

HENRY CLAY WATSON

THE CAMP-FIRES OF
NAPOLEON

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*The Camp-fires of Napoleon / Comprising The Most Brilliant Achievemnants
of the Emperor / and His Marshals:*

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Henry C. Watson

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PREFACE

The vivid pictures of war, however ensanguined, have a wonderful attraction for the mass of men. They stir the heart like a trumpet. No narratives are so generally perused with avidity as those of “feats of broils and battles;” for in them, in spite of many disgusting features, there is always something to excite a pleasing thrill. We love excitement, and it seems that it is to war, and the descriptions of its varied scenes of danger, during which the faculties of the combatants are roused to extraordinary strength, that most look for the gratification of their natural desires. We have heard of many persons who, in the abstract, condemn all wars as brutal and degrading to humanity, peruse, with unwearied attention, narratives of the campaigns of great generals, and dwell upon their details with evident manifestations

of delight. The passion is irresistible.

In this work, the author has endeavored to present to the mental eye, more vividly than the so-termed dignity of ordinary history permits, the most striking scenes and remarkable personages of Napoleon's astonishing career of glory—to show the greatest warrior of any age in the field, and at the nightly bivouacs—upon the fertile plains of Piedmont—in the shadow of the Egyptian pyramids—amid the forests of Germany, and on the frozen plains of Russia—surrounded by his galaxy of splendid generals, his military family—to illustrate a passage in the history of Europe, which, for stirring scenes and powerful characters, has, perhaps, no parallel. From the camp-fire at Toulon, where the young lieutenant of artillery gave the first impression of his wonderful genius, till the terrible night of darkness and death following the battle of Waterloo, the career of Napoleon is traced by his bivouacs; and around each watch-fire is grouped the incidents of the conflicts which there occurred. The salient points in the life of the great warrior are, therefore, illumined, so as to fix them in the memory.

Who can know the incidents of that career of glory without astonishment? We find a genius, under the smile of fortune, rising from the ranks of the people to the summit of despotic power—surpassing the generalship of Hannibal—the statesmanship of Cæsar, and performing exploits, which, before his time, were placed among the impossible. There is imperishable interest attached to every event in the life of such

a character; and, therefore, no work which honestly aims to illustrate them can be considered superfluous.

It is hoped that the numerous engravings will add to the attractions of the book, and render its word-pictures clearer and more perfect to the mind. Their value is so well established, that the time is approaching when few historical works will be published without such illustrations.

THE CAMP-FIRE AT TOULON

It was the night of the 19th of December, 1793. A sky of darkness, unbroken by the twinkling of a single star, arched over the town and harbor of Toulon. But on the rugged heights of Balagrier and L'Equillette, where the English had vainly constructed their "Little Gibraltar," the watch-fires of the French beseigers were redly burning; sending up showers of sparks, which looked like rising stars against the intense blackness of the heavens. It was the 19th of December, and the fate of Toulon, which for four months had lingered in the balance, was decided. Britons, Spaniards, Neapolitans and French—a garrison of the enemies of the republic—had fought in vain. The "Little Gibraltar," which commanded the town and harbor was in the hands of the French; their troops were even forcing their way into the town, and consternation had seized those who dared to oppose the decrees of the Committee of Safety, as well as those who had so promptly tendered them aid. The evacuation of Toulon had been hurriedly resolved; and now, as the red gleam of the watch-fires and the blaze of the thundering artillery shone upon the dark waters of the bay, crowds of trembling people could be seen embarking in vessels of all kinds, glad to avail themselves of the protection of the English fleet, to escape the bloody revenge of the triumphant republicans.

The batteries of the "Little Gibraltar," were already sending a

shower of death upon the hostile fleet in the roadstead. On a rock, by a small blazing fire, and just above a battery, a form could be dimly seen through the smoke of the guns, which was destined to rise as a terrible image before the eyes of Europe, as it stood now, the conqueror of the foes of France, at Toulon. It was a slender form, on which the costume of a commandant of artillery hung loosely. But the inexorable resolution of the pale face, and the keen, quick flashes of the eagle eyes, caused those who gazed to forget all but awe and wonder before this genius of war. Occasionally, between the reports of the heavy guns, could be heard the shrill voice of command, which none refused to obey—it would be obeyed. Those eyes had seen where to strike, and that voice had commanded, the blow which brought Toulon to the feet of the republic. The commander was Napoleon Bonaparte, the young Corsican—the pet of Paoli—the child cradled amid the civil wars of his native island—who had made the cannon his toy—and who had been educated to war at the military school of Brienne. A subordinate, he had compelled his superior officers to bow before the oracles of his genius. One after another they had yielded, till the last, General Dugommier, a brave old warrior, acknowledged his artillery officer as the conqueror of Toulon.

That was a proud moment for the young Napoleon. He knew that the triumph was secured, and that to him, alone, it was due; for his plan had prevailed against the ignorant and imbecile schemes of the republic's generals, and his devices for rousing an irresistible enthusiasm in the troops,—such as naming a battery

in a desperate position, the battery "*des hommes sans peur*" had rendered the execution of that plan complete. And now the enemy were preparing for flight—precipitate flight.

"A cooler aim—cut down a flag, brave Junot!" commands the shrill voice, amid the thunder of the guns, and the dusky, slovenly looking artillery man on the right of the battery, fronting Napoleon, steadily watches for a moment when the red glare shall show him a portion of the fleet in the roadstead. A glimpse of the cross of St. George! Loud thunders the gun, and at the next vivid glare, the flag falls; and amid the roar of the storm of death rises the cheer of the artillery men.

"Well done, Junot!" exclaimed the shrill voice. The slovenly man who brought down the cross of St. George was Andoche Junot, afterwards Marshal of France and Duke d'Abrantes, whose cool courage had more than once won the commendation of the commandant during this memorable siege.

But now occurred a scene which caused the fire of the "Little Gibraltar," to slacken. Even as Napoleon spoke to Junot, he discovered a spreading flame in the harbor, and in a few moments, great tongues of fire licked the air in front of the town, and fit up the scene for miles around with a terrible brilliancy. The English and Spaniards, under the direction of Sir Sydney Smith, had set fire to the arsenal, the stores, and the French ships which they could not remove. The rising flames, growing redder and redder, seemed at length like the glowing crater of a volcano, amid which could be seen the masts and yards of the

burning vessels, and the advance of the republican troops who were attempting to force their way into the town. The waters of the bay resembled streams of lava flowing from the mountains and hills around the town, which, themselves glowed like living coals. The Jacobins in the town now arose to take revenge upon the flying royalists. Horrid screams and yells, cries and entreaties rang upon the air like sounds from the infernal regions, while in the midst of all could be heard the swelling chorus of the Marseillais. The guns of Malbosquet were turned upon the town, and their thunder increased the uproar of this terrible scene. Suddenly, a tremendous explosion, as if a mountain had been shattered to its base by a bolt from heaven, shocked the air, and even caused the stern men under the eye of Napoleon to tremble. Hundreds of barrels of powder had exploded, and high above the harbor, the air was filled with the blazing fragments, which descended even among the batteries of the "Little Gibraltar," causing the men to spring about to save themselves from the fire. Again that awful shock was given, a second magazine had exploded, and again the air seemed fairly alive with soaring fires, which threatened destruction when they fell. Fragments fell at the very feet of Napoleon, but he stood still, as a statue of resolution, a man without fear. His eyes were fixed upon the British fleet, which, by the red glare of earth and sky, could be seen slowly making sail, the decks of the vessels being crowded with fugitives. Once more he commanded the artillery to fire; and before the fleet got beyond the range of the guns, it received

a shower of balls. The triumph was now complete.

Wearied officers and men now threw themselves upon the ground to rest, beside the fire. But to most of them, sleep could not come, with such a scene of terror, conflagration and tears before them. Napoleon, however, surveyed the harbor and town, for a few moments, and then, stretching himself upon the ground, commanded himself to slumber,—a faculty which he possessed through life—an evidence of his astonishing force of will.

The day dawned with a pale, ashen light. The roll of the drums, resounding among the hills, roused the triumphant soldiers of the republic; and as they gazed upon the smouldering ruins of the arsenal, and the bay strewn with the black fragments of the ships destroyed, they would have cursed their enemy; but they remembered their conquest, and pitied the destructive spite. Cheer after cheer rent the air. The artillery men crowded round their young chief, and with clamorous congratulations, gave him the first evidence of that enthusiastic affection, which, years afterwards, caused them to yearn to die in his service—to pave with their bodies his path to victory. What thoughts—what feelings burned within that young conqueror's breast none could know; for his stern, bronze countenance expressed nothing but his concentrated strength of resolution. The same day, General Dugommier sent intelligence of the capture of Toulon to the Committee of Public Safety, and in the despatch he particularly recommended Napoleon for promotion, in these remarkable words,—“Promote him, or he will promote himself.”

THE CAMP-FIRE AT MONTE NOTTE

The pure, bright moon shone with serene majesty in the soft, dark blue of the Italian sky, dimming the light of the silver stars, in her own calm glory. The rugged heights of Monte Notte, with here and there a tower and wall, or a row of trees upon its broken ascent, and the two small villages at its base, surrounded with groves and vineyards, were revealed with scarce the variation of a shadow. They would have seemed to sleep beneath the soothing influence of the night, but for the numerous red fires, which burned here and there along the mountain side, and at intervals for the distance of half a mile from its base; and the occasional booming of a gun, with its grumbling echoes. At a considerable distance in front could be seen the lights of the redoubts upon the heights of Monte Legino, which throughout the day, under the command of the indomitable Colonel Rampon, had withstood the furious assaults of the Austrians under d'Argenteau, the commander preferring to perish rather than capitulate. His resolution had saved the plans of Bonaparte from receiving a check, and now the young general of the French felt sure of his game.

Around the watch-fires to which we have alluded were gathered the half-fed, half-clothed, but enthusiastic troops of the

divisions commanded by La Harpe and Cervoni, who had united and marched to this strong position in the rear of Monte Legino, in accordance with the plans of Bonaparte. The general-in-chief was with them, for near this place he anticipated the triumph of his wonderful combinations, and the defeat of the Austrians. Most of the principal officers were quartered in the villages, resting from the fatigues of a rapid march. But the time was too critical for Bonaparte to think of sleep. He was abroad among those camp-fires, accompanied by the brave and active Swiss, La Harpe, that faithful and untiring friend, Michael Duroc, then aid-de-camp to the young general, and several other officers of distinction. As he walked among them, he looked like a mere boy attending a throng of rough and hardy soldiers. To each group gathered round a fire, he had a pleasant and encouraging word to say, a condescension to which these war-worn veterans were unaccustomed. As he turned away from them he might have heard expressions which showed that the troops believed in his invincibility, and at all events, were prepared to suffer any hardships in his service. The wretched clothing of many of them was observed by the general, and he occasionally reminded them, that they had now an opportunity of winning not only glory, which every true soldier should seek first, but wealth and abundance, amid the fertile plains of Italy. Such words, uttered by a commander among the camp-fires of an army are calculated to have more effect in arousing its enthusiasm than the most eloquent of regular and formal addresses. At length, arriving

at a fire much larger than any of the others upon the side of the mountain, Bonaparte threw himself upon the ground, and, motioning his officers to follow his example, he took out the plan of operations, which he had drawn up, and began with his usual precision, to explain how far it had been carried out, and what would be the movements of the next day. In the meantime the soldiers, grim, moustached veterans, withdrew and set about kindling another fire at a respectful distance.

“Augereau will reach this point early in the morning, and render efficient support to the troops already in position. Marching by this road on the other side of the Appenines, Massena will show himself, nearly at the same time, in d’Argenteau’s rear, and then the Austrians cannot escape us. They will be surrounded on all sides by a superior force.

“Thus far it has been successful,” said La Harpe. “But if Rampon had not fought so desperately at Monte Legino, the plan would have been defeated, or at least, checked for a time.”

“Rampon fought bravely; but when such a plan depends upon the maintenance of a post, a good officer should prefer to die rather than yield it to the enemy,” replied Bonaparte.

“Rampon fought like a hero because he knew the importance of his position,” said Duroc.

“I trust Massena will be as active as the occasion demands. He has courage, perseverance, and skill; but it requires the most imminent danger to awaken his activity,” said the young commander-in-chief.

“A singular man, truly,” remarked Duroc.

“However,” continued Bonaparte, following the train of his own reflections, “never had a commander-in-chief more reason to be proud of his general officers than myself. They are all men born to lead. With them, I have nothing to fear from the delinquency of our half-fed troops.”

“Yet, general, the soldiers are in a condition calculated to depress their spirits,” said La Harpe. “We officers, who chiefly fight for glory, and for the honor of our country, never murmur, although very badly treated by our government. But the majority of the soldiers in the ranks have a constant eye to their pay.”

“But to make soldiers worthy of France, we must alter that;” replied Bonaparte, “one and all must be taught to fight for glory, and then our arms will be irresistible.”

La Harpe shook his head. But the enthusiastic Duroc, catching the noble fire of his illustrious friend, exclaimed.

“Yes, the love of glory makes the true soldier! This will cause the troops to forget their toilsome, bare-foot marches, and their long days of hunger! And never have I seen the French soldiers more eager for conflict in defence of their country’s honor, than they have been since our young general took command of the army of Italy. That first proclamation gave them a new spirit, which has been growing stronger every day. There are splendid triumphs before us, I am sure.”

The face of Bonaparte expressed nothing of the emotions which must have heaved in his soul at these words. But he grasped

the hand of Duroc and shook it warmly.

“My friends,” said he, “it is all clear enough to me. Tomorrow will be a great day for France. Old Beaulieu will begin to know his enemy. The plain before us shall be the scene of more Austrian astonishment and dismay than has been known in Italy for many years. Beaulieu supposes that I intended to file off along the coast to Genoa; whereas, here I am, ready to overwhelm his centre. Following up this victory, it will be easy to cut him off from communication with the Piedmontese.”

The officers gazed with wonder and admiration upon the stripling who was thus summarily disposing of the fate of armies and countries, and while they listened to his words of conscious power, an awe crept over them, they felt themselves in the presence of a superior being; and yet among them were several men of splendid qualities,—born to command.

By this time the groups around the fires had stretched themselves upon the hard earth to repose, and the pacing of the sentinels alone disturbed the stillness of the scene, where thousands of brave warriors submitted to the conqueror, sleep. Bonaparte and his officers returned to a house in the little village of Monte Notte, which had been selected as the quarters for the night. And the army slumbered on, beneath the sweet vigil of the moon, and beside the cheerful warmth of the camp-fires until the cold, white light in the east told that the most glorious king of day, who has arisen and set upon so many fields of conflict, was about to ascend the heavens.

