

old spirit of the Empire, but as if they were really trusted with power, as portions of that Constitution to which the emperor had sworn in the Champ de Mai. His real security depended little upon the state of public opinion and upon the subservience of the legislature, but upon the efficiency with which he could reorganize his army. Devoting all his energies to this task, he was very soon prepared with a bold plan of operation. He would not wait for the attacks of his enemies, but would pass the French frontiers, and engage with some portions of the allied armies before they could unite. On the 11th of June, having appointed a Provisional Government to act in concert with the Chambers, he left Paris in the evening. On the 13th he was at Avesnes. On the 15th he had crossed the frontier, and was at the head of 122,000 men, at Charleroi in the Netherlands.

Most of the garrisons of the Netherlands had been strengthened by the vigilance of the duke of Wellington; Charleroi was amongst the weakest. In addition to the general belief that Napoleon would remain on the defensive, the uncertainty as to the line of operations which he would choose if he determined on the offensive by an invasion of the Low Countries, forbade a concentration of force upon any one of the available points of the frontier. It was open for Napoleon to attack the Prussians by the Meuse; to enter by Mons, to drive back Wellington upon Antwerp; or to advance by the Sambre upon the point of junction of the two armies. The four Prussian corps of Blücher was at Charleroi, at Namur, at Dinant, and at Liège. The army of Wellington, consisting of British, Netherlanders, and Hanoverians, was distributed in cantonments, a large reserve occupying the environs of Brussels, where the duke had established his head-quarters. The troops under his command, however separated, could easily unite, and they had the most precise directions how to act in the case of the French passing the frontier. The statement that Wellington had received false information from Fouché upon Napoleon's movements, and was therefore surprised when Napoleon was upon the Sambre, is thus contradicted by the duke's intimate friend, lord Ellesmere: "I can assert on the duke's personal authority, and on that of others in his confidence at head-quarters, that the duke neither acted on nor received such intelligence as that supposed from Fouché or any one else: that he acted on reports received from his own outposts and those of his allies, the Prussians, and on these alone." The surprise is supposed to be confirmed by the fact that Wellington attended a ball at Brussels after hostilities had begun. Upon this, lord Ellesmere says, "it is only necessary to

state that Napoleon's advance was known to the duke long before the period fixed for that festivity; that the question whether it should be allowed to proceed had been fully discussed and decided in the affirmative. It was held that a recall of the invitations would create premature alarm among the population of Brussels, and premature encouragement to a pretty numerous party in its walls disaffected to the cause of the Allies." The Despatches of Wellington sufficiently prove that he was perfectly aware of the advance of Napoleon when he went to the ball. At half-past nine on the evening of the 15th, he wrote to the duke de Berri, that the enemy attacked the Prussian posts at Thuin that morning, and appeared to threaten Charleroi. "I have ordered our troops to prepare to march at break of day." The duke had issued the most precise directions for the several positions which the whole of his army were to take up that night; every separate direction concluding with the emphatic words, "to be in readiness to move at a moment's notice."* For the troops, who were immediately under his eye, the order was, "to be in readiness to march from Brussels at a moment's notice:" that moment arrived even before the break of day. The duke quietly supped with the gay assembly at the duchess of Richmond's; he and his generals gradually retired; the drums beat the alarm; the bugle-call gave the signal for "mounting in hot haste;" the bagpipes summoned the Highlanders; the artillery was rumbling through the streets; the measured tread of infantry, and the sharp rattle of cavalry, were heard in every quarter of the old town. The whole scene was changed from revelry to war before the "last light had fled" from that "banquet-hall." The reserve at Brussels were all on the march through the forest of Soignies, on the road to Quatre Bras, in the morning twilight. The duke of Brunswick had gone forth, heading his gallant countrymen in their sombre livery of grief for his father's death at Jena. The prince of Orange had marched to the front the moment he left the ball-room. The duke of Wellington was soon up with his men, who cheered him as he passed. He well knew the ground where his great struggle was to be made. He could calculate with exactness the moment when the divisions would join him upon the road towards the enemy.

