

a lady in diamonds, and a long black hood." Boswell says, with much gravity, "This touch, however, was without any effect." It was more effectual in a case related by Daines Barrington, of an old man who was witness in a cause, describing how the good queen had touched him when he was a child: "I asked him whether he was really cured? upon which he answered, with a significant smile, that he believed himself never to have had a complaint, that deserved to be considered as the Evil, but that his parents were poor, and had no objection to the bit of gold" *—the angel of gold, with the impress of St. Michael, which was hung about the patient's neck.

The May-poles that had been set up at the Restoration,—when the Puritan justices and constables who had pulled them down were no longer in a condition to declare war against them,—after the Revolution had the fate always harder than persecution, that of neglect. They had ceased to be indicative of party feelings; and they gradually mouldered away upon the village green, and were displaced from the streets of cities in which commerce was more important than merriment. But when Anne came to the throne there was a revival: "I appeal to common knowledge," says Defoe, "if in the first half-year of her present majesty, almost all the May-poles in England were not repaired, and re-edified, new painted, new hung with garlands, and beautified." Defoe associates this with the revival of "drunkenness and revelling." He was looking at the May-poles through the old Puritanical glasses which saw in harmless sports nothing but Popery and vice. But the setters-up of the May-poles probably loved as little the merriment of the people as the non-conformists did. "Up went the May-poles," writes Defoe, "that the Church's health might be drunk, till the people not only knew not what they did, but might be ready to do they knew not what, to the demolishing the Church's pretended enemies, the Dissenters." † A Puritanical rhymester of 1660 makes "Sir May-pole" say,

"There's none as I so near the Pope."

The satirist of the extreme opinions of this time is not grossly exaggerating, when he says that Martin, in his "mad fit, looked so like Peter in his air and dress, and talked so like him, that many of the neighbours could not distinguish the one from the other, especially when Martin went up and down strutting in Peter's armour which he had borrowed to fight Jack." ‡

* "Observations on our Ancient Statutes."

† "Review," quoted in Wilson, vol. ii. p. 10.

‡ "Tale of a Tub." It is scarcely necessary to add a note found in most editions of Swift:—"Peter, Martin, and Jack, represent Popery, Church of England, and Protestant Dissenters."

CHAPTER VII.

Difficulties of recruiting the English army.—The Campaign of 1704.—Marlborough's secret plan of operations.—His march along the Rhine.—Arrives at the Danube.—Battle of the Schellenberg.—Devastation of Bavaria.—Junction of the French and Bavarian armies.—The battle of Blenheim.—Results of the victory.—Subsequent operations of the Campaign.—Marlborough returns to England.—Honours and Rewards.—Party Conflicts.—Parliament dissolved.

THE extreme measures taken by the House of Commons in 1699, for reducing the army to a point almost incompatible with the desire of king William to preserve to England its weight and influence abroad, must have proved a serious embarrassment to the government of queen Anne in the first two years of her reign. When, in the spring of 1704, Marlborough, taking no counsel of foreign princes or states, and imparting little of his plans to the civil directors of English affairs, was revolving in the most secret recesses of his own mind the plan of that daring campaign which was to exhibit war on its grandest scale, he must have sometimes contemplated with anxious doubt the insufficient means at his own command. We find him on the 29th of March writing from St James's to M. Hop, the Dutch minister, that the public funds not being sufficient to carry on the war with vigour, the queen had provided additional means out of the privy purse; and he announces that the transports will speedily arrive in the Meuse, with nearly a thousand recruits for the infantry of the English army.* A thousand recruits only, to supply the waste of two campaigns! But if we have reference to the difficulty of recruiting, we shall not be surprised at the small force which Marlborough could contribute, to be drafted into the regiments which he was contemplating to lead upon the most distant march ever attempted in our Continental wars. When preparing himself to embark at Harwich, on the 6th of April, he sends to Mr. secretary Hedges, "the list of officers for the two new regiments of foot to be raised under the command of the lord Paston and colonel Heyman Rooke." † But how to be raised? An Act of Parliament passed on the 23rd of March will inform us. When Farquhar was gathering that professional experience which he embodied in 1705 in his "Recruiting Officer,"

* Dispatches, vol. i. p. 247.

