

Saxony, who remained to make what terms he could with the allied sovereigns. The battle was ere then raging all round the walls.

“At eleven o'clock the allies had gathered close to the bridge from either wing; and the walls over against it had been intrusted to Saxons, who now, like their brethren of the day before, turned their fire on the French. The officer to whom Napoleon had committed the task of blowing up the bridge, when the advance of the enemy should render this necessary, conceived that the time was come, and set fire to his train. The crowd of men urging each other on the point of safety, could not at once be stopped. Soldiers and horses, cannons and wains, rolled headlong into the deep though narrow river; which renewed, though on a smaller scale, the horrors of the Beresina. Marshal Macdonald swam the stream in safety; the gallant Poniatowski, the hope and pride of Poland, had been twice wounded ere he plunged his horse into the current, and he sunk to rise no more. Twenty-five thousand Frenchmen, the means of escape entirely cut off, laid down their arms within the city. Four sovereigns, each entering at the head of his own victorious army, met at noon in the great market-place of Leipsic: and all the exultation of that solemn hour would have been partaken by the inhabitants, but for the fate of their own sovereign, personally esteemed and beloved, who now vainly entreated to be admitted to the presence of the conquerors, and was sent forthwith as a prisoner of war to Berlin.

“Napoleon, in killed, and wounded, and prisoners, lost at Leipsic at least fifty thousand men.

“The retreat of the French through Saxony was accompanied with every disaster which a hostile peasantry, narrowness of supplies, and the persevering pursuits of the Cossacks and other light troops could

inflict on a disordered and disheartened mass of men. The soldiers moved on, while under the eye of Napoleon, in gloomy silence: wherever he was not present, they set every rule of discipline at nought, and were guilty of the most frightful excesses. The emperor conducted himself as became a great mind amid great misfortunes. He appeared at all times calm and self-possessed; receiving, every day that he advanced, new tidings of evil.

“He halted two days at Erfurth, where extensive magazines had been established, employing all his energies in the restoration of discipline; and would have remained longer, had he not learned that the victors of Leipsic were making progress on either flank of his march, while the Bavarians (so recently his allies) reinforced by some Austrian divisions, were moving rapidly to take post between him and the Rhine. He resumed his march, therefore, on the 24th. It was here that Murat quitted the army. Notwithstanding the unpleasant circumstances under which he had retired to Naples in January, Joachim had reappeared when the emperor fixed his headquarters at Dresden, in the summer, and served with his usual gallantry throughout the rest of the campaign. The state of Italy now demanded his presence; and the two brothers-in-law, after all their differences, embraced each other warmly and repeatedly at parting—as if under a mutual presentiment that they were parting to meet no more.”

Murat saw that the prestige of Napoleon was gone, and to save his crown in Naples, he entered into an alliance with the foes of France. He immediately appeared on the arena of combined empires, against him who had made his fortune, and prevented by his opposing division, the advance of Eugene from Italy to aid

the cause of Bonaparte. The two members of the imperial family met at Milan, as enemies. For this timely assistance, the allies promised to secure the throne of Naples to Murat, and his heirs; a reward which was never given to the ambitious, dashing, vain, and unstable prince.

The hostile armies fell on Napoleon in his retreat, at Haynau, and were defeated, after losing ten thousand men. A bomb-shell exploded near him, but he escaped unhurt—his destiny was not fulfilled. He continued to press forward toward Paris, and at five o'clock, November 5th, reached St. Cloud, and embraced the weeping empress. It was a strange and humbling misfortune, which seems a part of the awful retribution for abandoning Josephine, and accepting the union with a faithless, because a royal race, that her father was then the most dreaded enemy of all the kings whose myriad host, like the Assyrians of ancient battle, were sweeping in concentrating circles upon the single captain of a decimated army. Maria Louisa felt the blow which had fallen from a paternal hand, amid the unfriendly strokes of those who had formed the emperor's household, and received their honors from him who gave thrones away to his heroes, as if the world were his own.