There was an interval only of a few hours before the march from Brussels, and the gathering of other divisions on the roads which led to Quatre Bras, were succeeded by a battle. The Prussians, under general Ziethen, who had been driven from Charleroi on the 15th, had retired upon Fleurus. Marshal Blücher had con-

* "Despatches," vol. xii. p. 472.

centrated the Prussian army upon Sombref, with the villages of St. Amand and Ligny in front of his position. If Wellington is considered by some to have been tardy in concentrating his troops in the neighbourhood of the Sambre, Napoleon is equally liable to reproach in having believed that Blücher was concentrating his troops about Namur, and in having neglected to attack the separate corps early in the morning of the 16th, before they had nearly all united. Bulow's corps, however, had not come up to join Blücher, when Napoleon attacked him in front, expecting that Ney would also have attacked him in the rear. The movement of Ney was interfered with by the timely arrival of Sir Thomas Picton's division at Quatre Bras, in company with the Brunswickers and the contingent of Nassau. Wellington had himself ridden to Sombref, and had conferred with Blücher before the battle known as that of Ligny had begun. He had returned to Quatre Bras by four o'clock, and then took the command of his own army. The battle between the French and the Prussians lasted for three or four hours. Although Blücher maintained his position, he was so weakened by the severity of the contest, that he marched in the night and concentrated his army upon Wavre. The British also maintained their position, "and completely defeated and repulsed," says the duke, "all the enemy's attempts to get possession of it." Our loss was severe, amounting in killed, wounded and missing, to more than 2,500 men. The duke was very composed after this first trial of strength. The Spanish general, Alava, saw at the close of that day his old companion in the Peninsular war sitting by the road-side; and to his surprise was asked, "Were you at Lady —'s party last night?" *

The movement of Blücher rendered a correspondent movement necessary upon the part of Wellington. At ten o'clock on the morning of the 17th he retired from Quatre Bras upon Waterloo, a distance of about seven miles. Between Waterloo and Wavre was a distance of about ten miles, through a country of difficult defiles. On the 17th the French made no attempt to pursue Blücher. A large body of French cavalry followed the English cavalry under lord Uxbridge; and at Genappe they were charged by the first Life Guards. In the course of the day Napoleon moved forward his army upon the same road over which Wellington had marched earlier in the morning. Wellington had taken up his position in advance of the village of Waterloo, near Mont St. Jean, where the high roads from Charleroi and Nivelles crossed. On the night of the 17th, and early in the morning of the 18th,

* Lord Ellesmere—"Life of Wellington."

Napoleon collected his whole army, with the exception of a corps which had been sent under Grouchy to observe Blücher, on a range of heights in front of the British position.

The battle field of Waterloo has been described again and again by observers capable of impressing us by the spirit or the accuracy of their pictures. The poet, the historian, and the tactician, have made every point in some degree familiar to us. Byron says, "I went on horseback twice over the field, comparing it with my recollection of similar scenes. As a plain, Waterloo seems marked out for the scene of some great action, though this may be mere imagination. I have viewed with attention those of Platea, Troy, Mantinea, Leuctra, Chæronea, and Marathon; and the field around Mount St. Jean and Hougoumont appears to want little but a better cause, and that undefinable but impressive halo which the lapse of ages throws around a celebrated spot, to vie in interest with any or all of these, except, perhaps, the last mentioned."* Before Byron had gone over the field, it had been called "this modern Marathon." † During the lapse of nearly half a century, it is not the "undefinable but impressive halo which the lapse of ages throws around a celebrated spot," which has made this ground such an object of curiosity to English visitors of the continent. Neither are there many who think that its interest requires "a better cause." So many of our countrymen have traversed this battle field, and have thus acquired a knowledge which no description can convey, that we shall only attempt briefly to indicate a few of its peculiar aspects in connection with a very general narrative of the leading events of the great day of the 18th of June. ‡

On the ground which we call the field of Waterloo (although the battle was fought about a mile and a half in advance of that village), Wellington had taken up his position, with a certain knowledge, derived from several previous examinations, of its capabilities for defence. "He used to describe the line of ground between the farm of La Haye Sainte and Hougoumont as resembling the curtain of a bastion, with these two positions for its angles." § The first care of the duke was to occupy with sufficient force these two angles, Hougoumont, near the Nivelles road, in front of the right centre, and La Haye Sainte, close to the Genappe road, in front of the left centre. The right of his position was thrown back to a ravine near Braine Merbes, which was occupied; and its

* Notes to "Childe Harold," canto iii.