“Far off his coming shone,”

and the stars soared out of sight, and the moon slowly faded to vapor, as the white light turned to a golden glow.

Then was heard the roll of the reveillé. With astonishing rapidity, the French were under arms and in motion. Bonaparte and his staff rode to an elevated knoll, commanding the whole plain, and then were ordered the movements which gave to the young commander-in-chief the victory of Monte Notte. D’Argenteau, the Austrian commander, found himself attacked upon one side by the divisions of La Harpe, Cervoni and Augereau, and upon the other by Massena. Then boomed the cannon, and the rattled musketry over the plain. The Austrian infantry sustained the conflict with admirable courage. But they were surrounded by superior forces and after several charges had been made by the French, in the full confidence of victory, the discomfited d’Argenteau was compelled to retreat towards Dego. In fact, the retreat was a disorderly flight. The French made two thousand prisoners, and several hundred Austrians were left dead on the field. The centre of the Austrian army had been completely overwhelmed. Bonaparte was the victor of Monte Notte. In after years, when the imperial crown adorned his brow, the conqueror showed his contempt for ancestral distinctions by saying that he dated his title to rule from this battle.

THE CAMP-FIRE AT MONDOVI

When the conflict is at an end, and the awful silence of night descends upon the field where stark and stiff lie the mangled dead, among the broken weapons and spoils of the fight, the scene is fearfully impressive. There lie the cold forms of those, who in life were furious foes; but in death, side by side, united in their doom of darkness, they are all clay together. The bugle and the drum, which were sounded to signal the contest, are broken beside the mutilated and bloody bodies of those who played them at the head of the marching regiments. The captain, whose gallant "forward!" roused the spirits of his men, lies where he perished, in the van. The standard-bearer still clasps a portion of that dear symbol of his country, which numbers cut from his hands, and seems to have yielded his breath, while hugging that remnant to his heart. The grim veteran of a hundred fights, to whom death has been a jeer and a mockery, and the youth, with blooming cheek and eager eye, who left his mother's cottage high in the hope of a glorious renown, are found cold and stiff together; the one with a smile of scorn curling his lip, the other with the keen agony, kindled by the rushing remembrance of the dear home lost forever, pictured in his countenance. The meek moon and the sentinel stars shining on this field of death, with a pallid light, add to its horrors, increasing the ghastly hue in the faces of the slain.

Such a scene was presented on the night of the 22nd of April, 1796, after the desperate battle of Mondovi. Near the town of that name, the dispirited army of Colli had been overtaken by two divisions of Bonaparte's army, commanded by Serrurier and Massena. Serrurier had been repulsed, but the onset of Massena was irresistible, and the enemy were attacked on both flanks at once. The cavalry of the Piedmontese over powered and drove back that of the French, but the wonderful valor of Murat, the most glorious of cavalry officers, renewed the fortune of the day, and, shortly afterwards, Colli's army was put to flight. During the retreat, the Piedmontese suffered dreadfully, losing the best of their troops, their cannons, baggage and appointments.

Wearied with the desperate conflict, the greater portion of the victorious army encamped in and about the town of Mondovi, a body of cavalry, alone pursuing and harassing the enemy. The description of the field of battle given above, will apply to this one, with the addition of a view of the towers and spires of Mondovi, and of numerous blazing fires in the vicinity, around which the exhausted troops had sunk to repose. Bonaparte had arrived; and, now, having gathered his principal officers at a ruined building, just outside of the town, which seemed to have been an old chapel, talked over with them the achievements of the day, and what was contemplated for the morrow. The ruin consisted of four broken walls, and was entirely roofless. It was several yards square, and the floor was strewn with fragments of sculpture which had once adorned the edifice. In the centre of the

floor a fire was kindled, and camp-stools were ranged around it. At some distance from the ruin, guards were placed, with orders to keep the inquisitive beyond ear-shot. This place had evidently been selected by Bonaparte, in preference to the best mansion of Mondovi, to be secure from the treachery of Italians, who might have overheard and communicated to the enemy important information.

As usual, Bonaparte had the paper containing the lines of his movements before him, and with pencil and compasses in hand, he devised and marked alterations even while he talked. Among the officers gathered around the fire, were Massena, Berthier, Serrurier, Murat and Duroc.

Next to the commander-in-chief himself, Massena had the most remarkable personal appearance of any of the group. His massive features had a somewhat Jewish cast and their general expression was extremely heavy, or rather drowsy. The eyes were half-closed, and they did not sparkle like those of the rest, when Bonaparte spoke. Yet it was well known that, when excited by the storm of battle, their flash was terrible. The expression of the mouth, was always that of an inexorable will. The whole aspect of Andrew Massena was that of a man of great powers, difficult to rouse. Napoleon himself remarked that it was only in danger that appalled most men, that Massena acquired clearness and force of thought. His want of activity was his great defect as a commander.

Serrurier was a large man, with rough, prominent features, in

which strong passions and dogged determinations were plainly expressed. His dress was torn and dusty; for although repulsed by the Piedmontese, he had fought like a lion on that desperate day.

The face of Duroc was manly and prepossessing. The slightly receding forehead, prominent nose, clear, bright eyes, and firm mouth, were illumined by a bland, but determined expression, indicative of the truly heroic spirit of this faithful friend of Napoleon. By the side of Michael Duroc, could be seen the stalwart form and noble countenance of Joachim Murat, the great leader of the cavalry, whose desperate charge had decided the battle in favor of the French. His gaudy costume was arranged with scrupulous nicety, and it bore no traces of the conflict. He sat toying with his long, dark curls during the conference.

“To-morrow, we will occupy Cherasco, which is within ten leagues of the Piedmontese capital,” said Bonaparte. “It has been a month of glory. Within that time, we have gained complete possession of the mountain passes and thus opened the road for our armies into Italy. We have gained three battles over forces far superior to our own; inflicted upon the enemy a loss of about twenty-five thousand men in killed, wounded, and prisoners, taken eighty pieces of cannon and twenty-one stand of colors; and almost annihilated the army of Sardinia. We can dictate a treaty at Turin.”

“The fight to-day was desperate enough, however,” said Murat, ever vain of his services. “The cavalry was beaten back by the Piedmontese, and General Stengel was among the slain.”

“A brave man lost to France,” interrupted Bonaparte.

“But I soon taught them that the French cavalry was not so easily beaten,” continued Murat. “That charge decided the day.”

“I am told,” said Bonaparte, “that the charge was indeed brilliant. But we expect such from Murat, and we hope that, hereafter, he may have the best opportunities of displaying his valor and horsemanship at the head of the cavalry of France. You have won a high promotion. General Serrurier, you were repulsed; but you afterwards bravely sustained your reputation, and contributed much to the victory. As for you, General Massena, high as were my expectations from your valor and skill, you have astonished me. France will yet regard you as a child of victory.”

Massena opened his eyes somewhat wider and nodded his thanks. “The troops,” he remarked, “are sadly worn with their rapid marches, and four days’ fighting. Besides, since they have been so severely treated for seizing upon what food and clothes they found along the line of march, they have suffered much for want of the common necessaries of life.”

“I know—I know,” replied Bonaparte; “I pity them, and hope that their wants may soon be relieved. But they must not become Goths and Vandals. What did you say was the loss of the enemy, to-day, Berthier?”

“It is estimated at about three thousand men,” replied the officer addressed—an elegant looking soldier, with a frank, intelligent countenance.

“Colli is then effectually crippled,” said Bonaparte. “He will not dare to make a stand between us and Turin. I learn that Cherasco is an ill-defended place, but it has an important position at the confluence of the Stura and the Tanaro, and with the artillery taken from the enemy, we can soon render it defensible, should that be necessary. But at present, the prospect is that we shall in a few days conclude a peace with the king of Sardinia, and then we must pursue the Austrians, whom we shall drive beyond the Alps. But in the meantime, you, Murat, shall take some of our trophies to Paris, and proclaim the triumphs of France. A more fitting messenger of victory could not be found.” At this intelligence Murat’s eyes sparkled, and a smile lit up his dark features; for next to the storm of battle, this proud soldier loved to boast of victory. Next to being a lion upon the field of battle, he desired to be a lion in the saloons of Paris.

“General,” said Duroc, “you may remember that when we stood upon the heights of Monte Lemoto, and beheld that glorious picture of the plains of Piedmont and Italy, you exclaimed, ‘Hannibal crossed the Alps; as for us, we have gone round them!’ It seems to me, with deference, that if reinforcements are not speedily sent to our aid, you will find yourself in a position more nearly resembling that of Hannibal, when, although victorious in Italy, he was deserted by Carthage. The chief difference will be, however, that Hannibal, by fortunate circumstances, was enabled to maintain his army against all the forces of Rome. But we should soon be

overwhelmed by superior numbers.”

“The government of France has neglected its duty,” replied Bonaparte, “but I cannot believe that it will desert us altogether. If so, however, I have no doubt, that we can provide for ourselves.”

“For myself,” said Serrurier, “I love France, but despise the present government. But for the bravery of the army, whose triumphs they have taken to themselves, the members of that government would not now hold their places.”

At these words, Bonaparte raised his head, and gave a steady, piercing glance at the frank, out-spoken soldier’s countenance, probably with the design of ascertaining the full depth of his meaning. But Serrurier returned glance for glance, and Bonaparte returned to the contemplation of his map. There was more in that young conqueror’s look than, perhaps, any of that martial group, suspected.

The chief incidents of the fight of the day having been communicated to Bonaparte by the various officers engaged in its terrible scenes, he proceeded to award commendation where it was due; and then gave the generals orders in regard to the movements of the next day. Despatches, hurriedly written, were sent to the generals of the divisions not engaged at Mondovi, and then the conference terminated. Most of the officers retired to their respective commands; but, accompanied by Duroc and Murat, the sleepless commander-in-chief rode over the field, to gain a more accurate knowledge of the terrible character of

the battle—to observe where the fight had been thickest, what corps had suffered the greatest loss, and what had the been advantages and disadvantages of the ground. In many places, it was difficult for the horses to proceed without trampling upon the groups of ghastly dead; and the reckless Murat occasionally rode directly over the corpses, while talking to the commander-in-chief. A considerable number of women, from Mondovi, were seen among the bodies, collecting many little articles of value attached to the clothing of the dead warriors. At the approach of Bonaparte and his officers they scampered away, like so many frightened vultures, upon which Murat would give chase for a short distance to increase their alarm. After a complete survey of the field, Bonaparte and his aids returned to Mondavi. The only remark the young commander-in-chief was heard to make, was, “It was a hard-won victory—Mondovi ought to be decisive.” And it was decisive. At Cherasco, Sardinia submitted to the victor’s terms; and thus one of the bravest of the foes of France was crushed after a campaign of very brief duration, the glories of which are thus touched upon by Bonaparte in an eloquent and powerful proclamation to his soldiers.

“Soldiers! in a fortnight you have gained six victories, taken twenty-one pair of colors, fifty-live pieces of cannon, several fortresses, and conquered the richest part of Piedmont; you have made fifteen thousand prisoners, and killed or wounded more than ten thousand men; you had hitherto been fighting for barren rocks, rendered famous by your courage, but of no service to

the country; you this day compete by your services with the army of Holland and of the Rhine. Destitute of every thing, you have supplied all your wants. You have gained battles without cannon, crossed rivers without bridges, made forced marches without shoes, bivouacked without brandy, and often without bread. Republican phalanxes, the soldiers of liberty alone, could have endured what you have endured. Thanks be to you for it, soldiers!”

THE CAMP-FIRE AT THE BRIDGES OF LODI

Beaulieu, the veteran general of the Austrians, had been beaten and compelled to retreat before the French commander of twenty-six. The Po being crossed and the Tesino turned, Bonaparte beheld the road to Milan open before him. But he prepared to make the effort to cut off Beaulieu's retreat, and compel the Austrian army to surrender. Like Nelson, upon the sea, he thought no triumph complete unless the enemy was entirely prostrated. But to cut off the retreat of Beaulieu, it was necessary to anticipate him at the passage of the rivers. A great number of these flow from the Alps, and cross Lombardy on their way to the Po and the Adriatic. After the Po and the Tesino, come the Adda, the Oglio, the Mincio, the Adige and numerous others.

The Adda was now before Bonaparte. It is a large and deep river, although fordable in some places. The passage was to be made at the town of Lodi, an old place containing about twelve thousand inhabitants. It has old Gothic walls, but its chief defence consists in the river, which flows through it, and which is crossed by a wooden bridge, about five hundred feet in length. Having crossed the river, Beaulieu drew up twelve thousand infantry and four thousand horse on the opposite bank, posted twenty pieces

of artillery so as to sweep the bridge, and lined the bank with sharpshooters. It was against all military practice to attempt the passage of a river in the face of such difficulties. But it was the military mission of Bonaparte to astonish the routine generals.

Napoleon, coming up on the 10th of May, easily drove the rear-guard of the Austrian army before him into the town, but found his further progress threatened by the tremendous fire of the pieces of cannon, stationed at the opposite end of the bridge, so as to sweep it most completely. The whole body of the enemy's infantry drawn up in a dense line, supported this appalling disposition of the artillery.

An answering battery was instantly constructed on the French side, Napoleon exposing himself in the thickest of the fire to point two of the guns with his own hands. This he effected in such a manner as to prevent the possibility of any approach on the part of the enemy to undermine or blow up the bridge. Observing, meanwhile, that Beaulieu had removed his infantry to a considerable distance backwards, to keep them out of the range of the French battery, he instantly detached his cavalry, with orders to gallop out of sight, and then ford the river, and coming suddenly upon the enemy, attack them in flank.

He now drew up a body of six thousand grenadiers in close column, under the shelter of the houses, and bade them prepare for the desperate attempt of forcing a passage across the narrow bridge, in the face of the enemy's thickly-planted artillery.

The cavalry of Napoleon had a difficult task to perform in

passing the river, and he waited with anxiety for their appearance on the opposite bank. But a sudden movement in the ranks of the enemy showed him that his cavalry had arrived and charged, and he instantly gave the word. The head of the column of grenadiers wheeled to the left, and was at once upon the bridge. The whole body rushed forward with impetuosity, shouting, "Vive la Republique!" A hundred bodies rolled dead, and the advancing column faltered under the redoubled roar of the guns, and the tempest of the grape shot. At this critical moment, Lannes, Napoleon, Berthier, and L'Allemand, hurried to the front, and dashing onwards were followed by the whole column in the very mouth of the artillery. They gained the opposite side: Lannes reached the guns first, and Napoleon second. The artillerymen were killed; their guns seized; and the Austrian infantry, which had been removed too far back, not having time to come up to support the artillery, the whole army was put to flight.

The French cavalry pursued in the blazing enthusiasm of almost unprecedented victory. About two thousand Austrians were either killed or wounded, and the same number made prisoners, while twenty pieces of cannon remained in the hands of the French.