A revolution followed the tidings of the result at Leipsic, in Holland, and the exiled prince of Orange returned to resume the reins of government, November, 1813. The Confederation of the Rhine became a gossamer web before the victorious allies, and the states, as the only alternative, wheeled into the ranks of the augmenting caravan of monarchs and subjects, whose hydra-folds were around the struggling Hercules who still kept the world in awe.

St. Cyr, with thirty thousand troops, who had been

shut up in Dresden, capitulated, on the conditions of returning to France, and no more taking arms against the allied armies, until formally exchanged as prisoners of war. But, in contempt of the stipulation, and, it must be confessed, in contrast with Napoleon's treatment of Wurmser at Mantua seventeen years before, the allies offered them starvation in Dresden, or the necessity of marching to the prisons of Austria. There was no sufficient excuse for this act of infidelity, and it was one of the lasting blots upon the banner of Napoleon's determined foes. Similar was the fate of General Rapp and his division at Dantzic. Wellington had driven the soldiers of France from Spain, and was on the territory of their sovereign. The outposts of power were all gone, and the way prepared to come down upon the citadel of strength—to march upon Paris itself. Napoleon afterward said of this crisis, "*Ere then I felt the reins slipping from my hands.*" Though propositions for peace were made by Caulaincourt in the emperor's behalf, and the branded kings issued at Frankfort a manifesto, the negotiations were no more than a passing illusion. Napoleon aroused himself with an amazing energy for the final contest. France was alive with warlike preparations. Conscriptions and taxation went forward with redoubled vigor. The emigrant royalists, who had been allowed to return to France, were busy plotting against the doomed man. The priests, remembering the invasion of their sacred rights in the person of the Roman Pontiff, and the confiscation of church possessions, joined in the widespread conspiracies. The wily diplomatist, Talleyrand, anticipating the coming overthrow, commenced correspondence with the allies to secure his good fortune against ruin. The emperor called around him the Council of State and the Senate, and made his stirring

appeals. But the nation was exhausted, and the conflicting parties growing strong under the shadow of his throne. To the coolness of the senators, who suggested that if the proposals of the allies had been accepted France might have been preserved, he replied, "Wellington has entered the south, the Russians menace the northern frontier, the Prussians, Austrians, and Bavarians the eastern. Shame! Wellington is in France, and we have not risen *en masse* to drive him back! All my allies have deserted—the Bavarian has betrayed me. No peace till we have burned Munich. I demand a levy of three hundred thousand men—with this and what I already have, I shall see a million in arms. I will form a camp of one hundred thousand at Bourdeaux; another at Mentz; a third at Lyons. But I must have grown men—these boys serve only to encumber the hospitals and the roadsides. * * * Abandon Holland! sooner yield it back to the sea! Senators, an impulse must be given—all must march—you are fathers of families, the heads of the nation—you must set the example. Peace! I hear of nothing but peace, when all around should echo to the cry of war." To the Council of State he added, respecting the undecided report drawn up by the Senate, "In place of assisting, they impede me. Our attitude alone could have repelled the enemy—they invite him. We should have presented a front of brass—they lay open wounds to his view. I will not suffer their report to be printed. They have not done their duty, but I will do mine—I dissolve the legislative senate." The truth is, the last conditions of the allies to reduce France to her natural limits were humiliating; and, rather than leave the realm less powerful than he found it, he preferred to fight and conquer—or die honorably in the struggle; or, if the dire necessity arose, abdicate his throne.

December 20th, Schwartzberg, with the grand army of invasion, crossed the Rhine near Basle, entering upon the neutral territory of Switzerland, and marched without opposition into Burgundy. At this juncture, and after but little correspondence between Napoleon and Joseph for months, the following letters were written, and soon after a reconciliation was so far made, that frequent notes were exchanged.

JOSEPH TO NAPOLEON.

"December 29, 1813.

"SIRE—The violations of the Swiss territory have laid France open to the enemy.

"In this state of affairs I am anxious that your majesty be persuaded that my heart is wholly French. Recalled by circumstances to France, I should be glad to be of some use, and I am ready to undertake anything which may prove to you my devotion.