† Lord Dudley's "Letters," p. 152.

‡ The author visited the field in May, 1861, in company with his friend, Mr. W. Harvey.

§ Lord Ellesmere.

left extended to the chateau of Frichermont, situated on a height above the hamlet of La Haye. The undulating plain upon which the army of English, Belgians, and Germans looked from the ridge on which they stood on the evening of the 17th was covered with crops of grain, of potatoes, and of clover. It had rained incessantly through the day; as night advanced the torrents of rain were accompanied with thunder and lightning. The troops had to bivouac upon the wet crops, whilst the generals and their staff obtained shelter in the adjacent villages. Wellington had his head-quarters in a house opposite the church at Waterloo. At three o'clock in the morning of the 18th he was writing to sir Charles Stuart at Brussels, with a calm confidence in the result of the almost inevitable struggle of that day. "The Prussians will be ready again in the morning for anything. Pray keep the English quiet if you can. Let them all prepare to move, but neither be in a hurry or a fright, as all will yet turn out well." At the same hour he wrote a long letter in French to the duke de Berri, in which he says, "I hope, and moreover I have every reason to believe, that all will go well." At the time of writing this letter, only a portion of the French army had taken up their ground on the opposite side of the valley, and he thought it possible that the main attack might be made at Hal, on the great road from Mons to Brussels. He had there stationed 7000 men, in addition to a large number of troops under the command of the Prince of Orange. The possible success of the enemy there, appeared to him "the only risk we run."* His army was a little superior in number to that of Napoleon, but it was inferior in artillery. There was however a far greater disparity. Wellington commanded an army of various nations, who had never before fought together; and even some of his British troops were new levies. In the summer of 1814, a large number of his famous Peninsular soldiers had been sent to America. Napoleon, on the contrary, had an army which he could wield with the most perfect assurance of unity of action, composed in great part of veterans who had returned to France at the peace. When Napoleon saw the English in position before the forest of Soignies, he exclaimed, "At last I have them; nine chances to ten are in my favour." He was of opinion, in which his generals agreed with him, that it was contrary to the most simple rules of the art of war for Wellington to remain in the position which he occupied; that having behind him the defiles of the forest of Soignies, if he were beaten all retreat would be impossible. Extensive and compact as that forest was, Wellington knew that there were many roads through it, all con-

* "Despatches," vol. xii. pp. 476, 477.

verging upon Brussels, most of which were practicable for cavalry and for artillery, as well as for infantry. "The duke," says Lord Ellesmere, "was of opinion that his troops could have retired perfectly well through the wood of Soignies, which, like other beech woods, is open at bottom; and he was still further satisfied that, if driven from the open field of Waterloo, he could have held the wood against all comers till joined by the Prussians, upon whose co-operation he throughout depended and relied." The greater number of military authorities agree that the position of Mont St. Jean was well chosen, and suitably occupied.*

General Jomini has described as one of the advantages of the position of Wellington, that all the movements of the French could be seen from it. There was a drizzling rain on the morning of the 18th; but occasionally the sun broke through the clouds, and displayed the French columns deploying to take up their ground. Amidst the inspiriting airs of the numerous bands which in the French armies were always to encourage the spirits of the soldier, three lines were formed, of infantry and cuirassiers and lancers, with the artillery on the crest of the ridge. To the French the British army offered no such magnificent spectacle, the greater number being concealed by the undulations of the ridge on which they stood. They had taken their ground silently in two lines, with the artillery in front, and the cavalry in the rear. They stood noiselessly, except when one loud hurrah was raised as the duke rode along the lines between nine and ten o'clock. Large detachments were in the inclosures of Hougoumont and La Haye Sainte.

The bells of the neighbouring churches were summoning to worship on the Sabbath morn when 150,000 men were thus preparing to destroy each other. The clock of Nivelles struck eleven as the first cannon was fired from the French centre. On the left of their line the quick fire of musketry was soon heard from the column advancing to attack Hougoumont. This property (the Château-Goumont—corrupted into Hougoumont) was a comfortable residence of a Flemish yeoman, with farm buildings, and a garden extensive enough to be misnamed an orchard, which was inclosed by a wall on the east and the south sides. This inclosure of about two acres was laid out in straight walks and planted with well trimmed trees. The formal garden is now laid down to grass. The ruins of the chateau, which was burnt, with the exception of a chapel attached to it, have been cleared away. A humble dwelling, formerly the gardener's house, now stands amidst some sheds and other rough buildings, the inclosed space being entered by a pair of wooden gates,

