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WITH THE ROYAL HEADQUARTERS
IN 1870-71

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WITH THE ROYAL HEADQUARTERS

IN 1870-71

BY

Cecil's
GENERAL J. VON VERDY DU VERNOIS

VOLUME I

OF

The Wolseley Series

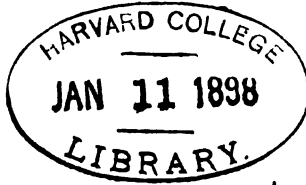
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THIS VOLUME
BEING THE FIRST
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IS BY
EXPRESS PERMISSION
Dedicated
TO
FIELD-MARSHAL
THE VISCOUNT WOLSELEY
K.P., G.C.B., G.C.M.G.
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE FORCES

Gibraltar, April 19th, 1897.

DEAR CAPTAIN JAMES,

I HAVE read with interest the list you have sent me of the military works to be published as "The Wolseley Series."

The subjects are wisely chosen, and the authors will be generally accepted as soldiers who are competent to express valuable opinions upon them.

I am much flattered by having my name associated with an undertaking that is designed to improve the professional knowledge of our officers, and I rejoice to feel that under your able editorship its success is assured. In some instances I see you are not only editor but also translator, for which duty, if you will allow me to say so, your intimate knowledge of the German idiom eminently qualifies you.

I hope the officers of her Majesty's army may never degenerate into bookworms. There is happily at present no tendency in that direction, for I am glad to say that this generation is as fond of danger, adventure, and all manly out-of-door sports as its forefathers were. At the same time, all now recognize that the officer who has not studied war as an applied science, and who is ignorant of modern military history, is of little use beyond the rank of Captain. The principle of selection, pure and simple, is gradually being applied to the promotion of all officers, especially in the higher grades. As years go on this system will be more and more rigidly enforced.

It is gratifying to know that a large proportion of our young officers are ambitious, and without doubt there is now many a subaltern who hopes to be a Field-Marshal

or to be shot in the attempt. Experience enables me to warn all these determined men of how small their chance is of ever reaching any great position in the army unless they devote many of their spare hours every week to a close study of tactics and strategy as dealt with in the best books upon recent wars.

In this series of military works from the pens of first-class writers, the military student will find ample material to assist him in fitting himself for high command, and in the interest of the Empire and of the army I earnestly hope he will avail himself of it.

I know how truly this work is undertaken as a labour of love by you as editor and by all who are helping you. But I also know that you and they will feel amply repaid if it assists the young officer to learn the science of his profession and, in doing this, to improve the fighting value of the service, to the true interests of which we are one and all sincerely devoted.

Believe me to be,

Very truly yours,

WOLSELEY.

THE WOLSELEY SERIES.

THE object of this series of books is to place before British officers and others translations of the best foreign military books in an English dress. It is also intended to add original works on portions of our military history which have, hitherto, been somewhat neglected. The great part played in national life by the armies of continental nations, has given rise to a much larger military literature than exists in England. The incessant struggle for supremacy has led to the production by master-minds of treatises on various parts of the art of war, which are of the highest importance, but many of which have hitherto only existed in their own language. It will be the aim of this series to make them available to English readers.

England has been engaged in no great war since the beginning of the century. It follows, therefore, that both strategy and tactics have been more widely treated by foreign authors than by our own, not only for the reason set forth above, but also because having usually taken a personal part in them they are naturally more interested therein.

It is sometimes urged that lessons of continental conflicts are in no wise useful to ourselves; this is ridiculous. The guiding principles of the operations of war are the same, whether they are conducted against civilized or savage foes. If our army were prepared only to meet the latter it need scarcely be maintained in its present form, but no one can say with our widespread

Empire that we shall not be called upon to meet civilized opponents. If we are able to deal with them, we shall certainly have no difficulty in defeating savages, for it is by the training and discipline which render troops fit to meet those of their own state of civilization that they prove superior to the savage when they meet him in the field.

Strategy is the same, whether used against Arabs or Frenchmen. The tactics employed differ as the weapons of the enemy differ. But the soldiers trained to meet the highest class of opponents are, *ipso facto*, better qualified to deal with the inferior.

This series, therefore, will contain translations of well-known foreign writers, and it will also contain original English works dealing with the kind of warfare in which we are most frequently engaged, and with certain special phases of British military experience which have hitherto been somewhat inadequately dealt with. The history of British arms is replete with interest and is second to none in moving incidents of gallantry. Many of these have already been recorded, but the actual lessons to be learned from them have not always been systematically treated. It is hoped, as this series progresses, to do so, and to secure for future generations the practical deductions to be made from the deeds of British soldiers. A list of the volumes already arranged for will be found at the beginning of this book, and it will be the aim of the editor to add from time to time such works only as seem of the first importance in the theory and record of military achievement.

WALTER H. JAMES.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THESE "Personal Recollections of the War of 1870-71," now first issued in book form, have already been partially published in articles which appeared in the "Deutsche Rundschau" in 1874 and 1895. Going again through my letters and the notes in my diary of that period, I have here and there added additional matter.

But still they are nowise intended to form an exhaustive description of the war, or even a complete record of personal experiences. Their publication is due to the renewed interest in those great events which the twenty-five years' jubilee has awakened, and their object is a limited one, viz. to give an insight into the daily life of the Royal Headquarters Staff during those times. The opinions held and mental impressions formed at particular moments with regard to the great events of the war are recorded for the most part in the form in which they were noted down at the time, without regard to whether, in the light of better information, they subsequently proved correct or wide of the mark. For thus only can the "Recollections" give a faithful picture of the views obtaining at particular junctures.

J. VON VERDY.

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INTRODUCTION.¹

THE author of these reminiscences, whose portrait is given on the front page, General Julius Adrian Friedrich Wilhelm von Verdy du Vernois, sometime Prussian Minister of War, and well known as among the first military writers in Germany, is descended from one of those emigrant French Huguenot families which have furnished so many distinguished soldiers and officials to the Prussian service. He was born in 1832 in the town of Freistadt, in Silesia, and educated for the career of arms at the Cadet Schools of Potsdam and Berlin, which latter he left in 1850, on being appointed to the 14th Foot, then stationed in Berlin, with the rank of second lieutenant. In after years Verdy wrote the history of this, his first regiment, and on his retirement from the army in 1890 the Emperor William appointed him its honorary chief.

During the years 1855-8 he went through the usual course of instruction at the Staff College in Berlin, from which he was appointed to do duty on the General Staff, for a time in the Topographical Branch, until in the year 1861 he was definitely appointed to it, with the rank of captain.

Verdy served on the staff in every grade up to the year

¹ For a considerable portion of the personal details in the Introduction I am indebted to Mr. Sidney Whitman, the well-known author of "Imperial Germany."—ED.

1877, when he was promoted to the rank of major-general. In 1879 he was appointed Director of the General War Department, forming part of the Ministry of War; in 1881 he was made lieutenant-general; in 1883, Governor of Strasburg; in 1888, full general; and in April, 1889, Minister of War, in which position it fell to him to defend in the Reichstadt the proposals of the Government for the now existing military organisation. Shortly afterwards, in October, 1890, Verdy retired into private life, and was awarded by the Emperor one of the highest personal distinctions in Germany—the “*Ordre pour le Mérite*.”

These are the bare official records of a busy life, during which he played an important part in many historical events of the first magnitude.

It is a long-standing custom in the Prussian service to send officers of the General Staff abroad whenever stirring events are happening, that they may gain experience and utilise it later for the benefit of their own army. Thus von Verdy found himself suddenly taken away from his routine work and sent to Poland during the rebellion in the “sixties,” where he was attached for a period of nearly three years (January, 1863, until December, 1865) to the headquarters of the Russian Army, at first under Grand Duke Constantine, subsequently under Count Berg.

During the Prusso-Austrian War of 1866 von Verdy served as major on the staff of the Crown Prince (the late Emperor Frederick), who commanded the Second Army, having previously been employed on the Headquarters Staff in Berlin, in the section which dealt with the Austrian Army. The war of 1870 found him a lieutenant-colonel and

chief of a section of the staff of the Royal Headquarters under Count Moltke. It is to his experiences on this occasion that we owe the present narrative. Von Verdy was thrown into continual personal contact with the great leaders of this memorable campaign, and thus his recollections are of considerable historical value and interest.

After the war von Verdy's scientific attainments found a fine field of usefulness in his appointment as Professor of Tactics at the Staff College at Berlin, where his name soon became famous in connection with the system of instruction devised by him and known to military students as the "Applied Method," an ingenious plan by which the student is intelligently led to the practical solution of military problems by the study of similar historical instances. Throughout his career von Verdy has been a voluminous writer on military subjects. In addition to the "Royal Headquarters," the following is a list of his principal works, several of which have been translated into French, English, Russian, Italian, Swedish, Danish and Dutch :—

"THE SECOND ARMY IN THE CAMPAIGN OF 1866."

"STUDIES IN THE LEADING OF TROOPS."

(1) "THE INFANTRY DIVISION AS PART OF AN ARMY CORPS." ¹

(2) "THE CAVALRY AS PART OF AN ARMY."

(3) "STUDIES ON THE REGULATIONS FOR FIELD SERVICE."

"A CONTRIBUTION TO THE QUESTION OF CAVALRY PRACTICE-RIDES."

¹ This has been translated by Colonel Hildyard, Commandant of the Staff College.

"A CONTRIBUTION TO THE WAR GAME."

"PRACTICAL STUDIES IN MILITARY HISTORY."

(I) "TACTICAL DETAILS FROM THE BATTLE OF CUSTOZZA."¹

"STUDIES ON WAR BASED ON THE FRANCO-GERMAN WAR, 1870-71," of which three parts have been published.

The ordinary military histories, like most other historical works, fail in giving to the reader the well-springs of thought which have led to the deeds they record. It is impossible to pass a judgment on the latter unless we know the mental processes which determined them. In the following pages we find published the views held at the time of action by those who devised the operations which laid the power of France prostrate at the feet of new-born Germany.

It is only within the last few years that we are beginning to know the inner life of the German military leaders during this war. The "Official Account" is very official, and neither awards blame nor distributes praise. Nothing contained therein reveals the opinion of the Royal Headquarters Staff on Steinmetz, on the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, on the problem of the duration of the war after Sedan, or the still more vexed question as to "bombardment" or "blockade" for the speedy reduction of Paris.

All these points are dealt with in Verdy's book, the translation of which is now offered to the British public.

The work is not only of general interest to the ordinary reader, it is of especial value to the military student.

¹ Translated by Colonel Henderson, Professor of Military Art and History, Staff College.

Those who know the general course of the Franco-German War will find many difficult points cleared up by a perusal of the straightforward record of the following pages.

For its general and particular interest, therefore, this book has been chosen to take the first place in the "Wolseley Series."

A map of the theatre of war has been added, which was not published with the original.

WALTER H. JAMES.

First Part

**THE WAR WITH THE FRENCH
EMPIRE**

B

First Part.

THE WAR WITH THE FRENCH EMPIRE.

I. From the Mobilisation to the Removal of the Royal Headquarters from Berlin to Mainz.

I. BEFORE MOBILISATION.—GERMAN PLAN OF CAM- PAIGN.

IN the commencement of July, 1870, the third class of the Staff College students began the practical Staff Tour which forms the termination of their three years course. It was under the direction of the Instructor in Staff Duties, Lieutenant-Colonel Bronsart von Schellendorf I, Out of friendship for him, as well as from interest in the tour, Lieutenant-Colonel von Brandenstein, Captain von Hahnke and myself undertook, as we had in previous years, to lead the various sections. This practical instruction in the subjects which have formed the course of military education at the Staff College is of the highest value, and it is always looked forward to with the greatest pleasure by all those who are to join it. It is, indeed, not only that part of the three years of study which is the most instructive from a professional point of view, but also, in spite of the hard work it sometimes involves, it is

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one of the most agreeable and one which an officer ever after remembers with pleasure. The change from the office and study to a healthy outdoor life, the fresh air, the riding through country frequently unknown, the stimulating effect of the constant exercise of those faculties, so abundant among our military youth, all have a singular charm of their own. When, therefore, we assembled at Oranienburg we were all in high spirits at the prospect before us.

But no sooner had we started than the first news arrived that the Spanish Ministry had offered the vacant throne to the hereditary Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern, and that the offer having been made public had aroused among the French nation a general, though perhaps artificially nurtured, excitement which brought a collision with Prussia within the range of possibility. As incident succeeded incident the possibility at times seemed a certainty, and then again the situation would become less strained. Of course we took great interest in these occurrences, without, however, allowing them to interfere with our work. The idea of a war with France was not novel to us, it had been in the air for a long time, and had even seemed probable in 1866, before the peace with Austria was concluded, when the French hankering after the left bank of the Rhine found expression, if only for a short time, in official despatches. Ever since then we had been convinced that a collision sooner or later was inevitable; but we were in a position to await it with equanimity. Our army was ready to strike, our alliance with the other German states solidly established, and we had employed our time in making the most careful preparations.

And yet, no one thought that a war would break out at that particular time. King William I. was at Ems; the chief counsellors of the Crown were nearly all away from Berlin; and the officers on whom the preparations for any war would chiefly fall, especially those of the General

Staff and of the Ministry of War, were for the most part absent, either on official tours, or on leave.

The news from France of course attracted considerable attention, but did not call for any immediate measures. On our part there was no wish to bring about a war; which was thought the less probable at the moment as the candidature of the Hereditary Prince had nothing to do with German affairs. How far our leading authorities were from desiring war just then the correspondence given below will show.

On the 11th July the War Minister at Berlin, General von Roon, received from Ems the following telegram from the King's aide-de-camp, General von Treskow¹: "The intelligence from Paris, which will have been communicated to you by the Foreign Office, requires that the necessary measures should be *prepared* which may be required for the protection of the Rhenish Provinces, Mainz and Saarlouis. His Majesty the King expects immediate proposals, if necessary by telegraph, to meet the occasion."

This was the answer:—

" 11th July, 4 o'clock p.m.

" To His Majesty the King, Ems.

"After considering the matter mentioned in this morning's telegram, and consulting the Ministers of State here present, Privy Counsellor von Thiele, General von Podbielski and Colonel von Stiehle,² I humbly propose to your Majesty not to take any special steps, because Saarlouis can be made safe from assault within twenty-four hours, and the fortress of Mainz, situated at five days' marches from the frontier, can be supplied with a sufficient garrison within forty-eight hours. But partial military measures on our part would

¹ General von Treskow is described as "General-Adjutant," i.e. a general officer holding the appointment of aide-de-camp. — ED.

² He was officiating as chief of the staff during the absence of von Moltke.

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call for similar ones on the part of the enemy and we should drift into war. If your Majesty is of opinion from definite news of offensive measures on the part of the French, that war is unavoidable, then the immediate mobilisation of the whole army would be advisable.

“(Signed) v. ROON.”

More than once in former times when the political situation was threatening had the army been gradually brought to a war footing by successive steps, which had clearly shown the unsatisfactory character of such a proceeding. For as mobilisation for war demands the whole fighting strength of the state it can only be well done when it is carried out in a uniform manner and as one act. Moreover, owing to the universal liability to bear arms, the mobilisation of the army is a measure of such far-reaching importance, entailing sacrifices felt most severely by every class of nation, that it should only be resorted to when war appears absolutely unavoidable. When once the army is on a war footing, it will scarcely be possible to arrest the course of events, if the political questions involved be such that, in public opinion, they can only be solved by an appeal to arms.

It is the duty of the War Ministry and the Staff to prepare in time of peace so that everything may be ready for mobilisation and surprise made impossible, if the diplomatic authorities are equal to their task.

During the course of the tour we were at Neu-Ruppin, where we had taken up our quarters for some days, when the news arrived which showed us that the diplomatic situation had become more acute. Many an exciting hour we consequently passed with our friends of the 24th Regiment (the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg Schwerin's), who were quartered there and who had received us in the most hospitable manner. No one who has actually known what war really is, and has been an eye-witness of

the misery and distress which it produces, even to the successful side, can possibly wish for it. But on the other hand it is easy to understand how the soldier, when once war has been decided upon, looks forward with pleasure to entering on the highest duties of the calling to which he has devoted his life. When we left Neu-Ruppin, therefore, we parted from our comrades with the words, "May we meet again on the field of honour." But very different was the meeting with our gallant friends of the 24th Regiment from what we had looked forward to in those pleasant hours at Neu-Ruppin. It was on the field of Vionville—Mars-la-Tour, when we rode over it with General von Moltke on the 17th August, the day after the battle. There we found them lying in heaps on the position they had bought with their blood. Loyally had the regiment done its part to win the imperishable fame of that day, with a loss of no less than 56 officers, one surgeon and 1099 men in killed and wounded. Among the fallen were its commander, three field officers and the whole of its captains and company commanders.

Immediately after our departure from Neu-Ruppin the rising waves calmed down again for a time, in consequence of the Hereditary Prince's refusal to accept the Crown of Spain. We were again able to think calmly of our plans for the future, and each began to consider what to do after the tour was finished. When we were in Templin on the 15th July the situation suddenly changed again. We had just finished our dinner, when a telegram directed the leader of the tour, Lieutenant-Colonel von Bronsart, to return to Berlin immediately, and ordered me to take command. A few hours later Brandenstein, whose duty on the Headquarters Staff was to superintend the arrangement for the transport of the troops, was recalled, and soon afterwards a similar order came for me also. Meanwhile a rumour had already spread at Templin that during the night the order for mobilisation would be issued, a rumour which

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seemed to be confirmed by the fact that the telegraphic office in the town was to be kept open.

Under these circumstances Hahnke also joined me, and we both drove on a hurriedly hired country cart by moonlight to the nearest railway station, Angermünde. The students of the Staff College left Templin, some that same day, others on the following morning, as they received orders, to join their regiments with the least delay possible. Our horses were brought back by road.

At the station of Angermünde we found Brandenstein waiting, as there had been no train since he came. We here learned that the orders for mobilisation had been given, and found the battalion quartered there at work, as soon as it was daylight, getting ready for war. The men were either procuring their new uniforms for the field and their ammunition, or were engaged in bringing the waggons out of their shelters and loading them. From all sides men were streaming into the station, singly or in small detachments, to join their regiments, or to accompany transport. Everything was in full movement. The mobilisation had evidently begun, and deep was the impression which it, the forerunner of grave times and bloody conflicts, made upon us.

We went on to Berlin by the next train, and arriving there in the course of the morning, went direct from the station to the office, 66 Behrenstrasse. Looking now at the palace on the Königsplatz, one wonders not a little how the old building with its cramped accommodation could ever have contained the whole apparatus of the Headquarters Staff. In addition to it there was only another smaller house in the Schönenberger Strasse on the other side of the canal (rented, I believe), in which the trigonometrical section was located.

When we left the office for home that evening we were able to say with the fullest conviction, "Everything is ready. Go on!" Various notions are prevalent among people as to what is meant by the preparations for war,

and it may therefore be useful to explain them a little more definitely. They are the business of different authorities, but chiefly of the Ministry of War and the General Staff. The duty of the former is, mainly, to see to the mobilisation and supplies of every kind (such as ammunition, rations, etc.); that of the latter to arrange everything to do with the operations of war, i.e. the movements of the army in the field. Both departments must and should prepare, down to the minutest detail, everything necessary long before the outbreak of war.

When the mobilisation is completed the troops have to be transported, according to a pre-arranged plan, from their peace stations to the points where they are to be massed. The choice of these depends on the objects which the leaders have ultimately in view. They must, therefore, be carefully considered and determined on beforehand. Their selection and the consequences which may arise from concentrating the troops at them, form what is generally called "The plan of campaign."

It must here be observed, however, as the late Field Marshal Count von Moltke has pointed out in the official account of the 1870-71 war and in other writings, that by such a plan of campaign is not meant a complete working out of all the operations to the end of the war, for it is impossible to foretell what will occur after the first collision with the antagonist. What happens after that, will depend on the circumstances under which it has taken place and the exact situation created by the result of the action. A commander-in-chief will, no doubt, always have certain main objects in view which will take different shapes, according to the character of the situation at the outbreak of the war, or the course which events may take subsequently. In 1870, there was no doubt as to what the main object was. It consisted in getting at the French army and beating it whenever found. That done, diplomacy would be free in its turn to attain its objects.

Different conditions may, however, make it necessary to

try, first, to solve lesser tasks. Thus in the Danish wars, the enemy's army was beyond our reach as soon as it withdrew to the great islands, and we had then to confine ourselves to the occupation of his territory on the main land; we could only aim at the possession of such islands as it was possible to reach with the means available. But in a war with France, we saw that everything depended on defeating the French army, and there was, therefore, only one course for us to pursue, viz. to mass our own forces as near as possible to the frontier, and then, after completing our assembly, to make for the enemy, wherever he might be. Of course we might make our conjectures as to where this would be, but whether the enemy would take exactly the course which we considered the right one, could not be foretold with any certainty. For the dispositions of an opponent depend on the views he holds and the objects he desires to attain. Hence just as opinions in ordinary life differ widely, even on the simplest matters, so also in war, what one side expects the other to do, may often be exactly the reverse of what actually occurs.

Shortly after General von Moltke became chief of the staff of the Prussian army he had laid down his views as to the conduct of a war against France. In the course of succeeding years these had been revised and developed in accordance with the changes which had taken place meanwhile in the political and military situation, alterations and additional preparations being made wherever it seemed necessary. The General's plans had received the sanction of the King, and thus in 1870, all the orders and other arrangements needed when war might break out with France, were all ready elaborated in the Staff Office, and it was only necessary to fill in the date on each document. Similarly at the Ministry of War all the requisite preparations were finished and all the instructions were ready to be issued forthwith.

The main idea of von Moltke's plan for the conduct of

the war was to act on the offensive. With this end in view the massing of our troops had to be executed in such a manner that the war could be immediately carried into the enemy's country and in a direction which would ensure meeting his main body. Owing to its geographical position, the German territory on the left bank of the Rhine, Rhenish Prussia and the Bavarian Palatinate, projecting far into France, seemed to the General the fittest place for concentrating our forces. An advance was possible from here in every direction, even if the French were not to respect the neutrality of Belgium and to march through that country. At the same time, it was the best way of protecting South Germany. For if the French should advance from Strassburg, we were in a position, possessing as we did the passages of the Rhine, to meet them with superior forces on either bank of the river. Should they make the attempt to push through Baden and Wurtemberg, such an undertaking could be easily checked on our part by an advance on the right bank, which would have cut their communications and involved them in a catastrophe in case of defeat. The result of these considerations was that von Moltke determined to assemble the main force on the left bank of the Rhine, and to advance thence to seek the enemy and bring about a decisive action.

But he had also not forgotten the course the enemy might pursue to oppose him.

It may here be remarked that in making a plan of operation it is always well to begin first of all by getting a clear idea of what our own intentions are and only then to ask oneself what the opponent may do to foil them. If the opposite course were taken, and one were first to consider what the opponent could do, and then deduce one's own plan, the latter would be dependent on the opponent's will. This would be to allow him to lay down the course of procedure and deprive oneself of the most important factor in the conduct of war, viz. the initiative.

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Taking into consideration the movements the French were capable of, the General came to the conclusion that owing to the geographical position of France and the arrangement of the railroads, the French army would most likely be assembled in two groups, the main army in Lorraine round Metz and a second of lesser strength in Alsace. If the French determined to concentrate a greater preponderance of their force on the one side or on the other, this would only be possible at the expense of the time which would be consumed in the transport by rail of the extra troops. To have acted thus would also have lessened the security of the territory denuded of troops.

Assuming the enemy to act as supposed, it was deemed advisable to push our main army forward towards Lorraine. At the same time it was not forgotten that by so doing the French corps, which would presumably assemble in Alsace, would be left on the flank, or rather in the rear, of our advance, and might by moving in a northerly direction seriously endanger any prolonged offensive movement towards the interior of France. Moreover, it was impossible to leave South Germany exposed to the attack of this force, even if were only a small one. It was necessary, therefore, to have a separate army capable of meeting any French forces that might assemble in Alsace. By assembling it at first on both sides of the Rhine close to the frontier, we remained free to use it as occasion might require, wholly or in part, on the one or the other bank of the river. But operations of the character indicated could only arise in case the French succeeded in assuming the offensive before we were ready. If no such movement took place on the part of the enemy while we were engaged in concentrating our forces, the army forming our left wing might then be utilised for the offensive, against Strassburg by the left bank of the Rhine. This would stop any advance of the French towards Southern Ger-

many and thus effectually protect that part of our territory.

If on the other hand the enemy's forces in Alsace were to make a stand against us and be beaten, we should then be in a position to advance with the part or perhaps the whole of our left wing into the interior of France.

Taking all these facts into consideration, General von Moltke's plan was briefly as follows. The greater part of our forces, divided into two armies on account of its size, was to be concentrated on the Saar and then pushed over it, while a third army was to be assembled between Landau and Germersheim, with a view to assuming the offensive against Alsace. The Baden and Wurttemberg troops were at first to be left on the right bank of the Rhine.¹

It was also necessary to consider the possibility of the enemy landing on our coasts, and the effect of considerable French forces rapidly advancing into German territory, without waiting to be completely equipped for war. From the former not much was to be feared, as our offensive movement into France would make the troops, destined for a descent on the coasts of the North Sea and the Baltic, much more necessary at home than there. In case the French should make such an attempt, the reserve formations available along the coast could meet them in sufficient strength; aided as they would be by an infantry division, which had to be left behind in any case, for use if necessary against Denmark, whose attitude was somewhat doubtful.

As regards an advance of the enemy with imperfectly mobilised forces, the General did not think it quite out of the question, but believed that such an operation would be highly dangerous and unfortunate for the French. We

¹ This army was in the war known as the Third Army, and the Baden and Wurttemberg Divisions formed part of it. It was never necessary to leave these behind, as the French did not assume the offensive.—E.D.

needed, in that case, only to place the points at which our own corps were to detrain a little farther back, which could be done even after the transport of the troops had already begun, and then we should be certain very shortly to have sufficient force at our disposal to meet the attack with every prospect of success, while the enemy would undoubtedly begin to feel all those disadvantages which must arise when troops are brought into the field before they are fully equipped for war.

Finally, our relations with Austria had to be considered. It was clearly quite natural that this state should be anxious to make good at the first opportunity which offered, the damage which it had suffered in and since the unsuccessful war of 1866. Its internal difficulties and its financial position were, indeed, great obstacles, and it might be assumed that Austria-Hungary would only take part in the conflict if France gained some success. But still we were bound to reckon with the possibility of action being taken by the former. The existing conditions, however, furnished the means to meet this contingency. For the transport of the immense masses of men from the interior of Germany to and beyond the Rhine could only be accomplished gradually, and it was necessary to bring more than one corps by each of the through lines of railway, so that the last detachments could only be moved after a considerable interval. Before this was ended it would become clear whether Austria meant to enter at once into the conflict. If up to this moment she had not commenced to mobilise, a considerable start would be gained for our operations against France; which we were strong enough to begin without waiting for the last corps to be brought up by rail. These would, therefore, remain available if needed for use against Austria, and the General would have formed them into a defensive army, which, resting on Dresden and the fortresses of the Elbe, was considered sufficiently strong to meet the first advance of the Austrians.

Such were the chief points considered in General von Moltke's plan, and for which all the necessary preparations had been worked out absolutely complete, down to the smallest detail, and approved of by the King. When, therefore, the order for mobilisation was given there was nothing to be altered and everything ran its course as intended.

It is evident from what has been said that, at the commencement of the war it was, speaking generally, the French army which formed our objective; at the same time it is clear that the plan of operations could not possibly go beyond the assembly of our forces, their distribution, and the beginning of hostilities. After this anything like a pre-arranged plan was out of the question; what would be done next depended entirely on the way events might shape themselves. But no one could foresee with certainty how that would be.

What I have said will probably suffice to give a rough outline of the nature of the plan of campaign and of the considerations on which it was based. Although a good many other and important factors had to be dealt with in working out so extremely complicated an affair, many of which would have considerable influence on the issue of the war.

The manner in which the various armies were constituted depended, partly on the tasks allotted to them, and partly on the direction of our railway lines. The First Army was made up of the VII. and VIII. Army Corps; the Second Army of the Guards, the III., IV., IX., X., and XII. Saxon Corps; while the Third Army was composed of the V. and XI. Prussian and the I. and II. Bavarian Corps, as well as the Wurttemberg and Baden Divisions.

At first the corps which would be the last to be transported, and which were in case of need reserved for action against Austria, were not incorporated in the armies. They were the I., II., and VI. Army Corps, as well as the

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17th Infantry Division, which was told off to watch Denmark. The newly formed Landwehr Divisions, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, and Guards were also left behind, for the present to protect the coast.

The cavalry, except that which was attached to the infantry divisions, was formed into six independent divisions of unequal strength, some of which were placed under the commanders of the three armies, while others at first remained available for use as needed.

2. DECLARATION OF WAR—BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON THE COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF AND THE STAFF OF THE ROYAL HEADQUARTERS.

The occurrences which had meanwhile taken place at Ems are well known. The demand made by the French Ambassador to King William to give an assurance that he would never again allow a Hohenzollern prince to become a candidate for the Spanish throne was an insult which the whole German nation felt as one inflicted on itself. The threatening news from Paris induced the King to return to Berlin on the 15th July. The Crown Prince, the Prime Minister, as well as the Minister for War and General von Moltke, went to meet him as far as Brandenburg, and when he entered the capital he was received with the greatest enthusiasm by the population. The report of a general mobilisation in France being confirmed, the same order was immediately issued, during the night of the 15th—16th July, to all the troops belonging to the North German Confederation. The same night a similar order was also given in Baden, and directly afterwards in Bavaria and Wurttemberg.

Such was the state of affairs when we arrived in Berlin on the 16th July from our tour. The next few days were passed by us in answering the most varied demands for information and in sifting the reports coming in from all sides, especially those concerning the French army. In addition to this we had to re-arrange the office work in

accordance with the redistribution of the Headquarters Staff for war purposes, and to tell off the various officers, who were now arriving from every point of the compass to constitute the staff, to their new duties.

It may be observed here that the work of Staff Officers at any Supreme Headquarters confines them for the most part to their office. It is only there that the reports and information arriving uninterruptedly from all sides can be sorted and transmitted to the various sections to be worked out. Owing to the extension of the telegraph system the officers engaged in this work do not get to rest until late at night, after all the reports from distant corps and differen[^] detachments have come in. In addition to this there are the necessary consultations about the situation at the moment, the issuing of orders, and the interchange of opinions with regard to possible future events. Consequently the members of the General Staff spend but little time out-of-doors except when marching, or when an action is expected, or when, as happens not infrequently to some of them, especially the Chiefs of Sections, they are sent off to different army or other commanders to explain the intentions of the Supreme Headquarters or to ascertain the views of the former on the situation before them. During the hours spent in the office waiting for information, and not occupied with official work, time is available to note down current events in a diary, to assist one's memory in writing letters for the information of those at home. This is how I am now able to give information about battles, and other comments, as they were written down at the time. These notes were not, of course, made on the actual day, but only when a free moment was available for the purpose.

We were so occupied in Berlin that we had scarcely a minute to spare to look after our personal outfit, which we had to leave chiefly to others. It is a good plan to make in peace time an exact list of all that is needed for war, and to revise the list from time to

time. To procure the number of horses required (each Chief of a Section wanted eight, including carriage horses, instead of the peace strength of three), besides the necessary saddlery, requires a great deal of time. Every Chief of a Section must also have a carriage to take his baggage and that of the officers in his Section, as well as some materials for office work. In this respect, Brandenstein and myself made an agreement which proved very useful afterwards: he procured a covered waggon for the luggage, large enough to carry his and his officers' baggage as well as that of my Section; and I got an open brake, with room for twelve persons, including the driver. This carriage, which we baptized the "War Chariot," did us excellent service. It enabled us when moving long distances equivalent to two days' march (for the headquarters remained in the same place as long as possible), to do the journey quicker than otherwise would have been possible, as we were able to send relays of horses in advance. Besides which we were able to go to work as fresh as possible, as soon as we had reached our new quarters. Moreover, as we were all together in the brake when driving, we could use maps better than if we had been on horseback, and we had plenty of time to discuss the situation in all its bearings, so that no time was lost in doing so before beginning work. The "War Chariot" was also placed at the disposal of officers who were sent with special missions to the various Army Headquarters. The riding horses were led close behind, so that the officers on arrival at their destination could mount comparatively fresh horses and accompany the troops on the march or to the battle-field.

The formations of the various armies for the war and the appointments thereby rendered necessary were made shortly after mobilisation. The choice of proper individuals to command the armies is very important, for, however well the sword may be sharpened, it still needs an arm that can wield it, and the question was to find the

right arm for each place. This heavy responsibility rested on the Military Cabinet, at the head of which General von Tresckow then stood, aided by Colonel von Albedyll, who was subsequently many years its chief.

The supreme command over the whole of the German forces was taken by His Majesty the King. This was natural, not only because of the importance of Prussia in the coming conflict, but also and above all, because of the personal ascendancy of that most beloved and revered monarch. The great mind of our Royal master, together with his simplicity and straightforwardness, his talents as a general, which had already stood the test so splendidly, the perseverance with which he ever carried through what seemed to him the right thing—all this created throughout the whole German army an unshakable confidence, based on the success of the last war, that he would bring us through the present struggle with equal glory and success.

At his side we saw again to our great joy his faithful and well-tried paladins, those three bright stars which will shine through all future ages, and of whom the world might well envy us the possession—Bismarck, Roon, and Moltke.

To the command of the Second and Third Armies were called Prince Frederick Charles and the Crown Prince Frederick William of Prussia. The former had devoted his whole life to his profession as a soldier. By unremitting work he had prepared himself for the great tasks which he had been called on to undertake, and which he had gloriously carried out. The training of the III. Corps, which he commanded, had become the model for the whole army. A well-tried leader in the war with Schleswig-Holstein and with Austria, the whole army regarded him with complete confidence. At his side, as Chief-of-the-Staff, stood Colonel von Stiehle, who was considered to be one of the most eminent Staff Officers.

The Crown Prince Frederick William had led an army

before the enemy for the first time in the Austrian war of 1866; its brilliant success had established his fame as a leader. His Chief-of-the-Staff was General von Blumenthal, his faithful assistant in the former campaign, who had previously earned for himself a great reputation in the Danish war.

I take this opportunity in order that I may not be thought to undervalue the military capacity of this departed scion of the Hohenzollerns, who will ever be dear to all German hearts, to insist particularly on the fact that the Crown Prince united in his person in an eminent degree all those qualities which go to make an army leader. Everyone knows this who was near him during either of the two campaigns, and I myself can attest it from my own experience, as I had the good fortune in 1866 to serve on his Staff. It was on the 28th June of that year, when the V. Corps was engaged near Skalitz, the Guards near Soor, that the Commander-in-Chief of the Second Army found himself obliged, much to his regret, to keep far away from the actual fighting so as to direct the various corps according to the reports as they came in. He therefore took his stand on the heights of Kosteletz, i.e. midway between the two corps then engaged. We had been present the day before at the victorious engagement of the V. Corps before Nachod, but we also knew that the attempt of the I. Corps to debouch on the same day from the mountains at Trautenau had not been successful. Moreover we received, while on the heights, telegraphic information of our defeat at Langensalza and of that of our allies at Custozza. On the issue of the two engagements then going on depended the success or the failure of the operations of the Crown Prince's army. It was indispensable that we should be victorious in both places, for only then was it possible for the whole army to debouch from the mountains and to establish communications in the direction of Gitschin with the army of Prince Frederick

Charles and that of the Elbe, which had already penetrated into Bohemia. Our position was therefore grave.

The Crown Prince assembled the officers of his Staff around him; leaning on his sword and fixing his clear eyes on us, he explained to us once more the whole position of his army minutely and in the most lucid manner; he repeated the instructions which had been given, as well as the reasons for them, alluding at the same time to the great importance of the day. To this he added the question whether anyone of us had any proposal to make which we thought might contribute to success. When we had answered in the negative, he finished with the words, "Well, then, we have done our duty; we have considered the position in every direction to the best of our ability, and have made dispositions which so far as we know must and should succeed; all the rest lies in the hand of God." Not a trace of excitement, no glimpse of a pessimistic view of things was observable in our noble Prince. With the greatest calm and attention he followed the course of the two engagements and perused with a cool head the reports as they came in and gave his orders accordingly. As is well known, the bravery of the commanders and the troops gained a victory in both places, at Soor and at Skalitz.

General von Blumenthal agreed with our great Moltke in the maxim, "First reckon, then risk." It produced a smile among us, therefore, when one day we saw him praised in a newspaper as a model of caution. His plans were certainly well considered, most minutely, even to the smallest details; but this once done, to dare was always what he loved most; it was his proper element! I can still see him at Kosteletz when the fighting on both sides increased in violence, turning to me (the special study of the Austrian army being more especially my sphere of work) with the question, "How many men do you think Steinmetz has before him over there?" I answered, "He is sure to meet one fresh corps; but there must be another

not far away, and if the Austrians have made their dispositions properly, he may even find a third in front of him." This answer was far from reassuring, considering the state of affairs, and it turned out afterwards to be correct. But it made little impression on General von Blumenthal; he pushed his forage cap to the back of his head and, running his fingers through his hair, said, "What a pity we can't be with Steinmetz; I should be curious to see how the old fellow will settle them."

This officer, the most eager fighter of those days, the "Lion of Nachod," as the people called him, was given the command of the First Army. The nomination certainly aroused some misgivings. The universal and high appreciation of the merits of this gallant fighting general was merited in every respect. But however high his military capabilities were, his personal qualities and his independence of character were such as to make it difficult for his superiors to deal with him, and made friction probable if he, at the head of an army, were subordinate to a higher command. These doubts later on proved to have been not altogether unjustified. The choice of a proper Chief-of-the-Staff may in such cases do much to smooth matters, and the best possible was made in the person of General von Sperling, a clear-headed, circumspect, and resolute officer. But even his eminent military as well as personal qualities were not able to prevail with such a character as that of General von Steinmetz.

For the rest, the generals who were at the heads of the army corps had, almost without exception, held high command and gained distinction in former wars, and possessed the full confidence of the troops. Manteuffel had been the victorious leader of the Army of the Main in 1866. Fransecky, the hero of Maslowed at Königsgrätz; Constantin Alvensleben; Kirchbach, who had led the 10th Division so gloriously at Nachod and Skalitz; Tümping, the distinguished Goeben, Zastrow, Manstein, all well-

tried commanders of divisions in the '66 war ; the Crown Prince of Saxony, who, with his countrymen, had earned in the Prusso-Austrian war the high esteem of friend and foe ; the gallant Bavarian leaders Hartmann and von der Tann, whose names were mentioned far and wide with respect ; while at the head of the Baden and Wurttemberg troops were the Prussian Generals von Beyer and von Obernitz. It is scarcely possible to imagine a force better provided with leaders than was the German army.

For us personally the question of the composition of the staff with the Royal Headquarters was of special importance. In this particular also, circumstances were so favourable that it will not be easy again to find such a happy combination.

I do not need to speak of General von Moltke. Not only his deeds but also his private character are perfectly familiar to the German people. We all considered ourselves most fortunate to have been with him in great and grave times. The illustrious example which all his personal qualities afforded, the greatness of his intellect which grasped every situation, the energy he displayed in carrying out his plans, joined with his great simplicity and modesty, could not fail to have their influence all around him. During the whole campaign we felt his powerful influence, while his never-varying kindness towards every one of us only increased to the utmost the feeling of personal devotion and the natural reverence we owed to him. Thus we looked up to him as people do to a venerable patriarch.

At his side as Quartermaster-General of the army stood Major-General von Podbielski.¹ I had not known him intimately before. A certain decision in his manner made him appear somewhat abrupt to those who had not the opportunity of becoming better acquainted with him.

¹ Known later on, during the siege of Paris, as "Nichts neues vor Paris," i.e. nothing fresh in front of Paris. A frequent form of telegram which bore his signature.—ED.

But it was not long before I found out that this man of keen intellect and inflexible will possessed a heart that soon made us all his most faithful supporters. With his chivalrous feelings, his ideal conception of duty and true devotion to friendship, he bore a chief part in maintaining a cheerful spirit of co-operation and a healthy tone among the staff. I only mention this because the great influence of the general in this respect is not universally known. I need not enter further into his other merits, but as regards his capability as a soldier I may sum up by saying : Moltke could not have had a more faithful and more efficient assistant during the campaign than he was.

But we were favoured not only in having such chiefs, good luck had also befriended us in the composition of the Staff in our immediate sphere. The three chiefs at the head of the three sections were, Bronsart for the movements of the troops, Brandenstein for transport and commissariat affairs, and myself for everything concerning the French army. But this division only roughly indicates the most important tasks of the sections, each of them had various other matters to look after in addition. We three had been friends ever since we had been boys in the cadet school, where, although belonging to different companies, we had played the war game together with Count Alfred Waldersee and Frederick Wilhelm von Notz¹ (who died, alas! too young). This had attracted the attention of our instructors so much that they encouraged our efforts at the game, which we had started on our own initiative. The year 1855 brought us into the same division at the Staff College, where we passed the three years together.

Here also what was at that time called the "garrison game," in which the officers of the whole garrison of Berlin were invited to take part, offered to us, beside our scientific pursuits at the college, a common point of

¹ This promising officer, who was on the Staff of the Crown Prince in 1866, died of cholera at Brunn.

interest which did much for our military education, the more so because the war game was very popular, being under the direction of very eminent generals, such as General Vogel von Falkenstein and Count Oriola. General von Moltke himself did not disdain to come from time to time during the last year of our course there and to follow it attentively.¹

As Bronsart, Brandenstein and myself had always kept up our former friendly relations and had been in the habit of exchanging opinions on military matters, our whole training in troop leading had been of so uniform a character as would have been difficult to find in any three others. Our friendship had been still further strengthened by all the three of us being placed together on the Staff soon after leaving the College. Another sign of our close friendship is shown in our participation in various Staff tours, as I have before mentioned. This constant contact in service as well as in private intercourse was of great advantage to us now in our new functions on the Headquarters Staff.

One of us, for instance, might suddenly be called away from his work while writing down an order to one of the armies, to receive some fresh instruction, another would then go and finish the document which the first had begun, and yet the whole would be completed in the same spirit. Moreover, we were of the same age, only a

¹ This war game served me in good stead in the way of promotion, as during the latter time of my course at the Staff College I was appointed to the Headquarters Staff on the recommendation of Major Freiherr von Wrangel, whose acquaintance I made by this means, and who has always remained my true friend. He had at that time already earned a great reputation by his services with the army of Schleswig-Holstein. All Schleswig-Holstein knows him still by the name of "The Drummer of Kolding." In 1866 he commanded a brigade of Goeben's division and distinguished himself at Kissingen: in 1870-71 he gathered fresh laurels as commander of the 18th Infantry Division, especially before Orleans. He last served as Governor of Posen, and left the army as a general. He now lives in retirement on his estate of Sproitz, in Lusatia, in the full enjoyment of health.

few months separating us. I was the youngest of the three, and had just completed my thirty-eighth year on the day of the declaration of war.

I cannot pass by the friends of my youth, my faithful companions in so memorable a time, without once more recalling them to remembrance.

Bronsart von Schellendorf I. was tall and slender, elastic in his movements, with a fresh healthy complexion and fair hair verging on brown; his countenance indicated both ability and good humour; his conversation showed his ability, while the clear logic of his arguments was eminently convincing. His whole character and presence showed the knight *sans peur et sans reproche*. He possessed a thorough grasp of military affairs, and his forecasts were singularly shrewd; he was also active, indefatigable, and reliable in the highest possible degree. The instructions issued from the Royal Headquarters, which were models of their kind, were mostly his work.

Karl von Brandenstein, or, as we generally called him, "das Karlchen" (Little Charles), resembled Bronsart in many of his intellectual gifts. He too was modest, straightforward, and simple in his ways, sincerity and trustfulness were written on his face. When thoroughly interested—and there were many things which interested him intensely—his eyes flashed fire and he would support what he considered right with an uncompromising tenacity. He also possessed an extraordinary capacity for work, and his mind was full of original ideas on the most varied subjects. The excellent plan for the transport of the troops to form the various armies was mostly his work. It was a feat the more to be admired because there was, up to that time, no practical experience in moving such large bodies. In personal appearance he was, in contrast to Bronsart, short of stature, but well set, with fair curly hair and pale complexion.

Both these eminent men have, alas! been taken too early from their friends and the army, after both

had attained to the highest positions in it. Bronsart, who was afterwards for many years of the greatest service to his country as Minister of War, died in command of the I. Army Corps, while Brandenstein was Chief of the Engineer Corps and Inspector-General of Fortifications.

General von Moltke's aide-de-camps were Major de Claer and his brother-in-law, Lieutenant von Burt. In their hands the comfort of our chief was well looked after, while de Claer, the elder of the two, seemed to be made on purpose to form a pleasant connecting link between the general and his staff.

The highly important position of Chief of the Executive Department (Operative Bureau) was held by Major von Blume. The duties of this post are extremely onerous, and their fulfilment demands not only a thorough understanding of the varying positions, but also a keen memory, the strictest habits of order and vigilance, keeping everything in readiness so that in issuing orders nothing may be overlooked which had been previously ordered to be carried out, or implied in consultation. The course of the campaign showed that in all these respects there were no hitches or mistakes. This was chiefly due to Major Blume, and deserves the greater recognition because this work of issuing orders, although it does not come before the world, is of the utmost importance for the successful issue of the operations.

As regards the remaining officers of the Headquarters Staff, there will be plenty of opportunity to refer to them individually in the subsequent course of the narrative. I will here only mention their names and say what became of them afterwards. The following is a list of them:— Major von Holleben, of the Saxon Staff, now a retired general, whose last employment was in the command of a division; Major Krause,¹ died as major-general, he was last commandant of Spandau; Major Blume, is now the general commanding the XV. Army Corps; Captain von

¹ Both he and Major Blume were ennobled.

Bülow, who was, however, soon afterwards given other employment, is now the general commanding the VIII. Corps; Captain von Winterfeld, now general, and commanding the Guard Corps; Captain Zingler, major-general, and Governor of Ulm; Captain Count von Nostitz, now major, who only re-entered the service for the war, lives on his estate in Silesia; Lieutenant Schmidt, of the Lithau Dragoons, left the service with the rank of major. Of the two aide-de-camps, von Claer is a retired major-general and was last employed as commandant of Magdeburg; Lieutenant von Burt is a major on half-pay.¹ Major-General von Podbielski died as Inspector-General of Artillery.²

To the General Staff belonged, furthermore, as a member of the Executive Commission for Railway Transport, the Privy Counsellor Kienel, an engineer employed in the Ministry of Commerce, whose eminent capabilities were soon generally acknowledged, and who through his personal qualities became a much appreciated and sympathetic companion to us during the whole campaign.

Owing to the intimate relations which united together not only the chiefs of sections, but also the other members, who had frequently been together before, everything worked, under the auspices of the Chief and General von Podbielski, in the most admirable manner, not only in matters of duty, but also socially.

To show that this description is not only based on my own impressions, I will quote those of General von Blume, as recorded in his "Reminiscences of Moltke,"

¹ In the German text z.D.=Zur Disposition, which means available for service. Every General Officer who takes his pension is as a matter of course put z.D. With the lower ranks it is a reward for good service.—E.D.