The victorious army encamped on the banks of the Adda, in the position which had been occupied by the defeated Austrians. Before night fell, Bonaparte was informed that he had failed to get between Beaulieu, and the other divisions of the Austrian army; but, aware of the terror which his daring exploit would

strike into the enemy, he scarcely regretted his trifling failure of movement. The line of the Adda was carried; tremendous difficulties had been vanquished with a loss of only two hundred men, and the courage and devotion of the soldiers had been raised to the highest pitch.

The encampment upon the Adda presented a remarkable aspect. Most of the officers had the accommodation of tents, but the troops were destitute of that luxury, and their only resource for rest was to throw themselves upon the ground around their fires. These gallant men, although fatigued with the efforts of the glorious day, were too much excited by their victory to rest without some demonstration. It was a clear, beautiful moonlight night. Although filled in some places with the dead, the Adda danced merrily onward, the ripples sparkling in the moonbeams. All was quiet above; but in camp and town, there was the bustle of men to whom sleep would not come. Bonaparte had retired to his tent to partake of some refreshment, and having soon satisfied his abstemious appetite, he was about to traverse the camp, alone, to observe the spirit of his troops, as well as to ascertain the character and rank of the prisoners. In front of his tent, he was astonished to meet a small deputation of grim-visaged grenadiers, who saluted him with the title of the "Little Corporal." One of their number then stepped forward, and respectfully communicated the intelligence that they had elected him a corporal, in consideration of his gallant service in the ranks that day, and hoped that they might one day confer

still higher honors upon him. Three hearty cheers were then given by the veterans, who appeared to enjoy the joke amazingly; and after they had retired, the young general was saluted in various parts of the camp as the "Little Corporal." This gaiety was characteristic of the French soldiers. Bonaparte was rather pleased with the singular mode of showing affection for his person, and admiration of his intrepidity.

The general approached a group of Hungarian prisoners without being recognised by them. They were standing near a fire, conversing, and evidently much irritated at the misfortunes of their position. He went among them and mingled in the conversation. An old officer, who spoke to him, appeared to be extremely moody. Bonaparte could not but smile at his language. "Things are going on as ill and irregular as possible," said this veteran of routine. "The French have got a young general who knows nothing of the regular rules of war; he is sometimes on our front, sometimes on our flank, sometimes on the rear. There is no supporting such a gross violation of rules." He evidently preferred to be whipped in a regular way. But it is agreed that the object of war is victory, and if rules do not secure that victory, they are of no value. Bonaparte's system appeared very extraordinary to the Austrian commanders. It was something beyond what they had learned at their German military schools.

After traversing the camp, and receiving many testimonials of the warm devotion of the troops to his person, Bonaparte returned to his tent, where he was soon joined by Berthier,

Massena, Augereau, Bessieres, Duroc, Serrurier, Lannes, and others. To each and all he gave a word of compliment; but he was especially fluent in his praise of the indomitable young General Lannes, whose daring courage had attracted his attention in previous engagements as well as at the tremendous charge across the bridge of Lodi. They were, indeed, as gallant a group of officers, as ever a general had at his command—men who could as calmly reason and determine upon manœuvres in the hottest storm of battle, as during the quiet hours of this moonlight night—quick in devising, irresistible in the execution; and yet it was only yonder stripling, with the Roman features and the piercing eyes, who could give a glorious harmony to their action, bring their peculiar faculties into play, and secure their triumph. Great as they undoubtedly were, they failed to achieve great triumphs when beyond the reach of the “Little Corporal’s” controlling mind. The conference was long, for there were difficulties in the arrangement of the plan for moving upon Milan, and some of the officers, particularly Massena, had objections to urge. However, Bonaparte determined according to his own views. The officers observed that there was a remarkable change in his bearing towards them. He had hitherto admitted them to complete familiarity; but they now felt constrained by his lofty manner to keep at a respectful distance. When they retired that night, some of them exchanged glances of significance; they were evidently displeased at the haughty bearing of the young commander-in-chief; yet few of them, perhaps, comprehended

the change.

The fact was that the victory of Lodi had a great influence upon Napoleon's mind. He afterwards acknowledged, that neither the quelling of the sections at Paris, nor the victory of Monte Notte made him regard himself as any thing superior, but that after Lodi, for the first time, the idea dawned upon him, that he should one day be "a decisive actor," on the stage of the political world. It was Lodi which gave birth to the 18th Brumaire.

THE CAMP-FIRE AT CASTIGLIONE

It was at Castiglione and in its vicinity that the wonderful spirit and rapidity of Napoleon's movements were more fully displayed than at any other of his scenes of victory in Italy. The aged Beaulieu had been superseded in the command of the Austrian army, by General Wurmser, a commander of high reputation. His army was greatly superior in numbers to that of Bonaparte. It descended from the Tyrol during the last days of July, in three divisions, commanded by Davidowich, Quasdanowitch, and Wurmser himself.

Wurmser, confident in his numbers, and calculating upon the absorption of the energies of the French army, by its endeavors to subdue Mantua, disposed his forces in the most admirable way to improve a victory; never reflecting that he might happen to be defeated. Untaught by all the previous disasters of Beaulieu, he committed the error of dividing his army, in order to cover an extent of country. His right wing was detached, with orders to occupy Brescia, and cut off the retreat of the French in the direction of Milan: his left wing was to descend the Adige, and manœuvre on Verona; while the centre, under his own command, advanced to raise the siege of Mantua. During the two first days of his approach, the French generals, after resisting to the utmost,

yielded up successively, Rivoli, Brescia, and Salo; but these two days were sufficient to make Napoleon master of the plan on which Wurmser proposed to carry on the campaign, and he instantly disconcerted the whole of it, by a movement so unlike that of any ordinary general, as to defy all calculation.

In one night, (31st July,) he raised the siege of Mantua; sacrificing the whole of his artillery. The men were employed to destroy as much as the time would allow. They spiked the guns, burnt the carriages, threw the powder into the lake, and buried the balls. Augereau and Massena were stationed to defend the line of the Mincio as long as possible. Before morning the whole French army had disappeared from Mantua, and Napoleon was hurrying forward to attack the right wing of the Austrian army, before it could effect a junction with the central body of Wurmser.

The Austrian right wing was advancing in three divisions. Napoleon defeated one division at Salo, and another at Lonato. At the same time, Augereau and Massena, leaving a sufficient number of men at their posts to maintain a defence, or at least to impede the enemy, marched upon the third division at Brescia; but it had already fled in disorder towards the Tyrol. The French generals instantly countermarched to the support of their rear-guards, which had been forced by the Austrians.

Wurmser reached Mantua and was astonished to find what he believed to be a precipitate flight. He entered the city in triumph—but he was completely deceived. (August 2nd.)

Bonaparte did not halt for a moment. His troops had been constantly on the march, he had himself been all the time on horseback; he resolved to make them fight the very next morning. He had before him Bayalitsch at Lonato, and Liptai at Castiglione, presenting to both of them a front of twenty-five thousand men. He had to attack them before Wurmser should return from Mantua. Sauret had for the second time abandoned Salo; Bonaparte sent Guyeux again thither to recover the position, and to keep back Quasdanowitch. After these precautions on his left and on his rear, he resolved to march forward to Lonato with Massena, and to throw Augereau upon the heights of Castiglione, which had been abandoned on the preceding day by General Vallette. He broke that general at the head of his army, in order to make his lieutenants do their duty without flinching. On the following day, the 16th (August 3rd,) the whole army was in motion; Guyeux re-entered Salo, and this rendered any communication between Quasandowitch and the Austrian army still more impracticable. Bonaparte advanced upon Lonato; but his advanced guard was beaten back, some pieces of cannon were taken, and General Pigeon was made prisoner. Bayalitsch, proud of this success advanced with confidence, and extended his wings around the French division. He had two objects in performing this manœuvre; in the first place, to surround Bonaparte, and in the second, to extend himself on the right for the purpose of entering into communication with Quasandowitch, whose cannon he heard at

Salo. Bonaparte, not alarming himself about his rear, suffered himself to be surrounded with imperturbable coolness; he placed some sharp-shooters on his exposed wings, and next took the 18th and 32d demi-brigades of infantry, ranged them in close column, gave them a regiment of dragoons to support them, and rushed headlong upon the enemy's centre, which was weakened by its extension. With this brave body of infantry he overthrew all before him, and thus broke the line of the Austrians. The latter, divided into two bodies, immediately lost their courage: one part of the division of Bayalitsch fell back in all haste towards the Mincio; but the other, which had extended itself in order to communicate with Quasandowitch, was driven towards Salo, where Guyeux was at that moment. Bonaparte caused it to be pursued without intermission, that he might place it between two fires. He let loose Junot in pursuit of it, with a regiment of cavalry. Junot dashed off at a gallop, killed six horsemen with his own hand, and fell, having received several sabre wounds. The fugitive division, entrapped between the corps at Salo and that which was pursuing it from Lonato, was routed, and lost at every step thousands of prisoners. During this successful pursuit, Bonaparte proceeded on his right to Castiglione, where Augereau had been fighting ever since the morning with admirable bravery. The heights on which Liptai's division had placed itself had now to be carried. After an obstinate combat, several times renewed, he had at length accomplished his object, and Bonaparte on his arrival found the enemy retreating on all sides. Such was the

battle called the battle of Lonato, fought on the 16th (August 3rd.)

This battle produced considerable results. The French had taken twenty pieces of cannon and three thousand prisoners from the division cut off and driven back upon Salo, and they were still pursuing its scattered remnant in the mountains. They had made a thousand or fifteen hundred prisoners at Castiglione, and killed or wounded three thousand men; they had alarmed Quasandowitch, who finding the French army at Salo, and hearing it in the distance at Lonato, thought that it was every where. They had thus nearly disorganized the divisions of Bayalitsch and Liptai, which fell back upon Wurmser. That general at this moment came up with fifteen thousand men to rally the two beaten divisions, and began to draw out his lines in the plains of Castiglione.

Bonaparte now determined upon fighting a decisive battle upon the ground which the Austrian general had chosen, but as it was necessary to collect all his disposable force at Castiglione, he deferred the action until the 5th.

It was the night of the 4th of August. The weather had been excessively warm for several days, and the troops were almost exhausted by their rapid marches under a burning sun. The hostile armies were encamped close in front of each other, vertically from the line of the heights on which both supported one wing, Bonaparte having his left thereon, and Wurmser his right. A series of heights formed by the last range of the Alps

extends from Chiessa to the Mincio, by Lonato, Castiglione and Solferino. At the foot of these heights was the plains on which the great battle was to be fought. Bonaparte had at most twenty-two thousand men, Serrurier's division not having come up yet; and, indeed, it had been ordered to make an effort to gain the rear of the Austrians. Wurmser had thirty thousand men under his command, and the wing of his army which was on the plain was supported by a redoubt placed upon the elevation of Medolano. It was a clear, warm night. The stars were thickly sprinkled in the arching heaven, but there was no moon, and the position of each army could only be clearly distinguished by the light of the lines of watch-fires, stretching away from the foot of the heights. In the rear of the Austrians, the low wall, and tower of the old town of Castiglione could be distinguished, forming a looming and shadowy background to a striking and imposing picture.

Around one of the fires in the vicinity of the tent of the commander-in-chief, was sitting a group of officers, among whom Bessieres, Duroc, and Augereau were the only men of renown. All ears were opened listening to Bessieres, who was giving an account of Bonaparte's wonderful exploit that day, in escaping from a surprise at Lonato. He told the story as follows:

“You know that this morning, our commander-in-chief set off for Lonato at full gallop, to personally hasten the movements of the troops. He was accompanied only by his staff and the Guides under my command. We arrived at Lonato about noon. We found that the orders of the general were already carried

out; part of the troops were marching upon Castiglione, and the rest were proceeding towards Salo and Gavardo. About a thousand men remained at Lonato. Scarcely had the general entered the place, when an Austrian flag of truce presented itself, and the bearer summoned him to surrender. The general started at the summons. He could not understand how it was possible that the Austrians could be so close upon him. But the case was soon explained. The division separated in the battle of Lonato, and driven back upon Salo, had been partly captured; but a body of about four thousand five hundred men had been wandering all night in the mountains; and seeing the town almost abandoned, wanted to enter the place, in order to open for itself an outlet upon the Mincio. General Bonaparte had no time to fight a battle, or perhaps he would have done it, even with his force of one thousand men. His plan was formed with his usual quickness and decision. He ordered all the officers about him to mount their horses, and then, the bearer of the flag to be brought before him, with his eyes uncovered; for, as usual on such occasions, the officer was blindfolded. You should have seen the Austrian's astonishment when he found himself in the presence of our general and his staff. 'Unhappy man!' said General Bonaparte, 'you know not then that you are in the presence of the commander-in-chief, and that he is here with his whole army. Go tell those who sent you, that I give them five minutes to surrender, or I will put them to the sword to punish the insult which they have dared to offer me.'

The astonished bearer of the flag returned with this message to his general. In the meantime, General Bonaparte prepared his small force for action. The Austrian then asked him to propose terms of capitulation. But our general, knowing the importance of immediate action, replied—‘No, you must become at once prisoners of war.’ The Austrian hesitated, but when General Bonaparte ordered his artillery and grenadiers to advance to the attack, the enemy surrendered; and thus, without striking a blow, four thousand infantry and five hundred cavalry surrendered themselves prisoners of war to about one thousand Frenchmen. We gained, besides, two pieces of artillery.”

A general laugh followed this narrative. All agreed that it was an admirable exploit, and quite worthy of the genius of Bonaparte. At this moment, the young commander-in-chief appeared at the door of his tent. His horse was standing near, and he was quickly mounted. “Come, Bessieres and Duroc,” said he in a sharp voice, “we will go over the field.” So saying, he rode away, leaving the officers addressed to follow him as soon as they could. They immediately left the group, which was now joined, however, by Lannes and Berthier, who, wearied out, sought the vacant seats to obtain a short rest.

“Who ever saw the like?” said young Lannes,—he of the tall, stout form, stern countenance, and long, fair hair, parted in the centre. “Such incessant activity! That slender ‘little Corporal’ would tire a host of us. In a few days he has killed five horses with fatigue. He will not entrust any of us with the execution of

his important orders. He must see every thing with his own eyes, inquire into every thing, and set every body in a fever of motion by his presence. Such tremendous energy I never knew any other person to possess. I do not believe he sleeps at all. There he goes again, to make his final arrangements for the battle.”

“He will wear himself out too soon, I am afraid,” said Augereau.

“But he will accomplish more in one month than many men could achieve in years. His immortality is already established, and he is but twenty-six,” replied Berthier.