† *Ibid.* p. 248.

the captain Plumes and sergeant Kites, with their drums, and ribbons, and strong ale, were unable to fill the ranks of the army with the "youth of England, all on fire." A bill was brought into Parliament in 1704 for a forced levy from each parish—a measure which was rejected as unconstitutional. A plan of general conscription being thus refused, an Act was passed, which gave as happy an occasion for favouritism and corrupt influence as when "Master Corporate Bardolph" had "three pounds to free Mouldy and Bull-calf."* By the Statute "for raising recruits for the land forces and marines," justices of the peace, and mayors or other head-officers of boroughs, were empowered "to raise and levy such able-bodied men as have not any lawful calling or employment, or visible means for their maintenance and livelihood, to serve as soldiers."† The constables were to receive ten shillings per head for bringing the tattered prodigals before the justices, and the justices were to consign them to the queen's officer, who was to present each of these cankers of a calm world with twenty shillings, and then send them to the wars, to "fill a pit as well as better." This Statute of 1704 was renewed in 1705; and the system was also tried in the latter end of the reign of George II. That it had a tendency to lower the military character can scarcely be doubted. But if such recruits were ready to plunder, they were also ready to fight; and for a century and a half England has been contented with such, and has not yet discovered the way to recruit an army by holding out the prospect of honourable distinction and just promotion to the deserving.

The campaign of 1704 was meant by Louis XIV. to decide the great question by which Europe was agitated. The war for two years had been a war of sieges, in which the advantages on the part of the Allies had been more than balanced by advantages on the part of France and Bavaria. If Marlborough had gained some strong places in the Netherlands, the French had taken strong forts on the Upper Rhine and the Moselle, and the Bavarians and the French had defeated the imperial troops and were masters of Augsburg and Passau. By the alliance of France with Bavaria, and through the successes of their joint forces, the way to Vienna was open to a great army to be collected on the Danube. Large detachments from the French army of Flanders were to be led by marshal Villeroy. Marshal Tallard was to leave the Rhine, and advance into Suabia through the Black Forest. The army of Italy was to march through the Tyrol into Austria. The Hungarians, then in a state of insurrection, were to be assisted by French troops.

* "Henry IV." Part II. Act. 3.

† 2 & 3 Annæ, c. 13.

Another century was to pass away before Germany should be again threatened by such a formidable concentration of the military power of France. It required the most extraordinary combination in one man of daring and prudence, to conceive the plan of a great war;—to devise a vast series of operations upon a similar scale with those of Louis,—but of operations to be conducted by the union of many discordant interests, and the subjection of many petty and adverse schemes to the policy of a master-mind. Marlborough had not only to mature his designs with small counsel from those who were to join him in carrying it out, but absolutely to conceal it from those who were to render him the most efficient assistance. The difficulties of his course may be traced in his letters; but we also therein trace the indomitable will by which he is determined to surmount them. On the 29th of April he writes from the Hague to Mr. secretary Hedges, "We are not yet come to any final resolutions here upon the operations of the siege."* On the 2nd of May he again writes to the secretary, that in a conference with the deputies of the States, he had informed them of his resolution of going to the Moselle, "as what may most conduce to the public service."† On the 5th of May, the States having consented that Marlborough should lead the joint forces to the Moselle, the troops began to march out of their garrisons. On the 10th of May the great general has got to Ruremond. He now writes confidentially to Mr. Stepney, the English ambassador, that he would not conceal from him "my resolution of marching with the English, some of our auxiliaries, and what other troops can with safety be spared, up to the Danube; but as I have not yet made any declaration to the States of my design of going so far, and as it behoves us to have particular management for them, I must not only desire your secrecy, but pray you will intimate the same thing to his majesty the emperor."‡ He next takes an Englishman into his confidence—Mr. St. John. On Wednesday next, he writes on the 11th of May, the troops will pass the Meuse at Ruremond, on their way to the Moselle; "and I may venture to tell you, though I would not have it public as yet, I design to march a great deal higher into Germany."§ Heinsius, the friend of William III., knew the plans of Marlborough. So did prince Eugene. But his impenetrable secrecy prevented the Dutch opposing his resolves upon the ground that it would leave their own frontier defenceless. "Under the blind," says Burnet, "of the project of carrying the war to the Moselle, everything was prepared that was necessary for executing the true design." The

* Dispatches, vol. i. p. 251. † *Ibid.*, p. 252. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 253. § *Ibid.*, p. 264.