"I am also aware, sire, of what I owe to Spain; I see my duties, and wish to fulfil all of them. If I make claims, it is only for the purpose of sacrificing them to the general good of mankind, esteeming myself happy if by such sacrifices I can promote the peace of Europe.

"I hope that your majesty may think fit to commission one of your ministers to come to an understanding on this subject with the Duke of Santa Fé, my minister for foreign affairs."

NAPOLEON TO JOSEPH.

"December, 1813.

"MY BROTHER—I have received your letter of the 29th of December. It is far too clever for the state of my affairs. I will explain it in two words. France is invaded, all Europe is in arms against France, and

above all against me. You are no longer King of Spain. I do not want Spain either to keep or to give away. I will have nothing more to do with that country, except to live in peace with it, and have the use of my army. What will you do? Will you, as a French prince, come to the support of my throne? You possess my friendship and your apanage, and will be my subject as prince of the blood. In this case you must act as I have done—announce the part which you are about to play, write to me in simple terms a letter which I can print, receive the authorities, and show yourself zealous for me and the King of Rome, and friendly to the regency of the empress. Are you unable to do this? Have you not good sense enough for it? Then retire to the obscurity of some country-house forty leagues from Paris. You will live there quietly if I live; you will be killed or arrested if I die. You will be useless to me, to our family, to your daughters, and to France; but you will do me no harm, and will not be in my way. Choose quickly the line which you will take.”

Ferdinand was restored to power; of whom Napier says, “an effeminate, superstitious, fawning slave at Valencay, and now, after six years’ captivity, he returned to his own country an ungrateful, cruel tyrant.” January 1st, 1814, Blucher passed the Rhine; and the third division of an army, numbering a million of troops, under Witzengerode and Bulow, crossed the frontier of Netherlands. The wealthy citizens flew to Paris with the news of the darkening storm over hitherto proud, victorious France.

January 24th, Napoleon held a grand levee in the saloon of the Tuilleries. Nine hundred officers and dignitaries gathered in splendid array around the em-

peror, with the subdued aspect of a grave and anxious assembly. Napoleon appeared in the center of the hall, accompanied by Maria Louisa, and the beautiful boy, for whom so fearful a sacrifice had been made. After bestowing the regency on the empress, he said with the firm and thrilling tones of an ever-eloquent voice, “Gentlemen, France is invaded; I go to put myself at the head of my troops, and, with God’s help and their valor, I hope soon to drive the enemy beyond the frontier.” Here he took Maria Louisa in one hand and her son in the other, and continued—“But if they should approach the capital, I confide to the national guard, the empress and the King of Rome”—then correcting himself, he said in a tone of strong emotion—“*my wife and my child.*”

Tears gushed from veteran eyes; they were shed by many who cherished no strong attachment for Napoleon. Officers immediately advanced from the silent and imposing circle, as pledges of the protection desired for the trembling queen, and her dreaming child. The hour of peril had brought from obscurity friends who had lived apart from Napoleon’s career. Carnot, who so boldly opposed the stride to imperial power, came forward, and offered his sword to the emperor. With characteristic appreciation of preeminent talent and noble qualities, he gave him the command of the important city and fortress of Antwerp.

January 25th, while the snow was falling, suggestive of past disasters, Napoleon having given his private papers to the flames, and embraced his wife and child for the last time, left Paris for the field of battle. Joseph was again in the capital at the head of the council, and next in official station to the empress.

Napoleon reached St. Dizier, a hundred miles from Paris, on the 27th, and there met with a small force,