“He will have a glorious opportunity to achieve a decisive victory to-morrow,” said Lannes; “but I doubt whether the battle will be as long and as desperate as that of yesterday.”

“Yesterday was indeed a day of hard fighting, for my division here, at least,” said Augereau. “My troops were completely exhausted, when Liptai’s division was driven from the heights. But how did Junot get cut up in such a way?”

“I’ll tell you,” replied Berthier. “When the Austrian line was broken by the charge of our infantry, one division was driven towards Salo, where Gueux was posted. General Bonaparte caused it to be pursued, in order to place it between two fires, and General Junot was let loose, with a regiment of cavalry. Junot set off at full speed. He encountered Colonel Bender with a party of his regiment of hussars, whom he charged, with his wonted bravery. But not wishing to waste his time by attacking the rear, Junot made a detour to the right, charged the regiment in front,

wounded Colonel Bender and attempted to take him prisoner, when he suddenly found himself surrounded. Of course, he fought like a hero, as he is, and it is said that he killed six of the enemy with his own hand, before he was cut down, and thrown into a ditch. I suppose he will be disabled for some time, which is a real misfortune to the army, as Junot is one of the bravest and most active officers now under General Bonaparte's command."

"Yes," said the generous Lannes, "we shall miss him. He was promoted from the ranks on account of his cool bravery, and he certainly has done honor to the judgment of our general, who first noticed his merit at the siege of Toulon."

"Still," said Augereau, "brave men are not scarce in the army of Italy. We shall conquer without Junot, I have no doubt."

Thus the group continued to converse, until General Bonaparte came up, with Massena and others, and invited them to his tent to receive their final instructions. The quick movements, and rapid, concise speech of the young conqueror indicated the unwearied activity of his mind. He had undergone tremendous exertion, but no trace of it appeared in his bearing. The restless fire of his eye was undimmed; his mind labored as vigorously and with as much precision as if he had been enjoying repose for several days; and the commander of the Guides reported that the general slept but an hour that night.

At the first peep of day, the two armies were in motion. Wurmser, impatient to attack, moved his right along the heights; Bonaparte, to favor this movement, drew back his left, formed

by Massena's division; he kept his centre immovable in the plain. He soon heard Serrurier's fire. Then, while he continued to draw back his left, and Wurmser to draw out his right, he ordered the redoubt of Medolano to be attacked. At first, he directed twenty pieces of light artillery upon that redoubt, and after briskly cannonading it, he detached General Verdier, with three battalions, to storm it. That brave general advanced, supported by a regiment of cavalry, and took the redoubt. The left flank of the Austrians was thus exposed at the very moment when Serrurier, arriving at Cauriana, excited alarm upon their rear. Wurmser immediately moved part of his second line upon his right, now deprived of support, and placed it *en potence* to front the French, who were debouching from Medolano. He took the remainder of his second line to the rear, to protect Cauriana, and thus continued to make head against the enemy. But Bonaparte, seizing the opportunity with his accustomed promptness, immediately ceased to avoid engaging his left and his centre, and gave Massena and Augereau the signal which they were impatiently awaiting. Massena with the left, Augereau with the centre, rushed upon the weakened line of the Austrians, and charged it with impetuosity. Attacked so briskly on its entire front, and threatened on its left and its rear, it began to give ground. The ardour of the French increased. Wurmser seeing his army jeopardized then gave the signal for retreat. He was pursued, and some prisoners were taken. To put him completely to the rout, it would have been necessary to make much more

haste, and to push him while in disorder upon the Mincio. But for six days the troops had been constantly marching and fighting; they were unable to advance further, and slept on the field of battle. Wurmser had on that day lost no more than two thousand men, but he had nevertheless lost Italy.

That night, the first time for five days, Bonaparte enjoyed the sweets of repose. The anxiety was at an end—Italy was his own.

THE CAMP-FIRE AT ARCOLA

The indomitable Bonaparte had nearly destroyed the army of Wurmser. The laurels of Roveredo, Bassano, and Saint George, adorned his young brow, beside those of Monte Notte, Lodi and Castiglione. Within ten days, he had carried positions, the natural difficulties of which seemed to defy human assault, killed or captured about twenty thousand men, and taken artillery and stores which were almost an encumbrance to his gallant little army. His brave officers, Massena, Augereau, Bessieres, Murat, Berthier, Lannes, and the rest, had heaped up their titles to immortal renown. To use the language of Thiers, "France was lost in admiration of the commander-in-chief of the army of Italy."

Still, Bonaparte's situation was rapidly becoming one of startling peril. Austria redoubled her efforts to recover Lombardy. A fine army was prepared from the wrecks of Wurmser, the troops from Poland and Turkey, the detachments from the Rhine, and fresh recruits. Marshal Alvinzi was appointed to the command. Bonaparte's army at this time numbered about thirty thousand men, but they were badly provided, while Alvinzi could bring sixty thousand men into the field. On the 1st of November, 1796, the Austrian commander advanced upon the Brenta. At first, the French fell back, but Bonaparte resolved to strike a blow at the onset of this new

series of movements, which would break the spirit of the enemy. The action took place on the 5th, between Carmignano and Bassano, and after a hot and bloody conflict, the French were victorious. Other contests followed; but in spite of the advantages gained by Bonaparte, he found that unless a great decisive battle was fought, Italy would be lost. The troops began to murmur at the neglect with which their government treated them, and the general complained to the Directory that the majority of his best officers were either killed or disabled by wounds. But in the meantime, Bonaparte conceived a daring plan of action, which, considering the circumstances, stands unparalleled in the annals of war. He resolved to give battle, unexpectedly, amid the marshes of the Adige, where the difference in numbers would be neutralized. Then followed the tremendous battle of Arcola, which lasted seventy-two hours, and ended in the complete triumph of the French.

It was the night of the 17th of November. The sun had set upon a third day of slaughter amid the marshes and upon the plain at Arcola. But with the quiet shadows of evening, came victory to gladden the hearts of the French and their glorious general. Exhausted by the terrible conflict, both armies were to pass the night upon the plain. But the Austrians took care to be beyond the reach of the conquerors and far towards Vicenza. The French kindled their camp-fires upon the field of their triumph. It was a gloomy night. Neither moon nor star smiled in the sky; and the line of the encampments could only be traced by the fires, blazing

even among the heaps of the dead, while far away over the plain the long line of Austrian fires could be distinguished. Having partaken of some slight refreshment, the French soldiers were stretched upon the ground around the fires. The majority slept. But to some, wearied as they were in body, sleep would not come, so excited were their minds by the vivid and terrible images of the conflict through which they had passed. The Guides, who had kindled their fires around a little cottage in which Bonaparte had taken quarters for the night, were among the wakeful ones. They had secured for themselves, at the order of the commander-in-chief, abundant refreshments, and now, sitting upon their campstools to rest their weary limbs, they discussed both the provision and the glorious achievements of the army of Italy. Their number had been considerably thinned by the great battle through which they had just passed, for they, as well as their general, had been in the thickest of the fire. But there were still Bessieres, the commander, young Lemarois, Duroc, and others of distinction; while among them was, Augereau, who, having been reared in the democratic faubourg St. Antoine, never had any scruples upon the subject of rank, outside of actual military operations. He associated with general and private upon equal terms. The others doubtless considered themselves as honoring the company with their presence; but they could not have formed a part of a more gallant group. Not an officer among them but bore marks of the terrible conflict through which they had passed. Their costume was bespattered with mud, their faces blackened with

powder, and some of them had sabre wounds, which, for the time, disfigured their countenances.

“The officers of the army have suffered dreadfully, during these three days of fighting,” said Augereau. “I thought that before the battle we were crippled enough in that way; but only look now. Here’s General Lannes, who was wounded before he went into the conflict, and he now lies low with three more wounds. Verne, Bon, Verdier, and several others are also wounded, while General Robert and the brave Colonel Muiron, who saved General Bonaparte’s life at Toulon, and covered him here again, are killed.”

“This battle will long be deemed a glorious monument of the genius of Bonaparte,” said Bessieres, “I say it with deference, that heroic as are his principal officers, they might have striven in vain against the superior numbers of the enemy, but for the daring and profound combinations of the general-in-chief, while much is also due to his efforts of resolute valor during the struggle.”

“No one will venture to deny that,” said the frank and generous Augereau. Massena merely nodded his head, but left the meaning of the nod unexplained.

“For,” continued Bessieres, “consider the position of the army before the battle. Our army was greatly inferior in numbers to that of Alvinzi, as, in spite of the immense loss of the Austrians, it remains. Our hospitals were full of sick and wounded. The troops were dispirited, because of the shameful neglect with which their government treated them. A large number of our best officers

were entirely disabled. Yet an address from General Bonaparte restored confidence to the army, and when, on the night of the 15th, orders were given to the troops to fall back, they obeyed with alacrity, although they believed they were retreating—a movement to which they are unaccustomed, for they supposed that some daring plan had been formed for their glory. When they had recrossed the Adige by the bridge of boats here at Ronco, they found that their confidence in their general had not been misplaced.”

“See then,” said Duroc, “how General Bonaparte availed himself of the advantages of the ground. What other general of this age would have thought of fighting among the marshes. Alvinzi was encamped on the road from Verona to the Brenta. Consequently when General Bonaparte reached Ronco, he found himself brought back on the flanks and nearly on the rear of the Austrians. The army was then amidst extensive marshes, traversed by two causeways, which we were ordered to occupy.

“Now mark the result of his calculations; amidst these marshes numerical advantage was neutralized; there was no deploying but upon the causeways, and on the causeways the courage of the advanced guards of the columns would decide the event. By the causeway on the left, which communicated with the road between Verona and Caldiero, he could fall upon the Austrians if they attempted to scale Verona. By the causeway on the right, which crossed the Alpon at the bridge of Arcola, and terminated at Villa Nova, he might debouch upon the rear of Alvinzi, take

his artillery and baggage, and cut off his retreat. He was therefore impregnable at Ronco, and he stretched his two arms around the enemy. He had caused the gates at Verona to be shut, and had left Kilmaine there, with fifteen hundred men, to stand a first assault. This combination, so daring and so profound, struck the army, and inspired them with confidence.”

“It was a grand stroke of genius,” said Massena. “I was stationed on the *dike* at the left, so as to go up to Gombione and Porcil, and take the enemy in the rear, if he should march to Verona.”

“And I,” observed Augereau, “was despatched to the right, to debouch upon Villa Nova. But before I could advance along the right hand dike, I had to cross the Alpon by the bridge of Arcola. Some battalions of Croats were stationed along the river, and had their cannon pointed at the bridge. They received my advance guard with a rattling fire of musketry, and at first the men fell back. I rode up and did all in my power to push them on, but the fire compelled them to halt. Soon after that, I saw a party of Hungarian cavalry come to inquire into the reason of the firing among the marshes. The Austrian marshal could not understand it. He did not for a moment suppose that General Bonaparte would choose such a field of battle, at least I judge so, from his orders.”

“Ha! ha!” shouted Massena, “you should have seen Rivera leading his division close along the left dike where I was posted. I permitted them to get too far on the dike to retreat, and

then dashed upon them at a run. How we tumbled them into the marsh! Ha! ha! The troops shot them by scores, as they floundered in the mud and water. Ha! ha!” It was a grim laugh.

“I did the same for Mitrowski’s division,” said Augereau. “I then pursued, and attempted to pass the bridge, the soldiers gallantly crowding around the flag I held to cheer them on. But they could not stand that tremendous fire. Lannes, Bon, Verne, and Verdier were wounded. In spite of my utmost efforts, the column fell back, and the soldiers descended to the side of the dike, to shelter themselves from the fire.”

“Then came the heroism of the ‘Little Corporal,’” exclaimed Duroc, his eyes glowing with enthusiasm. “He saw from Ronco, that Alvinzi had become sensible of his danger, and was striving to prevent you, brave Guyeux, from taking him in the rear at Villa Nova. He saw that it was of the utmost importance to cross the river at Arcola immediately, if he would gain Alvinzi’s rear, and thus secure great results. Did you see that glorious commander? He set off at full gallop, came near the bridge, threw himself from his horse, went to the soldiers who were crouching down by the borders of the dike, asked them if they were still the conquerors of Lodi, revived their courage by his words, and seizing a flag cried, ‘Follow your general!’ Hearing his voice, a number of soldiers went up to the causeway and followed him; unfortunately, the movement could not be communicated to the whole of the column, the rest of which remained behind the dike. Bonaparte advanced, carrying the flag in his hand, amidst a

shower of balls and grape-shot. We all surrounded him. Lannes, who had already received two wounds from musket-shots during the battle, was struck by a third. Muiron, the general's aid-de-camp, striving to cover him with his body, fell dead at his feet. The column was nevertheless on the point of clearing the bridge, when a last discharge arrested it, and threw it back. The rear abandoned the advance. The soldiers who still remained with the general, then laid hold of him, carried him away amidst the fire and smoke, and insisted on his remounting his horse. An Austrian column debouching upon them, threw them in disorder into the marsh. Bonaparte fell in, and sunk up to the waist. As soon as the soldiers perceived his danger, 'Forward,' cried they, 'to save the general.' They ran after Belliard and Vignolles to extricate him. They pulled him out of the mud, set him upon his horse again, pressed forward and Arcola was taken.

"Was there ever a more glorious man?" And as the enthusiastic Duroc concluded his animated description of the splendid exploit, his eyes gleamed in admiration of his great friend and patron.

"Yes," said Guyeux, "Arcola was taken. But I could not get across the river in time to attack Alvinzi's rear, and thus the Austrian was enabled to deploy into the plain. The general had striven gloriously, but he had not attained his object. In my humble opinion, he might have avoided the obstacle of Arcola by throwing his bridge over the Adige a little below Ronco.

"Aye," said Massena, "but then he would have debouched

into the plain, which it was of great importance to avoid. The general had the best reasons for doing what he did, and although the success was imperfect, important results had been obtained. Alvinzi had quitted the formidable position of Caldiero; he had descended again into the plain, he no longer threatened Verona, and he had lost a great number of men in the marshes. The two dikes had become the only field of battle between the two armies, which gave the superiority to bravery. Besides, so glorious had been the conflict, that our soldiers had completely recovered their confidence, a result of immense importance, as all may perceive." This defence of Bonaparte's course did honor to the intelligence of Massena.