movements of Villeroy, who had passed the Meuse at Namur, alarmed the Dutch, and they sent a pressing message to Marlborough to halt. The movements of Tallard frightened the margrave of Baden, and he implored Marlborough to come to his aid. He quieted their fears with smooth words, and went rapidly and steadily on his own march. The French themselves could not understand the movements of Marlborough. Villeroy had been ordered to observe him wheresoever he marched.* The French marshal suddenly lost sight of him altogether, and only learned where he really was, when he received the news of his first victory over the Bavarians.† A contemporary writer accounts for this ignorance, which caused Villeroy to march and countermarch in the neighbourhood of the Moselle, while Marlborough had pushed on to the Danube: "They make great use of spies; they also stop all passengers they meet, inquire their names, whence they come, what news they hear. They depend upon such rumours and reports, and take their measures accordingly, in matters of the last importance."‡

Marlborough is now moving amongst scenes as familiar to many English as the banks of their own rivers. From the heights of Ehrenbreitstein, then a strong fortress belonging to the elector of Trèves, he saw his cavalry pass over the Rhine. His infantry soon followed. His artillery and stores were put on board transports at Coblenz, as well as his sick soldiers. Marlborough's attention to detail—which was also one of the distinguishing characteristics of the great commander who came a century after him, with the same mission of arresting the ambition of France—saved his soldiers from many a privation and many a defeat. The allied troops moved along the banks of the Rhine, in the gray dawn and the soft twilight of that early summer. During the noontide heat, they rested under the shadow of slopes clothed with budding vines. "The Rhine was a great refreshment to the soldiers," says Cunningham. It was a striking change from the dull plains of Flanders, for the English to gaze upon a river far grander than their own Thames or Severn—to hear their 'Grenadiers' March, echoed from ruined castles perched upon every rock beneath which they wound their way; to drink huge draughts of the sharp Rheinwein, in quaint villages where money secured a hearty welcome. On they went cheerily through these novel scenes. "When the confederates had drawn up their ships beyond Andernach, the Mouse Tower, Bingen, and Bacharach, there opened to them on the left

* Dispatches, p. 270.

† Voltaire, "Siècle de Louis XII."

‡ Cunningham, vol. i. p. 373.

hand a large plain, whereon the whole army was seen to march at once, making a glorious sight in their arms and new clothes."* The army halted a day at Cassel, near Mayence, where the elector reviewed the troops; and when he first looked upon the English officers in their scarlet and gold—"all plumed like estridges"—he exclaimed, "these gentlemen seem to be all dressed for the ball." Marlborough wrote to Godolphin that he should send to Frankfort to see if he could raise a month's pay for his English upon bills; "for, notwithstanding the continual marching, the men are extremely pleased with this expedition, so that I am sure you will take all the care possible that they may not want."†

Whilst the army under the immediate command of Marlborough was thus moving towards the Danube, by the Rhine, it was no small part of his anxiety so to regulate the movements of the other confederates that a junction of the principal forces should be effected before they appeared in the presence of their powerful enemies. Up to this time some of the allies had been kept in ignorance of his ultimate plans; but he had so skilfully managed his communications with them, that they, in drawing towards the Moselle, might be ready to march far beyond to effect a junction with his main army. Marlborough passed the Neckar, on the 3rd, by a bridge of boats at Ladenburg. He here halted for two days. Troops were drawing near to join him as he advanced—Dutch, Luxemburg, Hesse, and Danish allies. He then expected to be on the Danube in ten days; but he found the roads excessively difficult, and had to make circuitous marches. He evidently had an imperfect knowledge of the country. At Mundelsheim, on the 10th, Marlborough and prince Eugene met for the first time, and after three days they were joined by prince Louis of Baden. Prince Eugene was in Marlborough's full confidence, and they hoped to act together for their common object. But for the present they were unable to arrange that united command which each desired in his reliance upon the other's judgment. Prince Louis of Baden asserted his claim of precedence to be with the main army as its commander. It was at last agreed that he and Marlborough should command on alternate days; and that Eugene should return to the Rhine to command a body of thirty thousand men—"the security of the lines and the passage of the Rhine being of the last importance to us."‡

Towards the end of June we find in the letters of Marlborough

* Cunningham, p. 373.

† Coxe, "Memoirs of Marlborough," vol. i. p. 331, edit. 1820.