* Brialmont—"Histoire de Wellington," tome ii. pp. 412, 413.

closing up the passage of the yard. There is not much here to see, if we look cursorily upon this dilapidated residence. If we examine it carefully there is abundant evidence of the nature of the struggle which here took place during seven or eight hours of that eventful day. The loop-holed walls show where the defenders of Hougoumont fired upon the attacking enemy; the dints of the assailing shot are still visible on many a brick. One portion of the gate, too injured for repair, is now hung up as a memorial. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say, "this Belgian yeoman's garden wall was the safeguard of Europe, and the destiny of mankind perhaps turned upon the possession of his house."* Six thousand French, under the command of Jerome Bonaparte, commenced their attack upon the English light troops which were in the wood around the château. This wood was defended with an obstinacy which was attested by the bullet marks upon every tree. The wood was, however, carried by the French, and the light troops had now to defend the walls of the garden and the gates of the yard. Some preparation had been made for this in the loop-holes which had been knocked out, and by scaffolding, from which the defenders could fire. This deadly contest was prolonged without any result till two o'clock, when Napoleon ordered that a battery of howitzers should play upon the building. It was soon in flames, but there was no relaxation in the resolute defence of the farm-yard by the 1st and 2nd Foot Guards. By a vehement rush the French had burst open the gates, but they were finally closed by a prodigious exertion of personal strength, in which Colonel Macdonnell, was amongst the most efficient of the stalwart heroes. The prolonged defence of Hougoumont had a decided influence in deranging the plans of Napoleon. "The general opinion was, that after having taken the post of Hougoumont, he would then render himself master of La Haye Sainte, and afterwards decide the battle by a violent attack of his reserve upon the enemy's centre." †

The difficulties attending the attempt to give an intelligible description of a great battle, such as that of Waterloo, have been well set forth by Wellington himself. He had been applied to by one whom he evidently held in great respect—probably Walter Scott—to give him information as to particular events and instances of personal heroism, for the purpose of a connected narrative description. "The object which you propose to yourself is very difficult of attainment, and, if really attained, is not a little invidi-

* Lord Dudley's "Letters," p. 134.

† Brialmont (quoting French authorities), tome ii. p. 475.

ous. The history of a battle is not unlike the history of a ball. Some individuals may recollect all the little events of which the great result is the battle won or lost; but no individual can recollect the order in which, or the exact moment at which they occurred, which makes all the difference as to their value or importance."* Wellington's own official description of the progress of the contest is in the most general terms. He says that the attack upon the right of our centre (Hougoumont) was accompanied by a very heavy cannonade upon our whole line. Repeated attacks of cavalry and infantry, either mixed, or separate, were made upon us. In one of these the enemy carried the farm house of La Haye Sainte. The enemy repeatedly charged our infantry with his cavalry, but these attacks were uniformly unsuccessful. They were repeated till about seven in the evening, when a desperate effort to force our left centre was defeated. Having observed that the French retired from this attack in great confusion; that the arrival of general Bulow's corps had begun to take effect; and that marshal Blücher had joined in person with the corps of his army, he (Wellington) determined to attack the enemy, and immediately advanced the whole line of infantry, supported by the cavalry and artillery. The attack succeeded in every point. These official generalities have far less interest than some of the familiar and pithy sentences addressed by the duke to personal friends. To lord Beresford he writes, on the 2nd of July, "You will have heard of our battle of the 18th. Never did I see such a pounding match. Both were what the boxers call gluttons. Napoleon did not manœuvre at all. He just moved forward in the old style, in columns, and was driven off in the old style. The only difference was, that he mixed cavalry with his infantry, and supported both with an enormous quantity of artillery. I had the infantry for some time in squares, and we had the French cavalry walking about us as if they had been our own. I never saw the British infantry behave so well." † It has been truly said, "there is nothing in the history of battles more sublime than the generalship which could order, and the patient valour that could sustain such a method of fighting as this." ‡ The desperate attempts to pierce our line were defeated by that unequalled firmness of the British infantry, which, it is reported, led Soult to say to the emperor, "Sire, I know these English; they will die on the ground before they will leave it."