"But it must be admitted," said Bessieres, "that the battle of to-day surpassed all the rest in the display of strategic genius. Yesterday was glorious for us, for the bravery and perseverance of the whole army was exerted in beating the enemy from the dikes, and tumbling them into the marsh, and we destroyed an immense number of them. But to-day proved most conclusively that in strategy our general is at least the rival of the Carthaginian Hannibal. Our general saw that the long conflict had disheartened the enemy, and considerably reduced their superior numbers. He then dared to encounter them on the plain. You, General Massena, marching at the head of your column, with your hat upon the point of your sword, showed them the way to victory, and the Austrians were once more crowded into the marsh. But General Robert was repulsed at

the bridge of Ronco. Yet mark the resources of the general-in-chief! Sensible of the danger, he placed the 32d in a wood of willows, which borders the right hand dike. While the enemy's column, victorious over Robert, was advancing, the 32d sallied from its ambuscade, and, of the three thousand Croates who composed it, the greater part were slain or captured. Crossing the Alpon, Bonaparte brought the whole army into the plain, in front of the Austrians. An ordinary general would now have ordered a simple charge. But the 'Little Corporal' determined upon a stratagem. A marsh, overgrown with reeds, covered the left wing of the Austrians. Hercule, *chef de battallion*, was ordered to take twenty-five guards, to march in single line through the reeds, and to make a sudden charge, with a great blast of trumpets."

"And Hercule was the very man for such a desperate service," observed Duroc.

"Precisely," said Bessieres. "Then the great charge was made by you generals, Massena and Augereau; but the Austrians stood their ground until they heard the great blast of trumpets, when, thinking they were going to be charged by a whole division of cavalry, they fled, and the battle was decided in favor of France. Italy is our own."

"Not yet," said Massena. "Austria is stubborn. In spite of her many defeats, she will make at least one more effort to recover possession of this fair land. We have much fighting yet to do, I am sure."

"We have lost many brave men in these three fighting days,"

said young Lemarois. "But the enemy have suffered a loss of at least twelve thousand killed, and six thousand made prisoners, while we have taken eighteen pieces of cannon and four stand of colors."

"Trophies enough," said Augereau. "It seems to me, that whether this battle has decided the fate of Italy or not, we shall soon have a short respite from our toils, which will give us time to recruit."

The conversation continued thus till most of the officers, being overcome with fatigue, retired to their quarters. The Guides slept around their fires, in close proximity to numbers of the gallant dead, whose slumber was destined to be broken only by the archangel's trump.

In the meantime, the young conqueror had sought his couch for much needed repose, and so soundly did he sleep that even the glories of Arcola were forgotten for the time.

THE CAMP-FIRE AT RIVOLI

The chain of Monte Baldo divides the lake of Garda from the Adige. The high road winds between the Adige and the foot of the mountains, to the extent of some leagues. At Incanale the river washes the very base of the mountains, leaves no room whatever for proceeding along its bank. The road then leaves the banks of the river, rises by a zig-zag direction round the sides of the mountain, and debouches upon an extensive elevated plain, which is that of Rivoli. It overlooks the Adige on one side, and is encompassed on the other side by the amphitheatre of Monte Baldo. An army in position of this *plateau* commands the winding road by which the ascent to it is made, and sweeps by its fire both banks of the Adige to a great distance. It is very difficult to storm this *plateau* in front, since you must climb up the narrow zig-zag road before you can reach it. Therefore no one would attempt to attack it by that single way. Before arriving at Incanale, other roads lead to Monte Baldo, and ascending its long and sloping acclivities terminate at the *plateau* of Rivoli. They are not passable either for cavalry or for artillery, but they afford easy access to foot soldiers, and may be made available for carrying a considerable force in infantry upon the flanks and rear of the body defending the *plateau*.

Here the star of Napoleon was destined to shine with new glory. Alvinzi commanded the principal attack on the Tyrolese

side, at the head of fifty thousand men, and advanced his headquarters from Bassano to Roveredo. General Provera took the command of the army on the lower Adige, which was twenty thousand strong: its head-quarters were at Padua. A great many troops appeared on different points, and some spirited actions also took place in the course of the 12th and 13th; but the enemy had not fully unmasked his plans, so that the moment for adopting a decisive course had not yet arrived. On the 13th it rained very heavily, and Napoleon had not yet resolved in what direction to march, whether up or down the Adige. At ten in the evening, the accounts from Joubert, at La Corona, determined him. It was plain that the Austrians were operating with two independent corps, the principal attack being intended against Monte Baldo, the minor one on the Lower Adige. Augereau's division appeared sufficient to dispute the passage of the river with Provera; but on the Monte Baldo side the danger was imminent. There was not a moment to lose; for the enemy was about to effect a junction with his artillery and cavalry, by taking possession of the level of Rivoli; and if he could be attacked before he could gain that important point, he would be obliged to fight without artillery or cavalry. All the troops were therefore put in motion from the head-quarters at Verona, to reach Rivoli before day-break; the general-in-chief proceeded to the same point, and arrived there at two in the morning.

The weather had been rainy for several days. But now the sky was without a cloud. The moon and stars shone with a

brilliancy peculiar to their light in this region. The air was keen and bitter cold. The French general, accompanied by his aids and the faithful Guides, proceeded to a projecting rock on the heights of Monte Maggone, to gain a complete view of the enemy, previous to fixing the plan of battle. And now behold the group, dismounted, and collected near the fire, Bonaparte being in advance, with glass in hand, surveying the positions of the enemy. Duroc, Lemarois, Murat, Berthier and Bessieres stood together just behind him. The whole horizon was in a blaze with the Austrian fires, and the red glare contrasted strangely with the pure white light of the moon. Bonaparte observed and talked with his customary precision and rapidity.

“Alvinzi has at least forty-five thousand men under his command. We have but twenty-two thousand; while the brave Joubert, who has so nobly maintained his position at Rivoli, has but ten thousand. The enemy has divided his force into three columns, although I see no less than five camps. The principal column, will proceed along the high road between the river and Monte Baldo, and will debouch by the winding road of Incanale. Three divisions of infantry have climbed the steep mountains, and will get to the field by descending the steps of the amphitheatre formed by this chain of heights. Another division will wind round the side of the mountains and attempt to gain our rear.

“But yonder seems to be another camp on the other side of the Adige,” said Murat, pointing to a line of fires.

“True,” said Bonaparte, “but that can do no damage. It can only fire a few balls across the river. It is clear, we must keep the plateau at all events. Posted there we prevent the junction of the different divisions of the enemy. We may play our artillery upon the infantry which is deprived of its cannon, and drive back the cavalry and artillery which must be crowded together in a narrow, winding road. The other divisions will not trouble us much.” Thus, with lightning-like rapidity, did this matchless general conceive the plan which was to give him a glorious victory.

“I suppose we are to begin the battle at daybreak,” said Duroc.

“At daybreak! Now! now is the time!” replied the French general, sharply. “Duroc! Joubert’s troops have been fighting forty-eight hours, and they are now taking a little repose. They must be aroused immediately. Tell them for me, that they must not let Massena’s division surpass them in endurance, and his troops have marched by night and fought by day. Order General Joubert to attack the advanced post of the Austrian infantry, drive them back, and extend his force more widely upon the plateau.”

Duroc immediately spurred away to communicate the order to Joubert.

“Joubert has done well; but he should not have abandoned yonder St. Mark’s Chapel. At all events, I do not believe the enemy have occupied it. Duroc is rapid in movement. The battle of Rivoli will soon commence,” said the French general.

“I wish Massena was nearer the field,” observed Murat.

“He will be up in time, never fear. He is indomitable. Besides,

if the battle should assume a critical aspect, I will go myself to hurry up his division. Ha! Joubert is up like a roused lion, and in movement. Who leads the column? Vial—a brave officer,” continued Bonaparte. At this moment, a rattling fire of musketry rang on the air, and from the height where Bonaparte stood, could be seen the rapid advance of Joubert’s troops, as well as the long line of D’Ocksy’s column of Croats against whom the attack was directed. Then the thunder of the artillery was heard, and clouds of smoke curled up from the plateau.”

“St. Mark’s Chapel is recovered,” said Bessieres.

“The Austrian infantry cannot stand against the artillery, and they are falling back in a semicircle, with the heights at their rear,” remarked Bonaparte.

At this moment, Liptai’s division which kept the extremity of the enemy’s semicircle, fell upon Joubert’s left, composed of the 89th and 25th demi-brigades, surprised them, broke their lines and compelled them to retire in disorder. The 14th coming immediately after these demi-brigades formed *en crochet* to cover the rest of the line, and bravely stood their ground. The Austrians now put forth all their strength and almost overwhelmed this little band of heroes. They made desperate efforts to capture the artillery, the horses of which had all been killed. They had even reached the pieces, when a brave officer rushed forward, and exhorted the grenadiers not to allow their guns to be taken. Fifty men immediately rushed forward, repulsed the enemy, harnessed themselves to the pieces, and

drew them back.

In the midst of this terrible struggle, the day began to dawn upon the field of Rivoli. Bonaparte who had watched the progress of the fight with the keenest interest, repeatedly making exclamations of surprise or admiration, now perceived the critical position of affairs. Turning to Berthier, he said quickly,

“General Berthier, I leave you in charge of my troops at the point where they are threatened. I know you and General Joubert can hold that position, no matter what the number of the enemy may be. I am going with all speed after Massena. Come, aids—Bessieres, mount and forward!” The whole party was quickly in the saddle, and away, leaving the watch-fire to smoulder and die, as the lurid blaze of battle arose upon the plain.

Massena's first troops had scarcely come up, after marching all night. Bonaparte took the 32d, already distinguished by its exploits during the campaign, and brought it to bear upon the left, so as to rally the two demi-brigades, which had given way. The intrepid Massena advanced at its head, rallied behind him the broken troops, and overthrew all before him. He repulsed the Austrians, and placed himself by the side of the 14th, which had not ceased to perform prodigies of valor. The fight was thus kept up on this point, and the army occupied the semicircle of the plateau. But the momentary check of the left wing had obliged Joubert to fall back with the right; he gave ground, and already the Austrian infantry was a second time nearing that

point which Bonaparte had such an object in compelling him to abandon; in fact, the Austrian infantry was about getting up to the outlet by which the winding road of Incanale led to the plateau. At this moment, the column composed of artillery and cavalry, and preceded by several battalions of grenadiers, ascended the winding road, and with incredible efforts of bravery, repulsed the 29th. Wukassovich, from the other bank of the Adige, sent a shower of cannon balls to protect this kind of escalade. Already had the grenadiers climbed the summit of the defile, and the cavalry was debouching in their train upon the plateau. This was not all. Lusignan's column, whose fires had been seen at a distance, and who had been perceived on the left, getting to the rear of the position of the French, were now coming up to their rear, in order to cut them off from the road to Verona, and to stop Rey, who was coming from Castel-Novo with the division of reserve. Lusignan's soldiers finding themselves on the rear of the French army, already clapped their hands, and considered it as taken. Thus, on this plateau, closely pressed in front by a semicircle of infantry, pressed on the rear, on the left by a strong column, sealed on the right by the main body of the Austrian army, and galled by the cannon balls which came from the opposite bank of the Adige in the direction of this plateau, Bonaparte was alone with Joubert's and Massena's divisions, in the midst of a cloud of enemies. In fact, he was with sixteen thousand men, surrounded by forty thousand at least.

At this anxious moment, Bonaparte was not shaken; he

retained all the fire of inspiration. On seeing Lusignan's Austrians, he said, "*Those are ours!*" and he allowed them to engage without giving himself any concern about their movement. The soldiers, conjecturing what their general meant, experienced the same confidence, and also repeated to one another, "*They are ours!*" Bonaparte did not concern himself with more than what was passing before him. His left was protected by the heroism of the 14th and the 32d. His right was threatened at once by the infantry which had resumed the offensive, and by the column that was scaling the plateau. He immediately directed decisive movements to be effected.

A battery of light artillery and two squadrons, under two brave officers, Leclerc and Laselle, were ordered to the outlet of which the enemy had taken possession. Joubert, who, with the extreme right, had this outlet at his back, suddenly faced about with a corps of light infantry. All charged at once. The artillery first poured a discharge upon all that had debouched; the cavalry and light infantry then charged with vigor. Joubert's horse was killed under him; he got up nowise daunted, and rushed upon the enemy with a musket in his hand. All that had debouched, grenadiers, cavalry, artillery, all were hurled pell-mell headlong down the winding road of Incanale. The confusion was awful; some pieces of cannon firing down into the defile, augmented the terror and confusion. At every step, the French killed and made prisoners.

Having cleared the plateau of the assailants who had scaled it, Bonaparte again returned to his attacks against the infantry which

was ranged in semicircle before him, and set Joubert upon it with the light infantry, and Laselle with two hundred hussars. On this new attack, consternation seized that infantry, now deprived of all hope of effecting a junction with the main body; it fled in confusion. The French semicircular line then moved from right to left, drove back the Austrians against the amphitheatre of Monte Baldo, and pursued them as far as possible into the mountains. Bonaparte then returned, and proceeded to realize his prediction upon Lusignan's division. That body, on witnessing the disasters of the Austrian army, soon perceived what would be its own fate. Bonaparte, after firing upon it with grape-shot, ordered the 18th and the 75th demi-brigades to charge. These brave demi-brigades moved onwards, singing the *chant du départ*, and drove Lusignan back by the road which Rey was coming up with the reserve. The Austrian corps at first made a stand, then retreated, and came full butt upon the advanced guard of Rey's division. Terrified at this sight, it sought the clemency of the conqueror, and laid down its arms, to the number of four thousand men. Two thousand had been taken in the defile of the Adige.

It was five o'clock. The Austrian army was almost annihilated. Lusignan was taken. The infantry which had advanced from the mountains, was flying over the rugged declivities. The principal column was pent up on the bank of the river, while the subordinate division of Wukassovich was an idle spectator of the disaster, separated by the Adige from the field of battle. The French general had had several horses killed under him, and

had received several slight wounds, but in spite of his constant activity and exposure, he was still ready to follow up his victory immediately. The battle of La Favorita ensued, in which the army of Provera was annihilated. In three days, twenty-three thousand men were captured. Massena's troops had marched and fought four days and nights, without any considerable intermission. The intrepid general himself, afterwards received the title of Duke of Rivoli. Mantua was at the feet of Bonaparte, and Italy was won.

THE CAMP-FIRE ON THE ALPS

Although Bonaparte had performed amazing, and, in some respects, unparalleled, exploits in Italy, there was a general disposition among both Frenchmen and foreigners to set up inferior commanders as his rivals. Now it was Moreau, then Massena; then Hoche, and then the young Archduke Charles, of Austria. The last mentioned had attained a high reputation by a campaign in which he triumphed over Generals Moreau and Jourdan, but his valor and skill, although great, were overrated, as Bonaparte and Massena soon rendered evident.