‡ Dispatches, vol. i. p. 307.

ample evidence of the deep anxiety with which he regards the great crisis which is approaching. Slight indications of doubt and impatience manifest themselves beneath the surface of his imperturbable temper. His friends in Holland, he understands, are alarmed and he entreats that they may be quieted; for if, misled by appearances, they were to give orders for their troops to march back, all his projects would be entirely disconcerted.* On the 29th he writes to Harley, that the army, in camp at Giengen, is within two leagues of the elector of Bavaria; but the Danish horse are not come up; "though if the duke of Würtemberg had hastened his march, according to the repeated orders I sent, he might have been here by this time." † But the English infantry and artillery have at length joined the cavalry with which Marlborough himself had pushed on; and he is now ready for serious work. Marshal Tallard and marshal Villeroy, he learns, are at Strasburg, preparing to send the elector a great re-inforcement, through the Black Forest. ‡ One blow may be struck at the elector before his friends come to his aid.

On the 1st of July Marlborough had received advice from a peasant living near Donawert, that thirteen thousand Bavarians and French were posted in an intrenched camp upon the Schellenberg. This eminence is described by Mr. Hare, the duke's chaplain, as about two English miles in circumference at the base, having a gradual ascent, and a large flat at the top, where the enemy was encamped in several lines. The Schellenberg joined the town of Donawert, from which an intrenchment was carried round the top of the hill, at whose base, on the south, flowed the Danube. The intrenchment was the strongest and the most regular on the north, where the hill is accessible from a spacious plain. Cunningham has given a somewhat picturesque description of the Schellenberg: "On the top of the hill stands a church with a churchyard, which was encompassed by the camp, and surrounded with the intrenchment. Adjoining to the churchyard is a little hill, which extends itself westward to a plain, and towards the south is broken into several hillocks, the bottoms whereof are washed by the Danube. Towards the east there is a ridge of hills covered by thick woods, frequented by robbers, and dangerous to passengers; and at this time not less fit for an ambuscade than the purposes of rapine." § At three o'clock on the morning of the 2nd of July, Marlborough marched out of his camp with a detachment of six thousand foot, thirty squadrons of horse, and three regiments of

* Dispatch M. D'Amelo, 23rd June, vol. i. p. 323.

† *Ibid.*, p. 328.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 331.

§ "History of Great Britain," vol. i. p. 377.

Imperial grenadiers. The roads were difficult; and it was noon before they reached the river Wernitz, a tributary of the Danube. They had marched twelve miles; and there were yet three miles of very rough ways to pass. The main body of the army was following the detachment. Fatigued as the men were, the duke resolved to storm the Schellenberg before the night closed. At six o'clock the attack began. The foot advanced in four lines up the rising ground; the horse in two lines. The cannon from the intrenchment of the hills, and from the works at Donawert, swept away officers and men with case-shot. The allied troops carried fascines to be thrown down into the intrenchments; but by mistake they threw them down into the hollow way which ran before the works, and the enemy came out of their trenches to charge a confused host, whose commanding officers were for the most part killed or wounded. But the English Guards stood their ground, presenting that solid front which has arrested many an onset; and the Gallo-Bavarians retired. The whole force of the Schellenberg was now concentrated upon the English and Danish assailants. The infantry shrunk before the incessant fire; but the horse closed up and rallied them, and again they attacked with redoubled vigour. Meanwhile, the enemy having withdrawn his men from the works on the right, nearest to Donawert, prince Louis of Baden led the imperialists to the feebly defended intrenchments, and they, throwing their fascines into the ditch, passed over with slight loss. The contest on the left still raged. The intrenchments were obstinately disputed, but at the end of an hour and a half the lines were forced; the allies possessed the camp; the routed enemy fled towards Donawert, whither they were pursued with great slaughter; the Bavarian general, count d'Arco, saved himself with difficulty; and as the flying crowds crossed the bridge of the Danube it broke down, and the waters swallowed those who had escaped the sword. Only three thousand of the men of the intrenched camp of the Schellenberg joined the elector of Bavaria, out of the twelve or thirteen thousand that occupied that almost impregnable position. But the allies also sustained a loss of more than five thousand killed and wounded. The determination of Marlborough to storm the intrenched camp was daring—almost rash. Marshal Conway, in 1774, viewed the ground and wrote: "The intrenchments on the heights of Schellenberg are, for the form, still entire, and appear, both for construction and position, very strong."* There were fourteen English infantry regiments in the action, and seven of cavalry. Twenty-nine of their officers were killed, and eighty-six

* MS. Letter.

wounded. Marlborough, in his dispatch to Harley, does not mention the aid he received from the prince of Baden. This was not jealousy, but contempt. The partisans of the prince repaid this, by ascribing the victory to the imperial general.

