

where Alvinzi was entrenched, designing to fall like a descending bolt upon his division before it could unite with the troops of Davidowich.

The armies met. A storm of rain, succeeded by wind and sleet, beat upon the desperate combatants, through which was poured the fire-sheet and leaden hail of battle. On the furrowed earth, reddened with blood, soon lay four thousand of the dying and dead, when without decisive victory, the exhausted foes retired from the arena of conflict. Napoleon, with disheartened ranks, fell back to Verona. Nearly forty thousand men were now sweeping their extending lines around the French, numbering not more than fifteen thousand. A bold and immediate blow must be given, or the republican army would disappear like the snow that melted along their path. Leaving fifteen hundred men to protect Verona, he emerged at dead of night from its walls, and with no intelligence breathed to the anxious troops of his purpose, he moved toward Mantua, where the blockade continued, as if to abandon the unequal strife. But suddenly he wheeled into a road leading toward the Adige, and crossed directly in the rear of the enemy. Between here and Arcola, and around it, lay the wide morasses, across which narrow dykes only furnished highways. Arcola must be reached and taken before he could rush between the great divisions of the Austrian army, and strike fatally with his comparatively inferior force. By daybreak, in three columns he charged upon the same number of dykes leading to Arcola. Like the struggling light of morning, the truth broke upon the minds of the astonished Austrians, that Napoleon with his tried troops was again upon them. Augereau first stood upon the narrow bridge on which they must pass. The deadly tempest of iron and lead drove his brave column back.

Napoleon saw that, if ever, Arcola must be taken before Alvinzi arrived; and seizing a standard, he dashed on to the bridge, exclaiming, "Conquerors of Lodi! follow your general!" The heroic grenadiers swept into the hurricane of battle, and again gave way; Napoleon was himself carried on the tide of combat to the very feet of the Austrians to the morass, and well-nigh smothered, while the soldiers of the enemy closed between him and his troops. "Forward to save your general!" rang over the tumult, and like the falling flood of a cataract, the columns under the tricolor, dashed over the trembling bridge, rescued their commander, and carried the passage. This was the battle and victory of Arcola.

"This movement revived in the Austrian lines their terror for the name of Bonaparte; and Alvinzi saw that no time was to be lost if he meant to preserve his communication with Davidowich. He abandoned Caldiero, and gaining the open country behind Arcola, robbed his enemy for the moment of the advantage which his skill had gained. Napoleon, perceiving that Arcola was no longer in the rear of his enemy, but in his front, and fearful lest Vaubois might be overwhelmed by Davidowich, while Alvinzi remained thus between him and the Brenta, evacuated Arcola, and retreated to Ronco.

"Next morning, having ascertained that Davidowich had not been engaged with Vaubois, Napoleon once more advanced upon Arcola. The place was defended bravely, and again it was carried. But this second battle of Arcola proved no more decisive than the first; for Alvinzi still contrived to maintain his main force unbroken in the difficult country behind; and Bonaparte once more retreated to Ronco.

"The third day was decisive. On this occasion also

he carried Arcola; and, by employing two stratagems, was enabled to make his victory effectual. An ambuscade, planted among some willows, suddenly opened fire on a column of Croats, threw them into confusion, and, rushing from the concealment, crushed them down in the opposite bog, where most of them died. Napoleon was anxious to follow up this success by charging the Austrian main body on the firm ground behind the marshes. But it was no easy matter to reach them there. He had, in various quarters, portable bridges ready for crossing the ditches and canals; but the enemy stood in good order, and three days' hard fighting had nearly exhausted his own men. In one of his conversations at St. Helena, he thus told the story. 'At Arcola, I gained the battle with twenty-five horsemen. I perceived the critical moment of lassitude in either army—when the oldest and bravest would have been glad to be in their tents. All my men had been engaged. Three times I had been obliged to re-establish the battle. There remained to me but some twenty-five *guides*. I sent them round on the flank of the enemy with three trumpets, bidding them blow loud and charge furiously. *Here is the French cavalry*, was the cry; and they took to flight.' The Austrians doubted not that Murat and all the horse had forced a way through the bogs; and at that moment Bonaparte commanding a general assault in front, the confusion became hopeless. Alvinzi retreated finally, though in decent order, upon Montebello.