This devoted endurance during seven or eight of the most trying hours was sustained throughout by the presence of the duke at

* "Despatches," vol. xii. p. 590. † *Ibid.*, p. 529.

‡ Miss Martineau—"Introduction to the History of the Peace," p. cccxcv.

every point of danger, and by his constant care to spare his troops as much as possible, by repressing the natural anxiety of men in battle to be actively employed. The character of a part of the ridge upon which the British line was placed has been materially altered by removing the earth for a considerable distance to form the materials for an enormous mound, on the top of which is the Belgian lion. Behind this natural parapet the duke had placed several regiments, the men lying down concealed from the French, who were advancing to attack. "Up, Guards, and at them!" were the words that in a moment presented a wall of bayonets to the confident French. For four or five hours the British commander had to endure the agony of disappointed expectation. He had counted upon being joined by Blücher about one in the afternoon, according to a message which he had received when the battle had begun. Two o'clock,—three o'clock,—four o'clock,—five o'clock,—six o'clock,—came, but no sign of the expected aid on his left: there was nothing for it but to endure. General Picton had been killed before the battle was half over. When Wellington was told that of Picton's division of 7000 men only 1500 remained, he replied, "They must stand in their place till the last man," and they did stand. A general officer asked that his brigade, reduced to a third, should be relieved. "It is impossible," said the duke, "he and I, and all of us, are called upon to die in the place which we occupy at this moment." Surrounded by his men in a square charged by the French cavalry, he exclaimed, "Stand fast, 95th! we must not be beaten, my friends. What would they say of us in England?" This stoical fortitude it was difficult for him always to sustain. Looking upon the carnage around him, he said, "There are yet some hours left for cutting these brave fellows in pieces: please God that the night or the Prussians would arrive before that is effected!"

The official despatch of Wellington contained these words: "I should not do justice to my own feelings, or to marshal Blücher and the Prussian army, if I did not attribute the successful result of this arduous day to the cordial and timely assistance I received from them." Blücher had arrived precisely at the time when his co-operation in another part of the field was a warranty for the success of the attack by Wellington which produced the final result. Brialmont cites these words as an example of the perfect equity and noble disinterestedness of which the duke had given so many proofs; but he protests against the injustice by which some historians have attempted to rest upon this avowal an opinion that to Blücher is to be attributed the honour of the victory. When

the corps of Bulow, Brialmont says, arrived, the position of Wellington was serious, but it was not desperate. If Blücher had not debouched upon the left of the position, fortune might have declared against the Allies. If the Prussians arrived in the nick of time, and decided the victory, that was owing rather to Wellington than to the initiative of their own general. It is impossible to refuse to Wellington the title of the conqueror at Waterloo, for it was he who settled the joint measures for the day of the 18th; who chose, and who occupied, the field of battle; who directed during seven hours the whole of the operations; and who ordered the decisive attack at the moment when the Prussians, according to their promises, debouched on the right of the enemy.*

At six o'clock in the evening there was no point at which the allied army had yielded, or which had not been recovered from the possession of the French. It was seven o'clock when the emperor made his great attack upon our left centre. It was at this moment that the issue of the conflict was doubtful. The duke, however, rapidly collected his men from all points, to meet this apparently overwhelming force. An observer of the scene says, "To the most dinning and continual roar of cannon and musketry I have ever known, there succeeded a sudden pause and silence. It was but momentary,—they had turned, and now fled, pursued by our troops."† The Prussians had outflanked the movements of the reserve corps acting against them, and were now pressing on the main body of Napoleon's army. It was then that he was convinced of the worthlessness of the fatal delusion in which he had indulged throughout the day,—that Grouchy, with his thirty-thousand men was at hand, and that the Prussians could not come up before he had beaten "that Wellington." The rout and panic of the French became universal. For a moment Napoleon hoped to arrest this flight by forming a square of the last regiment of his Guards, and by raising a battery with some dismounted cannon. A ball from this battery carried off the leg of lord Uxbridge. In the obscurity of the twilight the fugitives saw not this rallying point, and hurried on, a disorganized and helpless crowd. In the last square formed by the Guard, Napoleon was about to throw himself, there in all likelihood to die. Soult turned Napoleon's horse, exclaiming, "Ah, Sire, our enemies are already too fortunate." The emperor fled with the mass. The square, however held firm, to allow time for their leader to escape. Cambonne and other officers remained in the square. "Surrender!" was the cry

* "Histoire de Wellington," tome ii. pp. 440—445.

