budyn—and the defensive line of the mountains was lost to the Austrians.

At the same time, on the side of the Riesengebirge an Austrian corps disputed the advance of a Prussian column at Reichenberg; but another Prussian column meanwhile passed at Trautenau, and the hostile corps thereupon retreated in haste. The mountain chains did not prevent the Prussian columns from concentrating before Prague.

and not at several distant points.

But the manner in which Frederick's forces passed the mountains offered a great opportunity to an able adversary. They were separated by great distances, and their extended front manifestly gave the enemy the advantage of superior power of concentration. Therefore Napoleon, in such a case, while making feints on many points to turn or distract the defenders, passed his main body, in 1800, at one point. And this is doubtless the right way of conducting such an operation. The crests of the chain once mastered, it is impossible for the defenders to know what is passing behind the mountains. Any of the assailant's columns may be the head of the main army. The defenders, therefore, must either fall back and concentrate beyond the mountains, leaving the passage free; or, if they block all the issues, must expose some part of their line to be

overwhelmed, and the communications of the rest threatened. Therefore a general, whose object is to pass a mountain range defended by the enemy, should make feints at many points, but the main body should pass either in one column, or in columns so near each other, and so well connected, as to unite readily.

On the whole it may be said, that if the crests of a mountain range be held by an enemy entirely on the defensive, the strategical advantage will be with the assailant, who ought either to turn or break the enemy's front. The advantage of a mountain frontier to the defender will be,—1st, *that of retarding the enemy's advance*, thus giving time to concentrate on the threatened line—an advantage which may be increased by holding the passes with detachments to augment the difficulties of advancing; and, 2dly, *that of limiting the enemy to a few difficult lines of supply after he has passed it*. Unless the mountain range be of great depth it will generally be better to hold it only with detachments, and to assemble the army at some point where it will oblige the enemy issuing from the mountains to form front to a flank.. Defeat in such a case, driving him back into a single difficult road choked with trains and supplies, cannot but be disastrous.

Continued defence of a mountain chain ought to be turned to the advantage of the assailant.

Its real uses as a defensive obstacle.

It might at first sight appear that the well-known case of the lines of Torres Vedras, held by Wellington entirely on the defensive, is contradictory of what has just been affirmed. But there were many circumstances to make this a case specially favourable to the defender. 1st, The lines could not be turned, for they rested on one side on the Tagus, on the other on the sea. 2d, They had been artificially fortified, so as to be absolutely impregnable for many miles of their length; and all the passes were defended with strong works armed with heavy artillery. 3d, The Tagus, the sea, and the roads in rear, enabled the defenders to be easily supplied. 4th, A mountain chain perpendicular to the line of defence limited the enemy's attack to one side of that chain, since to have divided his forces would have been to offer one wing to the concentrated army of Wellington; and thus, though the line of defence from the Tagus to the sea was 29 miles, yet only a front of 14 miles could be at one time threatened, and of that length scarcely a half was assailable. Thus the case is reduced from that of *a continuous line of defence*, to that of an *exceptionally strong position*.

Case of Torres Vedras exceptional.

See Map No. 13.

Rivers considered as obstacles.

The defence of rivers safer than that of mountains,

but the passages more numerous.

Use of the river to screen the assailant's movements.

Possession of the higher bank at an inward bend very advantageous for crossing,

A river offers as an obstacle conditions different from these. The defenders can deploy, so as to bring an overwhelming convergent fire, both of small arms and artillery, to bear on the columns crossing the bridge, and these, as they successively pass the obstacle, must still deploy under fire. The detachments of the defensive army along the course of the stream will generally have good communications with each other; for as the banks of a river, especially one that is navigable, are generally fertile and populous, good roads often follow its course on both banks. Hence the defenders need not, as in mountain passes, fear the unexpected appearance of an enemy on their flanks or rear.

On the other hand, as it is easier to throw bridges in a rich populous territory than to make roads over rugged and desolate mountains, the good passages over all but the largest rivers will generally be far more numerous than over a corresponding extent of mountain range. Thus, there are six passages on practicable roads over the Ticino in 36 miles, from Turbigo to Pavia; while in the whole extent of the western face of the Italian Alps there is but one good road (fit to supply such an army as that of Napoleon III. in 1859), that of the Mont Cenis. And the more numerous the practicable avenues, the greater the difficulties of the defence; for either some must be left unguarded, or the army must be spread on an extended front.

When an army approaches a river defended by the enemy, its first object will be to drive all the hostile troops then in its front to the further side, and to extend a cordon of posts and videttes along the stream within the limits of possible operations. For, having possession of one bank, it can manœuvre unknown to the enemy; and as the enemy's movements will also be screened, it will be better (instead of forming a theory of his doings, which will very likely be false) to follow a sound plan, that is, one which will enable the army to cross with least risk, and at the same time with the most effective strategical result, whether by turning the flank or breaking the front of the defensive line.

There are two features of the case of special significance—namely, that a river is generally winding, and that the higher bank is sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other. The object of an assailant will be to pass part of his troops at some point where he possesses the commanding bank, for he can thus, with comparative impunity, drive the defenders



from the other shore, and bring his forces and materials for passing undiscovered to the spot. And if at that place the river also winds inward, indenting his front, he will, by disposing his troops round the bend, command and enclose the angle of the other bank.

For instance, in the campaign of 1813, Napoleon wished to pass the Elbe near the village of Priesnitz. The conditions were favourable, for the French bank commanded the other, and the bend of the river there indented the French front. Three hundred men were thrown over in the night, and established themselves on the further side. They were attacked, in the morning, by superior forces, with artillery; but the French, bringing 100 guns to bear from their own side, forced the enemy to retreat. During the following night nearly 3000 men crossed, and a work was constructed capable of holding two divisions; whereupon the enemy retired altogether.

See Woodcut,  
page 261.

The conditions may be so favourable as to enable large masses to pass even in face of an assembled army. In 1809, Napoleon, after entering Vienna, and guarding all the bridges of the Danube up to Passau, wished to cross and attack the army of the Archduke Charles, then opposite Vienna, on the left bank. First, the Emperor seized the large island of Lobau, and connected it with the right bank by a long bridge. Then he accumulated on the island the means of crossing, together with a force of more than 20,000 men. The arm of the river is 120 yards wide, and makes a favourable bend; and by seizing the two villages of Aspern and Essling a space would be enclosed and secured capable of holding a considerable force. On the 20th May bridges were thrown, two divisions crossed, and Aspern and Essling were seized. The Austrians, who had assembled on a height twelve miles up the river, came on in line of battle, and a desperate struggle ensued, chiefly for the possession of the villages. But the reinforcements to the French from the right bank came too slowly to maintain the battle; and the part of the army that had crossed—numbering, when first attacked, 30,000, afterwards 60,000, against 90,000 Austrians—was compelled to re-pass the branch of the stream to the isle of Lobau.

and may insure the passage of the whole army in face of the enemy.

See Woodcut,  
page 227.

When the most important passages on the main line of operation present conditions specially favourable to the assailant, it will be difficult and hazardous to oppose the passage. So important is the circumstance

Some rivers indefensible.



of the hither bank commanding the further, that the Austrian army drawn up behind the Mincio, in 1859, to await the French and Sardinians, quitted its position and crossed the river to seek its adversaries; "for," said Giulay, the Austrian general, "the enemy, whom it is impossible to observe from the left bank, can mask his movements and bring all his forces suddenly on any point before our troops can be warned and concentrated." And he had a precedent to justify his opinion, for in 1796, the Austrians being on the defensive from Peschiera to Mantua, Napoleon broke their front by crossing at Valeggio (see woodcut, page 26). Yet the Mincio possessed otherwise great advantages for defence, being a short line, secure on the flanks, and having two issues over it secured by Austrian fortresses.

It may be assumed, then, that when the assailant's bank decidedly commands the other throughout its length, or at the points where the roads forming the line of operation cross, the river is unsuitable for a defensive line.

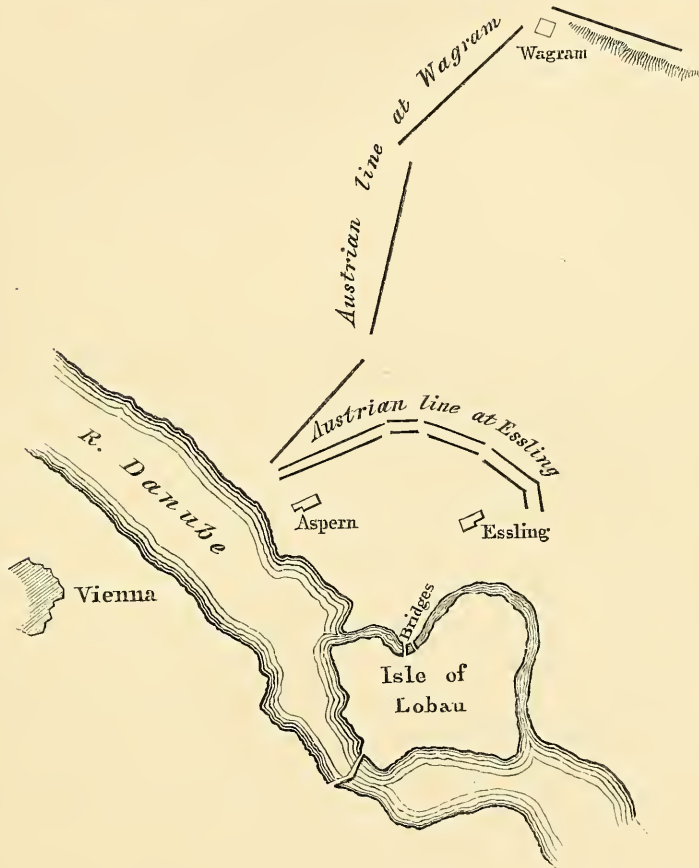
The lower bank still defensible if it offers strong points.

See Map No. 14.

But it must be observed that the mere command of one bank over the other will not be promptly effectual unless the opposing troops are unable to obtain shelter from the assailant's fire. It will naturally often happen that villages or towns are situated on one or both sides of a bridge. In this case, even if the assailant's bank has a moderate command, the buildings on the other side may, for a time, be defensible. At the battle of La Rothière, in 1814, the French right rested on the bridge of Dienville on the Aube—and the Austrians sought to turn that flank by sending a corps along the other bank. The Austrian bank commanded the other by about 30 feet, rising abruptly to a plateau less than 50 yards from the bridge, which was 95 yards long and 5 yards wide. But at 20 or 30 yards from its extremity on the French side was a substantial church, proof against field artillery, backed and flanked by the houses of the place. This was occupied so successfully that the Austrians were unable to pass the bridge throughout the battle, or even to drive over the river a French detachment on the left bank.

When the defender sees that the passage cannot be opposed, his usual course will be to take a position in the neighbourhood of the bridge; and the assailant, after passing, cannot manœuvre to turn this position, for by so doing he would uncover the bridge, the sole link in that part of his line

of operation. He must therefore make a direct attack on the position, which will almost certainly be on commanding ground. After his repulse



at Essling, Napoleon accumulated on the island of Lobau such ample means of passage, and so strengthened his communication with the Vienna side of the river, that it was in vain to attempt to oppose his landing; the Austrian army therefore took post 6 miles off, on the heights of Wagram, its right stretching towards the Danube. Napoleon, after passing, formed his columns of attack, and was victorious in the battle.

In 1862, Burnside threw the Federal army on the right bank of the Rappahannock, at Fredericksburg, almost without opposition, covered by

Passage in presence of a

concentrated  
enemy haz-  
ardous.

his powerful artillery. Lee observed the passage from his position on the opposite heights, and received the Federals, when they advanced to attack him, with so destructive a fire that they were driven in rout over the river.

If, therefore, circumstances are so favourable as to enable an army to pass a river in presence of the enemy, it must generally advance afterwards to attack that enemy in a strong position. But, in the great majority of cases, circumstances are unfavourable to an open passage. An army, however superior, seeking to force its way over a bridge, against an enemy posted on the higher bank, would certainly experience heavy loss. Thus, in 1810, Craufurd with the Light Division was driven over the Coa by a greatly superior force under Ney; but when the French attempted to pass the bridge, the British troops, lining the high bank, destroyed the head of every column, till the unavailing carnage caused the French to desist. And if the banks were of equal command, still the task would be too formidable for an equal army; for the only point at which an attacking column could advance being known—namely, the bridge—provision could always be made for bringing an overwhelming fire to bear on it. And if buildings, woods, or dykes, near the bridge, afford a shelter for the defender's infantry, the passage, in face of their fire, will be still more impracticable; indeed, such advantages will, as at Dienville, frequently balance the superiority conferred by the commanding bank. It may be inferred, therefore, that the points where a passage can be forced are comparatively few: and we may draw, for future use, the conclusion, that, *in the majority of cases, to attempt to pass an unfordable river, at a known point, in presence of a prepared enemy, demands a great superiority of force*—especially of artillery.

Stratagem  
usually em-  
ployed.

For this reason commanders generally seek to gain a footing on the opposite bank by manœuvring.

Having obtained command of the whole or a large portion of one bank, the assailant will show the heads of his columns, and make preparations as if to cross, at many points; while the real bridge will be constructed, or seized, and the first troops thrown across, elsewhere. Unless the defender's bank confers a very extensive and commanding view, he will be doubtful which column will make the real attempt—all must therefore be opposed; meanwhile, covered by the high or wooded banks, the assailant's troops

will be moving towards the real point. In general, a bridge of some kind, fixed or flying, must be thrown; and it will be a manifest gain to possess some creek or tributary stream where the materials of the bridge may be prepared unseen, and floated to the point of passage. If time allows, the means for throwing great numbers across at once may be prepared. In his second passage of the Danube, Napoleon placed 70,000 men, with artillery and cavalry, on the further bank in a single night. In 1704 the French had a flying bridge on the Rhine (that is, a bridge or raft passing from bank to bank by means of an anchorage up the stream), by which 500 infantry and 140 cavalry crossed at each trip. But, in all cases, success will in great measure depend on the ability of the assailant to augment his force on the opposite bank *faster* than the defender can bring troops to that point from other parts of the river, and from the reserves.

Necessity for multiplying the means of passage.

Although it is essential to an advance of the army after passing, that the assailant should possess the bridge of a great road *on* the line of operation, yet it is not necessary that the first troops should pass at a great road. On the contrary, if secrecy is an object, a point of passage will be more likely to be found unguarded elsewhere. All that is essential for the passage of the first detachment is, that the ground on both banks should admit of the manœuvring of troops of all arms. And it will be a great advantage to find, unguarded or weakly guarded, on the opposite bank, some easily defensible point, such as a village, a church, farm buildings, or a small wood. For as the necessary preliminary to throwing a bridge is to establish a party on the other bank, so some defensible point will enable the first troops to hold their ground, and to protect the construction of the bridge, or the completion of other modes of sending the rest of the troops across, such as the passage by boats or rafts. The seizure of the Portuguese seminary on the further bank of the Douro, by Wellington's advanced-guard, is a well-known example. Even when a permanent bridge is mastered, it will be necessary to throw other bridges at convenient spots near it, so as to concentrate on the other bank faster than the enemy; and throughout the operation feints should be persisted in at other points, to confuse and deceive the opposing general.

First troops pass at a weakly guarded point.

Advantage of seizing a defensible point on the opposite shore.

A force, then, being thrown across sufficient to deal with any that the defender can assemble at that point, it may advance along the bank

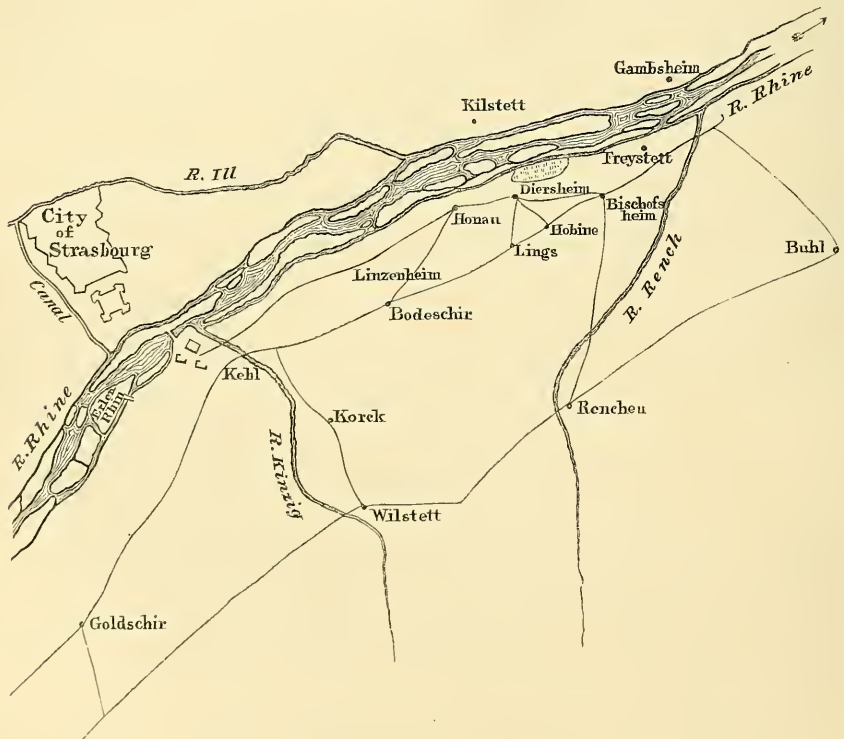
First troops that pass aid



in the attack  
on the main  
passage.

and assail in flank or rear the defenders of some important neighbouring passage, at the same time that another column makes a direct attack from the other bank on the same bridge. This is the usual method of gaining a footing,—and it may be executed either between the extremities of the enemy's line, or beyond one extremity—that is to say, either by breaking his front or turning his flank. The expediency of preferring either of these methods to the other must depend in great measure on the dispositions of the defender. For he must conduct the defence in one of two ways: either he must guard only the passages on the direct line of operation—in which case his front, too compact to be broken, may be turned; or he will guard all the passages by which the assailant can possibly seek to pass—in which case his front, thus dangerously extended, should be broken.

See also Map  
No. 8.



EXAMPLES OF PASSING A RIVER ON THE FRONT OF THE DEFENSIVE  
LINE.—MOREAU'S PASSAGES OF THE RHINE.

In 1796 it was arranged that the passage of the Rhine (see page 152) should take place a little above Kehl—the fortifications of that place forbidding a direct passage.

The river Ill runs nearly parallel to the Rhine past Strasbourg. A canal unites it to the small branch of the Rhine, called the Bras Mabile.

The materials for the passage were to be collected in Strasbourg, and to be taken by the canal to the Bras Mabile, where the attacking force was to embark.

Use of a tributary stream.

On the opposite bank the river was watched by the Suabian troops in the camp of Wilstett, the works of Kehl, and along the course of the Rhine for several miles on each side, 7500 men in all, of which about half were near enough to oppose the passage. The Austrians had about 9000 men between the Rench and Murg, and about 4000 extending from above Kehl to Brisach.

Wilstett to Kehl, 5.

All being ready, a false attack was made on the 20th June on the Austrian camp at Mannheim.

Feint to deceive the enemy.

On the same day the troops for the first embarkation quitted the neighbourhood of Mannheim for Strasbourg. The French right wing from the Upper Rhine also closed on Strasbourg. All the troops were to arrive near there on the 23d June.

16,000 French, for the main attack, were assembled in Strasbourg.

12,000 were to make a secondary passage at Gamsheim.

Strasbourg to Gamsheim, 13.

Between these places, three false attacks were to be made to confuse and distract the Austrians.

The width of the main branch of the Rhine is from 200 to 300 yards near Kehl. The numerous islands diminishing the total breadth of the stream—the woody banks, and the dykes along the shores, forming at once lines of defence for the first troops that might cross—were all circumstances in favour of the passage.

24th June.—Before midnight of the 23d all the boats for transport were brought down the canal into the Bras Mabile, and the first detachment,

False attacks at the moment

of commencing the enterprise.

2500, embarked at half-past one. The guns at the points of false attacks then opened.

The flotilla ascended the Bras Mabile, and got into the main stream; the main body landed on the wooded islands nearest Kehl—a detachment of 1500 men seized the bridge connecting the Erlen-Rhin with the Kehl shore—another attacked and carried the batteries on the Erlen-Rhin—a fourth attacked the two small islands on the stream; the boats, having landed all these, returned for fresh troops.

Use of a defensible point.

The Austrians, from their camp at Wilstett, marched to this point in time to oppose the troops first landed, who maintained themselves behind the dykes.

Assailants concentrate fastest.

A flying bridge from the French shore to the Erlen-Rhin was established by six in the morning. Infantry passed incessantly there, and by boats.

First troops turn to attack a main passage.

Sufficient troops having passed, they moved on Kehl. A detachment attacked the Austrian works, aided by heavy artillery from the Strasbourg bank. The enemy were driven out, on the Buhl road, and had no time to destroy the bridges of the Kinzig.

Main passage assured, army passes.

The bridge of boats opposite Kehl was commenced at six in the evening and finished next morning. The communications were thereby assured, and cavalry and artillery passed.

*25th June.*—Moreau reconnoitred the enemy.

Wilstett to Renchen, 6.

*26th June.*—The French pushed out on Goldschir, Korck, and Wilstett.

The Austrians, who had been driven back on Wilstett on the 24th, retired on Buhl.

Had Moreau brought Laborde's division from the Upper Rhine, where it was now useless, he might have assembled at Wilstett, on the 26th, 45,000 men—enough to guard the passages, and to crush all the troops between him and the Murg.

The Austrians after the passage were scattered thus:—

Dispersion of the defensive forces.

4000 on the Rench.  
8000 at Buhl.  
2000 on the Murg.

About 4000, separated from the rest, moved up the river towards Friburg.

The rest of the Austrian army of the Upper Rhine was between Mannheim and the Murg.

## PASSAGE OF 1797.

After the Archduke had driven Moreau over the Rhine in the preceding year, the Austrians besieged and took the works of Kehl, and greatly strengthened them. The Bras Mabile was now dry, the canal useless—therefore the passage could not be at Kehl. Strasbourg to Kilstett, 9.

Between Diersheim and the river is a small wood—the dykes there were favourable for defence—and separated from the wood by a small fordable arm of the river, was a large island. Above Kilstett the Ill runs into the Rhine, and would convey to the spot the requisite transport. It was resolved, therefore, to pass at Diersheim.

The Austrians were now in much greater force than in the preceding year, having, in the camp of Bodeschir, and between Kehl and Bischofsheim, about 20,000 men. Bodeschir to Diersheim, 4.

The troops of the French Centre were assembled on various pretexts about Kilstett on the 19th. The divisions, from right and left, were to arrive during the following night and day.

Forty boats, each for 70 men, a flat boat for guns, and twelve great boats from Strasbourg, were to pass down the Ill to embark the first detachment, which was to land principally on the island opposite the wood of Diersheim, a smaller force at Freystett, and a third between Freystett and Diersheim. Use of the tributary stream.

Two false attacks were to be made near Kehl, a third lower down.

*20th April.*—The boats were obstructed by a sandbank at the mouth of the Ill, and delayed till 5 o'clock in the morning. Meanwhile the false attacks had opened and alarmed the Austrians. Their batteries, sweeping the river, obliged all the first troops to land on the island; 300 Austrians were driven from it, and the advanced-guard attacked Diersheim. The French took the village, and, centring on it, extended to Honau on the one side, back to the Rhine on the other, on a front of 3000 yards. Use of a defensible point.

At 11 o'clock, the Austrians from Bodeschir, 4000, formed line from Freystett to Honau. Defenders concentrate fastest, but



fail to drive  
back the as-  
sailants.

At 3 o'clock the French established their flying bridge at Gambsheim, which could take only 25 cavalry, or 1 gun and waggon, at each trip.

The French had then in line about 8000 men—the Austrians 11,000, with a very superior cavalry and artillery. The Austrians attacked Diersheim and failed. The French took Honau.

The flying bridge was rendered useless by the enemy's fire; but a bridge of boats, begun at 6 P.M., was finished at midnight. In the night, an infantry division, a cavalry brigade, and 12 guns crossed.

*21st April.*—Austrians, superior in force, attacked Diersheim and Honau, but failed.

Assailants  
strongest at  
point of  
attack.

The French were now reinforced fastest, and at 2 o'clock Moreau attacked with superior forces. He directed his principal column between Lings and Hobine, his right on Linzenheim, his left on Freystett. The Austrians were routed, and the French advanced thus:—

Concentric  
advance from  
the river—  
main passage  
gained.

Centre, up the valley of the Kinzig, beyond Wilstett.  
Right, on Korck and Kehl.  
Left, on Bischofsheim, with its advanced-guard on the Rench.

*22d April.*—French advance resumed.

Assailants  
continue to  
push the de-  
fenders apart.

Centre, up the Kinzig.  
Right, up the Rhine valley.  
Left, forced the Rench.

The Austrian Right from Mannheim marched for the Murg. Moreau hastened to anticipate it; but an armistice between the two countries ended the campaign.

#### COMMENTS.

The communications of the assailant, after he has passed on the centre of the defensive line, being thus narrowed to a point, are more than usually vulnerable at the point of passage; but an army being fairly interposed between the parts of an enemy's front, it will generally in this, as in the cases discussed before, be secured from counter-attack by the anxiety of the hostile forces to reunite before taking the offensive. But as the enemy will concentrate twice as fast upon the centre as upon one flank, the necessity for prompt and vigorous

action on the part of the assailant, if he would derive all the advantages from the situation which it offers, is even more stringent after passing a river than in any other case. Moreau's tardiness in advancing after the passage in 1796, gave the Archduke time to concentrate his forces, to make his dispositions, and to effect his retreat on Ulm. Had the French struck out with vigour, pushing the Austrian left through the forest, and rolling Latour downward through the valley, the Austrians might have been cut altogether from the Danube, and their wings permanently sundered.

The apparent defensibility of a river or mountain-chain frequently offers inducements to the defensive army to attempt to guard a longer line than its numbers can adequately occupy; and in such a case a great opportunity is offered to a skilful assailant, who, inducing the enemy by dexterous feints to maintain or even increase the extent of his front, while his own concentration is concealed by the obstacle, should effect the passage on the centre, or between the centre and a flank of the hostile line, and should then seek, by vigorous attacks on one side, and the employment of a containing force on the other, to secure all the advantages which have been shown in Part IV. to exist in the situation.

A river frequently affords an opportunity of breaking a defender's front.

EXAMPLES OF PASSING A RIVER ON THE FLANK OF THE DEFENSIVE  
ARMY.—PASSAGE OF THE GAVE DE PAU.

In 1814, Soult held the Gave de Pau against Wellington. Above Orthez the river spread wide with flat banks. The bridge of Orthez was difficult to force, having a tower in the centre, the gateway of which was built up. The houses on both sides were occupied by the French, and the river there was deep and full of pointed rocks.

See Woodcut, page 236.

Five miles below Orthez was the broken bridge of Berenx — from whence a narrow defile led up to the main road on the right bank.

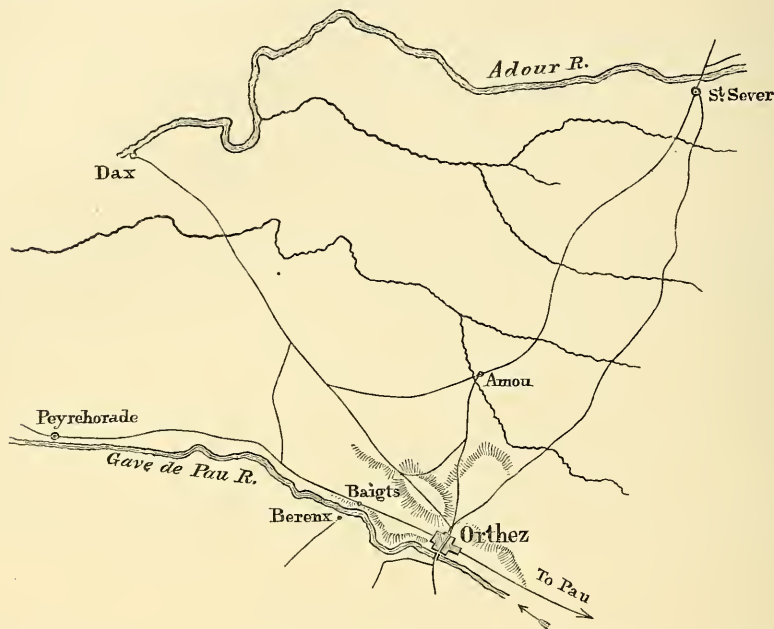
Soult designed to fall in force on the head of the first column that should cross. His line extended from near Baigts on the right, to above Orthez on the left, where, as the river was less defensible, he had placed strong bodies of troops.

Extent of the French line of defence.

Soult had 40,000 troops, of which 3000 were cavalry, and 40 guns.

Wellington had 37,000, of which 4000 were cavalry, and 48 guns.

Of the seven English infantry divisions, four were massed opposite Orthez, with 5 regiments of cavalry and 18 guns.



Orthez to  
Berenx, 5.

An infantry division, with a brigade of cavalry, in front of the broken bridge of Berenx.

Orthez to  
Peyrehorade,  
16.

Two divisions of infantry and a division of cavalry under Beresford in front of Peyrehorade.

Turning force  
passes,

Beresford crossed the Gave by a pontoon bridge and fords, and advanced with the main part of his force on the Pau road, throwing a detachment to his left to threaten Soult's communications with Dax, where he had a magazine.

and covers  
the passage of  
the main  
body.

Simultaneously a pontoon bridge was commenced at Berenx. Beresford, halting for the night near Baigts, covered the construction of the bridge. Communications were thus established between the Centre and Left.

Soult did not receive intelligence of Beresford's movements till he was near Baigts. By that time two divisions drawn from the right were approaching the bridge of Berenx, and that which had before been posted

there was about to cross. Thus five of the seven English divisions were massed opposite Soult's right, astride the river.

Soult now hesitated whether to fall upon Beresford, and the column crossing at Berenx, or to take a defensive position in rear. He finally decided on the latter course. Doubtless he was swayed partly by the strength of that position, but powerfully also by the circumstance that he could not know for certain the proportion of troops at each point. If he withdrew too many troops from left to right, the English right passing above Orthez might strike at his rear: if he attacked the English left with insufficient numbers, he might suffer losses to no purpose, and lose the Dax road. The screen of the river, veiling in some degree the assailant's movements, told against the defender.

Defenders  
take position  
in rear.

In taking his new position he pivoted on Orthez with his left, and swung his centre and right backward from the river in front of the Dax road. Wellington's divisions, when all had passed to the right bank, attacked the front of the position, dislodging the enemy by main force, and towards the close of the action, the English right, passing above Orthez, turned the French left, and accelerated the retreat.

#### PASSAGE OF THE TICINO, 1859.

See Map No.  
3, also No. 7.

In the middle of May the Austrians had their right towards the Sesia, near Vercelli, where they had destroyed the bridge, extending along that river to its confluence with the Po. Thence their line stretched along the Po (less than 300 yards wide in this part of its course), watching the principal points of passage as far as Belgiojoso, numerous bridges having been thrown over the Ticino below Pavia to render the communications easy. The left of the army, the 9th corps, was south of the Po in the defile of Stradella.

Preliminary  
operations.

The French divisions also extended along the Po from Valenza to Casteggio, watching the passages, with the division on the right thrown back to guard the issue of the defile. The Sardinians were massed on the left about Casale.

The French Emperor might aim (like his great predecessor in 1796) at Piacenza, operating by his right—might cross directly from his centre at Valenza and the other passages between that and the Ticino—or,



crossing by the passage he held at Casale, might prefer to force the Ticino rather than the Po.

The Emperor took the third course. He placed the Sardinian army between Casale and Vercelli, and threw it across the Sesia. This might be preliminary to a passage of the Po opposite the French centre, therefore the Austrian line fronted as before.

Feint towards  
Piacenza.

Demonstrations were made on the French right as if for an advance on Piacenza, and then a movement from right to left was begun behind the screen of the river. The 3d French corps (Canrobert) was withdrawn by rail from beyond the Scrivia to behind the Sesia, where it crossed and joined the Sardinians. This force was destined to cover the assembly of the army on the line Vercelli-Novara-Milan. The remaining corps moved along the roads bordering the Po. Demonstrations were made along the river by troops left for that purpose, as if to prepare for a passage; and when the 1st corps, last of all, quitted its position near Voghera, it broke up the roads and destroyed the bridges behind it to prevent pursuit, or a counter-advance by the south bank.

Vercelli to  
Novara, 14.

*1st June.*—The French corps were passing from Vercelli towards the Ticino, screened by Canrobert and the Sardinians, who had driven back the divisions forming the extreme right of the Austrian line to Robbio.

The Austrian 2d line (three corps) was drawn on to the arc Robbio-Vespolate-Vigevano, thus fronting the enemy and becoming the 1st line.

Buffalora to  
Pavia, 27.

Two other corps were drawn from the Po and directed on the Ticino at Bereguardo.

Part of the 1st corps was between Milan and San Martino, covering the passage there.

Novara to  
Turbigo and  
Trecate, 7.

9th corps between Pavia and Piacenza.

*2d June.*—French movements for the passage of the Ticino—the object being to reach Milan by a flank march round the Austrians.

Advanced-  
guard of turn-  
ing force  
crosses,

1st division of the 2d corps to Trecate, observing the issue of the Ticino at San Martino, and thus covering the march of a division of the guard directed on Turbigo, to force the passage there and cover the establishment of a bridge. Five batteries accompanied the bridge equipage. The division passed and occupied Turbigo.

followed by  
the rest.

*3d June.*—The division at Trecate followed, by Galliate, the movement on Turbigo, and reached Robechetto.

The other division of the 2d corps advanced to San Martino. The Austrians in the work covering the railway bridge retired, blowing up two arches imperfectly. Then the French division rejoined its corps at Turbigo, being replaced by another division of the Guard.

Treccate to S.  
Martino, 3½.

Canrobert between Vercelli and Robbio.  
Sardinians moving from Novara on Galliate for Turbigo.  
The rest of the French about Novara.

The Ticino here is as wide, or nearly so, as the Thames at Richmond—quite unfordable—and much more rapid.

Banks of the river quite low, especially the left, and very woody at a short distance from the shore, concealing movements of troops.

The Ticino had ceased to be an obstacle further than that the French must cross it at San Martino by a single damaged bridge. The real impediment lay beyond. Standing on the bank at the foot of the railway bridge, the spectator sees before him low flat meadows, terminated three-quarters of a mile off by a huge mound spreading in a wide semicircle. From the bridge of San Martino three roads diverge, piercing this mound at different points; one to the left, to Buffalora—that in the centre, raised 15 feet above the level, to Ponte di Magenta—the railway road, 300 yards from it, similarly raised—and from a lower point on the river runs a fourth road to Ponte Vecchio, crossing the mound at 1200 yards from the railway. This mound is the retaining wall of a large canal, deep and rapid, 30 yards wide, running between steep bushy banks 30 feet deep. The problem was to file over the bridge of San Martino and attack the four bridges of the canal guarded by the Austrians, aided by the three divisions from Turbigo under M'Mahon, who were already beyond the obstacle. And as the Austrians held the passages of the lower Ticino, and might attack by either bank, it was necessary to keep a force about Novara to cover the communications with Turin.

*Austrian Movements.*—Giulay's design was to carry his army from the right to the left bank, and attack the Allied force that might have crossed. To this end his troops on the 2d had been massed at the two points of passage, Vigevano and opposite Bereguardo. He trusted to the bridge-head of San Martino to delay the French till he should have his army assembled across the road to Milan. An emissary from the Emperor of Austria,

arriving at this critical moment with instructions, suspended the movement, which was delayed for several hours.

*4th June.*—The 2d and 7th Austrian corps, covered by the 3d, had crossed at Vigevano—their leading brigades were near the bridges of the canal, from Robecco to Ponte di Magenta. The remainder of these corps were 5 to 8 miles distant. A division of the 1st corps held Buffalora; another at Cuggiono opposed M'Mahon.

The 5th Austrian corps from Bereguardo was at Falla-Vecchio, 12 miles off. The 8th corps from Bereguardo had been directed on Milan, and was now at Binasco, 17 miles off.

*Allied Movements.*—The division of the Guard crossed at San Martino and covered the repair of the bridge.

The 3d and 4th corps were put in motion from Novara for San Martino—the 1st was to follow.

The Sardinians from Galliate to follow M'Mahon.

In face of the difficulties of forcing the bridges of the canal, it was Louis Napoleon's design only to threaten them with the division of the Guard, till M'Mahon's advance should have caused the defenders to turn their attention to him; then the Guard was to assault, and the attacks on the two banks would support each other.

The Guard was all on the left bank of the river at half-past 11.

M'Mahon was to leave Turbigo at 10 o'clock. He had 7 miles to march, and might be expected to reach Buffalora about noon.

The approach of M'Mahon was immediately reported to the Austrian commander-in-chief. Nevertheless, the first reinforcements from the Austrian rear did not arrive on the field till half-past 4 in the evening.

Turning force moves upon the main passage.

M'Mahon's divisions were directed on Buffalora and Marcallo. His right had already approached Buffalora, and his foremost troops were engaged, when he found an Austrian force in the space between his divisions. He recalled the leading troops, deployed his own corps across the space, and once more pushed forward, with the Voltigeurs in second line.

The front attack is precipitated.

But the fire of his advanced-guard had been the signal for the Emperor to launch his troops at the bridges of the canal. Much hard fighting ensued, and heavy loss. At Ponte Vecchio the Austrians were driven over the bridge, but blew it up in retiring.

At the railway bridge they were also driven over; and the French passing there turned along the further bank and aided in the attack of Ponte di Magenta, which was also carried.

Many repulses, however, had been suffered before so much success was achieved; for the attack had been precipitated by the first discharges from M'Mahon's troops, which, occupied in their deployment, caused no diversion at the bridges.

At length, M'Mahon's preparations being complete, he assailed the village of Buffalora. Taken in flank there, the Austrians abandoned the bridge, falling back to a line in rear—the French passed at Buffalora—and the connection between the separate parts of the army was restored.

Turning force aids in attack on the main passage.

The remainder of the action was a struggle on the part of the Austrians to make head against M'Mahon on the one side, and on the other to drive the French from the bridges. Brigades arriving from the rear were sent against them by both banks of the canal, principally the west side, and with partial success. On the other hand, troops from the 3d and 4th French corps now began to arrive at the contested points, after crossing from San Martino. Finally, at the close of the battle the French held the bridges down to Ponte Vecchio—the Austrians that of Robecco.

#### COMMENTS.

In all the foregoing cases the principle is apparent of throwing a force on the opposite bank, at an undefended or unexpected point, to co-operate in clearing a passage on the main line of operation. In neither of the examples of turning a flank is the whole army thrown off the direct line of operation for the sake of passing unopposed, but the advance of the turning force is used to cover or aid the main passage elsewhere.

The difference between the passage of the Gave and that of the Ticino is, that Soult, being restricted to the right bank, could only attack Beresford's force, and had not the option of attacking the remainder of the army: whereas the Austrians, possessing all the lower course of the river from Vigevano to Pavia, could operate by either bank, and the French were therefore detained astride the river.



Turning force  
not liable to  
be separated  
from main  
body,

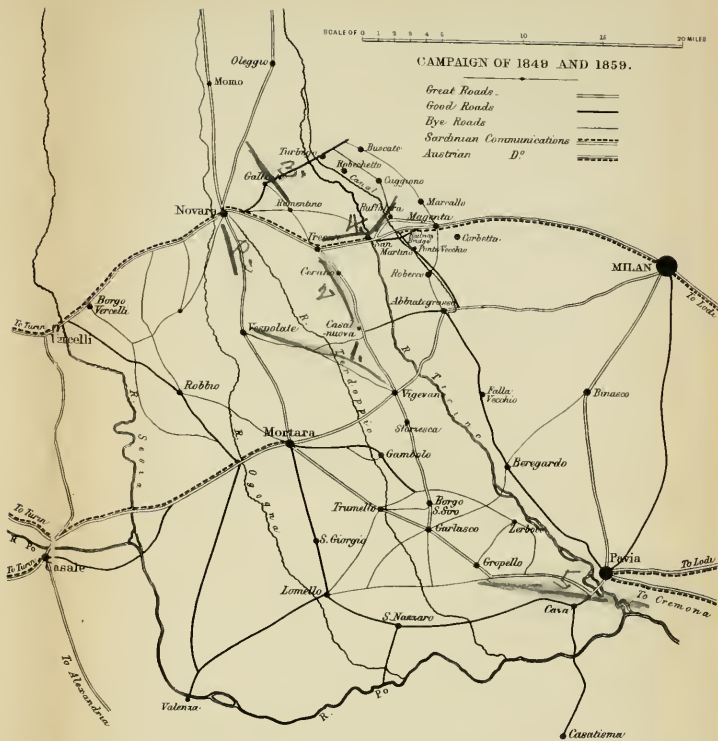
It is evident that if a force were detached off the main line to make a circuit round the enemy's flank in a part of the theatre where no considerable obstacle existed, it would be in imminent danger of being cut off, and an opportunity would be offered to the enemy of interposing between it and the main body. But when, in making the circuit, it crosses a river, this risk is in great measure obviated, because the part of the river between its point of passage and the main body is an obstacle to the enemy. The kind of disaster to which it is liable is to be forced back by a superior force upon the river. Thus, had the Austrian army been more concentrated, a part might have held the bridges while a force superior to M'Mahon's attacked him and drove him back on Turbigo. If attacked on a front perpendicular to the general course of the river, it will generally be able to recross without serious losses—for a detachment of troops with artillery, crossing in advance of the rest, could in most cases line the further bank and protect the passage; and the risk would generally be limited to the losses in the action, and those which must generally be incurred in retiring over a river in presence of a superior force. In fact, the point of passage will form *a pivot* for the operation of the turning force.

even if sepa-  
rately de-  
feated.

Real peril lies  
in the expos-  
ure of out-  
ward flank.

But it is evident that a turning force which advances along the bank with one flank on the river, exposes the other flank to a direct attack. Thus Sault, pivoting on Amou, might have come perpendicularly on Beresford's left and rolled him back on the river where there was no passage; and Giulay from the Milan road might have directly assailed M'Mahon's outward (left) flank, and driven him back on the canal and river between Buffalora and Turbigo. This kind of risk is exemplified in the two following instances.

Though it has no special relation to this branch of the subject, the nature of the movement on Novara, in 1859, should be studied. The reader, already familiar with the very similar case of 1849, will have no difficulty in perceiving the risk incurred by the Allies. Had they moved from the Sesia on Mortara and San Giorgio, and thence on Vigevano and Pavia, they would have perfectly covered both lines to Turin by Casale and Verelli; and the restoration of the bridge of Valenza behind them would have given the means of passing the Po, and would have materially strengthened their line of operation. Such an operation, in accordance with



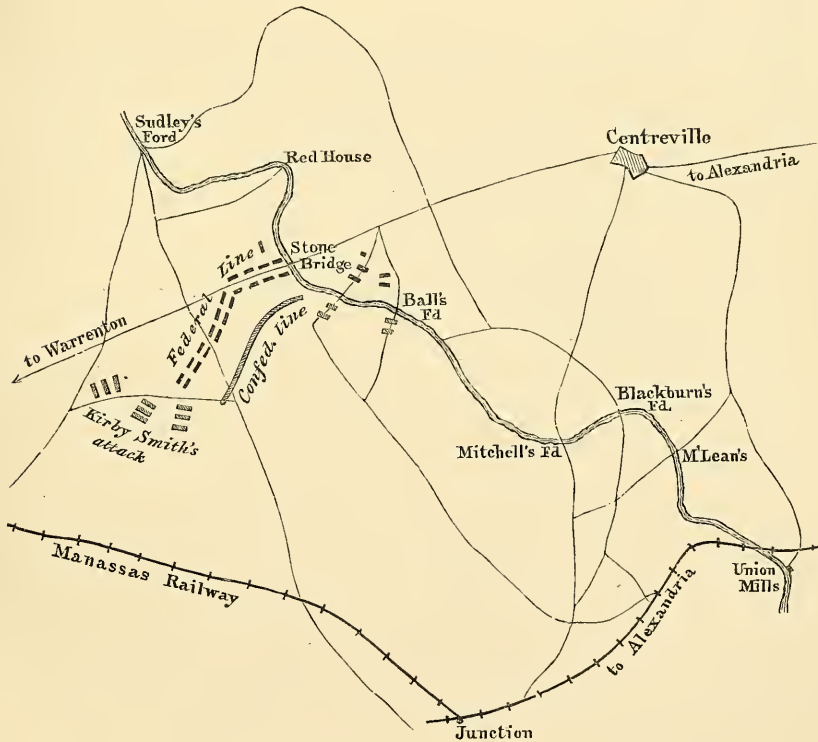


the circumstances of the case, would have given the army firm grounds from which to manœuvre for the passage of the Ticino, with better chances of obtaining a decisive strategical success, and with none of the risk of fatal disaster incurred by the flank march.

PASSAGE OF BULL RUN.

From Union Mills, on the Alexandria Railway, to Stone Bridge, which is on the highroad from Alexandria to Warrenton, through Centreville, there are six passages over the stream. The Confederate army was distributed

Examples of the risk incurred by a turning force. Extent of the defensive line.



along this space, 7 miles in extent, on the 17th July—a brigade being posted at or near each point of passage, and two in reserve.



The Federal army had advanced on that day from Alexandria to Centreville.

Direct attack  
repulsed.

18th July.—The Federals attempted to cross at Blackburn's and Mitchell's Fords, but were repulsed.

Centreville to  
Blackburn's  
Ford, 2.

They thereupon paused to reconnoitre the stream in order to turn the left of the Confederates, and discovered the road leading on Sudley's Ford.

Centreville to  
Stone Bridge,  
3.

21st July.—A Federal division advanced towards Mitchell's Ford—another on the Stone Bridge—a third was directed on Sudley's Ford—the Reserve remained at Centreville.

Two of the Confederate brigades of the Reserve were in rear of the right and right centre of their line. Jackson's brigade arriving the preceding night, was posted in rear of Mitchell's Ford. Bee's brigade was in rear of Ball's Ford.

Turning force  
passes, and  
descends the  
bank.