"In these three days Bonaparte lost eight thousand men; the slaughter among his opponents must have been terrible. Once more the rapid combinations of Napoleon had rendered all the efforts of the Austrian cabinet abortive. For two months after the last day of Arcola, he remained the undisturbed master of Lom-

bardy. All that his enemy could show, in set-off for the slaughter and discomfiture of Alvinzi's campaign, was that they retained possession of Bassano and Trent, thus interrupting Bonaparte's access to the Tyrol, and Germany. This advantage was not trivial; but it had been dearly bought.

"A fourth army had been baffled; but the resolution of the imperial court was indomitable, and new levies were diligently forwarded to reinforce Alvinzi. Once more (January 7, 1797) the marshal found himself at the head of sixty thousand; once more his superiority over Napoleon's muster-roll was enormous; and once more he descended from the mountains with the hope of relieving Wurmser and reconquering Lombardy. The fifth act of the tragedy was yet to be performed.

"We may here pause, to notice some civil events of importance which occurred ere Alvinzi made his final descent. The success of the French naturally gave new vigor to the Italian party who, chiefly in the large towns, were hostile to Austria, and desirous to settle their own government on the republican model. Napoleon had by this time come to be anything but a Jacobin in his political sentiments; his habits of command; his experience of the narrow and ignorant management of the Directory; his personal intercourse with the ministers of sovereign powers; his sense, daily strengthened by events, that whatever good was done in Italy was owing to his own skill and the devotion of his army—all these circumstances conspired to make him respect himself and condemn the government, almost in despite of which he had conquered kingdoms for France. He therefore regarded now with little sympathy the aspirations after republican organization, which he had himself originally stimulated

among the northern Italians. He knew, however, that the Directory had, by absurd and extravagant demands, provoked the Pope to break off the treaty of Bologna, and to raise his army to the number of forty thousand—that Naples had every disposition to back his holiness with thirty thousand soldiers, provided any reverse should befall the French in Lombardy—and, finally, that Alvinzi was rapidly preparing for another march, with numbers infinitely superior to what he could himself extort from the government of Paris;* and considering these circumstances, he felt himself compelled to seek strength by gratifying his Italian friends. Two republics accordingly were organized; the Cispadane and the Transpadane—handmaids rather than sisters of the great French democracy. These events took place during the period of military inaction which followed the victories of Arcola. The new republics hastened to repay Napoleon's favor by raising troops, and placed at his disposal a force which he considered as sufficient to keep the papal army in check during the expected renewal of the Austrian campaign."

He wrote to his brother, who was in Corsica, revealing that wonderful capacity which embraced, without apparent effort or confusion, the most magnificent schemes of conquest, and the minutest details of domestic arrangement; the improvement of the dwelling in which he passed his boyhood.

NAPOLEON TO JOSEPH.

"MILAN, December 10, 1796.

"We have made peace with Parma. I expect every day to hear that you are the minister there. Come

* Bonaparte, to replace all his losses in the last two campaigns, had received only seven thousand recruits.

back as soon as you can. Mix yourself up little, or not at all, with Corsican politics. Arrange our domestic affairs. Let our house be in a habitable state, such as it was, adding to it the apartment of Ignazio, and do little things that are necessary to improve the street.

"I expect Fesch and Paulette at Milan in a fortnight. As you return by Milan, settle the San-Miniato* business. Miot goes to Turin; Cacault to Florence."

With the dawn of a new year (1797) Alvinzi was mustering a fifth army for another campaign against the French. The gentry and the peasantry emulated each other in enthusiastic devotion to the common cause, and even the women wrought banners, and animated the troops in their preparation for the harvest of death. Napoleon, to prevent the enlistment of the Tyrolese, proclaimed that every man found in arms should be shot. The haughty Austrian replied that for every slain peasant he would hang a French prisoner of war. These murderous threats were ended in Napoleon's assurance to Alvinzi, that the execution of a Frenchman would secure the gibbeting of his nephew, who had been taken captive.