the Cossacks of Blucher's army. A brief struggle followed, and the French were victorious. The main columns of the Prussians were at Brienne on the Aube—the town where the genius of Napoleon received its earliest military culture. Could the emperor drive Blucher from this position, he would then lie between two great divisions of the overshadowing enemy, weakening their strength, and giving him the advantage of his inimitable mode of warfare—falling on separate masses of his enemy, like the successive shocks of the earthquake which lays the city in ruins. The 28th he marched in the face of a tempest, and through the snow, rekindling the enthusiasm of his soldiers, and receiving the warmest expressions of self-sacrifice and devotion from the humblest peasantry. The next day, he stood before the bristling castle and heights of Brienne, with twenty thousand men, opposed by sixty thousand Russians in this stronghold, whose presence thronged memory with bitter recollections. The sudden tramp of the French battalions before the gates, startled Blucher from his wine at the dinner-table of the chateau, and he made his escape through a postern, leading his horse down a stairway. A bloody fight began, and when twilight deepened over the crimson hills, five thousand of the allies were slain. General Gourmand shot a Cossack when pointing his spear at the back of the emperor—a moment more, and Brienne would have witnessed the close, as it did the dawn, of his career.

Napoleon gives a graphic account of these events :

NAPOLEON TO JOSEPH.

"BRIENNE, January 31, 1814; in the evening.

"The bulletin will have informed you of the events which have taken place. The engagement at Brienne

was very hot. I have lost three thousand men, and the enemy's loss amounts to between four thousand and five thousand. I pursued him half-way to Bar-sur-Aube. I have repaired the bridges over the Aube which were burnt. In another instant General Blucher and the whole of his staff would have been taken. The nephew of the Chancellor of Hardenberg, who was close to them, *was* taken. They were on foot, and did not know that I was with the army.

Since the battle of Brienne the allies have had great respect for our army. They did not believe we had any. I have reason to think, although I am not certain, that the Duke of Vicenza has reached the emperor's headquarters at Chaumont. This affair of Brienne, the position of our armies, and the opinion which is entertained of them, may hasten the peace. It is advisable that the newspapers should describe Paris as determined to defend itself, and should announce large numbers of troops as arriving from every quarter.

"I have ordered a column of from one thousand to two thousand horses belonging to the guard, two pieces of cannon, three or four infantry wagons, and between three thousand and four thousand men of the young guard, altogether a column of from four thousand to five thousand men, to leave Paris. To these should be joined a company of the baggage-train belonging to the guard, if there is one ready. This column is to proceed toward Nogent and Fismes, where it will wait for further orders. The Duke of Treviso had evacuated Troyes in order to advance upon Arcis-sur-Aube; but I desired him to return to Troyes, and he arrived there this evening at seven o'clock. It is very important to reinforce as soon as possible the division which is at Troyes."

Blucher retreated along the Aube to La Rothiere, nine miles from Brienne, where Schwartzberg, incited by the thunder of artillery, joined him. February 1st, Blucher opened the conflict, which raged all day with frightful ferocity. The eagles of France were struck down, and leaving five thousand of his soldiers mangled on the frozen plain, Napoleon fled toward Troyes. This second battle of Brienne, is called by French writers, the battle of La Rothiere; in which Napoleon's advanced guard was posted.

The allies now definitely arranged a conference for the consideration of peace. The emperor informs Joseph of its character:

NAPOLEON TO JOSEPH.

"PINEY,* February 21, 1814.

"It seems that the allies have fixed the 3d of February for opening the congress at Chatillon; that Lord Castlereagh and half a dozen other Englishmen will negotiate for England, M. de Stadion for Austria, M. de Humboldt for Prussia, and Rasumowski for Russia. It appears that the allies feared lest the arrival of the Duke of Vicenza at their headquarters might develop and mature the seeds of disunion already existing among them. They preferred to hold the congress at a distance from their headquarters. I shall be at Troyes to-morrow."

He arrived at Troyes on the 3d, and remained there three days; during which, Joseph despatched a message containing the following significant passage:

"The public mind was depressed to-day, and I had great trouble in keeping up the spirits of many people. I have seen the empress twice, and when I left her last

* A village half way between Brienne and Troyes.

night she was more composed; she had just received a letter from your majesty in which you mention the congress.

"If your majesty should meet with serious reverses, what form of government ought to be left here in order to prevent intriguers from putting themselves at the head of the first movement? Jerome asks me what should be his conduct in such a case? Men are coming in, but we want money to clothe them. Count Daru can obtain only 10,000 fr. a day from the Treasury; this delays terribly the departure of the troops. There are here two battalions of National Guards."

