

and other expressions of similar treasonable tendency were insultingly vociferated in the ears of the monarch, as he passed, with the usual solemnity, to open the session of parliament. In the narrow pass leading from the palace-yard to the house of lords, one of the glasses of the carriage was perforated by a bullet: and, on his return, he was treated with much rudeness and indignity. Several persons were apprehended on suspicion of being concerned in this infamous outrage; and a journeyman printer, of the name of Kidd Wake, was tried, convicted, and sentenced to stand in the pillory at Gloucester, on a market-day—afterward to be imprisoned and kept to hard labour for five years, at the expiration of which term he was to find security in the sum of one thousand pounds, for his behaviour for ten years.

The outrage offered to his majesty was taken into consideration by parliament, and a suitable address was voted by both houses. This was followed by a bill, introduced into the upper house by lord Grenville, “for the safety and preservation of his majesty’s person and government against treasonable and seditious practices and attempts. On the same day, Mr. Pitt, in the commons, moved, that the royal proclamations issued in consequence of the late riot should be taken into consideration; which being carried, he moved for a bill “for the prevention of seditious meetings.” These two bills had for their object the restriction of the right hitherto possessed by the people, of assembling for the purpose of petitioning the crown and the legislature, and of discussing political subjects. They were warmly opposed in each stage of their progress through both houses, and even stigmatized as violent and unnecessary encroachments on the privileges granted by the constitution, but finally passed into law, by more than the usual majorities: their duration, nevertheless, was limited to three years. The court and the minister, however, were instructed by what had taken place, to form a correct estimate of the state of public opinion on the subject of the war, and, accordingly, on the 8th of December, a message from the king was introduced to parliament, intimating that the present order of things in France was such as would induce his majesty to meet any disposition for negotiation on the part of the enemy, with an earnest desire to give it its fullest effect—an intimation which drew from the opposition side of the house, some sarcastic reflections on the futility of pretending that any change in the French government had rendered them more fit to be negotiated with at present than they were before.

The power and wealth of Great Britain being manifestly the principal object to the ambitious projects of France, it naturally became a leading topic of French policy to overthrow the foundations of her prosperity, and reduce her to the common level. A notion was industriously propagated on the continent, that England was the tyrant of the seas; and other nations were invited to make common cause against her naval domination. And as her commerce was obviously the basis of this superiority, plans were devised for throwing every possible impediment in its way: and the republic not being able to shut up the ports of the rest of Europe against her merchandise, a severe decree was issued, prohibiting its admission into any port of France or its dependencies, among which the states of Holland were now entitled to be reckoned.

About this time an envoy was despatched from England to the court of Berlin, with a view, as was supposed in France, of procuring the reunion of Prussia to the coalition, a measure which greatly incensed the directory; and its failure was regarded as the cause of the overtures that were now made by the British government to negotiate the conditions of peace. The directory, however, not choosing to appear adverse to the termination of so burdensome a war, granted the desired passports for an agent from England: and on the 23d of October, lord Malmesbury arrived at Paris in quality of negotiator, where he was received with every public demonstration of joy.

On opening his commission, lord Malmesbury proposed a mutual restitution of conquests as the fundamental basis of a treaty, and observed, that as the successes of England had placed her out of the condition of requiring

restitution for herself, whereas France had made large acquisitions from her allies, the negotiation would of course turn upon the compensations France would expect for the restitution she was to make to them. The directory replied, that the accession of other powers to a negotiation which his lordship was authorized to transact separately between Great Britain and France must necessarily retard its progress very considerably; nevertheless, they would consent upon his procuring credentials from those allies, to take into consideration any specific proposals he might have to lay before them. After much discussion on this point, lord Malmesbury was required to mention the compensations to which he had alluded, and he proposed the restitution of what had been taken from the emperor of Germany, and the restoration of the prince of Orange to the stadtholderate of the seven United Provinces; the accession of Russia to the treaty, and the including of Portugal without any indemnity demanded by France:—in return for which, Great Britain was to restore her conquests in both the Indies, receiving an equivalent, however, for the part of Hispaniola ceded by Spain to France. The directory then required from the English minister a specification of the whole of his demands, to be delivered in in four-and-twenty hours; and farther signified, that they could listen to no terms inconsistent with the constitution, and the engagements formed by the republic. On his lordship replying that their requisition precluded all farther negotiation, and that their own proposals ought to be communicated to his constituents, they told him, that his powers being inadequate to the conducting of a treaty, his residence in Paris was totally unnecessary, and abruptly ordered his lordship to quit the republic in forty-eight hours. Thus terminated the first attempt at negotiation;—an attempt so unpromising from its commencement, that it is not easy to suppose one party, at least, to have been sincere in its efforts to carry it into effect. (1)

LETTER XXVIII.

Italian Campaign—Buonaparte marches towards Italy—Battle of Monte Notte—Defeat of the Austrian General Provera—Retreat of the allied Armies—Battle of Dego or Millesimo—The French Army enters Piedmont—The King of Sardinia requests an Armistice—The French enter the Milanese Country—Death of General La Harpe—Battle of Lodi—Buonaparte enters Milan—The Pope obliged to purchase an Armistice—and the Duke of Modena—The French plunder the Country of its finest Statuary—Reflections on this Act of Spoliation. A. D. 1796.