The Austrian general sent a spy toward Mantua, to convey if possible to Wurmser his proximity, and readiness to afford relief. The peasant wandered over the country in the plainest guise; but nothing escaped Napoleon's vigilance. He was arrested and brought before the commander-in-chief, when in alarm he confessed that the ball of wax containing the message was in his stomach; he had swallowed it. The means were immediately applied to recover the despatch, and soon the surrender was made, and Napoleon possessed of the intelligence which decided his line of march.

* Bonaparte property.

Upon the tempestuous 12th of January, at nightfall, the tidings came to the French camp, that Alvinzi was moving down upon their battalions from the Tyrol, in two different directions. Napoleon was at Verona watching the movements; Joubert was stationed at Rivoli, and Augereau's division ordered to look after Provera, whose troops were following the Brenta, to form a junction with the force before the walls of Mantua. The plan was to unite the Austrian strength by separate marches, in the rescue of Wurmser, which, if successful, would have rendered the position of the French one of great peril. On the 13th, word was sent to Napoleon that Joubert had with difficulty resisted the superior force which was wasting his ranks. With another astonishingly rapid movement, Napoleon reached, at two o'clock in the morning, the heights of Rivoli, and in the clear, still moonlight, surveyed the slumbering host, many of whom were enjoying their last repose.

“Napoleon's keen eye, observing the position of the five encampments below, penetrated the secret of Alvinzi; namely, that his artillery could not yet have arrived, otherwise he would not have occupied ground so distant from the object of attack. He concluded that the Austrian did not mean to make his grand assault very early in the morning, and resolved to force him to anticipate that movement. For this purpose, he took all possible pains to conceal his own arrival; and prolonged, by a series of petty maneuvers, the enemy's belief that he had to do with a mere outpost of the French. Alvinzi swallowed the deceit; and instead of advancing on some great and well-arranged system, suffered his several columns to endeavor to force the heights by insulated movements, which the real strength of Napoleon easily enabled him to baffle.

It is true that at one moment the bravery of the Germans had nearly overthrown the French on a point of pre-eminent importance; but Napoleon himself, galloping to the spot, roused by his voice and action the division of Massena, who, having marched all night, had lain down to rest in the extreme of weariness, and seconded by them and their gallant general, swept everything before him. The French artillery was in position; the Austrian (according to Napoleon's shrewd guess) had not yet come up, and this circumstance decided the fortune of the day. The cannonade from the heights, backed by successive charges of horse and foot, rendered every attempt to storm the summit abortive; and the main body of the imperialists was already in confusion, and, indeed, in flight, ere one of their divisions, which had been sent round to outflank Bonaparte, and take higher ground in his rear, was able to execute its errand. When, accordingly, Lusignan's division at length achieved its destined object—it did so, not to complete the misery of a routed, but to swell the prey of a victorious, enemy. Instead of cutting off the retreat of Joubert, Lusignan found himself insulated from Alvinzi, and forced to lay down his arms to Bonaparte. ‘Here was a good plan,’ said Napoleon, ‘but these Austrians are not apt to calculate the value of minutes.’ Had Lusignan gained the rear of the French an hour earlier, while the contest was still hot in front of the heights of Rivoli, he might have made the 14th of January one of the darkest, instead of one of the brightest, days in the military chronicles of Napoleon.

“He, who in the course of this trying day had had three horses shot under him, hardly waited to see Lusignan surrender, and to intrust his friends, Massena, Murat, and Joubert, with the task of pursuing the flying columns of Alvinzi. He had heard, during the

battle, that Provera had forced his way to the Lago di Guarda, and was already, by means of boats, in communication with Mantua. The force of Augereau having proved insufficient to oppose the march of the imperialists' second column, it was high time that Napoleon himself should hurry with reinforcements to the lower Adige, and prevent Wurmser from either housing Provera, or joining him in the open field, and so effecting the escape of his own still formidable garrison, whether to the Tyrol or the Romagna.

"Having marched all night and all next day, Napoleon reached the vicinity of Mantua late on the 15th. He found the enemy strongly posted, and Serrurier's situation highly critical. A regiment of Provera's hussars had but a few hours before nearly established themselves in the suburb of St. George. This danger had been avoided, but the utmost vigilance was necessary. The French general himself passed the night in walking about the outposts, so great was his anxiety.