² All these officers, who were actually members of the General Staff, have therefore had a brilliant career, inasmuch as in the course of time two of them became Ministers of War; five (or counting also Bronsart, six) commanded army corps or held the post of inspector-general, two became generals, and (including von Claer) four major-generals.

in words as warm-hearted as they are true: "Among the staff of General von Moltke during the whole of the campaign, lasting more than six months, there was never one single jarring note. The staff formed a circle of friends, each of whom endeavoured not only to do his own duty to the utmost of his ability, but also to do his best for the others. If this be a proof of its happy composition, the result was also largely due to the magical influence of the great man at its head. The superiority of his master mind left no room for jealousies. His fidelity to duty, his strict adherence to fact, his modesty and unselfishness, the dignified and high-bred serenity which never left him for a moment, even in most critical situations, the kindness which never allowed a single impatient word to cross his lips—these exemplary qualities, brilliantly brought out by successes which belong to the history of the world, had a powerful effect on those around him. To be an assistant to such a man, in such times, was a good fortune and an honour which everyone tried to make himself worthy of by thorough devotion to his duty and the suppression of all petty jealousies. It may truly be said that Moltke's mind ruled in Moltke's staff."

The spirit which prevails in a headquarters staff is by no means a matter of indifference. Its imperturbability, the absence of any sort of "croaking," the self-confidence evident in its whole behaviour, as well as the firm belief in a victorious issue, not only further the work that is done there, but communicate serenity and confidence to all who come in contact with the members of the staff.

At the same time; it is true, a certain degree of reserve is necessary. The more so because it cannot be avoided that a number of persons congregate at headquarters who have no actual employment, and who are quite naturally apt to be curious as to what is going on and what is going to be done. But as everything

that is planned for the future must necessarily be kept strictly secret, it is only possible to avoid questions being put on these matters by showing great reserve in answering. This attitude brought upon us chiefs of sections the nickname of "the demi-gods," an appellation which did not affect us much.

In close relationship with the staff were also the Commissary-General of the army and the Chief of the Field Telegraph Staff. The former post was held by General von Stosch, whose clear grasp of the changing situation joined with the energy with which he carried out his intentions gave a complete guarantee that everything possible would be done in this difficult department. With him I was also on terms of intimacy, having been under him in peace time as a staff officer of the IV. Corps, while in the campaign of 1866 we both belonged to the staff of the Crown Prince. Colonel Meydam was the Chief of the Telegraphic Department; his indefatigable activity and agreeable personal qualities gained him friends everywhere.

General von Moltke was greatly pleased with the constitution of his staff, and expressed his satisfaction repeatedly.

The course of business at Royal Headquarters was as follows. Every morning there was a conference at the chief's quarters on the situation and the dispositions to be made, at which, besides the heads of sections, there were present also Major-General von Stosch, the Quartermaster-General, the Chief of the Executive Department, the senior aide-de-camp, and sometimes also the Chief of the Telegraphic Department. Then followed General von Moltke's report to the King, and after this the expedition of the dispositions decided upon. Further reports and information which came in during the day were settled according to their importance, either by the chiefs of sections concerned in conjunction with the Chief of the Staff and the Quartermaster-General, or after discussion in the sections

in general conference as above described. As far as the general demeanour of the staff was concerned, it was of course serious, corresponding to the situation, and yet it was a cheerful one, for we thought ourselves sure of success. Only a short time ago, I was reminded by an old acquaintance, our present Minister of Finance, Herr Miquel, of an answer which I then gave him as to the possible issue of the war: "You will see that we shall settle them (the French), although unhappily it will cost us much blood." At the same time we did not at all undervalue the worth of the gallant French army, and its eminent inborn military qualities, nor the greatness and gravity of the impending struggle. But the successful campaigns of former years had enabled us to estimate what our own troops could do, and had, at the same time, given us good reason to rely implicitly on our officers of every grade. We thought ourselves superior to the French, especially in the higher leadership, and also in our artillery. As regards the mitrailleuses, which were surrounded with such deep mystery and in which great hopes seemed to be placed in France, we were not much convinced of their wonderful powers. The Emperor Napoleon had, it is true, given his personal attention more particularly to the development of his artillery, but the war proved very soon that it did not come up to ours, and the remark of the Emperor is well known, when he met our King the day after the battle of Sedan, "In my artillery I feel myself personally conquered." On the other hand we were aware that the French rifle possessed many advantages over our own, and that this fact would most likely increase our losses; but we hoped that these advantages would be neutralized by getting up to short ranges.

For the issue of the war, however, the considerable numerical superiority which the forces of United Germany possessed was certain to weigh down the scale in our favour. According to the best sources of information, the

32 WITH THE ROYAL HEADQUARTERS IN 1870-71

French army numbered 567,000 men, including the contingent of 1869, which was, however, only to be summoned on the 1st August, while the calculations on our side gave us for the month of August a total of 982,000 men. The field army of the enemy was calculated in this estimate to amount to 343,000 men (as a matter of fact it was only about 336,000 men), while ours without staff, artillery, engineers, and the trains, amounted to 519,000 men.

Thus we began the war full of enthusiasm for our Royal leader, certain of the justice of our cause, elevated by the unanimity and the readiness for sacrifice shown by the German princes and the whole German nation. Convinced of the excellence of our army, with the most perfect confidence in the high advisers of the Crown, completely prepared in all respects, we entered upon the struggle which was to decide the future of the German people under the most favourable conditions.

3. MEASURES TAKEN BY THE FRENCH—PROTECTION OF THE FRONTIER—DEPARTURE OF THE ROYAL HEADQUARTERS FROM BERLIN FOR MAINZ.

The intentions of the French military authorities were not known to us; only conjectures could be made, such as have already been mentioned when explaining the German plan of operations. These proved to be right in so far as the assembly of the French troops, with their main forces round Metz and a lesser force at Strassburg, was concerned. In addition a reserve army was to be formed at Châlons. Up to the present day nothing has been published which gives in any detailed manner what exactly were the operations intended by our opponent at the time. A fully worked out plan of operations as it existed on the German side does not seem to have been prepared; but the Emperor had certainly a definite idea as to how they were to be conducted, and this idea was communicated by him to some of his generals and discussed with them.

It would lead us too far were we to discuss the origin of this plan, but it is interesting to form some notion of the intentions of the Emperor. To this problem something like a key is given in the pamphlet "Des causes qui ont amené la capitulation de Sedan," of which it may be assumed with tolerable certainty that the statements therein contained represent the opinions which the Emperor Napoleon himself entertained on the subject. In this publication we read: "In order to neutralise the superiority in numbers of the opponent, it was necessary to cross the Rhine with the greatest rapidity, to separate South Germany from the North German Confederation, and to bring Austria and Italy into an alliance with us through the impression of a first success." And further on: "The plan of campaign, which the Emperor entrusted only to Field Marshals MacMahon and Lebœuf, consisted in assembling 150,000 men round Metz, 100,000 at Strassburg, and 50,000 in the camp of Châlons. The junction of the two first armies on the Saar and on the Rhine would not disclose our real objects, as the enemy would still be uncertain whether the attack was to be directed against the Rhine provinces or against the Grand Duchy of Baden."

As soon as the troops were assembled at the points indicated, the Emperor wished to unite the two armies and cross the Rhine at Maxau, between the fortresses of Rastatt and Germersheim. Arrived on the right bank of the Rhine, he would have forced the Southern States to remain neutral, and then turned against the Prussian forces. While this movement was being carried out, the 50,000 men assembled at Châlons under Field Marshal Canrobert were to march to Metz, to cover the rear of the main army as well as to protect the northern frontier. At the same time the fleet cruising in the Baltic would have detained, and made useless for the field, a part of the enemy's forces in the north of Prussia, which would be kept there to defend the coast from invasion.

The projected manœuvres would have been practicable if we had not been in a position to meet them in time, with superior forces, and, as a matter of fact, the assembly of the French forces in their groups, at the points indicated above, was to some extent attempted, but was not completed, when the German armies crossed over into French territory, and thus anticipated the attack.

This showed that the intentions of the French leaders were based on wrong data.

And yet the Emperor Napoleon was accurately informed with regard to the considerable superiority in numbers of the German forces, and their power of rapidly mobilising. The reports of the French Military Attaché, Lieutenant-Colonel Baron Stoffel (which were partly published during the war, in 1871), admit of no doubt on this head. These reports are remarkable, both for their intimate knowledge and correct estimation of the German military arrangements, and the manly frankness with which the author expresses his views. We need only point to a report sent in in 1869 in which he says :

“I have always been careful in my reports to the minister of war never to exceed the bounds of my purely military functions.”

And then he goes on :¹

“ Mais l'Empereur ayant bien voulu me demander lors de mon dernier séjour à Paris, qu'elle était mon opinion sur les chances de guerre avec la Prusse, je présenterai ici quelques appréciations, toutes personnelles, propres à compléter et préciser celles que j'ai déjà données de vive voix.

“ Les points principaux que je désire établir sont les suivants :

“ 1° La guerre est inévitable et *à la merci d'un incident*.

“ 2° La Prusse n'a pas l'intention d'attaquer la France ; elle ne désire nullement la guerre et elle fera tout son possible pour l'éviter.

¹ Rapports militaires by Stoffel, p. 302.—ED.

“ 3° Mais la Prusse est assez clairvoyante pour reconnaître que la guerre, qu'elle ne désire pas, éclatera infailliblement et elle fait tous ses efforts pour ne pas être prise au dépourvu le jour où l'incident fatal se produira.

“ 4° La France, par insouciance, par légèreté et surtout par ignorance de la situation n'a pas la même clairvoyance que la Prusse.”

But the warning voice of this intelligent officer had no influence on the decision. The Emperor, certainly, counted on the assistance of Austria, Italy, and probably also of Denmark. The illusion, which had been indulged in with regard to the attitude of the South German States, had already been largely dispelled, a simultaneous beginning of the war in conjunction with the above mentioned states was not possible, and France had to enter into the war at first alone, while the participation of allies depended entirely on the successes of this first period. But any close study of the military situation and a methodical working out of the plan of operations must have resulted in the conclusion that such successes were not to be reckoned on.

All military considerations were against bringing on war. If, in spite of this, the Emperor allowed himself to be drawn into one, the motives must have been other than military.

From the day of the French mobilisation the military measures in France followed each other with confusing precipitation. The troops were brought in the greatest hurry at once to the frontier, without being put on a war-footing in their garrisons, the corps of General Frossart, concentrated at the camp of Châlons, being the first that deployed within a few days on the line of the Saar.

But such haste always involves great disadvantages. These lie not only in the fact that the troops, after providing for all the necessary detachments, will only have very weak cadres available, and, what is still worse, will be deficient in transport and other train services, which are

indispensable if operations are to be begun at once, and which in no country can be organised fully during peace.

In addition to this, the reserves which are called out must first be assembled in the depôts and equipped in order to be sent to their respective regiments, which they have considerable difficulty in finding, especially when they are on the march. This was more than usually the case in France, at this time, as it possessed a very unfortunate system of centralisation for all supplies. This led to further complications and overcrowding of the railroads. Such a system always contains the germs of confusion and disorder, and if a power resolve to risk all the grave drawbacks which a mobilisation on this principle entails, it can only be with a view to gain other advantages which outweigh the objections. This would only have been the case, if an invasion of the enemy's country had been actually carried out, immediately after assembling a sufficient number of troops on the frontier. The French may have fully intended to do so, but the execution became impracticable under the circumstances above set forth.

With the same precipitation as the mobilisation there followed, on the 19th of July, the anniversary of the death of our ever beloved Queen Louisa, the French declaration of war, at a time when the French army was by no means in a position to begin operations on a large scale and in a proper manner.

The Germans on their part preferred not to place bodies of any great strength on the frontier at first, but to carry out their carefully-planned mobilisation in a methodical manner in the garrisons. If, by doing so, they were somewhat tardy in massing their troops on the points threatened, they were, when this was ended, in a condition to prosecute the war vigorously. Therefore, our staff looked on calmly at the French proceedings. If they really advanced with forces unequal to large operations, it was sufficient, as Moltke had foreseen in his plans, to shift a little further back some of the points where the troops

were to detrain, in order to save them from the risk of being attacked and harassed, while as yet incompletely mobilised, by an opponent, who for the time might be superior in numbers. It was easy to foresee that we should, in that case, soon be in such a position to meet the advance of the enemy with superior numbers, and in complete readiness for action.

This measure, viz. the shifting backwards of the points of detrainment, was actually resorted to when the point of assembly of the Second Army was fixed nearer to the Rhine than was originally contemplated. Our chief, certainly, was very reluctant to propose such an alteration ; but prudence demanded it, in order that the concentration might not have to be carried on in the face of an opponent who was, not indeed fully mobilised, but yet in force, and who if he had any dash would have been in a position to considerably embarrass that operation.

After weighing all the possibilities above mentioned, General von Moltke thought it sufficient, in making his arrangements for the protection of the frontier, and for the observation of the enemy, to use for this purpose the various small detachments quartered in the nearest garrisons.

In Prussian territory the troops of the 16th division (General von Barnekow) quartered at Trier, Saarlouis and Saarbrücken were rapidly available, as were in Baden detachments of the Grand Ducal Division. On the other hand, in the Bavarian Palatinate, where the forces present were not sufficient for the task, further troops had immediately to be sent forward.

The duty of these several frontier detachments was not a light one. The detachment at Saarbrücken especially—one battalion of the Hohenzollern Fusilier Regiment and three squadrons of the 7th Uhlans—under Lieutenant-Colonel von Pestel, found itself in a very difficult position, being face to face with the main body of the enemy. But it performed its task with

extraordinary energy and boldness. The fears entertained concerning its fate among the members of our Staff were certainly great, and when encounters became more and more frequent, and the enemy appeared in its front in ever greater numbers, it was resolved at last, in order not to expose it to a check, to send the detachment telegraphic instructions to evacuate Saarbrücken and fall back. However, we received an answer from Lieutenant-Colonel von Pestel something to this effect: "Leave us here, the other side are more afraid of us than we of them." In view of such confidence, and considering the brilliant manner in which the detachment had acted so far, it was now left to the Colonel's discretion to remain or to retreat as he saw fit.

Still it was only to be expected that the sudden massing of French troops on the frontier, while our troops were still completing their mobilisation quietly in their peace stations, would arouse anxiety and excitement, which would spread to districts far away from the frontier. From one corps on the right bank of the Rhine there even came an inquiry whether some part of it had not better be, at once, set in motion for the protection of the river.

It was part of my duty then to report twice daily to the King the upshot of the news received as to the French army. On one of these occasions the King happened to speak of the uneasy feeling among the people; when I ventured to express an opinion to the effect that the French would probably not cross the frontier at all, or if they did so, would not get far, His Majesty tapped me on the shoulder, and said with a smile: "Ah, you young people always see things 'couleur de rose.'"

It was not long before our troops too were on the way to their points of assembly on and beyond the Rhine not far from the line of the Saar and on the Alsatian frontier. The methodical use of the means of transport by rail, the skilfully executed plan of making the different lines work in concert, which was due to Brandenstein and the

members of the executive commission, Director Weishaupt and Privy Counsellor Kienel, made it possible to assemble the armies in a comparatively short time. After a sufficient number of troops had concentrated in the districts appointed for assembly, and the further advance on foot had already been begun, the moment had arrived for the Royal Headquarters also to approach the seat of war. These were therefore transferred to Mainz, and started from Berlin at 6 p.m. on the 31st July.

The number of persons, horses and vehicles belonging to such a body, including the necessary guards, is so considerable that it has to be divided into various sections, which can only be transported one by one. It is of course desirable to reduce it as much as possible, but it must necessarily be large when the supreme command is in the hands of the Sovereign. It is, in that case, indispensable that the chief of the Foreign Office should accompany the Sovereign to the seat of war, and many branches of the different departments of the Government, including the War Office, have also to be represented. As regards the last named, the question has often been discussed whether the minister ought properly be in the field in person or whether a representative suffices. At that time we were all of opinion that the Minister of War had better remain in the capital, and ought only appear in the field as an exception, and then only for a short time. In this view I can only say that I have been confirmed on reconsidering the question in later years, when I myself was at the head of the War Office. All matters referring to new organisations of troops, supply of ammunition, siege guns, hospitals, uniforms, even the construction of new railways, a great part of the commissariat and a thousand other requirements can only be supplied from one's own country, and need the whole personal authority of the War Minister to make things run smoothly, and to prevent friction. But in order that the latter may remain accurately informed as to what the authorities in the

field intend to do, and be able to meet in good time any wants that may arise there, it will certainly be necessary to have a superior officer of the War Office attached permanently to the Supreme Headquarters.

Concerning the internal organisation of the Headquarters Staff, it is well known that it consists of two branches, to the first of which belong all those persons who are to be always at the disposition of the Commander-in-Chief, either because they are needed for the immediate conduct of operations, or for some other sufficient reason. The second portion, on the other hand, is not so immediately connected with the actual work, and is often looked upon, and not without good reason, as a very troublesome impediment, but yet one which no headquarters will probably ever be able to get quite rid of. Consideration must be shown for allied princes, for representatives of foreign powers whose presence under certain circumstances may be very desirable; there will be officials who must be held in readiness for future contingencies, especially for assuming the administration of occupied hostile territory; again, newspaper correspondents will probably always have to be admitted. Such personages will thus never be quite absent from headquarters, but it will be well—with all due regard to their claims—to limit to the smallest possible number the non-official section of headquarters.

In the train in which the King travelled there were, besides his personal suite, the Military and Civil Cabinet,¹ also Count Bismarck with the necessary officials of the Foreign Office, the Minister of War with some officers, and General von Moltke with his whole Staff, as well as the Chief of the Commissariat, and the Chief of the Field Telegraph Department. Proposals had been made to send the greater part of the General Staff by another train, but had been decidedly rejected by General von

¹ These have no counterpart in England. They are advisory bodies dealing with certain portions of the military and civil administration. See for example, p. 19—ED.

Moltke, as cases might occur when he would require the presence of any one of his officers, even during the railway journey. Even at the moment of getting into the train one of these little hitches occurred which are unavoidable when so many different groups that have been working hitherto independently of each other, have suddenly to co-operate as one body. The carriages had been assigned to their various occupants according to the instructions of Brandenstein as chief of the Executive Commission for Transport. Each carriage and compartment had a placard stating whom it was reserved for; but on our arrival at the station, it turned out that one of the officials of the King's household, who had had charge of the railway arrangements for the latter, had thought fit to upset the whole thing, and arrange the distribution otherwise, and that in a manner which favoured other considerations rather than those necessary from a military point of view. Our official, however, caught a Tartar in meddling with Brandenstein, for he put the matter straight again with such vigour, that no one interfered with him afterwards. I only mention this incident, in itself insignificant, in order to remark that, unavoidable as such friction is in putting the whole machine in motion, it was limited, in our case, to minor points only, and that we always experienced the greatest friendship on the part of the Royal Household, from Count Pückler to the indefatigable and circumspect Hofrath Kanoki.

We were much more annoyed on another occasion by the interference of another party. It was on the day when we arrived before Paris, and reached our quarters at Ferrières late in the evening, having been in the saddle since the early morning. Tired and hungry as we were—we had had nothing to eat the whole day—we revelled in the anticipation of a dinner prepared for us by the quartermasters sent on in advance. But, unfortunately, the War Minister, who, with his party, had arrived before us, was of opinion that we should not reach Ferrières that

evening, and had, therefore, polished off our dinner, and we were left fasting. Then, indeed, for a few hours, we *were* wrathful!

The General Staff had a large saloon carriage at its disposal for the railway journey, which contained, beside the main compartment, two smaller ones, one for the Chief and the Quartermaster-General, the other destined for a branch which was quickly extemporised and which Major Blume was placed in charge of. In spite of the great heat the journey went off tolerably well; only during the two nights it lasted, our rest was being continually disturbed by the noise which the perpetual singing of the "Wacht am Rhein" produced. The news had soon spread far and wide, that the train which conveyed our beloved Sovereign to the seat of war had started from Berlin, and wherever this became known thousands and thousands of people came streaming, not only to the stations, but the crossings, and, in fact, to wherever a road led near to the railway, all intent, even when the darkness prevented them from catching a glimpse of the universally revered monarch, on giving him a sign of their patriotic feelings by singing that stirring song, bidding him farewell, and sending their blessings after him. The unceasing noise produced thereby was so great that our ears rang for several days afterwards with the hum of the song and the sound of the guns that were fired on the way.

The concourse was greatest in Cologne. The train was of very great length, and the last carriage, in which we were, could not enter the station; so stopping outside we looked down upon the illuminated town, upon the Rhine reflecting the lights, and a multitude of men which seemed to be innumerable. Here also the strains of the "Wacht am Rhein" were roared out around us uninterruptedly. It was splendid and exhilarating; but as the crowd broke through the barriers, rushed on to the platform, and pressed towards the foremost carriages

in order to see the King, we were unable to reach the refreshment rooms. Fortunately, we had taken the precaution to lay up in our carriage a little reserve store for such occasions.

From the two incidents mentioned it is evident what great importance was attached, even in the General Staff, to the question of feeding; many a remark in the letters written at the time will give still further proof of this fact. Indeed, for the members of the General Staff, it is a necessary condition to go to work with a full stomach, not merely for the sake of personal preservation: the man who has had sufficient food does not write orders in a severe style, unless it is necessary; the hungry one, on the other hand, is apt to give expression to his own state of discomfort through his pen.

It will be easily understood that in the case of a superior staff which is at liberty to select the best places for its quarters, food is not very difficult to find. But yet, a man is required for this purpose who devotes himself thoroughly to the good of the staff mess, and who has a special talent for this kind of thing. Count Nostitz was invaluable to us in this respect as in others. We often owed a meal to him, even on the battle-field, after we had given up all hope of getting anything to eat at all.

During the railway journey a few hours were devoted to a game of whist, for which General von Moltke had a well-known partiality. There is, indeed, scarcely a better relaxation existing than a "rubber," and we stuck to it during the whole of the campaign, whenever circumstances permitted, in order to give the General an hour's distraction. The unceasing discussion of the gravest questions, even after there is no longer any practical utility in doing so, consumes much mental energy. If one tried to fill up spare time with conversation on other subjects, the mind would very soon revert to the old groove; but to tear oneself away for a time from the exciting business of the day, refreshes, and it is a wise thing under such

circumstances to seek distraction whenever it is possible. Do we not see every day with what delight many of our over-worked and jaded statesmen look forward to their evening game at "skat"?

At that time our great chief was still a very indifferent card-player. It was delightful to watch him when he was in doubt whether he ought to "finesse" or not. He could lay down his cards on the table, bend his head forward, and look his neighbour for some time straight in the face with his great eyes saying: "I must try and find out from his face whether he has the card." He used to do this in such an amusing way that not only the player in question, but all the rest would end by bursting out laughing. When the General had made up his mind, and played his card, it often happened that his knowledge of physiognomy had deceived him, and that he had played wrong. Then he would at once put down his cards again, raise both hands and exclaim: "What a good actor that man is, to be sure!" It did not much matter, for in these games there were no great sums to be gained or lost.

The thirty-seven hours of our journey passed tolerably quickly, thanks to the varying incidents which occurred on the way: besides, in spite of the many disturbances mentioned, it afforded us sufficient rest to be able on our arrival at Mainz on the morning of the 2nd August, to set to work quite fresh, and work enough we found, now that we had reached the region where the armies were assembling in such numbers.

II. The Course of Operations up to the Investment of Metz.

I. STAY IN MAINZ—ENGAGEMENT OF WEISSENBURG— BATTLES OF WÖRTH AND SPICHEREN.

ON our arrival at Mainz the King took up his quarters in the Grand Ducal Palace, while the General Staff was lodged in a hotel near the Rhine. As for me, my stay was a short one, owing to an occurrence which took place during our journey. The details of this incident I can no longer remember sufficiently to be able to guarantee every word, but in the main the following is a correct account of it.

In the course of the second day of our journey, General von Podbielski stepped out from one of the smaller compartments of the carriages into the large one, and handed me a dispatch the contents of which I was to note, and then see that it was forwarded by one of my officers at the next station we might stop at. The history of the dispatch was as follows :—

Late in the evening of the 30th July this telegram had been sent off to the army of the Crown Prince :

“ His Majesty considers it expedient that the Third Army should, as soon as the Baden and Wurttemberg Divisions have joined, advance at once on the left bank of the Rhine in a southerly direction, seek out the enemy and attack him. Making of bridge south of Lauterburg will thereby be prevented, and all Southern Germany most efficiently protected.

“ (Signed) v. MOLTKE.”

The answer received on the morning of the 31st of July from the Chief Commander of the Third Army, said, that the advance could not yet be undertaken as the whole of the troops were not ready for the field; the Baden and Wurttemberg divisions would till then remain on the right bank of the Rhine.

This answer was not considered at all satisfactory at the Royal Headquarters, and further information was required as to when the Third Army would be ready.

The information asked for arrived shortly before our train started and was to the effect "that the army would be ready for the field on the 3rd August." This matter came under discussion during the journey. It was not clear, even from this last report, whether the army would begin to advance on the 3rd August. It was of course not to be supposed that any delay was intended, but it seemed as if they meant not to begin the march until the very last detachments and columns had arrived, while we wished for as speedy an advance as possible, in view of the general situation, and especially of the intended co-operation of the Third Army with the two others.

Consequently, the telegram drawn up during the journey and handed over to me by General von Podbielski, contained a fresh and very decided order to go on. When I had read it, I said to the General that the telegram ought not to be sent in its present form: "I knew that staff very well in the last war. If you wish to create strained relations with them, during the whole of this campaign, send it; but I am perfectly sure that they will feel offended, and, I think, not without some cause. For, a good reason of some kind there must surely be, for their not yet fixing the date of starting."¹ General von Podbielski turned to General von Moltke, who was

¹ In regard to the difficult and unpleasant relations which may arise, if such kind of friction arises between the superior staffs, let the reader only remember the continual disagreements which took place, in 1813 and 1814, between the headquarters of Blücher and General von York.

just coming to join us, and repeated to him what I had said, upon which the latter remarked: "Well, but how are we to manage it, then?" We reflected a moment, and then I ventured to propose that I should try, as soon as we arrived at Mainz, to make my way to Speyer, where the headquarters of the Crown Prince were. I expressed at the same time my conviction that I should be able to attain what we so much desired by personally representing the state of affairs; in any case, things could be managed more smoothly than by sending the telegram. So the despatch did not go off. General von Moltke next obtained permission from the King, when he made his report to him, for me to go to Speyer, and I consequently started on my way there, as soon as we reached Mainz.

To get to Speyer was no easy matter, as all the lines from east to west were crammed with trains full of troops and there was no way of getting across country from north to south, or where there was, the lines were mostly used for feeding those running west. Therefore I had to use all sorts of transport, and it took me a considerable time to cover this comparatively short distance. First, I went by a cattle train leaving Mainz; then I came across a train bringing a horse artillery battery of the V. Army Corps across the Rhine. Here an amusing little scene happened. The train was travelling on a wide curve not far from some station, so that one could see, when looking out of the window on the inner side, the locomotive as well as the last carriage. Sitting with the officers of the battery in a compartment, we suddenly heard the sound, "The whole halt!" ringing distinctly in our ears. On looking out of the window, we saw a trumpeter who repeated the signal uninterruptedly while running after the train. The man, who belonged to the battery, had been standing at the open door of a horse truck, and had suddenly been thrown out by his horse moving forward. Fortunately, he had not come to grief by his fall, and as

he had his trumpet with him, he used it, in order to rejoin his troop. Of course his call could not be attended to, and we steamed on. Later on, in December, I chanced to meet the officers of the battery at Versailles, and remembering the incident, I asked how the matter had ended. The train had been delayed at the next stopping place, and the trumpeter had then succeeded in joining his battery again. Next, I did a part of the way on a locomotive, then again on foot for some distance, and at last I reached Speyer on a country cart that happened to come along. Here I found the Crown Prince. After briefly explaining the cause of my appearance, His Royal Highness at once declared himself ready, without waiting for the last detachments, to begin operations, as soon as it was in any way possible. But as to the precise moment when that would be the case, he must talk it over with General von Blumenthal.

Until the latter arrived the Prince kept me with him, and talked quite frankly to me in his well-known fascinating manner, about various things connected with the war—I having been on his staff in the campaign of 1866. He was in high spirits, and rejoiced to see the unanimity of the German Princes and the enthusiasm of the entire German nation. The Crown Prince was especially happy to see united and under his command, besides the two Prussian corps, the fighting strength of the South German States, and in the fact that a Crown Prince of Prussia led them, he saw a proof of the depth and constancy of German patriotism, which would henceforth form, in spite of internal quarrels, the basis for the happiness of the German races with the princes as well as the people. The Prince alluded with some tinge of regret to the circumstances that only the weaker part of the French forces stood before him, while he would have so much wished to do his share of the work on the spot where the main issue would be decided. I took the liberty of observing that such was indeed the intention of General von

Moltke, who would no doubt do everything he could not to let the Crown Prince of Prussia play a secondary part in this war. "The deeds of your Royal Highness will not be less glorious than in 1866," I added, "but the objects of the General can only be attained if your army assumes the offensive immediately. As soon as it has settled Mac-Mahon, it will certainly be required for co-operation against the main forces of the enemy."

Presently General von Blumenthal arrived, and we went into a room close by, in which the maps of the theatre of war were spread out on a large table with the positions of the various detachments of troops marked on it. In a short report I explained the general situation, indicating at the same time by means of strips of paper the places where the corps of Prince Frederick Charles and those of General von Steinmetz stood at the time. By this means, it became clear at the first glance that, if the Crown Prince's army was to co-operate with the others within any reasonable time, he must seek to crush the forces opposing him as rapidly as possible. It was evident from the explanations of General von Blumenthal that there was only one wish, viz. to get at the enemy as speedily as circumstances permitted; and I learned at the same time that the order for the assembly of the troops had already been issued that morning. I therefore requested the Crown Prince to allow Major von Hahnke, who was also present, to draw up a cipher telegram to the Royal Headquarters reporting that the army would cross the frontier on the following day, the 3rd August. General von Blumenthal, however, objected to this, as the various corps were not yet sufficiently concentrated for commencing the movement on that date; besides, the troops wanted that day to themselves. Thus Hahnke's telegram fixed the day of starting for the 4th August, and the ciphered despatch, signed by me, was sent off to Mainz.

It was nearly eleven o'clock at night when I was able

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to start on my return journey. It was even more troublesome than that to Speyer, and I only arrived at 8 o'clock in the morning of the 3rd August, after having thus spent three nights running travelling. While I was wandering about, I met at a small country station a train just coming in, conveying a squadron of Cuirassiers of the Guard. On inquiry I learned that several friends of mine were in it with whom I had spent many a pleasant hour, including Count Lüttichau and Herr von Massow. I was hard-hearted enough to disturb them in their slumbers in order to wish them good luck on their way to the front, as we could not tell whether we should meet again. Strange to say, I did not feel a trace of fatigue; exciting occupation and the variety of impressions on the way helped me, for some time at least, to forget physical exhaustion.

Meanwhile, on this same date, the 2nd August, news had arrived in Mainz, in the afternoon, of an engagement at Saarbrücken, and it looked as if this town had been evacuated by the detachment under Colonel von Pestel in consequence of a French attack. This was in fact the case. After the gallant little force had directly faced the masses of the French main army for several weeks, the latter had advanced, and the Hohenzollern Fusiliers and Rhenish Uhlans had retreated fighting before the forces deploying in their front, and had fallen back on a detachment which had been sent in good time to their support. Thus the self-sacrificing devotion of the small body had had a glorious end, and formed for us a subject of the warmest recognition and admiration.

The fact that the enemy had set foot on German soil and that our troops had fallen back, and the circumstance that during the engagement a few houses in Saarbrücken had been set on fire by the French shells, caused great excitement at home, while in Paris this occurrence, so insignificant in itself, was celebrated as a victory. This impression was enhanced by the somewhat obscure talk of

a taking possession "of the coal basin of the Saar," which gave the engagement an importance which it really never had.

The way we looked at the matter may be seen from my notes of the 3rd August, in which there is this remark: "The engagement of Saarbrücken is not of much importance, and of such outposts affairs we shall see plenty."

In reference to the further progress of operations I find likewise the following observations among my memoranda on the 3rd August: "Our cavalry will reach the frontier to-day at all points. We shall probably proceed to Kaiserslautern on the 5th. It still looks as if the French were waiting for us to come on. In that case there might be an important encounter with the main army on or about the 9th August, while the Crown Prince will probably have hard fighting at a still earlier date."

The circumstances under which the news reached the Royal Headquarters about the engagement at Saarbrücken were certainly peculiar. During the heat of the fight, reports are sent only to the immediate superior. He, it is true, sends on the reports, but as a rule only to the general from whom support is expected. As everybody's attention among the troops engaged is completely absorbed by what they are doing, it comes about that the Royal Headquarters do not hear till comparatively late of such occurrences, sometimes only in a roundabout way. This is the case more particularly during a retreat, when the telegraph station in the neighbourhood has had to be abandoned early. In this way, during the 2nd August, no news at all had arrived at headquarters in Mainz from the detachment at Saarbrücken. A telegraph official at Frankfurt, however, had employed his leisure time in communicating with his colleague at Saarbrücken, regarding the state of affairs. The news which he received in this manner, he wired on, as it seemed important, to the Director of Field Telegraphs, Colonel Meydam, who, in his turn, communicated them to

us. Still, no clear idea could be gained, from different accounts that had reached us in this way, as to what had really occurred at Saarbrücken, so that Bronsart was obliged, toward the morning of the 3rd August, to inquire by telegraph of the Commander-in-Chief of the First Army what had actually taken place.

In the evening of the 4th August, on the same day, consequently, on which the Crown Prince's army had crossed the frontier, we received news of the victorious engagement with Douay's Division, which had been pushed forward by MacMahon to Weissenburg, and whose gallant leader had fallen in this unequal contest. "The King, with whom I have just spoken, is highly rejoiced at this first and very important success of his son. If the enemy makes a stand against the latter, other successes will soon follow. The Crown Prince has only Marshal MacMahon before him; the main strength of the enemy stands on the line Saargemünd-Saarbrücken, confronting the First and Second Army."¹

On the 6th August, headquarters were still at Mainz. "Things are looking well. Goeben has just sent a report of a successful engagement at Saarbrücken. The enemy seems to be leaving the line of the Saar. What an extraordinary proceeding! The French first hurry up in mad haste, as if they were going to fall on us at once, and begin the war, but nothing happens! Now, when we are ready to attack them, they quit their position! It is possible that they will retreat to Metz or Nancy, also possible that they intend to make a stand in a good position on this side of those towns, and try to bring up MacMahon with his troops. We are prepared for whatever they do; only, in the former case, the decisive blow would unfortunately be delayed for some time. The losses in the engagements we do not know, but this much is certain, that they are very heavy."

¹ All the passages in inverted commas are extracted verbatim from my notes or from letters sent home by me.

In regard to reports of losses, let it be explained here that it is quite impossible to state them correctly immediately after an engagement, and before the reports from the troops engaged have arrived. Very often after battles and engagements, only quite rough estimates can be formed, for which the fury of the fighting in particular places, as well as the numbers of the troops engaged and the nature of the ground may furnish some data; but even then uncommonly great experience is required to avoid making vast mistakes. I recollect that on the evening of the battle of Gravelotte-St. Privat an estimate of our losses was made amounting to about 8000 men, and when I observed then that we might be satisfied if we had got off with 15,000 men, my opinion raised an incredulous smile. Unfortunately our sacrifices exceeded in reality my own estimate; we lost that day nearly 20,000.

There is another point, about telegrams sent home, which is apt to rouse at times something like indignation, viz. if in these despatches all the bodies of troops are not at once mentioned which have taken part in the fighting. People at home are certainly quite justified, when they hear a general report of some battle having taken place, in asking: "Have our people also been there?" As a rule, in case of battles in which several armies take part and at which the Royal Headquarters are present, it is precisely the telegrams from the latter which first reach home. Now it may be taken for granted that the information contained in these despatches will be spread broadcast, on the same day, through all the capitals of the neutral powers, and from there it is likely to find its way immediately to the enemy's intelligence department. It has happened to us repeatedly that we obtained valuable intelligence in this roundabout way. Therefore, if, on the one hand, the reasonableness of the desire of friends at home to know who has been engaged in the fighting, must be admitted; on the other hand, the

Headquarters are bound to be very cautious in considering what to publish. The case is somewhat different with direct information from particular corps to the provinces at home. Such information, to begin with, arrives generally somewhat slower, and, owing to the distance from the capital, becomes known throughout the Empire comparatively late.

The importance of the intelligence concerning the engagement at Saarbrücken sent by General von Goeben could not, at the time, be fully understood. Several other telegrams from commanding officers came in from the scene of action, and finally one from General von Steinmetz, who had arrived there at 7 o'clock in the evening. It was now gathered with some certainty that troops from both armies had taken part in the fighting, and that the command had passed through different hands. That night we were very much disturbed. I had just gone to bed, about midnight, when I heard someone knocking at my door, and a voice asked through the open door: "Verdy, are you here?" I recognized the voice as that of Prince Radziwill, aide-de-camp to the King. He entered, and told me a telegram had just reached the King, the contents of which were not quite clear, and he had, therefore, been sent to me. A light was struck at once, and while still in bed I read the despatch, which began with the words: "Two eagles," etc. This much was evident at least, that the Crown Prince's army had also been engaged, and had gained a victory. But where it had been, could not at first be made out. As the movements of this army, however, had been known so far, this point perhaps could be settled by reference. So I jumped out of bed, and sat down at the table where the maps were spread out. This conversation had, meanwhile, awakened Brandenstein, who was sleeping in the next room. On his asking what was the matter, I called out to him to come to us. He appeared in the same costume as myself, and we both found ourselves at the

table as we had jumped out of bed, each with a candle in his hand. Our immediate conjecture was afterwards confirmed, viz. that we had before us one-half of a telegram, the first half of which, in some strange way, had not got into the hands of the King.

The news, however, was so important that it was necessary to consider whether further dispositions had not to be made. So we waked Bronsart, who was joined by de Claer and, I think, Blume, also, and we all went to General Podbielski.

After we had imparted to him the state of the case, we all went with him, in the costume described, to General von Moltke, whom we also called up from his sleep. I shall never forget the peculiar expression in the face of the General, when he raised himself in his bed, without his wig, the moon shining on him, as he looked at us as if to ask: "Who are these strange visitors?" In the discussion that followed, we all came to the correct conclusion that the battle must have taken place in the neighbourhood of Wörth. Now, not only was it necessary to inform the other armies of the fact, but those corps which were still in the rear and not yet attached to any army, ought at once to receive instructions adapted to the new situation. To the First and Second Army orders were sent not to press forward too rapidly beyond the Saar, as they were not yet sufficiently concentrated. On the other hand, we did not want to prevent them from following up the enemy, who had his main forces stationed in front of them, in case he intended to retire. "To-day will make it clear whether this is the case. This bloody engagement has been for us an incalculable advantage; but it is only a prelude. The decision is yet to come; for, as yet, the main forces on both sides have only come in contact in parts. God will help us on! The losses you will hear of in Berlin sooner than we here."

A few remarks on the battles of the 6th August at Spicheren and Wörth may here be inserted. Both

battles are peculiar, in so far as they were fought against the will of the Commander-in-Chief. This fact is not unique, as the third great battle also, that of Colombey, on the 14th August, commenced under similar circumstances. In all these cases the engagement was begun by the outposts or the advanced troops. These in each case had the impression that the enemy before them was on the point of escaping, and they were anxious not only not to lose touch with him, which is in any case the business of all such advanced troops; but also to inflict upon him when retreating as much damage as possible.

Thus at Spicheren, General von Kameke saw himself at once engaged with his whole division in a hot conflict with the enemy, who showed front again and faced him in a formidable position. The engagement very soon assumed such proportions that a withdrawal of the troops was no longer practicable without incurring a complete defeat. In their glorious eagerness to help their hard pressed comrades, all the Prussian troops who were anywhere near hurried to the battle-field, and came into action. Even a battery of the I. Corps which, after an uninterrupted journey from Königsberg, had just arrived in these parts, continued its march still further, and put in an appearance on the scene. So it came about that troops belonging to the First and to the Second Army fought from the beginning without proper combination. The Commander-in-Chief of the Second Army had not foreseen the battle and could not have done so. On the contrary, he had not intended to attack the enemy in front in his strong position, but to force him, by enveloping his right wing, to evacuate the position, or accept battle under less favourable circumstances. With this view the movements of the troops had been begun, and as an advance on the enemy's part across the Saar was not a likely event, considering his inactive attitude thus far, so severe an action as that around Spicheren, brought about by the initiative of a subordinate com-

mander of the First Army, had not been expected. Prince Frederick Charles had still less intention of entering on such a severe struggle that day, as his army was not yet sufficiently in hand to be in a fit state to help the other. For the strategical deployment was only meant to be effected by the movements of the 6th August and the next following day. So it came about that only parts of the First and Second Army were engaged, and that the joint co-operation of all the forces which is to be desired when a decisive blow is struck, was wanting.

At Wörth it was the outposts of the V. Army Corps who sent out a detachment to reconnoitre the enemy, when movements in his camp apparently indicated a retreat. In the engagement thus brought about, support was afforded it by the Bavarian Corps of General von Hartmann, which was on the right wing, and the first division of which got entangled in a very hot fight in a very difficult country, during which the detachment of the V. Corps put an end to its reconnaissance. But as the fighting on the Bavarian wing became steadily more severe, and as, furthermore, an engagement had begun on the left, where the XI. Corps was, the whole of the V. Corps came into action in order to prevent the enemy from throwing his whole weight on one of the wings of the army; meanwhile the Bavarian Corps had received orders from headquarters to break off the engagement. The beginning of this battle is thus characterized by much hesitation, one body always falling back when another advanced, and the latter being recalled after the former had resumed the engagement in its support. But now the Crown Prince himself arrived on the scene, in time to take over the command and bring concerted action into the further conduct of the battle. Then it became evident, what an advantage there is in having a fully assembled army, ready to act together; so that the battle proper could be directed in an efficient manner. The contest was extremely bloody and violent. For, the

enemy, who had in his ranks the excellent African troops, was here again in a position that resembled a fortress, and it was only by the self-sacrificing bravery of our troops and skilful leadership that the victory was gained. But the struggle would have been still more severe, if the French commanders had brought up in time all the troops which, if they had received orders, might have reached the battle-field. More dangerous still in this respect was the situation for us at Spicheren, as very strong hostile forces were quite close at hand. Fortunately for us they were not brought up to the scene of action.

2. FROM MAINZ TO PONT À MOUSSON—BATTLES OF COLOMBEY-NOUILLY AND VIONVILLE-MARS LA TOUR.

Headquarters left Mayence on the 8th of August, going by rail to Homburg. "It was nearly 9 p.m. when we arrived; our horses arrived in the morning at 2 o'clock. No shelter could be found for them, and so they had to bivouac in torrents of rain, which was not agreeable. To-day, the 9th, I drove a dozen oxen out of their stables and put up our horses." Our way lay through some very pretty scenery; but we were all somewhat fatigued through having the last few nights had no sleep and the amount of work we had done. Everywhere we came across bodies of troops; we passed stations full of men who had got out there, as their trains had to stop for us; and we saw detachments of all arms who were on the march. Everywhere the troops halted and greeted His Majesty with cheers, while the military bands played patriotic tunes. Moreover, the whole population of the neighbourhood had assembled *en masse*; the enthusiasm was the greater, as the news of the victories of Wörth and Spicheren had already become known. The pleasant impression which all this made on one, was increased by the beauty of the Haardt mountains through which we passed.

But the serious side of the situation also made itself

felt. At Ludwigshafen Stosch learned that his brother, commanding the 46th, had fallen; then Waldersee heard that his cousin, in command of the 5th Jaegers, had been mortally wounded. We heard the same of other acquaintances. "The details of the engagements and the losses will reach you before they come to us; anyone who finds the opportunity telegraphs home. We only get intelligence of what it is necessary to know for the service, besides, we have no leisure to trouble about what is gone; the present and the future demand, that one should tear oneself away from the past. Thus we only learn where a certain engagement has taken place, against whom, and how it has ended. The army is too large for details to reach us in any other way than by accident.— The general situation is good, but so far (9 p.m.) no report has come in as yet from a single army concerning the events of the day. H.R.H. the Crown Prince of Saxony, whose corps lies close by here, honoured and delighted me with a long visit at my quarters. If the French do not attack us to-morrow, which is not impossible, though not very probable, we shall attack them the day after, when our whole strength is assembled."

Immediately after the campaign of 1866, several officers of the Saxon General Staff had been ordered to headquarters, by which means we got to know each other better while working together, and we had become very intimate. I remember particularly the names of von Holleben and von Tschirschky, who afterwards for many years commanded two Saxon divisions. (Von Holleben was also a member of the Staff at the Royal Headquarters in 1870-71, and was as popular among us and as pleasant a comrade as he was a valuable assistant.) Now, it so happened that General von Moltke soon after the war of 1866 had undertaken a tour for staff purposes in the Kingdom of Saxony, during which H.R.H. the Crown Prince often joined our rides, as long as they had Dresden for their starting point, and it was thus that friendly rela-

tions had sprung up between the Crown Prince and the General, which became closer every day during this campaign. Such relations among the leaders, which are based on personal acquaintance and that mutual high esteem and unlimited confidence which comes from it, are of the very highest value for the successful course of operations, and a guarantee for effecting co-operation. That this was so in this case, is shown by the fact that the leadership of the new army, which had to be formed after the battle of Gravelotte, was entrusted to H.R.H. the Crown Prince Albert.

“Homburg, 9th August, morning.
(Sent from Homburg early in the morning before setting out for
Saarbrücken.)

“The enemy seems to be retreating on all points. If that is so, he will probably not try to make a stand till he has reached the river Nied, and it will be another week before the decisive struggle comes.”

“Saarbrücken, 10th August, 9 p.m.

“As there was still much work to be done yesterday, and the change to new quarters took up much time, we had to hurry to get here. Moltke and Podbielski each took one of us with him in his carriage; my own was driven by Alten, who is a good whip. Claer, Holleben, Krause and Blume were with me in the ‘war chariot.’ The road hither is very pretty, and its beauty was much enhanced for us by passing on the way the marching columns of the Saxon Corps and the camps of the IX. Corps. The latter lined for some ten miles both sides of the road, over 30,000 strong. My ears are still buzzing with the hurrahs and the strains of the military bands, as we drove directly behind the King.

“Saarbrücken is charmingly situated and looks very smart. But in sharp contrast to this pleasant sight stands the fact that every house is crammed with wounded. The losses in the engagement of the 6th August here are

very considerable; I estimate them at nearly 5000 men on our side. Wounded Frenchmen and Prussians lie pell-mell together here. Among others, little Kuminski has been wounded again and is here; I shall try to see him for a moment to-morrow morning early. The position which our twenty-six battalions attacked is so strong that one can hardly believe it could be carried.

“As regards the general situation, the French seem to be seeking protection behind the Moselle under the guns of Metz. We are following them up everywhere. To-morrow the headquarters will remove to St. Avold, whither the railway is already open again.—From Paris very disquieting news for the Emperor Napoleon come in; it is possible that he will cut and run. This would not be pleasant for us, as the foreign powers might then come and say: ‘Now it is about time that the fighting should cease, you having yourselves declared that you waged war not with France, but with the Emperor Napoleon alone.’ Fortunately Bismarck and the other statesmen at the helm think otherwise. We will fight it out, so that the French may not begin again a few years hence, but will, on the contrary, have had enough of it for some time to come. They must be made to feel what it means to challenge a peaceable neighbour to a struggle for life or death; the whole French nation must be made sick of fighting, no matter whether a Napoleon reigns, or an Orleans or a Bourbon or anybody else. Dixi.”

No particular value need be attached to these opinions. I only mention them to show what we at the Royal Headquarters thought about the situation.

“St. Avold, 11th August, evening.

“We started to-day at 1 o'clock from Saarbrücken and arrived here at 4 o'clock; so we are now for the first time on French soil. The country about here is a very pretty and well-wooded table-land, intersected by valleys and water-courses. But few inhabitants are to be seen, a great

number of them having fled. According to the most recent information, the French army, now that Bazaine has taken over the chief command, is said still to intend to make a stand on this side of Metz. In that case, if they do not escape us, decisive battles may be expected by the 14th or 15th August.