The Archduke took command of the Austrian army of Italy, and on the 6th of February, 1797, advanced his head-quarter to Innspruck. During that month, his engineers visited the passes of the Julien and Noric Alps, which it had been designed to fortify. Napoleon, having about fifty-three thousand troops under his command, resolved to astonish his enemy by a rapid and daring march upon the passes of the Alps before they could be fortified. He formed the plan of a campaign, the great object of which was the Austrian capital, Vienna, and the execution was as prompt as the conception was bold. The Tagliamento was passed, and the enemy completely defeated; the passes of the Alps were carried, after a tremendous struggle. Joubert beat the Austrians in the Tyrol, the Archduke's reputation was reduced to its proper dimensions, and Vienna trembled, having no means of resisting

the all-conquering Bonaparte. Tarwis is the loftiest pass of the Noric Alps. It is above the clouds and is generally covered with snow and ice, which give it a desolate and terrible aspect. It overlooks Germany and Dalmatia. At this point the roads leading to Italy and Trieste separate; the road to Italy running west, and that leading to Trieste running south. At this place, Bonaparte fixed his head-quarters, shortly after the pass had been captured by the indomitable Massena. It was the last day of March. The weather was intensely cold, and the body of troops accompanying the French general suffered severely. Bonaparte and his aids were snugly quartered in the rude chalets, which are the only habitations upon the height of Tarwis. The soldiers were grouped amid a cordon of fires, the fuel for which they had brought from a great distance below, with a vast amount of labor and difficulty. Yet they shivered beside the crackling blaze. It was a wild and startling scene. The night was cloudy—the wind, keen and furious. The red glare of the fires was reflected by walls of ice and blood-stained snow. As the soldiers wrapped themselves in their blankets, crept as close to the fires as they could get, and conversed with a French attempt at gaiety, they were surprised to see their beloved general, accompanied by Berthier and Duroc, come out of a chalet, to examine their condition, and speak a word of cheer.

“A freezing time, men; but it will be hot enough soon,” he remarked to a group of veterans.

“The cold is more terrible than the Austrians, general,” said

one of them, with an attempt at a laugh.

“But it cannot conquer the conquerors of Italy,” replied Bonaparte. Thus he went among the brave men who followed his standard, and thus he communicated his own spirit to all with whom he came in contact. After traversing the whole ground occupied by the troops, the French general returned to his quarters to repose.

Beneath a kind of shed in the rear of the chalet, several of the Guides were seated round a cheerful fire, smoking pipes and conversing of the recent actions and their thrilling incidents. Among them were Bessieres and Lemarois. The wall of the chalet, which formed the rear of the shed, served to keep off the fury of the wind, so that this place was comfortable, compared with the position of the soldiers. Besides, the hearts of these veterans had been gladdened with abundance of good eating at the chalet, and satisfaction was evident in their faces. The manly face of Bessieres, wore that expression of calm circumspection, which it never lost in the thickest of battle.

“The passage of the Tagliamento,” said this brave leader, “will take rank with any similar exploit, recorded in history.”

“It must be acknowledged that the archduke had posted his forces in an admirable style,” said young Lemarois. “His artillery covered the level shingle of the river, and his fine cavalry, deployed on the wings, so as to be brought rapidly into service, was an admirable disposition.”

“Yes,” said Bessieres, “but as usual, the character of the

manœuvres which defeated the Austrians throws all their dispositions into insignificance. Was there ever a general so fertile of stratagem as Bonaparte? See how quickly he determined upon a plan to diminish the vigilance of the enemy! An immense number of men might have been lost if he had attempted the passage of the river as soon as he reached its banks. But he valued the lives of his soldiers too much, to throw them away, when a simple stratagem could save them. The Austrians naturally supposed that after marching all night, he wanted rest, and when the general ordered us to halt and begin to partake of our soup, they were completely deceived. How the archduke must have opened his eyes, when he saw us get suddenly in motion at noon!”

“The disposition of our forces was so admirable that it made some of our own skilful officers open their eyes,” said Lemarois. “Look at it! Guyeux’s division on the left, and Bernadotte’s on the right, by which arrangement the troops of Italy and the soldiers of the Rhine were brought into a noble rivalry. Then battalions of grenadiers were formed. At the head of each division was placed the light infantry, ready to disperse as sharp-shooters, then the grenadiers who were to charge, and the dragoons who were to support them. Each demi-brigade had its first battalions, deployed in line, and the two others arranged in close column on the wings of the first. The cavalry hovered on the wings. A finer disposition could not have been made.”

“Crossing the river was a glorious scene!” said Bessieres. “The

light infantry covered the bank with a cloud of sharp-shooters. Then the grenadiers entered the water. ‘Soldiers of the Rhine!’ exclaimed Bernadotte, ‘the army of Italy has its eyes upon you.’ Each division displayed the utmost bravery in the charge; we can make no distinction between them.”

“No, indeed,” observed a grim-visaged Guide, who sat next to Bessieres. “Our soldiers called the troops of the Rhine *the contingent*, and treated them with the greatest contempt before the battle. A number of sabre cuts were exchanged on account of this raillery. But the contingent proved themselves worthy of any army at Tagliamento. They drove the Austrians before them like a flock of sheep.”

“All acted in a manner worthy of France,” said Lemarois. “The archduke was routed and the line of the Tagliamento cleared in a remarkably short time.”

“What is the name of that general of cavalry who was captured?” inquired one of the Guides—a burly fellow, with a good-humored cast of countenance.

“I forget his name,” replied Bessieres; “but I cannot forget that he is a brave man, and that he fought with a courage and resolution which put most of his countrymen to shame.

“To be just, however,” observed Lemarois, “there are many gallant officers in the Austrian army. It is not their fault if they have not a Bonaparte to bring victory to their standard. They have a large number of hearts following their flag, as intrepid as old Wurmser. But strange to say, they have never had a first class

general.

“That’s about the truth of the matter,” commented the burly Guide.

“By the way, Jacques,” said Bessieres, “it seems to be getting colder as the night advances. Put on a little more of that wood. Its bad enough fuel, though, for it smokes abominably.”

Jacques was the burly Guide previously alluded to. He obeyed the order of his commander.

“The men outside ought to have plenty of provision to console them amid their sufferings on such a night. They will scarcely dare to sleep,” said Lemarois.

“I saw our general out among them a short time ago,” replied Bessieres. “A few sympathetic words from him will do more than any amount of provision.”

“That’s a fact,” said the grim veteran who sat next to the commander of the Guides. “They know that he feels for them, and that he would help them if he could. See there at St. George, an outpost of Mantua, where there was a necessity for constant vigilance, to prevent Provera from surprising us, and relieving Wurmser. The general visiting one of the outposts at night, found a sentinel lying at the foot of a tree, where he had fallen fast asleep from exhaustion. He took the soldier’s musket and walked backwards and forwards on sentry for more than half an hour. Suddenly the soldier started up, and was terrified at seeing General Bonaparte on duty; he expected nothing less than death. But the general spoke kindly to him, told him that after

his great fatigues, he wanted sleep; but cautioned him against choosing such a time. That is the way for a general to make heroes out of soldiers. That sentinel would have risked his life at any time to give victory to General Bonaparte.”

“Bonaparte is every inch of a general, a soldier and a man,” said Bessieres.

“Some miserable judges wish to set up this young Archduke Charles as a rival to our general,” said Lemarois. “Why, this battle of Tarwis, in which he had every thing in his favor, proves that he is not by a great deal, up to the measure of Massena.”

“Have you heard the full particulars of the struggle at this pass?” inquired Bessieres. “Battles come so rapidly, that it is difficult to gain a complete knowledge of them.”

“I was present when an officer of Massena’s division who participated in the fight communicated the intelligence,” replied Lemarois. “While we were advancing to Gradisca, General Massena pressed forward, reached this pass, and made himself master of it without much difficulty. The division of Bayalitsch, proceeding across the sources of the Isonzo to anticipate Massena at the pass, would therefore find the outlet closed. The Archduke Charles, foreseeing this result, left the rest of his army on the Friule and Carniola road, with orders to come and rejoin him behind the Alps at Klagenfurt; he then himself made the utmost haste to Villach, where numerous detachments were coming up from the Rhine, to make a fresh attack on the pass, to drive Massena from it, and to re-open the road for

Bayalitsch's division. Bonaparte, on his side, left Bernadotte's division to pursue the divisions that were retreating into Carniola, and with Guyeux's and Serrurier's divisions, proceeded to harass the Bayalitsch division in its rear, in its passage through the valley of the Isonzo. Prince Charles, after rallying behind the Alps the wrecks of Lusignan and Orksay, who had lost the pass, reinforced them with six thousand grenadiers, the finest and bravest soldiers in the imperial service, and again attacked the pass, where Massena had left scarcely a detachment. He succeeded in recovering it, and posted himself here with the regiments of Lusignan and Orksay, and the six thousand grenadiers. Massena collected his whole division, in order to carry it again. Both generals were sensible of the importance of this point. Tarwis retaken, the French army would be masters of the Alps, and would make prisoners of the whole of Bayalitsch's division. Massena rushed on headlong with his brave infantry, and suffered as usual in person. Prince Charles was not less chary of himself than the republican general, and several times ran the risk of being taken by the French riflemen. Whole lines of cavalry were thrown down and broken on this frightful field of battle. At length, after having brought forward his last battalion, the Archduke Charles abandoned Tarwis to his pertinacious adversary, and found himself compelled to sacrifice Bayalitsch's division. Massena, left master of Tarwis, fell down upon that division which now came up, attacked it in front, while it was pressed in the rear by the divisions of Guyeux and Serrurier. That

division had no other resource than to be made prisoners; and our army captured all the baggage, artillery and ammunition of the enemy that had followed this route. For my part, I think that a good general could have maintained this pass against a greatly superior force.”

“It is a strong position, and it does not appear to me that it could be turned,” observed Bessieres. “However,” continued he, rising, “the pass is ours; Joubert has beaten the enemy and will soon join us; the archduke is completely beaten, and there is scarcely an obstacle in the way of a march to Vienna. These are the results of a march as daring and skilful as any ever conceived by a general. So much glory for General Bonaparte, and renown to the arms of France. Come, Lemarois, we will enter the chalet, and strive to gain some repose. Keep up your spirits, men, and above all keep up the fire. Good night!”

And keen and swiftly blew the Alpine wind, and redly blazed the fires of Tarwis till the light of day arose from the ashes of the night. Then the French general pursued his march. He united his forces; Vienna was threatened, and the treaty of Campo Formio was extorted from Austria.

THE CAMP-FIRE ON THE NILE

The evening of the 21st of July, 1798, had cast its shadows on the Nile. Although the day had been excessively warm, the air was now cool and pleasant. The full moon was gradually deepening the placid splendor of her light, and giving a silvery sheen to the winding waters of the river. On an elevated terrace, in the distance, could be distinguished the bold and gorgeous minarets and gilded domes of Cairo. The villages of Bulak and Shoubra were nestled on the river banks, overlooking a vast extent of cultivated plain, rich in vineyards and grain. The great obelisk of Heliopolis stood out against the eastern sky; and the vast Lybian desert stretched away in desolation to the west. In the midst of this sea of sand, could be faintly distinguished the awful forms of the great pyramids of Ghizeh, from which that day, "forty centuries had looked down," upon the victory achieved by Bonaparte over the Mameluke tyrants of Egypt.

The French were encamped upon the banks of the Nile; and the light of their watch-fires could be seen for a great distance along the river. The victorious general was at Ghizeh, having fixed his quarters in the country-seat of Murad Bey. But although the watch-fires were burning, the soldiers of the conquering army were not gathered around them. No; the spoils of victory would not let them rest. They had suffered much in the dreary march towards Cairo, and fought bravely in overcoming the gallant

cavalry of the Egyptian army, and now very naturally sought to repay themselves for their hardships and toils. The field of battle was covered with the troops, who were engaged in stripping the valuable articles from the bodies of the slain Mamelukes. Among the spoils thus obtained were splendid shawls, weapons of fine workmanship, purses, some of which contained as many as two and three hundred pieces of gold; for the Mamelukes carried all their ready money on their persons. More than a thousand of these Egyptian warriors had been drowned in the Nile; and even now, by the light of the moon, the French troops were engaged in dragging for the bodies, to swell the amount of their booty. A more indefatigable set of spoil-seekers never won a victory.

The Mamelukes had sixty vessels on the Nile, containing the bulk of their riches. In consequence of the unexpected result of the battle, they lost all hope of saving them, and set them on fire. The great blaze suddenly rising to the sky, caused the French troops to pause in the midst of their search for valuables. They knew the contents of those vessels, and they beheld the gradual destruction of those vast treasures with feelings of disappointment not easily delineated. During the whole night, through the volumes of smoke and flame, the French could perceive the forms of the minarets and buildings of Cairo and the City of the Dead; and the red glare was even gloriously reflected by the Pyramids. To increase the terrors of the scene, the wild and treacherous populace of Cairo, learning the disasters of their countrymen, set fire to the splendid palaces of the Beys,

and these great edifices blazed and crackled up against the sky throughout the night.

About nine, in the evening, Bonaparte, accompanied by Berthier, Desaix, Lannes, Regnier, and nearly all his principal officers, and even a number of the privates, entered the country-house of Murad Bey, at Ghizeh. This residence presented a magnificent appearance at a distance, and a close inspection disclosed many additional beauties. But it was a point of some difficulty at first to make it serve for a lodging, or to comprehend the distribution of the apartments. But what chiefly struck the officers with surprise, was the great quantity of cushions and divans covered with the finest damasks and Lyons silks, and ornamented with gold fringe. For the first time, they found the luxury and arts of Europe in Egypt—the cradle of luxury and arts. Bonaparte and his staff explored this singular structure in every direction. The gardens were full of magnificent trees, but without avenues, and not unlike the gardens in some of the nunneries of Italy. The soldiers were much elated at the discovery of large arbors of vines, burdened with the finest grapes in the world. The rapid vintage excited the laughter of the French generals, who, themselves, joined in the scramble for the delicious fruit.

In the meantime, the two divisions of Bon and Menou, which had remained behind in an entrenched camp, were equally well supplied. Among the baggage taken, had been found a great number of canteens full of preserves, both of confectionary and

sweetmeats, besides carpets, porcelain, vases of perfume, and a multitude of little elegancies used by the Mamelukes. All these luxuries had been purchased by the oppression of the mass of the Egyptians, and it was but a stroke of justice which took them from the oppressor.

The French troops, who had murmured much while traversing the hot sands of the desert, now fell in love with Egypt, and began to hope for a career of easy conquest and rare enjoyment. Their general was pleased at their change of tone, and permitted them to revel amidst the fruits of their labor and endurance.

Bonaparte and his officers spent the greater part of the night in exploring the residence of Murad Bey. Towards morning they reclined upon its luxurious couches, and while the conflagration raged without, and the soldiers were revelling among the spoil, these veteran officers indulged in repose. A short time previous these gallant men had shared Bonaparte's doubt and anxiety as he stood upon the deck of a vessel, in the harbor of Alexandria, viewing the shores of the land of the Pharoahs. Now they could sleep in the confidence of continued victory.