The advanced-guard of the Federal troops passed at Sudley's without opposition, but were met by part of the Confederate brigade at Stone Bridge, detached to confront them. Pressing on, they approached Red House, where the rear of the right Federal column sought to pass. It was opposed at first by Bee's reserve; but eventually the right column of the Federals formed line from the Stone Bridge to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  mile from the river on the Confederate side of the stream.

Is opposed in  
front.

Jackson's brigade, and afterwards one from the right, arrived in support of the Confederate line.

At this time Beauregard is said to have given an order for a counter-attack, by the three brigades forming his right, on Centreville, threatening the Federal line of retreat—and the brigade at M'Lean's Ford advanced; but the order was not executed.

Turning force  
attacked on  
its outward  
flank.

Supported by reinforcements from the right, including the last brigade of the reserve, the Confederates maintained the battle till Kirby Smith's brigades of Johnston's force arrived near the field by the railway. Quitting the train, they fell on the flank and rear of the Federals, who broke and fled over Bull Run. The Confederate brigades at M'Lean's Ford and Union Mills, advancing upon Centreville, menaced the reserve there and the line of retreat, and increased the disorder of the flight.

PASSAGE OF THE RAPPAHANNOCK AND RAPIDAN.

27th April.—Hooker, encamped opposite Lee at Fredericksburg, based Falmouth to Aquia, and aiming at Richmond, broke up his camp. His right wing, consisting of the corps of Meade, Howard, and Slocum, moved up the Rappahannock to cross above the junction of the streams and turn the Confederate left.



The corps of Sickles, Reynolds, and Sedgwick, under Sedgwick, were Falmouth to Germanna, 22. to cross at the same time below Fredericksburg, and detain Lee from the true point by menacing his front.

28th and 29th April.—The right wing having passed the Rappahannock, crossed the Rapidan almost unopposed—Howard and Slocum at Turning force passes, Germanna, Meade at Eley's Ford—all moving on Chancellorsville.

Sedgwick's corps crossed below Fredericksburg.

30th April.—Couch's corps from the reserve crossed at Banks's Ford, and gains other fords. Sickles from Falmouth at United States Ford, both on Chancellorsville.

1st May.—Hooker formed his line and intrenched it: Howard on the right or outward flank, then Slocum and Couch in the centre, and Meade next the river—Sickles in reserve.

Defenders  
attack the ex-  
posed flank.

2*d* *May*.—Lee, aware of the movement against his left, sent Jackson by the Spotsylvania road to meet the attack. Jackson, by a road through the woods, moved past and round the Federal right.

Fredericks-  
burg to Chan-  
cellorsville,  
12.

Hooker sent Sickles to reinforce the right. Jackson, attacking the right wing in flank and rear, broke and routed it, and drove it back on the river.

Reynolds's corps, from Falmouth, joined Hooker by United States Ford.

3*d* *May*.—Lee attacked the angle and left face of the Federal line. Hooker was driven entirely back on the river, his right below Eley's Ford, his left below United States Ford.

Sedgwick attacked the heights on the right bank at Fredericksburg, carried them, and pushed along the Richmond road.

4*th* *May*.—Lee detached troops against Sedgwick, turned his left, and drove him over Banks's Ford. He joined Hooker by United States Ford.

Operation  
fails.

5*th* *May*.—Hooker, who, on the preceding day, had cut roads to the United States Ford, and laid bridges there, retreated over it in the night.

#### COMMENTS.

The point in common in these two cases is, that the forces which had succeeded in crossing beyond the enemy's flank, and which thereupon aimed at his rear, advanced on a front perpendicular to the course of the river. They thereby exposed the outward flank; and that they escaped destruction in either case was due to the fact that they continued to hold, at the time of the attack, certain points of passage. Had the Federals at Bull Run let go their hold of Stone Bridge, by continuing to advance, without gaining Mitchell's Ford—or had Hooker, moving down the stream, passed by United States Ford without gaining Banks's Ford—they would in either case have been in great peril of being driven not *across* but *into* the river.

We shall see, in the Part on Tactics, how this peril may be partially remedied by an advance in echelon, retiring the outward flank; though that method, by rendering the advance on the defender's rear less direct, would also render it less decisive.

But the inference may be drawn that, when the defender's forces are entirely on one bank, and the assailant has thrown a force across beyond the flank, the most effective mode of meeting the attack will be to march against the *outward flank* of that force, with all the troops available for immediate action.

It is also very useful to consider the circumstances in which these two cases differ.

At Bull Run a large part of the Federal force was retained to cover the line of possible retreat. At Fredericksburg the wings were both thrown across the river, and the advance assumed the form of a double passage and double attack. It is evident that a passage on both flanks exhibits at once, in its most disadvantageous form, the case of an army between whose parts the enemy's forces are interposed—since the parts are separated, not only by the enemy, but by the river, and may be successively overwhelmed and driven on their bridges, while the victorious army, passing a central bridge, may cut both from their lines of retreat, or of possible junction. Another example is afforded by the campaign of 1796, where the Austrians advanced to cross the Adige for the relief of Mantua at three points, namely, above Rivoli, on Verona, and near Legnago. At Verona they were checked; at the other points they passed. The French massed first on Rivoli, on which line the Austrians had been opposed by a retarding force under Joubert. Napoleon, defeating them at Rivoli, turned southward, and, in conjunction with the retarding force that had retired from Legnago and the troops besieging Mantua, fell on the Austrian left wing and destroyed it.

Disadvantage  
of a double  
passage on the  
flanks.

It may be held as established, then, that a double passage on the flanks *must* be wrong unless with a great superiority of force—and that superiority may generally be turned to better account otherwise. The passage of Bull Run, planned by General Scott, was much less faulty than that of the Rappahannock, planned by General Halleck.

When Sedgwick was driven to join Hooker over Banks's Ford, the line to Aquia, on which the Federals were based, was totally uncovered. In front of Hooker was Lee's army, which had already heavily defeated him; in his rear was an unprotected line and base which the enemy, crossing at Falmouth, might assail. These circumstances could not but precipitate his retreat. This situation illustrates the impolicy of throwing a whole

The line of  
operation  
must be cov-  
ered during  
the turning  
movement.



army *off* its line of operation for the sake of turning the enemy ; for though the chances of gaining a battle are increased, yet a reverse may be absolutely fatal.

Distribution  
of the turning  
and covering  
forces.

Considering it, then, as established that the proper way to turn the flank of the defenders of a river is to hold the passage on the direct line with a covering force during the movement, it remains to consider what should be the proportions of the covering and turning wings respectively, and their mode of operation.

*The first object of the covering force is to resist a counter-attack*; therefore full advantage should be taken of the circumstance that an *inferior* force can generally, for a time, successfully oppose the passage of a river at a known point. The covering force should, therefore, be diminished to the utmost extent consistent with safety, and the wing whose action will be most decisive should be reinforced in proportion. To do this it will be necessary, of course, to possess the means, by bridges or fords, of passing the greater part of the army promptly across the river on the enemy's flank.

If *the whole* of the defensive army were assembled to meet the flank attack, and the assailant's covering wing were to remain on the hither bank, his chances in the battle would be proportionably diminished. The second duty of the covering force should be *to occupy and detain before it as large a number as possible of the enemy*, by maintaining a cannonade, fire of infantry, and demonstrations of forcing a passage. Had the Federal force at Centreville advanced to the river and made a persistent attack on the lower points of passage, it would have been impossible to draw troops from thence to meet the flank attack. There should be skilful and incessant reconnoitring of the opposite bank; and when it is evident that the enemy has withdrawn all or most of the opposing forces to meet the flank attack, the covering force should cross at once, multiply its means of passage, and push the enemy on the march. Should the turning wing be defeated before the arrival of the covering force on the field, the latter should retire on the bridges by which it advanced, for the enemy will, or ought to, try to intercept the retreat on that line. But should the main army maintain the engagement, or continue to progress, the covering force should advance and join in the action in a direction still covering its own bridges; for the example of Waterloo shows how effective is a combined attack from two divergent lines.

A passage effected *on* the direct line of operation, and between, not beyond, the extremities of the enemy's front, presents none of these difficulties and necessities for skilful combined action. Every man should cross: for the divided enemy will certainly devote all his efforts to recombination, not to counter-attack; and in case of the assailant's defeat, he covers his line in retiring.

When a general throws a turning force off the line of operation, beyond a river, he naturally collects the rest of his army on the road forming the part of that line which is nearest to the turning force, for the sake of concentration. Thus, Louis Napoleon, sending M'Mahon by Turbigio, collects his army on the Novara-Vercelli road, neglecting that of Mortara-Casale, by occupying which his forces would have been dangerously extended on the day of battle. If, then, the enemy, abandoning the defensive, crosses and attacks the covering force, on the hither bank, it may be forced to fight on a front parallel to the last road which connects it with its base while the turning force is beyond the river; and if the covering force be defeated the whole army may be ruined. We see what the effect might have been had the Confederates crossed the Rappahannock at Falmouth, or Bull Run at the lower fords; or had the Austrians, from Vigevano, attacked the covering force at Novara in 1859. This perilous position of an army astride a river will be better illustrated by an actual example.

#### PASSAGE OF THE CHICKAHOMINY.

The stream itself is inconsiderable, forty feet wide, and fordable at low water; but it was liable to sudden floods, when the low grounds on both sides were overflowed for a considerable distance. See Woodcut, page 251.

The Federal army advanced from White House to Bottom's Bridge, which had been destroyed; the advanced-guard forded the stream and intrenched itself without opposition. White House to Bottom's Bridge, 10.

The centre and right moved to Mechanicsville, retiring whence, the enemy destroyed the bridge, and prepared to oppose the passage from commanding ground. The operations embraced the portion of the river from Bottom's to Meadow's Bridge. Bottom's to Meadow's Bridge, 13.

“The entire army,” says M’Clellan, “could probably have been thrown across the Chickahominy immediately after our arrival, but this would have left no force on the left bank to guard our communications, or to protect our right and rear.”

Fair Oaks to  
Bottom’s  
Bridge, 5.

Federals  
astride the  
river,

On the 30th May, four Federal divisions were on the right bank, beyond Bottom’s Bridge; they were attacked on the 31st in the indecisive battle of Fair Oaks, and kept their hold of the bank.

The nearest supports were two divisions six miles up the stream, which crossed by bridges already thrown, to support the assailed wing.

Having completed his bridges over the stream, M’Clellan intended to cross entirely to the right bank and assail the Confederates before Richmond, on the 26th June. But on that day he was himself attacked.

Jackson approached by Hanover Court-House, and part of the Confederate army before Richmond, which had hitherto fronted M’Clellan, passed the Chickahominy above Meadow’s Bridge and at Mechanicsville, to join in the attack on the Federals on the left bank. The advanced-guard of the Federals at Beaver Dam Creek was forced back to Gaines Mill—whence to Coal Harbour a new line was formed by the 5th corps.

are attacked  
on the left  
bank.

27th June.—The 5th corps was attacked. Part of the 6th and 2d corps crossed from the right to the left bank to support it. Finally the whole Federal right wing, outflanked on its right, was driven over the Chickahominy to the right bank.

The most  
effectual  
counter-move-  
ments open to  
the defender.

Thus the communications with White House were absolutely lost, and in ordinary circumstances the army would have been ruined. It was in the expectation of such a result that the Confederates had attacked on that side. The army was saved by the fact that M’Clellan had made arrangements previously for transferring his depôts by water to the James River; hence the disaster did not entail ruin; and the retreat upon the new base was effected by the most creditable fighting done by the Federals during the war. But the example serves to show, that *when an army is astride a river, it may be most effectually attacked on the bank nearest its base*, if the hostile forces are already on that bank, or can readily pass to it, and if their own *last* line of retreat is not immediately threatened by the enemy’s movements beyond the river. Reviewing the operations on the Ticino in 1859, it will now be readily seen what an opportunity was open to Giulay had he met M’Mahon’s attack with an inferior retarding

force, and, massing his troops on the right bank (instead of crossing, as he did, to the left), thrown his whole weight, on the 5th of June, on the side of Novara.



An increase in the width of the river increases in some respects the difficulties of the assailant, by augmenting the difficulty of throwing a bridge, without, however, materially altering the case. The first requisite for crossing is to establish some troops on the further bank to cover the passage of the rest. And this object will be greatly aided if artillery from the assailant's bank can bring such an effective fire to bear on the defender's infantry, which may seek to overwhelm those troops, as to keep it at a distance and prevent it from manœuvring, and also crush any batteries which the enemy may attempt to establish

Effect of increased width of the stream.



to prevent the passage. Thus, under the conditions of artillery up to ten years ago, if a river were only two hundred yards wide, a defender's infantry assailing the first troops that passed over would be liable to be cut to pieces by the fire of the guns on the hither bank. But if the river were eight hundred yards wide, not only would the fire on the enemy's infantry at that range be less certain and effective (since neither case-shot from field-guns, nor grape from guns of position, would reach it), but the defender's batteries established at six hundred yards from the river would play effectively on the head of the bridge and the troops covering it, while their distance—fourteen hundred yards—from the assailant's bank would secure them from being overwhelmed by superior fire.

Improved weapons, in this case, favour the assailant.

These conditions have been altered, on the whole, in favour of the assailant, by the improvement in weapons. For though the relations of the opposing batteries might remain unaltered, yet the infantry from the one bank could now bring an effective fire to the aid of their comrades on the other ; and thus the largest force—which, by the conditions of the case, it is supposed the assailant would always bring to bear at the point of passage—would prevail. If French troops crossing from Piacenza, and English troops thrown over the Douro at Oporto, in both cases far beyond the range of their comrades' muskets, could by surprise establish themselves and cover the passage, much more would such enterprises be likely to succeed when the first troops should be supported by the fire of the army on the other bank. And another circumstance in favour of the assailant is, that a large river will generally be navigable, and it and its tributaries will in most cases furnish a number of large boats sufficient to throw at once on the opposite bank a force capable of maintaining itself.

Effect of fortified passages.

The possession by the defender of fortresses or bridge-heads giving the command of both sides of a bridge modifies the conditions of passing a river. If they exist on the flanks of a line of operation, it will generally be impossible to pass the river on a flank ; for the force attempting the turning movement must pass completely round the fortified passage before it could aid in the attack on another passage not so guarded. Therefore in such a case the passage will be sought on the front of the defensive line. And if the defender be entirely restricted to the defensive, he will still be probably unable to prevent the passage. The possession of the bridge-head

of Mannheim did not prevent the French from crossing the Rhine; and even on the short line of the Mincio the fortresses of Mantua and Peschiera did not prevent the Allies from crossing between them in 1859. Their value to the defensive army will consist principally in the facility and support they would afford to it in assuming the offensive against the enemy on his own bank: and the degree of their influence must depend on their position, a question which will be discussed hereafter in the chapter on Fortresses.

From a review of the chapter, the following deductions may be gathered:—

1. Neither a mountain-chain nor a river affords a permanent line of defence, unless in exceptional circumstances: and it does not balance, in any appreciable degree, the disadvantage of decidedly inferior force. General conclusions.

2. The conclusions formerly arrived at respecting the general questions of turning a flank or breaking a front are only modified, not changed, in the case of the passage of a defended river. For if the defensive line be too extended, it will be best to pass the obstacle on the front; otherwise to turn the flank.

3. In case of turning the flank, the risk incurred by the turning force in case of defeat will be lessened by the river; since, to intercept its retreat, the enemy must cross the river between its point of passage and the point held by the rest of the army, where, it is to be presumed, no ready passage will exist.

4. An army defending a river, on finding its flank turned, does not generally seek to re-establish affairs by itself crossing to the other bank, but rather seeks to concentrate against the part of the enemy that has crossed.

5. Nevertheless such a counter-stroke, when the defender has the means of speedily crossing, may be the most decisive course; and the occasion for dealing it will be the defender's best, though very transient, opportunity.

6. On his own bank, the defender's most effective action will be against the outward flank of the turning force if it advances on a front perpendicular to the river.

7. Lastly—and very important for discussing the subject of the next chapter—in the majority of cases the passage of a river at points deliber-

ately defended is difficult, doubtful, and costly to the assailant in men and time.

True uses of obstacles.

The true uses of obstacles, then, are not, as might at first sight appear, merely to increase the means of passive resistance. Their best effects will be—

*To give their possessor increased power of manœuvring offensively, and of taking the enemy at a disadvantage. But their defensive uses are various:*

Defensive uses of obstacles.

*To cover a flank movement.*—Thus, when Lee, after defeating Pope, crossed the Potomac above Harper's Ferry, and pushed his main force towards the Susquehanna (which was, relatively to the Federal army at Washington, a flank movement), he held the passes of the South Mountain with Hill's corps. M'Clellan from Washington attacked the passes with greatly superior numbers, but did not succeed in forcing them till the main Confederate army had retraced its steps and was assembled behind the Antietam, covering its line of retreat.

*To afford opportunity for rallying a beaten army*—as the Mincio did after Solferino, although found to be unsuitable as a permanent line of defence. The impression which so generally prevails, that it must be a mistake to fight with a river in rear, is a popular error. Provided the passages are assured, and sufficiently numerous in proportion to the force of the army, no circumstance can be more fortunate for a defeated host than the existence of an unfordable river in its rear. It is only when those passages are inadequate or precarious that the risk of disaster is increased.

*To enable part of an army to hold a forward line and protect territory till reinforcements arrive:* as the Prussians might have awaited the Russians on the Elbe in 1806; or *to cover a concentration in rear* like Zieten on the Sambre in 1815.

*To enable a rearguard to cover a retreat.*

See Map  
No. 13.

#### MASSENA'S RETREAT (1811).

Example of  
the use of ob-

In March 1811 Massena held Santarem with his 2d corps—the 8th corps was on its right at Pernes and Torres Novas—the 6th corps in reserve

at Thomar, with a division under Loison guarding the bank of the Tagus on its left. stacles to a rearguard

Massena had resolved to retreat by the roads of Pombal and Espinhal to Coimbra.

His first move was to march the 6th corps and cavalry, under Ney, to Leiria. This seemed to threaten an attack on Torres Vedras, guarded on the side of the Zizambre by two of Wellington's divisions. Thomar to Leiria, 25.  
Leiria to Torres Vedras, 52.

Having sent all encumbrances to the rear, Massena began his retreat on the 5th March—the 2d corps upon Thomar, the 8th corps on Torres Novas. The bridges on the Alviella stream were destroyed.

*6th March.*—2d corps from Thomar on Espinhal.

The rest of the army, including Ney's corps at Leiria, concentrated on Pombal. Thomar to Pombal, 25.

The heads of the British columns followed the 8th corps on Pombal.

The 3d and 5th English divisions from Torres Vedras on Leiria.

*9th March.*—Massena assembled for battle in position before Pombal.

An English brigade followed the 2d corps on Espinhal.

*10th March.*—Wellington formed to attack; when the enemy retired through Pombal, covered by a rearguard under Ney on the right bank of the Soure.

In the night Massena regularly organised his retreat. The baggage and sick, protected by the reserve cavalry, were sent in advance—the 8th corps followed; the 6th corps, under Ney, covered the movement. “The country,” says Napier, “was full of strong positions, the roads hollow and confined by mountains on either hand, and every village formed a defile: the weather also was moderate and favourable to the enemy, and Ney, with a happy mixture of courage and skill, illustrated every league of ground by some signal combination of war.”

*12th March.*—The head of the British column came upon part of Ney's rearguard (5000) deployed on a height across the fork of the streams, and covering the ford and bridge of the Redinha. Behind him was a narrow bridge and defile; beyond the stream, on heights commanding his position, was a division of infantry with cavalry and guns. Pombal to Redinha, 6.

Wellington, unable to ascertain the real force of the enemy, formed his army for attack. The reconnoissance and deployment occupied some hours. Ney waited to the last moment—then withdrew his right and Rearguard forces the enemy to deploy.



Redinha to  
Condeixa, 12.

centre, covered by his left, through the village, which he set on fire, and over the river. His reserves from the heights on the other bank covered the passage, then the French fell back on Condeixa.

“There is no doubt,” says Napier, “that Ney remained a quarter of an hour too long upon his first position; and Lord Wellington, deceived by the skilful arrangement of his reserve, paid him too much respect.”

Condeixa to  
Coimbra, 6.

13th.—The British pursued and came on the 6th and 8th corps in order of battle at ten o'clock. Massena, who had intended to pass the Mondego at Coimbra, found the further bank occupied by Portuguese militia and the bridge destroyed, and resolved to retreat by the Puente de Murcella up the left bank of the Mondego to Guarda and Almeida. To insure this change of line, he had occupied Fonte Coberta strongly; and the approach to Condeixa being difficult, he was confident of effecting the operation.

Rear-guard  
retards the  
enemy till  
turned.

Wellington detached a division over the hills to his right, to turn the French left. At three in the afternoon it arrived beyond the enemy's flank. Ney, setting fire to Condeixa to impede pursuit, fell back towards Miranda. The British following, cut off from him the divisions at Fonte Coberta on the one side, and opened communications with Coimbra on the other. The French troops at Fonte Coberta marched round the British in the night, and recovered communications at Miranda with the main body.

F. Coberta to  
Miranda, 10.

14th.—The French strongly posted on the heights bordering the left bank of the Deuca, from Miranda downward. Wellington sent a division by the road Panella-Espinhel to unite with the British brigade on the Espinhel road, attack the 2d corps, and turn the French position by crossing the Deuca. Another division turned the position more immediately, while the division leading the main column attacked in front. Ney held the position until the main column had deployed, and the divisions had turned his flank, then retired through Miranda. Massena, threatened in rear by the British troops on the Espinhel road, burnt Miranda and passed the Ceira, leaving Ney to cover the passage. “His whole army,” says Napier, “was now compressed and crowded in one narrow line between the high sierras and the Mondego, and to lighten the march he destroyed a quantity of ammunition and baggage.”

Rearguard  
repeats the  
manœuvre.

Miranda to  
the Alva, 14.

15th.—Ney, deploying a large force on the left bank of the Ceira, was attacked and driven into the river with heavy loss. He blew up the bridge, however, and continued to guard the right bank, while the main army took post behind the Alva.

Rearguard suffers for committing itself to an engagement.

16th.—The British halted for supplies, and to await the subsidence of the flooded river.

17th.—Wellington crossed by a bridge thrown in the night, and by fords, and found the French behind the Alva with its lower bridges destroyed.

18th.—Three divisions menaced the Upper Alva, two cannonaded the passages below. Massena thereupon concentrated on the Moita ridge, thereby forcing Wellington also to concentrate.

19th.—Massena retreated on Celorico.

Wellington concentrated on the Moita ridge.

These operations will suffice to show the manner in which obstacles aid, and are indeed essential to, the efforts of a retarding force, which opposes a superior enemy, whether as a rearguard or as a body covering some decisive movement of the rest of the army. Wellington, coming up with Ney (who has about 10,000 against 40,000), must choose between attacking with the head of his column, with certain loss and with uncertain result—for he could not know, except by experience, what force might be in front of him; or deploying his whole army for battle, as at Redinha; or having recourse to a turning movement: and either of the last two methods cost him half a day in preparation.

On the other hand, the pursuing force, certain of support, operates boldly to a flank, and the retreating army is exposed to the risk of losing troops, either from being cut off by withdrawing too late, as at Fuente Coberta, or from being overwhelmed by superior forces as on the Ceira.

The difficulties of operating by a single road, and the nature of the operations described in Part IV. Chapter I., are well illustrated by the remarks quoted from Napier.

The latter part of Massena's retreat exemplifies the use which may be made of an obstacle to cover a change of front. The French from Celorico made for the Coa by Guarda and Sabugal. Their position at Guarda threatened the flank of Wellington's line along the Mondego, the head of

his column being at Celorico. Had he followed the same road as the French, that of Celorico-Guarda, with his whole army, he might have found his communications endangered; but by taking advantage of the bend of the Mondego, occupying the heights looking on its upper bridges with his right wing, he brought his left round, and changed the direction of his front in security.

Use of a  
river to secure  
the communi-  
cations.

But besides their value to a defensive or retreating army, rivers may be turned to account by an army during its advance, in a very important manner, *by securing the line of communication.*

When an army is operating close to its base, and that base is extensive, it can change the direction of its front, or of its line of operation, freely, without endangering its communications. But as it advances, and increases the distance from its base, its lengthened communications become more and more open to attack. It can no longer change the direction of its front, or of its line of operation, without laying bare some essential communications. It is hampered by the lengthening chain it drags after it; and while the enemy, if near his base, or in his own country, can manœuvre freely on many sides, the advancing army becomes more and more rigid and constrained, till at last, far from thinking of offensive movements, its whole energies are absorbed in covering its precarious communications.

But if, under these circumstances, it can master some defensive line, strong for defence, and create thereon depôts of material of all kinds, collected from the surrounding districts, and transferred from its own territory, it has carried its base forward, and recovers its freedom of manœuvre. Such a line is afforded by the course of a considerable river. Important passages on it, commanding many roads, are strengthened—recruits are brought thither from the rear, invalids are sent thither from the army, to occupy the works, and diminish the number of effective men withdrawn from active operations. Henceforth, all the roads between the base and the river will be secure; and the relieved general, restored to full activity, will now be solicitous to preserve only his communications with the river.

Thus, Napoleon in 1813, advancing from the Rhine into Northern







Germany, makes a secondary base of the Elbe from Pirna down to the sea. Pivoted thus, and creating a vast depôt in Dresden, he directs his movements northward against Berlin, eastward into Silesia, southward into Bohemia, the line to France through Leipsic remaining all the time secure: and it is not till he quits the Elbe that this line is endangered.

Thus, also, Marmont's Army of Portugal, linked to France by the single road of Bayonne, broadens its base by fortifying the Douro from the Esla to Valladolid, and acquires all the latitude of action displayed in the campaign of Salamanca.

When a general, surveying the map of the theatre, finds direct obstacles in the path he must advance by, he sees in them, if he be confident in his own skill in manœuvring, increased opportunities for obtaining strategical successes. And the opposing leader will, or ought to, find them illusory aids, if he attempts to hold them entirely on the defensive. To turn them to account he must make of them successively the pivots of offensive operations, or employ them as a means of temporarily retarding the enemy. In fact, like any other complications in a game, they offer on both sides additional opportunities to skill and talent, and additional embarrassments to incapacity.

## CHAPTER IV.

OBSTACLES WHOSE GENERAL DIRECTION IS PARALLEL TO THE PATH  
BY WHICH AN ARMY ADVANCES TOWARDS ITS OBJECT.

Mountain  
ranges of this  
kind.

WHEN French and Austrian armies moving east and west approach each other on the Po or the Danube, those rivers form obstacles of the kind whose influence is discussed in the present chapter. And while direct obstacles are at once seen to interpose difficulties and delay in the way of an advancing army, the effect of this other class of impediments is by no means obvious, and requires both thought and illustration to render it apparent.

Hazard of ad-  
vancing on  
both sides of  
such an ob-  
stacle.

When Massena followed Wellington to the lines of Torres Vedras, the ridge of the Monte Junto divided longitudinally the space between the Tagus and the sea. Had Wellington retreated by both sides of the ridge, his wings would have been separated by the obstacle, and Massena, following by one side only, might have overwhelmed a wing with his whole force before the other could by a circuitous march support it. In the same way had Massena advanced on both sides of the ridge, while Wellington retreated by one, the whole English army might have fallen on a wing of the French.

This ridge, ending at the Zizambre, did not penetrate the lines ; Wellington, therefore, could extend behind them across the whole space between the Tagus and the sea. The French, on the other hand, were still cramped by it ; and all their interests lying away from the sea, of which England held the dominion, they concentrated between the ridge and the river ; and having once elected to do so, they could not pass the ridge to attack on the other side without the risk of being themselves assailed while in

the act of passing, with the head of their columns separated from the rear by a difficult obstacle.

When Massena fell back on Santarem, Wellington followed him, still on that side of the ridge. But when the French halted beyond the northern extremity of the obstacle, while he was still cramped by it, the disadvantage was transferred from them to him, and led, as we have seen, to the dispersion of his army; for while they, from Leiria, could advance directly on Torres Vedras, he, from the Rio Mayor, must make the circuit by Alemquer, in order to reach that point, and it was therefore necessary to leave there troops sufficient to hold the ground till he could arrive. And as the screen of the mountains would enable the French to make their first march undiscovered, their relative proximity to Torres Vedras was thereby increased.

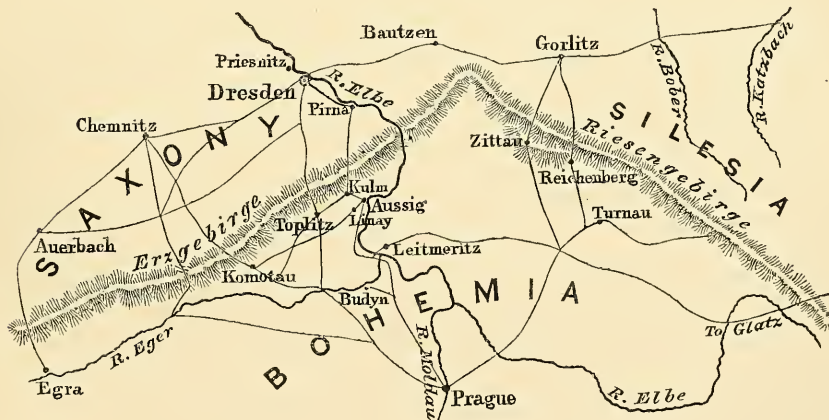
To advance on one side necessitates a detachment in rear.

It may be assumed, therefore, that when, of two armies operating near each other on an obstacle of this kind, one immediately holds a passage over the obstacle, and the other is at a distance from its nearest passage, the former possesses the advantage.

Deduction.

The manner in which an obstacle of this kind may be used as a screen for a movement against the enemy's communications is exemplified in the Leipsic campaign.

Manner in which the obstacle may screen an offensive movement.



Napoleon had advanced from Leipsic through Dresden and Bautzen to the Bober in Silesia, pushing back the Prussians and Russians. During



this march the mountains of Bohemia lay on his right flank. An armistice being agreed on, both parties halted in their positions—the Allies being posted with their left on the mountains west of Glatz, and their right on the Katsbach.

Over the western face of the mountains (the Erzgebirge) there are several passes, and the Elbe there pierces the barrier. Napoleon had occupied the Elbe from Dresden upward to the Bohemian side of the mountains. Between the Elbe and the Allied position only two passes practicable for great operations existed—namely, from Gorlitz by Zittau and Reichenberg—these passes Napoleon occupied.

Gorlitz to  
Zittau, 20.

French front  
is at a dis-  
tance from its  
nearest pas-  
sage.

Allies com-  
mand a neigh-  
bouring pas-  
sage,

Thus, when the armistice terminated, Napoleon, minus the detachments in his rear, fronted the concentrated forces of the Allies.

They by their position covered a passage from Glatz over the mountains into Bohemia. Leaving Blucher in a strong position to cover the roads to the Oder, by which Russian reinforcements were coming, they marched, with their main body in successive corps, on the 13th and 14th August, traversing Bohemia, crossing the Elbe at Leitmeritz, and aiming at Dresden.

and break out  
on Napoleon's  
rear.

On the 19th, Napoleon, hearing of the movement, led the detachments at Zittau and Friedland southward; but finding that the Allies were already beyond the Elbe, he left a rear-guard to face Blucher, and marched 80,000 men in three days ninety miles back to Dresden—the Allies, after moving through the four principal defiles, and pressing back the French corps guarding the roadway of the Elbe, being then assembled before the city.

In this also is seen another proof of the assertion in Part III., Chapter IV., which has received so many confirmations in the course of this work, that when armies are aiming at each other's communications, that army whose communications are most immediately threatened abandons the initiative, and conforms to the movement of its adversary. For Napoleon was linked to France by the sole line Dresden-Leipsic-Hanau; and though, when he marched from Zittau into Bohemia on the 19th, he was nearer the road by which the Allies had marched, and by which they communicated with Blucher, than they were to Dresden, yet they were not bound to that road, for, Austria having

joined the coalition, they might now base themselves on the Danube by Prague and Budweis.

We will now turn to the case of *rivers* forming obstacles of the kind in question ; and the campaign of 1859 at once affords two simple and forcible illustrations of their influence. Rivers of this kind.

Before the arrival of the French in the theatre of war, the Sardinians held the line of the Dora Baltea, seeking to cover Turin *directly* against the Austrians, then on the Sesia ; but by the advice of the French Marshal Canrobert, they relinquished this line, which was weak in the centre, too extensive for their numbers, and liable to be turned on the left by the road of Ivrea, and took post at Casale on the south side of the Po, holding, by garrisons in works on the left bank, the passage of the river. See Map No. 7.  
Sardinians at Casale check the Austrian advance on Turin.

Under these circumstances, if Giulay should throw his whole force towards Turin, the Sardinians would in a moment, by an advance on the road Casale-Vercelli, sever his communications. He must therefore place a force opposite Casale to guard against this peril, while the heads of his columns pushed upon the capital. But what if this Austrian covering force should be too weak to maintain itself—and not only itself, but the whole line between the Ticino and the head of the columns—against a combined attack of the Sardinians crossing at Casale? In such a case the army would be compromised. Hence it was that Giulay took his steps so cautiously towards Turin, throwing forward successive corps supporting each other, and placing a large force astride of the road Casale-Vercelli ; till finally, caution prevailing over enterprise, and French troops appearing in the works of Casale, he relinquished the attempt, and withdrew behind the Sesia.

Shortly afterwards the situation was reversed ; for, when the French had joined the Sardinians, the Austrians were thrown on the defensive, and it was manifestly the interest of the Allies to pass the Po beyond the enemy's flank at Piacenza. But the Austrians held, near the junction of the Ticino, a fortified passage over the Po at La Stella, the works on the south bank there forming an intrenched camp capable of holding a large force. Had the French from Voghera passed along the defile of Stradella Austrians at La Stella prevent the French from moving on Piacenza.

aiming at Piacenza, the whole Austrian army might, from La Stella, have burst on their flanks, split them asunder, and overwhelmed all eastward of that point; and this, doubtless, was one potent reason inducing the Emperor to advance by the line, strategically so inferior in importance, Casale-Vercelli-Novara.

Assailant requires greatly superior numbers.

To leave behind a defended passage of a river of this kind, when the defender holds both sides of the bridge, demands, then, a covering force at least equal to the force of the enemy; and moreover, the next passage, which the assailant has just quitted, must, until the enemy's rear is attained, be adequately occupied, lest the enemy should break out upon the rear (as the Allies must have continued to observe Valenza while passing La Stella, and aiming at Piacenza).

Risk of the assailant lessened if the defenders are restricted to one bank.

If the defensive army is restricted to its own bank, or if it is not in condition to cross and fight, the risk incurred by the assailant in marching along the river to break out upon the enemy's rear is proportionally diminished. It will be only necessary to conduct the movement with such secrecy that the assailants shall assemble on the further bank, at the point aimed at, faster than the defenders, so as to avoid the risk either of attempting to force a passage in the face of superior numbers, or of being overwhelmed during the passage by the more rapid concentration of the enemy. Thus, in 1796 the Austrians held the Po from opposite Valenza to Belgiojoso; Napoleon's divisions held the south bank from Valenza to Voghera. He resolved to march down the bank beyond the Austrian front, and pass at Piacenza; and to this end his divisions marched simultaneously in that direction, except that at Valenza, which remained both to detain the Austrians and to cover the communications with Turin from counter-attack. Having succeeded in gaining one march on the enemy, he crossed at Piacenza, in boats, faster than they could arrive there, beat their first troops, and drove them apart; seized the bridge of the Adda at Lodi, and forced the dispersed enemy to seek the shelter of the Mincio. And another instance similar to this has already been cited, in the operations of Moreau against Kray, when he threw his right over the Danube at Blenheim to cut off the Austrians in Ulm. Each of these operations, however, was undertaken against a beaten army, from which a vigorous counter-stroke was little to be feared; but they serve to prove that, in order to turn the river to full account, the defender must be in



complete possession of points of passage, and this will generally be secured by field-works covering both ends of the bridge. Supplementary bridges should also be thrown to facilitate the assembly on either bank. These conditions fulfilled, the position of the defender is such as to compensate for considerable inferiority of numbers.

Hence it is that, as the Archduke tells us, the first care of a general posted on the Danube should be to establish, at the point he occupies, a double bridge-head—that is, a work at each end of the bridge, and insuring the passage of the army to either bank.

To show the necessity of guarding the communications of an army which is about to cross a river of this kind to attack the enemy, even when that enemy does not hold assured passages, let us take the case of Napoleon and the Archduke in 1809. The Emperor had captured Vienna, and was about to cross at Essling to attack the Archduke, who did not possess a bridge between Ratisbon and Vienna, but only the means of throwing one. Yet during this critical operation, when every French soldier was wanted at the point of attack, Davout was retained with 30,000 men on the right bank between Vienna and Krems, so as to be able to assemble them at either point in one march, and guard the communications with France; while, farther back, Lintz was guarded by a corps of Würtembergers, and Passau by another of Saxons, and a strong garrison was kept in Ratisbon. And when Napoleon subsequently withdrew many of these troops to reinforce the main army, he compensated for the want of them by erecting strong works, suitably armed and garrisoned, at all possible points of passage—that is to say, at all points which presented, on each bank, roads suitable for the sustained operations of great armies.

Example of necessity of guarding passages in rear.

It might at first appear that, in an extensive theatre, the influence of an obstacle of this kind might be *evaded* by the assailants advancing on a line far distant from it. But the campaign of 1796 in Germany, already detailed, shows the futility of such an attempt. Jourdan, whose march lay a long way from the Danube, was nevertheless compelled in a moment to pause, and then to retreat, by the advance of the Archduke on the line Neuburg-Nuremberg, perpendicular to the French communications.

Influence of the obstacle not to be evaded.

In fact, an obstacle of this kind confers on its possessor all the advantages of the angular base *augmented*, because extending to both sides of



the theatre. It presents a succession of points which must either be directly attacked, or turned under protection of a covering force, and either course demands superior numbers. Of the two kinds of obstacles, rivers are best for defence, because it is much easier to pass troops over bridges than over a path in a chain of mountains, and the army that holds the passage has, therefore, readier means of concentrating on either side of the obstacle, or of maintaining communications between the wings if astride of it; while it is equally serviceable as a screen for movements, and as a means of dividing the enemy.

Supposing, then, an Austrian army in a war with France to have advanced up the Danube to Ulm, a French army, aiming at Vienna, must either drive the Austrians from Ulm, or, passing that place, must cover its march with a force capable of dealing with the whole Austrian army. Should it, without such protection, continue to advance eastward, the Austrians, descending perpendicularly on its line of communication with France, would force it to form front to a flank. If the French were defeated in this way on the side of Munich, they would be driven on the Tyrol—if on the side of Nuremberg, they would be driven on the Maine; while in either case the Austrians, if defeated, would obtain shelter behind the Danube. And if the French army should hold the river down to Ratisbon, the case would be reversed in its favour, for the Austrians could not pass beyond the Isar on one side nor Bayreuth on the other.

Consequent  
importance of  
the Danube,

We may now understand what the Archduke Charles meant when he said, “The history of the wars of Southern Germany, since the conquest by the Romans to the nineteenth century, furnish a thousand proofs of this maxim, that the valley of the Danube is the key to the country. In all times its banks have been struggled for, and the issue of these great conflicts has always been to the advantage of the side that mastered them.”

but only a  
certain por-  
tion of it.

But he expressly limits the influential portion of the river to the space between Ulm and Ratisbon; and the reason is that, above and below, the country does not afford roads by which to operate on both banks, and is unfit, from its nature, for the manœuvres of great armies. Were an Austrian army posted on the Danube above Ulm, the French from the Rhine, blocking the defiles of the Forest, might pass round it to Ulm. In fact, the mountains, with their defiles, would neutralise the influence of the river; and below Ratisbon, down to Passau, the difficulties of the

Bohemian mountains, and the absence of passages, would render the possession of the river of small value.

It might happen that the French would hold one part of the river, the Austrians the other. The French might be at Neuburg, the Austrians at Ingolstadt. If the French wished to advance, they must either pass by the passage of Ingolstadt or force it. The risk of passing it by has been discussed. If the French advanced to attack it by both banks, the Austrians, concentrating on one, and holding the passage with a containing force, would throw their weight on a portion of the French. If the French advanced altogether on one bank, the Austrians, if too weak to accept battle uncovered, might concentrate on the other, still maintaining their communications with Ratisbon; thus the enemy must force a passage at a known point. For example, in 1796, the Archduke charged Latour, if he were pressed by Moreau, to cross the Danube. And even supposing the opposite bank to that on which the French were advancing should not be defensible at that point, yet the course of the river would be certain to supply ground suitable for the purpose; for, in order to be indefensible, it must be commanded by the opposite bank, and devoid of all advantages for disputing the passage. If the banks were of equal command on both sides, or level on both sides—or if the Austrian bank, though the lower, afforded good points of defence—or if, on that bank, a good position existed within cannon-shot of the bridge,—the enemy must attack at a disadvantage. One or other of these conditions, would exist in the great majority of cases; and points of passage where these conditions did not exist, if not capable of being rendered available by fortifications, need not be included in the system of defence.

Case of armies each holding a portion of the river.

Since, then, either to force a passage, or to pass it by, demands superior forces, we find that the advantages of a line of defence of this kind are such as to compensate for considerable inferiority of numbers; but that these advantages are *entirely on the side that holds the defensive, and to profit by them, an army must take position near a point of passage, and await the movements of its adversary.*

The army that advances offers an advantage to its adversary.

## CHAPTER V.

CASE OF TWO OR MORE CONVERGENT RIVERS, WHOSE GENERAL COURSE IS PARALLEL TO THE PATH BY WHICH AN ARMY ADVANCES TOWARDS ITS OBJECT. — CAMPAIGN OF 1814 IN CHAMPAGNE.

See Map  
No. 14.

GREAT additional complexity is introduced into the question of the influence of rivers of this class, when two or more flow in the same general direction and converge.

If the operations lie altogether on the *outward* bank of one of two such rivers, the other river loses all immediate importance. Thus the Isar would have no influence on a campaign north of the Danube.

Conditions  
under which  
an army ad-  
vances in this  
case.

But it may happen that the most direct routes lie *between* such rivers ; and moreover, in the various windings of the streams, pass from one bank to the other. In this case an army, advancing by these routes, must sometimes be under the necessity of forcing the passage at a known point. And while moving on the *inner* bank of one river it will be exposed in flank to the direct attack of an enemy who makes the other river the pivot of his stroke. Thus one great road to Paris from the east passes to the south bank of the Marne at Chalons, and repasses to the north bank at Trilport. And another road, also from the east, passes the Aube at Dolancourt, crosses to the south bank of the Seine at Troyes, and repasses to the north bank at Nogent. An army moving from Chalons to Trilport exposes a flank to the attack of an enemy posted on the Seine ; an army moving from Chaumont to Dolancourt exposes a flank to the attack of an enemy posted on the upper Marne at St Dizier ; and on again emerging into the space between the rivers at Nogent, it is exposed to the attack of an enemy pivoting on the lower Marne. The ensuing narrative of

operations will give the reader an illustration of what is perhaps the most complex problem which a theatre of war can present.

CAMPAIGN OF 1814 IN CHAMPAGNE.

After the battle of Leipsic, Napoleon retreated to France by way of Frankfort and Mayence, leaving garrisons in many fortresses in Germany (where they were lost to him), in Holland, and on the Belgian and German frontiers of France.

The Allied Army of Bohemia, under Schwartzenberg, approached the Rhine at Basle.

The Army of Silesia, under Blucher, approached the Rhine at Coblenz, Mayence, and Mannheim. Basle to Coblenz, 220.

Two corps, Prussian and Russian, under Bulow and Winzingerode, in a series of operations expelled the French from Holland.

Blucher wished the united armies of the Allies to cross the Rhine between Mayence and Coblenz. If the fortresses of the Moselle should prove to be weakly garrisoned he proposed to take them—if strong, to observe them ; and then to march by this, the shortest, line to Paris, returning if necessary, after overthrowing Napoleon, to capture the strong places. Prussian plan of invasion.

The Austrians wished to turn the line of fortresses which guarded Paris from the east, by advancing from Switzerland. They argued that the investment of the great fortresses, by withdrawing so many detachments superior in number to the garrisons, would tell against the Allies. Moreover, they wished, by operating from Switzerland, to separate Napoleon from his army in Italy. Therefore the Austrians followed this route ; and Blucher moved on the intermediate line of the Moselle to connect the main army with the Allied corps in Holland. Austrian plan.

ARMY OF BOHEMIA,

Allied forces.

Commanded by Schwartzenberg—Radetzky, Chief of the Staff.

Corps 1	.	.	Austrian	.	.	.	General Colloredo.
„ 2	.	.	Austrian	.	.	.	Louis Lichtenstein.
„ 3	.	.	Austrian	.	.	.	Giulay.
„ 4	.	.	Wurtemberg	.	.	.	Prince of Wurtemberg.
„ 5	.	.	Austrian and Bavarian	.	.	.	Wrede.
„ 6	.	.	Russian	.	.	.	Wittgenstein.

Two light divisions under Bubna and Maurice Lichtenstein.

In all—95,000 infantry.

21,000 cavalry.

468 guns.



## ARMY OF SILESIA,

Commanded by Blücher—Gneisenau, Chief of the Staff.

Corps 1	. . .	Prussian	. . .	York.
„ 2	. . .	Prussian	. . .	Kleist.
„ 8	. . .	Russian	}	Langeron.
„ 9	. . .	Russian		
„ 10	. . .	Russian		
Cavalry	. . .	Russian		
Corps 6	. . .	Russian	}	Sacken.
„ 11	. . .	Russian		
Cavalry	. . .	Russian		
In all—69,000 infantry.				
19,000 cavalry.				
478 guns.				

French forces. To oppose these Napoleon had the corps of Ney, Marmont, Victor, and Macdonald, and the Imperial Guard under Mortier and Oudinot; at the outset about 70,000 infantry and 17,000 cavalry, with a great number of guns, with which to meet the heads of the Allied columns; and throughout the campaign he was constantly reinforced from reserves at Paris, and from the Pyrenees. On the other hand, Schwartzberg had a reserve of 50,000 men at Basle under Barclay de Tolly.

The Vosges Mountains extend parallel to the Rhine, separating its basin from that of the Moselle, and fall back at an angle opposite Basle. From thence southward the barrier is taken up by the Jura.