“To our astonishment, some of our officers, who had ridden on, found the direct road from St. Avold to Metz completely free of our troops; this was in consequence of the dispositions of General von Steinmetz, who had not pushed his army so far to the left as he ought to have done according to the intentions of the Royal Headquarters. The 15th Uhlán Regiment under Colonel von Albensleben, which chanced to be near, was therefore ordered on to this road, so that we had at least some protection in the immediate direction of the French. In addition, the 8th (Body-guard Grenadier Regiment) of the III. Army Corps was ordered to St. Avold, and one of its battalions was pushed forward beyond the town.”

On the 12th August, which day we spent at St. Avold, it became again uncertain, on comparing the various reports which we received, whether the French did really mean to make a stand on this side of Metz. Consequently, General von Moltke rode forward with us to reconnoitre. Although we rode far in advance of the cavalry outposts furnished by the 6th Dragoons, the enemy was still too far distant for us to see anything whatever of him.

“St. Avold, 12th August.

“The battles of Wörth and Spicheren seem to have made a tremendous impression on the French army, which is easily comprehensible. It seems likely, for the moment, that they intend to continue their retreat behind the Moselle. But their masses have got so entangled that they will have to leave some corps under the walls of Metz. Our cavalry to-day will cross the Moselle above and below the fortress, to see whether they can do any

damage to the hastily retreating French columns.¹ They will stick to the enemy, cut off his supplies under his very nose, blow up railways on his line of march, etc. Our young friend Neumeister of the Engineers did a fine deed of this kind last night. The foremost infantry detachments will likewise reach the Moselle and Meurthe to-day. Our table here, in spite of a good cook and requisitions, was rather a poor one, as the country hereabouts is already pretty well exhausted. At one o'clock we shall move on to Herny. Brandenstein has already had the railway repaired as far as the line of outposts."

"Herny, 14th August.

"At present we have our offices in the schoolrooms of the mairie of Herny; while I am writing, the IX. Corps is just marching past our windows with bands playing. Herny is a French village of about 900 inhabitants, and looks very well with its stone-built houses. It is about seven miles west of Faulquemont. The Royal Headquarters have been divided, the non-working members remaining at the latter town.

"Before we started from St. Avold, a fire broke out which our men put out; the passage through the narrow streets was consequently much impeded. At 1 o'clock we left, but instead of arriving at 3, we arrived only at 5 o'clock. It was an abominable journey, as we had the whole way to wriggle through between two or three lines of commissariat waggons belonging to two army corps.

"The King, who arrived after us, noticed that we were already at work, and greeted us with much kindness. To-day, the 14th August, we shall probably remain here, if there is nothing serious before Metz. Considerable bodies of the enemy are still observable on the glacis of the fortress, and the First Army is advancing in that direction.

¹ This was Moltke's intention, but his desire to invest, as it were, the west side of Metz with the 1st, 3rd, 5th, and 6th Cavalry Divisions was never carried out. So far as the first two are concerned it was chiefly the fault of Steinmetz.—E.D.

“During the night we received the first reports about the battle of Wörth. They cannot claim to be strictly accurate, of course, any more than the statements as to losses; the less so, because, in the V. Corps, for instance, the majority of the regimental commanders are killed or wounded. I regret to say that little Heineccius, who had been attached to Bose’s staff, has been killed. The losses at Wörth amount to about 10,500 men. If one takes into consideration that only 4½ army corps were in action there, while at Königsgrätz we had 7½ corps, and lost only about 9000 men, it becomes evident how much more sanguinary fighting is in the present day than it was then.

“The general situation in other respects is as good as we could wish. We shall know to-day whether the French will continue their retreat still farther beyond the Moselle. To-morrow we shall probably go to Pont-à-Mousson. But few of the people about here speak German, which results in the most amusing misunderstandings with our men. In the villages most of the men fit to carry arms have fled, as they have been told that we should enroll them among our troops, and place them in front, when going into action against their countrymen; but I expect they will soon come back again. Our mess is now apparently getting into working order.” (In fact, from this time onward we always had our chief meal together, that is whenever there was one to have.) “Besides the Staff, General von Stosch, his son and Meydam are members of it.

“The Empire of the 2nd December is shaken to its foundation. But France is certainly making desperate efforts to increase its fighting strength. It will be to no purpose, however; a very bloody crisis will and must come; I trust it may be soon!

“During the afternoon we heard the sound of cannon now and then in a northern direction. It could only have been part of the First Army engaged with the French before

Metz. But we only became sure of its meaning when Brandenstein and Winterfeldt, who had been sent thither, came back at night. They brought information as to the course of the battle which had meanwhile been fought at Colombey, and also of its victorious ending. In consequence of this, our intended march to Pont-à-Mousson on the 15th August came to nothing, His Majesty wishing to inspect the battle-field.¹ We drove there with him, the distance being over 15 miles, and our saddle horses followed us. I drove with General von Stosch, leaving my brake to the others."

Here, again, the battle had been brought on by the officer in command of the outposts. The advance-guard of the VII. Corps, Lieutenant-General Freiherr von der Goltz, had noticed considerable commotion in the French camp before him; as at Wörth and Spicheren, these movements had been interpreted, this time quite correctly, as pointing to the retreat of the enemy. But von der Goltz had something more in view than merely to inflict as much damage as possible on the enemy, when he ordered his brigade to advance. He had been an officer of the General Staff, and a very capable one, and was a gallant leader of men, who possessed to a high degree the confidence of those under him, especially of the Westphalians, in whose province he had formerly commanded a regiment. From certain things which had come to his knowledge, he had formed an idea of the situation and its bearings which was perfectly correct. Accordingly, it seemed to him important to keep the French army as long as possible on this side of Metz, so that the corps of the Second Army crossing the Moselle farther to the south might be able to advance far enough to threaten seriously the enemy's line of retreat. If I am not mistaken, Brandenstein's appearance on the scene decided the General to act on this calculation.

¹ The date given in the German text is the 16th. This is obviously a misprint for 15th, as the Royal Headquarters reached there on the latter day.—ED.

With this object in view, then, he advanced with his brigade and reported the fact not only to his immediate superiors in command, but also to the I. Corps and the other troops in the neighbourhood, and asked for their support. This was given by all, in some cases spontaneously, as soon as the sound of cannon was heard. On the right, General von Manteuffel came hurrying up with the I. Army Corps; from the immediate rear the remaining troops of the VII. Corps, and on the left the 18th division of the IX. Corps under General Freiherr von Wrangel. In addition to these, two cavalry divisions appeared on the battle-field. The participation of the 18th division, which belonged to the army of Prince Frederick Charles, had been made possible by orders from Royal Headquarters. It was not probable, certainly, that the French would, while one part of our army was still before Metz and the other crossing the Moselle in order to make its way round the fortress to the south, take advantage of this separation to make a sudden advance on the right bank; but yet, such an operation was not impossible. The Second Army had consequently received orders to dispose part of its forces in such a manner that any offensive movement of the French on the right bank might be met with sufficient force on the day it began. Forming the extreme right of the Second Army, Wrangel's division was at the time nearest to the scene of action; this enabled the General to bring up his troops and take part in the battle, which was with this exception fought out practically by two corps of the First Army (the I. and VII.). The Commander-in-Chief, General von Steinmetz, kept back the third corps of this army, Goeben's (the VIII.), as it was not his intention to attack this day at all. So only five infantry and two cavalry divisions were actually engaged.

The foremost Prussian forces which came in contact with the enemy found him in superior numbers, though on the point of retreating, in a very strong position

behind a little river with steep banks. The first French troops which were attacked formed front and deployed. They were supported by the troops in the rear, and General l'Amirault in particular, who was already crossing the Moselle with his corps, immediately faced about and pushed it forward in a direction which might have become very dangerous for our right wing, and for the issue of the battle. The Prussian troops first engaged were obliged, owing to the extent of the French front, to advance against it in small bodies, but everywhere they had assumed the offensive in spite of the superior numbers opposed to them, which made their task a very difficult one. In the same way the supports that came hurrying up could not go into action in masses, because, as soon as they appeared on the field, their immediate help was urgently needed in various directions. Nevertheless, their admirable valour enabled our troops to re-establish themselves at various points on the far side of the stream, and to ward off the dangerous advance on their flank. When night fell, the enemy were in retreat.

General von Steinmetz arrived late on the battle-field. In order to save the troops from further losses next morning from the fire of the heavy guns in the forts, he ordered a retreat; General von Manteuffel, however, persisted in remaining with his corps in bivouac on the scene of his victory.

This is a general outline of the course of the battle as it was explained to us upon the battle-field on the 15th August. On our arrival there, we were just mounting our horses, when I met Lieutenant-General von der Goltz, who was still exulting over the successful issue of the bloody combat, while not quite sure whether his unauthorized action was approved of in the highest quarters. I was in a position to reassure him on that point by telling him that his course of action had eminently furthered the objects aimed at; for the delay which the battle had

caused to the French was favourable to our projected operations and would facilitate their execution.

The battle-field was already cleared to a remarkable extent, although comparatively few hours had passed since the end of the struggle. Only in one small copse we still found some hundred wounded Frenchmen ; a large number of the dead, however, were still unburied.

The King conversed with Generals von Steinmetz and von Manteuffel, and then he rode on in the direction of Metz, we others following. After proceeding for a quarter of an hour I noticed that we were already a considerable distance beyond the line of outposts ; long ago we had passed the line of vedettes of the Black Hussars. I rode up to General von Moltke and drew his attention to the fact that our gracious Sovereign was moving forward in the direction of the enemy without protection. Moltke directed me to ride on, but in such a manner as not to attract notice ; Captain Zingler accompanied me. After making a detour across a ploughed field, we again got into the road farther on. This was close to the spot where the fighting had been severest on the previous day. The small ravine, covered on both sides with trees and bushes, was comparatively precipitous and deep ; there was no clear view forward, as the heights became higher in that direction, and were covered in part with dense wood. Along these heights numerous dead bodies were still lying in the shelter trenches thrown up by the French. We rode on along the high road in order to get a glimpse at Metz on the other side. Directly behind the foremost clumps of trees we found a small château in which a Prussian ambulance was at work ; it must have been Colombey, if we read our maps aright. Near it a troop of Blue Hussars of the VII. Corps stood under the cover of a wooded hill-top. When we had passed the latter (His Majesty had returned meanwhile to the other side of the declivity) we saw Metz before us. We rode on along a small avenue in which lay heaps of dead French. Zingler

dismounted in order to take from their knapsacks some pocket-books which might give information as to what troops had fought there and what marches they had made before. Not far from us was a small village, probably Borny, in which a French ambulance was at work; somewhat to its left rose some tremendous earthworks which were still being busily pushed on; towards the right there was a fort from which some shots were fired, till the sound of a trumpet put a stop to it; it came from a Prussian officer with a flag of truce whom General von Manteuffel had sent to arrange for burying the dead. Down in the plain lay Metz, wrapped in a bluish haze, out of which rose the gigantic outline of the cathedral. Behind the town were spread the somewhat steep slopes of Mont St. Quentin and the other heights on the left bank of the Moselle. While we were carefully engaged in surveying the whole ground we espied Bronsart, who had ridden forward by himself, to the left of us at the edge of a wood. On this side of Metz nothing was to be seen of any French troops outside the fortifications; only on the glacis there seemed to be still some movement going on. But we noticed quite distinctly strong columns ascending the heights on the left bank of the Moselle, to which our attention was drawn in the first instance by clouds of dust and the flash of arms.

After having watched them for some time, we returned, and, after discussing various matters with the staff of the First Army, we again made our way back to our quarters at Herny. The King had been anxious to express his thanks to the gallant troops on the battle-field, and stayed therefore some time longer.

Considering the general state of things, it was of the highest importance to know soon, how events would shape themselves on the left bank of the Moselle. The heads of the columns of the Second Army had already crossed the river, and must, therefore, meet the retreating French columns at some point or other. Nearest to the enemy

stood, besides the advanced cavalry, the III. Army Corps under General Constantin von Alvensleben. The task which he might be called upon shortly to undertake, would involve, in all probability, some fighting under very difficult conditions. But General von Alvensleben enjoyed such a high reputation as a leader of troops that he was looked upon as capable of coping with the most difficult situations. Thus our expectations as to what would happen where he was were indeed wound up to the highest pitch, but we entertained no fear except that the enemy might escape us if he succeeded in accelerating his retreat. In order to have timely intelligence of everything that might take place there and at the same time to explain to General von Alvensleben the desires of the Supreme Leader, Bronsart was sent off that same evening to the III. Army Corps, using on this occasion the "war chariot."

Among my notes on the 16th August I find the following :—"Concerning our operations we were prepared either for the French halting at Metz or for their retreat. If they do not make a stand, we have to hurry on without intermission ; but we shall have to do the same in case they stop ; only more careful march-dispositions will then be necessary, so that we should not be taken unawares by a sudden offensive movement of the enemy. Our arrangements had been made in such a manner, that, if the bloody engagement in the afternoon of the 14th August (battle of Colombey) had assumed still greater proportions, six army corps could have been massed for battle on the morning of the 15th. The prolonged halt of the French at Metz gives room for the hope that the leading columns of Prince Frederick Charles advancing by forced marches will be able to inflict on them considerable damage to-day or to-morrow."

On the 16th August we arrived in Pont-à-Mousson, a very clean and prettily situated town in the valley of the Moselle. It was already full of troops ; the quarters assigned

to me consisted of a cabinet-maker's workshop with an open door and large windows ; besides, the place was crammed full of materials used in the trade, and the floor covered with wood shavings, so deeply that it was difficult to walk a step. I immediately went in search of other lodgings, and was so fortunate as to find some in a small pavilion behind the house in which Moltke and Podbielski had taken up their quarters. A lady who lived there had the kindness to draw my attention to the pavilion, and I immediately took possession of it. On our arrival at Pont-à-Mousson in the afternoon we immediately received news of a fierce combat which was raging about Vionville and Mars-la-Tour, on the left bank of the Moselle. Wounded men, staff officers with reports, and orders for bodies of corps farther to the rear, came in continuous succession ; ammunition columns and ambulances went rumbling, at full speed, in the direction of the battle-field, while compact masses of troops arrived from the right bank, and had to seek rest towards the evening, after a forced march, here and farther on. It had become too late for us to put in an appearance on the battle-field, we should only have reached it after nightfall. Any dispositions to be made there fell moreover within the province of Prince Frederick Charles, who was on the spot. Alarming reports came in apace towards the evening, as the number of those increased who had taken part in the fighting. Their accounts all helped to give the impression that the combat must have been of an uncommonly fierce character, and accompanied by heavy losses. The 7th Cuirassiers were said to be annihilated, and also a brigade of the Hanoverian Corps ; well-known commanders were stated to be dead, as for instance the leaders of the two Guard Dragoon Regiments, von Auerswald and Count Finckenstein. There were also reports of great cavalry engagements and heavy losses among the artillery. From all we learned it seemed clear that the III. Army Corps, supported by the X. and some other troops, had

maintained themselves victoriously on the field, and that the French had not succeeded in continuing their march westwards. But complete certainty came only late at night with the arrival of Bronsart, who reported on the particulars of the battle with that calm self-control which never forsook him.

Now the question was how to make the best use of the extremely favourable situation won by so much blood, and to afford the necessary support to the weak forces which had been confronting the French army, and to prevent for good and all the retreat of the French, which had been arrested so successfully that day. Very early in the morning of the 17th August the Headquarters started for the battle-field, we officers of the General Staff as early as half-past two. The road from Pont-à-Mousson on the left bank of the Moselle in the direction of Metz which we followed, was covered with vehicles bringing back the wounded, with prisoners under escort, and troops marching to the front, as well as ammunition and supply columns. Nevertheless order was maintained, so that we arrived without much delay in the neighbourhood of Gorze, where we mounted our horses.

We then rode up the steep slope rising from the valley of Gorze, and on reaching the ground above, a kind of plateau, we at once found signs that the battle of the previous day had extended even as far as here. Just by the edge of the plateau lay the body of a young artillery officer with the sash of an adjutant; farther on we came across numerous dead of the 52nd regiment, which had suffered terrible losses. Here, too, had fallen the gallant Lieutenant-General von Döring, and our old comrade on the staff, Count Schlippenbach, had been severely wounded at the head of his battalion.

On the height to the south of Flavigny the whole Headquarters assembled, and here we practically remained during the greater part of the day, as it afforded a good view of the country. Only for a short time General von

Moltke rode on with us along the Vionville-Rezonville road farther toward the north, where, however, the forest land very soon obscured the view. The air was boiling hot, the ground hard, and everywhere the traces were seen of yesterday's bloody fight. The village nearest to us had only been evacuated by the French during the night or early in the morning. Beyond it, on one of the ranges of hills running parallel with Metz, were distinctly visible the white lines of small tentes-d'abri which marked the presence of considerable French forces.

It had been the earnest desire of General von Moltke to resume the battle again to-day. But the troops of the various corps ordered up from all sides, however much they exerted themselves, could only gain the plateau gradually. It was already afternoon, and even yet not all the forces were assembled which were near enough to be brought up for the battle. But it soon became evident, on the other hand, that the French would not do anything more that day. Only now and then a cannon shot came from the heights occupied by them, and for the first time we heard here the extremely loud jarring noise of the mitrailleuses. There was, therefore, no need to hurry the execution of our plans. The southern and most direct line of retreat of the enemy, towards the interior of France, was now blocked, and he had certainly not yet set his columns in motion on the roads towards the north which still remained open. These roads could for the present be watched and held by the cavalry.

After a personal conference of General Moltke with Goeben, who, hurrying in advance of his troops, had arrived at Flavigny, it was resolved not to attack the enemy, if he made a stand, before the next morning. Among our staff there was no doubt about the course to be pursued, viz. to proceed to the attack of the heights, if he remained there, or if he attempted, behind a screen of troops, to gain the northern roads with the bulk of his forces, to turn against the latter. As the Royal Head-

quarters entered here into direct contact with the Commander of the Second Army, the whole situation and the various dispositions necessary could be discussed in their smallest details, and the instructions given by word of mouth. Similarly, everything that was necessary was also arranged with the Quartermaster-General of the First Army, Colonel Count Wartensleben; General von Goeben also received directly from our Chief those instructions which regulated the action of his corps for the next morning.

The long-continued waiting for news and the unceasing observation of the enemy through the telescopes, together with the effect of the heat on the treeless plateau, produced at last a certain amount of exhaustion. Fortunately, Count Nostitz had managed to prepare some warm food for us, using for that purpose the cooking utensils of the killed that lay about; the first was offered to the King. Unluckily the quantity was not sufficient to supply all the members of the Headquarters, who for the most part had not provided themselves with victuals.

During the long hours which we spent waiting on this spot, several incidents occurred which brought some relief to the gravity of the situation, and produced an effect which was almost comic. I will just mention two of them.

On the spot occupied by us during the day there were many corpses scattered about, for the burial of which a few companies of engineers in the neighbourhood were told off. Many of the members of the Headquarters in the scalding heat felt the need of resting a little, while nothing was to be seen or heard, and stretched themselves on the ground. Among them was the Russian military attaché, Count Kutusov, who, with his face to the ground, very soon fell into a profound sleep. While Bronsart and I were speaking together, we observed a couple of pioneers approaching him, and after some consultation they agreed that the

gentleman in the green foreign uniform must be a superior officer of the French chasseurs. Deceived by the motionless attitude of the Count, and perhaps tickled by the smell of his new accoutrements of Russian leather, they looked at him for awhile and closed their observations with the words: "He's dead, so here goes!" With that they set to digging out the earth from beneath the middle of his body. It is easy to imagine the astonishment of the men when they suddenly saw the dead man come to life again, and still more the face of the Count when he became aware of the peculiar operation to which he was going to be subjected. We quickly interfered, and so the incident closed amidst general merriment.

As I have mentioned the name of Count Kutusov, I must not omit to add that he was a highly popular member of our Headquarters. His frank and winning manners, his upright character, were so generally recognized among us during the war and gained him such high esteem, that it always gave us particular pleasure to meet him.

The second event which I will now relate was one which at first aroused indignation, and afterwards general hilarity. As we were still sitting close together on our horses, there appeared among us suddenly, making room for himself without the smallest hesitation, a strange-looking personage in mufti, by his looks evidently a foreigner, and plentifully adorned with all the attributes that betokened from afar the war correspondent of the period. Moreover, this personage was on a horse which carried the trappings of a French cuirassier. When we cross-examined him as to who he was, and what he wanted here, he explained quite innocently that he was the correspondent of a foreign newspaper, was in possession of a passport from the French authorities, had so far followed the French army, and been present at the battle on the day before. He had that morning taken one of the stray horses, and had come over to see how matters stood with us! An incredible

piece of imbecility! He was quickly hauled down from his horse and removed, not only from the battle-field, but for the present, also, from the scene of operations. Whether he reappeared again anywhere else during the war, I don't know. His horse was assigned to me, as one of mine had broken down from over-work. Towards evening we returned to Pont-à-Mousson.

In order to understand the subsequent course of affairs, it is necessary to have a clear idea of the disposition of all our forces. On the evening of the 17th August they were at the following points:—

On the battle-field of the 16th August, or in its near neighbourhood, there were, of Prince Frederick Charles' Army, the III., IX., XII. Corps and the Corps of Guards, with its two cavalry divisions. Of the army of General von Steinmetz the VIII. and VII. Corps, the latter still in the valley of the Moselle, with its advance-guard pushed forward, and the 3rd Cavalry Division. On the right bank of the Moselle near Metz, the I. Army Corps and the 1st Cavalry Division. On the march to Pont-à-Mousson was the II. Corps; while the IV. Army Corps was on the right wing of the Third Army. Of this force the foremost corps had reached the river Madon, the two cavalry divisions being pushed forward beyond it, while the rear portion was still on the Meurthe from Nancy to near Lunéville (the V., XI., VI. Prussian, the I. and II. Bavarian Corps, the Wurttemberg Field Division, together with the 2nd and 4th Cavalry Divisions). The Baden Field Division had remained in Alsace to besiege Strassburg; it had been reinforced by a division of Guard Landwehr and the 1st Landwehr Division, as well as by troops of the line which had, until now, remained behind to garrison the fortresses.

Of the remaining troops which were still at home, the 3rd Landwehr Division was already on its way to Metz, while the 17th Infantry and the 2nd Landwehr Division

had been likewise ordered to the seat of war about the middle of August.

According to the news received concerning the enemy, it was conjectured that Marshal MacMahon was concentrating his troops, which had retreated in considerable disorder, at Châlons, and that the forces still available in the interior of France would be assembled there.

3. BATTLE OF GRAVELOTTE—ST. PRIVAT.

When I woke up in my solitary quarters on the morning of the 18th August I discovered, on looking at my watch, that it was long past the time at which I had given orders to be called. A man has naturally to rely on being called under such circumstances, his exertions during the day, besides working to late at night, not being calculated to make him wake in the morning of his own accord. I quickly washed and dressed and hurried down to see what was the cause. Two of my servants had remained on the battle-field with the saddle horses, the other two with the carriage horses were in the town, at some distance from my quarters. On walking towards the house to which my pavilion belonged, the quiet which reigned about it struck me as very peculiar, until I heard, to my horror, in the office that the generals and the officers had driven off some time ago. Then I hurried to where I knew my carriage and horses were. But not a trace of them! As it turned out afterwards, our officers had driven away with them, as they had been told erroneously that General von Moltke and myself had already left the town. My position began to be painful; it occurred to me that I might arrive on the battle-field too late, or perhaps not at all. I immediately went to the commandant's office, where I was assured that neither carriage nor horse were obtainable, as they were all in use for the transport of the wounded. But just as I left the office, I heard to my joy a carriage rolling through one of the by-streets. I turned that way and, behold, it

was Stosch with his conveyance, who now was ready to share it with me, as he often did during the war.

We saw during our drive our telegraph detachment still occupied in establishing telegraphic communication with Gorze. A comical impression was produced by seeing a French peasant in a white nightcap and blue blouse sitting by each telegraph pole already erected. The villagers had been made responsible for the safety of the poles, etc., and had hit upon this plan of watching them in order to keep themselves from being punished.

We fortunately succeeded in coming up with the other carriages of the Headquarters before they reached Gorze. Here we mounted our horses and again ascended the slope to the plateau at the same time as the Hessian Division, the troops of which looked in splendid condition.

Concerning the battle of Gravelotte-St. Privat, I managed during the next few days to write a coherent account of it, which was finished before we finally left Pont-à-Mousson on the morning of the 23rd August. We had returned there in the evening of the 19th.

This account I will give here word for word.

“The French had remained too long at Metz. This enabled us to prevent their intended withdrawal to Châlons. Several roads were open to them for retreat. On the 16th our foremost columns reached the nearest of these, and the enemy was prevented by the battle of Vionville and Mars la Tour from effecting a retreat that day. The battle was a murderous one, but attained its object. Our III. and X. Corps, the 11th Regiment and one brigade of the VIII. Corps had fought like lions, the various arms vying with each other in bravery. Almost the whole French army had thrown itself upon them, but the southern road of retreat, which our men had reached, was held by them. Our losses had been immense, but the enemy had suffered no less, as the number of their dead proved.

“Now, there was a chance of blocking the remaining roads also, if the French were to attempt to get away

farther to the north. Therefore, all the troops which could be brought up had been concentrated during the 17th. The 18th must decide the question, if the enemy did not seek the shelter of the guns of Metz. But the general conduct of the armies was a task of uncommon difficulty, for, in the event of the enemy deciding to march by the northern roads, the greater part of our forces would have to be moved in that direction, while a smaller portion covered the movement against a possible offensive demonstration of the enemy from Metz. If, on the other hand, the enemy gave up the attempt and satisfied himself with remaining in his present position, which could only be ascertained in the course of the morning, then he was to be attacked near Metz. Now it is no trifle to handle a quarter of a million of men, in the short space of the first half of a day, so as to have them ready for any event; to be able to use them in different directions and yet have them available in the latter half to fight a battle.

“We betook ourselves to the height near Vionville, south of Flavigny, where we had been on the previous day.

“It afforded a good enough view to enable us, at least for a time, to control the movements of the whole force. On our left, behind Vionville, the commander of the Second Army and his staff had posted themselves under a tall poplar tree; to the right were to be seen the last heights this side of Mont St. Quentin, where the French left wing stood. The rows of poplars of the great main road stood out distinctly against the sky, as well as the various farm-houses which were soon to become a prey to the flames. Between them we saw French batteries ready deployed, and still further back the tents of their camp. A strange impression was produced when we found, on looking up the names of various points on the map which might become of importance, that the two farms nearest to us, within the French lines, were called Moscow and Leipzig. Not a good omen for our opponents!

“Several hours passed, on the tiptoe of expectation, as we waited for information as to the enemy’s movements, while our troops were deploying to the front. I was sent twice to Prince Frederick Charles to discuss the situation with him, hear his opinions and intentions, and communicate to him those which obtained with us. I found the Prince and his staff in excellent spirits.

“Certain movements being observed repeatedly on the heights occupied by the enemy, opinions differed for a long time, with them as with us, as to whether he was withdrawing, or making preparations to deploy for battle, or whether he was placing troops in motion along the northern roads. Meanwhile Count Nostitz again prepared an agreeable surprise for us in the shape of a breakfast which he had succeeded in improvising.

“At last, at half-past 10 o’clock, the situation had become perfectly clear. The enemy before us was making a stand; the reports of the cavalry, sent out northward, confirmed the belief that he had given up the attempt to begin his retreat on Paris that day. Therewith the moment had come for the army of Prince Frederick Charles to wheel round to the right in a wide circle in order to advance against the enemy in a line with the two corps of General von Steinmetz, the VII. and the VIII., which had taken up a position towards Metz to cover the movement. The IX. Corps of the Prince’s army joined on to the troops of the First Army; on the left of the IX., the Corps of Guards and, on the extreme left flank, the Saxon Corps were to extend our line, but both would require time to effect their movement, and the latter could not be expected to come into action before 4 o’clock. The III. and X. Corps were for the present held in reserve by the Prince. For a general reserve, the II. Corps, under General von Fransecky, was approaching from the direction of Pont-à-Mousson.

“The section of the hostile position right in front of us was so strong that it was resolved not to begin the attack

on it before the corps on the extreme wings were able to operate against the flanks of the enemy. This intention could not be carried out at first, as the opponent had extended and thrown forward his right wing farther than the first reports had indicated, so that the turning movement by the Saxons could not take place till later than had been at first supposed. According to the reports that had come in so far, we imagined that the enemy's line of battle extended only to this side of St. Privat, viz. to Amanvillers. It was due to another reason that a serious attack on the strong front before us was undertaken much earlier than had been originally intended. For the IX. Corps, which formed the pivot of the wheeling manœuvre of the Prince's army towards the right, got so near to the enemy during this operation that it found itself immediately engaged in very heavy fighting. So that, about 12 o'clock, when heavy artillery fire was heard from this direction, the First Army felt itself forced, in order not to leave the IX. Corps in the lurch, to come into action also. We saw the batteries of the VIII. Corps deploying at the foot of the range of heights before us and open a slow fire. Instantly, an infernal roar burst from the hills occupied by the enemy.

"Everywhere along the whole range, guns sent out flashes, and belched forth dense volumes of smoke. A hail of shell and shrapnel, the latter traceable by the little white clouds, looking like balloons, which remained suspended in the air for some time after their bursting, answered the warlike greeting from our side. The grating noise of the mitrailleuses was heard above the tumult, drowning the whole roar of battle.

"It was not long before columns of smoke, rising in denser and blacker volumes from different places, announced that some farmhouses were already on fire. This and the powder smoke impaired very considerably the wide view which we had hitherto had.

"Soon after, from some woods lying in front, half left

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from us, we heard the rapid, faint crackling of the rifles of the IX. Corps. The infantry of the VIII. Corps now also deployed in support, preceded by the artillery. The scene became every minute more animated and lively. Every trace of fatigue brought about by long standing and continuous watching through the telescopes, vanished as the firing began.

“Still farther away, to our left, towards the point where the Corps of Guards had arrived, light streaks of vapour rising above the woods indicated that the battle had begun there also, and it was not long before we observed, right in front of us, in the direction of Rezonville and Gravelotte, the infantry of the VIII. Corps coming into action.

“Thus along the whole line the fire of battle had kindled, and quite a couple of hours passed—which, under the excitement, flew like minutes—without any change being apparent in the scene. The only thing which was evident was that, of the various corps, more and more troops were becoming engaged, and that the fighting was growing in intensity to a terrible extent.

“At last a report came from General von Steinmetz that the heights opposite were taken, and that he had sent forward cavalry in pursuit. This report and the proposal of a superior officer who had been farther to the front, and considered another point of view more suitable, induced us to move from the post we had hitherto occupied. Although the latter had not enabled us to overlook the whole of the battle-field, the lines of smoke which rose over woods and hills had given us some indication as to the course of the fighting in the centre and on the left wing, while we had the right wing immediately before us. The new point of observation to the east of Rezonville, however, did not afford a sufficient view, so that a third point farther to the front, north-west of Gravelotte, was selected as the post for the Royal Headquarters. This seemed the more advisable, as we supposed the corps of General von Steinmetz, from

his report of the capture of the heights, to be advancing farther on the plateau.

“But we soon perceived that the actual state of affairs was far from being what we had imagined. We had taken our stand directly behind the deployed artillery of the VIII. Corps, and therefore in close proximity to the line of battle. Now, it is not advisable for the supreme commanders to approach too near to the fighting, as then minor incidents of the combat in the immediate vicinity force themselves upon their attention, and occupy it to such an extent that the supervision of the whole becomes impaired. There is also the temptation to meddle with details which ought not to concern the highest leaders, whose task is of a different and more important nature. In any case, the close proximity of the line of battle, and to whatever is going on there, will impress and influence them more than is profitable, having regard to the proper direction of the whole battle. All this we experienced on the 18th August.

“As we were no longer able to follow, from our new post of observation, the course of the combat in the centre and on the left wing, we had to try to keep ourselves informed by continually sending out officers to see what was going on there. Moreover, Brandenstein, with one or two others, had been with the army of Prince Frederick Charles ever since the morning, and he furnished us with intelligence as to what was taking place there, and as to the intentions of its Commander-in-Chief. It must not be forgotten, however, that the sending of reports from a distance takes time, and that, if the headquarters be posted in a suitable spot, many things will be known sooner than they can be by reports, which, when they come from the foremost fighting line, have often first to pass through several hands.

“Directly before us was a deep ravine-like gully, on the other side of which the ground rose, as I have before described, only that we now saw it closer. Along the

heights, which descended steeply in places, the poplar bordered road and the various patches of wood, lay the French position. Several farmhouses on the crest, as well as nearer towards us, were still blazing furiously. On our right hand the village of Gravelotte extended a long way along the main road by which we had come ; behind the village rose more wooded hills, and cut off any further prospect in this direction, as was the case also on our left.

“ Within the French position, and also in advance of it, lines of skirmishers were established, some of them apparently in shelter-trenches constructed in tiers one above the other. On our side of the ravine our artillery was deployed with its right battery about 250 yards in advance to the left of us. Little was to be seen of the French guns ; on the whole the artillery fire was moderate, and on our arrival it seemed as if the engagement here had come to a standstill. Indeed, the inactivity of the enemy’s artillery struck us as strange. What did it mean? Had they used up their ammunition? Had they succumbed already? Was the enemy really retreating, leaving only his rearguard to oppose us? No answer was possible to these questions for the moment. But one thing became clear from the first, which was by no means agreeable, viz. that the heights, which Steinmetz had reported as taken, were by no means in our possession, and that Hartmann’s cavalry division, which was reported to have started in pursuit, was on this side of the defile, instead of on the other, to our right front, on the sloping ground towards Gravelotte. The King rode down to the division, which received him with enthusiastic shouts. We separated in order to find out how things were going on on our left, and came back just as the King had returned. It turned out that the Commander-in-Chief of the First Army had been induced to believe somehow or other, perhaps by reports which he had received, that the opposite heights had

actually been taken as a result of the severe fighting which had been going on for their possession, and so the cavalry division had been ordered forward for the pursuit.

“The defile of Gravelotte allowed the cavalry division to debouch only in a narrow column. The 4th Uhlán regiment under Major von Radecke, which was the first to debouch, was received by a heavy infantry and artillery fire, under which the regiment deployed. Within a few moments it lost 50 men and 100 horses, and had to be withdrawn, together with the rest of the cavalry division, to this side of the defile. Major von Radecke himself was missing, his wounded horse alone had come back, and he was believed to be dead. Fortunately this was not the case, and he regained his regiment soon after.

“Immediately after this, Count Wartensleben, Steinmetz’s quartermaster-general, came to report that the troops had been forced back; they had, indeed, taken the heights, but a strong counter attack of the enemy had driven them down again.” (It had been one of those incidents of the battle which swayed to and fro without result, the advantage inclining first to one side, then to the other.)

“Presently Steinmetz himself arrived with his staff. The King pointed out that now, as the heights had once been carried, and then lost, everything must be done to get possession of them again. General von Steinmetz returned in the direction of Gravelotte to issue orders to this effect. Again an hour passed, the troops of the VII. Corps had already suffered great losses, the position before them was very strong, but they were rallied once more for the attack.” (As a matter of fact all these events happened in reality somewhat differently; I only relate here what our impressions were at the time.) “The powder smoke and the decreasing daylight gave a peculiar colouring to the scene.

“Meanwhile I had ridden up to one of the batteries in front of us, and made a fresh-looking young artillery officer who

commanded the section on the extreme right wing (an old Hanoverian, as his large medal with the yellow ribbon betokened) point out to me the places at which the French artillery was posted, sheltered by small depressions of the ground, with which our own batteries had been engaged. As I was examining the country farther to the left through the telescope I noticed an extraordinary red glow in that direction. Adjusting the glass for the longer distance, I saw that it originated from the trousers of numerous French infantry who, amidst guns and wagons, came hurriedly streaming from the centre or right wing in the direction of Metz. Where they came from could not be made out, as the view was confined to a glimpse through a small cutting in the wood directly in front of us, but I certainly formed the impression that a distinct retrograde movement must have taken place on the part of the enemy in face of the attacks of the Guards and the Saxon Corps. I immediately went back to the Chief and General von Podbielski, told them what I had seen and asked both Generals to come to the spot where I had been and see for themselves. But before we reached it our attention was directed very forcibly to the part of the battle-field directly before us.

“The engagement in this quarter had assumed for some time a comparatively slack character; even the artillery fire had almost totally ceased. But meanwhile a fresh infantry attack *en masse* had been arranged, and the moment it began, the whole scene changed as by magic. Suddenly the opposing slopes were lit up as if by a grand illumination; innumerable small flames shot forth from all the tiers of trenches, and light blue clouds of vapour rose above them; near the crest, down below in the valley, in fact everywhere, the din of battle broke out again. Along the poplar avenue strong lines of infantry stood deployed, whose incessant independent firing produced a grand effect. And now, as if springing from the earth, the French batteries suddenly came into action

again: shrapnel, common-shell, mitrailleuse bullets, came sweeping like a hailstorm in wild confusion down into the valley. Even on the spot where we stood, the whizzing of the bullets became frequent, as well as the bursting of shrapnel high above our heads, the fragments of which cleft the air with a shrill sound. Altogether it was one of the most animated and splendid battle scenes that could possibly be imagined. But it quickly became evident that the enemy was too strong, and the ground too unfavourable for the attack to have any chance of success in this place; indeed, we soon saw large bodies of our men coming down the slope again.

“Meanwhile the II. Corps had come up in support. One of its divisions was already on the other side of Gravelotte, the other was farther back. The first was ordered forward to aid the retiring troops. At this moment Bronsart, who had been sent to the II. Corps, came up, and reported that its commander, General von Fransecky, had informed him he would advance with his whole corps and storm the heights.

“But now another occurrence took place which demanded our whole attention. On this side of the deep gully along the outskirts of Gravelotte, and through this village, at first only stragglers, then whole groups of men were seen in hasty retreat; faster and faster the crowd came rolling along, at last in full career; here and there galloped a few horsemen and vehicles of various kinds; then it seemed as if the artillery was also in full retreat, and the whole movement spreading farther in our direction, the six cavalry regiments posted north of Gravelotte also faced round and fell back. At the same time the firing became more and more violent, while in the increasing darkness the movements of several detachments on the opposite slope seemed to indicate a counter attack of the French.

“We saw before us a complete panic, and many a face may well have looked grave at that moment. The first

thing to be done was to get the King out of it and to stop the fugitives. We all mounted our horses, some of the staff hurried towards the village to look after the latter; while others closed round the General to be at hand if need be. After the direction had been fixed upon in which the King was to ride back, Moltke turned with us, and we rode once more towards Gravelotte, where the engagement had again become very severe; but still on the far side of the ravine, though we imagined for a moment that it had already reached the outskirts of the village. It was not possible, however, for the danger to become very great as one division of the II. Corps was already at hand, and I was able to affirm for certain that the other was close by, as I had only just a moment ago distinctly seen its dark lines approaching through the smoke. Still, the impression which the whole occurrence made upon us was a painful one.

“ Before we reached the village the confusion had been entirely arrested. The cavalry division, which had been posted until now close to the ravine, had only fallen back far enough to get room for the attack, and now wheeled round again to the front. Moltke himself riding with us at a walk in front of the first line, amid the rain of shells, made a good impression; the officers, who had been sent in different directions, here also joined us again.

“ What was it that had actually taken place? When the enemy resumed the engagement and made a counter attack, some spare horses belonging to the staff had all at once got into the line of fire, and had hurriedly returned to the main road. The wounded, and those who accompanied them, the stragglers, who lined the road on both sides in crowds, imagined that the enemy was close on their heels, and so they sought to escape as well as they could. An ammunition column meeting them tried to extricate itself from the confusion and wheeled off at a trot; these were the vehicles which we had taken for

the artillery; other groups of spare horses joined them, and thus the crowd of wounded men and non-combatants hurriedly streaming back had together produced the impression of a panic. But not a single detachment in close order, not one group of skirmishers had retreated. The battalions of the VIII. Corps, though losing heavily, had beaten off the attack on the far side of the ravine, on the slope and higher up, near the captured farm of St. Hubert.

“In the midst of this episode I noticed all at once two horsemen near me to whom my attention was attracted by some circumstance or other; looking at them more closely I recognized Hahnke and an aide-de-camp of the Commander-in-Chief of the Third Army who had ridden that day the whole distance from the headquarters of the Crown Prince. On my asking him what he was doing here, Hahnke answered: ‘I have only come to see what’s up here.’ Just like him; whenever anything was ‘up,’ he must of course be there. That very evening he rode back, and was the first to bring the news of the battle to the Crown Prince.

“It was now about 8 o’clock, and owing to the smoke which had settled down in the low-lying parts, it had become almost completely dark when we rode into Gravelotte. Before us the 3rd division was advancing, behind us the 4th division was close in rear with the 21st Regiment at its head. Some burning houses alone made it possible in places to make out anything clearly. I shall never forget what a grand spectacle the advancing regiments afforded. It must not be forgotten that this army corps, the last to leave Berlin, had only just managed to join the army at this decisive moment, after very strenuous marches, having been that day on the road from 2 o’clock in the morning until 8 in the evening. Now, in spite of hundreds of wounded streaming back from the front, in spite of the panic which they had just witnessed, in the midst of shells striking in every direction, they (the

Pomeranians) marched through the village in well-locked-up ranks with gallant bearing, and loud cheers at the prospect of taking part in the action. These are moments in which one feels that death on the battle-field is surrounded by a halo of glory.

“Many officers whom I had known at the Staff College or elsewhere, when they recognized me in the glare of the blazing houses, ran out of the ranks and joyfully shook hands.

“We accompanied the troops for some distance through the village, and everywhere we came upon bodies of men who had been under fire and were re-forming. I also met here General von Strubberg. Before us marched the 14th and 54th Regiments. When the musketry fire increased on all sides, we rode off out of the village, to the right, into the open, in order to get some idea of the battle, as far as that was possible, from the flashes of the rifles. Echoed back by the long walls of some extensive stables near us, it gave one the impression that we were ourselves in the midst of the engagement, although it was some distance off, on the other side of the valley. We had kept together wonderfully in the confusion, even our spare horses followed close behind us. But here, too, we could see no more than a few hundred yards before us. The darkness became too great, only the burning buildings on the hills stood out like spectres from it.

“Suddenly the drums of the advancing Pomeranian battalions were heard, and again the long lines of the enemy’s shelter-trenches were illumined, and again the unceasing roll of the French fusillade resounded. In between rang out from one place our long-drawn call, the ‘the whole advance.’ From all sides it was repeated; from every direction came thundering the hurrah of our gallant troops, and distinctly we heard the crackling of our needle-guns. Soon after, the fire from the shelter-trenches died away, which we interpreted to mean that our men had got into them. But on and on the bugles sounded, and again and again

the Prussian hurrahs were borne back to us on the wind.

“We now turned again to the village, rode through it and for some distance beyond it, in order, if possible, to get some insight into the progress of the fighting. It was going on only in some few places, and at rare intervals a bullet came whizzing past us. The height was (as we thought then) successfully stormed, after terrible losses, it is true, and after many a one of our men, probably, had been hit in the dark by the bullets of his comrades. Of the 14th and 54th, who had advanced before us, one regimental commander had been killed, the other wounded.

“When we had convinced ourselves that everything was going as well as we could wish—that things had turned out well in other parts of the battle-field we knew already from officers who had come thence—there was no sense in General von Moltke exposing himself further to personal danger without doing any good thereby. When we put this to him, he still remained on the road for some time, and only returned later on.

“As we did so, the King’s aide-de-camp, Count Lehndorff, met us and informed the General that his Majesty was at Rezonville, and was anxious to hear his report on the progress of the battle. So we proceeded at a trot. But scarcely had we left Gravelotte, when I thought it proper to advise the General to ride slowly, as the rapid motion rearwards of so numerous a body of riders had already begun to impress the wounded and stragglers on both sides of the road, and it was to be feared that another panic might arise like that of an hour ago.

“So the General moderated his pace to a walk, and we reached thus the western end of Rezonville; here the King had dismounted, near a barn that had been burnt down close by the road on its southern side, where a fire which had been made of doors, ladders, etc., was burning brightly. As I chanced to be riding on this side of the road in attendance on General von Moltke, I was the first who, after

dismounting, approached his Majesty. Just then I heard a superior officer saying to the King in a very impressive manner, 'Now it is my humble opinion, sire, that we, considering our heavy losses to-day, should not continue the attack to-morrow, but await the attack of the French.' This idea seemed to me so monstrous, that I could not help blurting out, 'Then I don't know why we attacked at all to-day!' Of course, I got my answer, which was not exactly spoken in a very gracious tone: 'What do you want here, Lieutenant-Colonel?' But at this moment, Moltke, who had heard what was said, stepped forward between us two towards the King, and said in his quiet and decided manner: 'Your Majesty has only to give the order for the continuation of the attack in case the enemy should make a further stand outside Metz to-morrow.' The orders were drawn up at once, also the despatch to be sent to Berlin—it was nearly 10 o'clock in the evening—was written out by Count Bismarck, and then it was resolved to remain at Rezonville for the night.

"Our spare horses, which had joined those of the King, and even my brake, were on the spot. Moltke had been wearing for some hours a cloak which had been taken from one of the dead soldiers lying on the battle-field, and my servant brought one for me also. Count Nostitz, meanwhile, had discovered a house not occupied by the wounded, in which a short time before, to all appearances, a detachment of the Hospital Corps had established itself, which, however, had been called off and disturbed in the middle of their meal. The remains of it—and it seemed as if the detachment had not been provided badly in this respect—we took possession of. While we were sitting in the small room, some of us wrapped up in soldiers' cloaks, by a table which was crowded with all sorts of utensils, working among the remains of food, by the light of some candle-ends stuck into bottles, his Majesty suddenly came in, saying, 'He must come and see what we were doing.' Next day he

remarked that he had thought, on finding the room crammed with so many persons, and seeing the wretched light which scarcely made darkness visible, he had got into a robbers' cave.

“ Finally, we gave up the room, in which there were two beds in the wall, to the two Generals, and sought our own resting-places. Blume, Holleben, Alten, Krause, Claer and myself lay down in some large stables in which our horses had already found shelter, but where there was an abominable draught owing to the broken windows and doors. We did not examine long into the composition of our beds, but fell asleep pretty soon, in spite of the groans and cries of the wounded near us. During the night we were wakened continually by men who were in search of shelter, and by the stamping of our horses, who got restless from time to time. Next morning at 5 o'clock I went to wash right in the middle of the village, in an old stable bucket, in which my servant had managed to get some rather dirty water. Stripped to the middle, I was busily engaged in washing, when suddenly I heard a burst of laughter proceeding from the windows of the nearest house, where, on looking up, I perceived their Royal Highnesses Prince Luitpold of Bavaria and the Grand Duke of Weimar, who were greatly amused at the sight.

“ During the course of the forenoon, in which reports came pouring in from all sides, with many sad particulars as to our losses, mentioning the names of many good old friends, I received orders to ride to Metz with a flag of truce. It was about the French dead and wounded that remained on the battle-field. As to negotiations for a capitulation, nothing could as yet be said, but I was to point out at Metz that the French army was now surrounded by our forces, and that its fate seemed sealed, the number of our troops being large enough to prevent any attempts at relief on the part of the comparatively small number of French forces still in the field.

“ Winterfeld accompanied me on this expedition ; near

the end of the village he bought a napkin from an old woman who chanced to be in possession of one, in order to equip ourselves for our business. After crossing the defile of Gravelotte we came across a dragoon regiment of the II. Army Corps, who were asked for a trumpeter, and here we fixed the napkin to a long pole to represent a flag of truce.