The emperor with gleams of hope, and a faithful army, lived continually under the shadow of fear for his capital. In a reply to his brother he betrays his anxiety: "Take away from Fontainebleau all valuables, and above all everything which might serve as a trophy, without, however, unfurnishing the chateau too much; it is useless to leave in it plate or anything that can be easily removed. I am writing to La Bouillerie to desire him to hold a million francs at your disposal, to hasten the clothing and equipment of the troops."

He gave orders to "hold firmly the batteries of Paris," to watch the three points of approach, and arm with fowling-pieces and pikes, reserves for defense.

He complains that "the bad spirit of such men as Talleyrand, who endeavored to paralyze the nation, prevented him from having early recourse to arms," the consequence of which was the doubtful crisis of national affairs. His efforts to quiet the popular feeling were constant, and he resorted to any form of deception to attain the object. From Nogent, on the Seine, to which he had advanced, he directed Joseph to "insert in the *Moniteur* an article, headed Cha-

tillon-sur-Seine, saying that on the 6th the members of the congress dined with the Duke of Vicenza ; that it is remarked that all the ambassadors are on terms of the greatest politeness, especially those of France and England, who are full of attentions for each other."

The correspondence given at length, presents a vivid picture of the crowding events of this reign of terror, and exhibits the character of actors on the world-exciting stage of royal contest.

JOSEPH TO NAPOLEON.

"PARIS, February 7, 1814; 11 P.M.

"SIRE—I have received your majesty's two letters of yesterday. I have seen and written to the Duke of Valmy. He starts to-night for Meaux. He showed me a letter from the Duke of Taranto, dated the 6th. He was still at Epernay, and had heard nothing from your majesty for four days. He had abandoned Chalons after defending it for some time. The artillery was directed on Meaux. The enemy had entered Sezanne. The intendant and the public treasure had escaped falling into the hands of the enemy.

"I inclose the exact route of the 9th infantry division of the army of Spain.

"I have sent an aide-de-camp along the Chalons road by way of Vitry.

"The minister of war tells me that he sent two thousand muskets to Montereau this morning.

"I have spoken to Louis about leaving him here ; he has written to me a long letter on the subject. I have determined on forwarding it to your majesty. I believe that your majesty told me that the princesses were to accompany the empress. If this should not be the case, I ought to have positive orders on the subject. I am most anxious that the departure of the empress

should not take place. We cannot disguise from ourselves the fact that the consternation and despair of the people may lead to sad and even fatal consequences. I think, and so do all persons whose opinion is of value, that we should be prepared to make many sacrifices before resorting to this extremity. The men who are attached to your majesty's government fear that the departure of the empress will abandon the people of Paris to despair, and give a capital and an empire to the Bourbons. Although I express the fear which I see on every face, your majesty may rest assured that your orders will be faithfully executed by me as soon as I receive them.

"I have spoken to General Caffarelli on the subject of Fontainebleau, and to M. de la Bouillerie about the million for the war and the removal of the treasure.* I do not know how far your majesty may approve of my observations, but I must say that I think it important to pay a month's salary to the great dignitaries, ministers, counsellors d'etat, and senators. Several have been mentioned to me who are really in distress, and, in the event of their departure becoming expedient, it is thought that many will be detained in Paris for want of the means of traveling.

"Marshal Brune has called on me ; I was not able

* The treasure in the hands of M. de la Bouillerie was gradually accumulated by Napoleon out of the contributions which he imposed on conquered towns, and out of the sale or the revenues of the domains belonging to the sovereigns whom he deposed or robbed. It was completely at his disposal, but was employed by him only for military purposes. Not much is known as to its extent, or as to the mode in which it finally disappeared ; but the general opinion is, that at the beginning of 1814 it amounted to about 150,000,000 of francs, and that about 110,000,000 of it were spent on the army before the expulsion of Napoleon. When that event happened about 40,000,000 of this treasure are supposed to have remained. It fell into the hands of the government which succeeded him, but was never accounted for ; one or two of the great fortunes of the Restoration are suspected to have been created out of it.—TR.