It would be a satisfaction to the honest pride of an Englishman if he could ascribe to the commands of the prince of Baden the disgraceful scenes of the next fortnight. Negotiations had been going on between the emperor and the elector of Bavaria, to induce the elector to join the Allies. Articles had been agreed upon; but when the elector was expected to sign, he sent his secretary to say that as marshal Tallard was marching with an army of thirty thousand men to his relief, it was not in his power, nor consistent with his honour, to quit the French interest. Marlborough, who relates this to Mr. secretary Hedges, coolly adds, "We are now going to burn and destroy the elector's country, to oblige him to hearken to terms."* To burn and destroy a country may be a glib phrase of war, to which some persons may attach no very definite meaning. It was here no idle threat to make the elector come to terms. The work was set about in a very business-like manner. On the 31st of July, three thousand horse were sent out, "to begin in the neighbourhood of Munich," under the command of the comte d'Orst-Frise. To him Marlborough writes the next day to say, that he has desired the comte de la Tour to execute the same job in another quarter,—during a couple of days, "brûlant en attendant tout ce qu'il pourra." † On the 3rd of August he writes to Harley, that his titled agents have returned, "having burnt a great number of villages between this and Munich, so that the elector can expect nothing less than the ruin of Bavaria for his obstinacy and breach of promise." ‡ The elector can expect nothing less! But the elector's people? The politic duke thoroughly knew what "the ruin of Bavaria" meant. He is quite sentimental when he writes to his duchess about these matters. To burn and destroy "is so contrary to my nature, that nothing but absolute necessity would have obliged me to consent to it, for these poor people suffer for their master's ambition. There having been no war in this country for above sixty years, these towns and villages are so clean that you would be pleased with them." His nature suffers, he says, to see so many fine places burnt. And then the sweet domestic affections break forth from his troubled heart: "I shall never be easy and happy till I am quiet with you." § He had a wife and children for whom he yearns. He has given up thousands

* Dispatches, vol. i. p. 358.

† *Ibid.*, p. 383.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 384.

§ Coxe, vol. i. p. 375.

of hapless wives and children to the destroyer. The villages, "so clean," that gave them shelter; the food they have just begun to gather into their garners; the standing corn—all are burnt; the wives and children, with husbands and fathers, are perishing, because the elector of Bavaria prefers the French interest to that of the emperor. An English historian writes, "thus was avenged the barbarous desolation of the Palatinate thirty years before."* Surely this sort of vengeance has at length become so odious, that Churchill the duke, and Morgan the buccaneer, might be placed in the same category as enemies of the human race, if the hero, in all ages, had not been held exempt from the ordinary code of morals. In Mr. Addison's day, such deeds were not held to be crimes; "courage and compassion" were joined in the "good and great" Marlborough, when "he thinks it vain to spare his rising wrath."

"The listening soldier fix'd in sorrow stands,
Loth to obey his leader's just commands;
The leader grieves, by generous pity sway'd,
To see his just commands so well obey'd." †

Forty years ago, archdeacon Coxe thus caressingly writes of his hero: "Although Marlborough was thus compelled to fulfil the most unwelcome duty which can fall to a general, his private correspondence shows that he felt as a man." ‡ Perhaps the Reverend biographer would have been less moved with the maudlin sentimentality of the letter to the duchess, which we have quoted, if he had known how one greater than Marlborough regarded such "duty." When Massena abandoned Portugal in March, 1811, burning and destroying every town and village as he retreated before the English army, lord Wellington thus described the operations of the French general: "His retreat has been marked by a barbarity seldom equalled and never surpassed." § Barbarity is the word—the act of a savage, as distinguished from the act of the civilised man. "The laws of war, *rigorously interpreted*, authorise such examples when the inhabitants take arms," writes sir William Napier, the historian of the Peninsular campaigns. The quiet population upon whom Marlborough let loose all the terrors of fire and sword had not lifted a finger to oppose his progress. And yet Marlborough was not a cruel man. He always treated his prisoners with exemplary humanity. There may be situations in war when severity is truly mercy. Was this such a situation?

On the 3rd of August, Marlborough was encamped at Friedberg. He writes to Harley, that the Allies intend to march on the mor-

* Alison's "Marlborough," p. 74.

† "The Campaign."

‡ Vol. i. p. 37.