“ The ride across this part of the battle-field presented a sad sight, on account of the large number of bodies of our men, which only too plainly proved what heavy losses we had suffered, while we only saw very few corpses on the ground which had been held by the French. Only in some of the shelter-trenches there were a considerable number of dead ; they lay there still as if in the ranks, their rifles pushed forward over the parapet as if ready to fire ; they startled us from the distance, they looked so much like a deployed line of French shirmishers. On approaching nearer it seemed as if these trenches had suddenly been taken in flank by our artillery, which accounted for the enemy's losses. As we continued our ride we suddenly saw rifle barrels flash out of some bushes on the top of a steep embankment of the road. But these belonged to men of our VII. Corps, whose foremost detachment had been pushed forward to this point.

“ While the mountainous country to our right precluded any further outlook, there lay on the left of the road before us a deep and pretty valley with houses belonging mostly to the village of Rozerieulles. Beyond it rose fairly steeply the slopes of Mont St. Quentin, from the fort of which came from time to time large volumes of smoke from some heavy gun. On this slope, and near the fort, were seen the tents of a large encampment. Between the hills on the right of the road and the slopes of Mont St. Quentin in front, the ground shelved down to a plain, in which, after having passed several turns of the road, we saw Metz lying at our feet. Out of the bluish haze hover-

ing above the houses, rose the huge outline of the cathedral.

“Our enjoyment of the beauties of the landscape was soon disturbed in a disagreeable fashion. For, from the village below, several cavalry patrols of two or three men each galloped in succession back in the direction of Metz, and as they came on a level with us, at a distance of about a hundred yards, they were so obliging as to fire their carbines at us, the bullets whistling about our ears. This was not a promising beginning, but worse was yet to come. As we came round a fresh bend of the road, and approached a building which lay some 80 yards ahead, we noticed a double sentry near it. I ordered a halt; the trumpet was sounded, and the improvised flag of truce waved. By way of answer the two men fired at us. We again sounded the trumpet, and tried, without stirring from the spot, to make ourselves understood by shouting. Immediately a small detachment of French infantry deployed along the garden wall, and poured a rapid fire into us, which came, to judge from the sound of the bullets which whistled past us, from the so-called *Tabatière* rifles. The men seemed to be *gardes mobiles*, but it did not matter who they were, and seeing no hopes of stopping the firing, we could not remain there any longer, so we turned about and made off at a gallop. After having gone a few yards, we noticed that the bay horse of the trumpeter was riderless. Fortunately we managed, thanks to the windings of the road, to get out of the way of the bullets sent after us. Here we found that the bay horse was slightly wounded on the foreleg; the trumpeter we saw coming after us on foot, a shot through the bridge of the nose had thrown him from his horse. We waited for him round a corner, and then went back. The incident afterwards gave rise to various diplomatic representations.

“When I made my report to the King on the result of

my mission, his Majesty was still visibly affected by the great sacrifices which the previous day had demanded. No further attempt was made to enter into communication with the French Commander-in-Chief."

Before I leave the battle of Gravelotte, a remark or two may be added to the description given above. I have left it deliberately in the same form in which it was written within a few days of the battle, and it expresses consequently the impression which the Staff of the Royal Headquarters had formed of it during the progress of the combat.

Historical researches have since shown that even in the course of an engagement which takes place close before one's eyes very wrong impressions may be formed as to what is taking place. This is clearly illustrated in this case: first the erroneous supposition of the headquarters of the First Army concerning the capture of the heights occupied by the enemy; then again the impressions which we too had gained as to the course of the fight for the heights, and the successes of the II. Corps, the former being several points very different from what we had imagined. The spectator may judge very differently of the particulars of an engagement during its progress, according to the position from which he watches it, or the period when he is present. An incomplete view of the ground, and still more the almost total obliteration of it by darkness coming on, must contribute to erroneous impressions being formed. Perfect clearness as to details can in most cases only be arrived at by conscientious historical investigation, and even this does not always succeed in establishing with absolute correctness the account of a battle.

Thus at Gravelotte, owing to our not being able to see the battle-field properly, it escaped our notice, that soon after the beginning of the infantry engagement,

the farm of St. Hubert on the heights had fallen into our possession and had been held in spite of every attempt to retake it. Furthermore, our impression that the II. Corps had finally taken the heights was a wrong one: the enemy, on the contrary, maintained himself in his position at Pont du Jour, and only vacated it during the night. The mistake arose from the fact that we had nothing to go by but our hearing, it being too dark to see. Thus the sounding of the "advance," the brief but furious musketry fire, and then its temporary cessation, made us believe that the attacks had been successful. As a matter of fact the II. Corps never passed the line along which the VIII. Corps had fought for so long, or if did, it was for only a very little way.

We may mention here an apocryphal story which became current soon after the battle, viz. that General von Moltke had led in person the attack of the II. Corps. It may have originated in the fact that the Staff of the Royal Headquarters found itself for a long time on the field over which the forward movement of this corps took place. Any personal leading of the II. Corps on the part of the Chief of the General Staff would not have been within the duties of the latter, and could therefore not have taken place. Besides, the well-tried commander of the Corps, the gallant General von Fransecky, would never have tolerated any such interference with his duty.

Looking at the battle in its main features, it will be seen that the conduct of it was most difficult, as from the beginning it was impossible to know in what direction the bulk of the forces were to be used, this being dependent on the movements of the enemy. It was only after it had become certain that the enemy was going to hold the position on the heights on the west side of Metz, that it became easier to direct the troops. But even then we were not sufficiently well informed, at first, as to how far the right wing of the enemy extended. We were led to believe by the reports which came in, for some considerable time,

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that it only reached Amanvillers. Now the further north this wing extended, the later would the forces told off to surround it come into action. From the beginning, we had judged rightly that the enemy's position was too strong to be attacked only in front, and great weight was therefore laid on this turning movement. But hours passed before it could take place. The IX. Corps, which formed the point on which the army of Prince Frederick Charles wheeled to the right, had prematurely become seriously engaged with the enemy close to it, and this had led to the troops of the First Army coming into action sooner than would otherwise have been the case. The French right wing succumbed before the concerted attacks of the Guards and the Saxons, which brought about the loss of the battle for the French and compelled them to vacate, during the night, the strong positions of the left wing, in which they still maintained themselves in the evening of the 18th August.

Our losses amounted to 20,000-men, those of the enemy to 10,000. It was not till several weeks afterwards, when the detailed reports had come in from the troops, and we had found time to read them, that we learned that two guns of the IX. Corps had fallen into the hands of the enemy.

One more remark I should like to add, finally, concerning this battle. It has to do with night engagements. The improvement in fire-arms, the greater explosive force of the powder of the present day, make it certain that the effect of fire-arms will be correspondingly greater than it was in our late wars. It was even then sufficient, under favourable circumstances, to repel any attack. There has been the endeavour, by means of new formations and in other ways, to try to diminish, as much as possible, the losses to be expected. Among other plans there has been talk from time to time of carrying on the combat, whenever possible, at night. It is quite incomprehensible to me how anyone can expect good results from a systematic

resort to this expedient. Anyone who has found himself once in his life in a night engagement, or even in the dusk, fighting as we were during the later hours of the evening on the day of Gravelotte, will hardly be an enthusiastic advocate of such tactics. There will be, certainly, situations in future wars in which a night engagement cannot be avoided, nor can we say definitely what conditions may not exceptionally arise, in which even large masses of troops may be so employed with a prospect of success, but to reserve the night for fighting on principle, cannot surely be sound doctrine. The troops like to see their enemy, and that is impossible in the dark; every man in such an engagement will probably soon arrive at the conviction that at least as many losses will be due, in the confusion, to the bullets of his own friends as to those of the enemy. The direction of a great battle is based on holding the masses together for concerted action; but a director who sees nothing, who receives no reports, and who arrives at utterly wrong conclusions in the dark from being guided by his own impressions, as we ourselves were that evening, is not in a position to direct at all. If it were only a question of placing troops in readiness, and putting them in motion, if that were the sum total of the tactics required from a leader, then perhaps it might be possible. But the direction of large masses of men during the progress of the action requires much more than this. It would be an error, moreover, to suppose that large masses could be prepared for night fighting by practice in peace time; it is only possible to do so with small bodies; in the same way as the requirements of so-called petty warfare, i.e. outpost duties, patrols, surprises, etc.

The battle of the 18th August had been fought on a reversed front, i.e. we stood with our backs towards Paris, and the enemy between us and home. Such a position is fraught with many dangers. In case of defeat, it might easily lead to the utter ruin of the vanquished.

We had exposed ourselves deliberately to this danger, being convinced that the greatest results would be gained from it, and we were quite sure that we should succeed in winning a victory over the opposing forces of the enemy. Under these circumstances, not the smallest fears had ever been entertained in our conferences, with regard to fighting the battle as we did. Our operations seemed to us the natural outcome of the situation, and best fitted for making the most of our successful battles and marches, and the blunders of the enemy.

Nevertheless, it may be asked, what would have happened if the 18th August had ended in a defeat? Even then the consequence would not have been disastrous. The II. Army Corps was behind our right wing, it had been engaged only for a short time on this day, and we should have been able, during the night and the following morning, to bring the greater part of the I. Corps to the left bank of the Moselle. There would, consequently, have been a sufficient force at our disposal to check any offensive movement on the part of the enemy, long enough for the army of Prince Frederick Charles to carry out its wheel backwards. This evolution would certainly have been practicable, with the large reserve still at the disposal of the Second Army, viz. the III. and X. Corps. Under any circumstances, a junction with the Crown Prince's army would then have been ensured, and therewith such a numerical superiority would have been attained over the enemy, that a second battle might have been fought with a reasonable certainty of success.

In the afternoon of the 19th August we returned to Pont-à-Mousson. Moltke took Winterfeld and myself with him in his carriage, and we drove on in silence; nor did the chief break his train of thought except for three short remarks. The first time was when we crossed, on the way from Rezonville to Gorze, a part of the battle-field of the 16th August and came across heaps of still unburied French Voltigeurs of the Guard, in whose fore-

most ranks lay a young non-commissioned officer of our 11th Regiment still grasping in his hands his rifle with fixed bayonet. Seeing him, the General said, "This was the bravest of the brave." Later on he remarked, "I have learned once more that one cannot be too strong on the field of battle." This observation referred to the approach of the II. Corps, which had been reported to be nearing the battle-field, but we had been in doubt for some time whether it would be wanted, and seriously thought of giving orders to stop it and allowing it to rest. The last remark of the General was made as we approached Pont-à-Mousson, and saw before us the church towers and outlines of the houses picturesquely lit up by the evening sun; rising above the town were the heights on the right bank of the river crowned by an old chapel or ruin which completed the charming picture. Then he exclaimed, "What would be our feelings now, if we had been beaten?"

My expedition with the flag of truce on the 19th was the cause of a very comical scene on my return to Pont-à-Mousson. The news of it had found its way there before our arrival, and with the addition that I had been killed on the occasion. On the morning of the 20th August I went into the front part of the house to speak to one of our officers who lived in the first storey. On coming down I suddenly met, at a turn of the staircase, the lady to whom I owed my quarters on the premises. She also had thought me dead, and must have imagined the first moment when she saw me that it was my ghost which appeared to her; at any rate she uttered a piercing cry. I managed with a few words to assure her that I was still among the living, when in the rapid transition from the illusion to reality, the kindly heart of the amiable enemy conquered every other consideration, and she embraced me heartily. Just at that moment the doors opened on both sides of the landing, on the right Moltke's head popped out, on the left that of Podbielski, both eager to

see what was the cause of the scream. I shall never forget the comical expression which spread over their faces at the sight of this scene. I need not say that I had to put up with a good deal of "chaff" about it for some time to come.

The French army being now driven within the fortifications of Metz, the whole of the forces of the First and Second Army were no longer required to blockade them there. Therefore the Corps of Guards and the XII. (Royal Saxon) Army Corps were detached from the army of Prince Frederick Charles, as well as the IV. Corps from the Third Army, and the three were formed into a new force, under the command of H.R.H. the Crown Prince Albert of Saxony.¹ The name "force" was soon changed, in command parlance, into the "Army of the Meuse." Indeed, so strong a force might well claim to be called an "army," considering that we had given that designation to both the Main and the Elbe Field Forces in 1866, which only consisted of three divisions each.

Lieutenant-General von Schlotheim, the Chief of the Staff of the Elbe Army in 1866, an officer as much distinguished by his services on the staff as by his ability as a leader, who had up to then commanded the Hessian Cavalry Brigade, was nominated Chief of the Staff of the newly-formed army. The command of the XII. (Royal Saxon) Corps was given to H.R.H. the Prince George of Saxony. The army of the Crown Prince had lost the Baden division, which was employed in Alsace, but afterwards the VI. Army Corps was attached to it instead; it was now amply strong enough to continue its advance into the interior of France, and to crush, in the open field, any organized force which the enemy might still possess.

After a few days' rest, which our troops sorely needed

¹ The expression used by the author, viz. *Armeeabtheilung*, i.e. part of an army, is quite untranslatable literally. Later on the expression "Army of the Meuse" was used officially.—ED.

after their great hardships, the forward movement was begun. The Royal Headquarters left Pont-à-Mousson on the 23rd August.

A few general notes may be added here from different letters which were written about this time; they will serve to illustrate our views of the situation, and the frame of mind we were in in those days. In a letter from Pont-à-Mousson, under date the 21st August, I wrote: "Our operations have brought the main army of the French into a desperate plight. It is blockaded in Metz. We are leaving seven and a half corps before the fortress; with all the rest we are continuing our march in the direction of Paris. It is not impossible, though not likely, that the French shut up in Metz may, by desperate efforts, succeed in breaking out; but that would not signify much, as the German corps, following them up on all sides, would render their escape impossible. But if they should not succeed in forcing a way out of Metz, they will soon have to capitulate through want of food.

"General von Chauvin, who has the whole of the military telegraphs under him, is very much obliged to me for having been the means, when he arrived at the front for a few days, of his being able to remain where he was for the 18th August, which enabled him to be present at the battle. Our losses in the latter must be considerably heavier than those of the French, because of the formidable position which they occupied. I shall be satisfied if we come off with 15,000 men, but I fear they are more. I have given up asking after friends, as I get to each question no other answer than 'Dead,' or 'Wounded.' I will mourn for them when all is over; now we want good spirits to enable us to carry the business to an end, and that we have, thank God. I am not at all surprised at our great losses, I expected them.

"As concerns our mess arrangements, I may inform you: we get our rations like every other soldier; we have them prepared by the cook, a man of the transport corps who

understands the business ; but when we are in a large town such as this, we eat at an hotel. Our time for dinner varies considerably, being sometimes mid-day, sometimes eight in the evening. For the rest, we divide fairly whatever we get sent to us from home ; the biscuits you sent me have been finished long ago.

“ In addition to the 8000 inhabitants, many of whom, however, have fled, there are in the town more than 3000 troops, besides over 4000 wounded, and there are always several thousand prisoners marching through.

“ The different opinions among our good Berliners concerning the first two great battles before Metz will have come to an end by now, and they may understand somewhat better the brilliant operations which came to a close with the battle of the 18th August. The 14th, 16th and 18th form one harmonious whole ; each day has been a success for us, in spite of all the French bulletins. But if people at home become hysterical now, when everything goes smoothly and well, Heaven grant we may not suffer a small check somewhere, and yet it is not beyond the range of possibility!—The French fleet disturbs our trade, certainly, but it has, at the most, a couple of thousand marines on board. If they should land somewhere, which is scarcely likely, it would not matter much ; they will soon go back again. The regiments which France had originally intended for service across the sea have been employed here in the recent decisive battles ; their dead cover the battle-fields in heaps.

“ We may yet meet a French army at Châlons. But what an army ! Only the two divisions of Failly and about two new ones are intact ; the rest are the remnants of the army of MacMahon, fourth battalions, gardes mobiles, all organized in a hurry. Against them we march with 8½ army corps, all well-seasoned troops. If Providence has not ordained otherwise, we shall beat them thoroughly.—Our advanced corps after their many hardships must, however, have a few days' rest before.”

“Pont-à-Mousson, the 21st August, evening.

“I once more point out the possibility that the French may break through our investment, perhaps on the right bank of the Moselle. In that case our communications with home would be interrupted for a short time, and you would hear nothing at all of us meanwhile. But do not become uneasy, if that should happen, as such a temporary interruption would not mean anything at all. We are prepared for such an occurrence. However, it is only a possibility.

“Our Sunday dinner to-day was so poor and scanty that they insisted on my giving them the ginger which had been sent me as a present. They ate it up like so much cabbage! Coming from dinner, I was told that Count Brüges of the Hussars of the Guard, who is lying wounded in the hospital, had sent for me. I managed to see him for a moment. He has had an accident; shortly after the battle a barn door, which was being opened, fell down on him, knocked him down, together with his horse. But it does not seem dangerous. I left him a box of cigars which I had taken with me in my hurry. Count Brüges of the dragoons is well. Whilst walking through the rooms of the hospital, I was hailed by many an acquaintance whom I scarcely recognized again; among them the brave Major von Wittich of the Emperor Francis' Regiment, on whose bay horse you rode, when a child, at Thorn, and in whose pleasant company we were at Rome, where he was recovering from the severe wound received in 1866. He is again very seriously wounded, I regret to say. I have also heard that our old friend Otto Koch has received a bullet in the abdomen.”

With our departure from Pont-à-Mousson the first act of the great drama came to a fortunate conclusion. On the 6th August considerable portions of the First and Second Army had crossed into French territory, and had gained the victory of Spicheren on French soil. After three more battles, almost the whole of the French main

army had, within the short space of twelve days, been driven into the fortress of Metz after the 18th August, and saw itself face to face with an almost unavoidable catastrophe, being confined within a narrow circle by sufficient forces. During this time, the army of the Crown Prince of Prussia, which had crossed the French frontier on the 4th August, had driven the minor army of MacMahon out of Alsace by the victories of Weissenburg and Wörth, and had penetrated, in its pursuit across the Vosges, into the interior of France. Communication had been established between it and the forces with us, whilst one of its divisions had been diverted to besiege Strassburg, and was at the same time entrusted with the conquest of Alsace.

The terrible blows in August had crushed, within a wonderfully short time, the French hopes of victory. Elated by our brilliant successes, and conscious of our superiority over the still existing forces of the enemy, we looked forward with confidence to the future !

III. The March to Sedan.

I. THE ADVANCE.

THE forces which the enemy was able to oppose to our 8½ army corps, advancing from the Moselle, could be pretty accurately estimated, but nothing could be done to prevent their assembling so far from us.

Now, it was clear that the enemy had several courses of action open to him. The most likely one of all, we thought, was to retreat slowly before our advancing troops in the direction of Paris, so as to form there the nucleus of an army to defend the capital. But what seems to us the most probable, need not, for that reason, be looked at in the same light by the opponent. Therefore the question which one must always ask oneself is this: "What other courses are open to the enemy?" Among those was the possibility that he would make a stand at Châlons, where his new army was being formed; another was that he would attempt to come to the relief of the forces shut up in Metz.

The consideration of these questions, together with the measures to be taken, were what chiefly occupied us for the next few days. We had started on the 23rd from Pont-à-Mousson and had gone to Commercy, making a detour *via* Ligny for the sake of meeting the headquarters of the Crown Prince of Prussia and discussing our further movements.

The headquarters of the Crown Prince were gay with many colours. There were to be seen there, besides the

uniforms of the various arms of the North German troops the light blue infantry and the light green light cavalry uniforms of the Bavarians, as well as the darker ones of the Wurttembergers. Conspicuous, too, was the English scarlet; its wearer was Lieutenant-General Walker, the British military plenipotentiary, who was the trusted friend of the Crown Prince, and had accompanied his headquarters in the war of 1866.

From Commercy General von Steinächer, of His Majesty's suite, departed for Berlin, and was so kind as to take letters home with him, and a few samples of the famous Madeleines de Commercy.¹

“Commercy, 24th August.

“According to the intelligence received, the camp of Châlons is broken up and the troops of the enemy are on the march towards Reims. What is their intention now? Bazaine is completely debarred from communicating with Paris. This very day (24th) we have intercepted a cypher despatch of his to the Emperor Napoleon which he tried to get smuggled through our lines by a peasant. From the letter of a superior officer intercepted at the same time, we learn that they reckon in Metz on being relieved from Châlons; but I hope that the army of Châlons will have enough to do to take care of itself. The question now is whether they will actually make an attempt at a relief, or whether they will make a stand at Châlons itself, or retreat towards Laon or Paris. The opinion is sometimes vented here that we shall never get as far as Paris, because the French will negotiate first. That does not seem very probable to me; the demands that we shall have to make on France are so heavy that the French people will not give up the game so easily, no matter what government may be at the helm.

“Our first railway train arrived yesterday at Pont-à-Mousson; but further on the line is blocked by the fortress

¹ A kind of pastry which is a speciality of Commercy.

of Toul. We shelled it yesterday, and fire broke out in several places in the town, but it did not surrender. So our correspondence will reach you somewhat later than it did before. A *coup de main* against Verdun will perhaps be attempted to-day. I was able to send Count Brüges, who is already able to leave the house again, some wine, cigars, and newspapers; Zeuner is the only regimental commander in the guards who is not killed or wounded."

On the 24th the Royal Headquarters were moved to Bar-le-Duc.

"Bar-le-Duc, the 25th August.

"We shall probably start hence to-morrow for St. Ménéhould, which is about 35 miles from here. Reports say that the French corps, which were in front of us at Châlons, have marched off to Reims. Our measures are taken in such a manner that if they remain there we shall attack them, and if they march to the relief of Metz we shall try to fall on their flank, without, however, abandoning the road to Paris, in case they should retreat that way.

"Bar-le-Duc is a very fine town, situated partly on heights, with fine broad streets and handsome houses with grounds behind them. The house in which I live together with Bronsart and Brandenstein has been deserted by the owner, whose name I don't even know, and only a butler has been left behind.

"During the next days you will only get a few lines from me, as we are likely to have a good deal of work and shall be much on the road. The Bavarian Corps are here, their troops are continuously marching through."

Bar-le-Duc became the starting point of the movements which led to the terrific catastrophe of Sedan. The operations after the battle, which did not take up our time so much, enabled me shortly after to write down a tolerably full account of my experiences during these important events; I give it literally here.

110 WITH THE ROYAL HEADQUARTERS IN 1870-71

“Headquarters, Vendresse, the 3rd September, 9 p.m., 1870.

“Here we are sitting in the same headquarters from which we rode away at 1 a.m. for the final sanguinary struggle. What we have been aiming at for the last week has, by God’s help, been attained; victory crowns the arduous work of our brave army, and rewards its sacrifices and those of the whole nation; a victory as brilliant as any that history records.

“While the impressions of what I have seen are still fresh on my mind, I will try to describe the events of this great day, before time makes them dim.

“After the battle before Metz on the 18th August, and the investment of the French main army in that fortress, the march on Paris was begun. The army corps under the command of the Crown Prince Albert of Saxony, together with the Third Army under the Crown Prince Frederick William, the victor of Weissenburg and Wörth, were set in motion towards the metropolis.”

(Here is repeated what I have already said about the forces of the enemy and the different courses open to him. Then it goes on :)

“Meanwhile the German armies which were marching towards Paris had been spread out over a wider front, a manoeuvre which was necessary, because a quarter of a million of men closely concentrated may fight a battle, but cannot execute great marches. Moreover, the fortress of Verdun, situated between Metz and Châlons, lay as an obstacle in the way of our march, and we had consequently been obliged to pass with our right wing to the south of it, so that our army extended now from that fortress to beyond Bar-le-Duc.

“When, only a few marches from Châlons, the cavalry ascertained that the enemy was still in that camp, we had to think of closing up again for possible battle.

“The Royal Headquarters were still in the pleasant town of Bar-le-Duc on the 25th August, where we quite revived again under the influence of good quarters and

good food; all the necessary orders had already been issued to both armies. In the evening of that day we Staff officers attached to the Royal Headquarters were sitting cheerfully on the benches of the lycée, having just finished our supper, and sung the 'Wacht am Rhein' and other songs. The one who had the least notion of music among us had even begun 'Singe, wem Gesang gegeben,' to our great delight, when the orderly officer of the day suddenly came rushing in with the words, 'General Moltke requests the attendance of the chiefs of sections; four other officers are to be ready to ride off at once!' In a moment our exuberant spirits vanished, we had to return to serious business again. Swords were buckled on quickly; 'The enemy is on the march,' we conjectured. 'But in what direction?' was the question, as we rushed into the office close by.

We were right, he had marched. The Cavalry Division of Prince Albert had dashed into the camp at Châlons, had found it empty, and the French retreating towards Reims. Later intelligence said, 'The enemy is already past Rethel.'

"'Will they really dare to do it!' we exclaimed almost with one voice; for the direction of their march pointed towards an intention of relieving the army shut up in Metz.

"Against such an attempt indeed nothing could be said theoretically; but a flank march of the French round our right wing was practical only if their troops were quicker in marching than our own, and we ourselves—blind."

"Headquarters, Rethel, 4th September, 1870.

"In war one must be prepared for anything! The enemy had disappeared from Châlons, that was certain. But he might just as well have withdrawn farther to Laon, as undertaken the relief of Metz. The latter move was the more important of the two for us, for the present. Were we now to interrupt our march on Paris and

concentrate our army towards the right, to guard against a movement of the enemy which was after all still problematical? We were reluctant to do it, for if the French did not continue their eastward march, we should lose some valuable days, and the troops would be fatigued without purpose. Everything depended on the cavalry throwing light on the situation as soon as possible, especially on the right wing. All the corps which were within reach of our officers despatched during the night from the Royal Headquarters were directed not to begin, for the present, the march on Châlons, for which orders had been issued, but to make a halt, cook their food, and keep themselves in readiness to march in the afternoon. I myself was directed to communicate His Majesty's orders to H.R.H. the Crown Prince of Saxony, and at the same time to explain the views and objects of the Royal Headquarters to him.

“ It was already past midnight, and the distance to the headquarters of the Crown Prince a considerable one, twenty miles or more. As it was possible that we should have to be very active during the day, I and the officers who accompanied me made use of my brake; a few orderlies of the royal escort and the spare horses came trotting after us. It was necessary to make haste, as the three army corps could only change their direction after our arrival, and they might, if we did not come in time, have begun their march according to previous orders. But the conditions of the road were far from favouring speed, as we had to proceed on country roads which intersected each other continually; moreover the villages were mostly deserted and the sign-posts destroyed; nor was the district through which we drove occupied by any of our troops. So we had often to halt and try whether we could make out our whereabouts on the map, by means of a carriage lantern, or read the inscriptions found on the different farmhouses. Once we disturbed, in a small house standing by itself, a good old

woman in her rest, but her dialect was rather incomprehensible, until, when she heard us talking together in our mother tongue, she surprised us by using tolerable German, and then we got out of her what we wanted to know.

“ Still, we were fortunate enough to reach the village, in which the headquarters of the Crown Prince of Saxony were, before the day dawned. The guard showed us the way to the Prince’s quarters, where he and the chief of his staff, General von Schlottheim, were aroused.

“ The Crown Prince determined, as was done also, almost at the same time, by the Royal Headquarters, not to wait for further intelligence, but to set the troops in motion at once in a more northerly direction. In the same way, also, the Crown Prince Frederick William issued orders to his whole army to march in the same direction, a striking proof how unanimous all were in their views of the situation, and as to the steps to be taken.

“ Information as to the decision come to was sent back to General von Moltke. While the Crown Prince Albert sent off his orderly officers, who had been called up meanwhile, to every point of the compass, we had a good wash in the courtyard, and then sat down to a cup of coffee together. The quarters were wretched, and the room so low that we nearly touched the ceiling ; the seats consisted of a plank laid across a couple of casks, but our spirits were excellent, and not a little elated at the prospect of the great events impending. Very glad we were too of the cigars sent by friends in Berlin, which I had taken with me, especially as there had been great dearth of these at the headquarters of the force. 10,000 cigars ordered by the Crown Prince were on the road, but had not found their way to their destination.”

“ Rheims, 6th September, 1870.

“ Meanwhile our horses were saddled, everything got ready for the start, and we accompanied the Crown

Prince to Clermont, a wretched little town in the forest of Argonne, built partly on a hill. During the day a large number of reports arrived which made it certain that the enemy was continuing his fatal flank march. Some Saxon troops, then strong columns of the Guards came marching through the town in uninterrupted succession. It was a sad sight to see the two decimated dragoon regiments of the Guard, from whose ranks so many of our friends were missing who had met their death on the field of Mars-la-Tour. Nearly the whole night through the troops defiled past; the roads had become a quagmire, as it had been raining in torrents since the forenoon.

“ I had sent information early in the morning to Bar-le-Duc that the village in which it was proposed the Royal Headquarters should spend the night, and in which the staff of the Meuse Army had previously been, was not suitable, and had indicated Clermont as the only possible place in which the first portion might, with some squeezing, find accommodation. An answer had then been sent to me from Bar-le-Duc that headquarters would be transferred to the place named. But the orderly lost his way with the message, and I did not receive it until next day. It was therefore quite a surprise for us to see General von Moltke appear late in the afternoon, and with him the quartermasters of the entire headquarters. Fortunately I had provided, on the chance, two houses for the King and the Chief of the General Staff; but for myself I had not yet secured any accommodation. There is as a rule no time to do so, and there is always some one or other who undertakes this trouble, for trouble it is, especially in an overcrowded place. Count Nostitz was the man for these occasions. His first question is: “ For how many officers do we want quarters ? ” He is told the number, and off he rushes into every house that could be suspected of being able to put anyone up, and demands to see all the rooms. If any of them seem suitable, he locks the doors, puts the

key in his pocket, and after some time comes back to hand a key to everyone who is in need of one. He ferreted out for me this time a small neat room in a little house that did not look at all promising from the outside; I gave it up later to Prince Pless and took up my abode with General von Stosch.

“His Majesty the King arrived at Clermont just as it was getting dark. The Royal Headquarters remained here for the next day. It was necessary to sift the reports which were coming in from all sides, as the General Staff had to hold the reins tight, so as to be able, if need be, to stop the movements of the different corps as soon as fresh indications as to the operations of the enemy made it necessary. We were therefore very busy in the office. To control the movement of the army was in itself difficult enough, if one considers that a quarter of a million of men facing West, on a front of some 70 miles, i.e. four or five days' march, had suddenly to wheel round on their extreme right and front North. Besides, the forest of Argonne, with its difficult hill roads, formed a great obstacle, and all the charms of its scenery did not prevent it from being heartily cursed.”

The 27th and 28th August we remained at Clermont; on the 29th, with the progressive movement of the various columns northward, the Royal Headquarters were transferred farther North to Grand Pré.

“Rheims, 7th September, 1870.

“The enemy by his flanking movement had got beyond Le Chêne. From that place two roads lead to Stenay, where there is a bridge across the Meuse in the direction of Metz. According to our assumption, two of the French corps were advancing on the southern road, the remaining two on the northern one. During the 29th August a French Staff officer was captured who was the bearer of a written order to the two corps nearest us regulating their further movement that day. He had

delivered the order to one of them, but on the way to the other, which was farther East, he had fallen into the hands of the Uhlans of the Guard, who had ventured up close to the enemy's columns. This order furnished our headquarters with a complete confirmation of the movements of the French army as they had been conjectured.

“From the first moment that the movement to the right was begun, our object was to block the enemy's path, should he continue in his attempt, not only to the East towards Metz, but also westwards towards Paris, and thus to involve him in a catastrophe. It is therefore easy to imagine with what eagerness every report brought in was scanned. There was time, during the first days, for the enemy to stop his dangerous movement, but on the 29th August we felt we could foresee that if fate had not destined it otherwise and great mistakes were not committed or misunderstandings and misconceptions did not creep in, that this, the last French army, had brought itself into a position from which it could not escape without disaster.”

These words, not written till the 7th of September, may seem an after-thought. It may therefore be of interest to read a few lines from letters sent home, written while the operations were still proceeding, and which show very clearly our way of thinking at the time. They are dated from Grand Pré on the 30th August, 1870, and written at 5 o'clock in the morning. “After the rainy days of last week, the morning sun shines out again merrily, and brightens the comfortable little room which I occupy here. The clear sky points to a hot day, and hot it will probably be in more senses than one. Beyond the little garden rise wooded ranges of hills, and at the foot of them lies a pleasant valley through which runs a stream. On the main road leading through it, are to be seen marching the columns of the V. Army

Corps which, after leaving the valley, will march through our little town. The merry strain of the Amazon's March comes floating over to us, and from the opposite side are heard the hurrahs of the troops which are intended for our Crown Prince, who is riding past.

"Such are the outward impressions under which I begin this day which will probably close the preparatory operations for a great decisive blow.

"What is going on, I may not tell you yet, but if our motto, 'God with us,' comes true, the world will hear, within a few days, of unparalleled deeds! Good-bye! I have just got orders for the army of the Crown Prince of Saxony."

2. BATTLE OF BEAUMONT.

"The moment had come, when the lines of march of the two opponents necessarily came into collision. As the army of the Crown Prince of Saxony was nearest to the enemy, and had to tackle and hold fast the latter, the first serious collisions were to be expected in its direction. The post of observation which the commander of this army with his staff intended to take up in case of an engagement, was distant from Grand Pré about ten miles, so I took to my carriage again, Captain von Alten and Lieutenant von Stosch accompanying me.

"The weather was beautiful, as on all the previous days of battle, the atmosphere clear and the temperature agreeable. All over the undulating country, the long dark lines of approaching columns were visible. We crossed the line of march of the V. Corps, then that of a Bavarian corps, and at last that of the Guards. We had great difficulty in getting along, as detachments of the Guards and the IV. Corps were constantly meeting each other on the narrow roads leading through the forests and over the hilly ground. But we managed luckily to make our way through the troops and ammunition columns, until at last we reached a place on the

road near which the Crown Prince was to take his post of observation.

“ Here we mounted our horses, and as no trace of a large staff was to be discovered anywhere, although we had ascended several hills to look for it, I sent out Alten and Stosch in different directions, I myself with an orderly of the staff taking a third.

“ Having wandered about in this manner for nearly an hour, during which time Stosch joined me again, I was convinced that the headquarters were nowhere near the spot we had supposed, when, all of a sudden, we noticed, a few hundred yards away, a dark object swinging rapidly to and fro among the bushes some two feet off the ground. On closer inspection it turned out to be a horse's tail, brushing away the troublesome flies. We rightly conjectured that there must be someone there, and sure enough, hidden among the dense undergrowth, we discovered a man of the military police. He had been posted near this point to indicate to bearers of reports and orders the road to the Army Headquarters, which had been obliged to change their position. But as the heat increased the guide preferred getting into the shade instead of remaining in evidence on the open hill-top. A volley of very vigorous language was duly discharged at his guilty head, but we soon found the Commander-in-Chief, who with his staff had taken up his post on a slope farther to the East.

“ We were received kindly as ever, and made ourselves at home. Captain von Alten joined us soon afterwards. The position offered a pretty extensive outlook; there was another range of heights in front of us, but the large tracts of forest which extended in a wide semicircle towards Beaumont, could be partly overlooked. On the right of us the Saxon Corps, and on the left the IV. were advancing through the woods; the Guards, who had not yet filled up the awful gaps caused by the 18th August, followed in reserve. Already, on the previous evening

the foremost columns of the Saxons had had some pretty heavy fighting with one of the enemy's divisions, which, however, had marched off during the night in the direction of Beaumont (engagement of Nouart).

"We had just eaten our lunch, consisting of bread, sausage, and a draught of wine, when, about half-past 11, the first cannon-shot was heard from the direction of the IV. Corps. Once more we saw the blue and white little cloudlets of smoke of the bursting shells playing in the air over the forest, and the deep bass of a mitrailleuse battery was likewise audible. From this we were able to judge how far the heads of our columns had advanced, and it seemed as if the ridge before us, being nearer to the fighting, would prove a more favourable post of observation. It was, however, so steep that our horses climbed it only with great difficulty, and when we arrived on the crest we found it so densely grown over with underwood, that the Gardes du Corps, who formed the escort of the Crown Prince, had first to cut a pathway with their swords to give us a clear view. We thus, however, obtained an extremely favourable standing point, from which almost the whole battle-field could be surveyed at a glance. Close to our feet began the above mentioned large woods; on their outskirts, on the far side, was open country, in which over a hundred guns of the IV. Corps and the Saxons were already in position surrounding the enemy's position in a semicircle. From out of the French position peeped, from a depression in the ground, the steeple of Beaumont, wrapped in the dense volumes of smoke from a burning building. Behind it the ground rose again, a wood-crowned range bounding the horizon. French mitrailleuse and other batteries fired away vigorously from this height; on their left a large farm was burning, and still further to the west the advance guard of a Bavarian corps was likewise engaged, while to the east the height descended abruptly to the Meuse, the beautifully blue waters of which wound in a broad coil through

the valley. It was a splendid panorama, which was, however, put in the shade two days afterwards by the scene at Sedan.

“Our batteries soon advanced until they were on a level with Beaumont, and opened fire again from this new position on both sides of the little town. The Crown Prince had already given orders to the Corps of Guards, which was as yet behind us, to follow up, and the Staff now also moved forward in order to get nearer the scene of action.

“The steepness of the hill did not permit a direct descent to the woods at our feet, and we had to make a great detour; it took more than half an hour, moving at a quick pace, before we, at last, cleared the forest. Meanwhile the pioneers were busily engaged in improving the roads. While we stumbled over the newly laid fascines, and stuck in great holes, the brushwood kept lashing our faces during our sharp trot so smartly that we felt it for several days afterwards.

“Meanwhile the enemy had already been forced by the infantry up the heights behind Beaumont. In the open field we came first to a small farm, where ambulances were already at work; from all sides the wounded came pouring in, and also the first prisoners were collected here. Then we went across a wide field over which our infantry had advanced to the attack, and on which many bodies of our brave Magdeburgers lay scattered; but few Frenchmen were seen among them. A few yards further, when we reached the first line of defence of the enemy, the scene changed; death had raged among them even more savagely. To the South of Beaumont a hostile encampment had been taken. As several roads met there, and it was situated on raised ground affording a good prospect over the country in front of it, the Prince took his post there for the next hour. It was the bivouac of the brigade which had fought with the Saxons the evening before at Nouart. At night they had marched off and

had only reached it near morning much fatigued. Without taking sufficient precautions for safety, the small tents had been pitched, and everyone had thrown himself down to rest. Even later on there can have been no outposts at all, or insufficient ones; at any rate when the men were busy in the forenoon with the preparation of their food, the vanguard of our 8th Division came up to within a short distance of them, and surprised them completely.

“The signs of the confusion which then arose baffle all description. The horses of the battery, still coupled together, lay dead or wounded; three guns had been put out of action, while many of the wagons could not be horsed. All the officers’ luggage lay about, the trunks open just as they had been used; the carriage with the military chest and medicine carts were upset, the knapsacks were all ranged in order. The food, of course, had to be left in the saucepans, and had been mostly carried off by our men as they marched through as a welcome present. We dismounted in the midst of this chaos of the dead and the groaning wounded. Before the Commander’s tent there was still standing a camp table and stools, which came in handy for spreading out our maps on. From this spot the further progress of the battle was watched, reports were received, and the necessary orders given. Meanwhile the younger officers of the staff searched about in all sorts of receptacles, to ascertain for certain what regiments had been in the camp. By this means boxes of sardines, truffled sausages and *patés de foie gras* were found in quantities, and as it was now 3 o’clock we all profited *en passant* by these discoveries.

“Meanwhile our infantry had successfully advanced into the woods on the heights beyond, but there the fighting increased in violence. The Crown Prince, therefore, rode still farther forward, previously sending the Saxon Cavalry Division to the right bank of the Meuse. I had sent off Lieutenant von Stosch to the IV. Army Corps; Captain

von Alten was ordered back to report to the King; I asked him at the same time to find out where the Royal Headquarters would be for the night.

“On riding into Beaumont we found the market-place and the street already crowded with over a thousand French prisoners.

“On the other side of the little town further traces of a hurried retreat were visible; on the left was another deserted encampment, on the right a large ammunition park of upwards of sixty wagons drawn up in orderly rows. It was strange that the enemy had not made an attempt to bring these off, as the engagement to the South of Beaumont lasted nearly two hours, and there would have been plenty of time to get them away. Most likely, when the first shells came flying among them, the drivers turned tail, and made off with the horses.

“We rode to the top of the range of hills, as that was the only spot from which the gradually sloping ground could be overlooked; besides, we hoped to be able to see Mouzon from there. The bridge crossing the Meuse at that place was an object of interest to us, for, now that the advance of the French on Metz, by the direct road *via* Stenay had been cut off, it was only possible for them to elude us by turning off northwards. But there the Meuse formed an obstacle, bounding the battle-field towards the north, as well as towards the east.

“The Commander-in-Chief took his position on the crest between the Prussian and Saxon batteries in action there. The prospect opening before us was limited in width, but this defect was amply atoned for by the variety of the scenery and the fierceness of the battle. The evening sun was already casting its declining rays, directly at our feet lay the Meuse, flowing in many windings, like a silver ribbon shining here and there through the smoke which hovered over it. Great splashes of water rose high where it was struck by the enemy's shells which fell short. On the other side of the river we already saw the Saxon

cavalry whose horse-artillery battery took part in the cannonade. In the background were the roofs and towers of Mouzon, and beyond it, on the other bank, rose a range of heights, which, at that distance and with twilight coming on, looked like a wall of rocks.

“Further to the left the eye discerned the massive foliage of the woods which covered the ground shelving down towards the bridge of Mouzon, and over which streaks of light blue smoke, waving to and fro, indicated a hot infantry engagement, of which, however, nothing could be distinguished clearly.”

“Rheims, 8th September, 1870.

“On the same spot arrived, one after the other, the commanding generals of the various corps, von Alvensleben I., Prince George of Saxony, and later, Prince Augustus of Wurtemberg. Our losses were estimated at from 2000 to 4000 men, and again many well-known names were mentioned who had paid for the victory with their life’s blood.

“Another attempt was cheerfully made to support the Prussian troops in their difficult fight in the woods; for which purpose three Saxon regiments advanced along the valley of the Meuse; their battery unlimbered, but the violent crossfire of the enemy soon made it clear that it was impossible to make progress here. So the attempt was given up, the more readily because the IV. Corps had, meanwhile, succeeded in gaining the outskirts of the forest towards Mouzon, and the enemy had consequently to evacuate, in any case, all the ground in front of the town.

“Darkness was now falling rapidly, scarcely anything was to be seen; it was, therefore, very strange that the French, who had brought up a fresh army corps on the heights opposite Mouzon, to cover the retreat of their troops, still maintained a powerful artillery and mitrail-leuse fire, which increased in intensity. Nevertheless

orders were given to place outposts in the position last wrested from the enemy, and to bivouac.

“Then we went back to Beaumont, where the Crown Prince was to take up his quarters and issue orders for the next day. Riding between overturned wagons we reached the place, at the entrance of which Captain von Alten joined us again, and brought, moreover, the agreeable news that my carriage had already arrived, and was in the market-place.

“The Crown Prince’s quarters were near the eastern entrance of the town, close to a burning barn. Here the dispositions for the following day’s movements of the three corps and the two cavalry divisions were worked out.

“The IV. Corps was to remain near Mouzon. This corps and the two Bavarian corps made it impossible for the enemy to break through towards the south. The Guards and the IX. Corps were to cross the Meuse above Mouzon early in the morning, and block the road as far as the Belgian frontier, so as to prevent the French army from advancing towards Metz. It had become necessary to make these arrangements for the army without appealing to Headquarters, as the time was short, and it was questionable whether, considering the distance, orders could arrive from them in time.

“At 10 o’clock we were ready to set out for the Royal Headquarters, which Captain von Alten reported to be at Buzancy. The first part of our drive was across country, and so our troubles began at once. Moreover, the inhabitants of all the houses we found on the way had fled; the buildings were all full of wounded men and their attendants, none of whom, of course, could direct us. However, it was a bright starlight night, and thus we managed at least to keep our general direction. The farther away we got from the battle-field, the more wonderful was the scene behind us, the country being lit up as by a grand illumination. The bivouacs of no less

than five army corps, that is of about 150,000 men, were visible. Everywhere, on the heights and on the outskirts of the woods, magnificent lines of camp fires were blazing in a wide circle. At last, in the neighbourhood of some village, we reached the Bavarian bivouacs, and thence onwards we had at least a decent road ; but our progress was no less difficult, as Prussian, Bavarian, and Saxon supply trains and ammunition columns came streaming along the road in the opposite direction, every column endeavouring, with all its might, to reach its own particular body of troops as speedily as possible, the latter to replenish the ammunition, the former to bring up provisions. Ambulances were passing in different directions, and finally came the whole reserve artillery of a Bavarian army corps. Despite all these obstacles we reached Buzancy at last, but at the very entrance of the village we came upon four rows of wagons that had become jammed fast. As we had now reached our goal, we left the carriages and horses where they were, climbed over the wagons and thus arrived about 1.30 a.m. at the Staff Office, where General von Moltke and his officers were still assembled, being busy issuing orders for the following day.

“ It appeared that those prescribed for the army of the Crown Prince of Saxony agreed completely with the dispositions already issued by the latter at Beaumont.”

“ Rheims, the 9th September, 1870.

“ The task for the 31st of August was as follows : on the one hand to follow the enemy closely and hamper his movements, on the other to push our left wing so far forward that his retreat westwards would be cut off. The last part of the task fell to the army of the Crown Prince Frederick William. From the post of observation which the King took up in the morning, seven or eight miles north of Buzancy, I was sent off to the Third Army with instructions to ascertain the movements of this wing, and to see what could be learned there about the

enemy; then to go to Vendresse in the evening, where the Royal Headquarters were to stay for the night.

“The final result of the day was that the whole French army withdrew to the last man to the northern bank of the Meuse and stood concentrated around Sedan. Some of their movements suggested the intention, at the eleventh hour, perhaps by a night march, to escape from the threatened surrounding, or to cross over into Belgium, which was close behind them.

“Later in the evening General von Moltke sent word to the Chief of the Staff of the Third Army, General von Blumenthal, to cross the Meuse, if possible, in spite of the fatigue his troops were beginning to show, at any rate with some of his forces. The V. and XI. Corps, forming the left wing of the Third Army, were therefore again set into motion during the night in order to cross the Meuse near Donchery.”

3. BATTLE OF SEDAN.

“At half-past 11 at night I returned to Vendresse; we worked on until half-past 1 in the morning and rose at 4 o'clock on the 1st September. At 5 we got into our carriage in order to reach the spot situated about 10 miles from Vendresse, from which the King intended to conduct the decisive battle. It was a fine fresh morning, the morning mists still lingered about the mountain valleys, and clung closely about the wooded slopes in thick wreaths. Mixed with the smoke of the bivouac fires they formed in many places enormous and apparently impenetrable banks of clouds, reminding one of those spectacular pieces on the stage, in which some particularly grand stage effect is set off with all sorts of fireworks. Above them we saw the hill-tops rising up into the pure air. Our road was free from troops; the two corps who had started during the night were already about to cross the Meuse, only their transport was still in the bivouacs which we passed.

“It was not long before cannon fire was heard in the distance, but to judge from the sound the fighting was not directly before us, but in a north-easterly direction ; it must have been with the Bavarians and Saxons. This much was clear: the French had not attempted to get away westwards, or else the corps before us must already have been hotly engaged ; it looked, therefore, more likely that they were again trying to move in the direction of Metz. As we approached the Meuse we left the road, mounted our horses, and again climbed a pretty steep hill, affording a magnificent outlook, where the King arrived about half an hour later.

“Close to our feet lay a second and lower range of hills, from which the artillery of a Bavarian corps maintained a fairly slow fire against the guns of the fortress of Sedan. The town itself lay before us as on a tray, so that we could even look into the streets. Several very large buildings and churches gave it quite an important look, while the clearly defined lines of the fortifications around it enclosed the whole as in a frame. Behind the town there rose gradually from the plain a line of hills, on the slopes of which a large French encampment was visible, in which there was much stir ; on its crest, which descended abruptly to the left to the plain, was a wood. The lines of the distant hills beyond formed part of the neighbouring state.