The space between the extremities of these ranges is known as the Gap of Befort, which gives admission to the valley of the Rhone, the only obstacles being the weak places, Befort, Blamont, &c. Thence the road to Paris leads over the Morvan range into the valley of the Seine at Langres.

First dispositions of Napoleon.

At the appearance of the Allies on the Rhine, Napoleon, notwithstanding the inferiority of his numbers, extended his troops near the frontiers on a wide arc of defence. He argued that the Austrians must leave many men before the fortresses, and it would therefore be possible to close against them the great roads from Alsace; that Blücher also would invest so many places that Marmont could retard him and fall on his left if he should attack Macdonald, whose corps was on the lower Meuse.

Langres to Nancy, 70.

Therefore Mortier was to bar the road by Langres, Ney by Nancy—Victor was to hold the Vosges Mountains against Schwartzberg.

Marmont was to oppose Blücher.

Macdonald to hold Belgium.

Augereau to hold Lyons—thus communicating with the army of Italy, and those of Soult and Suchet in the Pyrenees—and was to watch for an opportunity of operating by the Rhone valley against Schwartzberg's communications.

*Schwartzberg's Movements.*—Obviously the Gap of Befort was the point where, by turning both the Vosges and the Jura, it was easiest to pass. The mass of the army of Bohemia therefore passed there. But to secure the flanks, corps were pushed out to the right to invest the fortresses in Alsace (Strasbourg, Kehl, Colmar, &c.), to the left to oppose Augereau and to invest Dijon, Besançon, Auxerre, Befort, &c.

Advance of  
the Allies.

Giulay's corps moved on Langres, driving back Mortier.

Wrede turned Victor's right in the Vosges, and moved on Neufchateau.

Wurtemberg up the Moselle to Epinal.

Wittgenstein on Nancy.

In the middle of January, Giulay from Langres, in line with Wrede at Neufchateau and Wurtemberg from Epinal, together pushed Mortier back on Bar-sur-Aube, and thence through Vandœuvres to Troyes.

*25th January.*—Giulay occupied Bar.

Bar to Joinville, 28.

Wurtemberg on his right.

Wrede between Chaumont and Joinville.

Sacken (left of Blucher's army), Joinville.

On the French side, Victor had retired from the Vosges and joined Ney at Nancy. Marmont, retreating before Blucher through Metz, had joined the other Marshals at Nancy; the three had retired from thence upon St Dizier; attacked there by Sacken, and turned by the road from Joinville, they fell back to Vitry.

French retreat beyond the Meuse.

The French fortresses left in Blucher's rear were blockaded;—Mayence by the troops of Saxe-Coburg; Luxembourg and Thionville by Hessians; Metz by a Prussian division; and, until the arrival of the Hessian and Saxe-Coburg forces, they were watched by Prussian cavalry.

Meanwhile Winzingerode had passed the Rhine at Dusseldorf, and Macdonald, observing Blucher, had retired up the Meuse by Liege and Mezières towards Chalons.

Coblentz to Dusseldorf, 75.

Winzingerode halted at Namur, but subsequently resumed his march by Avesnes on Laon. For the present he need not be taken into account.

Junction of the Allies on the Marne.

Such were the movements that preceded the junction of Blucher's left with Schwartzberg's right on the Marne, and the assembly of the French corps on the arc of which Paris is the centre, and the rivers Seine, Aube, and Marne (and later the Aisne) are the radii. With this position of affairs the problem under investigation, of the influence of convergent rivers, commences.

Description of the theatre.

The district east of Paris, known topographically as the basin of the Seine, is bounded east, north, and south by hill ranges. Three streams take their rise in the eastern range—the Seine, the Aube, and the Marne—and along their banks lie the great direct roads from the Rhine frontier to Paris. These rivers, though of no great width, averaging fifty yards, are deep, and generally impassable except at the bridges. These bridges were now barricaded, and important passages on the main lines, as Troyes and Nogent, Chalons and Meaux, were rendered secure against a sudden attack.

The country about these rivers is quite unenclosed. Great fields, without fence or division, extend across the spaces between them. The roads are few; the open country would permit troops to move freely in all directions, and to deploy for battle, in dry weather; but in this winter season the cultivated ground, and the swamps bordering the small streams, would prevent this, and restrict the columns frequently to the roads. Only the great chaussées were suited to sustained operations. The cross-roads were of bad quality, and in many parts waggon-trains could only move on them with difficulty.

Allies still operate on a double line.

In this theatre Napoleon now prepared to oppose a single line of defence to a double line of invasion, for Schwartzberg was bound to the line Langres-Basle, by the necessity of keeping open his communications with the troops investing the fortresses; Blucher to the line Chalons-Mayence, to maintain his communications with Belgium and the Rhine. The Emperor's general plan was to hold the bridges on each side with his wings, and with the main body to manœuvre between them, casting his weight on each adversary alternately, while the other wing, aided by the river, contained the other hostile army. And foreseeing that these movements from side to side would be frequent, he established his line of main supply on the central road between the rivers, of La Ferté-sous-Jouarre-Sezanne-Arcis, and ordered those and other points to be fortified sufficiently to secure them against a rush of Cossacks.

Napoleon's general plan.

French communications.

*25th January.*—Napoleon went to Chalons to commence operations. Paris to Chalons, 100. Imagining Blucher's different corps to be scattered on the march, he resolved to unite the corps on the Marne at Vitry, and leaving Marmont at St Dizier, and Macdonald then approaching Chalons, to bar the passage of the Marne against Blucher, to turn himself by Joinville on Chaumont, calling up his right wing to him from Troyes and Arcis, and falling on the head of Schwartzberg's columns.

Accordingly he moved from Vitry with 35,000 men on the 26th.

Vitry to S. Dizier, 18.

*27th.*—He drove a Prussian detachment from S. Dizier.

But Blucher, on the same day, leaving his right in St Dizier, was moving to join Schwartzberg on the Aube, and was crossing the space between the Marne and Aube with 30,000 men of Sacken's command, and part of Langeron's. Learning this at St Dizier, Napoleon turned to pursue Blucher, in the hope of intercepting him before he could be supported by Schwartzberg.

S. Dizier to Joinville, 17.  
Joinville to Brienne, 30.

*28th.*—Sending Marmont along the highroad by Joinville to Brienne, he moved with Ney and Victor, by Vassy, on Montierender across a difficult country, at the same time sending orders to Mortier, then at Troyes, to remain on the Aube.

Napoleon pivots on the Marne, to strike the flank of the enemy moving between the rivers.

*29th.*—He debouched into the valley of the Aube, near Brienne.

Blucher, from Bar, had hastened down the Aube to cut Mortier from Napoleon, and crush him singly; but learning Napoleon's advance, he retraced his steps in time to reach Brienne. Here Napoleon attacked him, and after an indecisive action Blucher retired along the road to Bar.

Blucher evades him by retreating.

Napoleon was now within easy distance of his wings at Chalons and Troyes. With the latter point he was connected by Gerard's division at Piney. Joining Mortier he would have 80,000 men to meet Schwartzberg—joining Macdonald he would have 55,000 against Blucher, which he considered nearly sufficient. Posting his own troops across the roads from Bar and from Joinville to Brienne, and joined at Morvilliers by Marmont from Joinville, he awaited events, his right on the Aube, at Dienville, his left at Morvilliers.

Brienne to Troyes, 25.  
Brienne to Chalons, 47.

Blucher had halted at Trannes, a few miles from Brienne. Schwartzberg's leading corps reinforced him.

Battle of La Rothière.

*1st February.*—The main body of the Allies advanced by the right bank



of the Aube upon Napoleon, sending a strong detachment on the left bank to turn his right, and another beyond the Joinville road to turn his left. Napoleon would now have joined Mortier at Troyes; but, seeing the main body of the enemy approaching, he judged that he could not pass the river without fighting, and stood to receive them. Nearly treble his numbers on the field, they broke his centre and captured a great part of his artillery, though his right held fast at the bridge of Dienville. During the night he fell back through Brienne to Lesmont, and passed the river, covered by Ney's corps on the right bank, by Mortier on the left bank, and by Marmont, who, retiring from Morvilliers, had taken post on the Voire. The enemy at first imagined Marmont's corps to be the main army, and sent Wrede's corps to attack it; but the French Marshal, retiring over the Voire, defended the passage, inflicting considerable loss on the enemy, and made good his retreat to Arcis, where he could, according to circumstances, defend the Aube or join Napoleon at Troyes.

*2d February.*—Macdonald at Chalons was attacked by the corps of York from Metz.

Schwartzenberg advances on the Seine and Yonne.

Troyes to Sens, 44.

The main body of the Allies was now directed by the roads of Vandœuvre and Piney on Troyes. On the left, two corps, Giulay's and Colloredo's, moved on Villeneuve-l'Archevêque, and Sens, to compel Napoleon to evacuate Troyes, and to secure the Yonne.

Blucher returns to the Marne.

*3d February.*—Blucher, as Napoleon had foreseen, had many reasons for wishing to return to the Marne. York's corps was now at Chalons, and Kleist's and part of Langeron's were moving thither from Metz; joining these he would have near 60,000 men with which to operate independently, and might be the first to enter Paris. By moving thither at once he might cut off Macdonald's direct retreat, and drive him on Epernay. Therefore, and because also, his impatient spirit rendered him dissatisfied with the slowness and circumspection of his associate general, he led the troops which he had brought from the Marne to Brienne, across by Rosnay, St Ouen, and Fère Champenoise, to the road Chalons-Montmirail, sending Sacken towards Montmirail.

French left wing retreats.

*5th February.*—Macdonald, after destroying the bridge, evacuated Chalons, retreating on Epernay.

York pursued Macdonald to Chateau-Thierry. Macdonald destroyed the bridge after crossing.

Sacken moved by Montmirail on La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, and the rest of Blucher's troops from Fère Champenoise, followed towards Champaubert, while Kleist and Langeron were near Chalons.

Blucher's army advances between the rivers. Chalons to C. Thierry, 50.

Thus the Army of Silesia was spread in lengthened columns along the inner bank of the Marne.

Napoleon hesitated whether to fall on Blucher, or Giulay and Colloredo. He made a false attack from Troyes on the main body, to ascertain their movements; and repulsed a counter-attack on the bridge.

*6th February.*—Having resolved to strike at Blucher, he and Marmont (from Arcis) joined at Nogent. Mortier remained at Troyes to cover the movement.

Troyes to Nogent, 32. Nogent to Sezanne, 20.

*7th February.*—Marmont to Sezanne—Mortier, with the Guard, to Nogent—Victor's corps, and Oudinot's division of the Guard, to hold the bend of the Seine from Nogent to Bray.

Napoleon, pivoting on the Seine, attacks Blucher's flank,

*8th February.*—Ney's corps followed Marmont.

*9th February.*—Napoleon followed with Mortier's division of the Guard—in all, 30,000. Blucher had sent some Cossack regiments to occupy Sezanne—these were driven out, and retreated on Sacken.

On this day Blucher's corps were thus situated:—

York,	. . . . .	18,000,	Chateau-Thierry.
Sacken,	. . . . .	20,000,	{ Between Montmirail and La Ferté-sous-Jouarre.
Olsuvieff (of Langeron's command),	. . . . .	3,500,	Champaubert.
Blucher with 2 corps, Kleist and Langeron,	. . . . .	15,000,	Vertus (from Chalons and Vitry.)

*10th February.*—Macdonald was at Meaux. Napoleon, from Sezanne, fell on Olsuvieff, who did not know of the expulsion of the Cossacks, and destroyed his corps. Leaving Marmont to oppose Blucher on the side of Etoges, he turned with Ney and the Guard to follow Sacken, passing through Montmirail to the junction of the roads from Chateau-Thierry and La Ferté-sous-Jouarre.

pierces it at Champaubert, turns on the separated corps of the enemy,

*11th February.*—Sacken, who had pursued Macdonald's rearguard to Trilport, and destroyed the bridge there, warned of Napoleon's approach, and sending to apprise York, moved on Montmirail; York, who had restored the bridge, holding Chateau-Thierry, sent part of his corps to cooperate with Sacken. Napoleon defeated them with very heavy loss, and drove them on Chateau-Thierry.

and routs them at Montmirail; Sezanne to Champaubert, 13.

Champaubert  
to Montmi-  
rail, 13.  
Montmirail  
to Chateau-  
Thierry, 16.  
Meaux to  
Guignes, 24.

*12th February.*—Pursuing them he drove them beyond the Marne. In retreating they destroyed the bridge.

*12th and 13th February.*—The bridge was repaired.

Mortier passed it to pursue York and Sacken, who were retiring on Chalons by the circuit of Fismes and Rheims, there being no direct road. Macdonald from Meaux was sent by Guignes to reinforce Victor.

Blucher advanced on Montmirail.

Schwartzenberg attacked the bridges of the Seine.

then returns  
on Blucher,  
and drives  
him towards  
Chalons.

*14th February.*—Napoleon joined Marmont, attacked Blucher at Vau-champs, and drove him, with severe loss, half-way back to Chalons. Leaving the pursuit to Marmont, he returned to join Victor and Oudinot. These Marshals, far outnumbered and turned on the side of Fontainebleau, had fallen back to a strong position behind the Yères, where Macdonald joined them.

Army of the  
North enters  
the theatre.

This day Winzingerode entered Soissons expecting to join Blucher at Chateau-Thierry.

*16th February.*—Army of Bohemia was thus situated after passing the Seine :—

Schwartzen-  
berg pushes  
back the  
French right  
wing.

Advanced-guard at Mormant.  
Wittgenstein at Nangis.  
Wrede at Donnemarie.  
Wurtembergers at Montereau.  
Giulay at Pont-sur-Yonne.  
Colloredo at Fontainebleau.  
Reserves at Sens and Nogent.

Napoleon  
joins the right  
wing.

Napoleon had hesitated whether to fall on Schwartzenberg's flank by Sezanne, or to march round by Meaux and Guignes to join the Marshals on the Yères. The alarm of the Parisians at the approach of the Allies caused him to decide for the latter course.

Schwartzen-  
berg retreats.

*17th February.*—Advancing from the Yères, he drove the advanced-guard of the Allies from Mormant on Nangis, and Wittgenstein and Wrede retreated to the left bank of the Seine.

Nangis to  
Nogent, 24.  
Nangis to  
Montereau,  
16.

Oudinot was directed on Nogent.  
Macdonald ,, ,, Bray.  
Victor ,, ,, Montereau.

The Allies held the bridges long enough to cover Colloredo's retreat to the right bank of the Yonne.

18th February.—Napoleon forced the passage at Montereau (where the right bank, on which the Wurtembergers stood to fight, greatly commands the left), driving the defenders over the river and through the town. Oudinot and Macdonald, relinquishing the attacks on Bray and Nogent, where they had failed to force a passage, fled through Montereau.

Napoleon forces the passage at Montereau.

18th to 23d.—Napoleon had now been reinforced to 70,000, not counting Mortier and Marmont. Schwartzberg, with 100,000 less concentrated, did not think it prudent to meet him. He fell back towards Troyes.

Meanwhile York and Sacken had rejoined Blucher at Chalons by Rheims. On the 18th, Blucher, from Chalons, moved with 50,000 men on Arcis. Finding that Schwartzberg was retreating before Napoleon, Blucher occupied the bridge and town of Mery-on-the-Seine. Napoleon, sending Oudinot to attack him and to secure his flank at Mery, followed Schwartzberg, who retreated by Bar towards Chaumont.

Blucher returns to the Aube.

Chalons to Arcis, 32.

24th.—Napoleon entered Troyes. The Allies now resolved to call up from Bernadotte's Army of the North the corps of Bulow, by Laon, to Soissons. Winzingerode was at Rheims. Blucher, to join them, to draw Napoleon from the pursuit of Schwartzberg, and to seek an opportunity of attacking Mortier and Marmont, moved towards Sezanne, breaking the bridges of Plancy and Arcis.

Blucher again crosses to the Marne,

Marmont was at Sezanne.

Mortier at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre;

having returned to the Marne from their ineffectual pursuit of York and Sacken; throwing a garrison into Soissons after Winzingerode quitted it.

25th.—Marmont, from Sezanne, retreated before Blucher, by La Ferté-Gaucher, and joined Mortier on the 26th. Napoleon quitting Troyes, and leaving a force once more to oppose Schwartzberg, moved by Sezanne to attack Blucher.

and pushes back the French left wing,

27th Feb.—Blucher, on the left bank of the Marne, holding the bridge at La Ferté with his right, threw his left forward to cross at Trilport, and cut the Marshals from Paris. But the Marshals reached Meaux before him, and held the line of the Marne and Ourcq from Meaux to Lisy, holding the bridge at Trilport with a brigade.

which contains him on the Ourcq.

Meanwhile the Allies in council at Vandœuvres, feeling all the difficulties of the situation, had formed a new plan. The Grand Army was to



remain in observation in the centre, throwing out a wing towards Lyons and securing the line to the Rhine; while the Army of Silesia, considered as the other wing, and reinforced by Bulow and Winzingerode, was to take the offensive on the side of the Marne.

The Marshals Oudinot and Macdonald, commanding the containing force, pushed Schwartzenberg's rearguards over the Aube.

Napoleon, pivoting on the Seine, advances to attack Blucher.

28th Feb.—Napoleon was at Sezanne. He might advance from thence either by Montmirail or Chateau-Thierry, separating Blucher from Bulow and Winzingerode, or towards the Marshals, so as to cover Paris. He moved on La Ferté-sous-Jouarre.

Sezanne to La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, 33.

Blucher, who had crossed at La Ferté, at Napoleon's approach destroyed the bridge there, and continued to press the Marshals on the Ourcq, sending Sacken, supported by Langeron, to attack Meaux, and York followed by Kleist to Lisy.

Chateau-Thierry to Fismes, 25.

2d and 3d March.—Napoleon having thrown a bridge, crossed at La Ferté, and moved on Chateau-Thierry. Blucher, thus menaced, retreated by cross-roads up the Ourcq to Oulchy, for the Aisne, followed by the Marshals. Napoleon marched from Chateau-Thierry on Fismes—the Marshals from Oulchy on Soissons,—but were too late to intercept the enemy. Knowing, however, that Soissons was held by a French garrison, he hoped to overtake the Army of Silesia and bring it to action before it could bridge the Aisne. But the commandant of Soissons, threatened on the north bank by Bulow, who had just come from Laon, and on the south side by Winzingerode from Rheims, opened his gates. Blucher crossed the Aisne, barred the passage to Napoleon, and received the large reinforcements of Bulow and Winzingerode, who, meanwhile, had bridged the Aisne at Vailly.

Blucher crosses the Aisne.

Thus the Army of Silesia had evaded the blow he hoped to inflict, and was stronger than before. But it was beyond the Aisne; it was separated from its proper line of Chalons; and was at a great distance from the Army of Bohemia. Barring the Aisne against Blucher, and descending on Schwartzenberg's rear by Rheims and Chalons, the situation was still advantageous. But Napoleon wished to inflict some decisive blow on Blucher, and resolved to cross the Aisne and attack him—55,000 against 90,000.

Napoleon follows him.

5th March.—Napoleon seized the bridge of Berry-au-Bac, and crossed

there with Victor, Ney, and the Guard, leaving Marmont before Soissons, and sending a detachment to Rheims.

*6th March.*—Blucher, watching the enemy from the heights of Craonne (part of a line of high-wooded country that extends from Soissons along the Lette to the Reims-Laon road), resolved to move his army behind the Lette, across the road from Rheims to Laon, covering the movement with the Russian troops on the heights of Craonne.

Napoleon pushed out Victor and Ney towards the position of the Russians, and ineffectually assailed it.

*7th March.*—Napoleon, reinforcing the two Marshals with the Guard (Marmont still on the left bank), attacked the Russians, and after a very severe conflict, they were ordered by Blucher to retire, in order to concentrate round Laon. The Allied garrison of Soissons was also withdrawn.

Battle of  
Craonne.

*8th March.*—Napoleon moved across the heights to the Soissons-Laon road, sending Marmont from Berry-au-Bac on the direct road to Laon.

Soissons to  
Laon, 20.

*9th March.*—Napoleon attacked Blucher round Laon. This town stands on a remarkable hill rising abruptly from the plain to a height of 100 yards, with steep sides, and having villages, or faubourgs, around its base. The position is extremely strong for defence. Napoleon sought to dislodge his enemy by directing his attacks on the space between the roads of Soissons and La Fére, while Marmont threw his right forward on that of Avesnes.

Battle of  
Laon.

In the night, Blucher, passing corps from right to left behind Laon, fell upon Marmont, and drove him, with the loss of his artillery, back through the hills on the Rheims road.

*10th March.*—Blucher's right attacked Napoleon. After hard fighting the French fell back on Soissons, Marmont taking post at Berry-au-Bac.

Napoleon re-  
treats beyond  
the Aisne.

*12th March.*—Napoleon at Soissons having heard that the last of Blucher's corps from the Rhine (St Priest's) had just arrived at Rheims, ordered Marmont to leave a force to guard the passage at Berry-au-Bac and make a night-march with the rest of his corps on Rheims. Leaving a garrison in Soissons, he also marched thither himself.

Soissons to  
Rheims, 31.

*13th March.*—Napoleon and Marmont enveloped St Priest's corps, took several thousand, and dispersed the rest. Holding Soissons and Berry-au-Bac, he paused at Rheims till the 17th, to rest his troops and to organise his new levies.

Rheims to  
Chalons, 26.

Schwartz-  
berg pushes  
back the  
French right  
wing.

Napoleon  
from the  
Marne strikes  
at Schwart-  
zenberg's rear.

Meanwhile Schwartzberg, aware of his absence, had on the 27th February once more advanced, driving Mortier and Macdonald through Troyes to Nogent, Bray, and Montereau. The Army of Bohemia followed, and the heads of its columns occupied the opposite bank.

*17th March.*—Napoleon moved towards Schwartzberg, Ney on Chalons, main body on Epernay.

Mortier was left at Rheims.  
Marmont at Berry-au-Bac.

Schwartzberg having passed the Seine had advanced to Provins.

*18th March.*—Napoleon from Epernay by Fère Champenoise.

Schwartzberg hearing of his presence at Chalons had begun to retreat.

*19th March.*—Napoleon crossed the Aube at Plancy, directing Ney, then on the march from Chalons, on Arcis. He called up Oudinot and Macdonald by Provins, Villenoxe, Anglure, along the right bank to Plancy. Thus, as soon as the movements were completed, with his centre and right wing united, he would be ready to move against Schwartzberg's rear.

*20th March.*—Napoleon with the cavalry moved up the left bank to Arcis; and hearing from the cavalry advanced-guards that the Allied troops were moving between the Seine and Aube, he called Ney across, and sent the cavalry against them.

Battle of  
Arcis.  
Troyes to  
Arcis, 18.

But Schwartzberg, who had united his army about Troyes, was moving between the rivers with 90,000 men, and advanced upon Arcis. Napoleon was forced to fight with very inferior numbers, held his ground during the day, but fell back next day over the Aube.

Napoleon's  
new plan.

He had long revolved a project for uniting his immediate forces with the garrisons of the frontier forces on the upper Marne, and pivoting on Metz, descending with a united army of above 100,000 on Schwartzberg's rear, and finally uniting with the corps at Lyons for a great combined movement to drive the Allies beyond the Rhine. He had already while operating on the Aisne, sent orders to the garrisons on the Belgian, frontier, on the Meuse, in the Ardennes, and in the east of France, to sally out, unite, and move together upon the Marne; for he believed the corps left by the Allies to invest these places were too much weakened by the necessity of recruiting the main armies to be able to oppose the movement. The moment now seemed to have arrived for the execution



of this design. He marched on the 21st and 22d March from Arcis to Vitry, turned that place, which was held by a Prussian garrison, by a ford above it, and assembling his army there in expectation that Schwartzberg would hastily retreat as before, he called Mortier and Marmont towards him. But those Marshals were no longer in a condition to join him.

Marmont had held the Aisne against Blucher till the 18th March ; when turned on both flanks he retreated to Fismes, and called Mortier to him from Rheims, thinking thus still to fulfil the double object of keeping up relations with Napoleon and covering Paris. Blucher then moved on Rheims and Epernay to regain his communications with the Grand Army. The Marshals then moved to the Marne at Chateau-Thierry.

Blucher moves on the Marne.

Arcis to Epernay, 40.

Schwartzberg crossed the Aube at Arcis after Napoleon ; but he did not continue to retreat. Many circumstances proved that the political effect of occupying Paris would counterbalance any disasters that might happen to their line of communication. The Army of Bohemia, throwing forward its right from Arcis, met the left of Blucher extended from the Marne ; and the combined armies, leaving a corps under Wittgenstein to cover their rear from Napoleon, spread across the space between the rivers, and moved onward, crowding the two Marshals on the capital. A last fight ensued on the slopes around the city ; and the capitulation of Paris was signed on the 29th March.

The Allies unite between the Aube and Marne,

and move on Paris.

Napoleon on the Marne, looking on this as a purely military event, was still resolute to disregard it and to carry out his plan ; but the pressure exercised on him by his generals and by the voice of the nation was too strong to be resisted. Constrained to abandon his design, he turned towards Paris, hoping to arrive in time to prevent a catastrophe. Moving to the left bank of the Seine at Fontainebleau, he designed to fall from thence on the rear of the Allies and drive them through the capital ; or, failing that, still to fall back behind the Loire and join with Soult, Sachet, and Augereau. But the exhaustion of the people, the army, and the generals, by his incessant wars, was too complete to admit of further effort. In the visions of ultimate success which still flattered his imagination, he found none to partake. Finding the impossibility of longer maintaining the struggle with officers weary of war, and a country impatient of his rule, he abdicated on the 6th April.

Result.



## COMMENTS.

Points of passage previously known.

Since the main roads to Paris from the east crossed from bank to bank of the rivers, it was necessary for the invading armies to force the passages at the points of crossing. Thus we find the defenders disputing the bridges of Chalons and Trilport on the Marne—of Dolancourt, Dienville, and Lesmont on the Aube—of Troyes, Nogent, Bray, Montereau, on the Seine. These were certainly known beforehand as points for defence; and the fact that the advance of the assailants would be there checked for a certain time by an inferior force must be an important element in forming a plan of campaign.

Double line compulsory on the Allies.

If Blucher and Schwartzenberg had operated (as up to the beginning of February they seemed to intend) entirely on one of the great lines, they would not thereby have deprived Napoleon of the advantages of the converging rivers. For, had they selected the Aube and Seine for their line, he would none the less have used the upper Marne at Chalons and Vitry as a pivot from whence to fall on their communications towards Bar and Chaumont; and had they concentrated on the Marne, he would equally have threatened their rear from the Aube at Brienne or Arcis, and from the Seine at Nogent; in each case the river on which he pivoted forming a line of defence in case he should be defeated, upon which he could retreat, still threatening the enemy's flank, and from which he could manoeuvre to cover Paris. Therefore, as the least of two evils, the assailants were obliged to operate by both lines.

General plan of the defence.

This granted, the general plan of Napoleon is evident: to place a retarding wing on each river to dispute the known points of passage, and to join his main body to either, according to circumstances. It only remains to ascertain what circumstances should induce him to join either wing rather than the other, in order to have possession of the broad grounds on which to estimate the general plan of campaign.

The invading army on each line must adopt one or other of two courses,—either to march in processional order with the principal mass of the army on the main road (as the Army of Silesia was moving on the 10th Feb.), or to send columns along many roads—forming, in fact, a line of columns (as the Army of Bohemia was moving between the 14th and 17th

Feb., and again in its last advance in March). In the first case, the defender might (as he did) descend from the Seine perpendicularly on the flank of the column, separate its parts, and throw them asunder across the river; in the second case, the army must be either moving astride a river, in which case the part on the inner bank might be taken in flank and overwhelmed singly, or it might be entirely *beyond* the river. In this last case its flank would be defended by the river, the bridges on which it would, of course, hold or destroy. Thus, Blucher having pushed the Marshals on to the Oureq, had assembled his army on the right bank of the Marne, guarding the bridge of Trilport, and having broken that of La Ferté; the river consequently protected his flank from Napoleon advancing from Sezanne. And again in March, when Napoleon was at Rheims, Schwartzberg, while attempting to pass at Nogent and Bray, held the bridges of the Aube up to Arcis, thereby protecting his flank.

Difference of advancing between, or beyond, the rivers.

Of all the various ways of operating for the defence, that of attacking the flank of the enemy's column is most effective, because, by separating and ruining his army, it reduces the odds in material force against the defender, besides recovering ground for him in the theatre; whereas, in the most successful move against the communications, though the assailants may be recalled from their forward positions, yet they may combine in superior numbers for battle, or, if the defender evades them, may renew their advance with undiminished forces. The defensive army being, then, divided into two wings, whose business it will be to retard the enemy on either line, and a main body, this central force will co-operate with one or the other wing generally, according to the following rules:—

1st, Whenever possible, the main body should attack the *flank* of an enemy moving *between* the rivers, for which purpose it will pivot on a portion of the other river held by one wing. In this case the main body cannot combine directly with the other defensive wing, which will be occupied in stemming the enemy's advance—like Mortier at Troyes, when Napoleon aimed at Blucher's flank at Brienne, and like Macdonald at Meaux, when Napoleon made his attack on Blucher's flank at Champaubert.

General principles for the defence.

2d, To join the main body to a containing wing in order to oppose *in front* an enemy advancing to force a river, who does not, in doing so, expose a flank. Should the enemy seek to turn the defender by

advancing on both banks, the latter will have the opportunity of falling on a separate wing—always preferring to attack that which most directly covers the enemy's communications. Therefore,

Necessity of transverse communications.

To operate thus from side to side at need, the main body must have free and direct communications between the rivers; and in this campaign the transverse roads Joinville-Brienne, St Dizier-Brienne, Vitry-Brienne, Chalons-Arcis, Epernay-Nogent, Meaux-Melun, become of the highest importance—indeed, nothing can be effected without them.

In order to render the defence complete there should be direct communication with the objective along the *outer* bank of each river. In this the Marne was defective. For instance, had Napoleon been defeated in his first attack on Blucher at Brienne he must have retreated behind the Marne at Vitry and Chalons. But the only direct road from Chalons to Paris is on the left bank. Thus, to recover communications with Paris he must make the circuit by Rheims and Fismes, and the victorious enemy guarding the successive bridges of Chateau-Thierry, La Ferté, and Meaux, might reach the capital; whereas Arcis-Brienne or Troyes formed better pivots, since, forced to retire over the river at either, he would still have direct communications with Paris.

From the previous deductions it follows that—

Courses improper for the defensive army.

1st, To make a circuit in order to join a wing and confront an enemy who, moving between the rivers, exposes a flank; or,

2d, To move against the flank of an enemy operating beyond the river, and covered by it; or,

3d, To stand to receive battle beyond a river, unless in an exceptionally favourable position; or,

4th, To cross a river to attack in front a superior enemy,—

Are all violations of the principles on which the defence should be conducted, sacrificing the advantages of the situation.

Napoleon's campaign estimated by these rules.

Judged by these rules, the campaign of Napoleon, while it shows how thoroughly he appreciated the situation, nevertheless displays many errors, the results either of over-confidence or of political exigencies.

His march from St Dizier on Brienne, his defence of Troyes against Schwartzemberg, his march to Champaubert, his descent on the rear of the Army of Bohemia from Chalons, and finally from Vitry, are all illustrations of the way in which rivers like these may be turned to account.

But the battles of La Rothière and Arcis, where he stood with inferior forces to fight on the wrong side of the river, were terrible errors, leading to heavy disasters, which a more vigorous foe might have rendered fatal. So were those of Craonne and Laon. All he gained to compensate the losses at Craonne was the abandonment of Soissons by the enemy, which would have been effected with equal certainty by an advance on the Laon road from Berry-au-Bac, threatening the enemy's communications. Soissons occupied by a French garrison, and that road to Paris from the Aisne secured, the former system of defence should have been reverted to. The Marshals should have been left to oppose Blucher on the Aisne and afterwards on the Marne, while Napoleon, with his main force undiminished by the losses of those severe battles, descended on Schwartzenberg. Blucher beyond the Aisne; the Marshals on its left bank communicating with the Emperor by Rheims; Napoleon with the main body at Chalons and Epernay; Schwartzenberg between Provins and Troyes, retarded by Macdonald and Oudinot: here would have been a situation as promising as any that could exist in the theatre; and it was one that did exist on the 17th March, and might have existed without fighting the costly battles beyond the Aisne.

Nor did he turn the situation to full account. It was pointed out in a former page that, in aiming at an enemy's communications, the stroke should be dealt so far to the rear that the enemy will not be able to evade it. Moving on Plancy, he found the army of Bohemia beyond his reach. The battle of Arcis was completely injudicious and useless.

When at Montmirail, after the several defeats of Blucher, he had the option of falling on the flank of Schwartzenberg on the inner bank of the Seine, at Mormant and Nangis, by Sezanne. He sacrificed the advantage of the situation in making the circuit by Meaux to Guignes, which brought him on the enemy's front. No doubt the alarm of the people of Paris, and his precarious hold on the nation through the capital, furnished good political reason for interposing between it and the enemy; but, judged on military grounds, it was a mistake.

The peril incurred by an assailant in attempting a turning movement on one bank of a river while operating with the rest of the army on the other, is illustrated by the position of Colloredo's corps at Fontainebleau, which would have been irremediably separated from the others had the bridge



of Montereau not been defended by the Allies against more than one attack.

It appears to have been a mistake to send a force in pursuit of Sacken and York beyond the Marne at Chateau-Thierry. For not only did the pursuing troops not intercept the retreat, or prevent the reunion of Blucher's corps, but they were unable to perform their proper function of assisting to contain the Army of Silesia on the Marne ; and it marched unopposed from Chalons to menace Napoleon's flank at Mery. That offensive movement of Blucher, so soon after his heavy defeats, was the most vigorous act performed by the Allies throughout the campaign.

Turned to full account, the defender in a campaign like this has not only the usual advantage of a combined against a double line of operation, but also the power of dealing his blows in the most decisive direction. In attacking Blucher from Nogent through Sezanne and Champaubert, Napoleon combined the advantages of causing him to form front to a flank, and of breaking his front, thereby gaining every point that was possible in favour of the inferior army. And the diversity of fronts he could operate on is exemplified in the different engagements. At Brienne he fought with his right flank towards Paris, his back to Vitry and St Dizier. At La Rothière and Troyes he covered the direct road to the capital. At Champaubert he had his left flank to Paris, his back to Sezanne and Nogent. At Montmirail he had turned half round towards Paris, still pivoted on Sezanne and Nogent. At Vauchamps his front was exactly reversed. And all the time the Allies were bound immovably, each to the line by which he had advanced.

Manœuvring  
powers of the  
defensive  
army.

Advantages  
for the de-  
fence con-  
ferred by the  
rivers.

Manifestly, then, the situation gives the defender greater advantages than any other that has yet been discussed. If the ordinary case of the single against the double line renders 80,000 a match for 100,000 (see page 173), this present case renders a superiority of more than five to four necessary in order to enable the assailant to prevail. In fact, remembering that whether he forces a passage or exposes a flank to attack he suffers in proportion, while the containing wing of the defender, strong in position and difficult to turn, suffers less than usual loss in retiring before superior forces, it is evident that, even with such odds at starting, he may, on advancing half-way to his object, find his numbers reduced to an equality with those of his adversary, when success should be impossible.

And it is easy to conceive that two armies might each be nearly equal to the whole force of the defenders, and yet, operating by independent lines, be defeated and foiled.

Still there must be a mode of operating by which, a certain superiority being granted, the assailant may prevail. But the reader will best appreciate the difficulties of the assailants by trying to devise for them a plan of campaign, by which, without exposing a flank, or laying bare their communications, or either attacking a defended passage, or dividing to turn it, except with sufficiently superior forces, they shall continue to advance upon the capital.

Case of the  
assailant con-  
sidered.

Considering how this might be accomplished, let us still call the antagonists, Napoleon, Blucher, and Schwartzenberg, only supposing them equal in skill; and let us assume that the French army has its left wing in Chalons, closing Blucher's line, its right in Dolancourt, closing Schwartzenberg's line, and its main body at St Dizier.

As to cross the space between the rivers while the defender holds a point on the other river, from whence to strike the flank, is the peril chiefly to be dreaded; the first step, before the Army of Bohemia can cross from Chaumont to the Aube, is to dispossess the enemy of the points on the Marne, Chalons, Vitry, St Dizier, from which he may direct his blow. Now, were Blucher to advance directly on Chalons he would expose his communications to a blow from St Dizier. The first point to be aimed at then is St Dizier. And in order to direct both armies upon it without exposing them to be separately attacked, the preliminary to all offensive operations should be the establishment of a line of defence between Langres and Verdun, behind the obstacles that traverse that space, where the two Allied armies might form a common base of manœuvres. Guarding the flanks of this line with detached bodies, the central mass, composed of the main force of both armies, might be directed on the Marne, from Vitry to Joinville.

The French army might draw in both its wings upon the centre to defend the Marne, without thereby enabling the assailants to call up their detachments, for these must still continue to guard the flanks of the communications, which are not directly covered by the main armies. Therefore, at the outset the assailants, after making such detachments, should still be considerably superior to the total force of the enemy.

Assailants  
secure the  
Marne to  
Chalons,

This superiority they should turn to account by mastering the course of the Marne down to Chalons. The end of these operations would probably find the French right wing on the Aube at Brienne and Dolancourt, the left wing retreating down the Marne; the main body would join the right wing for the defence of the Aube.

and throw  
forward their  
left to the  
Seine.

Holding Chalons and Vitry with the right, the centre and left of the Allies would now cross from the upper Marne to the Aube, force that river, and push the defenders over the Seine at Troyes.

Now, it is evident that, if the Allies continue to advance on this line, directly they cross the Seine, the Yonne comes into the system of defence. They must guard Sens and Pont-sur-Yonne on their left, while in front they approach Nogent, Bray, and Montereau, and must still hold passages on the Aube to cover their rear. If they force the bridges of the Seine down to Montereau and advance towards the Yères, they offer the flank of their widely extended line to an attack based on the Marne, and their rear to an attack based on the Yonne. And, at the same time, they cannot advance along the Marne while Napoleon has the Seine for a pivot from which, by Sezanne, to descend on their flank.

Therefore, it will be better to halt between the Seine and Aube: occupying the passages of Troyes and Mery on the one side—of Anglure, Plancy, Arcis, on the other; the main body in the triangle, Mery-Arcis-Troyes, with detachments at Lesmont and Brienne.

Napoleon may either remain with his centre and right wing on the Seine: or, seeing in the position of the Allies a menace to his transverse line by Sezanne, may move thither his centre, calling up his left wing, for the moment useless on the Marne, and leaving his right on the Seine.

Assailants  
hold the  
Seine, and  
throw their  
right forward.

In the first case, the Allies, issuing from the passages of the Aube, will form front from Sezanne to Anglure, still guarding Mery and Troyes with their left; and will advance towards Villenoix and Pont-sur-Seine. Either Napoleon will form front on the line Provins-Nogent to meet the attack, or will retreat to the Yères. If he stands to fight, the corps from Mery and Troyes must join in the attack on the bridges of Pont-sur-Seine and Nogent on the left bank.

In case he takes post at Sezanne, the Allies from Anglure, Plancy, and Arcis will direct their columns thither—calling up the corps from Vitry, and directing that at Chalons to move to Bergères, and thence, if

necessary, to join in the battle. Either Napoleon stands to fight with inferior forces, or retreats upon the Marne. In either case the Allies follow to the Marne, force him back on the Oureq, and occupy Trilport and La Ferté-sous-Jouarre.

Either the French centre remains to hold, in conjunction with the left wing, the line of the Oureq—in which case the decisive action is fought there while the Allied left and French right watch each other on the Seine—or the French centre joins the right by Guignes, to deal a blow against Blucher's communications with Chalons. In that case the Allies, leaving their right on the Oureq and Marne, march through Sezanne, to fight the battle on the right bank of the Seine. Pushing the French right and centre to the Yères with their own centre and left, they fight then the decisive battle. It should be decisive, for the Allies on the two rivers, approaching each other in the narrowing angle, are now united, and can combine in a movement on Paris, holding the passages at Melun and Montereau on one side, at Meaux on the other.

In executing such a plan the weapons of the defender would in some measure be turned against himself; for each wing alternately of the assailants would stand on the defensive behind a river, while the centre, crossing between the rivers, would join the other wing, in order to make a step forward and deprive the defender of his most effective means of action. But being, as assailants, under the necessity of taking these forward steps, they do so at the disadvantage of always attacking a strongly posted enemy under penalty of exposing a flank to him, and this course demands a superiority in numbers of certainly not less than 4 to 3, and probably greater than that.

It is of course difficult to draw a satisfactory programme of an imaginary campaign, but the main points of what has been just sketched form an intelligible plan. In the actual operations of the Allies there is no indication of any design other than that of advancing whenever they could, on either line, and retreating whenever their rear was threatened; and but for the peculiar tenure of Napoleon's power in France, and the losses and discouragement of his army in battles that should not have been fought, there seems no reason why on their plan of action they should ever have entered Paris. But by following the systematic method described, of throwing their weight judiciously from side to side of the



theatre, they might, without retrogression or defeat, have succeeded, with their superiority of numbers, in forcing their way to the capital.

Effect of a  
third conver-  
gent stream.

The effects of a third convergent stream, like the Aube, tributary to either of the others, and between them, and which is traversed by the line of operation, are—to multiply the known points of attack—to cause the assailant to disperse still more—and to oblige him (on whichever side of this intermediate stream he may operate) to expose a flank to the enemy on one of the other rivers. Thus, when the assailant's columns crossing the central river are divided by it, they are exposed to be attacked piecemeal and in flank. "The intermediate line of the Aube," said Napoleon, discussing the campaign, "materially increases the difficulties of the invaders, while it strengthens the defenders' means of resistance; for the enemy's forces divided between those rivers, sometimes from necessity and sometimes from choice, would present many opportunities of being attacked with advantage."

When, as in this theatre, a number of rivers converge like radii towards the objective, the assailant's policy evidently is to include as few of them as possible in his front of operations. Directly Schwartzenberg passes the Seine at Troyes, the Yonne, hitherto useless, is brought into the system of defence: and he is forced, as we have seen, for the guarding of his flanks, to disperse his forces so widely as to render them ineffective either for attack or defence against a concentrated enemy.

So various are the lessons conveyed by this campaign, that the reader who has mastered it must be competent to investigate almost any problem which strategy can offer. And he will doubtless be somewhat surprised to find how great is the importance of obstacles of the kind discussed in this chapter, for their influence is by no means obvious at first view.

This is a case where to assume the initiative, often so necessary and successful, is not an advantage—since it is the army which advances that offers opportunities to its adversary.



CAMPAIGN IN CHAMPAGNE, 1814.

SCALE OF MILES.  
 5 10 15 20 25 MILES  
 J.E. Johnson



## CHAPTER VI.

## OF FORTRESSES.

AT the period when the system of making war was so far organised as to render armies extremely dependent on their bases, but while they were still unwieldy machines, not easily divided, and slow of movement, the establishment of great fortresses on frontiers liable to invasion, and on main roads leading from those frontiers to the capital, was an obvious expedient; for these slow-moving bodies could not venture to penetrate within a line of strong places, exposing to the sallies of powerful garrisons the long communications and cumbrous convoys which they did not possess sufficient mobility to defend by detached corps. Therefore that frontier was considered (justly, perhaps, according to the circumstances of the time) the strongest, on which strong places were most thickly set; and to besiege or to relieve a fortress was the business of a whole campaign.

Fortresses  
formerly gave  
great security  
to frontiers,

But fortified places are great drains on the resources of a country. They are expensive to construct and expensive to maintain. A few of them will swallow up, for their necessary garrisons, armies that might turn the scale of a great war in the open field. Hence it was only necessary to show that invading armies could pass them, and, after victories in the field, could make of them an easy and certain prey, to render it apparent that a continuance of such a system of defence must be a costly blunder.

but were costly  
defences.

Perhaps the rudeness of vehicles and the badness of all but great roads may have combined with the cumbrous organisation of the armies of the last century to render them little capable of passing such fortresses



Modern  
armies have  
often disre-  
garded them.

as lay in or near their path. But when roads and transport improved, and armies underwent the change already described, resulting from the condition of France after the Revolution, these mobilised machines, avoiding by a slight detour the fortified places in their way, leaving corps complete in their separate organisation to observe or blockade them, and rendering themselves to some extent independent of convoys by contributions raised within the enemy's frontier, marched upon those points of the theatre that were of greatest strategical importance, seized them, defeated and ruined the hostile armies, and then, at their leisure, reduced, or demanded from the prostrate power the cession of, the strongholds in which it had so vainly confided.

In June 1800 the Austrians held in Italy the fortified places of Genoa, Coni, Alessandria, Tortona, Arona, Piacenza, Ceva, Savona, besides the citadel of Milan, blockaded by the French: but the victory of Marengo gave all these to the conqueror. In 1806 the fortresses of the Elbe did not prevent Napoleon from penetrating to the Oder; and the capitulation of Magdeburg, Spandau, Stettin, Custring, was almost simultaneous with the destruction of the Prussian armies. Again, Napoleon, driven out of Germany in 1813, left strong garrisons in fortresses on the Elbe and Oder. As the Allies advanced towards the Rhine, detached corps were left to invest these places; but, on their surrender, the garrisons were lost to Napoleon, while the investing corps marched to swell the Allied armies invading France. Nor did the triple line of fortresses that guarded the French frontiers of Belgium and the Rhine prevent Blucher and Schwartzberg from marching upon Paris.

It was plain, then, that numerous bodies of 6000 to 12,000 each, or even stronger (25,000 French were left in Dresden), shut up in a line of fortresses, might be as utterly lost as if they were buried there, and quite ineffectual in a campaign which might have been decided by their presence in the field.

Yet the want  
of fortresses  
has often been  
severely felt.

But, on the other hand, it was equally plain that fortresses, properly distributed, might exercise a most potent influence. If France had too many, Germany had too few. Had strong places existed in 1809 on the Inn and the Traun, the defeat of Eckmühl need not have been so rapidly followed by the capture of Vienna. "All that a great monarchy wants," says the Archduke Charles, "is time to develop its resources." And time

Austria would have gained had she possessed at Linz or Passau a fortress or intrenched camp commanding the passage of the Danube and the road to Vienna on both banks, difficult to invest, impossible to leave in the rear. And, in 1814, had Chalons, Troyes, Nogent, been fortresses capable of sustaining a siege, it is easy to imagine what difficulties they would have interposed in the way of the Allies, and what support they would have afforded to Napoleon. In our own day we have seen a small fortress change the aspect of a great war; for had Silistria failed to repel the Russian army, Turkey, not the Crimea, would have been the scene of the campaign.