§ Wellington Dispatches, vol. vii. p. 358.

row, the artillery being ready at Nieuburg, for the siege of Ingoldstadt. Prince Louis, he says, "has made me the compliment either of commanding or covering the siege; I believe I shall choose the latter." He adds, "We have nothing new of M. Tallard, which makes us apprehensive that he may be halted at Ulm, in order to repossess the Danube, by which he may be more uneasy to us than if he joined with the elector." Tallard, however, did join the elector, and their united forces were encamped at Biberach, on the 8th of August. Marlborough had weakened his main army by despatching Prince Louis to carry on the siege of Ingoldstadt. Prince Eugene was encamped at Donawert. On the 9th, Eugene hastily rode into Marlborough's camp, to announce that the united Gallo-Bavarian army had advanced from Biberach towards Lauingen, with the supposed intention of passing the Danube. It was agreed that the prince should be immediately reinforced, and that the whole army should advance nearer the Danube, in order to join him. * Tallard and the elector passed the Danube on the 10th, and encamped at Dillingen. On that day Marlborough was encamped at Schonefeldt. It was a crisis of extreme danger; for if Tallard had attacked either army before their junction, his superiority in numbers would have assured him a victory. Eugene commanded a force of twenty thousand men, composed of Prussians, Danes, Austrians, and troops of the empire. Marlborough commanded a force of thirty-six thousand men, composed of English, Dutch, Hessians, Hanoverians, and Danes. Tallard, and his fellow-general Marsin, commanded forty-eight thousand Frenchmen, and the Bavarians numbered twelve thousand. On the 11th, Marlborough marched from Schonefeldt, and crossing the Lech at Rain, joined Eugene that night, having passed the Danube at Donawert. They intended to advance and encamp at Hochstet, "in order whereto," says Marlborough, "we went out on Tuesday [the 12th] early in the morning to view the ground, but found the enemy had already possessed themselves of it, whereupon we resolved to attack them." † It was no rash resolve, which dispensed with the necessary precautions to insure success. Marlborough and Eugene went up into the steeple of the church of Dapfheim; saw a camp being marked out upon a hill where the enemy's cavalry were stationed, and the infantry in full march towards it; carefully noted all the practicable ways from their own camp to that which they saw forming; and, to facilitate the movements of the next day, ordered a ravine to be levelled by the pioneers. ‡ The allied army was encamped to the

* Dispatches, vol. i. p. 387.

‡ Hare's Journal: Dispatches, vol. i. p. 396.

† *Ibid.*, p. 391

north-west of the river Kessel. The French and Bavarian army was encamped beyond the river Nebel, in the broadest part of the valley of the Danube, their right resting upon the great stream to which the Kessel, the Nebel, and two intervening rivulets are tributaries. The distance between the Kessel and the Nebel is four or five miles, with the wooded heights of the Schellenberg shutting in the valley, till it opens into the wide and fertile plain of Blenheim.

On the night of the 12th orders were given that the allied army should move before break of day. In the plain to the north-west of the Nebel there are three villages, - Kremheim, close upon the Danube; Unterglauch, in the centre of the valley; Berghausen, at its eastern extremity. At three o'clock in the morning of the 13th of August, the army of Eugene, filing by the right, in four columns, and the army of Marlborough, also in four columns, were passing the Kessel, over bridges which had been constructed on the previous day. Two brigades, which had taken position in advance at Dapfheim the evening before, formed a ninth column. This column had a considerable accession of strength given to it, and under the command of the gallant lord Cutts, marched along the Danube, upon the extreme left, by Kremheim, with orders to attack the village of Blenheim. Marlborough and Eugene, with the advanced guard, were sufficiently near by seven o'clock to take a view of the positions of the Gallo-Bavarian army. Their right was at the village of Blenheim, where Marshal Tallard had his head quarters. Their left was at the village of Lutzingen, covered by a wood. The space occupied by their lines was in length about four miles, upon rising ground which commanded the whole plain to the Nebel, in front. The morning was hazy, and Tallard was somewhat unaccountably deceived as to the intentions of Marlborough and Eugene. In a postscript to a letter which he wrote at a very early hour, he says, "This thirteenth, the enemy beat 'la générale' at two o'clock, and at three 'l'assemblée' * * * According to all appearance they will march to day, and the report of the country is that they are going to Nordlingen." Tallard found his mistake when the sun cleared away the mist, and the columns of Eugene were seen coming out from the hill-side behind Berghausen. His first operation was to call in his foragers, and to set fire to the villages on that side of the Nebel on which the Allies were advancing. At eight o'clock the French began to cannonade, and the batteries of Marlborough and Eugene soon replied. Eugene, however, had found considerable difficulty in taking up his ground. His march upon the edge of the wooded hills had been

rough and circuitous. He had rivulets to cross running through swampy ground. His wing had been necessarily extended. It was past noon when he had placed his troops, upon the extreme right, in front of the elector of Bavaria; and it had been agreed between the two commanders that the battle should not commence till both were ready. The announcement from Eugene was made; and then Marlborough mounted his horse, and gave the command that the lines should move forward to cross the Nebel, and that Cutts should commence the attack upon Blenheim.