“Such was the centre portion of the panorama which lay before us. To the right the morning mist obscured the line of hills and woods, which melted into one another, except where, here and there, lit up by the sun, they showed up in patches. Here and there flashes from guns in action, and the blue smoke-clouds from them, stood out in clearly defined outlines, some against the sky, and others against the hill-sides. In the foreground, on our side of the landscape, extended a broad glittering sheet of water formed by the Meuse, which had been dammed by the French for the purposes of defence, forming an inunda-

tion of no small extent. Not far from the river, but nearer to us, the village of Bazeilles, for which the Bavarians were fighting obstinately, was in flames. The wood-covered ranges of the left bank of the Meuse, rising to a considerable height on our right rear, blocked any further outlook.

“ On the left centre of the scene described above, West of Sedan, the Meuse flowed at the foot of the steep slope of the heights immediately behind Sedan, first northwards, and then, forming a loop, came back again to its former direction, after which, passing the little town of Donchery, it continued its course in a westerly direction. In a line with the portion of the river running north along the steep slope, on rising ground, were two villages for which we had to fight that day, viz. St. Menges and Floing. The latter was built on a hill-top, and seemed to be in mid-air, as the base of the hill was still lost in the vapour rising from the water.

“ The ground behind the northern bend, where dark mists still covered the earth, was only indistinctly seen, while the plain farther to the left of Donchery with its clearly defined net of roads, neatly bounded patches of wood, and the pleasant village of Vrine aux Bois, was spread out before us in a bright light. Into that village the rear of the V. Corps was just disappearing.

“ Behind us, and on the other side of the main road along which we had come, there rose more wooded hills of considerable height, one of which was crowned by a pretty little château. On a spur running down from it we recognised, in the middle of a group of horsemen, the Commander-in-Chief of the Third Army with his staff.

“ Our first business was to find our bearings by means of the maps. While doing this, shells from the fortress burst among the reserve troops a little to our front, which induced them to change their position. By-and-by flashes shot out of the mist at other places, notably St. Menges; we could clearly mark the progress of the various corps,

and how the girdle of fire was closing in round Sedan till it became impenetrable."

"Rheims, 10th September, 1870.

"As the V. and XI. Corps became more and more hotly engaged, Lieutenant-Colonel von Brandenstein was despatched to the Crown Prince of Saxony, while I was sent to the corps mentioned; Captain Count Nostitz and Lieutenant von Stosch accompanied me. First we rode to the height where H.R.H. the Crown Prince stood, in order to get information as to the whereabouts of the various bodies of his army; from there we went onward down the steep slope to Donchery, and Vrigne aux Bois. Behind the latter we met columns of the XI. Corps going to the front. By the bend of the Meuse we halted for a moment, as the engagement south of Menges could be watched advantageously from that point; then we followed the road along the Meuse. At the turn of the northern bend the troops ascended a road that ran steeply up the hills so as not to attract the fire of the enemy; between the infantry columns the batteries advanced at a trot. Just at this corner the steep slope was broken by a tiny plateau a few yards wide near a mountain spring, where Prince Albrecht (senior) stood with his staff. His staff officer, my old friend Versen, had already been wounded, while reconnoitring in the foremost fighting line. After a few questions, we likewise hurried up the heights and met, after half an hour's ride, the commander of the V. Corps, General von Kirchbach. It was a particularly great pleasure to me to be at such a critical time near my old and highly respected teacher at the Staff College to whom I owe so much. Lieutenant-Colonel von der Esch, his chief of the staff, who was likewise an old friend, came galloping up very soon afterwards from the left wing of the fighting line.

"We were standing to the north of the ridge on the

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southern side of which we had seen the French encampment from the King's post of observation; the wood which crowned it was strongly occupied by the enemy, especially by his artillery, with some mitrailleuse batteries among them. St. Menges was already taken; on the steep slope towards the Meuse and about the village of Floing near it, the infantry of the XI. Army Corps were still hotly engaged. The side of the range looking towards us was also very steep, and lay exposed to the heavy fire of the enemy. Half up the height, more towards the East, were two regiments of the V. Corps in extended order who at the time did not seem to be able to make further progress. Altogether the impression one gained at the first glance was that the hostile position in front could only be taken by very superior numbers and at a comparatively great sacrifice. But to put out all our strength before communication had been established with the corps of the Crown Prince of Saxony who were wheeling round from the East, did not seem advisable. Once that communication was complete, the iron girdle was firmly riveted, and the issue could no longer be doubtful; if the enemy did not surrender to-day, he would have to do it, in all probability, to-morrow. But in case he should, in his desperate position, attempt to break out in some direction or other, the reserves had to be held ready to meet him in good defensive positions, and it was therefore the less advisable to expose our forces prematurely to loss in a difficult attack.

“Running north-east from St. Menges, parallel to the enemy's position, was a second lower ridge, along which was deployed, in a long line of about three miles, almost the whole artillery of our two corps, who kept up a heavy cannonade on the enemy. Ever since 10 o'clock the batteries of the V. Corps had swept the high-road from Sedan into Belgium. On our side of the slope of St. Menges stood under cover behind a small park, the battalions of a brigade of the V. Corps, while another

brigade with two batteries lay close behind us in reserve. Further back, as far as the Belgian frontier, extensive woods covered the ground. Already many French soldiers who had abandoned their regiments were wandering about here, and some few shots came from this quarter; the staff of a French division, which had tried to escape, had been captured in the forenoon. The combat in our front swayed to and fro, the infantry engaged on the right wing did not seem to make much progress against the very numerous enemy and his strong position. All at once there appeared in the peninsula formed by the Meuse a few hundred cavalry coming down, at full gallop, from the villages. Some of them tried to swim the western bend, while others careered about fighting. A large number of riderless horses were cantering about, while waggons and men on foot moved in our direction; now and then rifle shots came from the outskirts of the villages facing us. We could not, at first, make out what was going on, and opinions were very much divided about it. Some took it for an offensive movement from Sedan, others thought our cavalry had made an unsuccessful attack. It reminded me of a similar scene at the battle of Königgrätz, where Austrian Hussars suddenly appeared in the midst of our troops, and the impression I got was, that the enemy's cavalry had made an unsuccessful attempt to break out. The report of Count Nostitz, who was immediately sent forward, confirmed my views. It appeared that several French cavalry regiments on the other side of the height had made an attempt to cut their way out, displaying extraordinary bravery in doing so, whole regiments perishing heroically in the attempt; only the foremost got through our infantry line, and then merely to succumb to the attacks of our cavalry.

“Until now the heights had prevented us from seeing anything of the army of the Crown Prince of Saxony, not even the sound of the cannon was to be heard.

Moreover the gaily-coloured infantry of the enemy, which owing to their red trousers had a very different appearance from our columns at a distance, appeared in steadily increasing numbers on the outskirts of the woods above. Our infantry in vain endeavoured to make headway, and the artillery fire in our centre and on the right wing slackened perceptibly; in fact, at last some of the batteries had only one gun firing. Soon there came in reports from all sides which were far from pleasant, to the effect that a great part of them had exhausted their ammunition, and that the ammunition columns had not yet arrived, and shortly after this young Prince Wied, a major on the staff of the IX. Corps, appeared, asking for reinforcements to carry the ridges lying before the French main position. The Wurttemberg Division which was to have formed the reserve of this wing had meanwhile been sought for everywhere in vain; it turned out afterwards that it had had to be employed otherwise, as bodies of the enemy had advanced from the direction of Mézières.

“ However, the aspect of the scene soon changed; first, news came that we had managed to supply the artillery with sufficient ammunition; then, that the cavalry of the Guards had come up on our extreme left wing, and that therefore communication had been established with the Corps of Guards and the army of the Crown Prince of Saxony, while the investment of the enemy had thus been completed. Finally, the six splendid cavalry regiments of Prince Albrecht with their batteries marched past us, and took up a position behind our artillery. The infantry on our right wing also at last made visible progress; the long-drawn sound of the ‘advance’ was heard from there, and the foremost patches of wood, lying in front of the great wood on the height, were taken. The French columns on its outskirts swayed about unsteadily, and it became evident that there was no longer room enough for them on the confined space in which they were more and more squeezed together, and where our shells caught

them in front and rear. Now too the Bavarian batteries at the foot of the hill where the King stood, and which we had watched the whole day across the peninsula, increased the rapidity of their fire. Immense clouds of smoke rose, moreover, from Sedan, behind the enemy's position. In short, we concluded that the battle was nearing its end; only another touch was wanted, and the command for a simultaneous general attack was therefore given to all our troops.

"We mounted our horses, and rode on towards the centre. The rifle fire was still not very heavy along the whole line; the unsteadiness of the enemy became visibly greater from minute to minute. At last whole battalions piled their arms on the outskirts of the wood, the men waved their handkerchiefs and surrendered; indeed they did not know where to find shelter, they could no longer go back to Sedan, before them and behind them was certain death. Our attention was riveted for some moments by this scene, and on our looking more towards the right, we saw a winding road, leading down from the height, densely crowded with French soldiers, many thousands of them, all men who had surrendered and were coming down under escort. We separated from General von Kirchbach, and rode on in that direction in order to obtain a view of Sedan. To our joy we noticed on the way that our losses on this part of the battle-field were comparatively slight; but within the enemy's position the terrible effect of our artillery was again seen in an awful manner. It was with the greatest difficulty that a man on horseback could move amongst the dead and wounded soldiers. The ground, moreover, was much more cut up than it appeared from afar, there being deep ravines which we had to go round. Our infantry and artillery pressed on in dense masses towards the last wooded eminence where a pretty villa stood, surrounded by high walls; arrived there, we soon found where we were, as at a short distance on the other side rose the nearest fortifications of Sedan.

“The XI. Corps, whose original commander, General von Bose, had been severely wounded at Wörth, this day again lost its leader, Lieutenant-General von Gersdorff, who was mortally wounded by a rifle bullet; in his place Lieutenant-General von Schachtmeyer had taken the command, whom we met with the chief of his staff, Major-General von Stein, on this height, and who gave us the requisite information as to the position of the troops. Meanwhile fire had ceased everywhere, even the heavy Bavarian battery on the other side of the Meuse had become silent; we therefore went back to St. Menges, where General von Kirchbach intended to take his quarters, in order to make ourselves acquainted with his dispositions for the two army corps for the following day, before our return to the Royal Headquarters.

“Count Nostitz managed even under these difficult circumstances to find the means to satisfy our hunger and thirst. As soon as the general arrived, business was gone through and despatched at once, and we presently started with our orderlies and spare horses on our return journey. As we were leaving, General von Kirchbach expressed with particular pleasure his satisfaction that circumstances had allowed him on this day to be sparing of the blood of his soldiers. His words impressed themselves in my memory with the greater clearness, as the general did not yet know then, that his own son, so full of promise, had met a heroic death that day in the ranks of the Guards.

“We had scarcely ridden on for a quarter of an hour, when it became quite dark; we chose our road along the Meuse, passing on the way columns of prisoners who were being escorted back, and at last, after forcing our way through various detachments, we reached Donchery, where we hoped to find the Royal Headquarters. In the midst of the general crush we chanced to meet with several of our comrades of the Staff, who informed us that Napoleon had sent his sword to the King. This surprised us not a little, because the presence of the Emperor in Sedan was not known to us, although we knew that he had

been with the army at an earlier stage. General von Moltke and the Quartermaster-General von Podbielski were ready to conduct the negotiations for the capitulation which had already begun. I reported myself, and we went into General von Moltke's room, where his chief secretary, Major de Claer, was, and where the remaining officers of the Staff, who had been sent out, assembled one after the other.

“ Now the object which we had continually had before our eyes for the last week, and which with each day we saw coming more and more within our grasp, had at last been gained ! Everyone of us had long expected this result, but nevertheless we were all, almost without exception, now deeply moved by the magnitude of the event. One of the first armies of the world, which had fought with heroic bravery, and which a short time ago had numbered nearly 150,000 men, a French army with the Emperor at its head, had been reduced to a state in which resistance was an impossibility, and forced to surrender unconditionally. The history of war records many a catastrophe, but one on such a scale as this had never been inscribed on its pages before !

“ On former occasions, when we had returned from a battle in the evening, many particulars used to be given of the combat, and hundreds of questions had to be answered ; to-day not a word was said about such things ; all we did was to repeat in many variations the one thought : ‘ What a stupendous victory ! ’ or, ‘ What will they say of this at home ? ’

“ It was about 11 o'clock at night, when it was announced that General von Wimpffen was at the door. This general had taken over the command of the French army, as Marshal MacMahon had, early in the day, been wounded by one of the first shells fired.

“ We went into the room which opened on to the landing ; Count Bismarck had also found his way there. General von Wimpffen with two other generals and several

aides-de-camp, all still bearing about them traces of the combat, stepped into the room, which was densely crowded. It was a strange and wonderful scene. Two candelabra with candles burnt down to various lengths and an old oil lamp did not suffice to light up the closely packed room ; the generals and Count Bismarck sat down around the table, we others stood round their chairs. The various uniforms, the solemn silence, the grave faces covered with perspiration and dust in the almost uncanny light, all this I shall never forget. The scene was made still more spectral by a ray of light which escaped from the broken globe of the lamp, gliding up along the wall till it fell on an excellent portrait of Napoleon I., who looked down on the wonderful assembly at his feet, and seemed to ask mutely from the world of spirits what it meant.

“Negotiations now began, in which General von Wimpffen tried hard to obtain better conditions than those which General von Moltke proposed to him. Wimpffen looked every inch a soldier, and was of strikingly prepossessing appearance; he complained: ‘Only two days ago I reached here from the interior of Africa, and now this is what I have to do!’ But his protests were unavailing. Count Bismarck pointed to the political situation: ‘During the last 200 years, we have been attacked by France more than twenty times in the midst of peace; if we had to deal with an old-established dynasty acceptable conditions of peace could easily be found, but that is impossible with such rulers as you have at Paris. We must have material guarantees for the future.’ And General von Moltke insisted with iron inflexibility on the conditions offered, viz. the capitulation of the army and of the fortress of Sedan. Wimpffen, indeed, objected: ‘The conditions were too hard, he had assumed the command during the battle, when he knew neither the position of the troops nor what dispositions had been made; the following day might, with new dispositions, change the situation.’ But our General retorted: ‘It is

absolutely impossible ! You have neither ammunition nor provisions, as you may learn from your officers ; an army of over seven army corps surrounds you ; we are in possession of all the heights around the fortress ; not a man in your army can stir, and all resistance is impossible. If you do not accept our conditions, the order will be given to-morrow early—much to my regret—to open the bombardment, and then there will be useless bloodshed which will only make your position worse.

“ Lastly, General von Wimpffen demanded twenty-four hours’ time to consider, as he could not accept such conditions on his own responsibility, but must consult with his generals. This also was refused in these words : ‘ If by to-morrow morning, at 9 o’clock, I have not received your answer, the signal will be given for hostilities to recommence.’ Next, one of the French generals declared he was commissioned to negotiate concerning the personal surrender of the Emperor. He was answered this depended on His Majesty the King, they had only to discuss military matters here, and as the Emperor had given up the chief command of the army, they had nothing to treat about concerning him. With that the conference broke off. Wimpffen promised to return his answer by 10 o’clock next morning.

“ General von Moltke then sat down, and dictated to me the draught of the capitulation. Bronsart and de Claer had still work to do. Some of the other officers insisted on keeping us company while we worked, but before long they all snored so vigorously that it became impossible to write any further, and we had at first much difficulty in waking them again.

“ At last the draught was finished, and I turned in about 3 o’clock. Bronsart told me what follows :—

“ When on the day of battle the enemy’s heights had been stormed, as could be seen clearly from where the King stood, the Bavarian batteries had received orders to shell the town. He had next been commissioned to ride

into Sedan and to invite the enemy to surrender. Arrived at the gate, he found the Bavarians there already in negotiation. After he had been admitted into the town, he demanded to see the Commander-in-Chief of the French army. Not knowing to whom he would be brought—he thought to MacMahon—he was at last directed to a room in which he found himself suddenly in the presence of the Emperor Napoleon, whom he recognized at once, as he said, from the caricatures in a well-known Berlin comic paper.

“The Emperor had risen with difficulty from his chair, had asked after the King, and then sent him back with General Reille, who was the bearer of a letter, to His Majesty. The reception of this general on the height where H.R.H. the Crown Prince and the foreign princes were, made a great impression on all present.

“Scarcely had we washed and dressed next morning and drunk a cup of coffee, when the news came: ‘The Emperor is here, and waiting in a house not quite a mile from Donchery.’ Generals von Moltke and Podbielski at once drove out with us. Count Bismarck, who had received the news before us, was there already.

“It looked as if the Emperor were anxious not to stay any longer in the midst of his army. The catastrophe had loosened the bonds of discipline; if the news of the capitulation became known, everything was to be feared from the infuriated soldiers. Therefore he had appeared at our outposts early in the morning. We found the suite of the Emperor before a small peasant’s house which, situated on the high-road, was only separated from it by a small courtyard sloping somewhat steeply down to it. Very soon afterwards General von Moltke came out again, and drove on to meet the King with the draught of the capitulation which had been made out during the night. His Majesty, returning in the morning from Vendresse, had gone again to the spot from where he had conducted the battle the day before. The

Emperor also subsequently came out of the house, and sat down on a chair, smoking one cigarette after the other. I saw him here for the first time; he seemed to me to be short and somewhat corpulent, and was ashy pale, his chin resting on the breast; at the same time he looked outwardly unmoved, almost indifferent, and only now and then, when he heaved a deep sigh, did he betray his inward emotion. A splendid squadron of the Body-Guard, who were to form his escort, attracted the attention of the French generals; nothing passed along the road the whole time except transport.

“Count Bismarck had offered his quarters at Donchery for the meeting with the King. But the Emperor did not like to go into that town; so several Staff officers were sent out to find a suitable place. Half a mile from us, not far from the village of Frenois and the Meuse, a small château was seen half hidden among the foliage; this was considered suitable, and the procession moved off in that direction. We drove in front, then followed two sections of the Body-Guard, then came the Emperor driving in his carriage with his suite, some driving, others riding; the rest of the cuirassiers brought up the rear. From the bivouacs along the road, of course, every man rushed on to the road to see.

“The château, built somewhat in the Norman style, was surrounded by a well-kept park, and looked very pretty. A small tower, rising in the middle, was flanked on the right side of the front by a conservatory reached by some steps. The place, down to the iron gate which led into the park from the road, was on a very small scale. Some part of the time during the next few hours we passed on this tower, the rest in the spacious and well furnished dining-room, which was on the ground floor. Outside the garden a Bavarian company was posted, behind them stood some Württemberg batteries unlimbered and ready, at a moment's notice, to open fire on Sedan, which was lying before us.

“Early in the morning a staff officer (Winterfeldt) had been sent into the fortress to tell General Wimpffen that, if the answer did not come at the hour fixed, the bombardment would begin. This officer returned with the answer, that the General was close behind him.

“General von Moltke also made his appearance again: His Majesty the King approved of the draught of the capitulation, but he would not consent to see the Emperor before it was signed.

“There were no longer any difficulties about this; only a few words were spoken in the dining-room concerning the subject, then I sat down with the Chief of the French Staff, and we wrote out two copies of the capitulation. Generals von Moltke and Wimpffen signed it. General von Podbielski, from whose portfolio the two pens had come which were used, was so kind as to give me one as a souvenir.

“Our General took the document just completed with him, mounted his horse and rode off to the King, who was still on the eminence.

“After the lapse of about three quarters of an hour he returned with the news that the King was coming at once. Having dismounted, he surprised the three Chiefs of Sections by presenting them with the Iron Cross which he had brought with him for us, expressing his pleasure to be able in the name of the King to hand them to us at so eventful a moment.

“Scarcely had we time to fasten them in our button-holes when His Majesty appeared with a large suite, accompanied by the Crown Prince, Prince Charles and all the princes present at headquarters. It was a solemn moment which words fail to describe. What was said inside, no one knew at the time, but we understand the Emperor had remarked that ‘he had been forced into the war,’ and that ‘he felt himself personally conquered by our artillery.’¹

¹ The Emperor, following the traditions of his uncle, had always taken great interest in the artillery. He partially wrote an excellent history

“After some time both sovereigns appeared in the conservatory, where the King addressed some words to the suite of the Emperor, and where the Crown Prince also conversed with the Emperor; then the latter accompanied the King as far as the steps. With youthful alertness the tall figure of our sovereign sprang into the saddle; going off at a gallop, accompanied by his numerous and many-coloured followers who had not been able to find room in the small house and had stood about among the shrubs, on the narrow pathways far down into the park. They formed a brilliant and wild-looking cavalcade, which the Emperor thoughtfully followed with his eyes before he disappeared into the room.

“Outside the drums of the Bavarians struck up; their bands played ‘Heil Dir im Siegerkranz,’ and the hurrah of the bivouacking troops followed the King along his ride; he was eager to express his thanks to his victorious troops on the battle-field.’

“General von Moltke invited me into his carriage; silently we drove back to Donchery, where more work awaited us.

“Next morning, the Emperor, escorted by two squadrons of Hussars, drove past our windows as a prisoner toward the Belgian frontier. We also set out for the headquarters of the King at Vendresse, the first stage on the road to Paris.”

Thus ended the first part of this gigantic struggle! With the capitulation of Napoleon and of the army which he accompanied, fell the Empire, which had brought about the war.

of its progress, and is generally believed to have been the suggester of the canon *Napoléon*, a species of compromise between the ordinary field-gun and a howitzer, which fired a 12lb. common shell instead of round shot. The French artillery in the war of 1870 showed itself distinctly inferior not only in material but also from a tactical point of view, and hence the Emperor's feelings.—ED.

¹ “Heil Dir im Siegerkranz, Herrscher des Vaterlands,” are the two opening lines of the Prussian National Hymn which has the same tune as “God save the Queen.”—ED.

Second Part.

THE STRUGGLE WITH THE FRENCH REPUBLIC.

I. The March from Sedan to Paris.

I. GENERAL SURVEY.

THE result of the battle of Sedan was bound to bring about a general revolution in the internal organisation of France. On the 4th September, in the afternoon, the leaders of the Republican party assembled in the town hall of Paris and declared, without consulting the legislative body, that the dynasty of the Bonapartes had ceased to reign, and proclaimed the Republic. At the same time a provisional government was established, the head of which was General Trochu, the Governor of Paris; the Empress Eugénie left the city the same afternoon.

Strange to say, I do not find the smallest indication in my notes and letters as to when and where we first heard of these events or what impression they made on us.

The absence of any kind of remark I can only explain now by the circumstance that the changes which occurred in Paris by no means took us by surprise. We had been thoroughly convinced even before the war that the defeat of the French army would at the same time seal the fate of the Napoleonic dynasty. General von

Moltke had even expressed this view quite definitely in one of his minutes long before the war. The catastrophe of Sedan was sure to be followed, as a matter of course, by a revolution in Paris, and so familiar had we become with this idea that we looked upon the change of government in France as quite the proper course for events to take. The only thing that appeared to us important now was what the further progress of operations would be.

When we left Vendresse, the opinion was pretty generally prevalent in the army that the chief work was now done, and that the end would soon follow. One of the armies of the Empire was already annihilated, the other locked up in Metz, while the organized fighting forces still existing in the interior of the country might fairly be assumed to be comparatively small. The best part of them was the Corps of General Vinoy, which had been too late to join the army of MacMahon at Sedan, and which, after skilfully evading us, hurried off to Paris.

When we supposed that the war would now soon be at an end, we were certainly very much mistaken: however, a fact it is that after Sedan, most of us believed that we had now only to push on rapidly to Paris and there dictate peace.

After the defeat of the French armies, the capital of the country became of peculiar importance. In many wars, certainly, the capitals of great powers have fallen into the enemy's possession without this event bringing about peace; for instance, Vienna, Berlin, Moscow. But the influence which Paris exercises over France had in former wars been proved to be so commanding, that with the fall of the capital the war also had come to an end; such had been the case in 1814 and 1815, and the march to Paris seemed therefore to be such an evident necessity, after Sedan, that no other plan was ever even put forward at the time.

But later on, when, contrary to all expectation, the war became more and more prolonged and the hardships of a

winter campaign keenly felt; when many more great battles and engagements had to be fought out, and many a grave situation faced, opinions were put forward which decried our advance on Paris as a stupendous mistake. We ought to have stopped after Sedan, it was said, and waited for the French to dislodge us, as they would have been bound to take the offensive if they wished to drive us out of the country again. Moltke said in reference to this view shortly before the fall of the capital, "If, with the experience we have now, we were again placed in the position we were in after Sedan, I should have nothing better to propose to the King than what we have done, viz. to advance on Paris."

What, indeed, should we have gained by standing still after Sedan? We should have given the French time to make use of their immense resources for the organization of fresh armies, and we should have left them at liberty to attack us, when and where they thought fit. If we had conquered in this fresh struggle, we could only have done the very thing which we now did under much more favourable circumstances. Or should we once more have stood still and awaited another attack? In this case the war would have been prolonged *ad infinitum* before France was exhausted. The part of the country which we possessed after Sedan, was, certainly, a comparatively large one, but it was still only a fraction of the whole French territory. By advancing to Paris we enlarged our borders, and materially facilitated thereby the provisioning of our army in the rich country around it. Even when before Paris, the task of subjecting the whole country was certainly too great for us; but we foresaw that the fall of the capital would bring about this result, and this was the only way in which there was any possibility of a reasonably early end to the war; nor were we mistaken in this calculation.

The march on Paris could not at first be begun with all the forces concentrated at Sedan. The safe

transport of the hostile army that had become prisoners of war, necessitated the leaving behind, for the present, of the I. Bavarian and the XI. Corps, which were placed under the command of General von der Tann. The remaining troops had first to be distributed again over a wider front, in order to facilitate the marching and to obtain better means of supply. The numerous cavalry were spread out in front in order to ensure the safety of the army, and they swept the country to great distances in front.

As General Vinoy had led his corps back to Paris, no further collisions with large bodies of the enemy occurred during our advance. On the other hand, numerous francs-tireurs and other organised bands began to make their appearance, harassing our troops considerably.

The Army of the Meuse, which was on our right wing, attempted, during our advance, to gain possession of the fortresses of Montmédy and Soissons; but their commandants were not to be frightened by the fire of our field guns. On the other hand, Laon capitulated on the arrival of the Duke William of Mecklenburg-Schwerin with the 6th Cavalry division and the 4th Battalion of Rifles. While the occupation of the citadel was proceeding, the powder magazine exploded—the act, probably, of some fanatic, which caused us a loss of 15 officers and 96 men, whilst that of the French was about 300 men.

By the 18th September both the Third Army and that of the Meuse had advanced sufficiently far for the investment of Paris to be effected on the following day. The Royal Headquarters left Vendresse on the 4th September, and arrived at Meaux on the 15th, *via* Rethel Rheims and Château Thierry.

2. DONCHERY, VENDRESSE, RETHEL, RHEIMS, CHÂTEAU THIERRY AND MEAUX.

No important events occurred during the period which follows, and I may, therefore, confine myself to

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reproducing some extracts from my diary and letters concerning, for the most part, only private experiences, but containing also certain views of the situation, as entertained by us at the time. In reference to these views, I repeat, that I reproduce here my notes word for word, without caring whether they afterwards proved to be right or wrong, because it is in this way only that it is possible to give a faithful impression of the feelings which prevailed with us at these times.

“Donchery, 3rd September, morning.

“This letter and my last may possibly reach home sooner *viâ* Belgium, than by our field post. In two hours' time we leave this place, and then for Paris! At the moment there is still much work to do in making arrangements for setting the immense convoys of prisoners in motion.

“It seems as if the Emperor Napoleon had left Sedan because he felt no longer safe in the town amid the prevailing anarchy. He is now on the way to Cassel, *viâ* Belgium, as a prisoner of war. As he did not command the army himself, no negotiations could be carried on with him concerning its fate; it is said that he will not enter into any future negotiations for peace either, being a prisoner. Who now represents the government of France?

“If nothing unexpected happens before Metz, there may be soon an end to bloodshed there.¹ The French have only one more organised corps, consisting mostly of reserve troops. A place like Paris need not be besieged at all, it has only to be blockaded from all sides and supplies cut off by means of a numerous cavalry. How-

¹ While the fate of MacMahon's army was being decided at Sedan Bazaine had made a sortie from Metz with all his available forces—in a direction, it is true, opposite to that from which the relieving army was expected; this led to the battle of Noisseville on the 31st of August and the 1st of September. The attempt to break out did not succeed.

ever well they may be provisioned now, they will come to loggerheads within the town itself, in a fortnight at the latest.

“Our losses in the recent battles have been comparatively small. As the catastrophe was inevitable, we could afford to proceed, in the case of most of the corps, with a regard to human life, which under different circumstances would scarcely have been practicable. The Bavarian Corps alone was engaged in an extremely bloody combat and has suffered heavy losses. Versen is dangerously wounded.

“Count Hatzfeld has just arrived, and will depart for Brussels; he is so kind as to take this letter with him.”

“Vendresse, 3rd September.

“We dined to-day about 6 o'clock with the King, and he congratulated us in hearty terms on receiving the Iron Cross.

“It was on this occasion that His Majesty gave the following toast:—

“‘You, General von Roon, have sharpened the sword; you, General von Moltke, have wielded it; you, Count Bismarck, have conducted my policy in such an able manner that, in thanking my army, I think of you three in particular. Long live the army!’

“I must also mention an amusing remark which was made on this occasion. One of the guests, sitting opposite the King, had caught a glimpse of the Emperor Napoleon at Donchery as the latter drove through the village under the escort of two squadrons of Black Hussars, on his way, *via* Belgium, to Wilhelmshöhe, near Cassel, which place had been chosen for his residence. At dinner this gentleman suddenly began to consider where the Emperor might be by this time, and he fetched out his watch to help him in his calculation. This manœuvre did not escape the King, who asked him, consequently: ‘I suppose you have still work to do?’ ‘I beg pardon, your Majesty, but I

am only calculating something,' was the answer. 'What is that, if I may ask?' 'I think I can show conclusively, that now the moment must have come at which the Emperor Napoleon is just crossing the frontier and can say with truth: "I have all France at my back."' The King laughed and observed: 'A very poor joke! but,' he added, raising his glass, 'I drink to it all the same.'

"Rethel, 5th September.

"Postal communication of course is becoming slower as the distance becomes greater. We are all quartered here, in a very fine house belonging to a manufacturer, who is absent, however. We look forward with pleasure to our arrival at Rheims; one positively longs to pass a few days again in a large town, to buy various necessaries, and to get needful repairs done, for which we shall have leisure enough, as we shall probably remain here some days to arrange for spreading out the several hundred thousand men concentrated for the last battle, over a wider front of march. The mines of which they talk in our newspapers, and the danger of being blown up, are sheer nonsense. We only destroy railways if we can make no use of them. The possession of the line *via* Toul would be particularly valuable to us, but that fortress is still in the hands of the French."

"Rheims, 5th September, 8 p.m.

"It is not long since we arrived; we are staying opposite the glorious cathedral, which just now, in the evening light, has a most beautiful appearance. Our quarters are not particularly good, as the Commander-in-Chief of the VI. Army Corps with his staff has already appropriated the best rooms in the hotel in which we stay, and we did not wish to turn them out, the corps being under orders to march again before long. While driving about the town, I saw Major von Schlichting fall backwards with his horse, close to General von Tümping, who was

watching his troops entering the town and march past him. Happily, there was no harm done. His eminent abilities, especially his rare insight into great strategical questions, would make him much more useful on the Staff than he can be in his present position as commander of a battalion.

“We expect to remain here for several days.”

“Rheims, 6th September.

“To-day we changed rooms and have now better quarters. Podbielski and I are in the house of one of the largest manufacturers of champagne.

“During the last week, owing to our duties in the field and the marches we made, the whole office work has been so much retarded, that I have seen nothing of Rheims as yet, except for a cursory walk through the cathedral.”

“Rheims, 7th September.

“It will be some days yet before we get away from here, as the armies have first to extend their front. The troops in front, meanwhile, continue their march on Paris with the cavalry in advance. What organized troops of the enemy are available, are only very inferior in numbers to our forces, and they are not likely to make a stand in the open. Until we get to Paris, our march will probably be more of the nature of a pleasure trip than anything else.”

“Rheims, 8th September.

“This morning we had a prolonged conference with the officer commanding the engineers as to the way we can best settle the forts of Paris. I am hoping that the thing will be done without much bloodshed on our side.

“Brandenstein is still busy at Sedan with the removal of the prisoners, and he is not likely to return for a day or two. I expect we shall remain here about four days longer.

“ If the people in Paris do not begin to quarrel among themselves, we shall have to make them see that the end is coming. Such a reminder will probably be necessary, as the conditions of peace which we shall make will not be accepted before they realise their powerlessness. Not counting a pretty heavy indemnity, we shall in no case let Lorraine and Alsace go; Metz must become a Prussian fortress. To-day a second supply of Iron Crosses arrived, and I was very glad that Blume, Krause, Claer and Nostitz were each presented with one.”

“ Rheims, 9th September.

“ Herr von Mühlberg, of the Zieten Hussars, has been here to-day. I have not seen him myself, but have spoken with the officer who now commands his regiment (the former commander, Colonel von Zieten, fell at Vionville). He is full of his praises. During the cavalry charge which took place when it was already dark, Mühlberg got wounded, and, unable to extricate himself from under his dead horse, was taken prisoner. The French carried him to Vionville, but he managed that same night to get free by paying a ransom, and returned to his regiment next morning.¹

“ The Alexander Regiment, likewise, praise the conduct of another friend of ours, little Kries; he and another were the only officers of his battalion who came out unscathed from the battle of Gravelotte; his brother, who is a reserve officer in the regiment, was wounded rather severely.

“ As to the story about signing despatches, it is simply this: formerly the hours for reporting to the King were different from now, and as Podbielski was not at the office at the time when they were sent off, I signed them; now that he is always on the spot before they are sent, it is a matter of course that he signs.

¹ Her von Mühlberg is at present Acting Privy Councillor of Legation at the Foreign Office. The “ransom” might possibly be better translated “bribe.”—ED.

“The important telegram sent off by the King on the evening of the battle of Sedân in which he announced that the Emperor Napoleon had offered his sword and that he had accepted it, has safely come back again last evening through the post. As the enemy appeared in the neighbourhood, the courier could proceed no further, and handed the despatch to an orderly, who brought it back again to us.”

“Rheims, 11th September.

“To-day we managed at last to get free for once, and made use of the opportunity to drive to the famous camp of Châlons in company with Podbielski, Bronsart and others. We were not particularly struck with it; the Quartier Imperial had been thoroughly ransacked by Gardes Mobiles.

“Once more our telegrams, of the 3rd and 4th September, are not in the Berlin papers; I wonder what can have become of them.”

“Rheims, 12th September.

“You ask me what will happen in respect to Paris? We must get in, that is clear; but as to how this is to be done, opinions are divided. Some believe that nothing further will happen of a serious nature; others—and I among them—doubt this. I maintain that strong compulsion will yet have to be used. In the field, indeed, they can no longer face us for the present.

“We shall see when we are on the spot, in what manner we shall proceed against Paris; for the present we have cut off (yesterday) some of their drinking-water, at Château Thierry. In Metz it would seem as if the French had still enough to live on, although it is declared for certain that they are already reduced to horseflesh, of which there will be no want for some time to come. Prince Frederick Charles is not going to let them escape, and he has the means to prevent it. But if the French

should be, nevertheless, so far successful, they would have to try to reach the south by a great detour, which in all probability, pursued as they would be by our troops, would mean their dispersal."

"Rheims, 13th September.

"To-day I have seen the vast champagne cellars of my host which the King visited yesterday. These subterranean galleries with their gigantic vaults for storage are highly interesting. In return for some small service I received a basket with six bottles of the choicest brands. I had them carefully transported to our 'war chariot,' which was parked together with all our other baggage-waggon, in order to have something in hand for a time of need." Unfortunately all this care was in vain, for a few days afterwards I discovered that the basket, together with the bottles, had been stolen!

"We are hoping that by to-morrow our cavalry will already be before the gates of Paris. We shall reach Château Thierry, about forty miles from here, in one long march, then, by another of equal length, Meaux."

"Château Thierry, 14th September.

"Here we are, having safely arrived at half-past 6 in the evening. The weather was showery, so that we could not see the country in its fullest beauty.

"On the way we had a few hours' rest at a delightful small château and made a very good breakfast, prepared for us by young Stosch, who had been sent in advance. Moltke took his coffee with us in a small tastefully furnished turret-room, which so took his fancy that he was loth to leave it again; nor were we at all eager. We were in the best of spirits, and so the resting place became the birthplace of innumerable puns.

"Scarcely had we arrived at Château Thierry—our limbs being still stiff from our long drive—when we saw our honoured chief already surveying the country from a

weather-beaten old tower. It was too dark to see much, but it is a habit of Moltke, wherever there is some point from which a wide view can be obtained, to immediately climb up to it.

“ You verily believe us endowed with wings ! We are actually supposed to be in Paris already ! Why, we only aim, for the present, at arriving before the town ; how we may get in, we shall see later on. I think we shall be more comfortable outside the gates than in the town.”

On the 15th September we left Château Thierry. Before starting, orders were issued to the Third Army and that of the Meuse for the investment of Paris ; there was also one more conference with the chiefs of the staff of both armies, Major-General von Blumenthal and Lieutenant-General von Schlotheim, concerning the future operations.

“ Meaux, 15th September.

“ It was a very pleasant drive to-day from Château Thierry to Meaux : beautiful weather and a lovely road winding between the heights which skirt the valley of the river. About five miles on this side of Meaux the French had blown up a large railway bridge having another running alongside of it for the traffic ; likewise the bridges over the Ourcq Canal and several others besides. This will cost them much money, and the only damage they do is to themselves. In such acts of destruction there is no sense, except where the river line in question is to be held, or if the river is so large that the bridging will cost the enemy some considerable time, neither of which was the case here. For a defence of the line all the necessary conditions were wanting, and the width of the water was so insignificant that the time needed for resting the troops was sufficient to prepare other means of crossing. The blowing up of these great and costly structures were therefore utterly unnecessary.

“ Our columns are now hurrying on all sides, in a great

semicircle, towards Paris. Within a few days this semicircle will become complete, enclosing the metropolis and isolating it from the world at one blow.

“The letters from Headquarters of the 2nd and mid-day of the 3rd September have got, not to Germany, but into the hands of the French commandant of Verdun, together with the courier, who has been taken prisoner. As far as I remember there are none of mine among them, as I sent my letters of those two days *vid* Belgium.”

“Meaux, 16th September.

“Our newspapers busy themselves very much with mines, incendiarism by means of petroleum, etc., whereby we are to be surprised. Even here there is not an hour that we do not get warnings from quite serious people in all parts of the world. We call this the mine fever, an epidemic which, when once it breaks out, spreads very widely; fortunately it has not affected us. Mines are a means of defence which may be used in war, and against which, if they are actually exploded, there is as little protection as against the bullets of the enemy. That can't be altered, I am sorry to say, if once a man takes part in wicked war! But if the French were to lay only the hundredth part of all the mines, of the existence of which we are warned, they would need not only their own powder, but all ours as well. Fanatical acts may of course take place, as recently as Laon, and as far as human foresight can protect our troops from them, it will be done. But on the whole, such rumours are mere bogies, fit to frighten people who know nothing about the matter. To us such gloomy forebodings serve only as amusement.

“We learn that in certain circles in Berlin no small fears were entertained about war preparations in Austria, North America and Spain. Now, I suppose, people will cool down again. Austria will scarcely think of entering the war at this present stage; North America has, indeed, recognized the Republic, but possesses no land army

capable of making itself felt in Europe; and Spain has plenty to do within her own borders. If any state of consequence had, at first, a desire to intervene, that desire must have vanished after the catastrophe of Sedan.

“They also complain in Berlin that Napoleon is being treated with too much ceremony, and that a sentimental policy is out of place in such stirring times. We simply treat him as *Emperor*. But for the moment he represents the only government which we recognise and we must continue to recognise it until we have another with which to treat. With whom otherwise are we to make peace?”

“I think I have made several mistakes in the dates of my letters. That comes of hurrying!”

“Meaux, 17th September.

“Nothing new has taken place here. In regard to the political situation, you may reassure all our friends who take an interest in it. Of course I cannot tell you anything definite on the matter, but I think I am tolerably well informed all the same, as our military arrangements, especially under the present circumstances, are sure to be greatly influenced by the general political situation.”

“Meaux, 18th September.

“It appears that the advance-guard of the VI. Army Corps is engaged just now to the south of Paris, at least artillery fire is heard in that direction.

“General von Gersdorff, whom you met at Prague, has died of the wound which he received at Sedan. Our dear Wittich, our travelling companion in Italy last year, has succumbed likewise to his wound. For Lieutenant Meie I will do all I can with pleasure; but that is only possible, if he can be spared where he is now. Everyone would like to be at the front, but everyone must first of all stick to the post where he has been placed. Only his superior officers can judge whether he can be dispensed with there.”

During the night of the 18th September we, the chiefs of sections of the staff, were suddenly summoned to General von Moltke, who lived in the Episcopal Palace. We found the General in a large room, the fame of which has since become historical, on the longer side of which there was a bed ensconced in a niche. Reports had come in from the north of Paris, according to which numerous bodies of the enemy were said to be still outside of the line of forts, so that there was the prospect of some fighting with the army of the Crown Prince of Saxony, which was approaching on that side with a view to effecting the investment on the following day. Moltke, wrapped up in a dressing-gown that reached down to his heels, was walking up and down the whole length of the room, and told us, first of all, to read through the reports that had come in. It was then a question as to whether more troops were to be dispatched to the north of Paris and where we ourselves were to go on the following day. I did not quite believe that the French would venture on a struggle outside the forts, and was just going to express my opinion when, chancing to look up, I saw something so comical that I could not help drawing the attention of the others to it. In the hurry they had piled an immense quantity of wood on the fire in the grate and the heat in the room had become unbearable. Moltke, whose face was dripping with perspiration during his promenade, wanted to wipe it off, but, wrapped in thought as he was, he seized on passing, instead of the handkerchief which was lying on the bedside cupboard, his wig, which lay there also, and wiped his face with it, without noticing what he did. This process he repeated each time he passed the cupboard, and the General would probably never have become aware of his mistake, if we had not told him.

The result of our conference was that we resolved to accompany the Army of the Meuse for the present on its advance to the north of Paris, and, in case nothing should happen of importance there, we would go to the

south front, where the famous castle of Ferrières, owned by the Rothschilds, had been chosen for our quarters. We started from Meaux at 5 o'clock in the morning, but only arrived at Ferrières at 11 p.m.

In the course of the day the Army of the Meuse succeeded in blocking all the approaches to the north front of Paris.

At Ferrières we next learned that the Third Army had been equally successful in its movements for investing Paris to the South and West; Versailles had been occupied by the V. Corps in the course of the afternoon. During their march the latter had an important engagement at Petit Bicêtre, and the II. Bavarian Corps another at Plessis Piquet with some advanced forces of the enemy; also the VI. Corps came into collision with smaller detachments. The investment of Paris was thus completed by the 19th September.

II. The Royal Headquarters at Ferrières (19th September to the 4th October).

I. GENERAL VIEW OF THE SITUATION.

THE task now before the leaders of the army was simple so far as the object in view was concerned, but when it came to carrying it out, the difficulties, as time went on, became very serious.

We had marched to Paris because we believed this town to be the heart of the resistance; its fall would put an end to the war. But how was this fall to be brought about?

We expected, if no internal convulsions hurried on the event, that it would take place in consequence of the state of distress inevitably resulting from a close blockade, and we had therefore effected the investment as a means to attain our end.

The question whether, and if so, when, we should proceed to a bombardment, or to a regular siege, remained for the present undecided. But not to neglect anything in this respect, the establishment of a siege park and its transport to the vicinity of Toul had been ordered as early as the 8th September. Further than Toul no directions could be given, as that fortress was still in the hands of the French.

As the question has now been opened, it may interest the reader to know the views which obtained among us in 1870 in reference to this subject. During the course of events, the opinion was frequently expressed that a different method from that which we had decided upon

would have brought about the fall of Paris sooner. A bombardment of the city especially was advocated, and the longer the investment was protracted the louder and more vehement became these cries: to many people at home it seemed incomprehensible that we did not resort to forcible measures earlier.

This outcry was the reason why I noted down, at that time—even before the bombardment—what our views were. This memorandum, drawn up on the 14th of December, 1870, is among my papers, and runs thus:—

“‘Bombard Paris!’ is the cry now; everybody shrieks it out, but no one explains how it is to be done. The French have constructed guns that carry farther than our own; those of the largest calibre send their projectiles to distances ranging up to 9000 paces. But that would not matter so much, and we should still find means to get near enough to tackle them and fight them down. We should also have to engage the forts of Paris; that, too, is feasible. But the nearest of the forts are distant from the works of the enceinte about 2800 paces; the farthest, Mont Valérien and St. Denis, about 6000 paces. It will therefore be evident to everyone that, first, possession of the forts would have to be gained, and then a further advance made a good deal nearer to the main works before there could be any question of an effective bombardment.

“This would mean a regular siege. But a siege of Paris cannot be named in the same breath with the sieges of Strassburg, Thionville, and the other fortresses which we have taken during the war.

“Perhaps the siege of Sebastopol might bear comparison—but in a few points only—with our present position; and the siege of Sebastopol lasted about 14 months! The capture of the outworks alone cost the allies about 30,000 men in killed and wounded! We cannot afford any such sacrifices for Paris *alone*. In short, against a fortress of the circumference of Paris, with a garrison more than

double as strong as the force we have available, a fortress, moreover, the artillery of which is more numerous than any we could bring here in six months, a regular siege and a thorough bombardment is, under the prevailing circumstances, an impossibility !

“ Besides, we are too weak in numbers ; we can only just maintain the investment, and we have not the troops available to mass three times the number we now have before the front attacked, which is the least a siege would require. These truths we cannot possibly publish now, merely in order to convince those who press for a siege.

“ But why, then, did we bring up the siege artillery ? We must, surely, mean to do something with it ? That we do, certainly, viz. to silence the forts in some places in order to protect our own troops from the galling fire of the enemy. Perhaps we shall then also see a possibility of pushing forward a few batteries near enough, if not for a regular bombardment, at least to harass some limited part of the town. But in the beginning of an investment the latter proceeding would be useless. That we have seen plainly enough by the utterly fruitless bombardments of Strassburg, Thionville, Montmédy, Verdun and Toul, which have taught us a lesson in this respect. But in the case of Paris, where only a relatively small part of the town could be reached by our shells, a bombardment would be effective even to a much less degree than in those places where the whole of the inhabitants had to suffer from it.

“ It will only be when the hope of relief from the provinces vanishes that a bombardment may possibly produce an effect ; that moment will arrive, I should think, soon after the New Year.

“ Another circumstance also has to be considered : to bring up a siege train together with sufficient ammunition has its difficulties. In the first place, we have to make sure of feeding our troops, the bringing up of the necessary reinforcements, etc., and for all this we are in pos-

session only of one single line of railway. Moreover, not enough horses are to be got in the country, and the temporary assistance which the ammunition and commissariat columns of our army corps here are able to render, in the way of teams of horses and waggons, is limited, as any extensive use of them would disable the troops before Paris for action in the field, in case such should become necessary. This consideration is the more important, as more than once the question has become urgent whether we should not be compelled to raise the investment in order to march against the Army of the Loire or that of the North.

“ Among us, at least, there has never been any difference of opinion as to whether we should fire on the town or not.

“ Whatever may be the pressure from outside, when the time comes, the means, too, will be at our command, and then we shall do precisely what our position demands.