Fortresses, then, though without armies they are unavailing, may give to a country defensive power that counterbalances the cost of their construction, armament, and equipment, and the deduction of their garrisons from the active force. And if, besides being impregnable to open assault, they contain within their defences everything necessary for the supply of armies, they may be used as temporary bases, or pivots, round which an army can operate with vastly increased power and latitude of manœuvring. Assuming, then, that fortresses properly placed will confer advantages that vastly more than compensate for the extent to which they tax the resources of a state, it remains to determine the points on which they will be most fitly situated. Their uses.

The double object of giving security to fortresses, and of commanding through them points of strategical importance, will be best secured by placing them on natural obstacles, and at the junction of many great roads. If a mountain pass were guarded by an important place, it would be difficult to provision and supply the garrison; the issues would be easily blocked by a few troops; and an invading army might turn the place, masking the defiles with numbers less than the garrison, and its capitulation under the stress of the blockade would be a question of time only. Mountain summits, then, are unfit positions for fortresses, though small forts may be judiciously placed where they close a main pass, as at Bard. But situated on rivers, at points where the main communications cross, fortresses not only command both banks and open numerous opportunities for attacking the enemy that attempts to pass the obstacle, but are also difficult to invest, since the besieging army, in order to surround the place, must have bridges both above and below it, and will thus be Selection of positions for fortresses.  
Mountains unsuitable.  
Best placed on rivers.

doubly dependent on a kind of communication which floods and other casualties render especially precarious.

Fortresses on either bank of a river will almost certainly command the passage, from the superior range of their heavy artillery; but great additional security may be given to the army issuing from them by placing them astride the stream, thus protecting the bridge from all risk of assault or cannonade. The same important end may be attained, where fortresses do not exist, by bridge-heads—that is, works demanding only very small garrisons, and armed with guns of such calibre as to keep field-artillery at a distance, while at the same time they afford all facility for the issuing, and formation on a large front, of troops that have passed the bridge. The fortifications should therefore be placed at some distance—half a mile or more—from the head of the bridge, and may consist either of a single enclosed work, or (which will give far greater security to the passage) of several small detached works placed on an arc, each occupied by two or three companies, and flanked by the fire of a central work placed near the bridge, and completely covering it. Thus, at the expense of one or two battalions occupying the works, a passage may be secured against any partial attack. Frequently, however, on emergencies, a very simple field-work is thrown up close to the bridge, as was done by the French on the Tchernaya in the Crimean war. But in all cases it is essential that the utmost facility should be given for the issue of troops. This was amply proved at Marengo; for the Austrians had protected the passage of the Bormida by a bridge-head having only one issue: thus the whole Austrian army was forced to defile by it, and their left column, the action of which, to be effective, should have been simultaneous, was long delayed from taking part in the action, while the troops that passed first suffered enormously in making a front attack on the French.

It will sometimes happen that the banks of rivers are unfavourable to defences of this kind. At Donauwerth, for instance, a high hill, the extremity of a spur of the Alps, rises from the river on the left bank, close to the town. To cover the passage from an enemy approaching from the Maine, the work constructed to protect the bridge must be itself protected from an enemy who might gain the hill. Therefore the hill must be fortified; and as the works there could not be protected

by fire from the right bank, which is flat, they must be strong enough to maintain themselves: hence a fortress on the hill is necessary to secure the passage at Donauwerth. But a great part of the course of large rivers, such as the Po, the Danube, and the Rhine, lies through wide flat valleys, where works protecting bridges have full effect, and where they confer immense advantages on their possessors. At Dusseldorf, Cassel (opposite Mayence), Kehl, Brisach, and Huningen, they gave a continual superiority to the French in the wars of the Revolution, giving them free issue to the German bank of the Rhine for the offensive, and affording certain refuge in defeat.

Especially important in flat valleys.

Placed thus astride of rivers which directly traverse the probable lines of operations of an enemy, fortresses, as the strongest kind of bridge-heads, may, according to their position, whether on the centre or extremity of the defensive line, give security to the front or the flank of the army that holds the obstacle. They force an enemy to be more cautious in his approach, and, by rendering him more solicitous to defend himself on his own bank while attempting to cross to the other, they deprive his operations of the vigour and decision in which lie his best hopes of success. Nevertheless, if a river be held strictly on the defensive, they do not, as has been repeatedly proved (twice on the Mincio, and often on the Rhine), prevent an assailant from crossing. It may be questioned whether a short definite line like the Mincio would not be better defended by a single fortress astride of it at a central point, such as Valeggio, rather than by one at each extremity; for a French army could not cross on both sides of such a fortress, since it would be voluntarily separating its front in the most unfavourable manner. It would therefore be limited to one or the other half of the river—that is to say, to a space of 12 or 13 miles. Should it cross the lower portion, the Austrians issuing from the fortress would force it to fight with its back to the Po; should it cross the upper part of the stream, it must fight with its back to the lake; and in both cases on a front parallel to its last line of communication with the base.

Their effect when situated on direct obstacles.

To the reader of preceding chapters it will be quite unnecessary to expatiate on the advantages of placing fortresses astride of rivers which are parallel to the line of operation of an expected invader. Placed on such a river, at the confluence of another stream of which they also com-

Their effect when on rivers parallel to the line of an enemy's operations.



mand the passage, they confer additional advantages on the army resting on them, besides being especially secure from attack, since a besieging army must be dependent on three sets of bridges during the investment, and if any of these were damaged by a flood or other accident, the whole force would be in jeopardy. And if, moreover, they are situated in parts of the theatre where the possible front of operations is greatly narrowed, they combine all the conditions of efficiency. Linz is an example, where the Austrians have constructed, since the lessons of Napoleon's wars, an intrenched camp commanding both banks of the Danube, with the roads to Vienna and Bohemia, and the passage of the Traun, and where the mountains of Salzburg on the one side, and the Danube on the other, narrow the practicable front of operations to the space from Linz to Lambach—about 25 miles.

Archduke's  
proposed sys-  
tem of for-  
tresses for  
S. W. Ger-  
many.  
See Map  
No. 8.

Discussing the features of South-Western Germany as a theatre of war, the Archduke selects the following points as most advantageous for fortresses, placing in the first rank those which require garrisons of 12,000 men and upwards; in the second, those whose garrisons are from 6000 to 12,000; in the third, those between 3000 and 6000.

Taking the Enns and the Moldau as the base, he proposes to fortify Enns (1st class).

Prague (1st class).

Budweis (2d class), as an intermediate point of inferior importance.

Ratisbon (1st class).

Ulm (2d class).

Ingolstadt (3d class), to connect Ulm and Ratisbon, at the junction of many important roads.

Heilbronn (1st class).

Passage of the Neckar near Canstadt (3d class), to command the roads from the Rhine and Maine towards the Danube.

These he regards as the most important points; but for increased power of defence he would support these by other fortresses at

Klattau (3d class), as the most important point between Budweis and Ratisbon.

Passau (2d class), to connect the two banks of the Danube and cover the bridge of the Inn.

Ebersberg (a small fort), at the passage of the Traun.

Yet he says an enemy might leave on one side the fortresses of the Neckar and the Upper Danube, and descend in force straight on Ratisbon, separating Ulm, &c., from their base. In fact, the lesson of 1805 had taught the Archduke this possibility; therefore he would add to the system,

Wurzburg (2d class), closing the best roads from the Maine to the Danube. And, to complete the system,

Moldau-teyn (a bridge-head), being the only good passage between Prague and Budweis.

Steyer (a fort).

Amberg (2d class).

Landshut (3d class), securing the flanks of an army manœuvring round Ratisbon.

Moskirch (2d class), and

Miltenberg (3d class), as outworks of Ulm.

Jomini, while pointing out the errors of the system on which France had been fortified in Louis XIV.'s time, when, on a third only of her total extent of frontier, forty fortresses had been constructed, yet considered that each face of her frontier (that of Belgium, or of the Rhine, for example) should have three fortresses in first line, three in second line, and a great place of arms between the second line and the capital.

Jomini on the  
defence of  
France by  
fortresses.

But Marshal Marmont, discussing the same question, considers that one great place on each frontier would suffice—for example, Lille for the Belgian frontier, Metz for that of the Ardennes, Strasbourg for that of the Rhine. But these should be something more than fortresses—they should contain sufficient material for a great army in artillery, firearms, provisions of all kinds, workshops, arsenals, hospitals; in fact, collecting all the raw material which naturally flows from the surrounding district into a great city, they should be capable of converting it, by means of a large population of artisans, and of extensive manufactories, into the material of war—of turning brass into cannon, iron into projectiles and rifles, wood into trains of waggons, wheat into biscuit, canvass into tents, &c.—so that an army might manœuvre round such a place either in its own or the enemy's country, secure of all the support which a near base can afford.

Marmont on  
the same.

An open frontier best guarded by a few great fortresses.

When a frontier is unmarked by any natural obstacles, and has numerous issues, it is in vain to attempt to close it entirely with fortifications; for an enemy, masking one or two of the strong places, would penetrate the line, and still be superior to the defensive army in the field, deprived as it would be of many troops for the ineffective garrisons of the frontier. That the influence of fortresses extends only to a limited radius is seen from the fact that in 1815 Tournay and Mons had not the slightest effect on Napoleon when he was advancing by the line of Charleroi. But, on the other hand, Napoleon may have been mainly induced to select that line by the fact that Mons and Tournay were fortified, and that his fighting force would be diminished by the necessity of masking them, should he advance by the roads on which they stood. On the whole, it would seem that an open frontier will be best protected by a very few strong places, situated on the most direct lines to the capital, whereby an invader will be driven to make a great circuit, or to diminish his fighting force considerably, in order to pass them, while the garrisons drawn from the defensive army will thus be reduced to a minimum.

Importance of fortresses when the issues of a frontier are few.

If a frontier, naturally strong, have few issues, the strong places that guard them become of immense importance. In 1812 the French held Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajos; they thus closed the doors between Spain and Portugal, and the one fortress would afford a base to Marmont, the other to Soult, in offensive operations against Lisbon.

If, on the other hand, Wellington, masking Badajos, were to take the offensive against Soult in Andalusia, Marmont from Ciudad Rodrigo would in a moment recall him by threatening Lisbon; and Soult would in the same way, from Badajos, prevent an attack on Marmont.

The peculiar circumstances under which the French occupied Spain rendered it necessary that they should spread widely, in order at once to obtain subsistence and to keep down the hostile population. The scantiness of provisions generally reduced them to the defensive during the winter and early part of the year, till the harvest filled with grain their central depots of supply. At these seasons they could safely disperse their troops, to seek subsistence, so long as the two fortresses kept the English at bay. But Wellington, supplied from the sea, was more inde-

pendent of the country ; and, if he could capture the fortresses, he might take the offensive at a season when it was most inconvenient for the French to assemble in masses. Hence it was that the possession of these places was so important to either side, and that Wellington rightly considered it worth the risks and certain heavy losses of the famous attacks by storm.

On a frontier, then, with few issues, especially if these be distant from each other, fortresses will be especially valuable, by obstructing an invader till the defensive army can place itself on the line of intended invasion ; and the best situations for them will be easily recognised. The interior range of strong places must be situated on points advantageous for defence, and strategically important. Lastly, the defence of the capital by fortifications is a measure of incalculable advantage. “The fortifications of Paris,” says Marmont, “assure more powerfully the independence of France against the attacks of all Europe than the acquisition of many provinces, which would only so much the more extend the frontier.” The student of the campaign of 1814 will perceive what vast additional power of manœuvring Napoleon would have gained had Paris been secure from assault. No longer recalled by the fears of the people, or by political exigencies, to interpose directly for its defence, all his strokes would have been delivered in the most decisive way ; and the nearer the Allied armies approached the capital the more imminent would be the risk they ran of a fatal disaster.

Importance  
of fortifying  
a capital.

Though instances have occurred where, as at Silistria, frontier fortresses have, by resisting the besieger, baffled an invasion, yet the strictly defensive effect to be expected from these, as from natural obstacles, is only that of delaying the assailant, and thereby giving the generals in the field the opportunity of opposing combinations and enterprises which depended for success on swiftness of execution. But, as with rivers and mountain ranges, the obstructing of the enemy is only a part, and not the most decisive part, of the influence which fortresses may be made to exercise on a campaign ; and to turn them to full account a general must employ them as powerful aids for attacking the adversary at a disadvantage.

Fortresses  
chiefly useful  
to aid offen-  
sive opera-  
tions.

The student will find it an excellent exercise in strategy, and one taxing his acquirements, to take a map of any country—France, Spain,



Prussia—and devise for it an efficient and economical system of fortresses, always remembering that these must be placed where they combine the conditions of security from attack with the command of those points in the theatre which are of chief strategical importance. For to place the fortresses in the most effective situations, he must know well the features of the country, and be able to recognise and deal with the many problems it may suggest, under various circumstances, as a possible theatre of war—problems such as it has been the object of this work to state and discuss.

## PART VI.

# TACTICS.

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## CHAPTER I.

### GENERAL VIEW OF THE CHANGES THAT HAVE LED TO THE MODERN SYSTEM OF TACTICS.

If the operations in a theatre of war have undergone great and remarkable changes since the feudal times, no less radical and complete have been the alterations in the method of conducting the movements of armies on a field of battle.

When soldiers were armed with pikes and axes and shields, the best formation in which they could be arranged for action was that of deep columns. For, if opposed by a thin extended line, the columns would by their momentum penetrate it and make gaps through which the cavalry would pour to attack the enemy in rear. Again, the column, by approximating to a solid square, possessed the formation necessary to resist the charges of the men-at-arms. If suddenly assailed in flank, the column readily offered on that side an impenetrable face, and manœuvres to turn and outflank an enemy were accordingly little thought of. Even archers drawn up many ranks deep could still use their weapons with effect. The line of battle then was a line of dense columns—a formation easily

Deep columns  
suitable to  
medieval en-  
gagements.

assumed from the column of march; and requiring, as it did, but little practice or instruction, was best fitted to the motley bodies which the different knights led to the field. The engagement was almost always desultory in its character: here a column would advance victorious, there another of the same army would dissolve into a rabble, ridden down by the men-at-arms or maintaining partial conflicts; most of the field was broken up into a series of individual combats, and only the banners of the most famous or the most resolute and commanding knights still kept round them patches of array amid the general drift and fluctuation. At last, after a struggle generally bloody and protracted, advantage of ground, superiority of number, or of spirit, or of skill in arms, would decide the day. On one side renowned leaders, inspiring special confidence and attachment, would still lead orderly bands to the charge; on the other all would be hopeless confusion ending in general flight; and the victors would for the most part be too disorganised to pursue.

Extended fronts of formation necessary in modern battles.

A great change ensued of necessity upon the introduction of firearms; for, as only two ranks can discharge their pieces, to form on any depth beyond that was to sacrifice so much of the fire of the line. At first only a part of the troops were armed with muskets, and the diminution in depth was only partial—the front line of battle still standing six deep. But when every man was a musketeer the line was extended in proportion—three ranks, however, being still considered necessary; the third, which could not fire, loading for the others, and being deemed to add to their stability—an idea which prevailed in Continental armies down to a recent period.

Armies of Marlborough's time incapable of rapid manœuvres.

To deploy into extended lines demanded more practice and precision in drill than to move in deep columns; but the training of armies did not keep pace with their requirements, and in the time of Marlborough and Eugene deployments were still effected but slowly, positions were deliberately taken up and fortified, and the opposing army with equal deliberation drew up and attacked in parallel order. There was little of what we call manœuvring; that is, the quick orderly change of highly-trained and flexible masses from one kind of formation to another, or their transference from point to point of a battle-field for purposes which might become suddenly feasible in the changing course of the action. Generals displayed their skill in choosing a position adapted to the num-

bers and composition of their army, and arranging the troops for its defence, and in detecting blots in the opposing line where the hostile leader had made a blunder in his dispositions, and directing thereon the decisive attacks. This was Marlborough's special gift. In the midst of the fight, when officers and men were heated in the *mêlée*, and ordinary generals, perplexed by the turmoil, could do little more than push their reinforcements into the fight, his clear calm vigilance detected a fatal blunder of arrangement, and his ready skill directed a heavy blow on the vulnerable spot. Thus, at Blenheim, the French in position had allowed Marlborough to draw up his forces deliberately and without molestation, though the difficulties of ground were such that Prince Eugene's wing of the Allied army was for many hours retarded in coming into line, during which the English general remained exposed to the possible attack of the full force of the enemy. At length the preparations of the Allies were completed, and they began the action; and, while the French made good their ground at the villages, Marlborough observed how weak was their line of cavalry on the grassy plateaus between. Ceasing to push the futile and bloody attack on Blenheim, he sent cavalry, infantry, and guns over the small marshy stream of the Nebel at the unguarded points, and, breaking through the thin line of horsemen, bore all that stood between his successful troops and the Danube back upon the bank of the deep river. And at Ramillies, seeing that one wing of the enemy was posted behind a marsh, where it was at once unassailable and unable to advance, he neglected it altogether, and, bringing the whole of his force against the remaining wing, won easily a decisive victory.

But it is evident that a great opening was afforded at this epoch for a general who should oppose to the armies of the time another army more elaborately trained, and therefore possessing superior swiftness, precision, and coherence. Such a machine fell ready made into the hands of one able and willing to use it. The character of Frederick William of Prussia, the father of Frederick the Great, is well known. Eccentric almost to insanity, one eccentricity which he indulged in throughout his life was a mania for drill. He was the great drill-sergeant of Europe. In his vocation he laboured so persistently, bringing to the task such rigidity of idea and purpose, such severity, so constant an interest, and a scrutiny so minute, that the result, attained indeed by the utter misery of the sol-

Origin of the  
Prussian mili-  
tary system.



Frederick  
turns to ac-  
count the  
manœuvring  
power of his  
army.

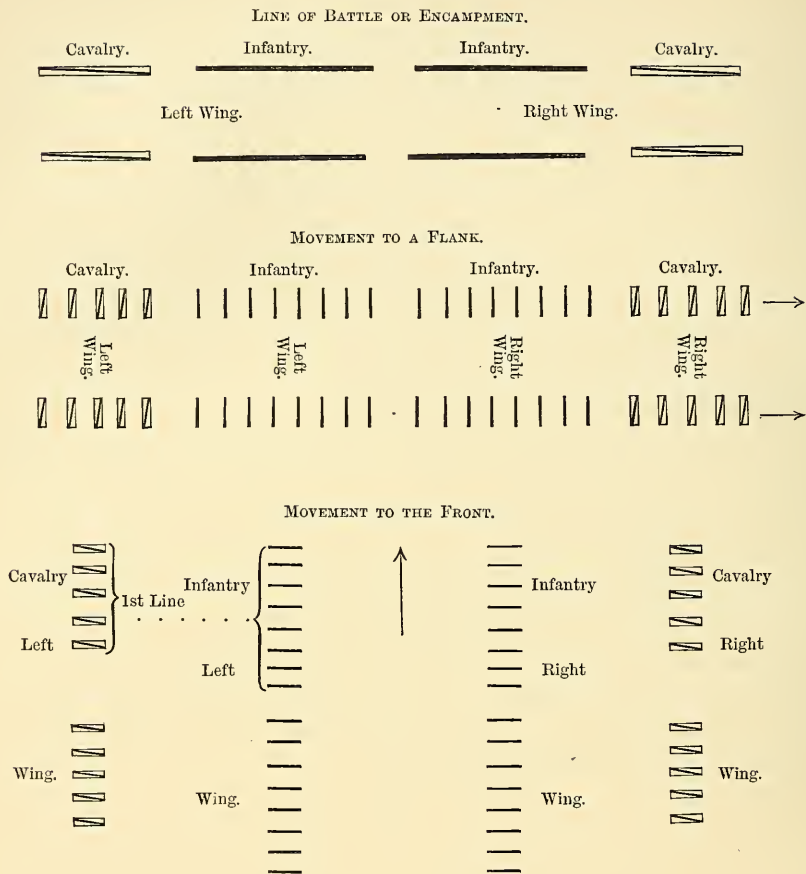
diers, was the most perfect military machine then in existence. The creator of this had neither the opportunity nor the genius to use it himself, but his successor possessed both in ample measure. Crafty, resolute, patient, and sagacious, Frederick had long meditated how to turn to best account the weapon thus placed in his hand; but it was not till after many trials that he learnt the secret of its power. His first essays taught him only that it was, as a mere fighting instrument, admirable; time and thought, failures and successes, showed him how to treble its efficiency. Old in experience but still vigorous in manhood, he found himself at war with the three greatest military powers in Europe, and he had to solve the hard problem of making head at once against all, with forces inferior to either. He perceived that the secret of success must lie in turning to full and unexpected account that power of manœuvring which his father's system had imparted to the Prussian troops, and which had been perfected under his own direction in camps of instruction, before the Seven Years' War. Urged by his impetuous spirit always to attack, he found in the Austrians an enemy always willing to await him. They carried the system of selecting and occupying strong positions to its very extreme. To its extreme, too, they carried the pedantry of war, embodied in their blind addiction to arbitrary rules and ancient precedents. Such a foe was, to a dexterous tactician and a highly-trained army, a very whetstone of skill. Moving round their slow inert masses, like a panther round an ox, he found the unguarded part, and cast himself on it with all his force. The secret of his success lay, not so much in judicious movements in the theatre of war, as in the use he made of the flexibility of his army as compared with the armies of his adversaries. It was by his successes in the fields of battle, rather than by his plans of campaign, which were often faulty, that he finally emerged victorious from the struggle, with a military renown unrivalled in his generation.

Granting that the superior steadiness and fighting qualities of his troops rendered them, line for line, on equal terms, more than a match for their enemy; and granting, also, that the manœuvring power of his army enabled it to form line for battle with unexampled rapidity, to deceive the enemy by feints, to fall on them before they could retrieve a false movement, or to retreat safely after a foiled attack; still, his most decisive successes

were due to this fact more than any other, that he frequently succeeded His great tactical stroke. *in placing his line within striking distance obliquely across the extremity of his adversary's line.* For troops thus attacked and outflanked are exposed helplessly to ruin should they remain passive, while the formation of a new line facing the enemy is a work not only of time, but of great difficulty, when attempted under the stress of a vigorous and sustained attack. And as the object of all attempts to outflank an enemy is to obtain an advantage of this kind, and as the necessity of guarding against such enterprises forms a principal motive in tactics, it is expedient here to inquire further into the nature and effects of a movement which brings hostile lines into such relations with each other. But first it is necessary to consider briefly how the line of battle was in Frederick's time composed, and how his army was organised.

The Prussian army was not, like an army of the present day, an aggregate of corps, or divisions, or brigades, all capable of independent action— Organisation and formation of the Prussian army. it was an aggregate of battalions; when assembled in the field the army was itself the integer, and any detachment was a fragment of the line of battle. It habitually camped and fought in two lines, each three ranks deep; the cavalry was on the flanks, and the army was divided, for convenience of manœuvring, into two wings of infantry and two of cavalry. When required to march, the order was simply to move by lines, if to a flank, when it advanced in two columns; or by wings, if to the front, when it advanced in four columns:—

LINE

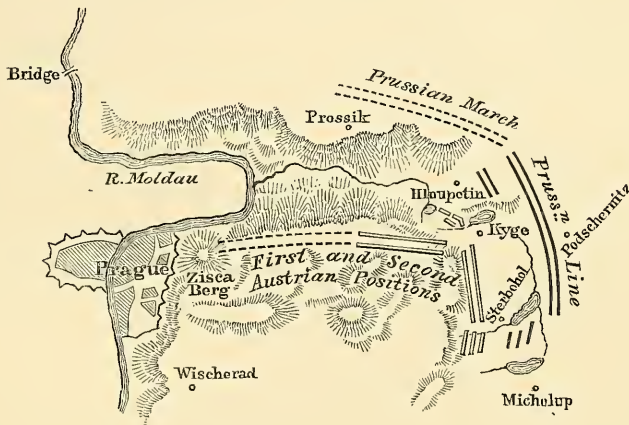


The perfect drill of the Prussian army enabled it alone, of the armies of the time, to move to a flank round the extremity of the enemy's line, marching perhaps two or three miles in this order, with such exactitude that it could at any time, by the simple simultaneous wheel of all the fractions, form complete order of battle and advance upon the enemy. The effect of the manœuvre is exemplified in the following action:—

## BATTLE OF PRAGUE, 1757.

Case of outflanking an enemy.

When Browne fell back from the Eger before Frederick, and Königseck from the pass of Reichenberg before Bevern and Schwerin, the Austrians united at Prague, on the right bank of the Moldau.



*5th May.*—Frederick threw a bridge and crossed that stream 3 miles below Prague, leaving Marshal Keith with 30,000 men to cover his communications with Saxony. At that time, Schwerin and Bevern were across the Elbe at Brandeis; and the wings of the Prussian army united by preconcerted signal at Prossik. There were about 62,000 Prussians in presence of 65,000 Austrians on this field—not counting Keith's corps beyond the Moldau.

See page 222.

Hostile forces

The right bank of the Moldau at Prague is very high and steep. On the hill there known as the Ziscaberg the Austrian left rested—thence their front stretched in two lines and a reserve along a plateau to Hloupetin and Kyge, four miles off; thence Königseck's force was thrown back at an angle towards Michelup, and the angle was covered by a work armed with guns, and some battalions, at Hloupetin across the rivulet.

Description of the battle-field and Austrian position.

*6th.*—Looking from his equal ground at Prossik across the ravine that separated him from the Austrians, Frederick saw that their left and centre



were difficult to attack. The roads there were narrow and broken, the banks of the intervening rivulet marshy, the slope on the Austrian side steep and scarped, and covered with vines, the crest of the ridge partially occupied with field-works and well garnished with artillery. Schwerin, reconnoitring towards Podschernitz, reported that an attack against the right wing was practicable. The plateau, highest on the bank of the Moldau, slopes gently but constantly downward till it subsides in the hollow that forms the basin of the rivulet. A line of fish-ponds artificially formed in the course of the rivulet, and passable by narrow dykes, being overgrown with water-grasses, were mistaken by Schwerin for meadows.

Prussians  
march to a  
flank, and  
turn the Aus-  
trian right.

The reconnoissance finished, and an attack on the Austrian right decided on, the Prussians moved by lines in two columns to the left, round the Austrian right, their infantry and cavalry between Podschernitz and the fish-ponds, their artillery by the road through Podschernitz. The movement, begun at half-past seven, was so far completed by nine in the morning that the left wing stood in order of battle opposite the Austrian right.

As soon as the Austrian commander (Prince Charles of Lorraine had superseded Browne) perceived the movement, he brought the cavalry of the left wing to join that of the right near Sterbohol; and withdrew infantry from the left to prolong that face of the angle formed by the right wing.

Austrians  
form front to  
meet them.

When these reinforcements to the right wing arrived on their ground, they advanced beyond the original alignment; and the wing being ordered to dress by the right, the forward movement of its left flank left a gap of several hundred yards near Kyge.

The battle commenced with the advance of the battalions on Schwerin's left against Sterbohol, which they took, but were driven from immediately. The whole Prussian left wing now advanced on the Austrian right wing—some battalions defiling by the dykes, others wading across the fish-ponds. Several times repulsed, the second line, supporting the first, at last made good its footing beyond the fish-ponds.

The left wing of Prussian horse, passing at both ends of the last pond, had engaged the Austrian cavalry with varying fortune; till the Prussian squadrons of the right wing joining those of the left, they drove the

opposing body from the field southward up the Moldau, pursuing it to the bank of the river at Wischerad, and laying bare the right of the Austrian infantry.

Meanwhile the right wing of the Prussian infantry had attacked and carried the post at Hloupetin, and penetrated into the gap, which had been widened by the fluctuations of the action to more than half a mile. The whole of the Prussians now bore against the isolated right wing of the enemy, their artillery enfiladed it from Hloupetin, their cavalry threatened the right and rear, and it broke and fled southward after the horse.

Prussian army concentrated against Austrian right wing.

Not only was the left of the Austrian right wing laid bare and enfiladed by the capture of Hloupetin, but the right of their left wing was in a similar predicament. It now formed a succession of lines, fronting as the right wing had fronted, and always drifting rearward, till the advancing Prussians crowded it into Prague.

Austrians defeated in succession.

#### COMMENTS.

The natural movement (already performed by the Austrians in this example) of an army whose flank is turned, is to throw back that flank, as the inevitable first step to ward off a formidable disaster.

In the case of an action between very small forces, the turning of a flank might be comparatively unimportant. A battalion, for instance, could change front to meet an attack in a very few minutes; a brigade of three battalions might effect the operation without such delay or loss as to entail ruin. But in case of the advance of a formidable line, supported by cavalry and artillery, and calling for the change of front of 10,000 or 20,000 troops of all arms, covering miles of ground, to meet the attack, the matter is more serious. The troops nearest the point of attack must necessarily face about and move rearward, exposed all the time to the enfilading fire of artillery, perhaps also to the fire of infantry, and the charges of cavalry. Under such circumstances, unless the ground is very favourable to the formation of a new front, and the troops are exceptionally steady, a whole army may fall into disorder and wreck.

Effect of a considerable turning movement.

In the present case, however, the Austrians, noting the direction of

Schwerin's approach from the Elbe, and taking advantage of the cover of the fish-ponds, had already accomplished this operation of throwing back a flank so as to face the enemy on that side. They met the attack, therefore, under circumstances unusually favourable. Yet the disadvantages of the formation on a salient angle, as exemplified in this battle, are still of the most formidable character; for instance,

Consequences  
of throwing  
back a flank.

1. The whole force of the assailant may be brought to bear on one face of the angle.

2. The advance of either face causes a gap at the angle.

3. The face assailed will then be liable to be turned on both flanks.

4. The fire of the assailant's artillery enfilades one or both faces.

5. The defeat of the assailed wing compromises the retreat of the other, supposing the original front of the army to have covered its proper rear.

Add to this, that the troops at the angle, exposed to a cross-fire, must crowd on each other in falling back, and so create a weak point in that decisive part of the line; and we see that the turning of a flank by a considerable part of the assailant's line advancing in order of battle is, in general, the prelude to a very decisive victory, and is to be guarded against by every possible precaution.

The French  
attempt to  
turn Frederick's  
weapon  
against him-  
self.

Perceiving the value of an advantage of this kind, the French army, in the same campaign, sought to turn the lesson against its great expositor, in the following instance.

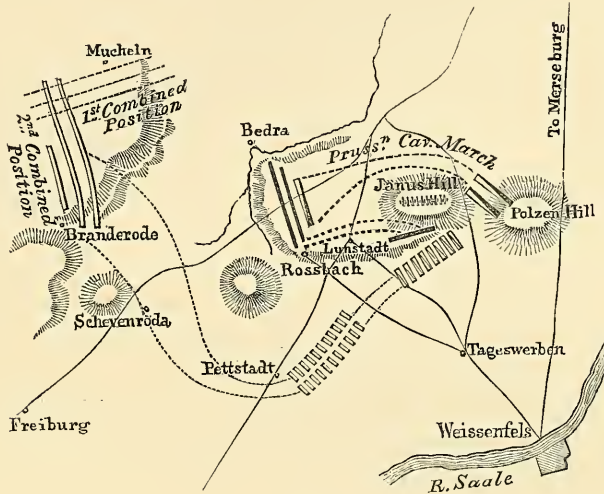
#### BATTLE OF ROSSBACH, 1757.

In November of this year, Frederick, leaving a force to face the Austrians eastward of the Elbe, had marched across Saxony to meet the combined French and German army, commanded by Soubise, then approaching the Saale.

*1st November.*—The Prussians from Leipsic advanced to the Saale at Weissenfels, Merseburg, and Halle, where the French destroyed the bridges, and, falling back, united at Mùcheln, numbering in all 50,000, on the 2d November.

*3d Nov.*—Frederick's columns from the Saale unite at Bedra, about three miles from Soubise's position. The King reconnoitred the enemy,

and finding the direction of their line such as to present and expose their flank, prepared to attack it next day.



4th Nov.—Advancing before day, by moonlight, he discovered that they had shifted their position, and now stood left at Mueheln, right at Branderode, strong on the flanks, and with their front well covered. Judging them too formidable to attack with his numbers (22,000), he fell back to the heights in his rear, left on Rossbach, right on Bedra, intending to await the movements of the enemy, who would, as he expected, be obliged by want of provisions to retreat to a point nearer to his supplies.

Hostile forces and positions.

5th Nov.—The ground between the Saale and the French position is a sandy barren plain, devoid of obstacles, highest at and behind Frederick's position, and descending thence by gentle rounded slopes to the level of the river bank. The French generals, confident in their own superiority, imagining Frederick's army, part of which only they could see, to be weaker than it was, and construing his retreat of the previous day into a confession of inability to encounter them, resolved to march round his left and intercept his retreat to the Saale.

French march to a flank.

About eight in the morning, the Combined army, forming columns of lines to its right, began to move towards Schevenroda; a body of troops, chiefly horse, under St Germain, advancing towards Frederick's left, and



making demonstrations of attack, and opening a distant cannonade to cover the general movement. As they had a magazine at Freiburg, the King, thinking they might be moving thither, remained to await the development of their design, merely ordering his cavalry to mount, and his infantry to be ready for immediate movement.

Moving in the hollow of the plain, the Combined columns, passing Schevenroda, were directed on Pettstadt. At the head of the columns (three in number, two lines and a reserve) marched the German horse; next, the German and French infantry; lastly, the French cavalry.

Before passing his left flank the enemy halted, and the French cavalry moved to join the other wing of horse (in all 7000) at the head of the columns. An hour afterwards he perceived that they, then past his flank, were heading towards Merseburg, and their project of cutting him from the Saale was no longer doubtful.

Prussians  
form across  
the French  
line of march.

The King thereupon ordered Seidlitz to move with all the cavalry (4000), covered by the rising ground, across the head of the Combined columns; while the infantry, forming columns to its left, and then wheeling to the left by divisions, followed at its best pace in the same direction. Only a body of light horse under Meyer was left at Rossbach.

The enemy, catching glimpses of troops rapidly moving towards the river, imagined the King to be retreating on Merseburg. They therefore pushed forward their cavalry in all haste far in advance of the infantry, in hopes of attacking his rear-guard, and forcing him to an action.

Reaching the reverse slope of the Polzen mound which screened him, Seidlitz found that he had anticipated the enemy, whose columns were then just beginning to ascend the other side of the slope. Forming line, he at once attacked and enveloped the head of the column, which, unable to form line, was, by repeated charges, dispersed in half an hour, and driven towards Freiburg. The Prussian cavalry then rallied, and reformed about Tageswerben, in a hollow of the plain.

During the cavalry engagement the Prussian artillery had brought twenty-two guns into action on the crest of the low mound called the Janus Hill; and the infantry division which had originally formed the left of the Prussians at Rossbach—seven battalions in number—began to issue through Lunstadt, forming as they arrived on the left flank of the

Combined infantry. The enemy now attempted to form front, and to extend beyond the Prussian flank ; but, enfiladed by the guns, the head of each attempted formation swept away by the Prussian fire, and the rear assailed by Seidlitz, the whole army gave way and fled in confusion, sweeping St Germain's force (which was at the same time broken by Meyer from Rossbach) with them, losing 3000 killed and wounded, and leaving 5000 prisoners and 70 guns in the hands of the victors. The Prussians lost less than 600 men.

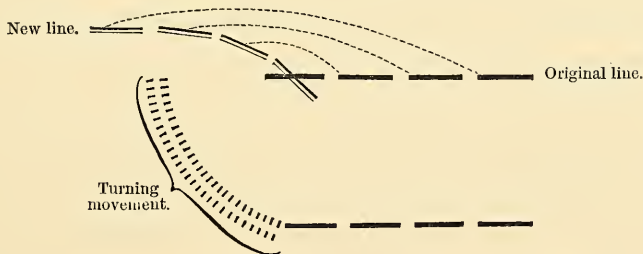
French defeated in succession.

COMMENTS.

The reader will see that an army moving to outflank another, which finds that other drawn across its path, is itself outflanked. And since the army that attempts to turn the flank of another, to which it stood originally parallel, by passing round it, out of range of its artillery, is moving on an arc of which the antagonist commands the chord, it follows that, in ordinary circumstances, and with the same conditions of ground, such an enterprise will be not only futile but disastrous. In general, the way to meet it will be to change front with the threatened wing ; and, disengaging the remainder of the line, move it behind that wing into the prolongation of the new alignment.

Dangers of the attempt to outflank.

Way of meeting it.



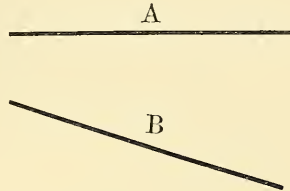
That an open turning manœuvre may succeed against inferior troops and generals, has, however, been often proved ; and the commander of a disciplined force opposed to barbarous troops—a British leader, for instance, acting against a native army in India—would be justified by the superior manœuvring power of his force (enabling it to defend itself at any

Attempt may be judicious against inferior troops.

stage of the operation, to outmarch its enemy, or to return on its path without disorder) in attempting openly to turn the flank of his enemy.

Mistake of those who deride the oblique order.

Some writers, assuming that by the oblique movement one line is merely brought to bear obliquely on the other, have derided it as a visionary advantage, pointing out that the obliquity of the two lines is reciprocal, thus:—



and that A's relation to B remains unchanged. Their mistake is in not perceiving that the one line, besides being oblique to the other, *must also outflank it*. Produce the line B beyond the extremity of A, and the nature of the situation is evident to the reader of the two actions just described.

Again, it has been triumphantly asserted that Napoleon himself pronounced the oblique order of attack to be a fantasy. If he did, he denied the plain facts of several of Frederick's most celebrated and decisive battles. But what Napoleon probably did say is, that an attempt openly to practise the oblique outflanking movement against the skilful leader of a well-trained army, ought, for the reasons just given, to be turned to the disadvantage of the assailant.

Prussian system becomes general in Europe.

Perceiving all the advantages of the Prussian system of drill and discipline, the other powers of Europe adopted it; and every civilised army is still strongly imbued with the spirit and the method which Frederick William so diligently imparted to his troops in the parades of Potsdam. As in other cases, the form has been taken for the essence, maxims and traditions have been rigidly adhered to long after they ceased to be applicable, and the pedantic spirit which blindly confides in them, and condemns all innovations, is by no means yet extinct among soldiers.

The next great changes in tactics took place, along with so many other changes, in the French Revolution. One was in organisation. Brigades

and divisions already existed in armies ; but they were fractions of the line, consisting of a number of battalions united under one general for convenience of command only. In the great war which revolutionary France maintained all along her extensive frontier, numerous small bodies, separated by many miles of space, often acted with a certain independence of each other, though directed by one commander-in-chief—in-  
 indeed, the nature of the theatre sometimes, as in the Apennines, rendered this inevitable. To make them capable of independent action, these bodies were now rendered complete in all arms ; divisions were organised of 8000 or 10,000 infantry, 1000 or 1500 cavalry, and twelve guns, under one commander, and trained to manœuvre in concert. A faculty of independent action was thus acquired ; but it led to diffuseness of movement and want of unity in design, as is well shown by a quotation from Jomini's comments on the campaign of 1796 in Germany :—

Change in organisation of the Republican armies.

Divisions rendered capable of independent action.

“The defensive system, *en cordon*, had brought with it another not a whit better,—that of operating offensively with an army parted into many divisions, marching on parallel roads at a great distance from each other, forming thus only a single line of battle, and, for the most part, without any supporting corps—for a reserve of 800 or 900 horse cannot be counted as such. This manner of operating can only be ascribed to the fear of being outflanked, or the hope of outflanking the enemy, in thus extending the line to the utmost.

Abuses of their independence.

“This is the system which many military writers have taken for an enlargement of the scale of the combinations of war. It would be very well in fact, if an army were beaten directly a small body of the enemy appeared on its flank. But if it is true, on the contrary, that this army can, in such a case, concentrate on its centre, overwhelm the division opposing it there, and push it vigorously, what then will become of the two extremities of this front of operations, occupied by divisions moving each on its own errand, without reserves, and not in a condition to support itself? This assumed perfecting of the art of war was, then, only a new error ; and to be convinced of it, it is only necessary to read the operations of Montenotte, Lonato, Ratisbon, and Amberg.”

Such were the errors entailed by the divisional system ; but the Republican armies possessed a tactical method which was an ample compensation. Before the Revolution important modifications in manœuvring had



been introduced, which presently proved so successful against troops trained exclusively in the system of Frederick. For, mobility and the mutual support of all arms, in which the Prussians had formerly been so superior, were now on the side of the French.

Bonaparte shows that mobility must be combined with concentration.

The reader, already acquainted with the campaign of 1796 in the Apennines, will now see what was the new impulse which Bonaparte's genius gave to the French armies and to war in general. The man, the material, and the opportunity were all met together. The divisional system existed—the Austrians, operating in the way Jomini censures, were widely dispersed—and the young general, bringing La Harpe to back the garrisons of the redoubts at Monte Legino, and sending Massena from Cadibona against the Austrian rear, utilised the independent action recently acquired by divisions, while illustrating the advantages of concentration; and repeated the operation again and again.

More massive organisation attempted in Moreau's army.

Turning to the campaign of 1800 in Germany, the reader will see in the organisation of Moreau's army an attempt to impart that unity and impulsion which were so necessary to the execution of a sound plan, but which were found scarcely consistent with the divisional system. The divisions there are assembled in a right wing, a left wing, a centre, and a reserve, the last under the immediate direction of the general-in-chief. (See Chap. V. Part III.)

System of army corps organised under the Empire.

The idea of imparting the necessary concentration and unity of action to an army was completed in the camp of Boulogne in 1804-5, when Napoleon's authority, as Emperor, was supreme, and the army was shaped into the instrument of his vast designs of aggression. It was seen that great masses of cavalry might produce a decisive effect on a field of battle. They were, therefore, abstracted from the divisions, and these were now united into corps under a marshal or lieutenant-general. These corps consisted of 20,000 to 30,000 men, with a proportion of cavalry and artillery sufficient to render them capable of maintaining independent combats. And a strong reserve, composed of chosen troops of all arms, notably of the famous Imperial Guard, was kept under the Emperor's hand for the decisive moment of the engagement.

Introduction of highly-trained light infantry.

Another change, too, which had taken place, was in the mode of fighting. France supplied great numbers of conscripts, full of intelligence and enthusiasm. But, to oppose the vast armies that assailed her,

she was forced to send these into the field without the instruction and practice in discipline necessary to meet the trained battalions of the enemy; therefore, they were thrown out in the form of skirmishers, where their intelligence and courage were rendered of avail, without the necessity of acquiring precision and coherence. It was soon seen that these lines of skirmishers—"clouds of skirmishers," as writers are fond of calling them, not without reason—might be made eminently useful to cover formations, to deceive the enemy, and to conceal tactical enterprises. Light troops, it is true, had existed before. The Austrians possessed, in Frederick's time, plenty of light cavalry in their hussars and Pandours, plenty of light infantry in their Croats; but these, very useful to harass convoys, to hover round the enemy's march, and pick off stragglers or baggage, to plunder territory, or to obtain information, were of small account on a field of battle. Now, however, light infantry, highly instructed and organised, were rendered capable, besides performing their own functions, of taking their places in the line of battle.

In the preceding pages of this chapter have been briefly traced the changes in the tactical conditions of armies down to recent times, when the system of the present century has received a new element—that of arms of precision.

## CHAPTER II.

FUNCTIONS, FORMATIONS, AND COMBINATIONS OF THE  
DIFFERENT ARMS.

Functions of infantry, MODERN infantry exercises its influence in conflict in two ways—in firing on and in charging the enemy. All its formations in battle have reference to one of these modes of action—the first defensive, the second essentially offensive.

cavalry, Cavalry has no power of exercising a decisive influence on an action by its fire; and that it should possess the power of delivering fire at all has been considered by many as destructive of its legitimate function. Its power resides in the impetus of its charge. A line of cavalry stationary at a short distance from a line of infantry would be destroyed; if it advanced slowly on the infantry it could be repelled. A certain distance must interpose between the front of cavalry and the troops it is about to assail, in order to give it a career in which to combine perfect order with the requisite momentum.

artillery. In two respects the fire of artillery is superior in degree to the fire of infantry: first, in the extent of its range; secondly, in the power of its projectiles. To exercise its full effects, it should—first, begin to fire at a range beyond that of small arms, without, however, falling into the error, so frequently condemned by Frederick, of commencing its fire at impracticable ranges; secondly, it should so direct its fire on the opposing troops as to give full scope to the penetrative power of the projectiles. Guns firing *directly* against a line can, with their most successful aim, only prostrate two or three men at a shot; but by firing transversely or diagonally on a line, or by enfilading it, their full effect is obtained. Against

deep columns the result will be nearly the same whether they fire on them in front, in flank, or transversely.

Such are the functions of the different arms. To discuss the formations by which each attains its fullest influence will be an important step towards appreciating the dispositions for battle, the object of which should be to obtain the full effect of each arm, and to insure the mutual support of all.

It has been said, in the last chapter, that if infantry forms on any less front than two ranks, it sacrifices a proportion of its fire. For a long time the regular formation, in most armies, was three deep; besides conferring additional stability on the line, it was supposed that the third rank, though it could not fire itself, did, by loading for the others, maintain their fire at a pitch as effective as if it had been used to extend their front.

Formations of infantry.

It was clear that deployed lines, giving the greatest amount of fire, were best adapted for defensive combat. And as a single line, unsupported, and thinned by casualties, would soon cease to oppose an effective barrier, a second was placed in rear to fill its gaps, or to cover its withdrawal and take its place.

But in advancing on the enemy for any distance over broken ground, long deployed lines lose their order, fluctuate, and fall into fragments; and as they would, while in motion, be exposed, at a certain distance from the hostile line, to a fire which they could not return, they would, before closing, find themselves in much worse condition to engage than the opposing line that, remaining stationary, had preserved its order. The same troops, however, moving in column would preserve their array, and, moreover, would often obtain shelter, during their advance, from accidents of ground, when they would have been exposed if in line. On arriving near the enemy the columns might either deploy and engage in a conflict of musketry with the hostile line, or, retaining their formation, might charge and seek to break, by their momentum, through the enemy immediately in their front, creating a gap, of which other supporting bodies could take advantage. And if a whole wing or centre could thus be brought to bear on the corresponding portion of the opposing front, it might, after breaking and dispersing it, deploy right or left on the exposed flank of the enemy.