The village of Plentheim, or Blenheim, had been converted by Tallard into a strong post. It appeared to him that the Nebel was impassable in the centre of the plain, and he therefore concentrated his chief strength on the right, leaving his left equally strong under the elector. The military critics of the time of Tallard severely blamed him for this disposition of his force. St. Simon says, that by a blindness without example, he had placed twenty-six battalions of infantry, six regiments of dragoons, and a brigade of cavalry—an entire army—merely for the purpose of holding a village, and supporting his right, which would have been better supported by the Danube. An English marshal, who viewed the ground seventy years afterwards, writes, "As far as the disposition was concerned, the neglect of the centre, and the crowding of so many battalions into Blenheim, whilst the flank of the village was not proportionally sustained, seem to me among the principal faults of M. Tallard."* The French Marshal took extraordinary pains in the defence of Blenheim, and by forming barricades between the village and the Danube, by making every house and garden a little fortress. As far as regarded the attack upon this spot the means of defence were wholly successful. At one o'clock the allied troops under Cutts descended to the Nebel, and crossed by two water-mills which had been set on fire. Brigadier-general Rowe led the English to the attack, supported by a brigade of Hessians. When they were within thirty yards of the palisades which surrounded the village, a heavy fire of grape swept away their ranks. Rowe led his men to the barriers, determined to enter sword in hand. He fell, mortally wounded, and the irresistible fire of the enemy compelled a speedy retreat. Squadron after squadron crossed the rivulet, at other points, and advanced in front of the village. Three times were the assailants repulsed; but at last they held their ground, and were enabled to occupy the attention of the great body of troops within Blenheim, by keeping up a feigned attack,

* MS. Letter of Marshal Conway. The "Memoirs of St. Simon" were not published when this letter was written.

whilst the main body of Marlborough's army was crossing the Nebel. It was a difficult and dangerous operation, which occupied several hours. The stream in one part had two branches, with soft and marshy ground between each branch. "There was very great difficulty and danger," says the duke's chaplain, "in defiling over the rivulet in the face of an enemy already formed, and supported by several batteries of cannon; yet by the brave examples given, and great diligence used, by the commanding officers, and by the eagerness of the men, all passed over by degrees, and kept their ground."* The reliance of Tallard upon the difficulty of passing the marshes would appear to have been the reason that he offered no opposition to the passage of the allied army, but that of a continual discharge of cannon. St. Simon severely blames him that he left a large space between his own troops and the brook, that his enemies might pass at their ease, "to be overthrown afterwards, as was said." The English, according to the same authority, speaking the opinions of French officers, had plenty of ground at their disposal while Tallard, by a different arrangement, might have been master of a vast plain. Nevertheless, as the columns of the Allies passed the stream, volleys of musquetry were poured upon them; and the charges of French cavalry were incessant. The conflict gradually extended from the left to the centre, as English, Dutch, Danes, and Hanoverians came into position. Marsin, who commanded the French at the west of the valley, near the village of Oberglauch, repulsed the Danish and Hanoverian horse. The prince of Holstein Beck then led eleven battalions from the heights on the opposite side of the Nebel, and began to cross. His columns were immediately charged by nine battalions, including the Irish brigade in the French service, and the foremost battalions of Holstein Beck were cut to pieces. Marlborough then led a body of cavalry and infantry to the rescue, and compelled the enemy to retire. During the passage of the left wing of the Allies, prince Eugene had been fighting the elector on the right, with indifferent success. Three times had he attacked, and three times he had been compelled to retire to the wood, and re-form his broken ranks. As the sun was westering the issue of the battle might appear doubtful. The French, on the extreme left of the line of the Allies, held Blenheim securely. The French and Bavarians on the right, had repulsed all the spirited attacks of Eugene, and the combatants faced each other, exhausted and irresolute. The main bodies under Tallard and Marlborough had not yet come to a general encounter. Marlborough has formed his cavalry in two lines in the centre of