“ At present, after all, our chief duty is this : not to hide mistakes which may have been committed, but to learn from experience. But I can only say even now, that, as far as I understand things, our leaders have neither committed a sin of omission in regard to our proceedings against Paris, nor have they made any mistake at all.”¹

We had to do the best we could with the forces brought before Paris, weak as they certainly were considering the magnitude of the task. Moltke said justly at that time: “ We enter upon a venture which the world will judge according to its success.” The line of our outposts before Paris extended for some 55 miles, while the available infantry forces amounted only to 122,000 men, some of whom moreover had soon to be detached in order to support the cavalry covering our rear; there remained, consequently, about one infantry soldier to each yard of the line of investment. Even a

¹ Bismarck appears to have strongly favoured bombardment. Moltke's views on the subject are clearly shown in his recently published correspondence. See *op. cit.*, vol. iii., third part, p. 415.—ED.

layman will understand that only the highest confidence in the skill of the leaders and the bravery of the troops could warrant such an enterprise, especially if we consider that the opposing garrison numbered even in September upwards of 300,000 men under arms.

Each body of troops, on becoming available, had to be brought forward immediately to strengthen the investment, viz. the two corps left at Sedan, the 17th Infantry Division after the fall of Toul, the Division of Landwehr of the Guard after that of Strassburg (on the 27th September). The transport of the latter was, however, so delayed, that they only arrived before Paris in successive detachments between the 9th and 19th October. Finally the II. Army Corps was also ordered to Paris from Metz on the 23rd October. But the chief additional force on which we could count for the operations was only set free by the capitulation of the French army in Metz on the 27th-28th October, after which only was it possible to bring the remaining corps of the First and Second Army into the interior of France.

The whole period, from the beginning of the investment of Paris on the 27th of September, until the fall of Metz on the 27th-28th of October, very soon assumed a character entirely different from that of the previous operations.

On the part of the Germans, waiting for the fall of Paris took the place of active operations in the field. All sorties of the garrison had to be repulsed, as well as any efforts to relieve it from outside. The latter necessitated, from the beginning, measures for protecting the investing troops in the rear.

On the part of the French, meanwhile, the most extraordinary efforts were being made for the formation of fresh fighting forces, whereby large masses of men were brought under arms, and these soon made themselves felt in more extensive sorties of the garrison and active operations in the field for the relief of the town.

The following were among the more important sorties :

On the 30th September, against the VI. Corps; on the 13th October, against the Bavarians (Châtillon-Bagneux); on the 21st October, against the V. Corps (Malmaison), and on the 28th October against the Guards. During the last, Le Bourget, an advanced post of the defensive line of the investment, fell into the hands of the French, and it became necessary to recapture it, which was done, after severe fighting, on the 30th October. This made a great impression in Paris, the more so because the great losses suffered by the French affected troops which consisted mostly of inhabitants of the town. During the course of October nearly 400,000 men were under arms in Paris.

The protection of the investment at first was entrusted to the numerous cavalry, but as the trouble with the Francs-tireurs increased, small infantry detachments had soon to be sent to their assistance. In the beginning of October, however, when bodies of the newly-formed forces of the enemy appeared, which, advancing mainly by way of Orleans, pressed back our cavalry, it became necessary to employ larger numbers of the investing troops against them. So the I. Bavarian Corps and the 22nd infantry division joined the three Prussian cavalry divisions in the south, the whole under the command of General von der Tann. After severe fighting at Artenay on the 10th and 11th October, he forced the enemy back across the Loire at Orleans and established himself on that river. The 22nd division was next employed in the direction of Tours and Le Mans, and, on the 18th-19th October, Châteaudun was taken after a bloody engagement.

The smaller forces of the enemy appearing meanwhile in the north were about the same time repulsed by weak detachments of Saxon and Prussian troops under Generals Count Zur Lippe and Prince Albrecht of Prussia (junior).

The zone of security was thus extended, towards the

end of the month of October, to the South as far as the Loire, to the North up to a line stretching from Vernon *vid* Gournay to Soissons.

2. PARTICULARS OF OUR STAY AT FERRIÈRES.

In reference to our experiences at the Royal Headquarters during the period just described, as well as to the views entertained by us at the time, the following extracts from my letters, etc., will give some information :—

“Ferrières, 21st September.

“The day before yesterday was a very trying one. We really intended to remain longer in Meaux, but the reports already mentioned which came in during the night made us decide on a start.

“We found, on the way, the houses of the villages in the neighbourhood of Paris utterly deserted by the inhabitants; the high-roads were torn up and partly barricaded, many bridges blown up and houses put into a state of defence; on the walls of the latter were large inscriptions with all sorts of left-handed compliments. These acts of destruction, however, showed very little practical knowledge. The cry, ‘Blow up bridges, make the roads impassable,’ had produced a regular mania for destruction, and driven the people to doing things which proved, generally, no obstacles to us, or such as were easily removed.

“At the Ourcq Canal we mounted our horses and then rode forward, in the direction of St. Denis. But there was no sign of fighting anywhere, not a single cloud of smoke from batteries in action. Very soon the King also came, and we remained a long time on one spot in order to see how things would shape themselves. Meanwhile, all the movements had taken place without a hitch, as they had been planned.” (We heard afterwards that there had been, after all, a few encounters with the enemy on the north front.)

“For our Most Gracious Sovereign this day was likewise a most interesting one, not only because we now stood actually before Paris; but his thoughts must have reverted to the day when in 1814 he stood as a youthful prince on the same spot, having taken part in the last fight of that campaign against the troops of the first Napoleon, by the side of his father, now in glory.

“On our left rose the heights of Romainville, with two forts, between which the camps of the French could be seen, then came Montmartre further to the right; in the background the clearly defined outlines of the fortified Mont Valérien peeped forth. Between them rose the towers and churches of Paris, while St. Denis was visible more to the right.

“Later in the day we separated from the King. Our quarters had meanwhile been removed to Ferrières. In order to get there we had to cross a bridge which the Wurtembergers had thrown across the Marne. After dark we lost our way in the hilly and wooded country on the north bank of the river, so completely that for some time we calmly rode straight on to Paris, until we at last became aware that this direction would lead us rather to the enemy’s quarters than to our own. So we returned as fast as possible, but it took us some time to find the bridge. On the way we overtook the Wurtemberg Field Division, which was marching in excellent order in the dark. The little lanterns which the markers carried on the flanks of sections rendered good service to the troops, who were stepping out briskly.

“Jules Favre meanwhile had arrived in Meaux from Paris and had accompanied Count Bismarck to Ferrières, but he returned yesterday, very much depressed, to the capital. The rulers for the time being seem already to be fully aware that they will soon lose their hold over the masses. Bazaine in Metz is moreover looked upon as a decided adversary, and it is said that he has sent a letter here, in which he laments the fate of his unhappy country now fallen into anarchy.”

In addition, it may be added here, that Count Bismarck had formulated the following demands during the negotiations for an armistice with Jules Favre :—

Surrender of Bitsch, Toul and Strassburg.

The garrison of Strassburg to become prisoners of war.

Metz to be excluded from the armistice.

In reference to Paris : either maintenance of the investment or surrender of some of the forts commanding the town.

The chamber was to meet at Paris or Toul^{rs} after the new elections. Two members of the government, for the time being, had already gone to the latter town before the investment ; Gambetta followed likewise, leaving Paris in a balloon.

“ Ferrières, 22nd September.

“ Our present surroundings give one the impression, of living in the midst of peace.—My stable is diminished, as the sturdy little carriage horses have fallen sick from over-exertion.”

“ Ferrières, 23rd September.

“ The French amuse themselves by firing with their heavy guns at every individual they catch sight of.—By the way, the destruction of property round Paris is by no means so great as the newspapers announce. But in respect to roads and bridges it is even greater.

“ We hear the noise of guns in the distance. The Third Army is firing at an aqueduct.”

“ Ferrières, 24th September.

“ I was going to Lagny yesterday, but General von Moltke sent for me and Bronsart to drive with him to the outposts of the Wurttembergers which are thrown out in advance, towards the confluence of the Seine and Marne. After having reached the outpost line, we went on foot to a small building on the other side of it, a kind of

garden pavilion, standing high on the slope which descends steeply to the Marne. The little building had been put into a state of defence, and we had a good view of the neighbouring forts through the loopholes. We could see plainly some Gardes Mobiles on the ramparts, and we overlooked that part of the town lying between the forts and Mont Valérien. The railway bridge across the Marne, at our feet, as well as several other bridges were blown up. As we are not in a position to attack the fortifications on this side, the blowing up of these means of crossing would really have been our business, to protect ourselves against a surprise here, but the French have been so kind as to save us the trouble.

“Yesterday we received news from Paris announcing the outbreak of disorder there. Four of the six divisions of the line which have been formed in the town, were engaged on the 19th September with the V. Corps and the Bavarians, and partly also with the VI. Corps. According to our reports the French regulars have more than once during these engagements, and for the first time, failed to show their ancient valour, and this is confirmed by the French journals. Some of their detachments are said to have run as soon as the first shells came flying, and spread panic even to the interior of the town. On the other hand the papers praise the Gardes Mobiles, but without reason, I should say, as they, too, did not cover themselves with much glory that day. Such public criticisms are very apt to give rise to discord between the various services.

“Jules Favre has returned an answer, saying that he and his colleagues unanimously declined the conditions made, and that they would consequently trust the further issue to Fate.

“We are very glad to hear that Toul fell yesterday. We shall try at once to repair the line of railway, which is destroyed at that point, in order to get this important line at our disposal. At the same time the section which we

constructed a few stations to the south of Metz as far as Pont-à-Mousson, in order to avoid the fortress, has been finished, so that we hope soon to be able to transport heavy artillery as far as Trilport, a station in the neighbourhood of Meaux."

A request had been made to me from Berlin, to see that three reserve batteries which were quartered at Charlottenburg should soon be dispatched to the theatre of war. I was able to answer as follows:—

" Ferrières, 25th September.

" Even before we heard of your wish, it was granted, and the artillery captain who expressed it is already on his way by rail to the interior of France.

" The little house from which Moltke reconnoitred the forts of the south-east front the day before yesterday, in our company, was demolished yesterday by the French shells. Bronsart is well, but Brandenstein suffers a little from over-fatigue. We had a consultation on some grave questions last night till late. As usual, we agreed completely in our views."

" Ferrières, 25th September.

" For to-morrow we propose—Alfred Waldersee, a few other men and myself—to drive along the greater part of the line of investment. The whole day will probably be spent in this trip. We have now postal communication round Paris, all letters are delivered daily to all the corps here.

" According to our information, Bazaine, and with him a great part of his army in Metz, whatever republican elements it may contain, are decidedly opposed to the present government in Paris. In addition to the number of adherents of Napoleon in the country, which is probably at this moment very small, there are many who wish for the return of the Orleans family. Furthermore, there are republicans of the most different shades. What will be the end of all this ?

“I have had, to-day, a cursory look at the interior of the Château of Ferrières.¹ Whatever may be its fame, I am not greatly taken by it. There is scarcely a room in which some want of harmony or other does not produce a disagreeable effect upon one. The whole château is a quadrangle built in modern style. The façade of the building, which is of two storeys, seemed to me too insignificant, too finicking in style, and out of proportion with the towers flanking the structure at the four corners. In the great hall, which serves as library, there are, above the gallery, the most beautiful Gobelins; then door-curtains of blue velvet, which do not harmonize in colour with the green walls. Several colossal busts are placed here and there, among them a few male and female negroes in black and white marble with gilded drapery.”

“Ferrières, 27th September.

“We had a very satisfactory trip yesterday. We were six of us in my drag; Podbielski and two others followed. The place where we wanted to go to is situated about twelve miles from here, to the south of Paris. A little house there, with a flat roof, standing on the slope, had been recommended to us as a particularly favourable spot for a view. We soon found it, and were rewarded with such an excellent outlook—after having groped our way with some difficulty up some very narrow steps to the roof—that we stayed there over two hours in spite of the hot mid-day sun. On our left lay the opposite slope of the Seine with Fort Ivry, and starting thence the horizon was marked by the following points: the Terrace of St. Cloud, the cone of Mont Valérien, the Arc de Triomphe, the Champs-Élysées, Montmartre, the Buttes de Chaumont, the heights of Romainville, and last, on the extreme right, Fort Nogent. Within this semicircle

¹ The château was too small to receive more than the first section of Headquarters; those of us for whom no room could be found in the house were quartered in the farm buildings, etc., which were close by. The second section remained at Lagny.

lay Paris, with its sea of houses, at our feet, as calm and quiet as if it was in the profoundest peace. Only now and then a flash came from some distant fort, and the thunder of an explosion came rolling over to us. The golden cupola of the Invalides shone brightly in the distance; to the right of it rose the Pantheon and the towers of Notre Dame. A copse in front of us hid the adjoining fort, that of Charenton, as well as our outposts. Altogether, there was not the slightest sign to remind one of an investment, the whole gave one the impression of a beautiful landscape without figures.

“We shall probably remove within a few days to the other side of Paris, either to Versailles or St. Germain.”

“Ferrières, 28th September.

“Last night we received news of the surrender of Strassburg. The fall of this town happened very opportunely for us from a military point of view, as we now get 50,000 of our troops free for action elsewhere. The first instalment of our siege train will arrive to-day at a place five days' march from here.

“The King is inspecting some of the troops, and our chief accompanies him; we others remained at home. Most of them are just going out shooting with General von Podbielski, some mounted, the others on foot, eight in number. But they have only two guns and eight cart-ridges between them; what fun they will have, to be sure!

“The telegraphic cable, in the bed of the Seine, connecting Paris with Rouen and Tours, has been luckily picked up and cut, after we had read a few telegrams. When we ourselves tried to communicate with Paris, they soon found out that it was not their countrymen who were sending the message. The cypher telegrams, which got into our hands, we were unable to make out, so we were obliged to cut the communication.”

“Ferrières, 29th September.

“Telegrams are sent from here to Berlin by other than

official persons, and so the report about street-fighting in Paris probably comes from such a source. We know nothing ourselves of such an occurrence, although the letters found lately in captured balloons certainly are somewhat depressed in tone.

“Sugar, butter, milk and such luxuries are scarcely to be had hereabouts; I force myself in the morning, as a rule, to swallow a piece of dry white bread; we breakfast at 11, and at 6 o'clock we have our dinner together. The best thing we get here is an excellent red wine. It will last for some time to come, according to an inventory taken yesterday, which is said to establish the existence of 18,000 bottles more in the cellars of Rothschild's house!”

“Ferrières, 30th September.

“I will continue my description of the Castle of Ferrières. It consists of a basement containing a billiard-room and rooms for guests, servants, etc.; then a raised ground-floor with the dwelling-rooms of the family and the offices; in the first storey are only guest-rooms. In the entrance hall, marble steps lead up to the ground-floor. Over the landing there are frescoes, apparently an apotheosis of James Rothschild. In the interior, a corridor runs through the whole of the quadrangular building, leading, on its outer side, to the rooms of this floor, and in the centre to a vast hall, taking up the whole width of the building. This serves, to judge from its furniture, various purposes, there being in it a billiard table, a grand piano and a library. Its dimensions are immense, its height about 45 feet, the length 32 feet and the width 19; at something more than half its height there is a gallery running all round. The details of its ornamentation are splendidly finished.

“I was yesterday at Lagny, and shall go again to-day with Waldersee and Radziwill. In this little town are the quarters of the second section of Headquarters. The

Marne flows through its middle; but the two substantial bridges leading across the river, one of iron and the other of stone, have been blown up by the French, in which process the houses on the bank have suffered most. They give the river scenery, very pretty in itself, an additional picturesque charm by their irregular appearance, which effect is heightened by the singular appearance of the railway bridge, which, after losing its central support by the blowing away of a pier, sank down into the river, while its iron framework and the roadway remained intact. With some assistance from our engineers the bridge has become passable again for pedestrians, although it winds up hill and down dale.

“Altogether, the villages before Paris make a singular impression. On our approach they were deserted by the inhabitants, who took with them in their hurry whatever was transportable. Those who live near to Paris withdrew into the town, and are now, of course, not let out again. Those farther off fled to the woods, but are now gradually returning; but they find a good many alterations in regard to their property. It is certainly the most foolish thing to do for the inhabitants to run away on the approach of the enemy. For our soldiers, after all, cannot be left on the road when there are houses beside it. The troops are therefore obliged to seek accommodation in the buildings, to take whatever victuals and forage are found stored there, and to cook their meals. So the search commences, and the doors being locked, windows and doors are necessarily beaten in. In order to get from the road to the top rooms, chairs and tables are piled one above the other, and are left there afterwards. Much of such furniture also is used for cooking, if the soldier does not know where else to find wood. All this kind of destruction would be avoided, and the necessary requisitions be carried out in a more orderly manner, if the inhabitants remained at home. There is, moreover, the damage done by *Francs-tireurs*, which is often very childish

in its character. We found, for instance, a barricade made of artichokes. The reader's imagination may finally complete the picture by road-side trees cut down, broken walls and overturned vehicles.

"Postscript.—There is fighting going on on the line held by the XI. Corps. By the time I get there, I suppose it will have come to an end."¹

"Ferrières, 1st October.

"Of course, before we could get over the 15 miles to the scene of fighting, the thing was already settled, there having been comparatively but few troops engaged. We could just see yet the red trousers of the French disappearing hurriedly behind the forts. Only the VI. Corps had had a serious engagement, and had lost about 300 men, among whom, unfortunately, there was an old friend of mine at the military school, Count Clairon d'Haussonville. According to my instructions, I was to send other bodies of troops, especially the Wurtembergers, to the scene of action, in case the fighting assumed greater dimensions; but this was no longer necessary, and I therefore went with the commander of the XI. Corps for the time being, General von Schachtmeyer, to his headquarters, Château le Grosbois, as I had several other matters to discuss with him. The castle is very handsomely furnished, and is the property of a descendant of Prince Murat. Everything in it is in very simple taste, refined and stately.

"People in Berlin are beginning to get excited about all sorts of shameful treatment which we might receive at the hands of the French on our entry in Paris. There is no imminent danger of that as yet!

"To-day is an arduous one for us in other respects as well: at 4 o'clock dinner with the King, at 6 back to our quarters, where I must be present without fail, as we have

¹ The sortie was directed specially against the VI. Corps, and led to the engagement of Chevilly.

invited Count Bismarck and General von Roon. Our 'master of the household,' Count Nostitz, has stinted us for some days in our rations of wine in view of this feast; some pheasants also have been slaughtered; certain wines, of which we have received plenty as presents from home, are to be brought out in honour of the occasion. The cook of the War Minister has even promised us a punch *à la romaine*."

"Ferrières, 2nd October.

"A French corps is being formed at Tours consisting of troops formerly stationed in Africa, and others collected from various depôts, about 20,000 infantry in all. Yesterday we had a fatiguing but pleasant day. At 4 o'clock we had dinner with the King. His Majesty had heard of our intended banquet, which gave him the opportunity to 'chaff' us frequently about our 'grand appetite' that could not be satisfied with one meal. At 6 o'clock I came back to our dinner, just in time; Count Bismarck and General von Roon with their suites were already there. The menu was, all things considered, not unworthy of a Lucullus. We were at table from 6 till 10 o'clock. After this our chief was, he said, 'just in the humour' for a game at whist, and as at the end some excellent punch was produced, we remained together till nearly 1 o'clock. Count Bismarck told us in his characteristic and unique style many interesting anecdotes, and made many a joke about the present and past. Among other things he mentioned his last conversation with Jules Favre and his long speeches ('He commenced by treating me like a meeting'). For our amusement extracts were read from various recent French papers from Paris as well as Tours. In one of them there was a sketch of Moltke, 'aged eighty,' pulling about with bony fingers the German armies like puppets, and Count Bismarck behind driving them on with a stick. Our high spirits broke out unmistakably soon after the soup. Our excellent Meydam had received some splendid verses from one of

our best known poets, on our present campaign. He was burning with desire to recite them, and when he was asked to do so, after the soup, his ill luck would have it, that after the first line he contrived to make up a sentence by drawing one letter of the next following word to one of the line before, which cannot be rendered here, but which was in such a comical contrast to the high-flown tone of the rest, that we laughed so much that we could not speak. The gaiety thus caused manifested itself in every variety of manner among the feasters. One laid both arms on the table and his head on them, another jumped up and danced about the room, and Moltke expressed his amusement by dipping one bit of bread after the other into a wine-glass and throwing it at my head.

“Another pretty little story which was told, I will repeat here. It concerned Lieutenant-General X, commander of a cavalry brigade, who one afternoon, on the march through French territory, arrived with his staff and the superior officers of one of his regiments at a luxuriously furnished little château. The mistress of the house, a very worthy dame of old family, received him with all the ceremony of the *ancien régime*. The dinner in the evening went off so brilliantly that the General tried to show his satisfaction in every possible way; only, as he could hardly speak a word of French, he was unable to express his feelings in words to the mistress of the house, who sat at his side. When, after dinner, they adjourned to the balcony, to take coffee and liquor, the crescent moon was just breaking through the clouds, and lit up with magic light the splendid park that stretched far away beneath them. This worked up such a degree of enthusiasm in the General, that he gathered together whatever French he knew, and placing his hand on the arm of the marquise and pointing with the other to the moon, he said: ‘Voyez, Madame, quel joli demi-monde.’¹

¹ The joke lies in the General translating “halbmond,” i.e. literally “half-moon,” by *demi-monde*, which is quite another story.—ED.

“The French government at Tours publishes reports about the engagements before Paris on the 19th September, containing the exact contrary of those sent them by the government of Paris. We were able to prove this clearly, as we had chanced to gain precise knowledge of the contents of the despatches before they reached their destination.”

“Ferrières, 3rd October.

“We look forward to getting to Versailles. Although many of the inhabitants have left, there will, nevertheless, be opportunities of renewing many things which have become worn out. I do not like this place at all; the castle is not to my taste, everything in the interior is too showy and wants harmony. Even the clumps of trees in the parks, pretty enough by themselves, have not made much impression upon me as a whole.

“About Count Bismarck I must tell one more story as I heard it. The minister sent for the agent of Rothschild’s estate and told him that he wished to buy some wine from the Baron’s cellars. The latter replied that he could not take any money, which had no value at all in this house, when the minister is said to have answered: ‘After the hospitable reception we have received here, I can only look upon the house as an inn; and, therefore, I will not only buy my wine here, but desire that, as I intend to drink the wine on the premises, a corkage of 30 centimes per bottle shall be added to the bill.’

“On a ride yesterday I came to a pretty little château belonging to the Duc d’Ampierre. How much prettier I thought it than this place; especially the large park, the antiquity of which is evident from the size of its trees and shrubs. The King also chanced to be there. His Majesty must have been not a little amused by our feast of the day before yesterday, for he cross-examined me on various details, of which he seemed to have heard vague reports.

“ Paris is said, in reports which have come in, to be provisioned for six weeks. A fortnight of this period has now passed ; but it is possible that the rulers in the town may carry matters to extremities and that the capitulation will only take place when the want of victuals makes it necessary. Only they must not, in that case, wait till the last moment ! We are not able to supply nearly two millions of people with food even for a single day. If we allowed supplies to enter from the provinces, where would they come from in sufficient quantities ? Within 50 to 75 miles around, everything has been already consumed by our men, and the destruction of the railways and roads prevent any great quantity being brought from a distance. In such a case there is, unfortunately, a prospect of thousands dying of hunger before any help can reach them.

“ It is very amusing to see how our men have made themselves at home in the deserted villages, and especially what sense of humour they show occasionally. Dummies of straw are sometimes seen set up, draped indiscriminately in apparel of male and female articles. Barbers’ shaving dishes are transformed into the insignia of distinguished orders ; the heads of the dummies ornamented with shining firemen’s helmets or high caps, and a broom or some such thing put into their hands. Particularly keen are our men on milliners’ shops, the pasteboard heads of which they paint over afresh and exhibit them in the windows garnished in a most fantastic manner, with white and rouged faces and with the woollen epaulettes of the Garde Nationale. Inscriptions of all sorts, too, left by the retreating Gardes Mobiles and Francs-tireurs, in gigantic letters on the walls of houses and gardens, create a peculiar impression. In between are sketches sometimes representing, in a symbolic manner, the Republic, but most often caricatures of Napoleon, and everywhere a ‘ mort aux Prussiens,’ to which our people add observations of their own on the subject.

178 WITH THE ROYAL HEADQUARTERS IN 1870-71

“To-morrow we transfer our quarters to Versailles. As the way is a long one, our saddle horses have already been sent on, and will wait for us at Villeneuve-le-Roi, on the left bank of the Seine, from which place an expedition to observe the south front of Paris will be undertaken.”

III. Versailles.

I. EVENTS UP TO THE FALL OF METZ (28TH-29TH OCTOBER).

“ Versailles, 6th October.

“ WE arrived here at nightfall last evening, so that I have not yet been able to see much of the town. The road we came by was very pretty; nothing of importance happened on the way except that our horses got pretty well tired out. Breakfast was taken in a large farm-yard, where Count Bismarck with his trusty followers and ourselves sat about in picturesque groups on bundles of straw, casks, etc. The whole VI. Army Corps, except the outposts, which were left at their various stations, was called under arms to receive the King, but the Staff Headquarters continued on their road without him.

“ Major Krause and myself took up our quarters in very handsomely furnished rooms at the house of a notary, whose wife had, however, already left the town. The French have not been accustomed thus far to having soldiers quartered in their houses. So we found only two little rooms reserved for us, which did not, however, suit our requirements—modest though, as a rule, they are—as we must prepare for a somewhat prolonged stay here. Winterfeldt undertook to explain this to our host in his elegant French, with the result that, after an unsuccessful attempt to get us out, he disappeared next day (we learned afterwards that he joined an ambulance corps on the Loire).

We thus became the undisputed masters of the whole house, but we contented ourselves with a common sitting-room and a bedroom each. The *bonne* of the house was taken into our service.

“The next few days are likely to become very interesting from a military standpoint. The French are concentrating more and more troops round Tours; moreover they seem bent on an advance from Orleans. Prince Albert, who is watching them with his cavalry division, is slowly retreating before them. We are making every preparation to receive them.”

“Versailles, 7th October.

“At half-past 1 to-day the whole of the famous fountains at Versailles were playing. I managed to get free for a short time to go there. I met His Majesty, who was on foot, surrounded and followed closely by a large crowd of the inhabitants. The effect of the fountains was magnificent.”

“Versailles, 9th October.

“Yesterday it rained in torrents all day. To us this made no difference, as we worked in the office, but for the troops, some of whom had to pass the night in the open, it was anything but pleasant.

“We are all very busy at this moment with reading letters that have fallen into our hands through a balloon from Paris being intercepted. I estimate them at about 30,000; many interesting statements are found, not only concerning the temper of the population, but also the means of defence and the organization of the troops collected into corps.

“Last night one of our squadrons of hussars covering our rear was suddenly attacked. Their commander, my brother-in-law, von Stosch, has arrived here severely wounded by a bullet in the shoulder.”

“Versailles, 9th October.

“The last sortie of the French on the 30th September

has cost the French more than we at first thought. Indeed we have buried ourselves upwards of 900, so that their total loss may amount to between 4000 and 5000 men, which is about ten times our number. It is not impossible that they will repeat the attempt some day, when they have sufficiently recovered. Until now in all the more important battles we have necessarily been the assailants, but here, as before Metz, we are in a position to make them attack us. The defensive, it is true, is the mode of fighting which suits us least, but it cannot be denied that with the efficiency of modern fire-arms it has become the easier, and it is therefore almost certain that the enemy's losses will considerably surpass our own.

“In Paris the opinion is already vented, as we gather from some of the intercepted letters, that some of the inhabitants would prefer to see us in the town rather than suffer the present state of things to go on. But such elements are as yet completely kept under by the ruling party, and distress has by no means become so great as to induce them to rise. It can, however, scarcely be very long before matters come to such a pass as to make them unendurable for any length of time. The government has of course laid hands on all the meat and other provisions; butchers have to sell at fixed prices, and the people who cannot afford to buy food are to be supplied by the government. According to our information there were in Paris before the beginning of the siege 27,000 oxen and something over 100,000 sheep, but disease has reduced the number. A large proportion of Gardes Mobiles will before long be obliged to apply to the city for assistance, as they will be unable to buy food for themselves and families with a daily pay of 1½ francs.

“Of great military importance for us would be an early fall of Metz, as we should then again have about 200,000 men at our disposal. If I am not mistaken, things must soon come to an end there; horseflesh cannot last for ever, and the want of salt is felt severely. The last minor

sorties that have taken place were practically only undertaken with a view to make a raid in search of potatoes. But the sortie of the day before yesterday was, on the contrary, an attempt on a big scale to break through. The French brought great masses into action, but their exertions proved vain.¹

“Brandenstein returned yesterday from an expedition in the direction of the Loire. He came across some Franks-tireurs, some of whom were captured, the others escaped.

“We learn from our newspapers, to our great satisfaction, that we are already in possession of Orleans; quite a piece of news to us. Things do not go quite so fast; but it is just possible that when these lines reach Berlin, that town may be in our hands. Thus far it is not the case, however.”

“Versailles, 11th October.

“Last night ‘Messieurs les Français’ disturbed many of us in our slumbers; they kept on blazing away wildly with their long-range fortress guns, imagining perhaps that we were engaged in constructing huge entrenchments, which operation they wished to disturb; or perhaps they only want to harass us generally. Their heavy projectiles, which carry to incredible distances, make a horrible noise on bursting.

“What forces the French have collected on the Loire and brought up against us so far, were routed yesterday with heavy loss by the Bavarians under von der Tann and by the cavalry under Prince Albert and Count Stolberg.² Orleans will probably be occupied to-day, and it is possible that the government at Tours will in that case remove to the south.

¹ This assumption turned out later on to have been mistaken. The sortie (engagement of Bellevue on the 7th October), in which the French had no less than two corps and more under arms besides the division of Voltigeurs of the Guard, only aimed at procuring further supplies for the provisioning of Metz.

² Engagement of Artenay.

"Yesterday we were nearly all of us at St. Germain-en-Laye, excepting only those whom business kept unavoidably at the office. The prospect from the terrace of the château well repays the trouble of going there. Terrace, park and wood rise abruptly from the Seine, which here makes several great bends. On the opposite bank extends a wonderfully pretty country full of gardens, bordered in the background by the steep and lofty cone of Mont Valérien, on the summit of which the dark masses of the fort stand out boldly against the sky. At St. Germain there is an old castle of Francis I. which has been partly restored, and that very tastefully. It contains collections of Roman and Gallic antiquities bought by Napoleon for his studies on Cæsar's wars."

"Versailles, 13th October.

"A regular siege of Paris is entirely out of the question, and I only hope that we shall never attempt such a thing. If only we wait till hunger compels the town to surrender, we shall lose fewer men and make it more certain that we shall attain our end.

"From balloon letters we gather that the Parisians place all their hopes on the Loire army which is now forming. It is possible that the news of its defeat at Orleans on the 11th of this month may have a depressing effect.¹

"At Metz we believe the end to be now really at hand.

"Our rooms are already becoming uncomfortably cold ; as there are no other appliances for heating them than open fireplaces, we get roasted on one side and frozen on the other at our office."

¹ Orleans fell into the hands of General von der Tann on the evening of the 11th October after severe fighting in which the Bavarians and the 22nd division were engaged ; the French retreated across the Loire.

“Versailles, 14th October.

“The telegrams will have already informed you that the French shells have burnt St. Cloud. The beautiful furniture and probably many art treasures have been consumed by the fire. Only a few things could be saved by our men.”

“Versailles, 15th October.

“We were out yesterday for three hours and a half. We first went to inspect some siege guns which have arrived, and have been parked here. Thence we went on to the Bavarian outposts, which are stationed in front of them on the plateau. The line of the hills here approaches pretty closely to the forts lying in the plain. The weather being somewhat dull, the lines of houses stood out against the sky in dark masses. We dismounted and crept along an abattis constructed by the Bavarians and running along the edge of a wood, until we came to a place from which we could overlook to some extent the Forts of Issy and Vanvres across the copse at our feet. On the slope some French infantry kept up a desultory fire on Bavarian patrols. We only remained a short time on this spot, because the commanding officer of the Bavarian outposts sent us a sergeant-major begging us not to stay long, as the enemy from the forts kept the crest under close observation with very good telescopes, and threw a few shells directly they noticed even single figures, whereby the regiment on outpost duty bivouacking behind the crest had already suffered some loss. We therefore returned, especially as we had now seen what we wanted.”

“Versailles, 15th October.

“Versailles is sometimes called the Parisian Potsdam, a comparison which is in many respects not inappropriate. Its propinquity to the capital, its palaces, its parks with their fountains, the villa-like character of a part of the town, make such a comparison plausible in

many respects. Numbers of pensioners, officials as well as military officers *en retraite*, have made their home at Versailles.

“On the Place d’Armes is situated the immense Palace, from which run five great avenues dividing the town in various directions.

“The Palace itself is a splendid structure, an enormous pile. Vast sums must have been spent on it in the past, as well as on its picture galleries, parks and fountains. A flaming inscription over the main gate informs us of the purpose of the galleries: ‘A toutes les gloires de la France.’ And, indeed, the glory of France is the subject of the pictures. That does not prevent, however, subjects being there such as, for instance, the flight of Louis XVIII. from the Tuilleries on the news of Napoleon’s landing in 1815! The long succession of rooms gives one the impression of their being endless; side by side with many admirable paintings are found a good many of inferior value; their subjects are invariably battles or scenes on state occasions. Although it is certainly a pleasure to go there and admire in detail what is beautiful, and although battle scenes are the delight of the soldier, yet the monotony of the subject eventually wearies one. I am particularly taken with the pictures of Horace Vernet, and especially with the capture of Smala, and those dealing with the Crimean War. I have never seen anything more lifelike, or more striking in the depiction of battle scenes. The individual figures stand out so sharply that one is inclined to get out of their way. Among the statues there is also the well-known lovely figure of the Maid of Orleans, the work of the Princess Helène of Orleans. If Napoleon I. stood in our shoes now, it is likely that the best works would have had to come out of the galleries.

“Behind the Palace terraces descend to the park and a flat space in the middle of which is a cruciform basin and a long channel, but the effect cannot compare with that

from the terrace of Sanssouci; indeed, the gardens of Potsdam on the whole are far superior to those of Versailles, as regards idyllic beauty, fine prospects and variety. The whole park, however, is instinct with the time of Louis XIV., and is on that account very interesting.

"Among the smaller châteaux on the estate the Grand Trianon deserves mentioning. The Petit Trianon gives one the impression of a middle-class private house. It is only interesting for the moment because the Empress Eugénie has collected there all the relics of the unhappy Queen Marie Antoinette which were still to be procured, such as a piano, presses, chairs, etc. Grand Trianon has been transformed into a hospital, as also the Palace itself. In the former there is a remarkable group of figures representing Italy and France, given to the Empress as a present by the ladies of Italy after the war of 1859. The figure representing Gaul is said to be a likeness of the Empress, but not a very good one; that of Italy is very striking."

"Versailles, 17th October.

"We rather expect that the Parisians are preparing for a great sortie."

"Versailles, 18th October.

"We thought it was sure to come off for to-day, but it has not taken place."

"Versailles, 19th October.

"Yesterday at noon there was a levée *in corpore* at our Crown Prince's in honour of his birthday. For the first time during the campaign the helmets were got out. His Highness reproached me for not coming more frequently; but that is not possible, there is no time.

"In the morning His Royal Highness the Crown Prince of Saxony, whose quarters are some dozen miles from here to the north of Paris at Margency, sent a telegram informing us that he would drive early in the morn-

ing to St. Germain and would stay there a few hours; if we could get away, he would like to meet us there. The birthday levée prevented us at first from doing so, but we sent a messenger on horseback to St. Germain to ask how long the Crown Prince would remain there. On returning from the levée we found that there was still a chance of being at St. Germain in time if we started at once. So Podbielski, Bronsart, Holleben, Krause and I drove off, and managed to pass a very pleasant hour with the Crown Prince and his suite on that glorious terrace near the Pavillon François I. The country was at its best and the scene was enchanting. Mont Valérien did us the honour now and again to throw a shell, by which a few houses some way off were set on fire."

"Versailles, 20th October.

"We were this morning at St. Cloud, where we had again a splendid view of Paris from the Villa Stern, which is close by. By means of a telescope we saw the French industriously engaged on various works.

"At dinner we celebrated the presentation of the Iron Cross, 1st Class, to General Podbielski, and managed to find some bottles of dry champagne in honour of the occasion."

"Versailles, 21st October.

"We inspected yesterday the new position of the V. Corps, which has been fixed on with a view to a possible sortie. Bronsart and Brandenstein, Holleben and I drove away soon after 1 o'clock, and did not return till nearly 6 o'clock. We were again delighted with various views of Paris from the foremost post of observation: the whole neighbourhood of the metropolis looks indeed like one grand park covering hills and dale."

"In the evening our old acquaintance of Warsaw days, the Russian Colonel Walberg, arrived here to follow our operations before Paris."

THE ENGAGEMENT AT MALMAISON.

“Versailles, 21st October.

“We had made up our minds to leave alone for once outposts and country, and to use the time for our neglected private correspondence. The intention was no doubt praiseworthy, but Fate determined otherwise, for when Krause and I sat down to lunch in our rooms with a few others whom we had invited, my servant suddenly came whispering to me in his habitual mellifluous and engaging tone: ‘Sir, they are just sounding the alarm.’ Sashes and swords were seized quickly, forage caps put on, and off we hurried to the office where the saddle-horses are sent in such cases. A brisk artillery fire, not far off, reached our ears as we went there. Moltke, who had been out for a drive in the opposite direction, brought back his horses steaming with perspiration; our grooms hurriedly brought up our saddle-horses, so that within a very short time the whole Headquarters Staff was able to set out for Beau-Regard, as we learned from incoming reports that the 10th Infantry division, lying between that place and the Seine, was engaged in repulsing a strong sortie from Mont Valérien. The General requested me to take a place in his carriage, but near Beau-Regard we mounted our horses. It is difficult to survey the country from there, as wooded crests surround the place on all sides. Scarcely anything could consequently be seen of the enemy, only the well-known sound of his shells and numbers of shrapnel with their little clouds of smoke were perceptible over the wood that lay on our right. Kirchbach, to whose corps the attacked division belonged, came trotting past us with his staff; reports came in continually concerning the progress of the engagement. His Majesty also chose this point for his position.

“After we had been there for some time we judged, both from the slackening fire and the direction it now took, that the attacks of the enemy were becoming distinctly feebler. Our position had now to be changed, and it was determined to make for the high water tower of Marly. The King and General Moltke ascended it with some of us, whilst General Podbielski with the greater part of the Staff took the direction of Malmaison in order to observe from there the further progress of the fight. From the platform of the tower, which is of considerable height, nearly the same view is obtained as from the one which I described from the terrace of St. Germain, except that the spectator is here much nearer to Mont Valérien.

“Weather and light were extremely favourable. At our feet Busancy, shelled by the French, was in flames. The French artillery were deployed in a long line half-way down the long and steep slope of Mont Valérien; they were covered by strong bodies of infantry, especially numerous behind their right wing, the battalions there extending right up to the crest of the hill slope, along which, further back, the dark masses of their reserves were visible. The enemy remained in this position for some considerable time under the shelter of the guns of the fort, still maintaining a pretty lively fire, which was scarcely returned on our part, as the ground afforded no suitable position for great masses of artillery. The engagement was evidently coming to an end.

“There were on the platform besides His Majesty and the Crown Prince, Prince Luitpold of Bavaria, the Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar, and the Duke of Coburg, together with some officers.

“Suddenly flashes of fire were seen on the opposite bank of the Seine; they came from batteries that had just come up, having been sent forward from the IV. Corps, and which now were brought into action. The extreme right wing of the enemy being right in their line of

fire, now hastily beat a retreat, followed gradually by the other troops.

“Night was now coming on, and the flames blazing up from Busancy showed out brightly.

“We, too, now turned homewards, and arrived at Versailles by 7 o'clock. Here all our remaining officers arrived one after the other, and remarks were exchanged on the details of the engagement. Our losses were comparatively small; two of the enemy's guns had fallen into our hands. Dinner was gone through hastily, there being a great deal of work still to be done at the office.”

“Versailles, 22nd October, in the morning.

“When we were all marching out of Versailles yesterday the streets of the town were fuller of inhabitants than we had ever seen them before. They all looked pleased, imagining that we were now going to be expelled by the Parisians.

Within Metz, want of food is now beginning to produce its effects. Deserters come over daily to our lines. One of them said, according to the telegram, the French troops in Metz had been told that when no more bread could be served out to them, they would only have to hold out three days longer, and that then peace would be made. If Marshal Bazaine imagines that we should treat with his army in Metz from any other point of view than a purely military one, he is egregiously mistaken. Perhaps the Marshal will attempt one more desperate coup at the eleventh hour. The mission of General Boyen from Metz to Versailles, as reported by the newspapers, is a fact. He has now gone to England on political affairs in the Bonapartist interest.

“Our newspapers prophesy daily the imminent bombardment of Paris. I do not think myself that it will take place just yet.”

“Versailles, 24th October.

“We expect for certain the capitulation of Metz to take place in the near future.

“In anticipation of that event there is just now much to be done, and even in view of the future surrender of Paris preliminary preparations are already necessary.

“There was a rumour current here at headquarters that the Empress Eugénie had intended to go to Metz and assemble there the Corps Legislatif. An armistice for a fortnight—but only before that fortress—was to be concluded! Metz, and the army shut up there, are to us for the present purely military objects, and we shall not allow ourselves to be robbed of the fruit of our labours lasting for many weeks, and of the sacrifices they cost us, by means of an armistice with the opportunity of revictualling the fortress. I wish the town would surrender on the 26th of this month; what a fine birthday present for our chief that would be!

“During the last sortie the French brought 90 guns and 120,000 men into action.”

“Versailles, 25th October.

“Metz cannot be saved for France even by the Empress. Still it is to be expected as probable that Marshal Bazaine will try at the eleventh hour one more desperate blow. This last hour is striking. It is said that the wife of the Marshal will arrive here from Orleans for the purpose of making on her part an attempt to get better conditions for the army. In Napoleonic circles they still nourish the hope of saving it to France and restoring order by its means in the country.”

“Versailles, 25th October.

“Hopes of peace are rising fast in some circles here; the cause is a telegram received this morning from General von der Tann from Orleans saying that Thiers was at his outposts asking for permission to come first to Versailles and subsequently enter Paris. His mission

was authorised by Gambetta and the other members of the government at Tours. This permission has been granted. He has not arrived yet, but his intention can only be a fresh attempt at negotiations for a peace, or rather an armistice. His visit to the European Cabinets from which he has just returned may have convinced him that France will not receive any active help from them. When he arrived at Tours he must have found everybody impressed by the defeat of the Army of the Loire at Orleans, and of that of the East before Besançon.

“The French had founded all their hopes of a relief of Paris and Metz on these two attempts of the newly raised large armies. I cannot quite believe that they will accept our conditions for the present. However desirable peace may be, it is probable that France and her people will be obliged to endure the war for somewhat longer. Only thus will they be prevented for some considerable time from entering again upon such a war as this. It is only now that the seed which we have sown is beginning to bear fruit fully, and it is indispensable that this fruit should ripen, however bitter it may be for this people.”

“Versailles, 27th October, morning.

“We have just received a telegram from Prince Frederick Charles, according to which the capitulation of Metz and its army will take place in all probability to-day at 5 o'clock p.m. The strength of Bazaine, inclusive of the sick and wounded, is about 150,000 men. The fate of Metz happens indeed very opportunely for us.

“There is no hurry as yet to send my winter things here; I have a big cloak which will be sufficient for the present.

“Yesterday we celebrated the birthday of our chief. We assembled in the morning as early as 8 o'clock in order to congratulate him, and it was done in a very hearty manner. The band of one of the regiments quartered

here serenaded him. The whole day it was almost impossible to do any work, as they all came in crowds to congratulate him, and every one of them stopped of course for a chat afterwards. Our Crown Prince brought a Laurel wreath, the Crown Prince of Saxony came himself from his distant quarters and brought the General a Saxon Order that has been conferred on him. Congratulatory letters and addresses arrived from all sides, and from Magdeburg the Freedom of the City.

“At 5 o'clock, earlier than usual, we had our dinner in the big hall of the Hôtel des Réservoirs, to which our Crown Prince had invited himself without the General's knowledge, as a surprise. Crown Prince Albert too was present, and so the General enjoyed the great honour and pleasure of passing on his birthday a happy hour in our midst between the two Crown Princes, the Commanders-in-Chief of the two armies before Paris.

“After dinner the Crown Prince of Saxony decided to pass the night here, and the day finished with a very pleasant game of whist at our General's till half-past 11 o'clock, first he and Podbielski against us, and then Bronsart and I played double dummy.

“Bronsart, Holleben and I really intended to-day to go to the headquarters of the Meuse Army, but we cannot get away, owing to reports which are expected from Metz.”

“Versailles, 28th October.

“Early this morning we received definite news of the conclusion of the capitulation of Metz, which took place at 12.45 a.m. One hundred and seventy thousand men have become prisoners of war, a number which has probably never been heard of before !

“Joy and sorrow in life are often near neighbours ; a few days afterwards I received the news that my dear mother had departed this life almost at the same time, in spite of the self-sacrificing devotion of my wife.

“Yesterday a beautiful letter from His Majesty was

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received by our chief, in which he made him a Count, and which ran something to this effect: The King could give him no reward, this he (Moltke) would find in his own conscience; but for the brilliant way in which he had conducted the operations he (the King) owed him before the world some outward recompense.

“How is the boundless confusion in France to end? Much depends on the question whether the French will soon cease to harbour illusions in regard to their position. And yet how far they are from this! For instance, here in Versailles no one among the people believes in the capitulation of Metz; on the contrary, they firmly maintain, nay they know for certain, that Bazaine has made his way already as far as Châlons, and that the army of the Loire is close on our heels!”

“Versailles, 29th October, in the evening.

“It is scarcely possible to-day to think to any purpose, or get peace and quietness, as every moment there is ‘something up.’ M. Thiers too has just arrived and wants to be escorted into Paris.

“I think it will not be easy to bring about an armistice. By the fall of Metz we get the means in our hands to carry the war through, but the French still fail to see that it is we who have to dictate conditions to them.”

“Versailles, 30th October.

“Captain von Winterfeldt has just received the news at our office that his brother-in-law has fallen in to-day’s engagement (recapture of Le Bourget). Also Waldersee’s brother George, commander of the Queen’s Regiment of Grenadiers of the Guard, I am sorry to say, has been killed, after having only recently arrived here and taken up again the command of the regiment, being scarcely recovered from a severe wound which he had received at St. Privat. Colonel von Zalusowski, commander of the Queen Elizabeth’s Regiment, is also among the victims of to-day. Death is reaping a rich harvest!”

During the period just described, the opinion gained ground that our stay before Paris would turn out to be longer than we had at first anticipated. Our daily life, therefore, soon settled down into a regular routine which I will now briefly describe. It remained much the same till the end of the war.

As I have before mentioned, Major Krause and myself took up our abode at the house of a lawyer whose wife had left Versailles before our arrival and who himself left soon after. The only member of this household that remained was the "bonne," Mademoiselle Elize, a young girl who now undertook in her own person the duties of housekeeper, parlourmaid and cook. A priest who lived on the floor above had been commissioned by the proprietor to generally watch his interests.

Considering the importance of the housekeeper in any well-regulated household, I must begin by relating how Mademoiselle Elize managed our affairs. From the time we arrived we engaged her regularly in our service, settled her wages and entrusted her with the entire management; Krause keeping an eye on the details, checking the bills and paying them. I can only say that when we left, after a stay of nearly five months, we could give the girl the credit of having done her duty most conscientiously both towards her master and mistress and to us. She was a very good cook, except perhaps with regard to hares (or rabbits), which she did not seem to understand. She used to cut off their heads and fore-legs, and served thus they looked like abortions preserved in spirits of wine!