Difficulty of moving in deployed lines.

Use of columns for manœuvre and attack.



During great part of the last century a controversy was waged between the advocates of the line and the column formations. Whether deployed lines should ever be resorted to; whether columns were at all admissible—if so, how wide or how deep; were questions incessantly argued, and often by men who had frequent opportunities of seeing their opinions tested in war. The only evidence that can really be of use in forming a judgment on such points is the practice of good modern generals in forming troops for defence or attack.

In Frederick's time the Prussians generally attacked in line. So perfect was their power of manœuvring, and their steadiness, that they could be trusted to form and advance thus under fire; and their own fire was so superior to that of any other infantry, so quick, well-maintained, and deadly, that they soon counterbalanced in the conflict of musketry what losses they might have suffered in the advance. In one instance Frederick even advanced to attack the enemy in single line; for at Sohr he was so inferior in force that, in its usual formation, his army would have been outflanked on both wings. In single line, then, he won the battle.

The French modify the Prussian system.

But the attack in line assumed and demanded a great superiority in the manœuvring power and fighting quality of the troops. Where armies were equal in flexibility, in discipline, and in weight of fire, it was incontestable that a body of troops, formed in line, could only advance under fire to attack another line of equal force, at great risk of being defeated before the actual collision took place. Columns, therefore, were the alternative; and to mask their advance, and balance, in some degree, the want of power to return the fire of the hostile line, they threw out skirmishers to ply the enemy with musketry, and to hide with movement, noise, and smoke, the intended attack. This was the great change already spoken of: the Republican and Imperial armies were trained to manœuvre and attack in column, and hardly ever deployed except when defending positions. But the columns varied greatly in depth and extent of front. At Waterloo the French formed columns of attack by ranging eight or nine deployed battalions behind each other. The front of such a column, supposing the battalions to be three deep and 600 strong, would extend about 120 yards, and its depth would be 24 to 27 ranks. Such a mass would be formidable in appearance, and its first line and skirmishers

Depth and extent of columns.

would afford a considerable amount of fire during the deployment of the rest; while its momentum, if fairly launched upon a line, would seem irresistible. But, though often successful against Continental troops, it totally failed at Waterloo, where Ney directed D'Erlon's corps, 16,000 strong, formed in columns of this kind, against the British line. The defects are, that it is impossible to screen columns so large during their advance; that they offer a wide mark to the ravages of artillery; that they are unwieldy, and cannot readily either deploy (and D'Erlon's columns did try to deploy) or change front.

A more usual formation, therefore, was a *line of columns of battalions*, formed each on the centre, on a front of two companies. Thus, a British battalion of ten companies might throw out two as skirmishers, and the remainder would form a double column of companies on the centre, eight ranks in depth, easy to manœuvre, able to form quickly to a front or either flank, and solid for attack.

Columns of  
battalions.

A formation which has been sometimes resorted to, and which combines the action of line and column, is that of a line of several regiments or brigades, each of three battalions, formed one battalion in line, the other two each in double column of companies behind its flanks (right column left in front, left column right in front); intervals equal to the front of two companies being left between the regiments or brigades, for the passage of the columns, thus—

Mixture of  
line and  
column.



This formation is good for defence as well as attack, affording a considerable front of fire upon the advancing enemy, while the columns, awaiting their approach, break out upon them through the intervals. Still, for defence, the counter-attack *in line* by the defensive troops, taking place as it does only over a short space, and showing a large front, which envelops the approaching columns on front and flank, ought generally to be the most effective: at any rate, repeated instances at Waterloo, where the French columns broke and fled before charges in line of very inferior numbers, indicate what is the right course for British infantry. And as an example of columns of attack being defeated by *the fire only* of

deployed lines, Napier's well-known description of the struggle for the hill held by the fusilier regiments at Albuera, will occur to most readers.

Jomini's proposed combination for attack.

Jomini, who had not only thought and written much about war, but had been present in a great number of battles, considered that the best formation for attack he had ever seen (and which seems to have been executed at a review, not in actual conflict), is that of two lines of battalions, formed in double column of companies on the centre. Advancing thus, the first line, on approaching sufficiently near for effective fire, deploys, each of its battalions throwing out the two flank companies as skirmishers. This leaves, opposite the columns of the second line, intervals equal to their fronts; through which, as soon as the fire of the first line shall have produced sufficient effect, they advance to the charge. Jomini considers that no troops could resist this combination of fire and of shock.

Effect of columns of attack chiefly moral.

In fact it is easy to imagine the effect upon a defensive line, already thinned and shaken by the enemy's fire, when through the smoke it perceives compact columns swiftly advancing upon its shattered array. The influence of the attack in column is chiefly moral in its nature; it is the solidity, the momentum, the measured tramp of its menacing and confident advance, that scatters the opposing line. "In war," says Jomini, "I have never seen but two kinds of infantry combats: either that of battalions deployed beforehand which commence firing by companies, and then pass, by little and little, to file-firing; or else that of columns marching boldly on the enemy, who gives way without awaiting the shock, or who repulses the columns before actual collision, either by his firm countenance, his fire, or by himself advancing to attack. It is only in villages and defiles that I have seen actual conflicts of infantry in column, the heads of which fought with the bayonet: in line of battle I have never seen the like." Again he says, "In the late wars, Russian, French, and Prussian columns have frequently been seen to carry positions with shouldered arms, and without firing a shot; the triumph is that of impulsion, and the moral effect produced by it."

Superiority of small over massive columns.

As it seems probable, therefore, that columns would never actually close on a line that stood firm, their natural course would be, on finding the enemy did not give way, to deploy and try the effect of their fire; when, in an attack such as that described by Jomini, the first line, now behind the second, could form column and try the effect of another assault.



Facility for deployment is for this reason, and also for the sake of effective action against a broken enemy, specially to be desired ; therefore columns of battalions must always be superior to those of more massive formation.

When the French army, covering the siege of Peschiera, expected the attack of the Austrians, in 1859, an order similar to that described by Jomini was prescribed for the defence. "As soon as the enemy shows himself," says the Emperor's order in anticipation of battle, "the fire of artillery will commence. The lines of infantry will be disposed, when the ground permits, alternately in battalions deployed and in battalions in double column ; useless fire of skirmishers will be avoided ; and while the deployed battalions engage in file-firing, the others will beat the charge and attack the enemy with the bayonet."

Mixture of line and column for defence.

The points wherein the French system differed from the Prussian were, then : that long processional turning movements were no longer necessary ; that therefore obstacles of ground, which forced lines to make circuits to preserve their order, would not stop columns, which could therefore be directed with much greater certainty on required points ; that, consequently, great plains were no longer necessarily fields of battle, since any ground would suit the purpose ; that the cavalry, kept in close deep columns beyond the enemy's reach, could move rapidly and accommodate itself to circumstances ; that the defeat of part of a line no longer entailed the crumbling of the rest, since broken troops were easily rallied on their supports. In fact, to use the metaphor of a French general, Baron Ambert, who has lately written on the subject, a flexible chain was substituted for a bar of iron. And, lastly, great reserves were kept in hand for a decisive movement.

Difference of Prussian and French systems.

The reader will perhaps say that either two lines of infantry do occupy adequately their ground, or they do not. If they do, the multiplying of the attacking force ought not to prevail ; if they do not, they should be placed in deeper formation.

Why numbers brought to bear at parts of the line prevail.

But, if in deeper formation, the extent of ground occupied will be contracted in proportion. And it is probably true enough that so long as two lines of good troops remain intact they ought to be as capable of repelling any attack as if their lines were trebled or quadrupled. Moreover, a deeper formation, while it diminished the front of fire bearing on



the attacking columns, would increase the losses of the defensive troops from the assailant's artillery. In any case, it is evident how, when a battle has been some time in progress, superior numbers assembled on a particular part of the general front will for the most part prevail. For the defensive line is no longer intact: numerous drafts have been made on the second line to fill the gaps in the first; the assailant's artillery has had its effect; the attacking force can always feed its line of fire from the supporting columns, and, maintaining a superiority, can either quench that of the enemy, or, when a due effect has been produced, launch its columns to the assault. An attempt to meet the attack by a deeper formation would dangerously diminish the front of the defender's fire; and would, moreover, generally offer a flank to the assailant's enterprises.

Consequent  
aim in modern  
battles.

It will be seen, then, that (granting the open turning of a skilful adversary's flank to be generally a manœuvre full of peril to him who attempts it) the great object in modern battles is to bring, at a certain point of the battle-field, a superior number of troops to bear upon the enemy. The design is screened by false attacks, by features of the ground, by a general advance of skirmishers, and by deceptive formations and manœuvres. The attacking force must be strengthened at the expense of some other part of the line—to engage that other part would be to offer to the enemy the opportunity of restoring the equilibrium of the battle which it had been the object of the former manœuvre to disturb. Therefore modern battles are for the most part partial attacks, where the assailant puts forth his foot no farther than he can be sure of drawing it back again. Thus, at Ligny the French right and Prussian left wings scarcely joined in the action, the efforts being made on the other wings and centre: at Waterloo the French left first attack Hougoumont; then the right is launched upon La Haye Sainte and upon the English left; finally, the baffled French make desperate efforts against the centre.

Methods of  
securing this  
object: eche-  
lon forma-  
tions.

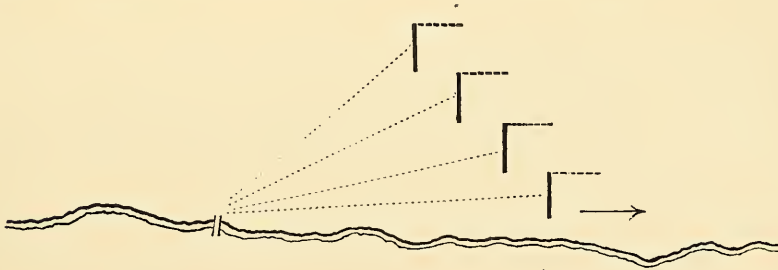
Very favourable to this non-committal kind of attack is *echelon* or *stair* formation of infantry, where each fraction of the attacking force, whether brigade, battalion, or company, advances successively from a flank or centre of the line, either at full wheeling distance, or, in the case of large echelons, where this would be inconvenient or impracticable, at a certain regulated distance from the next in front. The exposed flank may thus by being retired be secured—line may be formed on any

front, or a new front of echelons be shown by a simple simultaneous wheel. The head of the formation may be reinforced for the attack of a post, such as a farm or village covering the line of battle; if successful, the remaining echelons come up and form line upon it—if strongly opposed, they successively reinforce it—if defeated, they cover its retreat.

ADVANCE IN DIRECT ECHELON, WITH THE LEADING ECHELON REINFORCED.



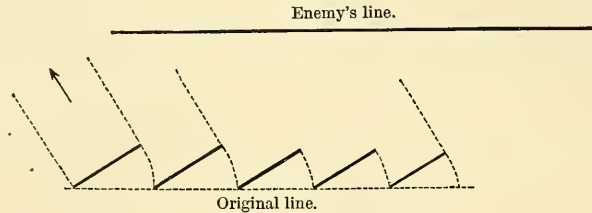
This is the formation spoken of at page 242 (where it would have been premature to describe a tactical operation) as suitable to an advance like that of M'Mahon's from Turbigo, where a flank is offered to the enemy,



since, by a simultaneous wheel of fractions to the threatened flank, the echelons front the enemy, and successively support each other, while the imperilled flank, by being refused, is rendered more secure, and the point of passage is better covered.

The march in oblique echelon was one of the manœuvres often employed by Frederick for gaining an enemy's flank. The fractions of the line are wheeled on an arc less than the quarter circle, and then advance each on its new front: when, though appearing from a distance still to be

moving in line, they gain ground rapidly to a flank, and by a simultaneous wheel backwards form line towards the enemy.



When columns are successful in breaking the opposing line, they deploy right and left, enveloping and rolling up the exposed flanks, while through the widening gap pour cavalry and supporting bodies of infantry to attack the second line and reserves, and prevent them from falling on the victorious columns. In this way a well-supported attack may spread confusion through whole corps of an army; for the breaking of a line which has stood fast to the last moment must compromise a large extent of troops to right and left of the gap.

Formations  
of cavalry.

As cavalry is found by experience to require a space of 300 or 400 yards from its starting-point in order to acquire the necessary union of coherence and momentum, it should be stationed at that distance behind any point it may be intended to defend, whether a post, a battery, or the flank of infantry, stationary or in motion.

The peculiarities of this arm are, first, that the opportunities offered to it of attacking to advantage are transient, and must be seized at once. Secondly, that either success or defeat so far disorders the combatant mass as to place it at the mercy of fresh troops of the enemy. Thirdly, that it commands special opportunities, from the speed of its movement, for attacking the enemy in flank.

For the first reason, then, it will often be expedient to keep a body of cavalry formed in the order of attack, lest the opportunity should pass during the preliminary formation.

For the second reason, it is imperative, as has frequently been experienced, not to commit the whole force to a simultaneous attack, especially

against cavalry. The first line should be followed by a second, at a distance sufficient to allow the first, if defeated, to pass round the flanks or through the intervals ; and a strong reserve should halt and deploy at 400 yards from the point of collision.

For the third reason, cavalry attacking any troops in line should form on a front as extended as is consistent with the preceding rule of preserving a second line and reserve. But since either cavalry or infantry, on seeing a fully deployed line of cavalry advancing upon it, might take measures to protect the menaced flank, it is well to keep part of the intended first line in column, behind the flanks of the front, till the moment preceding the change of pace from the trot to the charge, when the column on the side where the enemy is to be outflanked, or on both sides, should rapidly deploy.

Jomini recommends the following formation for cavalry : One-fourth deployed ; one-fourth in column on each wing ; one-fourth in reserve. Thus, of 40 squadrons, 10 would be in line, 10 in column on each wing, 10 in reserve in rear of the centre, and at some distance from the rear of the wings. But this formation is preliminary only, as the columns in rear must deploy for the charge. "Cavalry," says Marmont, "cannot and ought not ever to fight in column. This formation will serve to facilitate the march ; but at the instant of approaching the enemy, it ought to deploy."

All other changes of front and of formation should be executed at a certain distance from the enemy. To attempt them when an adversary is advancing within charging distance is to invite an overthrow. In such a case, the best course a leader can take is to charge in the existing formation.

When cavalry charge a square or solid column, the formation in line, in which the flanks must wheel inwards to come on the faces of the square or column, and that in succession, not simultaneously, would be very unsuitable. The squadrons should be drawn up in rear of each other, with intervals equal at least to their length. The leading squadron, on failing to break the enemy, wheels outward, and is followed by the next, and so on in quick succession. This series of charges may frequently shake troops that have stood one or two steadily. But it is inexpedient to form the cavalry column more than four or five deep ; for if



that number of charges fail, it is not likely others would succeed, especially as the preceding squadrons will have left in front of the infantry a rampart of fallen men and horses.

Cavalry charging a broken body of infantry ought to render it incapable of again assembling as a body in that action.

While improvements in weapons have materially affected the actions of infantry and artillery, science has done nothing for cavalry. In that arm no change of importance has taken place since, ceasing to be mere men-at-arms, heavily armed, slow of movement, and trusting for their effect to the power of wielding their weapons which they derived from sitting on horseback, they became formidable from the rapidity of their manœuvring and the order and momentum of their charge. It was in the second of his Silesian wars that Frederick first showed the world the capabilities of cavalry; in the third they reached the climax of their discipline and achievements; and no army has since possessed a cavalry leader or a body of horsemen who could claim any superiority over Seidlitz and his splendid squadrons. In fact, notwithstanding the huge masses of cavalry used in the later wars of Napoleon, their true use and efficiency for combat seems to have been less understood than in the time of Frederick. In place of the resolute home charge, cavalry began to manœuvre defensively, to resort to file-firing, and to halt to receive the enemy; and though, from time to time, gallant charges were made by the horsemen of each European army, yet the combination of impetuosity with determination in the attack was no longer, as it had been in the last half of the last century, the characteristic of the arm. In the last great wars originated the notion which now prevails, that cavalry cannot break steady infantry; though it is clear that in no formation can infantry really withstand a cavalry charge pushed home, and that when horse fail to break foot, it is from moral, not physical causes. Yet the cavalry of the Republic and Empire possessed one advantage over that of Frederick; for the system of rendering lines flexible, by jointing them into manageable portions for facility of manœuvre, had extended to this arm, and the French squadrons, by no means superior to their Prussian predecessors in the line of battle, were much more easily handled.

Questions scarcely yet decided have been constantly debated respect-

ing the management of this arm, of which the following seem the most important:—

Debated questions concerning cavalry.

1st, *Whether cavalry should ever charge in close column.*—Since Frederick's time the Prussian cavalry has been trained to act in squadrons at quarter distance; but it is contrary to the opinion and practice of Frederick, the Archduke Charles, and Napoleon. It may therefore be safely concluded that open column, or rather successive lines, is the best deep formation.

2d, *Whether the front line should be formed with or without intervals.*—Seidlitz always wished to see the centre of his line in the charge "jammed boot to boot;" and, indeed, unity of impulse being the grand requisite in a charge, it is hard to see how it can be attained so well as by a formation that renders it difficult for any horseman to disengage himself from the moving mass. Intervals imply looseness and fluctuation; nevertheless, considerations of manœuvre have induced most armies to admit them. In the second line they are indispensable to permit the retreat of the first, if defeated. The British squadrons are separated in line by intervals of one-fourth of a squadron.

3d, *Whether the formation in echelon is judicious for cavalry.*—When a charge is executed in this way, a whole line is not exposed to be at once defeated; opportunities are afforded of retrieving a first failure, and an exposed flank is protected. But, on the other hand, the action of the squadrons (if the echelon be of squadrons), which should be simultaneous, is thus rendered successive, and loses much of its effect; and the defeat or unsteadiness of the leading echelon, which is more exposed, and perhaps therefore less confident than the others, would be visible to all, and might have a bad influence. In fact, the success or failure of the charge would in a great measure depend on the success or failure of the leading squadron. Therefore, though cavalry in echelon, within charging distance of the enemy, should advance in that formation rather than pause to form line, yet the line, supported by a second line, is the best formation for attack.

But, for manœuvring, the echelon of squadrons at half distance seems specially suited to this arm. Not only is the flank (the weak point of cavalry even more than of infantry) thus protected, but less depth is offered to the enemy's artillery than in column, while, in advancing, more

order can be preserved thus than in line: line can be formed, in the simplest manner, oblique to the original front, or on the same front; and the front can be readily changed to any extent.

4th, *The amount of cavalry that can be effectively used in a single mass.*—In his reviews Frederick used to unite 10,000 or 12,000 horse for a charge—Napoleon kept immense masses together. The Archduke Charles says, that, unless the ground limits the action of this arm to particular parts of the field, it should be kept disposable in one body. Nevertheless the difficulty of maintaining order in the advance of a very long line limits the manageable front to six or eight squadrons in first line. Marshal Marmont, whose ideas are always carefully considered, and who knew war well, says, “I place at 6000 horse the utmost force of cavalry manageable; with this one ought to succeed in all that is reasonable to undertake on a field of battle with cavalry.”

5th, *The pace of the charge.*—The opinion of Jomini on this point will be to most readers, accustomed to attach high importance to the impetus of the charge, quite unexpected: “When the enemy approaches at a fast trot it is imprudent to advance on him at the gallop, for you will arrive all disunited against a mass compact and serried, which will traverse your disjointed squadrons. It will be only the moral effect produced by the apparent audacity of your charge which will help you; but if the enemy appreciates it at its just value you will be lost, for success ought naturally to attend the compact mass opposed to cavaliers galloping without cohesion.” He goes on to say, “I know that many horsemen think otherwise, but I know also that the most distinguished generals of this arm incline to the trot. Lasalle, one of the most skilful of these, seeing one day the enemy’s cavalry approach at a gallop, said, ‘There come lost troops,’ and these squadrons were in fact overthrown at a slow trot. Personal bravery has more influence on the shock and the *mêlée* than the different paces.” The only cavalry action of the Crimean war goes to confirm this. The Russian horse bore down upon the heavy brigade at Balaklava at the gallop, but, before closing, drew up to a walk, either to restore lost order, or from failure of resolution. Our regiments (except the 4th Dragoon Guards, which attacked their flank) moved to meet them much more slowly, hampered by impediments of ground, yet the enemy, thrice their numbers, were defeated.



6th, *Whether the cavalry should be to a certain degree independent, under their own commander.*—In Frederick's battles, while the king directed all the movements of the infantry, we find the chief of the cavalry selecting his own time for the attack. And when great masses of cavalry were brought on the field in the wars of the Empire, Napoleon permitted, indeed required, that their commander should judge of and seize opportunities for action. These opportunities are, in fact, so fleeting, that it would seem impossible to employ cavalry to advantage if they are to receive their impulses from a distant part of the field. "Cavalry charges," says Napoleon, according to Montholon, "are equally good at the beginning, middle, or end of a battle. They should be made as often as possible on the flanks of the infantry, especially when the latter are engaged in front."

But there is great authority for a different course. Baron Müffling, the Prussian commissioner at the British headquarters, urged the commanders of two brigades of English cavalry at Waterloo to charge at a moment when their attack would, as he thought, have been very opportune: they agreed with him, but said they dared not move without orders. Discussing this matter afterwards, Wellington expressed his opinion thus:—"It is of paramount importance that a general who finds himself in a defensive position should at no moment of the action lose the free disposal of all the troops under his orders. In the battles of Vimieiro, Talavera, Busaco, and Salamanca, he had allowed himself to be attacked, with the view of assailing the enemy with superior forces as soon as he had laid himself open. For this object it was necessary, 1st, That the commander-in-chief, standing on an elevated point of his position, telescope in hand, should investigate, by his own observation and the reports he receives, the disposition of his antagonist, and discover means of hindering the co-operation of his forces; 2dly, That the leaders of troops should set themselves in motion the very moment they receive their fresh orders. But this could not be done if they were engaged in their own enterprises, unknown to the general in command.

"Now, suppose, in the case mentioned, the cavalry had made their 3000 prisoners, it remained very doubtful whether they could have returned to their position in half an hour. When cavalry is once scattered, no one can foretell to what that may lead. The charms of pursuit are so



great, that no trumpet-signal can arrest it. . . . If the enemy should succeed in restoring order and defending himself, on a body of cavalry hastening to his support, who can then calculate that the pursuit will be ended at a given time? who can foretell that a hard fight of long duration will not ensue, during which time the main army will remain paralysed? Who would expose himself to such accidents? and for what? To make a couple of thousand prisoners, which perhaps may have no effect whatever on the decision of the battle. And supposing those prisoners were made, still the troops would have lost their first freshness, and no longer render the services in the battle which they might have done without this interlude."

Wellington, then, desired to keep the constant control of his cavalry. But two things are to be observed here:—1st, That he speaks of *defensive* battles; and his arguments are so strong that it may be assumed that a general awaiting his adversary's movements should certainly follow his example. But the tactics of Frederick and Napoleon were essentially *offensive*; and when once they had placed the mass of their cavalry in the field where it was destined to act, it was necessary, in supporting offensive movements, that the immediate commander should be left to his own inspirations. 2dly, That Wellington was comparatively weak in cavalry, whereas the French and Prussian armies were powerful in that arm.

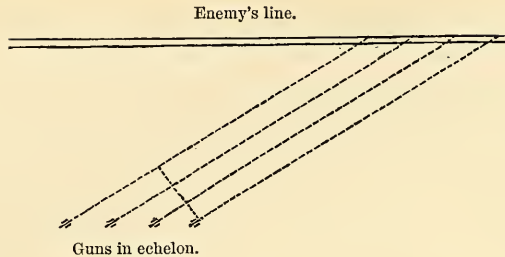
It appears, then, that when a powerful cavalry is supporting offensive movements, its commander should be allowed considerable discretionary power; but that the cavalry of an army which awaits its adversary, especially if inferior in force, should be constantly under the direction of the commander-in-chief.

Formation of  
artillery.

The only formation for artillery in action is, of course, that of line. The intervals between the guns (nineteen yards from centre to centre) necessary for the limbering up of the pieces, enables a battery to sustain for a considerable time a *direct* fire from the enemy's artillery which, from its weight and accuracy, might appear destructive.

Echelon of  
guns.

But in gaining a direction oblique to the enemy's front a line of guns will frequently be exposed to enfilade. A partial remedy for this in open ground is to retire the guns in echelon to the exposed flank.



The same order is applicable when numerous batteries are for a particular purpose concentrated on a part of the enemy's line.

The most effective fire of artillery is that which is directed down a gentle slope, so equable in its fall that the course of the projectile is nearly parallel to it throughout its extent ; or, the fire along a plain above which the guns have a certain command.

Relations of  
artillery fire  
to slopes of  
ground.

An opposing slope is disadvantageous to the fire of artillery almost in direct proportion to its steepness : first, because even a column so struck, from above, as it were, can only lose very few men with each shot ; secondly, because, as the shot quits the ground at nearly the same angle at which it strikes, its high rebound carries it over the heads of troops in rear (the English lines descending to the Alma suffered comparatively little from the powerful Russian battery on the opposite slope) ; third, because beyond a certain pitch the projectiles cease to rebound at all.

It may thus be better (so far as concerns losses from fire) to place troops or batteries down the slope towards the enemy, than on the reverse side of it, where they are concealed. At Inkermann, for instance, the line of English batteries was withdrawn a little from the crest, so that only the muzzles were visible, with the waggons on a line below, and the infantry not immediately engaged was also posted on the backward slope. But the flight of the heavy Russian shot and shell from the opposing eminence, after clearing the crest, coincided almost exactly with the reverse slope of the hill, so that, after killing men and horses, they struck the tents of the Second Division, some hundred yards in rear.

The same reasons that render it inexpedient to fire against an opposing slope also show that very commanding positions are ineligible for guns. Generally an elevation of from 20 to 30 feet above a plain will give all the command that is to be desired.

Combination  
of cavalry and  
artillery.

Seeing that cavalry on the defensive is helpless, Frederick, in the Seven Years' War, organised batteries of light artillery, capable of moving at the pace of squadrons, and intended to support all their enterprises.

When cavalry is advancing over a considerable space upon the enemy, the horse-artillery gallops out, and, having passed ahead 400 or 500 yards, forms on the flank of the line of advance, opens fire, and continues in action till its front is masked by the horse. In retreating, the reverse of this process is executed—the guns halt, and deliver fire, and gallop on, overtaking the retreating cavalry, and again, from suitable ground, protect its retreat.

When cavalry is finally advancing to the charge, the artillery must be always in rear of *the prolongation* of its flank or flanks, not directly in rear, where its fire would be masked and where it would be ridden over by defeated horse.

When a change of front of the cavalry is contemplated before charging, the guns should be on the pivot flank, where they can act during the wheel, and fire transversely on the opposing line; and should be clear of the flank of the squadrons by at least 100 yards.

If the sole action of horse-artillery be specially required, as in taking up the prolongation of an enemy's flank, or enfilading a formidable battery, its front, while advancing, may be masked by a line of horse; but as soon as the guns are in action, the cavalry, drawn up as already described, should take post at full charging distance in rear of the exposed flank or flanks. If the horse-artillery be formed on a front perpendicular or oblique to the enemy's line, all the cavalry will be in rear of the flank next the enemy; if its front be parallel or slightly oblique to the enemy's, the cavalry will be in two bodies in rear of the flanks.

Though good infantry alone has generally, in the wars of the present century, successfully resisted cavalry alone, yet cavalry and artillery together ought to destroy it. For the cavalry, manœuvring on the flanks of its line of retreat, would force it to form squares, which formation could not long be maintained under the fire of the guns. Unless the ground were broken and favourable to infantry, or shelter very near, the case of the infantry ought to be desperate. In 1811, a French brigade of infantry, attacking the Portuguese militia near Almeida, was assailed by six British squadrons and a troop of horse-artillery. "Mili-

tary order and coolness," says Napier, "marked the retreat of their squares across the Turones, yet the cannon-shot ploughed with a fearful effect through their dense masses, and the horsemen continually flanked their line of march; they, however, gained the rough ground, and finally escaped over the Agueda by Barba del Puerco, but with the loss of 300 men killed, wounded, and prisoners."

Much of the influence of artillery is due to the moral effect produced by the rush of the projectiles overhead. It is inexpedient, therefore, except in desperate circumstances, to place guns in rear of other troops. Cavalry certainly, infantry probably, would be rendered unsteady by the cannonade.

Neither is it desirable to place infantry in rear of artillery; for the guns should always be relied on to protect their own front, and infantry in rear of them would not be in the best position for protecting the flanks, which are the weak points; while the fire of the small arms would be masked till the enemy had penetrated the battery, and an increased depth of formation would be offered to the enemy's projectiles.

Combination  
of infantry  
and artillery.

Nor should infantry and artillery be on the same alignment; for one important function of the guns will be to protect the front of the infantry, which they will in that case do but inadequately; nor could the guns readily throw back a flank in echelon; so that, on approaching within a certain distance of the infantry, the enemy would no longer be exposed to artillery fire. The infantry, therefore, will best give and receive support if posted *in rear of the flanks* of the line of guns. The intervening distance must depend on circumstances. Should the ground in front be occupied by skirmishers, the guns may advance to the supports; otherwise they may be 50 or 100 yards in advance of the infantry. Where infantry is covering the exposed flank of guns, it should be posted about 50 yards in rear of the flank of the battery.

When on the defensive, the guns will direct their fire on the attacking columns; but when supporting an attack of infantry, though a part of them will properly be directed on the enemy's infantry, yet a proportion should also, by firing on the enemy's artillery, seek to diminish its effect on the advancing columns.

The custom, so prevalent in and before the seventeenth century, of intermingling bodies of horse and foot, was no longer expedient when the increasing rapidity of cavalry movements gave a new character to that

Combination  
of infantry  
and cavalry.



arm. "The action of the cavalry," says De Ternay, "having become so different from that of the infantry, it would be to establish a chaos to intermingle troops of these two arms in a small space."

Nevertheless the two arms may, and in most cases ought to be combined; but the combination should be devised with due regard to the action of both.

If infantry be engaged with infantry, the sudden onset of horse on the flank will decide the action,—as was seen in the second stage of the battle of Marengo, when Kellermann's cavalry charge routed the Austrian infantry engaged with the division of Desaix.

Cavalry thus supporting infantry may advance in rear of it; for the distance that must be preserved between the two bodies, in order to give the cavalry the necessary career, will obviate the disadvantages of a deep formation. It may, by its action at the right moment, convert a doubtful conflict into a success, or check the pursuit of defeated infantry.

The only resource of battalions attacked in flank by cavalry is to form square. But squares offer only a very inadequate front of fire when assailed by deployed battalions, and the gaps in their ranks will soon destroy their defensive power. A combination of infantry and cavalry ought therefore to succeed against a very superior body of infantry alone.

Experience has mostly proved that in general actions cavalry charges, except against cavalry, are indecisive unless supported by infantry. All the formidable inroads of Napoleon's horsemen on the British line at Waterloo availed nothing for the want of infantry support. They inundated the field, drove the artillerymen from their guns, careered in the intervals of the squares, and seemed masters of the ground, yet failed to make a permanent impression. Every great attack of cavalry on a mixed force should therefore be supported by infantry. These latter may advance with, or even before, the former, as they will certainly be left behind in the course of the movement. They should follow in columns, with considerable lateral intervals, through which the cavalry, if defeated, may pass; and the formation of squares of battalions, echeloned on two lines, will offer the most effectual check to pursuing squadrons. At Austerlitz, Kellermann's cavalry, defeated and pursued by the Russian horse, re-formed between the lines of infantry, and, attacking the hostile squadrons when disordered by the fire of the squares, entirely defeated them.

## CHAPTER III.

FORMATION OF THE LINE OF BATTLE, AND OCCUPATION OF  
THE GROUND.

A LINE of battle should be a disposition, on a great scale, of the three arms, for their effective individual action and mutual support.

Foot-soldiers standing in the ranks shoulder to shoulder occupy each 21 inches of lateral space. Ten men extend over seven ordinary paces of 30 inches, therefore twelve men occupy seven yards. Proportions of troops to space.

A battery of six guns (19 yards from muzzle to muzzle) occupies 95 yards; add  $9\frac{1}{2}$  yards on each flank, and 114 yards is the space for the battery. These intervals are necessary to enable the teams with the limbers to reverse when limbering up.

Cavalry occupy each man and horse 1 yard laterally; a squadron of 48 file, 48 yards; a regiment of six squadrons (with five intervals of 12 yards each), in round numbers, 350 yards.

Three thousand infantry in single rank cover nearly a mile; in two lines two deep this would give 12,000 infantry to a mile in the line of battle. Allowing for the space occupied by officers, intervals between battalions, and space for two batteries, a division of 10,000 infantry with 12 guns would suitably occupy a mile of ground, or, if in first line only, something over 3000 yards. But part of the force would be employed by sending out battalions as skirmishers, therefore nearly 12,000 men would still be needed to occupy the mile on two lines. If all the divisional guns were collected on one flank, the other, at such a range, would be but imperfectly defended by their fire. Therefore, to obtain an effective cross fire on the front of the division, its guns should be disposed on both its flanks, even when drawn up in two lines.

Reasons for placing cavalry on the flanks.

Supposing two or more divisions to be assembled in line of battle, with a proportionate body of horse, if the cavalry were placed between them in column, it could not deploy for action without overlapping on each side a large part of the infantry and masking its fire. If (occupying the same situation) it were deployed between the infantry divisions, a large part of the line would thus have no fire to oppose to an attack of infantry. The enemy's battalions might therefore fire with impunity on the central mass of cavalry, who must either retire, leaving a gap in the line, and exposing the flanks of the divisions, or must charge the opposing infantry in front, which will generally be a doubtful enterprise. In any case it must find great hindrance to its most effective mode of action—namely, against the flank of either infantry or cavalry; and its defeat would lay bare the centre of the line. For these reasons, when the ground is suitable, part of the cavalry is disposed in rear of the flanks of the line, where its front is free for deploying or changing direction, and where it covers and watches over the weak points—namely, the flanks—of the line of battle.

Position of cavalry attached to divisions or corps.

Such being the general rule, the course of an action nevertheless often gives opportunities for cavalry to operate to advantage between the divisions of infantry. For instance, a hostile column retreating in disorder from an ineffectual charge, or a hostile line engaged in a conflict of rifle fire, the flank of which might be imperfectly covered, or a line of skirmishers far from their supports, would give openings for a comparatively small force of cavalry to act with decisive effect. In each corps of two or three divisions a few squadrons might therefore be advantageously posted so as to act between the divisions; and their proper place would be with the second line, the space necessary for their advance being opened by wheeling back some companies of the first line at the proper moment; or, if placed in rear of the batteries, they may issue through the perpendicular interval between the guns and the infantry.

Space between the lines.

The object of the second line being to feed, reinforce, and relieve the first, it should be near enough to render prompt support; but if very close it would be struck by cannon-shot which had passed through the first line. By interposing a certain space, shot from the enemy's batteries, which, coming from a distance of 800 to 1400 yards, descend at an angle upon their object, would often, whether striking the first line, or falling a little short of it, or falling a little behind it, be carried by the rebound






clear of the second. An interval of from 200 to 300 yards will best secure, on level ground, the two objects of supporting the first line, while depriving the enemy's guns of the opportunity of inflicting double losses.

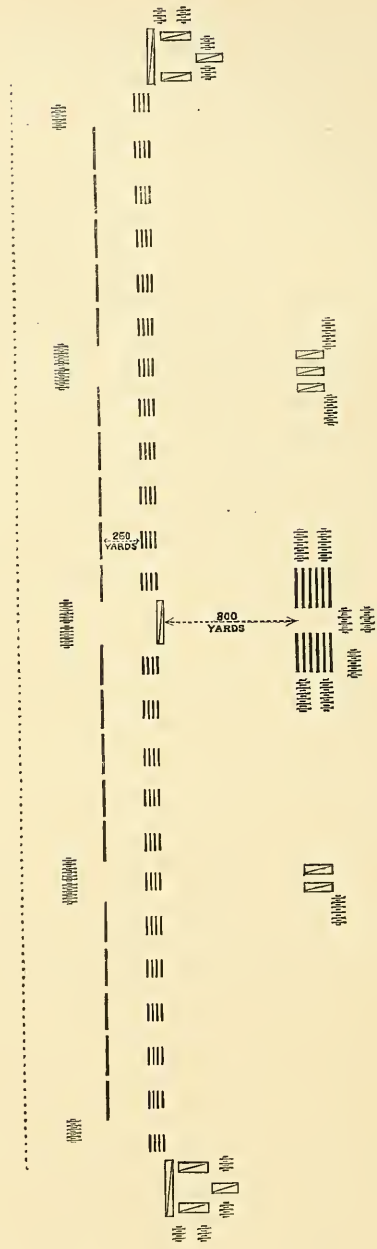
The column formation is so greatly superior to the line for facility of manœuvre, whether for a direct advance, change of front, or movement to a flank, that the second line is seldom deployed except for instant support of the first against a formidable attack. Battalions at deploying intervals, in double or single column of companies, will be the most convenient formation for the second line. Formation of the second line.

Let us suppose, then, that an army is composed of five divisions of infantry, each division two brigades, each brigade six battalions of 800 strong, which will give 9600 for the strength of the division; a corps of cavalry of 16 regiments, each of six squadrons, at 96 men per squadron, which will give 9408 horse, or a sixth of the total force; two batteries to each division, each battery of 6 guns; two troops of horse-artillery to each wing of the cavalry, and a reserve of three troops of horse-artillery; three field batteries and two heavy batteries, besides the field batteries of the infantry held in reserve; which will give a total force (placing the heavy batteries at 4 guns each instead of 6) of 128 guns, or about  $2\frac{1}{4}$  guns per 1000 men. Arranging this force in two lines, with a division of infantry (one-fifth of the force) in reserve, and one battalion of each brigade of the first line, together with some light infantry battalions, as skirmishers, the sketch (p. 340) presents an ideal or abstract line of battle—not in any case to be rigidly or pedantically adhered to, but reasonable and proper on a field where the centre and each wing occupy ground presenting no marked inducements for the exclusive employment of either arm, nor forbidding the action of any; such ground as battles have often been fought on—at Marengo, for instance, at Rossbach, in Belgium, and in Egypt. Supposed formation for battle.

Here a brigade of each division is in second line, the divisional batteries are placed in the intervals of brigades, and six squadrons are placed in rear of the centre. Twenty-four squadrons are placed on each flank of the line, one regiment deployed, one in column behind each flank, and one in column in reserve, with two batteries of horse-artillery. Thus the defence of the whole line is provided for; 56 guns are kept in hand, great part of which may be used to support an attack, or to concentrate



Battalion deployed, . . . . .  Regiment of cavalry deployed, . . . . .   
 Battalion in double column of companies, . . . . .  Regiment of cavalry in column of squadrons, . . . . .   
 Battery, . . . . . 



their fire when the enemy's plan of offence is developed ; and a division of infantry and five regiments of cavalry, withdrawn out of range, are ready to reinforce an attack, to follow up a success, or to cover a retreat.

Such a formation, reasonable and proper in itself, and serving as a basis for innumerable variations, must almost always be modified to suit the conditions of the battle-field. These conditions will now be considered under the different heads of—slopes of the ground—obstacles in front of the line—and obstacles on flanks of the line.

Conditions of ground.

The position occupied by an army on a continuous and very steep range of heights, may be so strong as to defy the attack of superior numbers. But, in proportion to its inaccessibility will be the difficulty of quitting it for a counter-attack upon the enemy. Cavalry and artillery will lose their effect, and the conflict will be one chiefly of infantry ; therefore a general must consider, before taking up such a position, what his object is in delivering battle. If, to measure his strength and skill with his adversary's, and to put matters to a decisive issue, such ground will be quite unsuitable ; but if his object be defensive merely, it will perfectly answer his purpose. Thus Wellington, halting in his retreat before Massena, upon Lisbon, to give the inhabitants time to seek safety behind him, and to prevent the pernicious effect which continual evasion of an enemy must exercise on the spirit of an army, ranged his troops on the heights of Busaco, against which the French generals led their veteran columns absolutely in vain. And for a containing force, fulfilling the functions described in Chapter I., Part IV., as proper to it, such a position will be invaluable. But a superior antagonist, though baffled for the moment, will only be delayed ; for the means of turning the position must certainly exist. Thus, on the day after the battle of Busaco, Massena, turning Wellington's left by a road through the mountains, forced him to continue his retreat.

Should positions be inaccessible.

The most advantageous ground in general will be, then, such as obstructs the assailant, but not the defender. The crest of slopes favourable to the fire of artillery and the movements of cavalry, and overlooking a plain along which the enemy's troops must advance under fire, with their designs apparent, to ascend ground the inclination of which is in itself an obstacle, will be such a position as a general anxious to meet his adversary will select.

Positions which should generally be chosen.

Passages of a river covering a line of battle.

When the front of an army is covered by a river, the destruction of the fords and bridges will entail the same general consequences as the occupation of unscalable heights, except that in this case the conflict will be rather one of artillery than of infantry. But by preserving the passages, the power of counter-attack is retained, and the river then bestows this advantage on the defender, that the points where the assailant's columns must advance being limited in number, and previously known, preparations may be made to meet with a concentrated opposition the different attacks. But, on the other hand, if the assailant's bank screens his movements, the chance of being turned, as Soult was turned by Beresford at Orthez, will always exist.

Obstacles partially covering the front.

An impassable obstacle, such as a piece of water, a ravine, or a marsh, might extend *partly* along the front of a position. To extend the line of troops along the rear of the impediment would be to repeat the fault of the French commander at Ramillies, and to give the enemy the opportunity of falling in full force on the remainder of the line. But though either cavalry or infantry thus posted would be paralysed, yet guns might play across the impassable space with full effect, and would not only be secure from capture, but, if the obstacle were a marsh, would suffer comparatively little from an opposing fire, since the shot which might strike in front would not rebound from the soft soil.

Relations between the direction of obstacles and the line of battle.

To occupy a position which *is perpendicularly intersected by an impassable obstacle*—a deep ravine, stream, lake, or marsh—would be to divide the army voluntarily into two isolated parts, and give the enemy the option of bringing his mass against either. Such was the error of Durando's position before Mortara in 1849. But if such an obstacle, after approaching the front of the position, *ceases there*, it will be of great advantage to the defence, for the assailing forces will be divided by it, while the defenders can bring their main strength to either side.

When the ground in front of a position is intersected by artificial obstacles, such as strong walls or ditches, those parallel to the front may be advantageous to the assailant, affording cover to his skirmishers, and rallying points for broken columns; but those perpendicular to the front will be detrimental to him, by dividing his attacking forces, without sheltering them from fire.

However advantageous a position may otherwise be, if its immediate

front be thickly wooded, or so broken as to conceal the enemy's movements, it will scarcely be tenable; for, not only will the defender's special advantage, that of firing on the assailant's columns during their advance, be lost, but the enemy may mass his troops on any point he selects, undiscovered; and he will thus possess the power of attacking that point with superior numbers unshaken by fire. One of the first conditions of a good position is, therefore, that it shall afford a full view of the enemy's movements within effective cannon-range.

Essential condition of a good position.

Certain defensible points, such as a hamlet, village, farm, church, and churchyard with its wall, or a grove, within distance of easy support in front of the line of battle, will generally increase its strength in a very material degree. Strong in itself, and its garrison constantly reinforced from the line, while the ground in front is swept by batteries, such a point is difficult to attack directly; the enemy cannot attempt to surround it without exposing the flank and rear of the attacking troops; and to pass it by in order to reach the position, the assailants must expose their flank to its fire. If several such points exist, they support each other, isolate the enemy's columns of attack, and force him to expend his strength in costly assaults upon them; in fact, they play the part of bastions in a line of fortification. But it is essential that they should be within supporting distance (short cannon-range) and easy of access from the rear; failing these conditions, they had better be destroyed, if possible, as defences, and abandoned to the enemy. A remarkable illustration of this is afforded by the Austrian position at Solferino. (Plan 17.) Their general line stretched through Pozzolengo and Cavriana; by far the strongest part of that field, taken singly, is the hill of Solferino, commanding all the neighbouring country, crowned with strong buildings, and flanked by precipitous slopes. But the back of the hill is so steep and scarped that it can be ascended only by a single winding path; and between it and the high ground of Cavriana in rear, stretches a width of nearly two miles of broken ground. The brigades that occupied this formidable outpost maintained themselves long against the direct attacks of the French; but when the assailants turned it, part of the garrison was cut off, and both troops and post were lost. It would have been far better to leave it unoccupied, and place its garrison in the general line at Cavriana; or else, to advance the whole of the line of battle, making the hill the centre, and

Defensible points of a position.



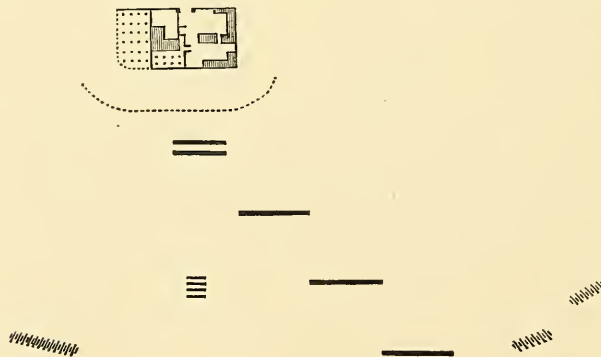
connecting the wings with it, so that the Austrian left wing would have occupied the ground on which the French are represented in the plan.

Another case in point is the line of slightly fortified posts occupied by the Turks in front of Balaklava. Their distance from the army was far beyond cannon-range, and they were captured in a moment, with their armament, in presence of the Allies, at the first attack.

When well placed, points of this kind in front of the line enable the defender to mass his troops at the proper time for a counter-attack, and launch them, with a comparatively short distance to traverse against the enemy. And should they, feebly occupied and defended, be captured, they give to that enemy the same advantages for renewing his attack. For these reasons most great battles are marked by bloody episodes where advanced posts like Hougomont, Solferino, Ligny, and the two Arapiles at Salamanca, are the objects of contention. Yet, because these attacks are so costly, great commanders like Frederick and Napoleon have avoided them whenever such evasion was possible, preferring to drive out the garrisons by a concentrated fire of artillery; or, if the posts stood far asunder, to push the attacking columns in between, masking them meanwhile by demonstrations.