† Letter from sir Robert Gardiner in Ward's Memoirs," vol. i. p. 493.

of their assailants. Cambronne threw himself into the ranks of his enemies, and perished. One last cry of "*Vive L'Empereur*," was heard amidst the smoke and clash of arms. "Nothing more is heard; the Guard is dead, the Empire is finished."*

At nine o'clock, Wellington and Blücher met near La Belle Alliance, which was in the centre of the French position. The Prussian general Gneisenau pursued the flying French, to whom all chance of rallying was impossible. Wellington joined in the pursuit, but the fatigue of his men compelled him to stop between Rossomme and Genappe. It was at Genappe that the carriage of the emperor was taken, to form a show in London. During the pursuit Wellington rode with the advanced guard. Colonel Hervey, who was with him, advised him to desist, as the country was growing less open, and he might be fired at by some stragglers from behind the hedges. "Let them fire away," he replied, "the battle is won, and my life is of no value now"† Under the brilliant moon which succeeded the lowering day, Wellington rode across the battle-field to his quarters at Waterloo. As the heaps of dying and dead lay around him, the emotions must have rushed upon him which he so beautifully expressed the next day, in a letter to the duke of Beaufort: "The losses I have sustained have quite broken me down, and I have no feeling for the advantages we have acquired." To the earl of Aberdeen, in a letter dated the same day, he said, "I cannot express to you the regret and sorrow with which I look around me, and contemplate the loss which I have sustained, particularly in your brother. The glory resulting from such actions, so dearly bought, is no consolation to me."‡

The total loss of both armies in this tremendous battle is thus stated:—British and Hanoverians, 11,678; Netherlanders, 3,547; troops of Brunswick, 1000; of Nassau, 1000; Prussians, 7454. Total, 24,679. Of the French army, 18,500 were killed or wounded, and 7800 made prisoners.§

* Brialmont, tome ii. p. 429.

† Lord Dudley's "Letters," p. 134.

‡ "Despatches," vol. xii. pp. 485, 489.

§ Brialmont, tome ii. p. 431.

CHAPTER XX.

Napoleon's return to Paris.—His abdication.—On board the *Bellerophon*, at Plymouth.—Sails for St. Helena.—Specimens of the truth of History.—The Allies take possession of Paris.—Return of Louis XVIII.—Definitive Treaty with France.—Settlement of Europe previously arranged by the Congress at Vienna.—Holy Alliance.—Treaty for the Abolition of the Slave Trade.—Execution of Labeledoyère.—Escape of Lavalette.—Execution of Ney.—The Battle of Algiers.

AFTER the fatal night of the 18th of June, Napoleon had travelled with all haste to Paris, where he arrived at four o'clock on the morning of the 21st. The Chamber of Representatives met at noon on that day, and declared its sitting permanent. Its manifest intention was to assume the executive power, and to compel Napoleon to abdicate. Lucien Bonaparte appeared at the bar of the Chamber to urge the claims of his brother upon the gratitude of France. Lafayette replied, that "during the last ten years three millions of Frenchmen had perished for a man who would still struggle against all Europe. We have done enough for him. Now our duty is to save our country." During the 22nd Napoleon was urged to abdicate. He resisted for some time, exclaiming, "The Chamber is composed of nothing but Jacobins and ambitious men. I ought to have driven them away." He yielded at last, and dictated his abdication in favour of his son Napoleon II.; and in this document, in which he said "My political life is ended," he invited the Chambers to organize a Regency. The Chambers sent a deputation to thank Napoleon for the sacrifice which he had made to the independence and happiness of the French nation; but he replied that he had only abdicated in favour of his son, and that if the Chambers did not proclaim him, his own abdication would be null. Instead of appointing a Council of Regency, it was determined by the Chambers that the government should be put into the hands of a Commission of five members. This was indirectly to set aside Napoleon the Second. The provisional government required that Napoleon should leave France, and embark at Rochefort for the United States. He demanded that the government should give him two frigates for his passage there. The frigates were placed at his disposal, and their commanders were ordered to set sail within twenty-four hours after he was on board,