Elize was at first somewhat frightened of her new masters, but we soon gained confidence, and she would come and sit down on an easy-chair in the sitting-room and explain to us all that we wanted to know about the people in whose house we were. At last she became quite at ease and told us, with a laugh, "she would like to see us at the devil, and that she would be very glad when

we went away again." This frank declaration did not at all impair our good humour, and we were not long before we all got on well together. It was only some time after we discovered that she was not French at all, but a native of Luxemburg, and that she understood German fairly well, although she pretended not to know a word of it. In fact she betrayed herself one day when she thought we were not at home, by singing with all her might in the kitchen, "O Strassburg, O Strassburg, Du wunderschöne Stadt."

She got on very well, too, with my soldier-servant Fritz, a good-natured, thoroughly reliable and faithful fellow. The important servant question was thus satisfactorily settled, and we remained free from all domestic bother. She very soon trained Fritz to make himself useful about the house, and he had to do all sorts of things for her, such as make beds, sweep rooms without damaging nicknacks, go shopping, lay the table and wait at it, etc. In return she taught him French, whilst he tried to perfect her knowledge of German.

Her severe rule was gradually extended over us also. When we were late for lunch—as we unfortunately often were—she was sure to receive us at the top of the stairs and commence lecturing us as soon as we opened the door below: "Mais Messieurs," she would begin, "le déjeuner était prêt à midi, maintenant nous avons une heure passée. Alors, il n'y a plus de déjeuner!" Nevertheless there was always something for lunch, but we knew she would dispatch Fritz next day to the office at 11 o'clock to ask whether "the gentlemen meant to be late again to-day?" Even in other respects she tyrannised over us. One day when Krause had vigorously blown up his servant—not without good cause—she came, after it was over, into our room and reproved my friend: "Mais Monsieur le major, vous êtes le vrai Diable."

This was really very hard on my dear comrade who now, alas, is dead, like so many others of my companions-in-arms. Major von Krause had formerly served on the

Hanoverian Staff. He had fully appreciated that the changes which followed the events of 1866 were necessary for the development of Germany, and had accepted the new order of things with equanimity. In his new sphere his noble and steadfast character, his extensive knowledge, his common-sense, the thoroughness of his work, his honest devotion to duty, together with his friendly nature in spite of a certain amount of reserve, gained him the affection and esteem of all. To me he was a considerate friend with whom I shared all the troubles and joys of that great time. All honour to his memory!

Leaving now the members of our small household and passing on to the description of our daily life, I quote the following remarks from notes which I jotted down in December, 1870, and sent home as a Christmas present.

“Every morning about 7 o'clock I emerge from my bedroom and enter the dining-room, completely dressed and booted except that I wear an ordinary great-coat for the sake of comfort. Then I draw up an arm-chair towards the fire, which never burns well in spite of our perpetual grumbling. Close by stands the large round dining-table with the breakfast things, which are never complete, as there is always a knife or the sugar or something wanting. Then I knock at the door which leads into Krause's bedroom and call out that all is ready. ‘*Toute de suite, mon Colonel,*’ he says with great regularity, and presently friend Krause appears fully equipped for going out, even his frock-coat buttoned up.¹ After shaking hands we both say, ‘I hope you slept well.’ He replies, ‘Very well, except for the fire from Bullerian (Mont Valérien), which disturbed me all night.’ I, on the other hand, assert I had slept very badly because I had such a lot to think about, which impression must be due to hallucination, for I certainly heard nothing of the firing.

¹ The words of the text are literally “the collar hooked,” which probably means the flaps of the frock-coat were hooked at the collar but not buttoned up.—ED.

Then we sit down to breakfast ; Krause, taking the head of the table, sees to everything and pours out the coffee ; all I have to do is to prepare my own bread-and-butter. But this is hard work, because the bread and still more the hard butter keep crumbling to pieces. Having tried for some time, I generally give it up with a groan and plunge the bread into the coffee without the butter. Then we light a cigar and presently a dispute arises as to whether I have already had my second cup or not. A little later Fritz opens the door leading to the passage, my toilet is hurriedly finished, swords buckled on, and we go off to the office, which is not far away. Our conversation on the way is almost the same every day ; whether we shall find news come in during the night from such and such a corps ? Do you hear the booming from the forts ? What a fog ; impossible to see fifty yards before you ! etc.

“ Our offices are located in the house in which General von Moltke resides ; they look out into a court with a small garden facing a side street. Two strides and we are up the stone steps leading up to the hall door, but come down again somewhat less hurriedly : we are the first and the door is still locked ! The keys have to be fetched from the orderlies' room on the front side of the building. This process we repeat regularly every day, but we learn nothing from experience. Then we separate ; Krause works in a smaller room in the wing of the building ; those of us who are chiefs of sections occupy with Blume two larger rooms in the main building. These rooms when we came were very well furnished with arm-chairs, large curtains, étagères and a small piano. But now everything that is superfluous has been removed, and instead we have requisitioned in the town small writing desks of deal provided with drawers that can be locked up. Only the mirrors with their rococco frames are left on the walls, and these have been ornamented with all kinds of maps—of France, the environs of Paris, of our telegraph

lines, railways, etc. Soon a good fire blazes in the chimney, fed from a huge pile of firewood near it. Now and then one of us stumbles over a log which has rolled down from the heap into the middle of the room; it is picked up with a growl and hurled into the fire, which is also the receptacle for all the envelopes and letters of no importance.

“The other members of the Staff meanwhile appear, and soon everyone is engrossed with his business. Our work consists in drawing up orders, etc., in consultations amongst ourselves or with other officers sent here from other staffs; we receive reports and consult with the generals about them. Frequently one or the other is sent off on some special missions for which he has to receive his instructions.

“If nothing extraordinary occurs, the officers who are not engaged on urgent business go off to lunch about 12.30. Krause fetches me at a time previously agreed upon, and we both walk back together to our rooms. But here we are rarely alone. Versailles is continually full of officers of the investing army whose quarters are outside the town and who come here on duty or who have received a few hours' leave. Officers belonging to the various field armies frequently pass through, and finally there are numbers of people who come to headquarters on all sorts of business, especially those who bring presents from home.¹ Among all these a considerable number are known to us, and everyone is anxious to see us and have a talk. We, of course, are no less anxious to see them, partly because it is a pleasure to learn how old friends have fared in the field or what they are doing at home, and also because in this way we often acquire knowledge of facts which bear on the military situation in some

¹ *Liebessgabe*, literally “love-gifts,” cannot be directly translated. It is used to express the presents which are sent to those on active service by those at home, not necessarily from friends or relations.—ED.

particular place which is important to us. We therefore receive a good many visits at the office. But the office is not the place for lengthy conversations, and all our time there must be given to serious work; so there is no other way but to ask our visitors to come and share our frugal luncheon with us, at the usual time. Our household expenses become rather heavy in consequence, especially as the price of food has risen considerably at Versailles since our occupation. Fortunately, however, we have received a corresponding extra grant to our pay, which has been given equally to all grades of officers. To be sure the junior officers ought really to get a larger allowance than their seniors, because it may be assumed that they generally have to satisfy larger appetites! But among the latter there are not a few who in the field perform astonishing feats in the way of eating!

“If by chance we are alone at lunch, I have just time to smoke half a cigar in peace, and then my friend Krause obliges me with a favourite air or two from an opera which he whistles with exquisite skill. In spite of my poor talent for music I think I have now advanced sufficiently to hum after him ‘Einst spielt ich mit Scepter und Stern’ or ‘The Last Rose of Summer,’ at least so that anyone might guess which tune I was endeavouring to render.

“But this amusement does not last long. Sometimes it is brought to a sudden end by the appearance of an orderly recalling us to urgent business which demands our immediate presence at the office. But in any case, in the afternoon we are all regularly at work again, and it is only exceptionally that an hour remains free for a walk about the town or a visit to the picture gallery, or a short excursion into the environs.

“Our work is generally over by 5 or 6 o’clock, unless some fresh report again demands attention. We then gradually gather round the fire in the larger room

and conversation becomes so lively that the last who has remained at his desk with the intention, perhaps, of writing some private letter, throws his pen down and joins the rest. At last, at 6.30, one of the aides-de-camp appears and calls out : ' His Excellency is preparing to go ; time for dinner ! ' All jump up, swords are buckled, great-coats put on, and when the General has come downstairs, off we all go to the Hôtel des Réservoirs, which is close by.

" This hotel was formerly the residence of Madame de Pompadour, whose bust is to be seen in the entrance hall ; it is finished in a grand style and very suitable for its present purpose. We walk through a glass door first into an ante-room, then through a small dining-room into the great dining-hall.

" The latter is very spacious and has an elegant appearance with its marble columns and glass roof. Lengthwise, in the centre of the hall, is the immense table which serves for the mess of the second division of the Royal Headquarters Staff and that of the Third Army. Along the walls on both sides there are a number of smaller messes for the officers of the garrison of Versailles and gentlemen who stay here only for a short time.

" At right angles to the rear-wall and immediately underneath the colossal mirror is the table reserved for us ; all the seats in the hall are always occupied. The medley of uniforms presents a wonderful variety of colours, as not only the military representatives of every state on the globe are seen here, but also state officials, diplomatists, Knights of St. John and of Malta, everyone wearing some particular costume to indicate his official capacity ; it is only rarely that the civilian dress of some battle painter or war correspondent is seen.

" As soon as Moltke enters at our head, walking rapidly to our table in the rear of the hall, the hum of conversation stops, every one rising to salute him respectfully ; even the numerous dogs belonging to officers stay their

noisy game of chasing one another, astonished by the sudden silence, and eye us attentively.

Often at the table in the middle of the room some of the Royal personages are seen, who as a rule dine either with His Majesty or at their own quarters. Among these are the Crown Prince of Wurtemberg, the Hereditary Grand Dukes of Mecklenburg-Schwerin and Saxe-Weimar, the Duke of Cobourg, the Duke Eugen of Wurtemberg, the Prince of Lippe-Detmold, the Hereditary Prince of Hohenzollern, the Duke of Augustenburg and others. The Crown Prince also takes his dinner here sometimes.

“At our table, dinner passes off amidst pleasant conversation which is rarely of a military nature, unless an orderly from our office suddenly makes his appearance with a dispatch that has just come in, an incident that, indeed, occurs pretty often. Then there is always a certain hush in the hall, everybody watches the generals and whichever of us opens the dispatch and reads it out to them in an undertone; everyone wishes to discover from our faces what impression the telegram is producing. But not much is to be gained in this way, they never alter, whatever may be the news. The immediate dispatch of an answer is the most exciting thing that ever happens, or an order to forward the message to other quarters, which is done without any fuss.

“The dinner with the subsequent cup of coffee and cigar take about an hour and a half, during which we now and then greet an acquaintance who may be seen in the room; but as soon as our chief withdraws, we as a rule follow him and return all together to our office.

“Usually some fresh work has come in meanwhile, but that can be generally so arranged that Moltke is sure of his three partners for a game at whist, which is played in his beautifully furnished study in the first story. When, as it sometimes happens, one of the players is called away

for the dispatch of fresh business, there is always a reserve man to be found to take his place.

“ It depends on the amount and the importance of work in hand how long we stay at the office. Sometimes I am back home by 11 o'clock, at others much later. One of the staff remains at the office all night in a room set apart for this purpose; his business it is to open everything that comes in, and, according to the urgency of the case, either to put it by till the morning, or see that it is dealt with at once.

“ The domestic harmony between Krause and myself goes so far that we always leave the office together; whenever one of us is kept the other waits, occupying himself meanwhile as well as he may, till we can go home together. We are so much accustomed to this that each of us knows exactly which of the house and corridor doors it is his business to open and hold till the other has passed to prevent it breaking his nose, and whose special duty it is to lock each door.

“ Fritz has to wait up for us in our sitting-room, chiefly in order to receive his orders for next day. When he hears our swords rattling on the stairs, he opens the door, holding a light, that is, when he has not fallen asleep too soundly in the arm-chair, which happens now and again.

“ With a final shake of hands Krause and I wish each other good-night, and then we go to bed with the agreeable certainty that in any case we have approached one day nearer to the end of the war.”

Such was the routine of our every-day life with but few exceptions during the five months we stayed in Versailles — on the whole quite a domestic idyl in the midst of the war!

2. FROM THE FALL OF METZ TO THE BOMBARDMENT
OF PARIS—NEGOTIATIONS FOR AN ARMISTICE—THE
BATTLE OF VILLIERS-CHAMPIGNY—CHRISTMAS.

THE next following period from the beginning of the investment till the arrival of the First and Second Army, which became free after the fall of Metz, was a very difficult one, owing to the limited forces which were available before Paris.

The number of the enemy's forces increased everywhere in an extraordinary manner owing to the energetic and wide-reaching activity which the French displayed, especially after the appearance of Gambetta at Tours, and which compelled us to weaken still further the comparatively scanty forces round Paris by sending off considerable detachments to resist them.

On the Loire the troops placed at the disposal of General von der Tann (I. Bavarian Corps and the 22nd Infantry division with three cavalry divisions) were by the beginning of November no longer sufficient to make head against the French, who had here assumed the offensive with greatly superior numbers. He in vain faced the enemy on the 10th November at Coulmiers; he was obliged to retreat, and Orleans fell again into the hands of the French. The necessary reinforcements for the troops covering the siege in this direction were furnished by sending off the 17th Infantry division from Paris, and the further advance of the French from the direction of Orleans came to a standstill. They also pushed forward from the south-west, and some of their troops even appeared before Houdan on the 14th November, only two days' march from Paris; but they were at once driven away again.

There was for a time great uncertainty in regard to the intentions of the Army of the Loire. The forces facing it hitherto—now united into an independent body under the command of His Royal Highness the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin—were not numerous enough to act on the offensive, and the cavalry were unable to penetrate behind the screen formed by the advanced detachments of the enemy and numerous bodies of *Francs-tireurs*, and were consequently unable to furnish proper intelligence. This led to various marches and counter-marches of the corps in its arduous endeavour to stop, now here, now there, the threatening movements of the enemy, but it was, nevertheless, unable, owing to its weakness in numbers, to completely block at the same time the roads in the direction of Orleans as well as those to Tours and towards the west.

It was therefore with some eagerness that the arrival of the German troops from Metz was awaited, where the army of Marshal Bazaine had been compelled to capitulate on the night of the 27th October. These reinforcements, however, could only arrive gradually, and at first not even in their entirety, as the VII. Corps and several other detachments were required for the safe transport of the prisoners. But the bulk of the two armies began to move immediately; the First Army, now under the command of General Freiherr von Manteuffel, received as its general direction the line Metz-Rouen passing to the north of Paris. As the enemy had not appeared yet in any considerable force in this part of the country, several divisions of this army were used first against the fortresses of the north.

The Second Army, consisting now only of the III., IX. and X. Army Corps and the I. Cavalry division, very soon found it necessary to accelerate their movements, in view of the daily increasing danger threatening the besiegers, and finally hurried on by forced marches. As they neared the

road from Orleans to Paris, Prince Frederick Charles saw clearly that he had the main forces of the enemy in front of him. The corps of the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg, which had been engaged on the 17th and 18th November at Dreux and Châteauneuf, was now placed under the command of the Prince. On the 28th November the advance on the enemy began; it was directed against the left wing of the Second Army, and was repulsed by the X. Army Corps at Beaune la Rolande. Next, on the 2nd December the corps of the Grand Duke fought victoriously with the forces before them at Loigny-Poupry. Having effected a junction with the Grand Duke, Prince Frederick Charles advanced with the whole of his troops against Orleans, which after the victorious battles of the 3rd and 4th December fell into our hands a second time.

Meanwhile General von Manteuffel reached the region north of Paris with the I. and VIII. Corps, routed the opposing forces near Amiens on the 27th November, and took possession of the citadel of that town on the 29th; on the 5th December he reached Rouen.

In the first days of December all the difficulties which had accumulated during November, and which had made the investment of Paris so arduous, were thus removed, and the blockade was certain to come to a successful issue. In the city the attempt of the Commune on the 31st October to seize the reins of power had been unsuccessful. The active defence had been very feeble till the very end of November; a great sortie which was to have taken place on the 19th of that month did not come off. It was only during the last advance of the Army of the Loire that preparations became evident which seemed to aim at breaking through the blockade. Demonstrations took place at various places from the 26th November onwards, and during the night of the 27th an exceptionally heavy artillery fire was opened on our outposts and cantonments. At last a sortie *en masse*

took place against the position of the Wurtembergers on the East of Paris which led to the battle of Villiers-Champigny on the 30th November and the 2nd December, in which the former and Saxons took part as well as the II. Army Corps and part of the VI. Corps, and which ended with the retreat of the French behind their works on the 3rd December.

The first of the next following extracts from my letters of this period deals chiefly with the negotiations for an armistice which, as I have mentioned, were begun on the arrival of M. Thiers in Versailles. The basis of these negotiations proposed on the part of the French was to be an armistice lasting four weeks, Paris being revictualled meanwhile, demands which our position did not warrant being granted.

“ Versailles, 3rd November.

“ The proposals of M. Thiers for an armistice are now known. What shall I say of them? We are to abstain from requisitioning and permit Paris to be provisioned! The number of inhabitants together with the masses that have crowded into the place from the outside are stated by the French to be from 2,700,000 to 2,800,000 souls; at the same time affairs in Paris have assumed a critical aspect. The former government is said to have been forcibly overturned, and ominous signs are reported on all sides from the outposts or through prisoners and are evident from the Paris newspapers. It is rumoured that the new government is far from being generally accepted in the town as yet. As soon as that is the case we must expect a great sortie, as those now in power press for it.

“ One of our divisions has already arrived from Metz.”

“ Versailles, 3rd November, evening.

“ Negotiations with M. Thiers continue, but are not likely to lead to anything. To judge from all the rumours

and signs, it seems as if they were already beginning to come to loggerheads in Paris. These rumours have become so rife that Thiers has been induced to interrupt negotiations and send one of his companions into Paris in order to inquire whether the government which had given him the mission still existed. Thiers himself must therefore think its fall possible. And we are to conclude an armistice with a government like this, which offers us no certain guarantees !”

“ Versailles, 4th November.

“ My dear old friend, Max von Versen, on the Staff of Prince Albert, has just arrived, although the wound which he received at Sedan is not healed yet, and he walks lame, but he was eager not to lose anything.

“ Mont Valérien blazes away at nights in a tiresome manner, and is at its music at the present moment.”

“ Versailles, 5th November.

“ The negotiations for an armistice still continue, without any hope of one. Thiers drives into Paris and back.

“ We are by no means ready yet for the attack on the forts. On Saturday we caught two balloons, the one with three, the other with two passengers. The latter appear, however, this time to be only private persons who wanted to leave Paris on business, and who paid the aeronaut 3000 francs for the trip. They will now have the pleasure of going to one of our fortresses instead.”

“ Versailles, 7th November.

“ Thiers takes his departure to-day, and there is consequently no longer any question of an armistice. More fighting and bloodshed is to come, without any prospect of its affecting the issue. The creation of new corps, the calling in of all the troops from the dépôts, the device of recalling to the colours all the men who have completed their service, as well as raising fresh levies, have brought under arms a

large number of men, so that the French Army of the Loire is likely soon to be upwards of 80,000 strong. There may be fresh fighting to be done against the latter presently, as it appears that those divisions which are already formed have crossed the Loire at Tours and will advance against us from the west, along the right bank of the river."

"Versailles, 8th November.

"The French have been fairly quiet during the last few days ; perhaps they are preparing for something big."

"Versailles, 8th November, evening.

"To-morrow, Bronsart, Holleben and I intend to pay a visit to the Crown Prince of Saxony. We have already sent Bronsart's carriage horses forward as relays. I hope that nothing will happen meanwhile to prevent our going, although it is not impossible, as an advance of the French Loire Army and probably also a sortie from Paris are to be expected shortly. Concerning the Army of the Loire, four long days' work has yet to be got through before we are quite ready to cope with the conditions which may result from its advance.

"To-day I was agreeably surprised by a visit from the Russian General Annenkov, whose acquaintance I made many years ago at Warsaw."

"Versailles, 9th November.

"The long intended drive to the headquarters of the Meuse Army has at last come off. At Satrouville, where we found the carriage horses which had been sent in advance, I met Richard von Arnim, formerly of the 1st Regiment of Guards, now in command of a battalion of Guard-Landwehr.

"Both going and coming back we had a good warming in his quarters, as driving in an open carriage makes one aware that it has already become very cold.

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“As we had anticipated, General von der Tann was engaged with the Army of the Loire yesterday and has been compelled to retreat before superior numbers and evacuate Orleans. We now hope that he will succeed in forming a junction to-morrow or the day after with the supports which are already on the way, and that the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg, who has taken the command of the force, will be strong enough to drive the enemy back again. Communication seems to be kept up between Paris and the Army of the Loire, probably by means of carrier-pigeons, so that as things stand a sortie from Paris with all available force may be expected. Severe and bloody fighting is likely to result in that case; as to the upshot of it all, we shall be wiser to-day week, but in any case we look forward with perfect confidence to whatever may happen. Unfortunately, as far as we ourselves are concerned, there will not be much for us to do, as only parts of the Third Army will be engaged in the fighting that may ensue, and everything is therefore in the hands of the headquarters of that army.”

“Versailles, 10th November.

“It has been snowing here for the first time and the whole day, an unheard-of occurrence in France at this time of year.

“I have received a letter from Lattre at Florence (our military plenipotentiary in Italy). The poor fellow is mad with vexation at being obliged to stick to his post during the war, and has kept on writing letters ever since it began, begging to be recalled. All my endeavours have hitherto been in vain, but yesterday I was able to gratify him by telegraphing to him the King’s command to come here immediately. He has been attached to General von Obernitz, commanding the Wurtemberg Division.

“There will be no little astonishment at Berlin about the evacuation of Orleans and von der Tann’s engagement ;

that I can easily imagine. We are not in the habit in such cases of telegraphing; our plan is working out *à merveille!* We prefer to let facts speak for themselves a few days later. If only the Army of the Loire would come a little nearer still, and I hope it will, for it must try to join hands with Paris. We shall then have stirring times, which we all look forward to with pleasure after so much tiresome waiting."

"Versailles, 11th November, evening.

"I called upon Versen to-day, as the Crown Prince would not let him go after the report of the court physician on the state of his wound. Versen has therefore been ordered to remain here about another week, to get quite well before he returns to his division."

"Versailles, 12th November.

"The French seem willing to give us time to complete all our preparations for dealing with the Army of the Loire. To-day nothing has happened either with Tann or here before Paris."

"Versailles, 14th November.

"We can make nothing of the operations of the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg, it being not easy at this distance to judge of what is going on on the spot. One of us will probably have to go there. It is Bronsart's turn, and as he has now recovered from a slight indisposition, it is likely to be he.

"In one of the last Parisian papers there is an amusing story. A strange noise is heard in a house in an out-of-the-way street. Gardes Mobiles enter the house, and find a workshop in which Prussian helmets, articles of uniform, etc., are manufactured. It appears that a new branch of industry has grown up there, the manufacturers shoot at, and otherwise mutilate their wares, and then sell them to the Gardes Mobiles returning from

the outpost to be shown by them as trophies. Imaginary letters also are manufactured, such as this: 'Dear Carl! Come back as soon as you can. We have here a French prisoner of war whom I like very much, as he looks so much like you. Only he has finer eyes than yours. He is now standing behind me and playing with my curls, etc., etc. Your loving *fiancée*, Elise Krauthuber.'

"Versailles, 15th November, morning.

"Reports say that troops are being massed behind the forts, and that ambulances are being brought up there, and we also hear that the enemy is approaching in force from the west, as well as the south. The horizon is clouding in on all sides and critical times are before us; but we feel the greatest confidence that they will turn out favourably for us. Even if the investment should be broken through in some one place, which I do not think probable, it would not matter. We could leave a passage open in one direction for the Parisians for several days without their being able to provision the town for even half a day longer. Meanwhile, the leading columns of the army of Prince Frederick Charles, after some forced marches, are nearing us as desired. The II. Corps is already before Paris, another only two days' march off."

"Versailles, 16th November, morning.

"The situation is unchanged. The people of Versailles are quite confident that we shall be driven out of their town within the next few days, but they will not get their wish."

"Versailles, 17th November.

"The Berlin newspapers fix the bombardment of Paris for the 25th. We shall certainly begin as soon as we are in a position to do so, which is not the case for the present, nor shall we be in all probability on the 25th either. If only people would not get nervous! A prolonged

war is indeed very capable of producing such a state, but, thank Heaven, there are no traces of it among our staff! As long as Napoleon was at the head of the government, a brief campaign might be expected, but since this is no longer the case, and the French carry on the war *à outrance*, the end of the war cannot be foreseen with any certainty. We shall have to wait till Paris has fallen before we can think of returning home."

"Versailles, 18th November.

"I perceive that the excitement about the battle of Coulmiers and the retreat of von der Tann has not yet subsided at home. I will venture to prophesy, however, that on the 22nd or 23rd of November Prince Frederick Charles will again be in possession of Orleans. The preliminary operations against the Army of the Loire began yesterday. Treskow, of our staff, has taken the command of a division, and yesterday ousted about 7000 Gardes Mobiles from Dreux after some little fighting; for at that point Messieurs les Français had come a little too near us.

"Public opinion in Paris is a curious thing. In some of the last papers it was openly said that further defence was madness and the government of Tours ought to be deposed. But now, upon the news of the fighting near Coulmiers, this opinion has, of course, suddenly changed to the contrary, and every Parisian is again for continuing the resistance, and brimful of hope.

"Our affairs before Paris are in very good order, and I do not think it likely that any attempt to break through will succeed.

"In the political world they seem to be waking up again."

"Versailles, 20th November.

"You reproach me with never telling you anything. Well, an investment is very slow work, and there is

very little to be said about it. We have nothing to do but just to wait and see what the enemy is pleased to undertake. Such forces as are not required here, are used elsewhere about the country. Of these we shall probably hear something very soon. Near Amiens in the north, near Orleans in the south, then on the road Paris-Chartres-Tours and in the country thereabouts will be the points at which fighting may be expected. But first we must have the means available, which will not take long; it is only a question of a few days. Nor are we as yet in a position to begin the bombardment of Paris."

"Versailles, 21st November.

"Things here go quietly on their usual course. The Grand Duke of Mecklenburg is beginning to make headway, and as soon as Prince Frederick Charles has his last troops together there will be fighting near Orleans which may turn out to be very severe."

"Versailles, 22nd November.

"The Grand Duke is engaged in clearing out of the way whatever is before him. To-morrow he may have severe fighting near Nogent-le-Rotrou if the enemy makes a stand. In that case he is likely to break down all opposition before him. Matters seem to be much more difficult at Orleans; the whole Army of the Loire is probably entrenched there. The capture of Orleans will therefore probably be delayed for a few days, unless the enemy, alarmed by the threatening movement of the Grand Duke, evacuates the town."

"Versailles, 24th November.

"To-day at dinner with the King the talk turned upon the Russian General Annenkov, who is now going back. I observed that he had become a captain later than I, and was now already a general, on which His Majesty replied: 'I suppose you mean to reproach me for not having made you one? You will never even be made a colonel, or I should

not be able to distinguish you from Gottberg !' (Some likeness to the Quartermaster-General of the Third Army, Colonel von Gottberg, had already led to mistakes.)

"To-day is the 24th November, and I have again to put off the date of the recapture of Orleans. We have been mistaken as to the power of resistance of Paris, and just as little did we guess that France would succeed in improvising such large armies as she has done. Therefore our position in regard to the Army of the Loire will have to be thought out very carefully, and even the possibility of a check before Orleans, although that is not probable, will have to be taken into consideration. We are hoping that the enemy will make a stand at Orleans and that a telling blow may be struck at him there. Unfortunately this will cost further sacrifices."

"Versailles, 25th November.

"We hope to hear news this morning of the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg and Manteuffel having gained victories, so that the situation will shortly be quite cleared up. If that be not the case, other measures will have to be taken, but these will not be half-hearted; that I can guarantee."

It lies in the nature of things that such stirring and difficult times cannot pass without friction. Nor did we remain free from it in some respects. Rumours had repeatedly reached home and given rise to various questions. An observation in one of my letters written on the morning of the 26th November has reference to this point:—

"The world need not know the dark side of glorious times. There are too many people who love to gloat over, and who seek to diminish our pride in the great things which have been done, and detract from their well-merited acknowledgment."

I need not enlarge on the fact that I hold as firmly now to this sentence which I then wrote down, and that I adhere to this principle throughout my "Recollections."

“Versailles, 26th November, evening.

“Stosch has been nominated temporary chief of the Staff, with the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg's Corps, and will start from here at 2 o'clock. This corps has been placed under the chief command of Prince Frederick Charles. As soon as the junction of the two forces is effected everything will be in good trim, but that is not yet the case, unfortunately, as the enemy is still between them.

“We again receive reports pointing to an approaching sortie northwards, against the army of the Crown Prince of Saxony.”

“Versailles, 27th November, evening.

“The results of to-day's movements are not yet known, but we are convinced that everything will have been done as we wished.

“Stosch has already arrived at the Grand Duke's headquarters.”

“Versailles, 30th November.

“Since the evening of the day before yesterday firing has been going on unceasingly from all the forts. At the present moment all the window panes are rattling. Yesterday the French attacked, in comparatively small bodies, here and there, but suffered no small loss. To-day the fighting seems to be assuming larger proportions, at least the report of field guns is distinctly heard, as well as infantry fire, from various directions. They probably assume in Paris that the Army of the Loire is approaching. It is questionable whether the latter will get any nearer since its right wing attacked on the 28th November, and was repulsed by the X. Corps. The losses of the enemy on that occasion are said to have been upwards of 7000 men. Also the engagement at Amiens has borne good fruit for us, and concerning the Army of the Loire, we are at last in a position to assume the offensive in

earnest. The movements are, unfortunately, very much hampered by the state of the roads and the country; it is scarcely possible to get along anywhere but on the roads."

"Versailles, 30th November.

"De Claer is sitting opposite me in the office and has just calculated that each shot from Mont Valérien costs the French between 92 and 94 thalers. He is disgusted with this waste!

"All our junior officers have already left for the various posts of observation. It is possible that the fighting going on at this moment is a serious attempt to break through; on the other hand, it may only be intended to prevent us from sending off more troops to the Loire. If that be the case the French will not gain much, as we shall do it all the same if it become necessary. For the present there is no need. It is also possible that Trochu wants to make the Parisians believe that he does his best in order to be able to tell them if he does not succeed: 'Now you see, there is no longer any chance for us.'"

"Versailles, 2nd December.

"According to all the reports which came in during the evening of the 30th November, the French have not succeeded with their sortie *en masse* in breaking through our lines. To my astonishment, I received at the office a despatch, late in the evening, with the news that our II. Corps, acting as reserve to the Third Army, and which had been brought on to the field of battle as a reinforcement, had at the end of the engagement returned to its quarters, which are nearly 10 miles to the rear. What could have induced the brave General von Frensecky to do so, I cannot imagine; but in any case it was evident that the French might very likely continue the fight next morning, in which case the Army Corps would be absent

from our line of battle. I at once therefore framed a telegram to the II. Army Corps, in which an immediate return was ordered, and went with the despatch to General von Moltke. The Chief consented to the telegram being sent, and asked me on my suggesting to him the necessity for one of us to go there, whether I could be spared. As this was the case, he requested me to go at once to the scene of to-day's battle and to let him have, as soon as possible, further news from the right bank of the Seine. Le Piple-Château, where the staff of the Wurtembergers lay, was fixed as the point where any instructions from headquarters would find me. I at once ordered the 'war chariot' to be got ready, and requested some of my officers to accompany me. Meanwhile, I went to the Crown Prince, of whose army the II. Corps formed part, in order to confer with him. The conference took place by the bedside of General von Blumenthal, who had already retired for the night.

"We took our way along the advanced line of outposts. The firing from the forts was still going on, but only in a desultory manner. Now and then a shell bursting some distance off lit up the country. In Villeneuve-le-Roi, the headquarters of the VI. Army Corps, I called on General von Tümpling and his Chief-of-the-Staff, Colonel von Salviati, in order to ask him for a brigade which was to cross the Seine and fill for the present the place which was now left empty. An order to that effect had, however, already been given by the corps commander, and I found on crossing the Seine the brigade marching to the front. Its commander was General von Malochowski, my former much-liked instructor when I was a cadet at Potsdam.

"In Villeneuve I asked for fresh horses from the VI. Corps, as mine were already tired out. The short interval was utilized to confer with the commanding general and his chief-of-the-staff; we naturally did not stay a moment longer than was necessary to get the carriage ready. Accompanying in the dark the infantry

of the VI. Corps marching across the Seine, we arrived towards the morning at Le Piple-Château, where I met General von Obernitz, whom I had known from my youth, and Major von Lattre, who had just arrived from Florence.

“We could easily survey from here the battle-field on which the Wurttembergers had yesterday fought so bravely and with such success. Between 8 and 9 o'clock the sound of tramping horses announced from a considerable distance the approach of mounted men. It was General von Fransecky with his staff, who had received the order to return with his corps at the moment when, after arriving at his quarters at Lonjumeau, he was going to dismount. All the troops of the corps had likewise faced about in consequence of the order, but their arrival in the old position was only to be expected by noon after their night march on bad roads and their previous exertions.

“General von Fransecky entered the room and addressed me in these words: ‘The Crown Prince has sent me a telegram that you would bring me the orders of His Majesty.’¹ My situation was a curious one, for I had no orders from anyone to bring. Without, however, entering into an explanation on the point, I thought it right to lay down in a definite form the views entertained at Headquarters, which were well known to me. I therefore requested Captain Zingler, who accompanied me, to take down carefully in writing every word that I was going to say, and then explained to the General as follows: ‘The enemy is still on the right bank of the Seine and on the left of the Marne, outside his works, and it is in accordance with the intentions of His Majesty for your Excellency, as soon as your corps is assembled, to advance to the attack and drive the enemy back again behind the line of his forts.’ I knew very well that I took on my shoulders a certain responsibility by acting thus; but the heads of sections of the Headquarters

¹ As I could see for myself afterwards, the telegram in question actually ended with these words: “You are requested to return as fast as possible to Le Piple, where you will receive the further orders of His Majesty through Lieutenant-Colonel von Verdy.”

Staff are quite competent to do so, as they are intimately acquainted with all the intentions of the Commander-in-Chief.

“The late arrival of the corps and the shortness of the day-light prevented the immediate execution of the order, a circumstance which, however, only became clear during the day. I had myself received strict orders to return to Versailles as soon as I knew the further plans of the General. I therefore waited for the next day’s orders to be issued and then started on my way back, but left two of the officers attached to me with General von Fransecky to further report as to what might take place there on the following day. At Villeneuve-le-Roi I took my own horses again, but could not accept the invitation to dine with the staff, as there was no time to lose. The commandant of the headquarters, First-Lieutenant von Goldammer, however, pretty soon got something ready for me, and whilst the horses were changed I ate some ragout or fricassee.¹

“It was nearly ten o’clock in the evening when I again arrived at the quarters of General von Moltke, who was already fully informed of the position of affairs, except my last despatch from Le Piple-Château, which only arrived just when I entered his room. The General took me to His Majesty, although it was somewhat late, to make my report; he himself then entered into a minute exposition on the situation.

“On the following day the second battle of Villiers-Champigny was fought under the chief command of the Crown Prince of Saxony, in which the II. and the Royal Saxon Corps, besides portions of the Wurttembergers and of the VI. Corps, had some very severe fighting,

¹ Premier-Lieutenant von Goldammer had organised extremely well everything to do with the out-of-doors work at the headquarters of the IV. Army Corps. For instance, he had formed a “brigade” of old women who had returned to the place to clean the streets and the houses in which the staff duties were carried on. For this they received some small payment besides their food.

after which, however, the enemy on the morning of the 3rd December again retreated as far as the line of the forts.

"A few days later the King suddenly said to me at dinner: 'Well, this is another pretty story which I hear about you! my son has told me all about it!' On my asking what story His Majesty was referring to, he replied: 'The Crown Prince on the morning of the 1st of December was about to start on a reconnaissance when a telegram arrived from the VI. Corps with the information that two carrier pigeons had just been caught. He at once sent orders by telegraph to forward them to Versailles. On his return in the evening he found, however, instead a report from the VI. Corps, that "Lieutenant-Colonel von Verdy has just eaten them up."' "

"So I learned at last what my fricassee in Villeneuve on the evening of the 1st December was made of."

"Versailles, 3rd December.

"Yesterday seems to have been again extremely bloody. Details of the fighting are not yet known. In any case the French have suffered considerably and must be very much disorganised; they cannot stand many more such struggles. The fighting in the south against Orleans is also of great importance. But nothing decisive can occur before Paris negotiates. The Army of the Loire must also be pursued on the other side of that river. I point this out intentionally because else too great a significance might be attached at home to the telegrams announcing our victories."/>

"Versailles, 4th December.

"The latest struggles before Paris have again been of an extraordinarily severe and bloody character. I estimate our losses alone at about 5000 men. Whether the French here have now had enough of it for some time to come, or whether they will try their luck in another direction, remains to be seen.

"These times are very trying: continuous tension in

different directions, continuous excitement together with important work and orders which cannot be too exact. Warfare in these days of telegraphs tries the nerves much more than in former times. Then some detached corps were not heard of perhaps for weeks, and there was at least twenty-four hours' time before sending further instructions. Now we are asked every evening whether there is any news from all the detached bodies and corps distant perhaps 400 or more miles. Whatever comes in from them must be always answered at once, as the operations of even the most distant corps may be influenced the very next day by our directions. Gradually we too begin to get a little nervous. But our good spirits are nevertheless kept up, and many a jest is made in the midst of serious work. A commander of a certain division who, quite rightly, had entrenched his troops in such a manner that not a rat could get out of Paris without being shot at, and who levelled of course all the woods and villas that were in his way, has been nicknamed 'Director of the Society for the Embellishment of the Country.'

"On the same day which you spent with the wife of Major Stockmarr, I had speech of her husband, viz. on my trip to the Wurtembergers. On the following day he was in the midst of very hot fighting, but I don't suppose that anything happened to him, as I should probably have heard of it." (This turned out not to be so; serving as staff officer of the 3rd division, he was wounded by a bursting shell so severely that he had to leave the front.)

"At Amiens, my old pupil Captain Maye, who made such a stir a year ago with his pamphlet,¹ has, I am sorry to say, been killed.

"To-day is Sunday, but so far the holiday has not with us differed from any other day. It begins to get downright cold here; and the cursed open grate system

¹ "A Tactical Retrospect." He was also the author of "The Prussian Infantry in 1869." The two pamphlets made a great sensation when published. Bronsart von Schellendorf replied to them.—ED.

does not suit me at all; there are draughts too everywhere. It is time that I had got my winter things."

"Versailles, 5th December.

"The Orleans bugbear, viz. the Army of the Loire, according to the telegrams of to-night on the progress of Prince Frederick Charles, seems to be collapsing. This was to be expected as soon as we could tackle it properly.

"We shall probably send some one into Paris presently to inform Messieurs les Parisiens of our successes on the Loire, on which occasion, perhaps, the question would not be inappropriate, whether they now had enough of bloodshed.

"As regards the King, he looks better than ever, and is in high spirits."

"Versailles, 5th December, evening.

"Berlin must have rejoiced over the last telegrams, at least they brought good cause for it to do so. The defeat of the Army of the Loire and the recapture of Orleans have been communicated to General Trochu."

After the second battle of Orleans the retreat of the Army of the Loire took place in various directions. The German troops followed across the Loire with several detachments, whilst others proceeded to pursue the retreating corps along the right bank. But the force under the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg on its march down the river encountered immediately fresh resistance; the enemy furthermore showed troops which had not fought at Orleans. The Grand Duke, supported later on by the X. Corps, routed the enemy in the days from the 7th to the 10th of December, in uninterrupted, severe and exhausting engagements, whereupon the latter retreated on Le Mans in a westerly direction. As we were not in a position to pursue them to their last places of refuge, such as Lille, Hâvre and Bourges, general directions were issued from the Royal Headquarters on the 17th December, drawing atten-

tion to the fact that now it was only necessary to cover the investment of Paris. The various armies had at the same time certain districts assigned to them in which the troops were to be granted that rest which had become absolutely requisite. The First Army was to hold Rouen, Amiens and St. Quentin in the north, the force under the Grand Duke was to concentrate in the west round Chartres, the II. Army round Orleans, holding at the same time Blois and Gien.

For the moment the French gave up any further attempts to relieve Paris by means of the Army of the Loire; on the other hand, their Northern Army, which had meanwhile been formed, advanced in the last two weeks of December, but was repulsed by the First Army in the battles on the Hallue on the 23rd and 24th.

Thus everything was progressing favourably towards the end of December, at which time various indications pointed to the intention on the part of the French to engage in operations which transferred the chief theatre of war to the east, where General von Werder was covering the siege of Belfort.

Tolerable quiet prevailed before Paris up to the 20th of December; on the following day, however, another great sortie of the garrison took place against Le Bourget, but it, also, was repulsed successfully; the same thing happened to a sudden dash down the valley of the Marne on the 22nd. But now the French here, too, changed the tactics which they had pursued until then; they fortified strongly not only the advanced post of Mont Avron in the east, arming it with more than 70 heavy guns, but they began also in the north to form saps and construct heavy batteries. It therefore became imperative for us to take other measures. From my notes of that period the following are extracted:—

“Versailles, 8th December,

“Things progress as well as we could wish. The Grand Duke of Mecklenburg is marching on Tours; unfortunately

his forces are very much reduced. He will, however, probably take possession of that town, as the expulsion of the government there may produce some impression in France."

"Versailles, 9th December.

"There was again severe but victorious fighting on the Loire near Beaugency along the road Orleans-Tours. So far all is well, but we must expel the government from Tours. It is true the troops of the Grand Duke will soon come to the end of their strength after the enormous exertions of the last few days and must be reinforced. The French government is making desperate efforts to maintain itself at Tours."¹

"Versailles, 11th December.

"The Grand Duke has had another engagement. The enemy attacked, but was repulsed. But the troops have thereby again been deprived of the necessary rest. Moltke, on reading the despatch referring to it, said: 'Victory after victory; our brave troops have only to be led to the right spot and then you can sleep in peace! You can't help taking off your hat even to the very drivers of the transport!' Probably to-day or to-morrow the requisite supports will be on the spot, and then we shall be able to settle accounts with the enemy's forces there. I hope this will happen soon enough to get troops available in good time against those bodies of the Army of the Loire which have withdrawn from Orleans in other directions."

"Versailles, 12th December,

"The roads to-day are so slippery with the frost that it is difficult to walk at all. This makes all operations very difficult."

¹ The section of the French Government located at Tours was actually removed to Bordeaux. The occupation of Tours was, however, given up in order not to extend too far.

“Versailles, 13th December.

“In the north the French are again very busy ; we must be careful in that direction, or some day they might interrupt our communications effectually. That would not much matter in the long run, but it would be highly disagreeable if our connection with home were stopped for a few days.”

In consequence of several remarks in Berlin newspapers about parleying before Paris, I alluded to this point in my next letter :—

“Versailles, 14th December.

“The whole of this nonsense is based on the letter which our General wrote to Trochu informing him of the defeat of the Army of the Loire. This letter was delivered by the usual intermediaries who are established permanently at Sèvres where the Seine runs between the outposts of both sides. A white flag hoisted by us when required on the so-called Crown Prince Redoubt gives the signal, whereupon a boat comes over with an officer from the French side.

“Yesterday at dinner the King asked me soon after he came in: ‘How many guns was it we took at Montmedy? You ought to know that.’ Now we had received a telegram only two hours before which said: ‘Fall of Montmedy cannot yet be accurately timed, as a dense fog prevents observation of the fire.’ His Majesty was holding a telegram in his hand which had just come in; the question made me therefore suspect that Montmedy had actually fallen and that the number of the guns captured was given in it. So I answered with reference to the dense fog mentioned in the first despatch: ‘The fog was so dense I could not count the guns;’ to which His Majesty replied with a smile: ‘But there are people who can see even in a fog. There, read this telegram.’

“Prince Charles too is now as ever always kind to me;

he spoke again about the days of his youth, and said how my grandmother, who was then lady-in-waiting to Princess Louisa, had always been kind and affectionate towards him."

"Versailles, 19th December.

"The day before yesterday a deputation arrived here which had been sent from Berlin in regard to the acceptance of the Imperial Crown. I spoke with the Duke of Ujest, Herr von Unruh Rothschild, Romberg and others. My cousin Puttkamer I sent in the 'war chariot' to the water tower of Marly, so that he might see something of Paris at any rate, but I had to borrow another of Brandenstein's horses, as three of my carriage horses were ill. Krause's best horse, for which he paid a hundred Friedrichsd'or, has suddenly died."

"Versailles, 21st December.

"Stosch has returned to-day from the Grand Duke. He has done brilliant service there, and a considerable part of the successes gained is due to him. Moltke welcomed him most heartily: 'We have always felt your strong hand there.' Alfred Waldersee will take his place.

"The forts are firing furiously. Reports come in continually, and it seems as if the enemy were making a demonstration here to-day, in order to carry through something big elsewhere."

"Versailles, 22nd December.

"Yesterday's sortie was repulsed successfully at all points, and what is more, apparently without any great loss on our side. Only we are not quite certain whether the French have not a yet greater sortie in view for to-day or to-morrow; for what they did yesterday was not energetic enough.

"On Christmas Eve we shall set up a tree in our office, to which each of us has contributed ten francs; Burt brought the presents. I managed to find for Krause in a shop a small imitation Cross of the Legion d'Honneur, he

being a most reliable authority on all that concerns the French army, and having given us such ready and excellent information on all the re-organization schemes, we are manufacturing likewise for him a degree signed by Gambetta which sets forth his 'great services to the French army.' This he will receive for a Christmas present from me.

"On Christmas Day I intend to give a grand soirée in my apartments; so many gifts have come for us all, and especially for myself, that the boxes piled up in the ante-room of our office scarcely leave room to pass. Goldammer, who had also heard of my soirée and has arrived here for orders, brought a roebuck, two hares and a saddle of mutton, and besides a whole clothes-basketful of all sorts of eatables.

"Your Christmas box I knew at once, and the first thing I took out, and which gave me great pleasure, was the little Christmas tree which you had prepared for me. Then followed all the other beautiful things, so many of them that I shall be obliged to buy a book and enter them in it. In other boxes, big and small, I found photographs referring to the war, the new Kladderadatsch almanack, another Christmas tree, the stand of which contained two pretty enamelled buttons with the Iron Cross. Cigars, various wines, caviare and preserves have arrived in plenty.

"On Christmas Eve we all assembled in the rooms adjoining the office till Claer and Burt had lit the candles on the Christmas tree. It had been got with some trouble, but it was fine and large, and very neatly decorated. For each of us there were two presents in the basket held by the "Weihnachtskind," both of which were of a comical character. Moltke, who drew the first lot, got the big Christmas rod; he laughed and threw it again into the basket containing the presents and then drew his second lot. We all remained together, under the Christmas tree, with a bowl of punch, singing national

songs, and were as harmlessly merry as men could be under the circumstances."

"Versailles, 26th December, evening.

"The gorgeous entertainment in my rooms last night came off splendidly. The company consisted of about four-and-twenty persons. Besides the members of our staff including Stosch, Keudell, Waldensee and Hahnke were there. Moltke said playfully: 'Why do you not entertain more often?' and later on: 'It does one a world of good, after all, to rest for once from all business.'