Formation for  
attacking  
them.

The echelon formation is especially suited to the attack of posts of this kind. Suppose, for instance, the farm in the accompanying sketch, with



its yard-wall, out-buildings, and orchard, is to be attacked by a brigade of six battalions from the first line; that the left flank of the brigade is considered secure (being protected by cavalry, let us suppose); that the other

flank, however, is exposed. The brigade advances by echelon of battalions from the left, except two battalions, one of which supports the head of the echelon at 50 yards' interval, and the other, formed in double column of companies, follows as a reserve at the height of the third echelon. The guns of the division, reinforced from the reserve artillery, concentrate their fire on the post till their front is masked by the advance of the infantry, when they are turned on such batteries of the enemy as bear on the battalions of attack. The leading battalions throw out their flank companies as skirmishers, represented by the dotted line, and then attack; the reserve supports them, and, if necessary, the second echelon. Should a counter-attack be made on the right flank, the echelons meet it, either on their existing front, or by an oblique formation; should the attack fail, they cover the retreat; should it succeed, they either extend on the flank of the captured post, or form in rear, according to circumstances, to confirm the success; and throughout, they maintain the connection between the head of the attack and the line of battle.

Points of this kind, villages, woods, &c., in the *actual line of battle*, are far from advantageous; they break the unity of the defence, hinder the circulation of troops, and, should the enemy gain a footing in them, give him strong support in his efforts to permanently sunder the line; while, if the line be broken elsewhere, the troops occupying such points are frequently cut off, like the garrison of Blenheim. Should they be set on fire by shells, they would cause disastrous confusion. The line of battle can, therefore, be scarcely too clear of such obstacles from flank to flank.

It might at first sight appear that, considering the importance of the flanks of the line of battle, they would be best secured by resting on insuperable obstacles.

Obstacles on the flanks of the line of battle.

For instance, in taking post at Montebello or Casteggio, an army might rest one flank on the Po, the other on the mountains. But (even granting that the army properly fitted the intervening space) a skilful general would find himself deprived of much of the latitude for manœuvre which it would be one of his chief aims to preserve, and the battle would be so far reduced to a contest of sheer strength. Moreover, in case of the front being broken, the fragments of the line would be liable to be thrown back on the obstacles and destroyed, as happened to great part of Tallard's army, hemmed against the Danube at Blenheim; and had the Allies

pushed vigorously their success at La Rothière, Napoleon's right wing resting on the Aube at Dienville might have been compromised in the same fashion.

The best supports for the flanks are therefore such as leave them free : defensible posts, like those already described as strengthening the front of the line, will also most suitably protect the flanks ; an isolated hill, a small wood, a strong building, a village, or a field-work armed with heavy guns, will all fulfil the purpose ; and if two such posts exist near together, mutually flanking each other, the flank should be, with ordinary precautions, secure.

Some examples of the actual adaptation of troops to ground will render this part of the subject clear. At Austerlitz, not only were the French tactics at the climax of their excellence, but they came into direct collision with the tactical system of Frederick. Waterloo shows us the dispositions made for enabling troops, partly British and partly foreign, to resist the attacks of columns, when the system of attack by columns had reached its extreme development. And at Solferino, modern armies, wielding weapons of precision, and carefully exercised in camps of instruction, manœuvred freely in an open field. For these reasons then, and because no battles have been more minutely recorded, these three cases have been taken as illustrations.

Plan 15.

#### FORMATION OF THE LINES OF BATTLE AT AUSTERLITZ.

The Russians, approaching from Olmutz to Brunn, found the French army barring their path on the Goldbach. They were under a false impression that Napoleon's line of retreat must be the road Brunn-Vienna, and that, cut from that, he would be ruined.

He, however, did not rely on it, but on the line Brunn-Pilsen, through the Bohemian Mountains to Ratisbon. Seeing the error of his opponent, he had not hesitated to place the main strength of his army towards the Olmutz-Brunn road, inviting, as it were, an attempt to cut him from Vienna.

Allied plan  
of operation  
of the left,

The plan of the Russo-Austrians was, to move their left in three columns to Telnitz, Sokolnitz, and the Chateau. The fourth column, or centre of

the army, in rear of the third, on the road Austerlitz-Pratzen, was to cross the Goldbach at the defile of Kobelnitz. The right of the French army being presumed to be thus turned, the columns were to wheel to the right, so as ultimately to occupy the ground between Turas and Schlapanitz.

Meanwhile, as it was expected that Napoleon would attack along the right, Olmutz road during the movement; the right of the Allies was drawn up across that road; and as no point of support for the right flank was found nearer, it extended to the heights of Kowalowitz, the left being in Kruh. This right wing, under Bagration, was to co-operate in the general attack that was to take place after the expected turning of the French right, by advancing through the defiles of Schlapanitz, Bellawitz, and Kritchen, when the whole Allied army would be reunited before Brunn across the angle of the Olmutz and Vienna roads, extending from Kritchen through Latein to the Schwarza, and pushing the French northward on the mountains.

To unite Bagration's left with the centre during the movement, 82 centre. squadrons under Lichtenstein were to extend from Kruh to Blasowitz.

The business of the Allied right was then to menace and contain Napoleon on the side of the Olmutz road while his right should be turned; and then to join in the attack by advancing westwards, while the left wing advanced northward.

The movements of the Allies were made with so little disguise, that this general plan was evident on the afternoon of the battle, when the columns of their left wing were already approaching Tellnitz and Sokolnitz; and Napoleon, further certified of their position and intention by several reconnaissances, issued that evening to his army the famous bulletin in which he prophesied the events of the morrow.

The valley of the Goldbach, low and marshy, is apparently passable for all arms only by the roads marked on the map, though no doubt infantry Description of the field.

Low hills, forming advantageous points for defence, crown the undulations of the field; but the highest ground is the plateau around the village of Pratzen, the faces of which slope downward to the Goldbach from Sokolnitz to Blasowitz, and on which stand the two hills of Stari Wini-bradi and Pratzen.

Napoleon's infantry was in 4 corps, those of Lannes, Soult, Bernadotte,



French organisation and force.

and Davout, and a reserve of a division of the Imperial Guard, and another of grenadiers; each corps 2 divisions; each division of 10 battalions (except Bernadotte's, which were 9)—the battalions averaging 550 men. Two battalions formed a regiment; 2 regiments a brigade of the line; the other 2 battalions of the division were light infantry.

The divisions may be taken as 5500 strong. The cavalry regiments were nearly all of 3 squadrons each; and 100 to 120 men formed a squadron. There were 41 regiments in the field, being 123 squadrons, 14,000 in all—about one-fifth of the total force.

- 12 guns were attached to each infantry division;
- 6 to the cavalry of each corps;
- 12 to the cavalry of the Guard;
- 12 formed a separate reserve;
- 15 with the reserve cavalry.

Soult's and Davout's corps and the Reserve had each a brigade of 2 regiments of cavalry attached; Bernadotte's and Lannes's corps each a division of 4 regiments. The cavalry brigade of Davout's corps was absent. Soult's replaced it, and Bernadotte's was attached to Lannes for the occasion.

There was a reserve of 66 squadrons under the orders of Murat, not counting 18 squadrons detached with Davout on the Vienna road.

The proportion of field-artillery was  $2\frac{1}{2}$  guns to 1000 men.

French plan and dispositions for

From the Olmutz road (following the Goldbach) to Tellnitz, the distance is about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles—far too extensive for the numbers of the French to occupy continuously on two lines, especially as their formation was three deep.

operation of the right,

From Kobelnitz to Tellnitz Napoleon only meant to hold the defiles; therefore here he posted very few troops, viz. :—

- 3 battalions in and around Tellnitz;
- 2 in the village and castle of Sokolnitz;

1 brigade of cavalry between Tellnitz and Sokolnitz, to watch the course of the stream and assail any troops crossing there;

A brigade of infantry before the defile of Kobelnitz in two lines—the first deployed, the second in column; and a battalion behind the defile.

Thus more than half the line of battle was occupied by 1 division of infantry and 1 brigade of cavalry, to be supported by the other division

of infantry and a division of cavalry, then five miles distant on the Vienna road; when all had assembled, this part of the line would be guarded by Davout's corps and 24 squadrons (for, besides Soult's cavalry, a division of reserve cavalry was serving with Davout), less than one-fifth of the total force. And the business of this part of the army was to be purely defensive, and to retard the columns of the Allied left wing.

Napoleon's design being to attack the heights of Pratzen, and his whole plan of battle hinging on a first success there, he had placed between Puntowitz and Girzikowitz (2000 yards) the corps of Soult, and backed it by Bernadotte's. centre,

From Girzikowitz to the Olmutz road, 2000 yards, where the part played was to be at first defensive, Lannes's corps was placed by divisions, each on two lines, by brigades, one deployed, and the other in quarter-distance column of battalions at deploying intervals. The hill called the Santon, which covered the left, was fortified, armed with 18 heavy guns, and occupied by a light infantry regiment. In rear of Lannes was placed one division of the reserve (the Guard); the other was behind Girzikowitz, in such a position as to support either Soult or Lannes. left.

The divisional artillery of the left wing was in the intervals of brigades.

The cavalry of Lannes's corps was in advance of the left, between Bose-nitz and the Olmutz road. Distribution of artillery and cavalry.

The reserve cavalry, whose sphere of operation was to be the Olmutz road and the plain on each side of it, was drawn up behind Lannes's corps, all the cavalry divisions being formed by two lines of regiments in column of squadrons, and one division being in reserve. c

But the line of battle could scarcely be considered as developed till the centre had advanced in order of attack. The movement was begun at nine in the morning. Soult's divisions crossed the Goldbach and formed across the space in advance of a line drawn from Puntowitz to Girzikowitz. Each division had a brigade in first and a brigade in second line, and both lines were formed in columns of battalions by divisions of a fourth of a battalion, at half distance, and at deploying intervals—the regiments of light infantry, in skirmishing order, covering the advance, and being destined to join the first line at the moment of attack. Formation of the columns of attack,

The corresponding formation of British battalions would be either

double column of companies, or grand divisions, at company distance, with 4 battalions of light infantry as skirmishers.

of the sup-  
ports,

Bernadotte's corps, during Soult's advance, was drawn up in contiguous close columns of regiments (its divisions were of 3 regiments, each of 3 battalions).

and reserves.

As the direction of Soult's advance would cause a considerable interval between his corps and Lannes's, even though the latter should also advance, Bernadotte was not to follow Soult directly, but in such a way as ultimately to extend in a single line of 18 battalions in column, at deploying intervals, from behind Soult's centre to beyond Blasowitz, and the divisions of reserve, in contiguous columns of regiments, were to follow Bernadotte.

At eight o'clock Bagration threw his right forward towards Bosenitz. To meet the movement, Lannes advanced, making a movable pivot of his left, which approached Bosenitz, the space thence to the Santon being occupied by the corps-cavalry (12 squadrons). The movement was masked by Kellermann's 12 squadrons in front of the right division, as the advance of the Russians was by a line of Cossacks. Kellermann advanced in a line of regiments in column of squadrons.

Two Russian battalions had just entered Blasowitz when they were attacked by 4 battalions of the right of Lannes's corps, whose right flank was covered from Lichtenstein's cavalry by 18 squadrons of the reserve. At the same moment a battalion detached from Soult's left turned the village, which was taken, and a battalion captured in it.

The 18 squadrons were moved forward to cover Soult's left pending the extension of Bernadotte's corps.

This hour, then—nine o'clock, when both armies, moving offensively, were ready for the shock—is the proper time at which to review the lines of battle.

Proportion of  
troops to  
ground at the  
commence-  
ment of the  
battle.

From the chateau of Sokolnitz to Tellnitz, 3000 yards, only 8000 infantry and 2600 cavalry, with 24 guns, were destined to oppose the advance of 30,000 infantry and cavalry, with thrice or four times the number of guns. But the duty of the French troops here was strictly that of a *retarding force*. They were to delay the heads of the columns, to cause them to deploy, to retreat before they were themselves fatally compromised, and to assume new positions, always leaning on the centre,

to which they were linked by the brigade before Kobelnitz. The battle in this quarter was altogether a struggle for the defiles, in which only the heads of the enemy's columns were brought to bear, and a small opposing force, therefore, fulfilled its object. The nature of the ground between Kobelnitz and Sokolnitz would prevent the enemy, however successful he might be on the French right, from falling on Soult's flank. It was one of those cases, already discussed, where an obstacle separates the columns of attack, but not the opposing troops, since the French remained connected by the defile of Kobelnitz. During the action Davout brought up his second division, directing one brigade to the south, the other to the north, of Sokolnitz, thus connecting the parts of his first division and enveloping the heads of the Allied columns. The division of cavalry had preceded the infantry.

On the left the ground was open ; the enemy could bring his force to bear, and his success there would be disastrous to the French ; therefore the ground was carefully occupied. The space from the Santon to Girzikowitz is 2000 yards. It was occupied by 11,000 infantry, 24 guns, and 12 squadrons (about 1300 horse).

11,000 infantry, 3 deep, in two lines, occupy . . . . .	1050 yards.
12 squadrons, in two lines 2 deep, at deploying distance,	375 „
24 guns, . . . . .	450 „
	<hr/>
	1875 „

leaving only 125 yards unoccupied, under the guns of the Santon, even if the first and second lines were exactly of the same strength. The force, then, was perfectly suited to the space.

From Blasowitz to Pratzén is 3000 yards. In the proportions of the left, it would have been sufficiently occupied by 17,000 infantry, 2000 cavalry, and 36 guns ; but into this space were sent 32,000 infantry, with more than 2000 cavalry (18 squadrons and the cavalry of the Guard) and 84 guns. As they pushed on, in the progress of the battle, these troops extended more and more, always resting their right on Kobelnitz, till the two corps of Soult and Bernadotte formed but a single angular line, with the corps of reserve still massed in their rear, and the 84 guns of the three corps placed in great batteries, on commanding ground, in intervals of the line.



Allied forces. There is great difficulty in estimating the Allied forces at Austerlitz—probably there always will be in the case of a defeated army, unless it wants to prove its decided inferiority; but it seems to be admitted that the three columns of the left wing numbered 30,000, and that the centre or fourth column was under 15,000. There remain to be accounted for the corps of Bagration, the cavalry of Lichtenstein, and the Russian Guard. These number together 22 battalions and 140 squadrons, 15 of which were Cossacks, out of a total of 115 battalions and 172 squadrons.

The fourth column was composed of 27 battalions—12 Russian, 15 Austrian. The first column, of 30 Russian battalions, 32 Austrian and Cossack squadrons, was not more than 15,000 strong, admitting it to be double the strength of the second or third. It will be a liberal estimate, then, to assume 550 as the strength of the battalions, and from 80 to 90 as the strength of the squadrons, which would give 12,000 infantry and 12,000 cavalry for the right wing, and the total force about 70,000, of which 14,000 or 15,000 were cavalry; in fact, as nearly as possible equal to the French force, counting the Cossacks, who, however, were inferior to the other squadrons in line of battle; but the Allied artillery was much the more numerous.

Formation of  
the Allied  
left.

The night before the battle, the first column under Doctoroff, 15,000, bivouacked between Augezd and Klein-Hostieradek, on the road to Tellnitz.

The second column, 7500 infantry (according to a Russian writer), under Langeron, was on the road Austerlitz-Sokolnitz, and was to pass the Goldbach between Sokolnitz and Tellnitz.

The third, under Prybyzewski, 7500 infantry, was on the road Austerlitz-Pratzen, and was to pass at the chateau of Sokolnitz.

These three columns formed the left wing. They appear to have marched through the deep hollow paths leading to the Goldbach on a front of subdivisions—say 20 men in a rank, or 60 in a subdivision. At full distance the cavalry would extend over 1400 yards of the road, the infantry over at least 2500 yards, the artillery at least a mile; so that if Doctoroff marched by one road, as appears on the plans, his column stretched three miles and a half. The second and third columns, with their artillery, would each stretch nearly two miles.

The fourth column was in rear of the third on the road Austerlitz-Pratzen, and the Russian Guard behind it on the same road.

Bagration's corps was between Kruh and Kowalowitz across the great road.

Next day, at dawn of a December morning, the left and centre resumed their march. Doctoroff, Langeron, and Prybyzewski were to pass at Tellnitz, Sokolnitz, and the Chateau, and to turn northward on Turas and Maxdorf; the fourth column (Kollowrath's) was to advance on Kobelnitz, pass there, and form line with the others.

The great mass of the cavalry had followed Doctoroff; but to fill the gap which the march would leave between Bagration's left at Kruh and the centre at Pratzen, this cavalry, Lichtenstein's, was ordered now to march and take position between Kruh and Blasowitz. One of the incidents which generals should always guard against by their previsions now occurred; for the cavalry crossed the path of the second and third columns, forcing them to halt, and was then stopped itself by the march of the centre.

Doctoroff was separated from Langeron by about a mile, Langeron from Prybyzewski by about 1500 yards. There was no communication between them. And when the left wing should have fulfilled its purpose by crossing the Goldbach, the distance from Sokolnitz to Blasowitz, 7000 yards, would be occupied only by the central column of 15,000 infantry.

To support Lichtenstein, the ten battalions of the Russian Imperial Guard echeloned themselves in his rear on two lines, with the cavalry of the Guard on their flanks and in rear. Formation of  
the Allied  
right,

Bagration, placing three battalions in the villages of Kruh and Holubitz, and extending his Cossacks in front, formed his other nine battalions in two lines. He had to fill a space of about 2000 yards. His force would give only 900 men for the front rank, who would fill only 525 yards. He therefore placed five battalions in first line, and his cavalry in rear extended beyond the right wing of the infantry. His 18 guns would occupy 680 yards.

At the moment of collision, then, the Allies extended thus—

From Kowalowitz to Kruh,	. . .	2,000 yards.
„ Kruh to Blasowitz,	. . .	2,000 „
„ Blasowitz to Pratzen,	. . .	3,000 „
„ Pratzen to Sokolnitz,	. . .	4,000 „
„ Sokolnitz to Tellnitz,	. . .	2,000 „
		13,000 „

or seven miles ; and in the central *half* of that line, far too extensive as it was for their numbers, they had not *a third* of their troops.

and centre.

When Soult attacked the plateau, Kollowrath's column, holding Pratzen with its left and the hill of Stari Winibradi with its right, formed on two lines. Five battalions, being the rear of Langeron's column, hearing the conflict, marched to the plateau, and, extending on Kollowrath's left, were opposed by the French brigade (Levasseur's) advancing from before Kobelnitz. Lichtenstein sent ten squadrons to Bagration to maintain communications between them, and two battalions of the Guard occupied Blasowitz.

Proportions between different parts of the opposing lines.

On the left we see 11,000 French containing 28,000 Austro-Russians, who with varying fortune continued to advance.

On the centre, 17,000 Allied infantry are opposed by the three corps of Soult, Bernadotte, the Guard, and Levasseur's brigade of Davout's corps, 34,000.

On the other wing, the Allies oppose about 8000 infantry and 11,000 cavalry to 11,000 infantry and 11,000 cavalry.

In the next stage of the battle, the Allied centre being driven back, the Russian Guard comes into the space between it and Lichtenstein ; and on the French side, Bernadotte extends in first line, while the Guard and grenadiers in column form second line to him and to Soult ; and the superiority of numbers on the centre and wing tells more than ever.

Finally the victorious centre (Soult and the reserve) falls upon columns one, two, and three in flank, while Davout attacks their front, and they are forced into and beyond the lakes.

Employment of the artillery on both sides.

Though the Allied artillery is said to have been very numerous (Jomini places it at 330 guns), not more than 200 can be accounted for in the action.

Bagration brought 20 to 24 to bear on Lannes, who could reply with 36 (24 of the infantry, 12 of the cavalry).

Lichtenstein placed 40 guns in battery, opposed by 39—viz., 15 guns of the reserve cavalry and 24 of Bernadotte. Altogether, in this quarter, 75 against 60 to 64.

The Russian Guard appears to have brought only 4 guns into action (though its artillery force may be placed at from 24 to 30), opposed by 12 of the Guard in action.

The fourth column (Kollowrath) placed 18 guns in battery, opposed by 24 of Soult.

FORMATION OF THE LINES  
OF BATTLE AT AUSTERLITZ.

PLAN 15.

Deployed Battalions    Battalions    Cavalry  
French    —    ■    □

Miss

R e g i o n

H i l l







The first, second, and third columns seem each to have brought 12 guns into action, opposed finally by 24 of the infantry of Davout, 6 of the cavalry, and 6 of the reserve artillery.

Finally, at the close of the battle, Doctoroff assembled, from the wrecks of the three columns, 50 guns, opposed by 24 of Soult, 36 of the reserve, Davout's 24, and 6 of the cavalry.

It appears, then, that the Allies never brought their superiority in guns to bear in any part of the field, and that a great proportion of them were following the left wing for the anticipated battle beyond the Goldbach, or placed in reserve behind the centre; and that most of those belonging properly to the columns of the left wing were, from their position in rear of the infantry, only available after those columns were attacked in flank by the French centre.

Besides the want of connection, and consequently of co-operation, throughout the Allied line, and the numerous flanks exposed by its intervals, the cavalry formed of itself a large portion of the line of battle, and the small reserve was also brought into first line to close the gap between Lichtenstein and the centre. Thus there was no general reserve, whereas on the French side the grand reserve was almost untouched at the close of the action; for so well had the different arms supported each other that a reverse sustained by any was immediately remedied by the co-operation of the rest, and the centre was brought to bear upon successive portions of the enemy which, together, would have outnumbered it.

## FORMATION OF THE LINES OF BATTLE AT WATERLOO.

Plan 16.

From the Nivelles road to the lane which runs between Verd-Cocou and the farm of La Haye, the British position is defined by a ridge, which on the British right ends abruptly in a ravine, but on the left loses itself in a plateau. A gentle continuous slope descends from the front, and again rises to the opposing ridge occupied by the French.

Description of  
the field.

In front of the British right are the farm and grounds of Hougomont, the rear boundary of which is 200 yards from the British line. La Haye Sainte is 300 yards in front of the centre.

On the right of the Nivelles road the ground is broken: the hollow

road thence to Braine l'Alleud was occupied by skirmishers having supports in rear.

On the left, where the English ridge, spreading outwards, joins that occupied by the French, are several defensible points—Papelotte, La Haye, and Smohain—from 600 to 800 yards from the line.

The hollow road occupied by skirmishers, the enclosure of Hougomont, the farm of La Haye Sainte, and the points Papelotte, La Haye, Smohain, are the outposts.

The line of battle extends from the Nivelles road immediately behind Hougomont on the right, to the extremity of the plan, towards Wavre, on the left, and is coincident with the cross-road from Wavre which traverses that space. Following the line, from the extreme left, to the right of the outposts covering the right, the distance is 3 miles.

Wellington had 50,000 infantry, 12,400 cavalry, and 156 guns.

Occupation of  
the outposts.

The entire enclosure of Hougomont is about 500 yards square, the buildings, garden, and wall being the strongest part for defence. The post was occupied at first by 1200 men.

La Haye, the enclosure of which has a front of only 80 yards, was occupied by between 300 and 400 men.

In the buildings in front of the left, Papelotte, &c., and in support, were placed 3200 infantry.

In the hollow lane from Hougomont to the extreme right, and in support, 1200 infantry.

The outposts were thus occupied by 6000 infantry.

Wellington's reserves were posted entirely behind the right and centre; and about 13,000 infantry were assembled there.

British line.

Therefore about 31,000 remained for the line of battle, which, from the Verd-Cocou lane to the Nivelles road (a space occupied entirely by infantry) is about 2 miles, or 3500 yards; and as there were 20 battalions in each line, the front line would be 15,500 strong, of which 13,000, being British or Anglo-German troops, would be formed 2 deep, and the Dutch battalions 3 deep. The light companies sent out in front as advanced posts and sentries would reduce the force by one-eighth—which would then require 3700 yards, not counting intervals between the battalions. Therefore the first line must have been intended, either in whole or in part, to stand on a deeper formation than that of two ranks; and in fact we find the right wing forming 4-deep in the battle.

On the left, where the ground was level and the flank exposed, two brigades of light cavalry, numbering 2500 sabres, one-fifth of the force, were placed. Of these, that on the left was deployed on two lines, one of 8 and one of 4 squadrons; the other was in a line of columns of regiments by squadrons.

Distribution  
and formation  
of the cavalry.

Immediately in rear of the right, ready to operate along the Nivelles road, were two brigades, and two regiments of light horse, between one-third and one-fourth of the cavalry.

Behind the centre, on each side of the Charleroi road, were the two heavy brigades, about 2000 strong, or about one-sixth of the force.

Four brigades of cavalry, in all about 4000, were held in reserve.

Most of these brigades were formed in close column of regiments by squadrons, at deploying intervals: the brigades immediately supporting the infantry were from 100 to 200 yards in rear of the second line; the reserve cavalry about 450 yards in rear of that line.

Of the 140 guns present at the beginning of the battle (16 previously detached arrived during the action), 6 were with the cavalry brigade on the left; 50 others, in batteries of 4 or 6 each, were posted along the downward slope in front of the deployed battalions, or between the columns, but filling of themselves no lateral spaces in the general line: 12 were with the first reserve, posted in rear of the right; 38 with the brigades of cavalry in rear of the centre and right: and 34 in reserve—or, generally, a third in first line, a third immediately in support, and a third (counting the 16 that arrived subsequently) in reserve.

Distribution  
of the artil-  
lery.

Part of the first line, and the whole of the second, with all the brigades of cavalry except the two on the left, were screened from observation, and partly from fire, by the reverse slope of the ridge.

The centre of the French position at La Belle Alliance was 1400 yards from Wellington's centre on the highroad. Following the ridge, the wings approached nearer—the outposts almost touching on the right, and the French left being about 600 yards from the extreme right of the British, and the enemy in front of Hougomont being about 300 yards from its front boundary.

Like his adversary, Napoleon placed 31,000 men in two lines along the ridge. The corps on the right extended from the Charleroi road to a point opposite the English left; and the French being formed 3 deep, the interval was just sufficient for the deployment of 16,000 men in that

French line.



formation, with 6 yards between battalions and 50 yards between divisions. The space between the lines was 60 yards.

From La Belle Alliance to the Nivelles road the corps on the left, 15,000, was drawn up in precisely similar formation.

On the left of the Charleroi road, 100 yards behind the centre, were two divisions, together 5000 strong, drawn up in mass of battalions, on a front of grand divisions (2 companies).

Half a mile in rear of the general line, the infantry of the Guard, 11,000 strong, was drawn up—24 battalions being disposed in column on a front of 2 regiments (4 battalions), the 6 lines of the column being at 20 yards' distance from each other.

Distribution  
and formation  
of the cavalry.

On the flanks of the line two brigades of cavalry were drawn up—that on the right, 11 squadrons, 1400 men, having 3 squadrons in front line, 3 in second, and 5 in the third. That on the left, 15 squadrons, 1730 sabres, having 4 squadrons in first line, 4 in second, 7 in the third.

The French squadrons averaged 110 sabres—those of Wellington's force, from 75 to 100.

Two hundred yards in rear of the second line of French infantry, 2 corps of cavalry were placed, one behind the centre of each wing; 24 squadrons on the right, under Milhaud, 24 on the left, under Kellermann. These corps were deployed on two lines, 60 yards apart.

Two hundred yards in rear of these were placed the two cavalry divisions of the guard, also deployed on two lines; that on the right numbering 19 squadrons, that on the left 13.

Alongside the infantry divisions which were behind the centre, and on the other side of the highroad, two cavalry divisions, one of 9, the other of 12 squadrons, were drawn up, each division in mass of regiments on a front of a squadron.

Distribution  
of the artil-  
lery.

Napoleon brought 246 guns to the field. Of these, 84 were in the front line; 36 with the cavalry, in rear of the wings and centre; 30 with the infantry, in rear of the centre; and 96 in reserve, with the infantry and cavalry of the Guard. Each corps of infantry and each division of cavalry had a horse-battery of 6 guns attached—therefore, of the total number, 90 guns were of the horse-artillery. Except the batteries with the cavalry on the flanks, the guns were not in extension of the line, but down the slope in front of the infantry.

It is evident, then, that Wellington's dispositions were made with special regard to the defence of his right—not only because of his rooted expectation of an attack on that side to sever him from Ostende, but also because he expected his left to be strengthened by the arrival of the Prussians from Wavre.

Napoleon, by the massing of his infantry in rear of the Charleroi road, and the disposition of his cavalry, holds his forces disposable for the attack of the centre and *either* wing.

His object being to sever Wellington from Blucher, *the centre and left* of the British were the points he designed mainly to attack; but, with the strong post of Hougomont so close to his left, it would be manifestly unsafe to cast his weight immediately on the other side of the field; therefore the battle commenced with an attempt to gain that important post. But, first, the inspection of the line by Napoleon being completed, the infantry, which had been deployed, in order to produce an effect on part of the Allied troops, formed columns of battalions; Kellermann's guns reinforced the front line, where 50 pieces now opened on Hougomont and the British right, and 18 guns from Wellington's right reserve came into front line.

Choice of points of attack.

For the attack of the Allied left wing the 46 guns of the French right wing were reinforced by 16 from the centre and left, and 12 from the cavalry in rear, and placed on a rising ground between the hostile wings, 600 or 700 yards in advance of the line. The 4 divisions of the French right wing formed at first but 4 columns, on a front of battalions; afterwards, the right column was divided in two for the attack of Papelotte. A division of cavalry was brought from Kellermann's corps to support the attack, advancing along their left of the Charleroi road.

Dispositions for attack and defence.

The Dutch-Belgian troops, in first line of the British left wing, having retreated before the 2 left columns of attack, the British troops, from the Charleroi road leftwards, formed a 2-deep line, and the English heavy cavalry were brought to the front, and a brigade from the reserve. One brigade attacked the French cavalry, the other the flanks of the columns; and this other was met in turn by the light cavalry on the right of the French line, and these, again, by the 2 brigades on the British left. A brigade of infantry was brought into second line on the British left from the reserve.

The French right having been not only defeated but disabled in the repulse of its attack, Napoleon, while still continuing to assail Hougomont, directed his next blow against the centre. But, meanwhile, the heads of Blucher's columns appearing from Wavre, the whole force of infantry and cavalry immediately behind the French centre, and in front of the Guard, was directed to the right to oppose the coming foe.

The squadrons on the left of the French line confined themselves to demonstrations of an advance. Nearly the whole of the infantry of the left wing assailed Hougomont, penetrating the outer enclosures, and extending along the eastern boundary. The two battalions on the right of the British front line were thrown into the post, and Brunswick battalions from the reserve were brought to fill their place.

Two columns from the left of the French right wing advanced upon La Haye Sainte.

Into the large space between the Charleroi road and Hougomont, laid open by the forward movements of the French wings from their inner extremities, the whole of the cavalry in rear of the right wing, 43 squadrons, now advanced. The battalions of Wellington's right wing formed square to receive them. Their repeated onsets failed to break the infantry, and numerous encounters took place between the French and Allied cavalry in the intervals of the squares.

The whole of the cavalry in rear of the French left wing was added to that of the right, 80 squadrons in all, for a renewal of the attack. All these efforts were preceded by a concentrated fire of the French artillery on Wellington's right. The cavalry was again repulsed.

Two British batteries from the reserve were brought into front line on the right wing, and two brigades of infantry were brought from the reserve of the right into front line, extending from the rear boundary of Hougomont to the crest of the position. When these troops deployed for action they formed four deep. By this change of the line of battle its right now rested on Hougomont, and formed an enclosing angle with the general front.

Final order of  
battle of the  
French.

In the final grand attack, the French line had assumed the following aspect:—

The cavalry on the left still merely threatened to advance, as a diversion.

FORMATION OF THE LINES  
OF BATTLE AT WATERLOO.







The left wing, attacking Hougomont with its left and centre, threw forward the columns of its right beyond the eastern boundary.

The French right wing threw forward its left column against La Haye Sainte, and captured the post. From thence its battalions, in columns, extended backwards to the original crest of the position; those on the right fronting towards the outposts on the Allied left, and joining the left of the French troops sent to oppose the advance of Blucher between Smohain and Planchenoit.

Into the interval between La Haye Sainte and Hougomont the remaining battalions of the Imperial Guard, 11 in number (the rest had been sent to aid the force opposing Blucher on the right), now advanced. Two of these were left on the crest of the position as a last reserve: nine formed two columns, one of 4 and one of 5 battalions, drawn up in rear of each other on a front of a battalion. Preceded by numerous skirmishers, and by a fire of artillery, these last reserves advanced upon the British right wing between Hougomont and the Charleroi road. When they reached the crest of the British position they formed the apex of the French line, which thus presented the general formation of an army echeloned on its centre.

The British cavalry brigades on the left were brought along the rear of the second line to the rear of the centre of the right wing; and when the Guard was repulsed, they supported the advance of the British right, which, joined with the *direction* of the Prussian attack, decided the battle.

## FORMATION OF THE LINES OF BATTLE AT SOLFERINO.

Plan 17.

The Austrian columns from the Mincio halted the night before the battle thus:—

On the right the 8th corps was about Pozzolengo.

Front of the  
Austrians.

The 5th at Solferino, with two brigades between Solferino and Pozzolengo.

The 1st about Cavriana.

The 7th on the Ferri road, the head of the column at Foresto.

The 3d between Guidizzolo and Ferri.

The 9th between Rebecco and Castel Grimaldo, with an advanced-guard in Medole.

The 11th in rear of the 9th, on the Goito road.

All, except the 5th and 8th, much scattered, with only the heads of columns ready for action, and with a vast quantity of artillery in the rear.

Front of the  
Allies.

On the Allied left, 4 divisions of the Sardinian army were moving on Pozzolengo—one by Madonna della Scoperta, two from Desenzano, behind which one followed in reserve.

Next, on the left of the French, marched the 1st corps (Baraguay d'Hilliers's) on Solferino by the two roads on the edge of the hill district, one division on the left, two on the right.

The 2d corps, MacMahon, moved in one column down the Goito road. The country being open and the road good, his infantry probably marched on a front of companies, his cavalry on a front of one-fourth of a squadron—say 14 to 16 files.

On MacMahon's right, the 4th corps, Niel, moved on the Medole road.

Thrown back considerably on Niel's right was the 3d corps, Canrobert, west of Castel Goffredo.

The Imperial Guard followed MacMahon at an interval of several miles.

The cavalry divisions of the 1st and 3d corps followed Niel.

Organisation  
of the French,

Of the 5 corps of the French army, the 2d and the Imperial Guard were each of 2 divisions, the others of 3 divisions. The divisions were of 2 brigades of 6 and 7 battalions, one battalion being of light infantry. The battalions, originally 800 strong, averaged, at the time of the battle, 550 to 600 men.

The cavalry divisions were of 2 brigades each of 8 squadrons. The squadrons averaged 123 men.

To some corps a division of cavalry was attached, to others a brigade, and each division of cavalry and of infantry was accompanied by 2 batteries (6 guns each).

Each corps had a reserve of 4 batteries; but there was no general reserve of any arm except the Imperial Guard.

Sardinians,

The Sardinians were in 5 divisions, of which 4 were present in the battle.

The divisions were each of 2 brigades. A brigade was 9 battalions, of

about 550 men to a battalion. The strength of a division was about 10,000 infantry, 4 squadrons at 100 per squadron, and 18 guns. There was no special reserve of any arm.

The proportions of the different arms of the Allied forces in the battle was 124,500 infantry, 10,700 cavalry, and 300 guns.

The Austrian corps were assembled in two armies, one of 4 and one of 3 corps. All the corps were of 5 brigades except the 7th, which was of 4. The brigades were of 5 battalions, each battalion 850 strong. Each corps consisted of about 22,000 infantry, 1300 to 1700 cavalry, and 72 guns in batteries of 8 guns each, 1 battery being attached to each brigade, and 4 in reserve to each corps. Austrians.

The squadrons were of various strength. The proportions of the different arms were 146,000 infantry, 15,000 cavalry, and 688 guns available, though many squadrons and nearly half the guns remained unemployed in the action.

The field of Solferino is very easily described. A line passes diagonally across it; looking westward, all on the right of that line is a hill country, all on the left is level plain. The hills, not lofty, are abrupt and steep, and their multitude gives to this district somewhat the aspect of a green billowy sea. The plain, extending to the Po, is an almost unbroken level, and the only obstacles to the movements of troops are the villages, groves, and vineyards which spot the expanse. Just before the hills subside in the plain, they shoot up to their highest pinnacle at Solferino. The sides of this eminence, approaching it from the north or the east, are almost precipices; westward, it extends in long ridges towards Castiglione; and southward, it slopes by steep but gradual inclination to the plain. Across this hill, from the northern precipice to the southern slopes, stretches a defensible line; on the right a cemetery, then an old chateau, next a high mound crowned with a massive tower; and on the left, looking down on the plain of Medole, a hill of cypresses. The garrison, then, had their right resting on the steep descent towards the hill country; their front enclosed a deep hollow basin, in which lay a village, and bounded by the two ridges stretching westward from the hill; their left, thrown forward along the left ridge, was on the cypress hill; and so far all was well—the post was commanding; but behind were steep precipices, and only a single narrow path led down to the village of Description of  
the field.



Solferino in rear, and connected the defenders with the lower hills of San Cassiano and Cavriana. The hill of Solferino, therefore, was an *isolated* post, receiving small support from the rest of the line.

The heads of the Austrian columns were at Pozzolengo, Solferino, Cavriana, Foresto, Guidizzolo, and near Rebecco, on the Medole road. The line marking their front is therefore extremely salient towards Solferino; while the corps, instead of filling the intervening spaces of the line, are crowded behind each other on the centre and left of the Austrians, where, moreover, they stretched straggling backward to the Mincio.

Proportions  
of troops to  
space.

The distance from Solferino to the Medole road near Rebecco is 8000 yards; from Solferino to the ground taken by the right of the 8th corps, about the same distance. But in this right portion, the hill country, less than a third of the hostile forces were engaged. Benedek, commander of the 8th corps, had six brigades at his disposal, and between him and Solferino were two brigades of the 5th corps. The Sardinians, moving on Pozzolengo, sent one division by Madonna della Scoperta, two by Rivoltella, and the remaining division detached one brigade on each road. Benedek, meeting the larger force of 5 brigades with  $5\frac{1}{2}$  brigades, detached half a brigade as general reserve towards his left, where the contest was maintained by 3 Sardinian brigades against 2 Austrian.

Of the rest of the 5th corps, 2 brigades garrisoned the hill-post of Solferino, one extended from the hill towards Madonna della Scoperta.

The 1st corps, advancing to support the 5th after the battle began, extended in a kind of echelon from Solferino village to Cavriana.

The front of the 7th, moving up from Foresto, occupied the space between San Cassiano and Solferino village.

Thus, on a front of little more than 2000 yards, nearly 3 corps were assembled in rear of each other in the Austrian centre.

A space of about 3600 yards, extending from the north of the Goito road to the south of the Medole road, at the height of Rebecco (where the roads are 3200 yards apart), includes the fronts of 3 other corps—the 3d, 9th, and 11th—the last of which, 6 miles off, arrived late in the action.

The two leading divisions of the 1st French corps, extending inwards from the two paths, attacked the post of Solferino.

MacMahon, seeing this conflict on his left on the hills, while far in the plain on his right the head of Niel's column, driving the Austrian outposts from Medole, was advancing on Rebecco, paused in his march down the road; for, before him, the brigades of the 1st and 7th Austrian corps were crowning the low hills from San Cassiano to Cavriana, and extending into the plain.

To fill the gap between Solferino and Rebecco, into which the enemy, if unopposed, would presently penetrate, MacMahon drew 3 of the 4 brigades composing his corps across the road—one on the right of it towards Niel, two on the left towards the hills—keeping the remaining brigade in column on the road ready to move to either side. But as his front extended only 2000 yards, large intervals were left on both flanks, especially the right. The cavalry divisions of the 1st and 3d corps were therefore formed in this larger interval, while most of the squadrons properly belonging to the 2d corps covered its left.

The remaining division of the 1st corps was directed also on Solferino; and, when the Imperial Guard came up, one of its divisions joined in the attack on the southern slopes, while the other supported it; and filled the interval on the side of the 2d corps. The heights looking on the post were everywhere occupied by the batteries of the 1st corps and the Guard, which ranged with effect from a distance in some cases of 2500 yards.

Thus, in the space of a mile, across the front and flank of the assailed post, where the two brigades forming the garrison were subsequently supported by a third, the French brought into action 36,000 infantry and about 100 guns, or three times the number necessary in ordinary circumstances for the occupation of the ground. The columns of attack seem to have been formed of battalions on a front of one-fourth of a battalion, equal to our grand divisions.

The 1st and 7th Austrian corps placed 30 guns in battery to disturb the deployment of MacMahon, who replied with 24 of his own divisions and 12 from the cavalry division, which, from their superiority of construction, disabled the opposing batteries, and also those with which it was attempted subsequently to supply their place.

When the post of Solferino was finally taken, MacMahon moved against the hills between Cassiano and Cavriana, with his corps entirely on the

left of the road he had marched on. For Niel, reinforced by one brigade, and afterwards by two others of Canrobert's corps, had deployed across a great part of the interval between the two roads that traverse the plain. That interval is about 4000 yards, of which Niel, on an irregular front, occupied less than 3000. As the 9th corps brought up troops to oppose him, both sides formed across the space. On the French right and centre of the 4th corps the hostile forces deployed their first lines, and the batteries of brigades and divisions were distributed along the fronts. But the Austrians assembling a large mass of artillery to sweep the space between Niel and MacMahon, Niel opposed them by 42 guns, taken from the brigade on his left, from his own reserve, from the cavalry, and from the 3d corps; and, to cover the left flank of this line of artillery, he placed a brigade there, thrown back in echelon of battalion-columns.

As MacMahon's advance widened the interval between him and Niel, the cavalry division of the Guard joined the others already posted there.

Niel, reinforced by Canrobert, drew all his infantry into a continuous line, on a convex front, and protected his main battery, which opposed that of the Austrians across the Goito road, by placing a division of cavalry on each flank.

Formations  
and combina-  
tions of the  
different  
arms.

The cavalry of the 3d Austrian corps, and Mensdorff's division, had been at first placed in rear of the right of the infantry opposing Niel, but was subsequently brought up on its right, opposite the French divisions. The regiment of the 3d corps was deployed in single line. Half a mile in its rear was Mensdorff's division; each brigade deployed with two regiments of each in echelon behind its flanks. These two bodies, 4500 strong, are all the cavalry accounted for on the Austrian side in the battle.

One of the French divisions had two regiments deployed with a squadron in echelon on each flank, and one regiment in second line.

Another had two regiments in first line, one in second—one being detached in rear of the infantry.

The cavalry division of the Guard covering MacMahon's right was formed in echelon of brigades, each brigade in mass of regiments by squadrons, at deploying intervals.

FORMATION OF THE LINES  
OF BATTLE AT SOLFERINO.

PLAN 17.







The Austrian infantry formations were mostly of two lines, the first deployed, the second in column of battalions. Though, from their straggling march, and want of concert, they formed in the action a front very inadequate to their aggregate numbers, yet they brought throughout a very superior force of infantry to bear on Niel. But he was strengthened by the great mass of cavalry assembled on his left (the three divisions and the brigade of the 2d corps opposed together 8000 sabres to the Austrian 4500), and by the superiority of the rifled guns, which the Austrian artillery could not contend with. He used the first brigades sent him by Canrobert to cover his right, throwing the front back on the extremity of the line; and that which subsequently arrived was moved in columns of attack through the centre of his own corps. When he found his infantry overmatched by the superior fire of the enemy, he frequently sent columns of attack against them through the intervals of his first line.

The French battalions seem to have been in three grand divisions each; our corresponding organisation would be six companies to a battalion; and the battalion columns were six ranks deep. The brigades, in attacking Solferino, were in contiguous columns of regiments, on a front of grand divisions; and, as a regiment is sometimes of two, sometimes of three battalions, the columns were 12 to 18 ranks deep, and on a front equal in extent to a battalion.

The Austrian battalions in column stood each 4 divisions or 8 ranks deep.

From these examples it will be seen that in ordinary circumstances the formation in two continuous lines prevails—the exceptions being, 1st, refused portions of the line, where the formation may neither be continuous nor on two lines throughout; and, 2dly, portions of the line reinforced for a special purpose, generally for attack. Deductions.

That columns are the only formation for the advance and the attack, with the single exception of troops in line, which, having awaited the attack and compelled the hostile columns to pause, charge, in their existing formation, over the short interval that separates the bodies.

That of the various kinds of columns for attack, battalion-columns have been most resorted to and most successful.

That general attacks of either cavalry or infantry should be supported by the other arm, and preceded by a concentrated fire of artillery.

That cavalry is not uniformly stationed on the flanks of the line of battle, especially when a flank is otherwise supported (as at Austerlitz); but that it should uniformly cover the flank of an attacking force which, by advancing, is separated from the rest of the line; and that, when the attack assumes the salient form, a force of cavalry should be stationed near the angle, so as to fill the gap and operate on the flanks, when the faces open outwards; and that, for these purposes, the place for great reserves of cavalry is near the centre.

That artillery does not always occupy spaces in the general line—the exception being when the downward slope allows it to be posted in front of the infantry without giving double effect to the enemy's projectiles.

That the proper use of reserves is not to keep them in hand till the last moment, but to consider them as a *disposable* force, ready to support any point, or aid the enterprises of any part of the line, at any period of the battle. Nevertheless it is well always to keep a part of them fresh to the last; thus, at the close of the battle of Austerlitz, Napoleon had still untouched battalions ready for any effort; and the two battalions of the Guard which did not join in the last attack at Waterloo alone withstood the general wreck, and, in any degree, covered the retreat. The worst use, however, that can be made of reserves is to fritter them away by repairing gaps and losses throughout the line: they should act as much as possible in masses.

That, when divisions act together, they do not form the one the second line to the other; but that each division forms its own first and second line with its own brigades, while the brigades sometimes form partly in each line by regiments. The reason of this is, first, that the jealousies of rival commanders of divisions might lead one sometimes to withhold support from another; secondly, that a general's task is much simplified, and he has much better hold of his troops, if his command extends *in depth* rather than *in breadth*.