On the 20th of July, the young conqueror of the Pyramids, entered Grand Cairo, receiving the humble submission of the sic and the shouts of the thronging populace. The capital of Egypt was in the power of the French.

THE CAMP-FIRE AT MOUNT TABOR

In Lower Galilee, to the north-east of the great plain of Esdraelon, rises an eminence rendered intensely interesting by memories sacred and profane. It is Mount Tabor. Although surrounded by chains of mountains on nearly all sides, it is the only one that stands entirely aloof from its neighbors. The figure of the mount approaches that of a semi-sphere, and presents a regular appearance. Its ground figure is usually described as round; and, indeed, seems to be perfectly so to those coming from the midst of the great plain, or from the sea of Galilee. But, in reality, it is really somewhat longer from east to west than broad, so that its true figure is oval. The height of this mountain has never been subjected to actual measurement. It appears, however, that it occupies three hours to travel round the base of the mountain; that an hour is generally required to reach the summit by a circuitous path, and that the plain upon the top of the eminence is seldom traversed in less time than half an hour.

The mountain is inaccessible except on the north, where the ascent offers so little difficulty that there are few parts which suggest to the traveler the prudence or necessity of dismounting from his horse. This remarkable mountain offers so rare a combination of the bold and beautiful, that pilgrims of all ages

have expatiated upon its glories with untiring wonder and delight. The trees of various species, and the bushes always green, with which it is invested, and the small groves with which it is crowned, contribute no less than its figure to its perfect beauty. Ounces, wild boars, gazelles, and hares, are among the animals which find shelter in its more wooded parts; while the trees are tenanted by "birds of every wing," whose warblings and motions beguile the fatigues of the ascent. "The path," says Mr. Stephens, "wound around the mountain, and gave us a view from all its different sides, every step presenting something new, and more and more beautiful, until all was completely forgotten and lost in the exceeding loveliness of the view from the summit. Stripped of every association, and considered merely as an elevation commanding a view of unknown valleys and mountains, I never saw a mountain which, for beauty of scene, better repaid the toil of ascending it."

The view it commands is magnificent. To the north, in successive ranges, are the mountains of Galilee, backed by the mighty Lebanon; and Safet, as always, stands out in prominent relief. To the north-east is the Mount of Beatitudes, with its peculiar outline and interesting associations; behind which rise Great Hermon, and the whole chain of Anti-Lebanon. To the east are the hills of the Haouran, and the country of the Gadarenes, below which the eye catches a glimpse of the Lake of Tiberius, while to the south-east it crosses the valley of the Jordan, and rests on the high land of Bashan. Due south rise the mountains of

Gilboa, and behind them those of Samaria, stretching far to the west. On the south-south-west the villages of Endor and Nain are seen on the Little Hermon. Mount Carmel and the Bay of Acre appear on the north-west; and towards them flows, through the fertile plains of Esdraelon, “that great river, the River Kishon,” now dwindled into a little stream. Each feature in this prospect is beautiful: the eye and mind are delighted; and, by a combination of objects and associations, unusual to fallen man, earthly scenes, which more than satisfy the external sense, elevate the soul to heavenly contemplations.

The beautiful upper plain is inclosed by a wall,—probably the same which was built by Josephus, when Governor of Galilee,—and contains some ruins, which are probably those of the two monasteries, which, according to William of Tyre, were built here by Godfrey of Bouillon, in the place of others of earlier date which the Moslems had destroyed. The plain has at different times been under cultivation; but when, from oppression or fear, abandoned by the cultivator, it becomes a table of rich grass and wild flowers, which send forth a most refreshing and luxurious odor. In summer the dews fall copiously on Tabor, and a strong wind blows over it all day.

Tabor is chiefly interesting to the Christian, however, as the supposed scene of the Transfiguration, when Christ appeared in glory, with Moses, and Elias. To the reader of profane history and the student of the career of Napoleon Bonaparte, it is also rendered interesting as the scene of a decisive victory gained by

the French general over some of the bravest forces of the East.

It was the night of the 16th of April. The victorious French had encamped at the foot of Mount Tabor. The evening had set in calmly and beautifully, above a plain heaped with the dead of the annihilated army, but the deep shadows of night had scarcely descended, before the French general-in-chief ordered all the villages of the Naplousians to be set on fire; and although they were distant, their red light was so glaring, that it illumined the field of battle and the camp of the victors, and rendered evident many ghastly features of the scene.

At the tent of General Kleber were assembled that gallant officer, Junot, Murat and Bon. Bonaparte was in his tent, surrounded by his faithful Guides. Just outside of the line of tents the watch-fires were brightly burning, and the sentinels paced up and down with solemn tread. Kleber, and his brothers in glory, were seated on camp-stools around a table, on which were several bottles of wine. After Napoleon himself, Kleber was the most remarkable man of the army of Egypt. See him there, with his large and powerful frame—his great head of shaggy hair, his quick, piercing eyes, prominent features, and slovenly costume. Great-souled Jean Baptiste Kleber! The revolution found him a peaceful architect. He entered the ranks as a grenadier, and rose to be esteemed a military genius indispensable to France, and a commander as humane and generous as he was brave and skilful. Always peevish, he yet was guilty of no bitterness of action—mean conduct was with him an impossibility. Opposite

Kleber sat Andoche Junot. His mild, pleasant, handsome features expressed nothing of the indomitable spirit which he ever displayed in action; but his eyes were quick and intelligent. His costume was much cut and soiled by the desperate service he had performed during the last two days. Murat was as usual finely dressed. He seemed weary, and drank deeply to revive his spirits. Most terrible had been the slaughter of his sabres that day on the banks of the Jordan. General Bon had nothing remarkable in his appearance. The expression of his sun-burned countenance was that of firmness, united with intelligence and promptitude.

“I wonder how things go on at Acre,” said Junot.

“Bad as usual,” replied Kleber. “The place cannot be taken, that is evident. It was clear to me long ago, that Sidney Smith, and the engineer Philippeaux have stimulated the troops to extraordinary exertions. They repulse every assault; and as we have no siege trains, where is our chance for taking the town. Nowhere, nowhere—and so I told General Bonaparte—the stubborn specimen of lean genius. We shall waste our army before the walls of that place, and gain nothing; whereas, if the siege were raised, we might yet do much for Egypt.

“Then here must end our general’s grand project for striking a blow at the English dominion in Asia,” observed Bon.

“Aye,” said Kleber, “and it was folly to entertain such projects after the destruction of our fleet at Aboukir, by that confounded Englishman, Nelson. The most we could hope to do after that was to consolidate our empire in Egypt, and that would have been

no ordinary task. But this ‘Little Corporal,’ will not listen to any one.”

“The march to El Arisch, across that burning desert was bad enough; but I’m afraid that we shall have the same thing to do again, under worse circumstances,” said Murat.

“But this battle has won us glories enough to atone for many hardships,” remarked Junot. “At first the prospect was desperate enough.”

“You, Junot, have certainly increased your reputation,” said Bon. “The advanced guard which you commanded consisted of, at most, but five hundred men. Yet with that force you dared to encounter the enemy on the 8th, and not only covered the field with their dead, but took five stand of colors, and came off with but little loss.”

“Very well, but that is scarcely worthy of mention when we consider the long and successful defence made by Kleber’s whole division on the ground.”

“If I had not arrived too late last night, I might have surprised the Turkish army, and then that long defence would have been unnecessary. I designed to attempt the surprise,” said Kleber.

“The number of the enemy surprised me this morning, when they were drawn up in battle array,” said Junot. “Fifteen thousand infantry occupied the village of Fouli, and more than twelve thousand horse were drawn up in the plain, while we had scarcely three thousand infantry in square.”

“They made an imposing show, but they were met with such

steady bravery, and such a blaze of fire, that their ranks seemed to melt away like mist before the sun,” said Kleber. “However, it was well that General Bonaparte came up. The furious charges of the Turkish cavalry had begun to make an impression on my ranks, and it is probable enough they might have been broken in the course of the afternoon, if the general-in-chief had not brought up your division, Bon, and made those admirable dispositions, which placed the enemy between two fires, and soon put them to the rout. A tremendous fire discharged from three points of the triangle, sent the Mamelukes away in heaps. We took the village of Fouli—yes, Fouli, you call it—and then finished the enemy by putting them to soak in the waters of the Jordan. It has been a glorious day.”

“Six thousand French have destroyed an army which the Naplousians stated could no more be numbered than the stars in the heavens and the sands on the seashore,” observed Junot. “Well, we may fail in the conquest of the East, but this victory cannot be forgotten.”

“Besides glory,” said Kleber, “it may be as well to mention that the booty taken is worth considerable. The Turkish camp was well supplied with both necessaries and luxuries. We have taken four hundred camels, and the other booty is sufficient to satisfy our soldiers.”

“And see,” said Bon, “the Naplousians will have reason to remember us,” and he pulled aside the canvass of the tent and pointed to the red light of the burning villages.

At this moment, General Bonaparte appeared at the door of the tent, in company with Bessieres. The young general looked much worn and fatigued. His figure was stouter than it had been during the campaign of Italy; but his stern countenance still showed the hollow cheeks and sunken eyes, caused by the constant and powerful workings of his genius. His costume was much soiled, and its appearance indicated his want of attention to such matters during the press of the business of life and death. He held some papers in his hand.

“Generals, I hope I do not interrupt your conversation. But business like ours admits of no delay. I set off at day-break for Acre, where I am determined to press the siege with renewed vigor. I have reason to dread that a large Turkish army will soon be landed near the mouth of the Nile, and if Acre is to be taken at all, we must accomplish the feat very speedily; and it must be taken,” said Bonaparte, in his emphatic way.

“Must be taken,” said Kleber, always outspoken. “My opinion is that the siege will cost us many valuable lives, and yet not be successful. Every day increases the difficulties of our safe return to Cairo.”

“Yes, yes,” said Bonaparte, impatiently, “but it will not do to let this Englishman, Sidney Smith, and his Turks, baffle the conquerors of Italy and Egypt. General Kleber, you will lead your division back to Acre; and you, General Bon, will follow. We have annihilated our foes in this quarter, and have nothing more to fear from them. Hasten your march to Acre, and, doubtless,

with a few more determined efforts, that town will be in our hands." So saying, he bowed, and hurried out of the tent.

"A man destined to do great things; but destined to be mistaken in his present enterprise," observed Kleber.

Murat now proposed a ride over the field of battle, before retiring to repose. The others agreed, and all were soon mounted, and cantering away along the line of the camp-fires, and among the heaps of the dead. A large number of the French soldiers were engaged in searching for valuables among the bodies of the Mamelukes, and to the inquiries of the generals, they responded that they were reaping a full harvest. Around the line occupied by the troops of Kleber's division, was seen the wall of carcasses which had served as a protection to those gallant men, when they had become extremely fatigued by the struggle against the overwhelming numbers of the enemy. The light of the burning villages, and the watch-fires, was quite sufficient to enable them to pursue their spoil-seeking occupation. After riding over the whole field, the generals separated, and each sought his tent to stretch himself for repose, and to dream of the glorious incidents of the victory of Mount Tabor.

THE CAMP-FIRE AT ABOUKIR

The battle of Aboukir, was, perhaps, the only instance in the history of war, in which a hostile army was utterly annihilated by an inferior force. The victory, therefore, was one of the most splendid which Bonaparte ever achieved. The Turkish army, conveyed by the squadron of Sir Sidney Smith, anchored in Aboukir Bay on the 11th of July, 1799.

The place fixed upon by the English for their landing, was the peninsula which defends this road, and which bears the same name. This narrow peninsula runs out between the sea and Lake Madieh, and has a fort at its extremity. Bonaparte had ordered Marmont, who commanded at Alexandria, to improve the defences of the fort, and to destroy the village of Aboukir, situated around it. But, instead of destroying the village, he thought it better to keep the place in order to lodge the soldiers there; and it had merely been surrounded by a redoubt to protect it on the land side. But the redoubt not joining on both sides the sea, did not present the appearance of a close work, and put the fort on the same footing as a simple field-work. The Turks, in fact, landed with great boldness, attacked the intrenchments sword in hand, carried them, and made themselves masters of the village of Aboukir, putting the garrison to the sword. The village being taken, the fort could no longer hold out, and it was obliged to surrender. Marmont, who commanded at Alexandria,

had issued forth, at the head of twelve hundred men, to hasten to the assistance of the troops at Aboukir. But learning that the Turks had landed in considerable numbers, he durst not attempt to drive them into the sea by a bold attack. He returned to Alexandria, and left them to quietly take up their position on the peninsula of Aboukir.

The Turks amounted to nearly eighteen thousand infantry. These were not the miserable Fellahs who had composed the infantry of the Mamelukes; but brave janizaries, carrying a musket without bayonet, slinging it at their back after firing, and rushing pistol and sword in hand upon the enemy. They had a numerous and well-served artillery, and were under the direction of English officers. They had no cavalry, for they had not brought more than three hundred horses; but they expected Murad Bey, who was to leave Upper Egypt, proceed along the desert, cross the oasis, and throw himself into Aboukir with two or three thousand Mamelukes.

When Bonaparte was informed of the particulars of the landing, he left Cairo instantly, and made from that city to Alexandria one of those extraordinary marches of which he had given so many instances in Italy. He took with him the divisions of Lannes, Bon, and Murat. He had ordered Desaix to evacuate Upper Egypt, and Kleber and Regnier, who were in the Delta, to bring themselves nearer Aboukir. He had chosen the point of Birket, midway between Alexandria and Aboukir, in order to concentrate his forces thither, and to manœuvre according

to circumstances. He was very fearful lest an English army had landed with the Turks.

Murad Bey, according to the plan settled with Mustapha Pacha, had tried a descent into Lower Egypt; but being met and beaten by Murat, he had been obliged to regain the desert. There was now nothing left but the Turkish army to fight, destitute as it was of cavalry, but yet encamped behind intrenchments, and disposed to stand its ground there with its usual pertinacity. Bonaparte, after inspecting Alexandria and the admirable works executed by Colonel Cretin, and after reprimanding Marmont, his lieutenant, who had not dared to attack the Turks at the moment of landing, left Alexandria on the 6th Thermidor, (July 24th.) Next day, the 7th, he was at the entrance of the peninsula. His plan was to inclose the Turkish army by intrenchments, and to await the arrival of all his divisions, for all he had with him were no more than the divisions of Lannes, Bon, and Murat, about six thousand men. But on observing the arrangements made by the Turks, he altered his intentions, and resolved to attack them immediately, hoping to inclose them in the village of Aboukir, and to overwhelm them with bombs and howitzers.