"I had better describe our arrangements a little more minutely, or else you might imagine that our doings had been a trifle too extravagant. To begin with, the whole frontage of our house, containing four rooms, with two windows each, besides a larger room looking to the back, had been illuminated. In one of these rooms stood the buffet. Two large candelabra were blazing on it, and in the middle stood a large Christmas cake, sent to Bronsart, Claer, Krause and myself, by Major von Brandt from Berlin; it was crowned by your pretty little Christmas tree. All around, besides large groups of plates, knives and forks, there were caviare, lobsters, sardines, sausages of all kinds and shapes, anchovy, butter, gherkins, gingerbread, roast goose and other cold roast meats. Burt, Keudell and Blume played delightfully; the generals had a game of whist in the back room and were served there; the other hungry beings, who had dined for once at two o'clock, made a rush for the buffet soon after seven, and it had to be renewed several times. There was punch too (extract sent from Berlin), in no small quantity, but not nearly enough, and Krause and I had to bring out for the sacrifice whatever other drinkables we possessed. It was nearly midnight when the last, after having taken a cup of coffee, left us. We all felt as if we had been in another world."

3. FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE BOMBARDMENT TO THE END OF THE WAR.

FRANCE roused herself for a last effort. All the endeavours to relieve Paris had up to now been unsuccessful, and the conviction had at last become strong that the fall of the town must inevitably follow, within a very short time, if something were not done.

General Chanzy was concentrating his troops at Le Mans after their defeat at Beaugency, and General Faidherbe, after the loss of the battle of the Hallue, similarly drew his corps together in the north; both generals had received reinforcements and were preparing to make one more attempt to break the investment of Paris. But the chief hopes were based on operations in a different quarter. These consisted in sending eastward by rail the forces of General Bourbaki, which were being reorganized near the Loire and were to join the French troops already in the East and the Garibaldians; making Besançon their base, they were to drive off General von Werder, relieve Belfort, and, above all, force the German armies to raise the siege of Paris by moving against their lines of communication, or if necessary by an invasion of Southern Germany.

At the German headquarters the plans of reorganization of the French armies near Le Mans and in the North were well known; but up to the end of December it had not been possible to obtain sufficient information as to the whereabouts of the various corps of Bourbaki. Rumours had, indeed, been heard in different forms that the latter were being transported towards the eastern frontier; but

there were, on the other hand, indications which seemed to point to a junction with Chanzy's troops.

In order to make certain on this point, Prince Frederick Charles received orders on the 1st of January, 1871, while holding Orleans, to take the offensive, in a westerly direction, against the opponent nearest him, General Chanzy, whose forces were believed to be again advancing. At the Prince's disposal were placed, besides the corps of the Second Army (III., IX. and X.), the 17th and 22nd divisions, formed temporarily into a corps, the XIII., and placed under the command of the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg, and also four cavalry divisions.

The advance from Vendome to Le Mans, which was captured in the evening of the 12th January, took seven days of severe fighting. Chanzy's army retreated in the greatest disorder, and was pursued for a short distance by some of our columns. Here, as on the Loire, there were only minor engagements until the armistice was concluded. The XIII. Corps was again detached from the Second Army, and arrived on the 25th January at Rouen in order to set free the troops of the First Army quartered there, for operations against Faidherbe's forces.

Meanwhile, events in the North had taken the following course: The extreme left of the First Army had in the beginning of January arrived in the neighbourhood of Havre. But on the right wing, the renewed advance of parts of the French Army of the North had entangled our advanced troops, covering the siege of Peronne, in fights near Bapaume, on the 2nd and 3rd January, in which the latter, however, had held their ground. On the 8th January, General von Goeben took the command of the First Army, *visâ* General von Manteuffel, who was sent to conduct the operations on the eastern frontier. The capitulation of Peronne during the night of the 9th to the 10th materially improved the position of the First Army, the

main body of which now took up a position behind the Somme.

From this position General von Goeben advanced again on the 18th January, as strong bodies of the enemy approached and occupied St. Quentin. This led to the battle near that place against the united forces of Faidherbe on the 19th January, in consequence of which the latter also retreated in disorder. The pursuit here, as at Le Mans, was only continued for a short distance, and General von Goeben led his troops back again behind the Somme.

Before Paris, during this period, the arming of Mont Avron, on the east side, on the part of the garrison, as also their counter-approaches and the construction of heavy batteries in the North towards Le Bourget, caused us to bring a portion of the siege artillery into action against the former position. Fire was opened on the 27th December with more than seventy heavy guns, and brought about the evacuation of the entrenched position on Mont Avron. Subsequently, siege batteries were established to oppose the advance of the enemy on the north side also; on the 5th January, the artillery attack on the south front began, and preparations were made for that against St. Denis, in the North.

The effect of the fire against the forts of the south front was such that the artillery of the works attacked was silenced, and the forts themselves suffered so much damage that we were able to push forward nine batteries and take up the fight against the works of the enceinte; but the latter had no decisive result up to the date of the conclusion of the armistice. Meanwhile the garrison attempted one or two more sorties, as for instance those on the nights of the 13th and the 14th January, but they were repulsed with little trouble.

The 18th January was the memorable day on which, in an impressive but simple manner appropriate to the circumstances, His Majesty King William of Prussia

was proclaimed German Emperor, whereby the union of the German races under a supreme head was finally accomplished.

The following day, the 19th January, saw the last efforts of the Parisian armies. The sortie in strength, directed against the positions of the V. Army Corps, and also against Versailles, was foiled in the battle of Mont Valérien, in which the French suffered great loss.

On the 23rd January negotiations began afresh, which now ended in an armistice for twenty-one days, but which did not include the siege of Belfort and the operations in the departments nearest to that fortress.

The events which took place in this part of the theatre of war, for the moment excluded from the armistice, remain to be summarised here.

After the taking of Strassburg the task of General von Werder became gradually more extensive, as he now had to occupy Upper Alsace, take its fortresses, besiege Belfort and cover the siege. His intention of letting the greater part of his forces advance in the direction of the Loire had soon to be relinquished, because several detachments of the enemy immediately in front of him, and which constantly received reinforcements from the south, occupied him sufficiently. About the middle of December the General had concentrated all his troops available for the field round Dijon, when the enemy, Garibaldians and French troops, began to appear in greater numbers; this led to the engagement of Nuits. From the 21st December onward, rumours and reports began to become frequent, pointing to the approach of large bodies of troops from the interior of France, which induced the General to march to his left, in order to be able to meet an hostile advance on Belfort; but it was only through small engagements on the 5th January that it became clear that the whole army of Bourbaki had joined the enemy already on the spot and was advancing to the attack. The onset of these vastly superior forces was repulsed in the glorious

battle on the Lisaine, on the 15th, 16th and 17th January.

Meanwhile further measures had been already taken, in consequence of which the defeat of this French army was turned into a catastrophe.

On the part of the Headquarters, orders had been issued on the 6th and 7th January, as soon as the whereabouts of Bourbaki's troops was known for certain, for the VII. Corps, which was at this time between General von Werder and the Loire, to concentrate at Châtillon sur Seine, and for the II. Corps, which had just arrived at Montargis, to advance to Nuits. The chief command over the whole of the forces in this part of the theatre of war was entrusted to General von Manteuffel.

This General succeeded by skilful manœuvring during his advance in taking the retreating army of Bourbaki in the flank and rear, and after several severe engagements with heavy losses, in forcing them to cross the Swiss frontier.

The armistice was next extended to this district also, in consequence of which Belfort was handed over to the German troops on the 18th February, the garrison marching out with the honours of war.

The following notes belong to this period:—

“Versailles, 27th December.

“Since 7 o'clock some seventy guns of the siege artillery have been firing on the opposite side of Paris, against the outlying works at Mont Avron, where Colonel Stoffel (formerly military attaché in Berlin) is in command. Unfortunately, the weather is not favourable for an artillery engagement owing to snowstorms, and the effect of the fire is, at such great distances, difficult to observe and rectify.”

“Versailles, 29th December.

“Mont Avron ceased to return our fire yesterday; whether it has been evacuated, was to have been ascertained

during the night, but we have no information on the matter as yet.

“The superior officers entrusted with the attack on Paris, General von Kameke and Prince Kraft zu Hohenlohe, have arrived here; but they have first to study the question thoroughly before they can give an opinion, when the attack on the south front can be begun. It will not be an easy piece of work, and it is still questionable whether we shall be able to send our shot far enough into the town to produce any considerable moral effect. A siege, as I have explained before, is not practicable. An incomplete bombardment—and nothing else will be possible—will only produce an important effect when the distress occasioned by it shakes the patience hitherto displayed, and this moment is perhaps now at hand. People at home are mostly very hasty in their judgments; they have been spoilt by the great successes at the beginning of the war, and they overlook the immense and difficult tasks that have since fallen to our lot, and which, if we finish them in the beginning of next year, will be at least as grand feats, when taken together, as the operations of the first half of the war. Everyone can easily imagine that all this urging from outside, and the observations which we hear of, are not without their influence on the enthusiasm with which the heavy tasks which are yet before us, must after all be carried through.”

“Versailles, 30th December.

“Brandenstein and Bronsart, who have suffered from overwork for some time, are now well again; but there was a period with each in which we feared that they would not be able to hold on any longer.

“The situation is good. Mont Avron is now in our hands. Whether further progress can be made on that side, we shall see by-and-by. Also with regard to the attack on the south front, there are obstacles still to be cleared out of the way before we can go ahead rapidly.”

"Versailles, 30th December.

"When I went home to lunch from the office, I looked forward to a well-heated room; for I had told my servant, as it was so cold, to make a good fire for once; we had lately been actually frozen. This he did indeed, and with what result? The whole fireplace had collapsed; the mantelpiece, with everything that was on it, had fallen down and was lying about in pieces. A pretty business it was; and, of course, there was a general tumult all through the house. There was no other way to get warm than to go for a walk or a run; the first time for ever so long, I went on the ice in the park of the palace, where the Grand Duke of Oldenburg, who remembered me at Warsaw, and the Grand Duke of Weimar took me between them, and in this manner I enjoyed a pretty long constitutional.

"Certainly, if human lives did not come into consideration, we might perhaps have begun the bombardment earlier, but it would have cost us dear, and would probably not have been a success. We need no longer fear any great loss of men; this we shall be spared now, except in case of sorties. Measures have been taken to prevent it, and we have moderated our aims. These we shall attain now, I think, and there will be presently an end of the whole business before Paris. But this could not have been done at an earlier period."

"Versailles, 1st January.

"I dined with Stosch at 7 o'clock yesterday; Prince Pless, the Duke of Ujest, Count Stolberg, Count Maltzahn, Salisch and others were there. After eleven I joined my comrades, who had brewed their punch at the office, and so we passed together the last hour of this eventful year.

"I am just back from the congratulation levée, which was held in very grand style in the Hall of Mirrors of the Palace of Versailles."

"Versailles, 4th January.

"The sky is not propitious to-day. Since daybreak

upwards of 200 guns have been ready for the attack on Paris, and everybody is expecting the first shot. But there has been such a dense fog that it is impossible to see three yards ahead; without seeing where one is firing, it is of course impossible to begin. It is annoying; and no prospect at all of improvement, however often we look at the sky."

"Versailles, 5th January.

"This is a fine winter's day, and the bombardment therefore began this morning at 8.15. But there is still a dense fog hanging about in the valley of the Seine, so that only part of the batteries have been able to come into action. So far three officers have been reported wounded in them.

"A telegram has also just arrived from General von Werder from Upper Alsace, to say that he was attacked to-day. If the rumour that Bourbaki's army has marched thither should be confirmed, there is, certainly, a chance of some considerable trouble in that direction, and alarm may spread, especially in Southern Germany. But even if things should go wrong there for a few days, it is quite certain that the whole affair will be put right again in a very short time.

"Prince Albrecht, senior, has fallen ill, and poor Versen, his staff officer, has got the small-pox, though he had only just arrived."

The fatigues, to which the chivalrous Prince exposed himself during the war, in utter disregard to his own health, may have contributed not a little to his early death. To his honour be it mentioned that although, in his quality of a general of cavalry, he had already held command of a corps in the campaign of 1866, he accepted in 1870 the subordinate position of a divisional commander, in order to be able to devote all his energy to the great cause!

"Versailles, 6th January.

"The state of affairs in Upper Alsace will probably cost some cudgelling of brains, as it is only too likely that

considerable forces are advancing against General von Werder. But that does not matter, however; the business will be arranged all right. There was, yesterday, again so much fog about Paris that our batteries could only open their fire gradually. Nevertheless the result was very satisfactory. To-day the wind veered round and the weather has become warmer and clearer, so that the bombardment will probably be more effective still. When the batteries have got the range of the forts, it will be the turn of the town, as there will then be no necessity to employ all the guns against the advanced works."

"Versailles, 7th January.

"Our friend Stocken is said to have been wounded yesterday in the successful engagement at Vendôme. It is very difficult to arrive at anything definite about the report; but I have asked Prince Pless for information, as he is the first to get news through the 'Knights of St. John,' and as soon as I know where he is, I will report further.¹ There will again be some bloody work all round for the field troops covering the investment of Paris.

"Prince Frederick Charles is on the point of a collision with Chanzy's army, and Werder must, in all probability, be fighting to-day with the forces of Bourbaki. General von Werder has no easy task before him; but even if he should lose a couple of engagements, or be obliged to raise the siege of Belfort, that will not damage us on the whole very much. Considering the great liberty of movement which the large number of railways gives to the enemy, it is impossible to hinder him from appearing in force in some distant part of the theatre of war. We shall not always be able at once to meet him, if he move his troops about from one place to another. Our object must

¹ A telegram from Prince Frederick Charles, concerning the engagement, had reported that Major Stocken was wounded. This was only correct in so far as a shell bursting near him had stunned him for a short time and bruised him slightly.

be in such cases to prevent any further bad consequences. However, if Werder proceeds warily, he may get the better of the enemy single-handed."

"Versailles, 8th January.

"The next week may become the most important of the whole of this period of the war. Prince Frederick Charles has already closed, it appears, with Chanzy's army, which is nearest to us. In the north we shall be able to cope with the renewed attacks of General Faidherbe, and what may happen where General von Werder is, has little influence, just yet, on the main issue.

"The first shell has been thrown into the interior of Paris. We have papers of the 6th January announcing that, on the 1st already, shells fell in the garden of the Luxembourg. But these were only stray shots, probably sent wide on purpose.¹ In our house here in Versailles, a number of artillerymen have been quartered. When they fell in, on the night before the first bombardment, in the courtyard, before marching to their batteries, I overheard one saying: 'Well, the deuce would be in it, if I didn't for once make a mistake and fire into the town!' In the city the people clamour for a sortie *en masse*."

"Versailles, 9th January.

"Concerning Moltke, he lives entirely with his staff, and is as kind as ever to everyone of us. No one has ever heard a single harsh word from him during the whole campaign. With us he is even merry, in his simple, cheerful and modest way. We all feel happy in his company, and absolutely love and worship him. But outside of our small circle, also, there is only one feeling, and that is admiration towards him; everyone says that he is a truly ideal character."

¹ It is true that, on the first day, the town was shelled intentionally, but only from one gun.

“Versailles, 10th January.

“Heavy snowfalls prevent the punctual arrival of trains, which causes considerable inconvenience. Snow and fog prevent likewise the fire against Paris being regularly opened. The ramparts of the enceinte of the town are so powerfully armed and provided with such heavy artillery, that we could only get possession of it by a formal siege, and such a thing is impossible. Everything turns out as we have foreseen: the artillery combat can only be undertaken against the advanced works of the enemy and the forts, and only such guns as are not required for that purpose can be used against the town. But even this, as we cannot get near enough, can only be done at immense distances, and costs us many a piece, owing to the heavy charges that have to be used. On the other side, the Parisians urge on General Trochu a grand sortie to avert the daily approaching danger.”

“Versailles, 12th January.

“Several barracks were on fire in the forts yesterday; we also learn from the recent Paris papers that our fire has already done considerable damage. A few houses have been destroyed, small conflagrations break out almost every day; but still the bombardment has no decisive effect. The majority of the Parisians look upon it only as a spectacle. One of their papers says: ‘The Trocadero is the theatre at which all Paris assembles.’ In consequence of this notice it is likely that they will get a few shells there.

“Our men are by no means inclined to carry the war *à outrance*, on their part; they are too good-humoured for that, as the following incident proves. Close to the line of outposts, they discovered some large wine cellars. The troops which are near began to clear out the contents, but the stores being too large to be emptied completely, what did they do but beckon to the French outposts, who piled arms, came forward, and carried away the rest of

the wine, which our men, moreover, fetched out of the cellars for them. Our troops are not cut out for butchers.

“Yesterday I was invited to dine with the Crown Prince. I had not been able to speak to him at the congratulation levée on New Year’s Eve, although I saw him afterwards as he was driving past the statue of Louis XIV., some way off, when he nodded to me with particular graciousness. Yesterday he said to me, as he congratulated me on my Iron Cross: ‘You may imagine how pleased I was when you got it. I knew it beforehand. I hope you understood my salute from the carriage; I intended it as a congratulation.’” (We three chiefs of the sections of the staff had received the cross of the 1st class before the end of the year.)

“Versailles, 13th January.

“We celebrated the Russian New Year to-day with our friend Kutusov. There were present two Russians, Colonel Walberg and Captain Seddler, a very well-informed and good-hearted officer who is attached to the VI. Corps;¹ and of our people, Claer and myself. We remained until nearly 1 o’clock and spent a very pleasant and harmless evening together.

“The intelligence gathered from the Paris newspapers makes it evident that the opinion in the town concerning the bombardment is already beginning to change. Up to the present they have treated the matter sneeringly, but now, the way in which they express themselves shows that they are angry. The shells already reach the vicinity of the Hôtel de Ville, and as far as the church of St. Sulpice, so that the whole left bank of the Seine is in a state of alarm. Within the next few days fire will be opened on the north also; at first, against the works of the advanced post of St. Denis, and then the right bank of the Seine will also be attacked.”

¹ Afterwards the general commanding in the Baltic Provinces.

“Versailles, 14th January.

“Last night several smaller sorties had to be repulsed, but these will do them no good.

“Much more serious for us of late has been the situation on the south-eastern seat of war, where General von Werder is.”

We certainly had greatest confidence in that experienced General, as well as in his chief-of-the-staff, Lieutenant-Colonel von Leszczyński, with whom we three chiefs of sections had been on terms of friendship ever since we had been cadets together, and whose discernment and extraordinary energy we all knew; but the superiority in numbers of the enemy was so great, that it became a question whether it would not be better to avoid a decisive combat, raise the siege of Belfort and retreat, until the arrival of General von Manteuffel with his corps should make itself felt. Such a retreat, however, which might last some days, would have had a very undesirable moral effect.

Under these circumstances it was determined at Versailles to free General von Werder from the responsibility of entering into a battle which might end in defeat, and for this reason the following telegram was sent to him on the 15th of January in the afternoon:—

“Attack to be met in a strong position covering Belfort, battle to be accepted. The advance of General Manteuffel will be felt within the next few days.

“(Signed) COUNT MOLTKE.”

The order turned out to have been unnecessary. Before it reached the hands of General von Werder, he had determined, of his own accord, to oppose the further advance of the enemy, and he was already in action in accordance with this resolution. The glorious days of the 15th, 16th and 17th, the battle of the Lisaine, crowned with success the enterprise of the brave General.

“Versailles, 17th January.

“At home people seem to have the idea that we at Versailles have really nothing to do but sit still and look

on at the whole business. The deeds of our troops, who certainly cannot be praised enough, their losses and sufferings, are evident to the whole world, but of the immense cares and labours of the leaders and their staff, only few have an inkling. And yet for them also the situation is full of grave difficulties. We are at this moment passing through a critical, as well as an exciting and interesting time. Will Werder be able to hold out until Manteuffel's approach affects the enemy? If Werder does hold out, and Bourbaki does not quickly retreat, what shape will the ruin of the latter take? Of equal importance will also be, within the next few days, the operations in the north between Goeben and Faidherbe.

"Last evening our friend Toeche arrived, the head of the firm of Mittler and Son, on business concerning us both. Holleben has been ordered to join General von Manteuffel; his place is to be taken by Hackewitz.

"The weather has suddenly changed; instead of the severe cold we now have spring. We had to-day two striking proofs of the smartness of our post officials. I learned from a letter from my wife, that I had forgotten in one of mine to her, to put 'Berlin' on it, but it had arrived without any delay. When I told this at the office, Blume said: 'I know of a pendant to that. I have just found a letter on my table, which is fully addressed with the exception of my name.' Late in the day, H.R.H. the Crown Prince Albert came here to be present at tomorrow's ceremony, when the King will be proclaimed Emperor; he passed the rest of the evening with Moltke and us."

The next day—the 18th of January—was to be a turning-point in the history of our nation: it was the day of the proclamation of the Emperor, memorable for all time, never to be forgotten by us who had the good fortune to be present at that solemn moment!

The ceremony took place in the Hall of Mirrors of the stately palace. At the upper end of the hall, in a semi-

circle, taking up the whole width of the hall, were ranged on a slightly raised platform the glorious colours and standards of the regiments before Paris, representing nearly all the German races. There also were the German Reigning Princes serving with the army, and other Royal Princes; on to this platform stepped the venerable figure of the victorious leader of the German army, the noble and God-fearing King of Prussia.

Before him stood, first, his great paladins whom we all look up to with pride and reverence: Bismarck, the strong pilot of the ship of state, Roon, who had sharpened the sword before the combat, Moltke, who had wielded it so mightily; then came the generals with their staffs, the representatives of the troops, the deputations sent from home, and others who were granted admission, in a densely packed crowd. Reflected in the mirrors the throng appeared still vaster than it actually was.

On the side towards the windows, a free passage had been left open, in the middle of which a small space had been arranged for divine service and a field-altar fitted up.

When the sermon was finished, Count Bismarck approached the platform, on which the King had meanwhile taken his position, and read aloud the important document, whereupon the Grand Duke of Baden called for cheers for the first Emperor of the new German Empire.

Then all present went past the Emperor and did homage to him.

The whole scene was simple and dignified, and all the more impressive for that reason. We had taken part in the celebration with feelings of exultation, and deep gratitude to the supreme Ruler of the world, that this long-yearned-for day had at last dawned for the German people.

Previous to the ceremony we had been afraid that the French might disturb it by a fresh sortie, but happily none took place that day. Still, reports had come in of a strong

massing of troops at various places behind the enemy's forts, which looked like preparations for a sortie ; so we hurried back to the office where the reports from the line of investment would arrive first. /

“Versailles, 19th January, evening.

“The new German Empire has to-day received its baptism of fire, as the French made a sortie with the whole of their forces, and actually against that part of our position nearest to Versailles. General Moltke sent for me to the office : I was to accompany him in his carriage. We again went to the water tower of Marly, where the Emperor followed us. The fighting was already going on hotly, the enemy having a particularly large number of guns in action ; also Mont Valérien made itself very conspicuous with its heavy guns. The peculiar noise of the projectiles from its monster gun could be distinctly distinguished, even at a great distance, very different from the others, the bursting of its shells having a peculiarly strident sound.

“In front of us the batteries of the Guard-Landwehr Division were in action, in a good position fronting Mont Valérien. Most of the big guns of the forts were trained upon them, and as the smoke of the batteries made a fairly good mark, the projectiles generally struck pretty near, but our brave gunners paid not the slightest attention to them.

“In the villages and parks before us, there was infantry fighting, but the enemy's attack was directed mainly against the elaborately entrenched position of the V. Corps, to the west of St. Cloud. We could follow as clearly as possible the movements of the enemy, and as we stood at right angles to the attack, we saw them from the flank and rear. Strong French forces made repeated attempts to force their way up the slope in front of them to the park wall. But each time, when they reached the edge of the ascent, they were received with such a murderous fire, that they were thrown back again. There came in our direction, from

time to time, an armoured railway engine having a gun mounted on it, which, after having fired its shot, went regularly back again. Gradually, the attack became feebler, and at last ceased altogether. Various detachments were already seen retreating towards Paris, and we also returned to Versailles, just as darkness was coming on. In Paris fires had meanwhile broken out again in various places.

"To-day, I expect, Goeben will have met Faidherbe and finished him. Werder has maintained himself in his position and Bourbaki has had to go back. If he does not move quickly, Manteuffel will make his retreat impossible for him. I can only repeat my opinion: things are drawing to a close."

"Versailles, 20th January.

"The French have given up the idea of going on with yesterday's attack. Considering the large forces which they brought into action, they might have done better. The sortie, which led to nothing after all, has cost us over twenty officers and a couple of hundred men.

"Our work is assuming such dimensions, that we have had to be the whole day at the office."

"Versailles, 21st January.

"If the fog clears to-day, our siege artillery will attack St. Denis. After this it will not be long before the northern half of Paris, which has not been touched so far, will also become acquainted with our shells."

"Versailles, 22nd January.

"Bourbaki's end is now near. The operations against him have been very skilfully planned, and if the French do not make the most extensive use of their railways, they will get into the worst position possible. After this we are likely to be left alone by the French armies, until the fate of Paris is decided. The conditions for the capitulation and its execution will, however, be a

matter of great difficulty, and the preliminary arrangements in view of this event have taken up our whole energies for a long time."

"Versailles, 23rd January.

"We now learn that the Franks-tireurs have destroyed a pier of one of the bridges across the Moselle and thereby interrupted our direct communication with home. We have wondered for a long time why they have not done more damage to the railways; if they were to begin to play at that game, we might expect every day some blow-up on the lines. However, what would have amounted to a serious interruption formerly, is now only an inconvenience; but in order that we may not be the only sufferers, the General Government of Nancy has been ordered by telegraph to impose a contribution of several millions of francs as a punishment.

"There is a fire in St. Denis, as also in different other places in Paris. The losses suffered by the French on the 19th January were very great, upwards of 5000 men probably. With regard to our own, it has turned out that they amount to about 700 men, among them some 30 officers.

"All the horses in Paris except those used for military purposes, do not seem to have been slaughtered yet; we could plainly see, by means of telescopes, ladies driving in carriages on the Pont de Jéna.

"Bourbaki's position gets more and more desperate; the eleventh hour is striking, and his chance of escape is gone."

"Versailles, 24th January.

"Yesterday, Jules Favre arrived here again from Paris and called on Count Bismarck. As to the negotiations which are to be set on foot, views are sure to differ widely on the French and German sides, and they are likely to be somewhat lengthy. But, even if they should be broken off again to-day, or to-morrow, the French will have to come some time and agree to what we propose."

“Versailles, 26th January.

“Jules Favre, who had meanwhile returned to Paris, has been here again since yesterday. He is terribly eager to come to terms. What he most probably dreads is a revolution, the signs of which are already becoming apparent.”

“Versailles, 27th January.

“Since mid-day the batteries on both sides have been silent, and we are extremely busy with the negotiations for a capitulation. The question is how far the Parisian section of the government represents the country as a whole.”

“Versailles, 29th January.

“We were discussing the whole of yesterday, the capitulation articles of Bismarck’s convention with the committee of French officers. This morning at 11 o’clock the forts are to be surrendered. The French rulers seem to be bent on obtaining peace; when in some points we did not at once give in they are said to have observed: ‘In that case we cannot guarantee that we shall have power enough to be able to carry out what we wish to carry out.’ We are looking forward eagerly to the attitude which the provinces will assume in regard to this agreement. Major Krause only returned last night, after having been sent the day before yesterday to the Crown Prince of Saxony with orders regarding the occupation of the forts on the north and east fronts. He was present at the entry into St. Denis.”

“Versailles, 30th January.

“The Parisians have left yielding to their unavoidable fate to the very latest. As the railways are destroyed, it is questionable whether they will get enough provisions in time. We shall assist them for a few days from our stores. On the whole the desire for peace certainly exists in the country, but it is doubtful whether on some points there will not be opposition, especially in the

south, at Marseilles for instance. The most probable thing is, that they will come to blows among themselves. Nevertheless the present state of affairs will result in a peace, unless, indeed, the government with which we are negotiating gets upset by a riot in Paris, which is not at all impossible. For the present, the district in which Manteuffel and Bourbaki are measuring swords is excluded from the armistice, and that on the demand of the French negotiators !

“ Perhaps they imagine that Bourbaki will succeed in getting the better of our forces there, and that by such a favourable turn of events the further negotiations would be greatly influenced to their advantage. What a terrible mistake to make ! We see clearly the catastrophe that awaits Bourbaki ; therefore we can only be glad to see that part of the seat of war excluded from the armistice. In this manner we shall reap the fruits of our battles and operations there.”

Versailles, 1st February.

“ Yesterday Bronsart, Brandenstein, Krause and myself took a drive of several hours to points which had not been accessible so far, owing to the hostilities. First, we drove beyond the battery of St. Cloud to the French side, to see how it looked from there. It was constructed very cleverly on the slope, scarcely to be seen by the enemy, as long as it was not in action, but as soon as this was the case it offered a very good mark for the enemy’s guns. While engaged by the town in front, Mont Valérien lay in the flank of the battery, which, however, was hidden from the fort by wooded heights ; but the fire from the latter was watched from the ramparts facing the battery, and the result communicated by signals.¹ Next we went to the blown-up bridge of Sèvres, where a lively traffic had now begun between the inhabi-

¹ This battery of St. Cloud has probably had to stand the severest fire of the enemy ; it lost eight men killed and some thirty wounded.

tants and our outposts. A large number of people from Paris have been allowed to pass through the latter; they had come out to see what had become of their property. They cannot have got much pleasure from the inspection, for a large number of houses have had to be levelled in order to make the position of the V. Corps defensible.

Then we proceeded to the batteries of Meudon which are established on the terraces of the castle. In some manner not explained yet, the castle was destroyed by fire a few days ago; the fire breaking out all at once so violently in the rooms underground, that there was no chance of extinguishing it. Yesterday the flames were still flaring up now and then in the interior of the building; there is nothing left but the bare walls, and light clouds of smoke envelope the ruins of the castle in which Prince Napoleon once lived."

"Versailles, 2nd February.

"Yesterday came the news of the crossing of what was the army of Bourbaki into Swiss territory. This has a double importance for us, first, as being the conclusion of one of the most brilliant of military operations, and secondly, as one more guarantee for peace, France being now deprived of its strongest army."

"Versailles, 5th February, evening.

"On the 4th February I made use of my spare time to drive up to Mont Valérien with Brandenstein. The weather was splendid. Many of our detachments were changing quarters, as the houses nearer Paris can now be occupied. The latter, which had been in the zone of fighting until now, had been completely deserted by their inhabitants. This transfer of our troops into the empty houses looked just like a quarter day in one of our large towns; one man carried a lamp, another a chair, a third plates, knives, forks, and a fourth the beds, etc. All the handy utensils for the house are carried

from one village to another, and many an inhabitant will be surprised to find, on his return, a set of furniture in his rooms which he has never seen before.

“ The road up to Mont Valérien is rather steep. In the first line, we passed through Sandrart's ‘ gardens,’ which must be seen to get an idea of them.¹ His engineer officer, Captain Firscher, spent several months on this work ; and it certainly has been planned on a vast scale and in a very practical manner. For thousands of yards the long slopes have been cleared of their trees, in order to obtain a clear field of fire for the different defensive positions lying behind each other. The villas in the way were levelled, many of the finest country houses burnt out ; no staircases, no floors left, only the bare walls, so that the enemy should not find shelter in them. Enormous abattis, barricades and stockades, shelter casemates, trenches with caponnières, newly constructed military roads, etc., follow in endless succession.

“ We drove through the park of St. Cloud on to the battle-field of the 19th January, which was all the more interesting, as we could now survey our positions from the French side, and besides, in the opposite direction, had a fine outlook over Paris. Before us lay Mont Valérien, from the large barracks of which the German colours waved. Everywhere soldiers of the most varied regiments came streaming up the steep cone in regular order in their forage caps, but carrying rifles and cartridges in case of need. They were brought up by their officers by order of Headquarters, in order to have a good look at the disagreeable ‘ Bullerian,’ as they had baptized the fort, the fire of which had disturbed them for so many days and nights. Looked at from the foot of the mountain, the large barracks on the top looked like a gigantic brewery ; thousands of soldiers were standing on

¹ The extensive entrenchments in this district had been erected by order of General von Sandrart, the commander of the 9th Infantry Division.

the ramparts, in order to have a look at Paris, which gave the whole the appearance of a great popular fair.

“The ground on the top was very soft. We wandered about on the works with great interest, as every point offered a new and splendid sight. Spread out peacefully at our feet was the Bois de Boulogne; behind, quiet and noiseless, lay the vast sea of houses with its towers and cupolas; the heights of Romainville closed the horizon. To the west we looked over the wooded hills of Garches and Marly, from the water tower of which latter place we had so often looked across here and seen the top of Mont Valérien wreath itself suddenly in clouds of smoke and send its noisy greeting close to our feet. Farther back lay St. Germain, with the dark shadow of the edge of the park standing out clearly above the steep slope behind the Seine. One could see over the whole valley, and the windings of the river, as far as Gennevilliers, with its many villages, as for example Malmaison, once so lovely, and the long rows of houses of Rueil and Bougival, where so much blood had flown. Special attention was further attracted to that gigantic monster, the great gun, the bursting of the shells of which had startled us so often from our sleep with their noise.

“The Crown Prince too came up later on. I had a talk, besides, with Miss von Kleist, the sister of the Princess Pless, who is here as a sister of mercy. She has been for a long time in danger of her life owing to blood poisoning acquired in tending the wounded; even now she can only use one arm.

“On our way back we went along the Seine and through the portion of St. Cloud which lies on the river, to the bridge of Sèvres, and back to our office.

“The part of St. Cloud which we passed is interesting, because, after the engagement on the 19th January, a party of Frenchmen had established themselves in a few empty houses along the Seine, and their expulsion caused us comparatively heavy losses. Some of the houses in

the place had to be levelled, to avoid any future repetition of this."

"Versailles, 7th February.

"I can only repeat my impression that the desire for peace is general throughout France. Only in the south, which has not yet felt so fully the burden of war, they will not give in so readily. Toulouse, Bordeaux, Marseilles and Lyons are the centres of resistance, and we are waiting to see what shape and dimensions it will take; but we shall know, before many days are over. In any case, we shall have to wait and see how things will develop in the country, and whether the government, which is to be formed after the new French elections, will be strong enough. It may be that things will take shape pretty rapidly; but if not, we shall have to face a totally new situation, for which purpose the troops would have first to be distributed afresh. So nothing can be settled as yet about our return to Berlin."

"Versailles, 8th February.

"A short prolongation of the armistice will probably become necessary. We shall be able perhaps to return home at the end of February, or beginning of March. A commission has been named for the arrangement of details in regard to Paris, consisting, on our side, of Acting Privy Councillor Count Hatzfeld and myself; on the part of the French, of M. de Ring, whom we knew in Berlin, with several assistants."

"Versailles, 9th February.

"Within the next few days a few army corps will march away from here, as the cards must be shuffled afresh, if the French mean to carry on the game. But I do not think this will be the case. The armistice will probably be prolonged by a week or a fortnight, as in the time previously fixed, all the business cannot be concluded."

“Versailles, 11th February.

“The result of the elections, which will be known by to-morrow, will influence our attitude towards the French.”

“Versailles, 13th February.

“Not even when operations were in full swing had I so little time to myself as now. So many details have to be settled that I scarcely know how to attend to them all. From yesterday’s conference with the French alone there are a dozen propositions of theirs, which could not, with the best intentions, be examined into. In order to save me walking home from the office, our chief invited me to breakfast, to which I contributed, however, a fish.”

“Versailles, 14th February.

“The various meetings of the conference to-day kept me busy uninterruptedly from half-past 8 o’clock in the morning until half-past six. Jules Favre is expected here about the prolongation of the armistice; it is said that he requested Count Bismarck to extend it until *the 31st of this month*, whereupon the Chancellor is reported to have answered: ‘Alors l’armistice ne finira jamais,’ this being February and having no 31st in it.”

“Versailles, 15th February.

“Favre did not come yesterday, as he had promised. We should be within our right in breaking off the convention at any moment, as the French are behindhand with the surrender of their arms.”

“Versailles, 16th February.

“Yesterday in the afternoon I went for a short time to the bridge of Neuilly to get a little fresh air. It was highly amusing to see the Parisians buying victuals in the small market on this side of the river. Everywhere were seen most charming genre pictures. Here an elegant lady holding up triumphantly a struggling rabbit; there an old gentleman with a delighted smile, squeezing through the crowd with two fowls under his arm, which

he had succeeded in buying. Access to the bridge was really forbidden, but people were nevertheless let through in batches, to make their purchases, while the band of one of our regiments of Guards played lively music lower down, on the bank of the Seine.

“In the evening I dined with Prince Charles. I was sitting at the end of the table and had two old gentlemen of high rank on either side who were both unfortunately deaf just in that ear which was turned towards me. What misunderstandings this produced! One of them was speaking of the trajectory of projectiles, the other, at the same time, talking about Tancred and Clorinde.”

“Versailles, 17th February.

The armistice has, for the present, been extended to the 24th of February, i.e. only five days, counting from the 19th, but it will probably have to go on still longer. Everybody is now coming to see Versailles; old friends are to be met at every step: Paul Kropff, little Charles Schmeling, Augustus Kühne (Johannes van Dewall), etc., have been here already, Flatow and Stocken I expect one of these days, and a whole host of other acquaintances have announced their coming.”

“Versailles, 19th February.

“At present, peace negotiations and the election of a new government in France are going on side by side. I hardly think it possible that everything will be arranged so easily and quickly. I suppose that on the 24th February the conditions of peace which we have laid down will be agreed to by the French, but only in principle; possibly the preliminaries will be arranged, but the negotiations, as to details, are likely to be continued much longer. We shall, therefore, be able under these circumstances to send home after the 24th, the Landwehr and some portions of the army, but the rest will have to remain for some time longer; but it will be possible to increase their comfort by distributing them over a wider area.

“ It is feared in Paris, and has been for some days, that riots will break out.”

“ Versailles, 20th February.

“ Monsieur Thiers is expected here, and it is also whispered about, that our entry into Paris will soon take place. But no one knows for certain what will be the situation after the 24th, or what may happen later. Prudence therefore requires us to be prepared for all contingencies, and to be in full readiness in case the war should have to be continued. But very few believe this will be the case.”

“ Versailles, 21st February.

“ Messrs. Thiers and Favre are here, and the first conference between them and the Imperial Chancellor will have begun by 12.30. These are momentous hours, as to-day, or within the next few days, a conclusion must be come to. Any prolongation of the armistice is conceivable only under special guarantees and the acceptance of the preliminaries of peace.”

“ Versailles, 23rd February.

“ Metz and the number of milliards seem to be the contested points in the negotiations. How much a milliard is, there have been few until now who had any real idea. From the birth of Christ up to to-day is less than a milliard of minutes.”

“ Versailles, 25th February.

“ Although we have not got all we wanted, we may yet be satisfied with what we have got. However valuable the possession of Belfort would have been, the certainty that we could only have got it at the cost of a continuation of the war, was decisive against persisting in this demand. We, of course, possess sufficient means to carry on the war, but neither its duration nor the greatness of the sacrifices which we should have to make in that case, can be calculated, least of all the course which the internal affairs of France might take, and which would influence most

seriously the conclusion of peace. Now we have at least a government with which we can negotiate, and which hopes to maintain its rule."

"Versailles, 27th February.

"Yesterday the peace preliminaries were signed here ; as to the particulars, it will be superfluous to enter upon them, as the telegraph has probably already given them to you. On Wednesday, the first detachments are to enter Paris. But if the French in Bordeaux are quick with their ratification they will keep us altogether from entering ; most likely, however, they will find it necessary to make such long speeches, that parts of our army will yet have the opportunity of looking at Paris for a few days. I do not think that there is any doubt about the peace preliminaries being ratified at Bordeaux, but how long some of our troops will have to remain in France, is not to be foreseen as yet.

"General von Kameke has been nominated Commandant of Paris, and Alfred Waldersee chief of his staff.

"We are engaged uninterruptedly with the Parisian authorities in arranging details as to our entry, quarters, etc.

"At dinner yesterday, after the peace preliminaries had already been signed, the Emperor embraced our Moltke most heartily."

"Versailles, 1st March.

"The entry into Paris takes place on the 1st, 3rd and 5th of March, unless the gentlemen from Bordeaux arrive here before then, with the ratified treaty. In that case we have agreed to evacuate Paris as soon as they arrive. Not more than 30,000 men will march in at one time ; moreover there will only be a small zone occupied by us, viz. from the Arc de Triomphe as far as the gardens of the Tuilleries, in order to avoid conflicts in the big town. The Emperor will remain at Versailles. In the Bois de Boulogne, at

Longchamps, the entering troops will be inspected by him, and it may be that he will then drive into the town for a few hours."

"Versailles, 2nd March.

"The gentlemen from Bordeaux with the accepted treaty are on the way, and as it may be signed to-day, we shall perhaps have to clear out of Paris to-morrow."

"Versailles, 3rd March.

"We were in Paris yesterday ; it was a very interesting sight ; only very different from what a visit to that metropolis generally means. Soon after 1 o'clock we drove from here, Krause, Holleben and myself, and were back after six. We chose our route, first along the Seine, then across a pontoon bridge at the foot of Mont Valérien, through the Bois de Boulogne to the Arc de Triomphe, then by the Champs Elysées to the Place de la Concorde, where we stopped for some time at various places, as for instance near the street leading to the Madeleine, then again at the corner of the Rue de Rivoli and at the gate of the Tuilleries gardens, near the sentry box, where we found shelter a few years ago, at the invitation of a friendly sentry, a Zouave of the Guard, when a thunderstorm suddenly occurred.

"The weather was splendid. From the Trocadero we had a wonderful view over the whole city, as far as Montmartre, the Buttes de Chaumont and the heights of Romainville on one side, and the terrace of Meudon on the other. The Champ de Mars was beneath us on the left bank of the Seine, a very different sight, however, from what it was when we saw it last. Then the tall exhibition buildings were there ; now it was all filled with tents and wooden huts, in which the French troops were encamped.

"All the shops, indeed, were shut, but a number of Parisians promenaded about in the quarter occupied by us, the ladies dressed in black. The streets, however,

were crowded with our soldiers, whose different uniforms enlivened the scene sufficiently. Besides the 30,000 men of the troops of occupation, there were at least as many more of our men present. For there was a rumour in the air, that very likely the occupation would not extend to the 3rd, and so every one who could reach Paris from his quarters, went in : whole companies and battalions with green twigs stuck in their caps, all saluting the Arc de Triomphe with a hurrah ; everyone wanted to have been at least once inside Paris, after having been lying so long outside it.

“ Where our sphere ended, the French had blocked the streets with wagons, and occupied them with strong piquets ; but behind them, as far as the steps of the Madeleine, and in the other streets, as far as the eye could reach, people stood so densely packed, that they could scarcely move an arm, and full of curiosity. The busy life of the streets, so loud at other times, the street cries, the talk and the uninterrupted roar of the traffic, all were silent now. These hushed masses of people, the troops under arms everywhere, all looked so strange, so mysterious, so like a conspiracy, and as if an outbreak might take place at any moment.

“ Nothing, however, has happened ; the fears which were entertained at home for months in regard to the entry, we ourselves have never shared. When we entered on the previous day, a few street arabs hooted now and then, which produced loud laughter among our men : that was all. But I must not forget one thing : the faces of the statues of towns standing on the Place de la Concorde, have been draped with mourning ! I am afraid the impression made on our people by this manifestation was a different one from that made on the French !

“ We met the Crown Prince and likewise Moltke in Paris, when we were on our way back.

“ As the treaty of peace was actually signed yesterday, our troops will leave the town again. In a few days

we shall probably start for Compiègne and then gradually shape our course for home."

"Versailles, 4th March.

"The parade of the 3rd March was a fine one. When troops at the end of such a hard campaign bear themselves as well as they did here, one is tempted to declare that the world has never seen such an army.

"An insurrection is imminent in Paris."

"Versailles, 5th March.

"Negotiations were going on all day yesterday with the French generals, as to the handing over of the forts and other military arrangements. We shall probably leave Versailles the day after to-morrow, or on Tuesday, and return to Ferrières. On the way, there is to be a parade of the Saxons, Wurttembergers and Bavarians. From Ferrières, the Emperor intends further to inspect the forts on the north side of Paris, and also the troops in Rouen and Amiens, and, according to present arrangements, to return to Berlin on the 18th March.

"The French Government is expecting every day an insurrection in Paris; on their urgent request, permission has been given to bring up immediately reinforcements from the provinces; the latter will probably arrive by rail to-day or to-morrow.

"Generally speaking, the French rulers have immense difficulties to overcome yet, and although we shall send back our Landwehr, a large part of the army will have to be held in readiness for some considerable time, to meet all contingencies. My predictions of the beginning of February are therefore likely to come true."

"Versailles, 6th March.

"Early to-morrow we shall remove from here to Ferrières. Our company has already dwindled down

considerably. Count Bismarck returns to-day. Roon starts to-morrow for Berlin, only Prince Charles remains here, and the Crown Prince comes to stay with us for two days.

“I hope nothing will change our plans at the last minute, and that we shall really arrive in Berlin on the 18th March; but one cannot be certain in these matters. We are all rejoiced at the prospect of going home. The hardships of the troops were certainly at times much more severe than our own, but our unceasing work, with its important bearing on the operations and its responsibility, and the continuous straining of all the mental faculties to the utmost, also makes itself after a time not less forcibly felt. We, too, need some weeks of rest for recovery.”

As a matter of fact every one of us from time to time has had moments when he began to feel that he possessed nerves. I, also, have known days latterly, when I felt exhausted, and only just managed to drag myself to the office, and when, as soon as work did not demand the exertion of my little remaining strength, I sank into a sort of lethargic state.

It was during our stay at Ferrières, that His Majesty the Emperor asked me one day whether I still remembered our conversation after the battle of Beaumont. I was able to reply in the affirmative. It had happened in this way: During the battle itself I had been with the suite of H.R.H. the Crown Prince Albert of Saxony, and during its progress I had sent reports to the Royal Headquarters. The King knew therefore exactly where I had been on the 30th August. On the next day, when he arrived at the rendezvous, he beckoned me to his carriage before descending, and assuming a grave expression, though I at once saw that he was joking, he addressed me with these words:

“Where were you all yesterday? I have not had a single glimpse of you; I believe you must have been

asleep all day." I made free to answer: "If that be so, your Majesty, I have at least had a pleasant dream." "What was it, tell me?" "That we had won another battle." His Majesty smiled, and patting me on the shoulder, said: "In that case I will only say: Go on dreaming like that." Afterwards I had to report to him the particulars of the battle.

Referring now to that conversation, the Emperor, after I had told him that I recollected it very well indeed, went on to say: "Well, I have been very satisfied with your dreams, and you have gone on having good ones."

After the great events of the war had closed, the minor incidents which happened afterwards offer but little interest, and I may therefore confine myself to summing up the rest in a few words.

The Emperor had to abandon his intended journey to the north, in consequence of a slight cold, and the Crown Prince went in his stead. On the 13th March the Royal Headquarters removed to Nancy, on the 15th *viâ* Metz and Mayence to Frankfort a/Main; on the 16th to Erfurt, while the Emperor went on ahead to Weimar. On the 17th March, at five in the afternoon, the imperial train arrived in Berlin, and was received in an enthusiastic and impressive manner by the endless cheers of the inhabitants, who had come in multitudes to the station.

A portion of the army remained in France some considerable time, and witnessed before Paris the bloody conflict which the government had to wage with the unchained elements of the Commune.

Thus ended this ever memorable war, in which the German nation stood shoulder to shoulder in arms as one man, in trouble and in danger, and won that high reward of victory, the new German Empire.

May those glorious times be ever present to the eyes of the German people! May they never forget with what

sacrifices, what trials the goal was won, for which they had yearned for centuries! Unity alone conquered in the tented field, and unity alone can preserve and strengthen us in the steady work of peace.

God grant that it may be so!

THE END.

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