"At one of these he found a grenadier asleep by the root of a tree; and taking his gun, without wakening him, performed a sentinel's duty in his place for about half an hour; when the man, starting from his slumbers, perceived with terror and despair the countenance and occupation of his general. He fell on his knees before him. 'My friend,' said Napoleon, 'here is your musket. You had fought hard, and marched long, and your sleep is excusable; but a moment's inattention might at present ruin the army. I happened to be awake, and have held your post for you. You will be more careful another time.'

"It is needless to say how the devotion of his men was nourished by such anecdotes as these flying ever and anon from column to column. Next morning

there ensued a hot skirmish, recorded as the battle of St. George. Provera was compelled to retreat; and Wurmser, who had sallied out and seized the causeway and citadel of La Favorita, was fain to retreat within his old walls, in consequence of a desperate assault headed by Napoleon in person.

"Provera now found himself entirely cut off from Alvinzi, and surrounded with the army of the French. He and five thousand men laid down their arms. Various bodies of the Austrian force, scattered over the country between the Adige and the Brenta, followed the example; and the brave Wurmser, whose provisions were by this time exhausted, found himself at length under the necessity of sending an offer of capitulation."

The Austrian general was now in extremity. His garrison was reduced one half, the salted horseflesh gone, and famine stalked before his anxious mind. Klenau, the bearer of despatches, entered the tent of General Serrurier, and with a flourish of deceptive words, conveyed the impression that Wurmser could hold the citadel for several days longer, but would yield upon honorable conditions of surrender. Napoleon started up from a corner of the tent, and presenting through the folds of his cloak, his calm face and piercing eye, glanced upon the aid-de-camp, and then rapidly wrote a few lines, which he handed to the astonished messenger, saying, "These are the terms to which your general's bravery entitles him. He may have them to-day; a week, a month hence, he shall have no worse. Meantime, tell him that General Bonaparte is about to set out for Rome." February 2d, Mantua was evacuated. Napoleon, to spare the heroic Wurmser's feelings, delegated Serrurier to receive the veteran's sword; a delicate and beautiful expression of generosity, which

greatly affected the Austrian commander. Besides sparing him the humiliation of being present at the capitulation, Napoleon allowed him to retire with two hundred horse and five hundred men, unmolested to Austria. When the Directory remonstrated against such lenity, he replied indignantly, "I have granted the Austrian such terms as were, in my judgment, due to a brave and honorable enemy, and to the dignity of the French republic."

During all these scenes Napoleon's heart was true to Josephine, and he turned from the shouts of victory, and the applause of millions, to win the smile of her approval. Of the correspondence which passed at that period, but little that is authentic is preserved. Extravagant letters are attributed to him, and their authenticity doubted by the best historians. But it were not strange if at twenty-six, with a distant bride he had left so quickly, and covered with glory that would bewilder an aged conqueror, he did pour his raptures in language whose ardor seems now the fond ravings of a happy lunatic, rather than the utterance of an intellect well poised as it was creative and mighty.

Eugene joined his father-in-law, in the campaign, and won distinction for himself, grateful to Napoleon as it was flattering to the young soldier. This will appear in the subjoined note originally furnished by Josephine :

NAPOLEON TO JOSEPHINE.

"MY BELOVED FRIEND—My first laurel is due to my country; my second shall be yours. While pressing Alvinzi, I thought of France; when he was beaten, I thought of you. Your son will send you a scarf surrendered to him by Colonel Morback, whom he took prisoner with his own hand. You see, madam,

that our Eugene is worthy of his father. Do not deem me altogether undeserving of having succeeded to that brave and unfortunate general, under whom I should have felt honored to have learned to conquer. I embrace you.

"BONAPARTE."

Alvinzi thus completely routed, Wurmser and Provera surrendering, left the spreading plains and swelling slopes of Lombardy under the banner of the republic, and threw around the name of Napoleon, a dazzling halo of premature glory, which, with comparatively small abatement, was yet the merited reward of unexampled military wisdom, and exhaustless activity on the field of daring and heroic deeds.