* Dispatches, vol. i. p. 403.

the plain, with his infantry in their rear towards the left. At five o'clock the trumpets sound a charge, and the horse and foot mount the acclivity. The French receive the charge firmly, and the Allies fall back, but still keep the brow of the hill. Their cannon are brought up, and the fire on each side is close and incessant. It is the weak part of the French line, and they cannot stand against the storm of musquetry. Another charge, and now the French horse are scattered. Nine battalions of French infantry that had been intermingled with their cavalry, are cut to pieces. Marsin has fallen back to avoid a flank attack; and the centre of the French line is more and more in danger. Tallard dispatches orders to the little army shut up in Blenheim to come to his aid. It is too late. He sends for a re-inforcement to the elector. Eugene has given the elector enough to do in his own position. A third charge of Marlborough's horse, and the battle is won. The centre of the French lines is broken by these terrible charges, and now Tallard's cavalry endeavour to rally behind the tents of their camp. The Allies close upon them. The rout is now general. Some fly toward Hochstet, about two miles in the rear. Others crowd to the nearer village of Sonderheim, upon the bank of the Danube. General Hompesch pursues those who had gone in the direction of Hochstet. Marlborough himself, with his victorious cavalry, charges upon those who fled towards Sonderheim. Down the steep banks of the Danube rush the fugitives. Many attempt to swim the river, and are drowned. Others file towards Hochstet under the banks, and prepare to rally. The victorious squadrons appear, and again they flee. Marshal Tallard has reached Sonderheim, but he finds retreat impossible, and surrenders himself to an aide-de-camp of the prince of Hesse. One extraordinary document still in existence, exhibits the wonderful self-possession of the conqueror in this agony of his triumph. The great duke pauses a minute in his pursuit of the flying enemy to write this note, in pencil, to his duchess, upon a slip of paper, torn from a memorandum-book:

"August 13th, 1704.

I have not time to say more, but to beg you will give my Duty to the Queen, and let her know her Army has had a Glorious Victory. Mons^r Tallard and two other Generals are in my Coach, and I am following the rest, the bearer my Aid de Camp Coll Parke will give Her and account of what has passed, I shal doe it in a day or two by another more at large

Marlborough."

The fighting was over. And there was a large body of Bava-

rians and French at one end of the line, and there were twelve thousand French shut up in Blenheim at the other end. The troops of the elector and of Marsin seeing the rout of Tallard, and being closely pressed by Eugene had set fire to their positions of Oberglauh and Lutzingen, and were moving away in unbroken order. Night was coming on; the distance was indistinct from the clouds of smoke which hung over the battle-field; and Marlborough,—mistaking the troops of Eugene for part of the army of the elector, "marching in good order, and in such a direction as might have enabled them advantageously to flank our squadrons, had they charged the other part of the elector's force" *—offered no interruption to their retreat. The scene at Blenheim was of a far more stirring character. During the day, the French there had held out against every attack; but now, when the main body of Tallard's army was routed, the Allies closed round the barricaded village. Horse and foot were ready to assail the isolated forces in every direction. Artillery was brought up, and batteries constructed. All the great English generals were assembled to unite in this final struggle. Cutts was there, and Orkney with his Scotch Royal; Churchill, and Lumley; Ross, and Ingoldsby; Webb, and Wood. The French finally surrendered as prisoners of war. St. Simon has told the story of this surrender, with a Frenchman's sense of national humiliation, but with a minuteness which leaves no doubt that he had his details from the first authority—that of the officer who signed the capitulation. This officer was Blansac, the camp-marshal, who had been left in command when his superior officer had abruptly withdrawn himself. Denonville, a young officer who had been taken prisoner, came towards the village, and waving a handkerchief, demanded a parley. He came to exhort Blansac and the troops to surrender. Blansac sharply dismissed him. Denonville returned again, with an English lord, who demanded a parley with the commandant. The Englishman told Blansac that the duke of Marlborough had directed him to say that he was marching upon Blenheim with forty battalions and sixty pieces of cannon; that he was beginning to surround the village on all sides; that there was no force left to support the position; that Tallard was in flight; that the elector had retreated; that he had no succour to hope; and that he had better surrender himself and all his men as prisoners of war. Blansac was for sending the lord back with a hasty refusal. But the Englishman pressed him to step out of the village with him, only a couple of hundred paces, and behold the state of things

* Hare, Dispatches, vol. i. p. 457.