## CHAPTER IV.

## OF ORDERS OF BATTLE.

IN the preceding chapters two methods have been discussed of gaining a relative advantage over an equal enemy on a field of battle: first, by occupying favourable ground, such as will obstruct the enemy only; secondly, by so combining the different arms, and so adapting them to the configuration of the field, as to obtain from all their full and concerted effect. An army that has secured one or both of these conditions can scarcely fail to beat an enemy of the same force and quality, which possesses neither.

Two kinds of tactical advantage defined.

But it was also pointed out that the turning of a flank or breaking of a line may be an important step to victory, by producing new relations between the hostile lines; and the methods of accomplishing this have been already discussed and exemplified—namely, manœuvres for turning the enemy, as at Prague, or measures for assembling a preponderating force on some point of the line, as at Austerlitz. But in all cases, to render such conditions of avail, the remainder of the army must be so disposed as to follow up the first successful attacks by advancing to support the troops that have made them, and to prevent the enemy from executing new plans of battle.

Offensive movements must be supported,

When an army whose front is coextensive and parallel with that of its adversary moves altogether to a flank for the purpose of turning the hostile line, the conditions produced are reciprocal,—the outflanker is equally outflanked, and no advantage is gained. This might be illustrated by two *equal* lines placed thus—

and the remainder of the line refused or protected.



And again, if one of these armies were to reinforce one part of the line at the expense of the rest, it would be exposing other parts of the line to the attack of superior forces, and the result might be merely a partial success on each side, leaving the result still undecided.

Therefore a general who meditates a blow of either kind at his enemy must secure from counter-attack the part of the army with which the blow is not to be made, either by withdrawing it out of reach, or protecting it by obstacles.

Hence, in an attempt to turn or break through the flank of an enemy with one wing, it is essential to refuse the other. And again, in reinforcing part of the line, it is necessary to prevent the rest of it, comparatively weakened for the purpose, from engaging at a disadvantage. Dispositions must be made accordingly for the reinforcement and advance of some parts, and the protection or withdrawal of others. Hence result *Orders of Battle*—that is, *certain relations existing between the hostile lines before or during the encounter*.

Hence results a third kind of tactical advantage.

Besides the two methods already mentioned of engaging the enemy with advantage, there is, then, a third—namely, the *Order of Battle*—which will be well or ill chosen in proportion as it is adapted, according to existing circumstances, to produce such relations between the hostile lines as will ultimately place a sufficient part of one of them *in battle array* across the extremity of part of the other. And although some authors have enumerated and described a great variety of Orders of Battle, yet these, stripped of pedantic and fanciful distinctions, resolve themselves into the few which it is the object of this Chapter to discuss.

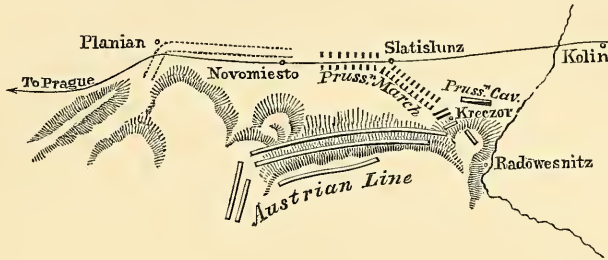
#### OBLIQUE ORDERS.

An army may attack its enemy in front or flank. If it aims at a flank—say the right—its own right must be refused. Hence, when it arrives on the extremity of the enemy's line, the army will be in oblique order. And as the head of the column will meet the first shock, and as the success of the whole movement depends on its progress, it should be strongly reinforced. This is more especially necessary when the assailed flank of the enemy rests on some impassable obstacle, and must therefore be broken through rather than turned.

How the oblique order is produced.

And it is also essential that the refused wing should continue refused for a certain time after the commencement of the attack ; the disastrous consequences of neglecting this are exemplified in the battle of Kolin.

Necessity of preserving the obliquity.



On the 18th June 1757, the Prussians, 34,000 strong, were marching eastward from Planian to Kolin. On their right, on a high ridge, scarcely a hill, was ranged the Austrian army, 60,000, in two lines and a reserve, —their right in a wood, beyond which was a ravine ; their front in villages ; their left covered by swampy ground. The King, regarding them from a point between Planian and Kolin, judged the left unassailable, the front dangerously strong ; but considered that by attacking in oblique order their right flank, near the wood, he could break in there and roll up their line.

Battle of Kolin.

Zieten, with the greater part of the cavalry, was to march first. Next General Hulsen was to lead 7 battalions at the head of the left wing ; and these bodies of cavalry and infantry we may call the advanced-guard. The army followed in two columns—one on the road, the other on the left of the road.

Diverging from the road at Slatislunz, the advanced-guard was to form, and attack the village of Kreczor, and occupy the wood beyond, thus establishing itself on the Austrian right flank. During this attack, the head of the left wing was to slant still more, so as to join Hulsen's right, if successful, beyond the village, or to support him if repulsed. The right wing, following in the footsteps of the left, was to remain refused until the oblique movement should bring it into collision with the enemy's line.

Prussians re-inforce the head of the attack,

and refuse the other wing.

Hulsen's attack succeeded ; but, pausing beyond Kreczor to re-form, he found that the left wing was not following him.

The attack succeeds, but

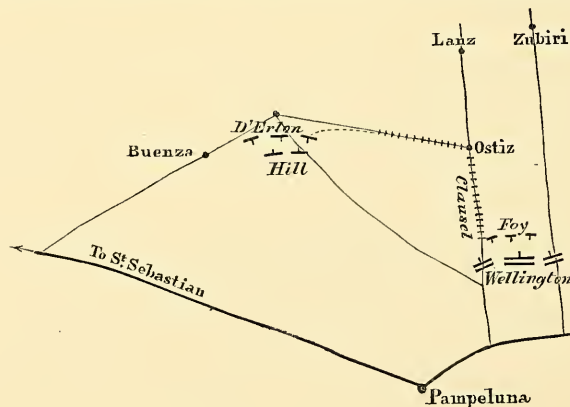
the refused  
wing engages  
the enemy.

The Croat skirmishers in front of the Austrian line annoyed the Prussians in their march. The 7th battalion, from the left of the Prussian left wing, formed line, without orders, to repel them. Seeing this, all the battalions of the left wing that followed it, and all the right wing, naturally conformed to the movement, for the left was the directing wing. Wheeling up, they formed line and attacked, and the oblique order disappeared.

The Prussians  
are defeated.

The 6 leading battalions of the left wing continued to advance, leaving a large interval, till, seeing the right wing engaging, they also formed and attacked. Thus the Prussian front was in three disconnected parts—the advanced-guard; the 6 battalions, supported by some from the second line; and the rest of the army; and, the whole being now committed, the execution of the original plan became impossible. The isolated central battalions were surrounded and compelled to surrender; the right wing, defeated, abandoned the field; the advanced-guard held its ground, and covered the retreat.

Again, in 1814, Wellington's army was engaged in covering the sieges of St Sebastian on the left, Pampeluna on the right. Soult, advancing against Pampeluna, forced the British right to concentrate before it.



The position was this:—The English right, drawn up before Pampeluna, was assailed by the corps of Reille and Clausel down the valleys of Lanz and Zubiri. In rear, down the valley of Lanz, followed D'Erlon's corps. At Buenza was Hill's division.

Foiled in his attack on the English right, Soult diverted D'Erlon's corps on the march from the Lanz valley by Ostiz upon Buena, turned Hill's left, forced him back, and threatened to cut him from St Sebastian.

Soult turns the British left,

At the same time Reille and Clausel were withdrawn from before Wellington to follow D'Erlon. A division under Foy was left to cover the movement.

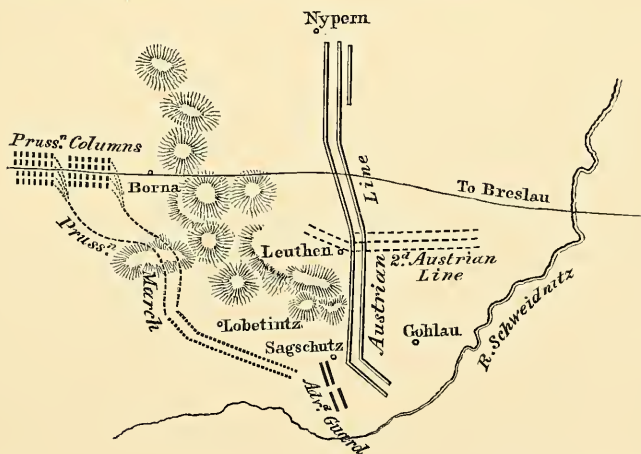
but leaves his own left exposed,

Wellington, with his whole right, fell on Foy, drove him apart, and, turning on Clausel and Reille, assailed their rear. Soult, weakened by the separation of Foy's division and losses in action, retired in disastrous confusion beyond the ridges of the Pyrenees.

and is defeated.

Soult had neglected to refuse his weakened wing. Foy's division should have been withdrawn beyond reach of a counter-stroke, rearguards only being left before Wellington, to conceal the movement and delay pursuit.

Therefore it may be assumed that *it is dangerous to turn an adversary with one wing, unless you refuse or protect the other.*



The most complete example of the successful application of the oblique order is to be found in the battle of Leuthen, in 1757, where 30,000 Prussians defeated 80,000 Austrians.

Battle of Leuthen.

The Austrians extended from Nypern, through Leuthen, to Sagschutz, where their left, thrown back, rested on a marshy, impassable stream.

Taking advantage of some low intervening hills, the King commenced



his march from Borna against their left from Sagschutz to the stream, in two lines formed in columns or oblique echelons of companies—a strong advanced-guard marching between the heads of the columns and the enemy's line.

Prussians preserve the oblique order,

Clearing Sagschutz, the advanced-guard formed, attacked, and broke the Austrian left. The army followed in support, the cavalry, penetrating through the gap, constantly turned the left and rear of the broken line, which at length formed anew from Leuthen at right angles to the rest. The right wing sending off reinforcements to the left, the new line stood in very deep formation.

The Prussians, not ceasing to press on, formed on a parallel front to the Austrian left, with their hitherto refused left extending beyond Leuthen.

till the moment arrives for engaging the refused wing.

The Austrians now sought with part of their right wing to extend their line west of Leuthen. Thereupon the Prussian left wing fell upon the flank of this new portion of the enemy's line. The Prussian right continued to attack the Austrian left.

Throughout, the Prussian guns were directed on the angle made by the retired Austrian left, enfilading both its faces.

Austrians defeated.

The turning of their right forced the Austrians to abandon Leuthen; and after some attempts to stand, they retreated in great confusion to Breslau.

Refused wing must not remain altogether out of action.

Although the rearmost wing must be refused in making an oblique attack, it by no means follows that it should not take part in the engagement; on the contrary, every portion of the army unemployed, and which does not neutralise part of the enemy, is a chance lost. It will enter into the action either when the progressive advance of the line brings it into contact with the enemy, or by wheeling up and attacking the troops with which the enemy may seek to reinforce and extend his new line. The one thing essential is, that it should remain refused till the progress of the rest of the army secures it from the counter-attack of superior forces.

Frederick, whose system did not include large disposable reserves, used to reinforce the head of his attack with his advanced-guard and part of the cavalry of the refused wing. His advance in two lines renders these actions perfect examples, in form as well as in fact, of the oblique order.

But modern armies need by no means adhere to the oblique form,

though adopting in spirit the oblique order. The head of the attack would be reinforced either from the reserve or the second line of the refused wing; the troops intended successively to support the attack would be formed in the manner most convenient for moving them to their destined places; the whole front would be masked with skirmishers and the fire of artillery; and a preponderating force of guns would be brought to bear on the assailed wing. Battalion columns in echelon—the head of the echelon reinforced and followed by strong reserves—the *outward* flank protected by powerful cavalry, with its accompanying horse-artillery, and the field-batteries assembled on the *inner* flank, so as to support the attack and to enfilade the probable new front of the enemy—would generally be a suitable formation for the part of the army beginning an attack upon the enemy's flank.

Spirit of the oblique order may exist without the form.

The error of the Allies at Austerlitz, and the Prussians at Kolin, sufficiently demonstrates the necessity for preserving the *continuity* of the line throughout the progress of an oblique attack. Not to preserve it, is to multiply the flanks (or weak points) of the line.

Continuity of the line essential.

#### OF THE COUNTER-ATTACK.

It has been shown that an army whose flank the enemy attempts to turn may, by operating on the chord, like Frederick's at Rossbach, anticipate the enemy moving on the arc, and secure all the advantages of the situation expected by its opponent, since it will be oblique to the opposing line, and will also outflank it.

Counter-stroke may be dealt at the attacking

But when the Allies at Austerlitz sought to turn Napoleon's right, far from moving across their path, he withdrew from it, and aimed his blow at the remainder of their line. And the results were more decisive than those either of Frederick's counter-stroke at Rossbach, or those of the manœuvre, so very similar in design, execution, and effect to the Prussian King's, executed by Wellington at Salamanca; for, after defeating the centre and right of the Allies, Napoleon enclosed and destroyed the wing with which they attempted the turning movement. Whereas, in intercepting the enemy's turning movement, though his defeat be imminent, yet, as he will be thrown back upon the line by which he advanced, scarcely any result is to be expected beyond that of cheaply gaining the

or refused wing.

The latter more decisive.

battle—a result greatly to be desired, of course, but not necessarily decisive of a campaign. In fact, we find Marmont's army, beaten at Salamanca, presently reassembling and opposing Wellington anew; for, though driven in disorder from the field, its broken troops made good their retreat.

Reasons for  
choosing.

By investigating these different cases, we shall find grounds for determining the circumstances which render the one or the other mode of delivering a counter-stroke desirable and judicious.

As we have seen, Napoleon's real line of retreat at Austerlitz was not menaced by the turning movement. But Frederick's retreat to the Saale, and Wellington's to Ciudad Rodrigo, were both cut off, should the enemy's manœuvre prevail. In both these latter cases, then, we find the generals resorting to that counter-manceuvre which brought them on a front covering the line of retreat.

Again, in the cases of Rossbach and Salamanca, the parts of the assailants' line not primarily engaged in the turning movement were in great degree *secured*—at Rossbach *by distance*, for had Frederick descended on the left (or rear) wing of the French, they would have had time, before he reached them, to form front to their left, and bring their forces to bear on him; at Salamanca *by position*, for Marmont's centre and right were so strongly posted as to render their defeat, before the left should have completed its turning movement, very doubtful. Therefore in both cases the victors took the right course. But at Austerlitz the Allies laid bare their centre to the entrance of overwhelming forces, and the result was doubly decisive.

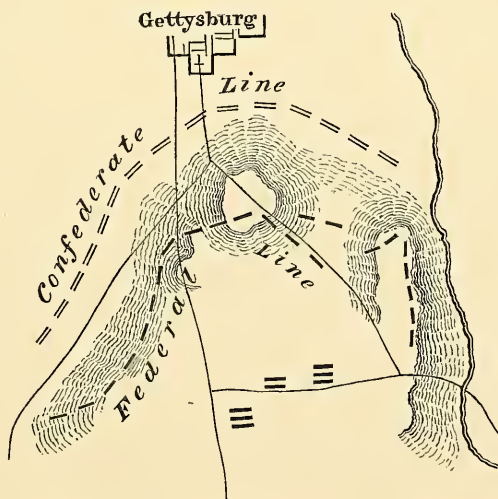
The attack of a wing, or of a centre and wing, is merely a variety of the oblique order, with the main attack made on a larger scale. Thus, for Napoleon's attack upon the British left at Waterloo, the right was reinforced with cavalry and guns, and the attacking connected with the refused wing by advancing the inner flank of the latter, and placing cavalry between them. The order echeloned on a wing is another variety.

#### ANGULAR ORDERS.

The salient  
order.

The disadvantages of forming the front of an army on a salient or outward angle have been already discussed at page 310.

Nevertheless there are cases where such an order may be resorted to without entailing the usual penalties. For instance, the wings may be strongly protected by obstacles, and the apex of the angle may be so placed as to deprive the cross-fire of the enemy's artillery of its full effect. The accompanying sketch of the Federal front at Gettysburg illustrates this. The left wing on the heights overlooks the plain along which the Confederates advanced; the right wing, also on high ground, is partly fortified, and covered by a stream. The apex of the line rests on the hill, which forms the highest and strongest part of the position, and which acted as a traverse or great mound protecting the wings from enfilade. If thus strengthened, this order of battle possesses the manifest advantage of enabling the reserve to reinforce any part of the line with the utmost facility—a circumstance which greatly aided the Federals at Gettysburg, where the corps of reserve was moved from wing to wing to meet the Confederate attacks.



In the cases supposed or adduced above, this order has been treated of *defensively*. But whenever an attack is made on a central part of a line, it is almost inevitable that the assailing force should assume the salient form; for it is no less necessary in this case than in the oblique attack to preserve the *continuity* of the line. The head of the attack must be con-

Attacks of necessity assume the salient form,



nected with the parts of the army kept for the moment out of action, and the flanks of the attacking troops must be protected ; hence the assailant's line, or part of it, forms a salient angle. As the assailant cannot, like the defender, choose his position, it is very unlikely that there will be any exceptional circumstances of ground, like those of Gettysburg, to neutralise the disadvantages of this order of battle. The reader may ask, therefore, why attacks necessarily taking this form are ever successful?

but without entailing the same disadvantages.

The answer is, 1st, that these attacks, being unforeseen, *are not met by a corresponding enclosing angle on the part of the defender*, which is the only decisively effectual counter-order—they are generally directed against a straight front ; 2d, this order is merely preliminary, for as soon as the head of the attack breaks the line, the faces form outwards against the broken extremities ; 3d, the attack is disguised by feints elsewhere, designed to weaken the resistance ; and, 4th, provision is made, by reinforcing the head of the attack, for insuring and following up its success ; supporting troops pour in at the gap, and the effect may be doubly as decisive as the turning of a flank. The sudden assumption of this order, for immediate attack, is, therefore, a very different thing from adopting it to await the enemy.

Employment of cavalry in the salient order.

It may be noted here, that masses of cavalry may operate with great effect from the apex of a salient order, for the objections against making them the central portions of a straight line of battle do not apply here, as immediately on issuing from the opening of the faces they find a wide field free for their advance, and form, in reality, the flanks of those faces, while the rapidity of their movement peculiarly fits them for filling an interval of the kind. Thus at Austerlitz the two divisions of Lannes's corps, as they advanced, pivoted each on its outer flank, the left division moving against Bagration, the right against Lichtenstein ; and through the widening interval between them (very dangerous if unprotected) advanced the numerous squadrons of Murat. Therefore cavalry (except on ground where it cannot act to advantage) should always support attacks on the enemy's front.

An attack of this kind is especially suitable when the enemy has weakened, by undue extension, part of his front.

Re-entering order.

The effect of an order of battle the reverse of the salient—namely, that which forms *a re-entering or enclosing angle*—is exemplified at Waterloo,

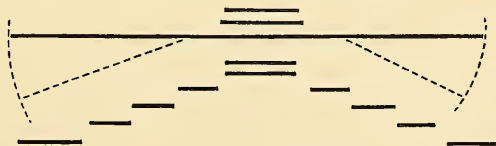
where the Prussians, by the direction of their advance, formed with the British line a front enclosing the front of the French. Not only do all the consequences already described ensue, but, while the guns from the enclosing line can scarcely take effect otherwise than transversely or in reverse—that is, with maximum effect—those of the salient front cannot attempt to fire otherwise than directly—that is, with minimum effect—except by immediately exposing themselves to enfilade. The troops forming the advanced face, or the angle of the salient, are shaken morally and physically by the attack which threatens their rear, and which in fact, if successful, cuts off their retreat. Nothing but darkness saved D'Erlon's wing from being enclosed between Blucher and Wellington.

Therefore, whenever it is possible to form front of battle which, while it encloses that of the enemy, preserves the continuity of the line, the chances are in favour not merely of a victory, but of a victory of the most decisive kind. At page 194 it is said that “if allied armies, operating from divergent bases, *can combine*, their operation will be more effective than if they had a common base.” In such a case tactical advantages supplement those of the strategical situation. Hence, too, is seen another advantage of a wide base—enabling an army to throw forward a wing which will still command a line of retreat.

It is with reference to the advantages of this order of battle that Jomini blames Ney, when approaching the field of Bautzen in a direction which would have brought him on the Allied flank, for diverging in order to form in prolongation of the French line.

The ill effects of placing cavalry in the centre of a line are at their maximum in this order of battle, where it could not advance without masking part of one or both faces of the infantry. Its fittest field of action will be on the extremities of wings.

The attack in order of battle, echeloned on the centre (sketch below)



—which is manifestly a variety of the salient order—will generally fail if deliberately attempted on a large scale, for, its object being obvious, it

will be provided for by reinforcing the threatened centre, and throwing forward the wings.

Convex order. *The Convex Order* is another variety of the salient; or rather it may be said that there is no such thing as the convex order, since an army would scarcely draw up on an arc, and that what is meant by the expression is, generally, an order echeloned on the centre, or some other angular form. And it may be asked why, being generally so disadvantageous, it is ever adopted? The answer is, that circumstances sometimes render it inevitable; after crossing a river, for instance, on an enemy's front, it is necessary to push a part of the army forward to cover the passage, and other bodies up and down the stream to prevent the first from being cut from the bridges. Hence a convex or salient front—such as Napoleon, in fact, assumed when, after passing the Danube, he occupied Essling and Aspern on his flanks, and pushed forward his centre, and when, the Austrians having formed so as to enclose his front, he experienced all the disadvantages of the formation. Again, a rearguard covering the retreat over a river or through a defile must often form in this way. The best remedy will be to post the angle of the salient strongly, or, if possible, fortify it with field-works, and in case of a river, the flanks may be protected by batteries on the further bank.

Concave order.

Similarly, *the Concave Order* is merely a variety of the enclosing angle, or rather it generally resolves itself into the order echeloned on both



wings. To await in such order an equal enemy formed on a straight front, would be to offer both flanks to his attacks. In assuming it, it would be indispensable, therefore, that the flanks were rendered perfectly secure by the nature of the ground. In such a case the position would be extremely difficult to assail, whether on the protected flanks or the retired centre. As an adversary would scarcely enter such a trap with his eyes open, the flanks might be connected directly by a thin line of troops forming an apparent or false front, and veiling the real centre while inviting the attack.

To attempt to *turn an enemy on both flanks*, refusing the centre, would

produce an order of this kind ; if attempted *with equal numbers*, it must break the continuity of the line, and could only be justified if the intervals or weak portions were rendered, by obstacles or fortifications, strong against counter-attack.

It would frequently be impossible to attack an enemy if he had sufficient warning of the design to prepare to oppose it. To advance 1200 or 1400 yards over a plain, exposed to the fire of powerful batteries, is scarcely to be expected from the best troops. Therefore, the first essential preliminary to attack in open ground, such as that of Waterloo, is to assemble a great force of artillery on points which bear on the part of the enemy's line where the attack is to be made. And this concentration of guns is concealed by maintaining a general fire from the divisional batteries along the line. A great superiority of artillery fire being established and maintained till the columns of attack are near the enemy, they arrive comparatively uninjured to assail troops shaken and partially disorganised. "The general engagement once begun," says Napoleon, "he who has the address to bring, suddenly and unknown to the enemy, an unexpected amount of artillery to bear upon the most important points, is sure to carry them. This is the great secret of '*la grande tactique*.'"

Preparations  
for the at-  
tack.

Artillery fire.

It is, however, only in the attack of positions deliberately chosen and occupied, that such preparations must be made before launching columns to the attack. When battles are, as is often the case, the sequel of rapid manœuvres, or where the defender has been forced to receive battle on ground not especially advantageous to him, or where a counter-attack is made on a baffled assailant, columns of attack may reach the enemy without suffering much during the advance. Screened by the ground and the fog at Austerlitz, Napoleon not only massed the troops for the grand attack in the centre undiscovered, but brought them into contact with the enemy in good order, and without loss.

In all cases, however, it was considered necessary in the wars of the Empire, not only to maintain a general fire of skirmishers along the line to confuse and distract the enemy, but to precede columns of attack by fresh swarms of light troops thrown off during the advance, in order to veil the battalions, and to annoy the enemy's line and batteries.

Use of skir-  
mishers to  
cover move-  
ments.



Also when, in forming order of battle, certain parts of the line are to be refused, the design may be concealed by sending out skirmishers in front of those parts, who, without compromising themselves, induce the enemy to expect that the troops behind will advance rather than retire, especially if the ground conceals the movement.

Selection of points of attack.

In all cases, before deciding on the order of battle, it will be necessary to fix on the points of attack. On the selection of these will generally depend the degree of success in case of victory.

When the enemy is in a flank position.

If an army is connected with its base by one flank, the defeat of that wing may entail the dissolution of the whole force. At any rate, an attack on the other wing, however successful, would generally have the effect of forcing the enemy back on his proper line of retreat, and would be so far indecisive.

When important points lie on his flanks.

If an army were connected by its flank with another army, or a fortress, or other important point of the theatre, that flank would properly be the object of attack. Thus the Prussian right at Ligny, the English left at Waterloo, being the points by which the Allies were connected, were the objects of the first efforts of Napoleon.

When his line of retreat is oblique to his front.

If the line of retreat of an army obliquely traverses the rear of one wing, that wing will be the object of attack ; since, to drive back the other would be to rectify the position of the army by rendering its front perpendicular to its line of retreat.

When the assailant is in a flank position.

On the other hand, if an army in a flank position designs to become the assailant, it should attack with the wing by which it is linked to its line of retreat. For, as the attacking corps or wing should be reinforced, the reserves will naturally be already on that side which it is most important to secure ; and it would be equally impolitic either to denude that part of the line to strengthen the other, or to reinforce both at the expense of the centre. This applies to all cases in which the army is linked to important communications by one of its flanks. Thus Blucher, taking the offensive at Ligny, reinforced his right to favour the co-operation of his ally. Wellington, by placing his reserves behind his right wing at Waterloo, indicated that he considered his communications with Hal and Ostende especially menaced, and that he was especially desirous of preserving them.

When the lines of operation of hostile armies are identical in direction,

it will be a grave error to take position on a front oblique to that line for the sake of advantageous ground. For every degree of deviation of the front from a direction perpendicular to the line of retreat offers, proportionately, a flank to the approaching enemy, and withdraws the troops on the other flank from the points of collision. In fact, the relations of the lines would be those produced by the successful counter-stroke against a turning movement.

Strong ground no justification for offering a flank.



It is possible to force an enemy from the field without either menacing his flank or breaking his front. This may be effected either by pressing back his line throughout its extent, or by seizing on commanding points of the battle-field, the loss of which renders his position untenable. In either case trained troops, properly commanded, will withdraw in good order; a rearguard will be organised, defiles defended, pursuit checked, and the army, at the first secure pause, will be reorganised, and, except the loss of prestige and of ground, comparatively little the worse for the encounter. Where an army has been pushed back by a front attack, and there is no immediate pursuit, the victors often suffer nearly as heavily as the vanquished. At Solferino the losses of the French in killed and wounded exceeded those of the Austrians. "A routed enemy," says Marmont, "can always rally when not rapidly pressed at the moment of disorder."

Indecisive victories.

In order to render a defeat *decisive*, the flank of the enemy must be turned, or his front broken. It is when troops are cut from their line of retreat, or thrust off it, that great captures are made; it is when, to avoid such contingencies, they hurry in disorder from the field, as at Waterloo, that a swift organised pursuit forces the fugitive bands, seeking safety and sustenance, to wider dispersion, and converts defeat into ruin.

Victories only decisive when the enemy is turned or broken.

Flank operations, then, being, as we have seen, generally dangerous, and the breaking of the front producing every result that can be demanded from victory, *tactical* considerations—that is, the opportunities

Tactical reasons generally dictate points of attack.

offered by the enemy's immediate position, and his manner of occupying it—become generally of paramount importance in choosing points of attack.

Advanced posts must be captured.

The importance of advanced posts, like Hougomont, has been already discussed and illustrated. And they confer a further advantage on their possessor, exemplified at Waterloo, that of enabling him to throw forward a portion of the line, till it rests on the post, and so to enclose the enemy's columns of attack. Unless, therefore, they stand so far asunder that the attack can be made between them, beyond the effective range of either, it will be usually imperative to master one or more of these, as the preliminary to an attack upon the line of battle.

Strong points in the line to be avoided,

If such posts exist *in* the line of battle, it will be well to direct the attack elsewhere, seeking rather to master some neighbouring commanding ground, or to reach the rear of the post, than to incur the certain losses of a front attack. The French left at Austerlitz, avoiding the fortified hamlets of Kruh and Holubitz, occupied by Russian battalions, easily captured them by mastering the surrounding heights.

except when on commanding ground.

In general, the most commanding ground occupied by the enemy's line will be the point of attack. For while he holds it, a success elsewhere cannot be decisive; and since the height must be carried, it is better to attack while the troops are fresh and vigorous than when wearied by the conflict. But if the enemy's line of retreat can be seized or menaced by an attack in another quarter, it will be manifestly well to avoid the costly effort. Had the Austrians possessed no other line of retreat to the Mincio than the Guidizzolo road, the struggle for the hill of Solferino would have been needless.

Point to attack when the enemy's flank is supported.

If a flank, say the left, of an enemy rest upon an impassable obstacle—a river, lake, sea-cliff, or precipitous heights—by breaking the line at the other extremity of that wing, or in the centre of the army, all the troops between the point of attack and the obstacle may be thrown back upon it and destroyed, like the Russian left upon the lakes at Austerlitz. In such a case, as a most decisive victory may be gained in this way, the assailant's dispositions should be made with the design of only occupying and menacing the rest of the enemy's line, while the supports and reserves, and the combinations of the different arms, should be

directed to the main purpose of pressing the broken wing back upon the obstacle.

Conversely, when an army in position has an obstacle of the kind on its flank, it should by no means rest on it, but should rather leave an interval between the extremity of the line and the obstacle, to invite an attack there, which might be provided for by stationing troops in echelon behind the flank. When Napoleon advanced westward from Montmirail (Map 14) on the rear of Sacken and York, he formed across the angle of the La Ferté and Chateau-Thierry roads. In that angle, and on his right of it, the ground is level and open. But on the left of the La Ferté road it is difficult and broken, descending steeply to a marshy stream. Napoleon's left was retired along this part of the ground towards Montmirail. Sacken threw his right forward, seeking to penetrate to Montmirail through the valley; but the French counter-attack on the centre being successful, all the Russian wing—more than a third of the entire force—was thrown back on the stream and lost.

Occupation  
of ground  
when a flank  
is covered by  
an obstacle.

At the Alma, the sea-cliffs were on the Russian left and the Allied right. The Allies advanced in echelon from *the right*, close to the cliffs. The Russians, defeated, retired on Sebastopol with small loss, and hardly any captures were made. Had the Allies, leaving a wide interval between their right and the cliffs, advanced in echelon from *the left*, the victory might have been decisive of the campaign. And, as to a counter-attack by the enemy between their right and the sea, it was evidently the step they should have most desired him to take. On the Russian left the river, too, was narrower, the heights lower and more gradual; the roads to the interior lay on that side—everything indicated it as the point of attack.

When the lines on which hostile armies are operating meet at an acute angle, that army which operates farthest from the angle obliges its enemy to take a flank position. Therefore such conditions offer a case eminently suited to *manœuvring*, where the general and the army who can move with the greatest promptitude and precision force the enemy to receive battle at a disadvantage. To apply this, take the case of Gettysburg. Lee's line of operations lay through Harper's Ferry, Meade's through Washington, and at Gettysburg they met at an acute angle. Lee, being at the point of the angle, attacked, forming front oblique to his line of



retreat (his left, indeed, was thrown forward considerably off that line). Whereas, by withdrawing a short distance towards Harper's Ferry by the



Fairfield road, and manœuvring by his right, he could have forced his adversary either to retreat or to receive battle in a flank position.

Case of an  
army cut from  
its base.

When an army is absolutely cut from its base, it has at least this in its favour, that, having no communications, it can manœuvre freely to a flank. Yet the Austrians, issuing from Alessandria, continued to fritter away their strength in vain efforts against the French front in the village of Marengo and along the brook which flows by it, though their left wing had already succeeded in turning the French right in the plain. As any change in the direction of the fronts must, for them, have been for the better, they should have followed their left with their whole army, covering the march by demonstrations only, on the centre and right.

Conduct of  
retreats.

When a retreat becomes inevitable, it is well to conceal the design by partial attacks. The second line relieves the first, which withdraws by alternate battalions or wings of battalions. The artillery should withdraw by parts not less than batteries, as alternate guns, or half batteries, would not command sufficient width of front to open fire after withdrawing, without risk to those that had remained to cover the movement. A rearguard of the freshest troops available is organised as soon as possible ;

the victorious army, which cannot long move in order of battle, but must form columns to pursue, is checked till it can again deploy; the rear-guard performs the functions formerly described as proper to it; at the first defensible line the retreat is stopped, and the army restored to order, and as much as possible to confidence, and again confronts the enemy. Such is the history of a well-conducted retreat.

Military writers have disputed the point whether retreats should be concentrated or divergent. A beaten army should form numerous divisions and retreat on eccentric lines, according to Lloyd: "For," says he, "if the pursuing army forms an equal number of divisions, it cannot act vigorously on any one point; while, if it pursues in one mass, it can only operate against one division of the enemy, while the others retire without danger; and this division, being able to move with more rapidity than an entire army, may retire in its turn without experiencing great loss." "But," rejoins Jomini, "an army in retreat is already weak enough without dividing itself further; and though it is true all the divisions can scarcely be destroyed, yet one or two may, and the retreating army may thus sustain a greater loss than the most importunate concentrated retreat would entail."

Now, when the Prussians retired from Ligny, had they retreated in many divisions towards eccentric points they could never have united to fight at Waterloo. And had Napoleon possessed several lines by which to reach the French frontier from Waterloo, he need not have so completely lost his army, since much of its disaster was owing to the fact that it retreated by a single road. Neither Lloyd nor Jomini can, then, be wholly right, and yet both are partly right; for the truth seems to be, *that when an army quits a lost field with the intention of renewing the contest at the first opportunity, it should retreat in the most concentrated form possible; but when a routed army seeks the shelter of its own frontier, the more roads it can move by the better.*

Marmont advises that a retiring army, having selected the position for its next halt, should withdraw towards it betimes: and that the rear-guard should, without compromising itself, so delay the enemy that he cannot arrive before the position till within two hours of sunset. However anxious he may be to attack, he will not then be able to make the necessary dispositions in time to engage during daylight.

Conduct of  
pursuits.

In pursuit, the great aim should be to strike, not the rear, but the flank of the retreating enemy. And as infantry that preserves its array can scarcely overtake troops flying in disorder, cavalry and horse-artillery are especially adapted for making circuits by which to cut in on the line of retreat. Cavalry pressing on the rear should not stop to attack firm infantry, but pass on, and increase the confusion of troops and abandonment of material.

To sum up the matter of this and the preceding chapters—the assailant's order of battle must depend on the points selected for attack, and the selection of those points must depend on circumstances already discussed.

A general, taking up a defensive line, or attacked while manœuvring, should seek to obtain, as far as possible, the following conditions:—

*1st, By the direction of his front, to cover his line of retreat as squarely as possible, without lending a flank to the enemy.*

*2d, To occupy ground which cannot be approached within range un-awares.*

*3d, To insure free communication between the parts of his front.*

*4th, To conceal his movements and force as much as possible.*

*5th, To seize such advanced posts as will strengthen his front.*

*Lastly, he must take up his ground with a view to the action of that arm in which he may be proportionately strongest, or superior to the enemy.*

Viewing the case from the other side, the assailant must first choose his point of attack. In order to do this confidently, he must fully understand his adversary's dispositions, by reconnoitring, if possible, the whole extent of his line. After the ground on which the centre and wings of the enemy stand has been well considered, De Ternay recommends that the front of the hostile army should be prolonged by an imaginary line extending to 2000 yards on each side, and perpendiculars to it should be conceived to be drawn from the centre and each wing. In this way the difficulties of all possible attacks—namely, on the centre, the wings, and the flanks—may be separately estimated. Probably all experienced generals execute, consciously or unconsciously, some such mental process in reconnoitring the enemy. This done, the assailant must make his dispositions—*1st, For disguising his attack; 2dly, For executing it; 3dly, For supporting it; and, 4thly, For refusing the containing or defensive parts of his order of battle.*

## CHAPTER V.

## CHANGES IN CONTEMPORARY TACTICS.

THE introduction of arms of precision was the signal for numerous speculations, many of them somewhat extravagant, on the changes in warfare which would ensue. Some said all attacks would be impossible; some that artillery would now be the chief arm, and infantry and cavalry mere escorts for the batteries; some that the day of cavalry was over. This is by many degrees the most important question that can occupy the thoughts of contemporary soldiers, for it was by divining the relations between new systems and old that Frederick and Napoleon rendered Prussia and France each for a time supreme in war. To discern and provide for the new conditions under which armies will engage may, in the next European war, be worth to a people, not merely armies and treasure, but liberty and national life.

The first thing to be noted is, that the changes are not radical, like the introduction of artillery or of light infantry, but are only modifications of previously existing conditions. To estimate the extent of these modifications will be an important step towards anticipating their influence on future military operations.

The fire of infantry has extended its *effective* range from less than 200 to 600 or 700 yards. At 200 yards it is twice, at 400 six times, as effective as formerly.

Increased  
ranges of  
arms.

The effective fire of field artillery is extended from 1200 or 1400 to 2000 or 2500 yards.

At first sight it would indeed seem that an advance against a line delivering such a fire would be impossible. But there are many circumstances to modify this conclusion.



Reasons  
which detract  
from their  
efficacy.

First, The calculation of the efficacy of rifle fire is based on the practice made by men firing singly at targets. File, or platoon, firing is very inferior in effect.

Secondly, From 150 yards downwards the fire of infantry, and from 1100 yards downwards the fire of artillery, is not more destructive to troops than formerly.

They do not  
render attacks  
impracticable,

Thirdly, In action numerous circumstances lessen the effect of rifled arms. The adjustment of the weapon must be constantly changed in firing on an approaching object; and within the ranges of the old musket and the old field-gun, the new arms are not more effective than their predecessors. Therefore, while within those ranges the effect is not increased, beyond them the effect of fire on moving bodies is uncertain. Although the power of choosing a position in which to await battle would generally entail on an adversary the necessity of advancing for a long distance uncovered before he could attack, yet the country does not always admit of the choice of such positions. Even if it did, they might frequently be turned; and it is far more likely that manœuvring armies would come into collision in ground which would greatly lessen the advantages of the defensive. For instance, the level plain on the side of Guidizzolo, and the broken country about Pozzolengo, with its small hills and short undulations, were no more favourable to defence than to attack; indeed, in the hilly country, where the conformation of the ground would conceal the concentration of an assailant's columns of attack, the advantage would be on his side. Again, in almost all districts there are hollow ways and dips in the ground which may shelter troops even in what at first may seem to be a plain. Finally, the smoke of artillery and musketry, to which dust or fog may often be added, and the stress, moral and physical, of sustained conflict, are all of them influences which greatly diminish the effect of weapons requiring a clear range and a deliberate adjustment.

though they  
have increased  
the advan-  
tages of de-  
fence.

Still, notwithstanding this, a great additional advantage has been conferred on the army which, in a sheltered and commanding position, awaits the attack. The enemy's columns of march must now often form line of battle at a much greater distance than formerly, and troops advancing to attack must traverse, under the fire of the hostile line, a space of three or four hundred yards where the old musketry would

not have reached them. Moreover, batteries stationed at distant parts of the hostile line, quite beyond former range, would now concentrate their fire on the columns of attack.

In adapting the formations of troops to these new conditions, no change is necessary for the army on the defensive, since deployed lines are more effective than ever for awaiting an attack. The essential question *for the assailant* to consider is, what dispositions will best obviate the increased difficulties of the attack.

An advance in line would, if practicable, insure the least possible loss to the assailant ; and in case of an attack made by a single battalion or brigade, the advance in line might be judicious. But the question is of throwing a large portion of an army, a whole wing or centre, upon the enemy's position. The French held a movement in line of such extent to be impracticable, even in the days of the old musket and the old field-gun ; and Jomini declares that he has never seen troops which could perform it, and believes it to be impossible. Wellington's battles throw no light upon the question, for his method was to *await* the attack, and then in turn attack the repulsed enemy, so that his line advanced over a narrow space against a broken enemy.

An advance in line impracticable.

It would certainly seem a hopeless enterprise to direct a force of say 40 battalions, in two deployed lines, over average ground, so that they should arrive close to the enemy (who awaits them in good order) in condition to make a successful charge ; and a repulse of any part of the line might lead to a general rout of the assailing forces.

On the other hand, large deep columns, like those of Waterloo, always difficult to manœuvre, would be more than ever pernicious when opposed by modern arms of precision, and may be absolutely condemned.

Deep columns also to be condemned.

Seeing the conditions of the problem, the French sought to solve it, at the epoch of Austerlitz, by a compromise between the line and column. They formed two lines of battalion columns at deploying intervals. The columns were on a front of two pelotons or companies, 4 such divisions composing the battalion, which, 3 deep, would give a depth of 12 ranks to the column.

Columns in which the French formerly attacked.

In 1851, the present Emperor Napoleon called on the veteran Jomini to give his opinion respecting the probable effect on tactics consequent on the introduction of modern weapons. In his reply, the General, still

Late modifications in these.

insisting, as heretofore, on the necessity of forming battalion columns of attack at deploying intervals, and covering their advance with a line of skirmishers, further suggested, that, to diminish to the utmost the losses inflicted by the enemy's artillery, he would form the columns of 3 divisions instead of 4, offering a depth of 6 ranks only. And he proposed, also, in order that the organisation of the troops should lend itself to this formation, that battalions in the field should consist of 6 companies.

Now, that the chiefs of the French army coincided in these opinions, is testified by the fact that at Solferino the corps of MacMahon and Niel were formed in two lines of battalion columns of divisions (2 companies), at deploying intervals; and the organisation of the battalions corresponded, for each column was of the depth of 3 divisions, or 6 ranks.

Formation of the skirmishers.

These formations appear to have been covered and preceded by the light infantry battalions attached to divisions. The French *chasseurs-à-pied* extend before the enemy in groups of four men, the two files of the group five paces apart, and the maximum intervals of groups forty paces, to be diminished at need. The groups, in case of a loose attack of cavalry, form squares, a man to each face of the square. A small reserve of each company is posted from one to two hundred yards in its rear, to fill gaps, serve ammunition, and form a rallying point. Against more formidable attacks they form solid circles, of sections, subdivisions, or companies.

Case where deep columns may still be admissible.

In advocating his views, Jomini makes an exception in the case of the attack of isolated posts, where he thinks more massive formations admissible. Accordingly we find the French attacking the hill of Solferino not in deployed but in contiguous columns, and on a depth of several battalions; and, it may be added, they suffered accordingly, although they carried the post.

Such, then, are the ideas which a great military nation not merely entertains but conforms to. Perhaps the reader may think the change so important that the fate of battles may depend on the adoption or neglect of this method of attack. The solution of the problem is the more necessary because we have here a special manœuvre, requiring special practice, perhaps even special organisation.

This being the way in which the French reply to the question, *How to form troops for the attack of positions under the fire of modern infantry and artillery*—it remains for objectors to suggest the alternative. It would be



rash—it might be fatal—for a general to take the field at the head of a European army who was not prepared with an answer.

For facility of formation, and of subsequent deployment to the front, columns of grand divisions on a central division are preferable in performing this manœuvre, since the flank divisions, facing inwards, would simultaneously form in front and rear of the central one. But for ready deployment to a flank, double column of companies is better, since one wing of the battalion, by simultaneous wheel of its companies into line, would cover the deployment of the other. The choice between them must depend on circumstances.

Modes of forming the columns.

Since Jomini proposes to keep his battalions entire in the columns of attack, instead of throwing out the flank companies as skirmishers, as in his former plan (Chapter II. Part VI.), no increased intervals would be left between the battalions when deployed; and the line of skirmishers must be furnished by battalions specially detailed for the purpose. As sharpshooters, firing independently and deliberately, and availing themselves of accidents of ground, use their weapons with increased effect, and are better secured from counter-fire, and play, moreover, an essential part in the attack by covering the advance of the columns which cannot fire themselves, it is more than ever imperative to possess a strong force of skirmishers. But there must be a limit to these; for if not, they would cease to be skirmishers, by approximating to an ordinary line. At 5 or 6 yards interval between the files—which, except in very advantageous ground, would be so close as to impede independence of movement, and to invite the enemy's shells—one-fourth the number of the front line would supply both the skirmishers and the small reserves destined to make good immediate losses, and to serve as rallying points.

At the time when all battalions had their light companies, these naturally performed the light-infantry duties. But, now that all companies of the line are armed and trained alike, it would no doubt be generally preferable to charge entire battalions, or wings of battalions, with the duty of covering the line or the column.

Skirmishers, how furnished.

In executing the manœuvre in question, commanders of corps or divisions order the brigadiers to form their battalions in columns of attack; the columns of the second line being opposite the intervals of the first. The advance being made in this order, on arriving within effective rifle

Execution of the attack.



range of the enemy, the battalions of skirmishers advance through the intervals, and cover the front of the columns. Meanwhile the columns, especially while at a considerable distance from the enemy, may deviate slightly from their exact order, for the sake of obtaining shelter; thus two or three might follow each other in a hollow way, or approach each other in a basin or behind a ridge, always within certain limits; order being restored during the subsequent advance, and a pause of very brief duration being perhaps necessary at about 300 yards, or even less, from the enemy to insure sufficient *ensemble* in the charge. During this pause the skirmishers would retire through the intervals to the rear of the second line, which should close considerably on the first. Should the enemy seek to enclose the flanks of the columns by throwing forward companies, these would leave intervals through which the second line of columns would penetrate. And it must be remembered, in estimating the chances of thus breaking the hostile front, that the advance of the columns would be preceded by a concentrated fire of artillery, to balance the disadvantage of advancing under fire, and would be followed by strong supports, which would be wanting to the enemy, if the dispositions for *disguising* the attack had been successful.

Advantages  
of attacking  
thus.