The Turks occupied the furthest end of the peninsula, which is very narrow. They were covered by two lines of intrenchments. Half a league in advance of the village of Aboukir, where their camp was, they had occupied two round sand-hills, supported the one on the sea, the other on Lake Madieh, and thus forming their right and left. In the centre of these two hillocks was a village,

which they had likewise kept. They had one thousand men on the hillock to the right, two thousand on the hillock to the left, and three or four thousand men in the village. Such was their first line. The second was at the village of Aboukir itself. It consisted of the redoubt constructed by the French, and was connected with the sea by two trenches. It was there that they had stationed their principal camp and the bulk of their forces.

Bonaparte made his arrangements with his usual promptitude and decision. He ordered General Destaing, with some battalions, to march to the hill on the left, where one thousand Turks were posted; Lannes to march to that on the right, where the two thousand others were; and Murat, who was at the centre, to make the cavalry file on the rear of the two hillocks. These arrangements were executed with great precision. Destaing marched to the hillock on the left, and boldly climbed it; Murat contrived to get at its rear with a troop of cavalry. The Turks, when they saw this, abandoned their post, fell in with the cavalry, which cut them in pieces, and drove them into the sea, into which they chose rather to throw themselves than to surrender. The same operation was executed on the right. Lannes attacked the two thousand Mamelukes, Murat got at their rear; and they were in like manner cut to pieces and driven into the sea. Destaing and Lannes then moved towards the centre, formed by a village, and attacked it in front. The Turks there defended themselves bravely, relying upon assistance from the second line. A column in fact was detached from the camp of Aboukir; but

Murat, who had already filed upon the rear of the village, cut this column in pieces, and drove it back into Aboukir. Destaing's infantry and that of Lannes entered the village at the charge step, driving the Turks out of it, who were dispersed in all directions, and who obstinately refusing to surrender, had no other retreat than the sea, wherein they were drowned.

Already four or five thousand had perished in this manner. The first line was carried; Bonaparte's object was accomplished, and now, inclosing the Turks in Aboukir, he could bombard them while waiting for the arrival of Kleber and Regnier. But he desired to make the most of his success, and to complete his victory that very moment. After giving his troops a little breathing time, he marched upon the second line. The division under Lanusse, which had been left as a reserve, supported Lannes and Destaing. The redoubt which covered Aboukir was difficult to carry; it had within it nine or ten thousand Turks. On the right, a trench joined it to the sea; on the left, another trench brought it further out; but was not continued quite to Lake Madieh. The open space was occupied by the enemy, and swept by the fire of numerous gun-boats. Bonaparte, having accustomed his soldiers to defy the most formidable obstacles, sent them upon the enemy's position. His divisions of infantry marched upon the front and the right of the redoubt. The cavalry, concealed in a wood of palm-trees, had to make the attack on the left, and then to cross, under the fire of the gun-boats, the open space between the redoubt and Lake Madieh. The charge was

made; Lannes and Destaing urged forward their brave infantry. The 32d marched with their pieces on their arms towards the intrenchments, and the 18th got at the rear of the intrenchments on the extreme right. The enemy, without waiting for them, advanced to meet them. They fought hand to hand. The Turkish soldiers, having fired their pieces and their two pistols, drew their flashing sabres. They endeavored to grasp the bayonets, but received them in their flanks before they could lay hold of them. Thus a great slaughter took place in the intrenchments. The 18th was on the point of getting into the redoubt, when a tremendous fire of artillery repulsed it, and sent it back to the foot of the works. The gallant Leturcq fell gloriously, by desiring to be the last to retire; Fugieres lost an arm. Murat on his part had advanced with his cavalry, with a view to clear the space between the fire of the redoubt and Lake Madieh. Several times he had dashed forward, and had turned back the enemy; but taken between the two fires of the redoubt, and that of the gun-boats, he had been obliged to fall back on the rear. Some of his horse-soldiers had advanced to the ditches of the redoubt. The efforts of so many brave fellows appeared likely to be entirely unavailable. Bonaparte looked coolly on this carnage, waiting for a favorable moment to return to the charge. Fortunately the Turks, as they usually did, quitted the intrenchments for the purpose of cutting off the heads of the slain. Bonaparte seized this opportunity, launched forth two battalions, one of the 22d, the other of the 69th, which marched upon the intrenchments and

carried them. On the right, the 18th also took advantage of this opportunity, and entered the redoubt. Murat, on his side, ordered a fresh charge. One of his divisions of cavalry traversed that most exposed space between the intrenchments and the lake, and made his way into the village of Aboukir. The Turks, affrighted, fled on all sides, and a horrible slaughter of them ensued. They were pressed by the point of the bayonet and driven into the sea. Murat, at the head of his heroes, penetrated into the camp of Mustapha Pacha. The latter, in a fit of despair, snatched up a pistol and fired it at Murat, whom he wounded slightly. Murat struck off two of his fingers and sent him prisoner to Bonaparte. Such of the Turks as were not killed or drowned retired into the fort of Aboukir.¹

The proud army of the Turks was thus completely overwhelmed, as if it had been entirely buried by an avalanche. No wonder that the enthusiastic Kleber, after witnessing the manœuvres that gained this splendid victory, clasped Bonaparte in his arms, and exclaimed, “General, you are as great as the world itself.”

It was the second night after the battle. The army was encamped upon the field. Bonaparte was alone in his tent. That day he had contrived to obtain from Sir Sidney Smith a file of papers from Europe, from which he eagerly sought information as to the condition and prospects of France. He had dismissed all his officers, and now, as they were either carousing in their

¹ Thiers.

tents, or wandering among the camp-fires of the troops, he sat in his tent to obtain that information which was destined to lead to such great and decisive plans. See him, as he sits there, with his eyes keenly fixed upon the papers, and an occasional smile lighting up his features of bronze! He learns the calamities which have visited the armies of France, and then the smile is turned to a terrible frown, and he exclaims, passionately,

“The imbeciles! the imbeciles! Why was I not there?”

He perused the accounts of the overthrow of the French armies in Italy and Germany; he saw that all that he had gained for France, had been lost; he knew that these disasters would not have occurred if he had retained a European command; and he felt more strongly than ever that he was destined to retrieve the condition of affairs, to bind victory once more to the tri-color standard. Perhaps, also, his mind perceived the opportunity for gratifying the aspirations of a selfish ambition, and that this perception caused the frown to melt once more into a smile—a smile of triumph. He saw that the disasters attending the French arms had rendered the Directory unpopular, and that power was within the reach of any bold, decisive man, who would dare to attempt the overthrow of that government; and he had faith enough in himself to decide that he was the very man for the crisis. Long he read, and long he pondered. Cæsar deliberated upon the banks of the Rubicon. At length he started up. The die was cast. He would return to France and strike for the supreme authority. Having once decided upon his movements,

no man could have taken his measures with more promptitude. He resolved to sail secretly for Europe. He wrote a dispatch to Admiral Gantheaume, directing him to get the Muiron and Carrere frigates ready for sea. He determined that as Kleber was very popular with the army, that general should be left in command. There could be no doubt of Klebers vigor, activity and skill. Bonaparte then sat down, and, with astonishing rapidity and precision, drew up a long list of instructions for the new commander-in-chief. He then sent word to Berthier, Lannes, Murat, Andreossy, Marmont, Berthollet, and Monge, that he wished to see them in his tent. It was late. But they came, without exception, at his summons. Kleber and Menou were then at Cairo, or they, also, would have been invited to this important conference. In a few words, Bonaparte communicated his sudden resolution to those officers he had assembled around him. They were surprised, but when he told them that he wished them to go with him, they were glad; for in spite of the glory achieved in Egypt, they were anxious to return to France. Berthier had been suffering for some time from depression of spirits, owing to a long standing matrimonial engagement; and he fairly leaped from his seat when he heard of the intention of the general-in-chief. Monge, that circumspect votary of science, hinted that there was the greatest danger of the whole party being captured by the English cruisers, which were exceedingly vigilant in the Mediterranean. The only reply was the brief and emphatic "I must incur the risk." The officers cast significant glances at each

other, but it was extremely doubtful if they fathomed his designs.

“I have received ill news from Europe, my friends,” said Bonaparte, toning over his papers, and seemingly attending to several matters at once. “The Austrians and Muscovites have gained the superiority. That which we won with so much toil has been lost, and France is threatened with the invasion of her territory. We are wanted in Europe, and in spite of winds, waves, and English cruisers, we must go thither.”

Soon afterwards the conference was broken up, and the general-in-chief was again alone in his tent—nay, not alone, for the images of ambition were fast crowding around him, and they were companions whom he valued more than the ordinary human realities of the camp. And there this all-daring, all-achieving soldier sat till the peep of day, perfecting his plans, the ultimate reach of which was a throne above thrones; for it was his habit of mind never to form a design which did not extend to the farthest point. In war, it was the conquest of a world at which he aimed; in politics, consul nor king could satisfy the cravings of his soul—he would be an emperor. Doubtless, his Rubicon was at Aboukir, and there the die was cast which determined him to be master of France.

CAMP-FIRE IN THE VALLEY OF AOSTA

We are now to behold Bonaparte as First Consul of France—as the successful rival of the Carthagenian Hannibal in the prodigious exploit of leading an army over the lofty and wintry Alps—and as the conqueror of his old enemies the Austrians.

The time was May, 1800. At Paris, Bonaparte had formed the plan of the most astonishing of his campaigns, with a precision so wonderful that it pointed to the very spot on which the decisive battle should be fought. While the intrepid Massena defended Genoa with unwearied energy, and Moreau engaged the attention of the Austrians on the line of the Danube, the First Consul had created a third army, caused the passes of the Alps to be explored, determined to take that of the Great St. Bernard, and achieved the passage as far as the vale of Aosta, where an unexpected obstacle was found in the fortress of Bard.

The valley of Aosta is traversed by a river which receives all the waters of the St. Bernard, and carries them into the Po, under the name of Dora-Baltea. As it approaches Bard, the valley narrows; the road lying between the base of the mountains and the bed of the river becomes gradually more contracted, until at length, a rock, which seems to have fallen from the neighboring crags into the middle of the valley, almost entirely blocks it. The

river then runs on one side of the rock, and the road proceeds on the other. This road lined with houses composes all the town of Bard. On the top of the rock stands a fort, impregnable by its position, though ill-constructed, which sweeps with its fire, on the right, the whole course of the Dora-Baltea, and on the left, the long street forming the little town of Bard. Drawbridges close the entrance and the outlet of this single street. A garrison, small in number, but well commanded, occupied this fort.

The brave and persevering Lannes commanded the advanced division of the French. He was not a man to be easily stopped. He immediately put forward a few companies of grenadiers, who broke down the drawbridge, and, in the face of a sweeping fire, entered Bard. The commandant of the fort then poured a storm of shot and shell upon the town, but was soon induced to cease, by a feeling of compassion for the inhabitants. Lannes stationed his division out of the town and under cover; but it was impossible to pass the materiel of the army under the fire of the fort. He then reported to General Berthier, who, coming up, was dismayed at the unexpected obstacle. General Marescot, the skilful engineer of the army, was then brought forward.

He examined the fort, and declared it nearly impregnable, not on account of its construction, which was indifferent, but from its position, which was entirely isolated. The escarpment of the rock did not admit escalading, and the walls, though not covered by an embankment, could not be battered in breach, as there was no possibility of establishing a battery in a position

suitable for breaching them. Nevertheless, it was possible, by strength of arm, to hoist a few guns of small calibre to the top of the neighboring heights. Berthier gave orders to this end. The soldiers, who were used to the most difficult undertakings, went to work eagerly to hoist up two four-pounders, and even two eight-pounders. These they in fact succeeded in elevating to the mountain of Albaredo, which overlooks the rock and fort of Bard; and a plunging fire, suddenly opened, greatly surprised the garrison, which, nevertheless, did not lose courage, but replied, and soon dismounted one of the guns, which were of too feeble a calibre to be useful.

Marescot declared that there was no hope of taking the fort, and that some other means must be devised for overcoming this obstruction. Berthier, in great alarm, instantly counter-ordered all the columns as they successively came up; suspended the march of the men and the artillery all along the line, in order to prevent them from involving themselves further, should it be necessary, after all, to retreat. An instant panic circulated to the rear, and all the men thought themselves arrested in this glorious enterprise. Berthier sent courier after courier to the First Consul, to inform him of this unexpected disappointment.

The latter tarried still at Martigny, not meaning to pass over the St. Bernard, until he had seen, with his own eyes, the last of the artillery sent forward. But this announcement of an obstacle, considered insurmountable at first, made a terrible impression on him; but he recovered quickly, and refused positively to

admit the possibility of a retreat. Nothing in the world should reduce him to such an extremity. He thought that, if one of the loftiest mountains in the world had failed to arrest his progress, a secondary rock could not be capable of vanquishing his courage and his genius. The fort, said he to himself, might be taken by bold courage; if it could not be taken, it still could be turned. Besides, if the infantry and the cavalry could pass by it, with but a few four-pounders, they could then proceed to Ivrea at the mouth of the gorge, and wait until their heavy guns could follow them. And if the heavy guns could not pass by the obstacle which had arisen; and if, in order to get any, that of the enemy must be taken, the French infantry were brave and numerous enough to assail the Austrians and take their cannon. Moreover, he studied his maps again and again, questioned a number of Italian officers; and learning from these that many other roads led from Aosta to the neighboring valleys, he wrote letter after letter to Berthier, forbidding him to stop the progress of the army, and pointing out to him, with wonderful precision, what reconnoissances should be made around the fort of Bard. He would not allow himself to see any serious danger, except from the arrival of a hostile corps, shutting up the debouch of Ivrea; he instructed Berthier to send Lannes as far as Ivrea, by the path of Albaredo, and make him take a stronger position there, which should be safe from the Austrian artillery and cavalry. When Lannes guards the entrance of the valley, added the First Consul, whatever may happen, it is of little consequence, the only result may be a loss of time. We

have enough provisions to subsist ourselves awhile, and one way or other we shall succeed in avoiding or overcoming the obstacles which now delay us.

These instructions having been sent to Berthier, he addressed his last orders to General Moncey, who should debouch by the St. Gothard; to General Chabran, who should come down by the Little St. Bernard, directly in front of the fort of Bard; and then, at last, resolved to cross the Alps in person. Before he set forth, he received news from the Var, informing him that on the 14th of May—the 24th of Floreal—the Baron de Melas was still at Nice. As it was now the 20th of May, it could not reasonably be supposed, that the Austrian general, in the space of six days, could have marched from Nice to Ivrea. It was then on the 20th of May, before daylight, that he set out to pass the defile. His aid-de-camp Duroc, and his secretary Bourrienne, accompanied him.

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