Finally, the advantages of the formation in battalion-columns of attack may thus be enumerated:—

1. Facility of formation and deployment.
2. The minimum depth offered to the enemy's projectiles.
3. The extreme extension in which a large body can make an orderly advance.
4. A superiority of solidity and impulsion in meeting a two-deep line.
5. Power of taking advantage of such shelter as the ground may offer during the advance.
6. A considerable front of fire in covering a change of formation near the enemy.

Question of  
retaining  
squares  
against  
cavalry.

Impressed by the difficulty of keeping battalions in squares under the fire of improved artillery, the French appear to approach the conclusion that squares should be altogether abolished, and that infantry should meet the attack of cavalry in line. So long as the line is secure on its flanks this might perhaps be judicious against cavalry accompanied and supported by artillery; though, as said in a former chapter, it is likely

that the *best* cavalry would generally break a line of infantry by a direct attack. But if the flank of the line were exposed, it would be impossible, in any formation except a square, to resist well-manceuvred squadrons.

Modern arms do not appear to render necessary an increase in the distance between the first and second lines.

Considering the progress made by artillery in mobility and range, late French writers of authority assert that to associate it intimately in future with infantry would fetter its powers and diminish its utility. The more acute the angle at which its fire traverses the enemy's line, the greater will be its effect; and, to obtain the necessary obliquity, large masses, detaching themselves from the line of battle, may suddenly concentrate on its front or flanks. To protect the swift and daring movements of these great batteries, great masses of cavalry must follow and support them, drawing off in the plains, but coming closer in sheltered ground. Meanwhile the artillery of divisions will be reduced to the minimum necessary for the march and the protection of their front. This idea was executed in the campaign of 1859; for, both at Magenta and at Solferino, great batteries of 40 guns were drawn from the divisions and reserves, and manceuvred under the protection of masses of cavalry.

Change in  
artillery  
tactics.

The reader will have noted that, both at Austerlitz and at Solferino, the beaten armies brought to the field a great preponderance of artillery, a large part of which took no part in the engagement. The truth is, that the huge trains which followed their columns were too unwieldy to be arrayed. Surplus artillery is far worse than useless—it hampers and delays the columns, destroys roads, perplexes generals, keeps troops out of action for its escort and protection, and impedes the retreat. The proportion of guns to men at Solferino—namely,  $2\frac{2}{3}$  to 1000—is probably as large as can exist with advantage in great armies. This is more than ever true since the increased mobility of artillery and the widened sweep of its horizon have augmented its effect compared with its numbers. This proportion, however, may be increased as the force of the army diminishes, in districts favourable to transport. Frederick brought ~~3~~ guns per thousand men to the field with his greater armies, and increased that proportion considerably as his infantry decreased in numbers. An army

Proportions of  
artillery to  
troops.

of 60,000 might well be accompanied by 180 guns; a corps of 30,000, by 100 guns.

Organisation  
of artillery.

To gain from this mobility its greatest effect, field-batteries should, to a certain extent, be converted into horse-artillery, by which the greatest possible rapidity of manœuvre would be attained; batteries would constantly shift their positions, so as always to take the line diagonally or in flank, and by rapid retreat would baffle a counter-attack.

Rifled guns of larger calibre than those of the field-batteries, corresponding to those formerly called guns of position, can now easily follow the march of troops, and take part in the line of battle. Their value in protecting refused portions of the line from counter-attack, covering fixed points—such as bridges and defiles—enfilading distant parts of the hostile line, and silencing troublesome batteries, is so great, that immense advantages would in many cases be gained by increasing their numbers. Perhaps, if the foot batteries were limited to the force necessary for the independence and security of divisions, and a sufficient reserve to supply casualties in these, the whole remaining artillery of an army might with advantage be divided, though in unequal proportions, between heavy batteries and horse-artillery, especially in such theatres of war as Eastern France, Belgium, and Germany.

Destiny of  
cavalry.

As cavalry has been stationary while other arms were increasing in efficiency, disputants have been found to question whether it should in future enter so largely as formerly into the composition of armies. The achievements of French or Austrian squadrons in the Italian campaign were not calculated to show how it could be used decisively; and in the American war the cavalry on either side was confessedly unfit to take its place in the line of battle; and both Confederate and Federal officers believe that the arm should be restricted altogether to the duties of reconnaissances, advanced-guards, and escorts. This opinion is not shared by the Continental powers, who hold the opposite doctrine, that, though the relations of the three arms have been changed, and new combinations are necessary, yet their equilibrium has not been seriously disturbed. We have only to imagine two armies approaching each other—the one possessing a cavalry which, after covering its march, would retire beyond reach

of the engagement, the other, accompanied in the battle by great masses of carefully-trained squadrons—to perceive the importance of solving this question.

Inquiring what the duties of cavalry of the line have been, we find these among the principal :— Its principal uses in action.

1. Covering the exposed flank of infantry.
2. Attacking the enemy's infantry when engaged with infantry.
3. Checking an attack of infantry by forcing the columns to form squares and halt.
4. Dispersing a line of skirmishers by attacking their flank or rear.
5. Protecting batteries.
6. Charging troops that have been repulsed in an attack.
7. Charging lines of infantry when shaken by artillery.
8. Filling dangerous intervals in the line during the process of formation.
9. Protecting infantry against the attack of a superior infantry—as the French cavalry divisions supported Niel's corps at Solferino.
10. Covering a retreat.
11. Converting defeat into rout by swift pursuit.

Such is the important list of functions that must cease if cavalry cannot be found, under the fire of modern weapons, to act as it acted in former wars. It is argued that cavalry, always helpless when opposed to fire, will now receive such a storm of projectiles as will destroy it while still at a distance from the enemy.

True as this may be of cavalry stationary in column, or moving uncovered to a flank, or halting to form for attack, it does not apply forcibly to the attack itself. Swiftmess of movement is more than ever important, in advancing over the region swept by fire, to close with the enemy. Cavalry can with ease move over 1000 yards, ending with a charge, in  $3\frac{3}{4}$  minutes. The speed of its motion would insure it against numerous or accurate discharges either of guns or infantry. Closing with the adverse line, it would have no more to fear from rifles than from muskets; and good cavalry has seldom been repelled by fire alone, but rather by the steady aspect of the serried line.

One of the conditions under which artillery must exert its increased power of manœuvring is association with cavalry. On the efficacy of the cavalry, therefore, must depend, in great degree, the efficacy of the artil-



lery. But, when associated thus, cavalry is no longer helpless against fire—the combined force can both attack and defend itself. Such companionship, then, is more than ever important.

Let us grant that cavalry will, in certain cases, suffer more than formerly. But, as Napoleon used to say, omelettes cannot be made without the breaking of eggs. The losses must be compensated by increased efficiency, exhibited in power of manœuvring and determination in attack. Let us grant also that *bad* cavalry, when the lines are about to close, had better get out of the way; that merely *respectable* cavalry will, while supporting the other arms, effect nothing that can be considered decisive of a battle. But let it also be granted that cavalry, properly trained and led, may play as great a part as ever on the stage of war. Combined with new and larger proportions of artillery, its action may be decisive of the fate of battles; and, launched in pursuit of a broken foe, it may finish a campaign which would else wade through fresh carnage to its woeful end.

It will often happen that cavalry will best take advantage of sheltering ground by forming close column. But when exposed it must deploy; and the general formation for manœuvre which is supported by the most logical advocacy, is that of echelons of not less than squadrons. Whether there shall be one rank or two, one line or two, or in what manner the lines shall support each other, are questions for members of that part of the service to decide. But whatever the system, its highest application, in manœuvring before the enemy and in making powerful attacks, must depend on that rare product of any age or country—a great cavalry general.

Influence of  
modern arms  
on man-  
œuvres.

The difficulties of approaching certain positions being increased, it will happen in future more frequently than in former campaigns that generals will rather manœuvre than attack them—preferring the hazards of losing their communications to the certain losses of the assault. Turning movements, rendered extensive by the necessity of keeping beyond the increased range of artillery, will be attempted, and opportunities for the counter-stroke of Rossbach and Salamanca will be seized on the one side, and provided for on the other. Indeed, the most legitimate use of the

turning movement is, not so much to attack an enemy's flank as to draw him from a position impregnable in front, by threatening its weak side. Manceuvres, then, will in these cases precede the battle.

But when an attack is judged practicable, it would be absurd to suppose that the range of modern artillery would keep armies cannonading each other at a great distance. Rather will the assailant seek to bring the lines so near that the columns of assault will suffer the least possible loss during the advance.

In making the attack, it will be necessary to disguise it by feints elsewhere, to make dispositions for supporting it, to prepare to refuse or protect weakened portions of the line, to precede the attack by a powerful concentrated fire of artillery, and to cover it with skirmishers.

Large bodies of cavalry and artillery will manceuvre, with a celerity and precision hitherto unknown, on important points, such as, 1st, *the flank of a flank attack*; 2d, *behind the centre of a salient attack on the enemy's front*; or, 3d, *in front of refused portions of the line*. Great opportunities of achieving decisive successes will thus be opened to the commanders of those arms, who must add a knowledge of great operations, and of combinations, to skill in their special functions. And it is clear that the army which can best combine the arms according to the ground, and launch with most celerity and vigour its columns of attack, will have great chances in its favour.

The reader will have noted that all important changes of tactics and of organisation have been made in intervals of peace, and that the place has been a camp of instruction. It was in his Silesian camps that Frederick worked out his system, taught it to his generals, and brought it to perfection. It was in the camp of Vaissieux that two marshals of the old *regime* devised and taught the newer methods which the French Republican armies so successfully put in practice against the inheritors of Frederick's tactics. It was in the camp of Boulogne that Napoleon modified the new system, and prepared the French army for the triumphs of Ulm, Austerlitz, and Jena. As in the past, so in the future it must be for armies, before new wars shall find them still fettered by obsolete customs and traditions, to adapt themselves, as the weapons with which States guard their honour, independence, and prosperity, to the altered circumstances in which they must operate.

Use of camps  
of instruction.

## CHAPTER VI.

## DISPOSITIONS FOR THE MARCH THAT PRECEDES A BATTLE.

WHILE an army is at a great distance from the enemy, the chief care of the leaders of columns will be to place their troops in such order as will best insure celerity of movement and convenience of supply. But when an army is moving to an immediate engagement, all its columns must be ready to form line of battle on the shortest notice.

The first great distinction between a march of this kind and an ordinary march is, that whereas, in general, a long train of supplies and baggage must follow the columns, an army moving to battle disencumbers itself of all that is not essential for feeding and fighting during the day or days of conflict. Men and horses carry with them one or two days' food; spare ammunition must be at hand; all else may be for the moment stored in the rear.

Selection of  
routes for  
columns.

Thus stripped for the struggle, columns, each of a corps or division, advance upon such roads as will at once lead them on the enemy, and keep them within deploying distance of each other. If the commander has been enabled, by reconnaissances and intelligence of the enemy's dispositions, to determine his order of battle, it will be a great advantage; for, according as a wing or centre is to be reinforced, the troops can, at the outset of the march, be directed on the roads which will bring them to their destined positions in the line. The divisions and the cavalry will be accompanied by their own batteries; the reserve artillery will generally follow a central column, if the road be good.

The army will be preceded by an advanced-guard.

Compactness being now of the highest importance, all the arms of a

column will move in close order, and on as large a front as is consistent with leaving part of the road free for the transmission of orders and the going-about of cavalry or guns. The column may be formed thus in an average country :—

1st, A battery, because its fire will be required to keep the enemy at a distance during the first deployments—preceded, however, by a few horse. Order of march to the front.

2d, A brigade or division of infantry.

3d, A battery, preceding another brigade or division of infantry.

4th, The cavalry of the column. This is not placed more forward, first, because cavalry of itself cannot defend itself, as infantry can, under all circumstances ; and, secondly, because its speed will always enable it to reach the line of deployment, or point where it is to act, as soon as the majority of the infantry.

5th, The remaining batteries of the column.

6th, The rear-guard.

When the nature of the country dictates that masses of cavalry should be on one wing, or on both wings, they will march, accordingly, on one or both flanks, in adjoining columns, not intermixed, either laterally or longitudinally, with infantry. Such was the order in Davout's march to Eckmuhl, when his cavalry covered his left flank, his right being protected by the Danube (p. 143). Position of the cavalry.

In all cases the columns will be incessantly connected by light troops extended in skirmishing order throughout their front ; and advantage must be taken of all cross-roads to maintain concert and exchange intelligence during the movement. Connection of the general front.

Meanwhile the advanced-guard (to be treated of separately), marching at a certain distance ahead, will, presumably, prevent the heads of columns from being suddenly attacked, or from being separated by an advance of the enemy.

On approaching a position which the enemy may be supposed to occupy, or to be seeking to occupy, the main columns subdivide into other smaller columns, and all strike out for themselves routes as direct as possible towards their destined positions in the line, endeavouring, at the same time, to preserve due intervals of deployment, and always maintaining their connection. But as an attempt to move for any distance in columns so small and numerous as to be in order of battle, or nearly so, Subdivision of the columns.



Clearing of  
routes.

would create confusion and delay at every impediment, it is inexpedient to separate farther than into brigades of the first, each followed by its brigade of the second, line, the divisional artillery still accompanying, if possible, its own brigades. Each column will be preceded by pioneers, to clear the road of obstacles, throw planks across ditches or rivulets, repair bad parts of the track, cut away the steep banks of fords for the passage of cavalry or guns, and, under the direction of staff-officers, shorten the routes by levelling fences and cutting paths.

Defects of  
intervals.

Of the two extremes, of moving the columns too close to, or too far from, each other, the former, though leading to an accumulation and overlapping of troops, and consequent diminution of the proper front, will be less dangerous than an extension, which would give the enemy an opportunity of breaking the front. Avoiding both, an army runs no risk in any country, for an enemy can, at best, only present himself in equally good order. It is only when an army *in lengthened columns* finds itself suddenly in presence of an enemy in line of battle, that the situation is critical; and such a crisis it is for the advanced-guard to prevent. But of the necessity for moving as compactly and as nearly in fighting order as possible, the battle of Solferino is an illustration. Both armies had reconnoitred the country between the Chiese and Mincio; each expected to find its adversary awaiting it behind the river; neither anticipated the encounter; but the French army was by far the best prepared for it by the order of its march. The army that marches in the best order for forming battle, according to the nature of the country, will be certainly best prepared for victory.

The closer the nature of the country, the more necessary will it be to render different portions of each column complete in each arm. For the order of march on the intersected bank of the Po, in 1859, the reader is referred to page 28.

Flank  
marches near  
the enemy.

So far, *marches to the front* only have been under consideration. But an army, or part of an army, must frequently march to a flank—westward, for instance, with the expectation of forming a line of battle which will front south—as Pirch and Thielemann moved from Namur to Ligny; and if it were to move in the order just prescribed for a march to the front, it must make a long wheel of its columns before forming order of battle. To avoid this it must adopt an order of march suited to the occasion.

On perfectly open ground such a movement might be accomplished by marching to a flank in order of battle—that is, in three columns formed of the two lines and the reserve, with an advanced-guard protecting the outward flank (flank towards the enemy). But the question is of making a march of this kind in an average broken or enclosed country, where very lengthened columns, especially of cavalry and artillery, could not without great risk offer their flank to the enemy.

The column of cavalry, as being least able to fight singly, should not be on the outer flank. In case of a small force, say of a division, making such a movement, it might be done in three columns,—the infantry on two lines next the enemy, the cavalry and reserve artillery on the inner flank. But with a considerable force—a corps or wing—the first and second line and reserves of infantry should each form a column, followed and preceded by portions of their own artillery. The order of march of the columns of the main body, then, would be in this order, beginning on the flank next the enemy:—

Order of  
march to a  
flank.

1. A division of infantry (being the first line), preceded and followed by its own artillery, and at intervals by an advanced and rear guard of mixed arms; pioneers clearing the march.

2. A division (being the second line) of infantry in the same order.

3. The division of infantry of the reserve. (If the general reserve of the army is otherwise provided for, this column will be divided between the two former.)

4. Cavalry, with its own artillery.

5. Cavalry and reserve artillery.

These columns should preserve intervals not greater than those which should exist in the line of battle between the first and second lines and the second line and reserve; and the column next the enemy must be the column of direction—that is, must govern the movements and distances of the rest.

Intervals of  
columns.

Meanwhile an advanced-guard of all arms should move between the corps and the enemy, constantly flanking it, and occupying all defiles by which the enemy might issue on the flank of the columns. Thus, while the Prussians marched from Wavre to the field of Waterloo, the advanced-guard on their flank closed the passages of the Dyle against Grouchy.

When a corps is moving thus to a flank, it will be of immense import-

ance to decide whether it is to form line of battle to a front or a flank, relatively to the rest of the army and to the enemy. Thus Bulow's march to the field of Waterloo was a flank march ; but, for the attack on the French flank, the order of march to *a front* was the proper formation for his columns.

To an English reader, amid our highly-cultivated and strictly-enclosed landscapes, marches such as those described will appear very dubious of execution. But the more enclosed a country is, the more numerous generally will be its roads. Still, such marches may well appear perplexing in England or Italy. A trip to Belgium or the Rhine will, however, convince him of the feasibility of such manœuvres in countries better suited than ours to military operations.

## CHAPTER VII.

## MINOR OPERATIONS OF WAR.

UNDER this head, as necessary accompaniments to the movements of armies, yet possessing distinctive features of their own, are placed the Conduct of Advanced-Guards, Outposts, the Escort of Convoys, and Reconnaissances.

It was the custom of Napoleon to despatch large bodies of light cavalry to the distance of several marches ahead of the army, while it was still at a great distance from the enemy. "And," says Marmont, "when one is far from an enemy strong enough to deliver battle, and is marching upon him, it is necessary to occupy, with advanced-guards and light troops, at least a space of a long march all round the army, to be informed of his movements, and modify our own."

Measures of this kind, however, the object of which is solely to procure intelligence, are not now in question, but the conduct of specially-organised bodies moving immediately at the head of armies, to facilitate the march and to guard against surprise. The advanced guard.

While the advanced-guard must, on the one hand, shun to compromise itself with a superior force; on the other, it must not allow the march to be delayed by demonstrations made by insignificant bodies. The commander, therefore, has need both of prudence and resolution; according to circumstances, he must dispute the ground, fall back towards the army, or promptly attack. "Never *haggle*," says Frederick to his generals, "with the enemy's light troops." Duty of the advanced-guard.

In almost all countries, the advanced-guard should consist of all arms. The proportions of cavalry and infantry must depend on the nature of Its composition.



the district—the former preponderating in open, the latter in close and hilly regions. Artillery is required to shell the enemy's posts out of sheltered ground, farms, &c.

Its proportion  
to the main  
body.

If an army is moving on a narrow front, one of its brigades or divisions, combined with cavalry and artillery, may form the advanced-guard, extending across the whole front. Forey's division at Casteggio formed, in May 1859, the advanced-guard of the French army. But where corps are moving each on its own roads, as at Solferino, each will form its own advanced-guard: and these have generally consisted of from 1-10th to 1-20th of the army or corps. Thus an army of 100,000 might be covered by a division; of 50,000, by a brigade; and a corps of 20,000, according to the country, by 2 battalions of infantry and a regiment of cavalry, or by 1 battalion and 2 regiments of cavalry, with a battery, either of horse-artillery in an open country, or of heavy guns in case of defiles to be forced or strong posts to be battered.

Order of its  
march.

A small party of horse precedes the main body, to obtain and bring the earliest intelligence. But of the main body the infantry should march first; for neither artillery nor cavalry should enter any defile which has not been first explored, and its flanks secured, by infantry. A road enclosed by strong walls or fences, or a hollow way, or a bridge in a deep valley, or a wood, or the street of a village, would all be situations fatal to horse or to guns attacked by rifle-fire, and unaided by infantry.

When the Allied army made its flank march round Sebastopol, the head of the column, marching through an extensive and thick wood, was composed of several field-batteries. Fortunately, after proceeding some distance through dense and narrow paths, the head of the column halted for guidance and protection. After a certain interval it was ordered to proceed; and it finally emerged into an open space, close to the rear of a strong Russian column which had just traversed its front. But for the halt, the head of the army would have touched, not on the rear, but on the flank, of this column, when a few companies of infantry might with ease and impunity have destroyed great part of the British artillery.

No defile should, then, be entered till its flanks, throughout its extent, are occupied by infantry, when the other arms should pass with all convenient speed.

The artillery may, in general, properly be placed next the leading battalion of the advanced-guard.

The flanks of the column should be covered to a distance of some hundred yards by parties of horse; and a chain of riflemen, at 40 or 50 paces from each other, should extend within the cavalry. Every neighbouring obstacle which might shelter hostile troops, every wood, and copse, and farmyard, and rising ground, to a considerable distance on each side, should be visited and explored by the flankers, and detachments must occupy important defiles on the flanks until relieved by others from the main column.

In a halt of any duration, the advanced-guard should form order of battle, and cover its front and flanks with advanced-posts.

The considerations which govern the distance between the advanced-guard and the main body are these:—If it were considerable (say half a march), not only might it be cut off altogether by a superior force attacking it in flank and rear, but it might frequently be forced to an action while falling back. The army must then support it, and thus a battle might be fought inopportunately or in an unfavourable position, and contrary to the desire of the commander-in-chief.

Its distance  
from the main  
body.

On the other hand, were it too close to the army, it would merely be the head of the column, and would very inadequately fulfil its main purpose of putting the corps on their guard and giving them time to prepare for battle.

The distance, then, must be such as to give the columns time to deploy sufficient force to meet any probable first attacks, and to cover the deployment of the rest. If an army be moving in numerous columns, at just intervals, it will need less preparation than when the roads refuse to lend themselves to any but deep columns, and too narrow or too extended fronts. Frederick's advanced-guards observed a distance from the army of from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 miles; larger armies and less compact columns might extend it to 5 miles—nor should this be greatly exceeded, except in the single case that it was desired to seize on some point or position, the possession of which would be worth the risk.

Outposts are established to give an army or detachment notice of the Outposts.

Distance of  
outposts from  
the main  
body.

movements of the enemy, and to guard against surprise. Like advanced-guards, they must be placed at the distance from the main body which will fulfil this purpose without exposing them to be cut off or overpowered. And as they occupy much ground in proportion to their force, 3 miles is as great a space as should intervene between them and effectual support.

The advanced-guard usually furnishes the outposts. When, or before, the army has taken up its destined position for the halt or the bivouac (the chief requisites of which will be, the defensive capacity of the ground, and the facility of procuring wood and water), the advanced-guard halts also in its selected position.

Manner of  
disposing  
them.

Let us suppose that the infantry of this advanced-guard consists of two battalions. These, divided into wings, furnish four bodies of four companies each, which let us assume to be all 100 strong. At 1200 yards apart, these wings will extend just 2 miles; and they will, as *main-guards*, take up their position where they command the main avenues of approach, and at points where they can at once easily defend themselves and be sheltered from observation. The skirts of small woods, hollows behind the crests of ridges, a line of wall, or embankment, or hedges, will answer the purpose.

The main-  
guards.

The pickets.

Each of these main-guards may detach a company in sections of 20 to 25 each, at an average distance of 400 yards to its front. These sections form the line of *pickets*, which may extend 400 yards beyond the flanks of the main-guards, occupying two miles and a half of front. These shelter themselves in the same way as the larger bodies.

The sentries.

Each picket will furnish three double sentries, of which there will then be 48. At an average distance of 100 yards apart (and such small intervals would only be necessary in very close ground), they would extend 4800 yards. According to the nature of the district, these might be reduced to a half, or even a third; though, in country so open as this small number would imply, cavalry videttes would be more appropriate. The sentries might be at an average distance of 400 yards from the pickets.

The officers in charge of guards and pickets must now busy themselves with securing free communications between all parts of these three lines of troops, by making passages through enclosures; roads and defiles in

front of the sentries should be temporarily blocked (not destroyed); and all the posts should be strengthened in the readiest way, such as felling timber, loopholing walls, or making breastworks of stacks or trusses. For the business of these posts is not merely to give an alarm, but to dispute the ground, and force the enemy to deploy considerable forces before obliging them to give way.

The cavalry is posted with the main-guards and pickets according to the nature of the ground—naturally where it is open, and generally on the principal roads. Videttes may be pushed down the main approaches to a distance of 1000 yards in open ground.

The guns, in divisions of not less than two, should be with the main-guards, under cover, and at commanding points, generally on or close to the roads.

If an obstacle which would shelter the approach of an enemy is within rifle-range, the line of pickets must be extended so as to include it, or withdrawn to due distance.

The sentries must be visible from the pickets, the pickets from the main-guards.

The men remaining in the pickets, after providing for three reliefs of sentries, will furnish patrols, which, in thick weather or at night, pass once in each relief, along the whole line; and the main-guards connect themselves in the same way, parties of cavalry being very suitable for the purpose.

In great woods, like those of America, the outposts must clear spaces with the axe, and shelter themselves on the edge of them with abatis.

Every officer eligible to command a company ought to be instructed how to post his pickets and sentries, and provide for their shelter and defence, in ground of all sorts; and every field-officer should be able at once to cover the front of a column with a line of outposts, and undertake the supervision of the whole of the dispositions.

Behind such a line as has been described—numbering, say, 1600 infantry, 500 cavalry, and 6 guns, and maintained with due vigilance and intelligence—a corps of 20,000 of all arms might rest in security, after providing, by its *inlying pickets*, or bodies destined to support the main-guards, for the immediate succour of its outposts in case of attack.

If the flanks of the line of sentries were unsupported by obstacles, it

Their proportion to the main body.



would be necessary to place guards—say of a company—a few hundred yards in their rear, which might be furnished from the outer main-guards.

Armies in actual presence of each other cover the front at a short distance with a line of pickets and sentries.

#### Convoys.

The escort of a large convoy, except when it is covered by the front of the army, is one of the most difficult enterprises which an officer can be called on to conduct; because, in general, the extent of front to be protected (which is the whole line of road occupied by the convoy) is out of all proportion to the number of the troops; and because, to reach its destination, it must traverse roads which may be occupied or damaged by the enemy.

Provisions, ammunition, or other munitions of war, baggage, sick, or prisoners, may form the convoy. The escort should generally be mixed in proportions depending on the nature of the country.

Before setting out the commander must inspect the animals and vehicles, and form divisions of convenient numbers. He must obtain precise information of the road he is to follow—places of halt and billet—position of the enemy—points where an attack may be looked for—and the places of refuge to be sought in case of retreat.

A waggon with four horses occupies in the file 12 yards, counting intervals. Where the road admits of it, the vehicles should form double file, with a yard between the files, and leaving room for drawing aside a waggon that may have broken down.

On a good road a waggon journeys about two miles and a half an hour; in a hilly country, a mile and three-quarters.

It is prudent to have a number of empty waggons to receive the loads of those that break down; and part of their horses may help the rest. Beasts of burden precede waggons, because the latter break up the roads. Five or six yards' interval must be preserved between the divisions for the passage of the troops from right to left.

#### Manner of disposing the escort.

The escort is divided into advanced-guard, main body, and rear-guard. With a considerable convoy such as 200 carriages, occupying 2400 yards, where it would be impossible for any but a large force to line the whole extent with troops, the main body might be divided into four parties—

one to form a reserve, one for the protection of the centre, one to march at the head, and another at the rear, of the column.

This reserve is to reinforce any point that may be specially threatened, and should be half of the main body; the detachment to protect the centre one-fourth; and for each extremity only an eighth, for the centre will be the most fatal point of attack, and the detachments on the extremities will be aided by the advanced and rear guards.

Each division of the convoy is preceded by a section of infantry, and some soldiers march on the flanks to watch the waggons, who, being generally peasants impressed for the occasion, would otherwise linger or halt, or attempt to make off with their teams, especially in case of attack.

These different bodies do not quit their own places in the convoy to concentrate on a first alarm, because feints will probably precede or accompany the real attack.

The convoy, harnessing by successive divisions, to prevent unnecessary fatigue to the men and horses, sets out secretly in early morning; and, if its safety be of vital importance, the space over which it is to pass should have been traversed just before by a movable column. The advanced-guard must precede it by about two hours, for it will be delayed by discharging its necessary functions of scouring the road on each side, impressing labourers, if the roads require mending, levying forage for the convoy, and looking out for suitable halting-places. March of the  
convoy.

The convoy must not be committed to a defile before it is occupied by detachments from the reserve; meanwhile the convoy draws together on the largest possible front, and the advanced and rear guards close on it. When the defile is reconnoitred the advanced-guard passes through, and far enough ahead of the defile to allow the convoy to be parked in rear, while the reserve occupies the heights bordering the defile towards the enemy.

When attacked in force, especially by cavalry, the convoy forms square, the horses facing inward, and the angles and faces are defended by infantry. A rehearsal of what is to be done in case of attack might prevent confusion at sight of the enemy.

If the enemy can be checked, the convoy must continue its march, and the attack should be met at some distance from the waggons; if unable

to defend the ground, the escort should retreat on woods, farms, or other obstacles, and place the park so that the obstacle and the convoy may flank each other, while the troops extend between them.

In case defence seems hopeless, part of the convoy must be sacrificed to obstruct the enemy. As a last resort, the carriages may be destroyed, the traces cut, and an attempt made to retreat fighting.

When an escort of prisoners is attacked it should remain near them, because the assailants will not risk killing their own people by firing. To prevent escape the prisoners should be ordered to lie down, and not rise without orders, on pain of being shot.

Attack of a  
convoy.

The attack of a convoy is much easier than the defence. The assailant can choose his time, and make his dispositions accordingly, while the escort is always hampered and uncertain.

Cavalry alone would not succeed in an attack—it should be supported by infantry and guns; and the force should be divided into three bodies, the principal to attack the escort, the second to assail the convoy, the third in reserve, besides any further detachments that may be required to make feints.

The point of attack must depend on the nature of the country. In a very close country a convoy attacked at once in flank and in rear might be entirely destroyed.

In very open ground an attack on the centre would entail most difficulties on the defenders; while, in general, the combined attack of the head and flank would be most effective, as cutting off the convoy from its destination. Obstacles of ground should be employed to effect an ambush, and false attacks on distant points will force the defenders to remain dispersed.

In case of a convoy succeeding in forming a park, the cavalry attacks the escort, and the guns fire on the park, which will always be set on fire or opened by a few shells; but if the assailants have no artillery, and fail to penetrate, they must draw off and await their opportunity when the convoy is again in motion—moving ahead, meanwhile, and breaking up the roads.

Cavalry alone may be employed with advantage against convoys of baggage, animals, or of prisoners.

The first step towards a military success is to know where the enemy is, and what he is doing. And this is not always so easy as might be supposed, for the extent of the operations of great armies confuses inquiry, and sometimes a great obstacle draws over the hostile front an impenetrable veil. When, in 1859, the armies fronted each other on the Po, Giulay could devise no better plan for discovering the motions of the enemy than sending a whole *corps d'armée* across the river to make a reconnaissance in force. The great disadvantage of this operation is that, as the troops employed are intended only to unmask the enemy and then make good their retreat, they always retire from an action with the air and reputation of defeat. Thus Forey, with very inferior forces, claims to have beaten Stadion at Casteggio; and it is in vain to explain what passes for a defeat by calling it a reconnaissance. Unfortunately, too, for the Austrians, the information they derived from the costly adventure was delusive; for the vigour of the French defence caused them to believe that the main force lay towards Voghera, and that the great operation would be by the right. Hence they were induced to strengthen their left; whereas the Allies marched round their right flank by Novara.

Reconnais-  
sance of the  
enemy.

When armies are near each other, outposts serve the purpose of natural obstacles; and a commander who wants to know what a skilful adversary is doing must resort to secret or armed reconnaissances. The first kind must depend so entirely on the invention and faculty of enterprise of the conductor of the operation that it would be in vain to lay down any rules for guidance. The second must have for its object to push in the pickets and reach the main-guards, beyond which it can rarely penetrate without the risk of bringing on a general action. But the number and position of these will of themselves give a great deal of information about the force and position of the main army.

From commanding ground, or before an enemy who is negligent in covering his front, much may be learnt by a practised general without making an actual attack. Napoleon spent part of the day before Austerlitz at the outposts, while, in his front, the valley of the Goldbach, and the opposite slopes, were covered with cavalry skirmishers, amidst whom rode experienced officers, from whose observations, joined to his own, Napoleon deciphered accurately the movements and designs of the adversary.

In a reconnaissance to observe an enemy on the march, the detachment



is hidden, and the officer in charge goes himself to the front to verify the reported approach of the hostile column. He then rejoins his party, and draws it up by the side of the road, where it will at once be concealed and command a view of the enemy. He must be very much on the alert, or it is likely the flankers of the advanced-guard may intercept him; still, a cool and experienced officer will not be imposed on by an appearance of danger which might deceive a novice. He must aim at discovering the number, composition, and direction of the enemy's troops; their order of march; whether they have artillery; and if they appear ready for action. But before finishing his observations he must send off two mounted men with notice that the enemy is approaching, and that he will in a few minutes make a detailed report.

When Wellington, before Badajos, heard that Marmont was approaching Ciudad Rodrigo, just captured from the French, he sent an officer to observe the movement. From a well-concealed point of observation the envoy marked the march of the French; and, entering a town they had just quitted, found they had left the greater part of their scaling-ladders behind. As their siege-train had been captured in Rodrigo, Wellington, who might else have been drawn northward for the defence of his acquisition, had no fears for the safety of the fortress, and remained to prosecute his immediate design.

A reconnoissance on the rear of a beaten enemy ought to discover what roads the principal masses have taken. Few precautions are necessary; celerity is the main requisite, and light cavalry are the proper troops. All traces left of the enemy are noted, and his main line may generally be known from these alone, as abandoned guns, baggage, arms, and wounded. Such a reconnoissance made on every road after Ligny might have saved Napoleon at Waterloo. By pursuing on a wrong line under a false impression, Wellington failed to gather the proper fruits of the victory of Salamanca.

Reconnois-  
sance of coun-  
try.

It is necessary to supplement the information given by maps, however good, by an actual deciphering of the country by instructed officers.

When M'Clellan moved up the Peninsula from Fort Monroe, he found his maps untrustworthy in important particulars. One of his columns

was stopped by unexpected obstacles; and he was forced to await a complete reconnoissance of the district.

It is very useful for a staff-officer to consider what observations he may with most advantage *habituate* himself to make, so that, under all conditions of ground, he may recognise the essential features, which will now be briefly enumerated.

ROADS.—Their width; which ought to be 20 feet, for free and convenient passage of troops. The minimum width for an emergency must be determined by the space required for the passage of a gun. Their maximum practicable slope is for horses  $\frac{4}{10}$ , for mules  $\frac{5.5}{10}$ , for men  $\frac{8}{10}$ .

Whether they pass over good or bad bottom; whether liable to become impassable in certain weather; whether easily repairable, and if materials for mending them exist near, such as wood fences, stone walls, planks, hurdles, brushwood, straw, furze, or reeds, or, as in the corduroy roads of Canada, small pine-trees.

Contractions of the roads, such as fords, bridges, and defiles; whether practicable for all arms; width, material, and strength of bridges. A bridge where infantry can pass four-deep will bear cavalry in file, and guns singly.

The foregoing particulars must be necessary for all movements in an imperfectly known district; when, for instance, a combination is to be directed from all quarters on a particular point, as in marching to engage the enemy. It is also essential that distances should be expressed in *time* as well as space. Every staff-officer should ascertain, as accurately as possible, the length of his own average paces and those of his horse, and the time in which each accomplishes a given distance.

If movements are to be made near an enemy, he must also note where the road is commanded; what positions it affords in case the march should be opposed; what roads and paths fall into it, and their direction; where it is bordered by trees, hedges, ditches, or marshes; and the nature of the slopes on each side of a bridge or ford, with regard to attack or defence. When other parallel roads are near, the nature of the ground, and communications between them, should be investigated.

FORDS.—Their banks, their bottom, their level at entering and quitting the water. Their position, whether in angles, windings, or straight parts of the stream. The direction of the ford—depth and rapidity of stream—

whether the ford is shifting or permanent—command of the banks. Points existing in the neighbourhood of which use may be made to deceive the enemy as to the real point of passage.

A ford should not be deeper than 3 feet for infantry, 4 feet for cavalry, and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  for artillery. If the stream be swift these limits must be lessened.

A bottom of large stones is bad for cavalry, impracticable for carriages. Gravel is the best bottom. A sandy ford, though good at first, is apt to deepen when many troops pass. It must be ascertained whether the stream be liable to sudden floods, and if so, under what circumstances; and whether it is affected by tides.

WOODS.—The kind of trees composing them; whether adapted for abatis and entanglements; whether the trees are wide apart, permitting cavalry to penetrate, or thick and difficult to traverse; the number of troops they are calculated to hold. Single trees, or other conspicuous objects, should be noted, and their bearings observed, as they may serve for points of alignment, or to give directions to a column. At Magenta the troops under MacMahon were directed through the close flat country on the tower of Magenta, which was the principal point visible among the trees. The nature and direction of the roads through the wood should be noted; and whether the wood would be an advantage or a hindrance in case of taking position near it.

CANALS.—Whether for navigation, or irrigation, or draining of wet lands; their width, length, and depth; slopes of the banks; locks, how situated, and how to be destroyed or protected.

DEFILES.—Their length; whether their gorges are open or narrow; mode of occupying them to cover a retreat; how to distribute troops both to attack and defend them. Whether they can be *turned* if strongly occupied.

RAILWAYS.—Whether for one or two sets of rails. The lengths of embankments, tunnels, and cuttings should be recorded. Embankments may form a commanding position for artillery if the front be clear, if there be means of easily moving the guns up and down its slopes, and if there be roads and paths intersecting the railway near at hand. In posting guns on a straight line of railway, it must be considered whether the enemy can gain the prolongation of the line, and so enfilade them. Where a railway enters a cutting, points must be secured in advance of

it towards the enemy, because, if he establishes himself on the edge of the cutting, he commands the neighbouring portion of the line.

Officers should habituate themselves to consider the capacity of all sorts of railway carriages, and the speediest means of filling and emptying them of troops and horses, not only on the platforms of stations, but on other parts of the line, as Jackson's troops quitted the train on the field of Bull Run. The capacity which a railway station may possess of being rendered defensible must always be considered in the reconnaissance of a district.

**INUNDATIONS.**—A defensive army which cannot find rivers to cover its front sometimes resorts to inundations, by damming up otherwise insignificant streamlets or canals of irrigation, in which case it must be considered how these can be converted back to other channels by dams or sluices, and how to cover or destroy a dam or sluice.

An inundation must not be looked on merely as a space of water of a certain depth and extent. It must be considered whether it is owing to canals, as aforesaid, or to a permanently wet soil having springs beneath it, or to the overflowing of a neighbouring stream. In all cases, how it may be traversed should be ascertained, or, if impassable, what are the shortest routes round it.

**MOUNTAINS.**—In reconnoitring a hilly region, the most commanding points should be first taken, and the ravines which spring thence followed. The watercourses, their volume, rapidity, and direction, should be noted; and of the roads, those which pass along the crests, as generally the most practicable, should receive most attention, those that often cross valleys being less eligible on account of the multiplicity of bridges requiring to be established to secure free access. Defensible positions should be looked for at proper distances for halts and encampments, with wood and water at hand.

**SLOPES.**—Whether all arms can move up and down them; whether cavalry, after ascending, will be in condition to charge immediately.

**FENCES.**—In all districts, the nature of the fences in different portions must be considered—whether easily levelled to afford free communication, as rails, and thin quicksets, and palings; whether forming ready defences, such as banks and ditches; whether rendering portions of a line ineligible for the action of certain arms.



It is evident that, in the performance of these duties, the man who is merely a student, however intellectual, will be very inferior to the shrewd and ready observer who has developed in various pursuits his ingenuity and resource. The staff-officer may bring diversified knowledge into effectual play. Some acquaintance with geology may enable him to recognise at once the character of whole tracts of country, discerning whether they are boggy, gravelly, rocky; what sort of roads may be expected in them; what resources they will afford; and whether field-works will be easy or difficult of construction. Without being a learned botanist, he may often recognise the nature of a soil or a ford from the character of the herbage. And he will find a knowledge of the influence of climate upon soil, upon the rise and fall of rivers, and upon crops, and of the signs which indicate storms, rains, mists, heat, or sudden changes, of great value. Staff-officers who join acquirements to ability and a spirit of enterprise are the springs which, directed by sagacious generals, impart order, force, and purpose to the machinery of armies.

## CONCLUSION.

THE foregoing pages were designed to present an image of modern war ; and if they have not failed of their purpose, the reader will be convinced that military science is not mere pedantry, but a reality of vast importance. For, granting the preceding narratives to be mainly correct, and the inferences drawn from them just, skill in arms is the equivalent of thousands of good troops, and may again succeed, as it has so often succeeded before, in gaining, against odds, victories which fix the fate of nations.

Let us imagine that an army in the field is commanded by a general who has fought his way upward from grade to grade, who is valiant, devoted, and practised in war. He is versed in all routine duties, knows the uses and capabilities of the different arms, can choose and occupy a position, make the dispositions for the march of his columns, stubbornly cover a retreat, and save his army, even after a heavy disaster. But not having a mind capable of comprehensive views, or of deep study, he knows nothing of great combinations. Strategy, in the sense of a flexible science, to be adapted to circumstances, is a sealed book to him : the theatre of war is written in a cipher to which he has not the key ; he can deal with the accidents of the country, when they present themselves as something to be immediately attacked or defended ; but they suggest no large problems by the solution of which a few marches decide a campaign. Cautious, from not knowing when he may venture to be bold, and rash from ignorance of what may be attempted against him, he spoils his offensive movements by hesitation, defends himself by makeshifts, and only half understands his own blunders when they have ruined his army. This is no unfair picture of what has often passed muster in the world as

a respectable leader to be intrusted with the fate of hosts. It would do no injustice to some of Napoleon's most celebrated marshals. Such a one will probably acquit himself with credit so long as he is opposed by no qualities superior to his own.

But let us imagine that a general of a different stamp enters the field : one who has been taught by study and thought, not merely what has been done in war, and how to conform to respectable precedent (though that may be much), but how to meet new circumstances with new combinations. He has mastered the problems of strategy, and can *read* the theatre of war. He knows not only how to draw from a situation all its inherent advantages, but how to produce the situation. Thus, when a great opportunity arrives he is the less likely to lose it, because it is of his own making ; he seizes it unhesitatingly, because he has confidence in his own knowledge of the game ; and in darkness and difficulty his step is assured, because he is familiar with the ground he moves on.

When such opponents are matched, we have the conditions of startling, brilliant, decisive successes in war. And such were the conditions under which Napoleon met his adversaries. On the one side was respectability, relying on revered traditions. Prussian and Austrian generals were not likely to desert prescribed paths in order to strike out independent modes of military action. But Napoleon was not only a man of vast insight, originality, and power, but had been trained amidst influences adverse to all kinds of prescription. The French Revolution was sceptical of military as of political traditions, and asserted in practice the most subversive doctrines. Napoleon, the child and servant, before he became the master, of the Revolution, was the man to combine with the occasion. From the moment when he first assumed command of a Republican army he began to remodel the system of war. His opponents moved their men on the chess-board according to the rules which they took for immutable principles, and the game went on so long as their antagonists were also guided by them ; but when an adversary appeared who only awaited the development of their methodical movements to play his own secret, profound, and decisive game, all equality of chances disappeared, and the only variety in the result was in the mode of defeat. In 1796 he concentrated his force against the extended front of the enemy, broke it at Millesimo, and confusion and ruin poured in after him at the gap. At Piacenza he broke

out on their line of retreat, and in a moment threw them back beyond the Mincio. Repeatedly, around Mantua, he met and defeated, with the same troops, the desultory dispersed attacks of his adversaries. In that single year, the first in which he commanded an army, he illustrated completely the system of war which deserves to be styled the Napoleonic, since he was, if not its inventor, its greatest exemplar.

In 1800 and 1805 he descended upon the line of retreat of the hostile armies and enclosed them. In 1806 he aimed the same stroke, cut the Prussian armies from the Oder, and threw them on the coast of the North Sea. In 1809 he varied the stroke, for he broke the centre of the enemy's line, and threw back the fragments beyond the capital. And here ended the unbroken flow of his successes; and it ended for two reasons—first, because it was inevitable that his constant adversaries should in time come to catch some of the spirit of his own system, and to meet him with his own weapons. The strokes they dealt against his communications in 1812 and 1813 would probably have been impossible for them ten years before. Beaten into proficiency, the terms they engaged on were no longer so unequal as at first. But, besides that, the Napoleonic system is more successful in single campaigns than in protracted wars. It is wasteful of men; great marches can only be performed, great blows delivered, at a certain cost of material. The immense opportunities for which he laboured existed only for the moment. When he had broken the enemy's front, when he had concentrated superior numbers against them, still, if he neglected to crush them, the opportunity would vanish. Hence troops were poured on, effecting with carnage what might have been effected with small loss, had time permitted—but time did not permit. The result would be worth a few thousand men; let it be won at the price, since for the enemy the cost would be far greater. When armies are equal in numbers, constant losses of five against three, in thousands or tens of thousands, soon decide a campaign. But when this system is pursued for a series of campaigns, against enemies whose resources are double, it must fail in the end. His own losses crush the victor. Lee, like Napoleon, wins campaigns by making skill compensate for numbers; but, like Napoleon, he yields at last to the superior resources of enemies who continue to press him to exhaustion.

Such wars *à l'outrance*, and such inequality of resource in the combat-



ants, are, however, the exception. And the moral of this book is, not that numbers and wealth must prevail, nor that great generals are heaven-born ; it is, on the contrary, that the conditions of success are attainable and capable of demonstration ; that the preparation of study and thought is essential to skill in war ; and that, being thus prepared, a leader, in order to achieve the most notable successes, need not be gifted with inspiration, but only with the more appreciable, though still rare, combination of sound sense, clear insight, and resolution. It is partly for the sake of pointing this moral that the achievements here recounted have been divested of the glow and ornament with which historians naturally embellish, while they confuse, the record of deeds that form the pride of nations, and that these feats of arms have been dealt with in their logical, not their rhetorical aspect. If, of the many Englishmen who possess the qualities necessary for great soldiers, some few should find that this book has in any degree smoothed the path that leads to honour and achievement, the years passed in studying its subjects, and the many months devoted to its composition, will have been sufficiently fruitful of result.

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