You are now, my son, about to enter upon a narrative, which, if you can abstract the mind from all those troublesome questions of morality that are ever and anon recurring as we turn over the pages of history and pursue the annals of blood, cannot fail to excite a lively interest, if it do not fill you with astonishment. The exploits of Napoleon Buonaparte—the rapidity of his motions—his dexterity in manœuvring—his bold and undaunted courage—and the victorious career which he was destined to pursue, are perhaps unparalleled in the history of the world.

The plan of crossing the Alps and marching into Italy suited in every respect the ambitious and self-confident character of the general to whom it was now intrusted. It gave him a separate and independent authority, and the power of acting on his own judgment and responsibility; for his countryman Salicetti, the deputy who accompanied him as commissioner of the government, was not probably much disposed to intrude his opinions. He had been Buonaparte’s patron, and was still his friend. The young general’s mind was made up to the alternative of conquest or ruin, as may be

(1) New Annual Register, 1792—1796.—Dr. Aikin’s Annals of George III.—Jones’s Continuation of Goldsmith’s History of England.—Woodfall’s Debates in Parliament.—Bissett’s History of the Reign of George III.

senà, directed themselves upon Deگو, by the vale of Bormida; the right wing, commanded by la Harpe, manœuvred on the right of all, for the purpose of turning Beaulieu's left flank. Augereau was the first who came in contact with the enemy. He attacked general Colli on the 13th of April. His troops, emulous of the honour acquired by their companions, behaved with great bravery, rushed upon the outposts of the Sardinian army at Millesimo, forced and retained possession of the gorge by which it was defended, and thus separated from the Sardinian army a body of about two thousand men, under the Austrian general Provera, who occupied a detached eminence called Cossaria, which covered the extreme left of general Colli's position. But the Austrian showed the most obstinate courage. Although surrounded by the enemy, he threw himself into the ruinous castle of Cossaria, which crowned the eminence, and showed a disposition to maintain the place to the last; the rather that, as he could see from the turrets of his stronghold the Sardinian troops, from whom he had been separated, preparing to fight on the ensuing day, he might reasonably hope to be disengaged.

Buonaparte in person came up; and seeing the necessity of dislodging the enemy from this strong post, ordered three successive attacks to be made on the castle. Joubert, at the head of one of the attacking columns, had actually, with six or seven others, made his way into the outworks, when he was struck down by a wound in the head. General Banal and adjutant-general Quenin fell, each at the head of the column which he commanded; and Buonaparte was compelled to leave the obstinate Provera in possession of the castle for the night. The morning of the 14th brought a different scene. Contenting himself with blockading the castle of Cossaria, Buonaparte now gave battle to general Colli, who made every effort to relieve it. These attempts were all in vain. He was defeated and cut off from Beaulieu; he retired as well as he could upon Ceva, leaving to his fate the brave general Provera, who was compelled to surrender at discretion.

On the same day, Massena, with the centre, attacked the heights of Biastro, being the point of communication between Beaulieu and Colli, while la Harpe, having crossed the Bormida, where the stream came up to the soldiers' middle, attacked in front and in flank the village of Deگو, where the Austrian commander-in-chief was stationed. The first attack was completely successful,—the heights of Biastro were carried, and the Piedmontese routed. The assault of Deگو was not less so, although after a harder struggle. Beaulieu was compelled to retreat, and was entirely separated from the Sardinians, who had hitherto acted in combination with him. The defenders of Italy now retreated in different directions, Colli moving westward towards Ceva, while Beaulieu, closely pursued through a difficult country, retired upon d'Aqui.

Even the morning after the victory, it was nearly wrested out of the hands of the conquerors. A fresh division of Austrians, who had evacuated Voltri later than the others, and were approaching to form a junction with their general, found the enemy in possession of Beaulieu's position. They arrived at Deگو like men who had been led astray, and were no doubt surprised at finding it in the hands of the French. Yet they did not hesitate to assume the offensive, and by a brisk attack drove out the enemy, and replaced the Austrian eagles in the village. Great alarm was occasioned by this sudden apparition; for no one among the French could conceive the meaning of an alarm beginning on the opposite quarter to that on which the enemy had retreated, and without its being announced from the outposts towards d'Aqui.

Buonaparte hastily marched on the village. The Austrians repelled two attacks; at the third, general Lanusse, afterward killed in Egypt, put his hat upon the point of his sword, and advancing to the charge, penetrated into the place. Lannes, also, afterward duke of Montebello, distinguished himself on the same occasion by courage and military skill, and was recommended by Buonaparte to the directory for promotion. In this battle of Deگو, more commonly called of Millesimo, the Austro-Sardinian army lost five or six

thousand men, thirty pieces of cannon, with a great quantity of baggage. Besides, the Austrians were divided from the Sardinians; and the two generals began to show, not only that their forces were disunited, but that they themselves were acting upon separate motives; the Sardinians desiring to protect Turin, whereas the movement of Beaulieu seemed still directed to prevent the French from entering the Milanese territory. Leaving a sufficient force on the Bormida to keep in check Beaulieu, Buonaparte now turned his strength against Colli, who, overpowered, and without hopes of succour, abandoned his line of defence near Ceva, and retreated to the line of the Tanaro.

Napoleon, in the mean time, fixed his head-quarters at Ceva, and enjoyed from the heights of Montezemoto, the splendid view of the fertile fields of Piedmont stretching in boundless prospective beneath his feet, watered by the Po, the Tanaro, and a thousand other streams which descend from the Alps. Before the eyes of the delighted army of victors lay this rich expanse like a promised land; behind them was the wilderness they had passed;—not indeed a desert of barren sand, similar to that in which the Israelites wandered, but a huge tract of rocks and inaccessible mountains, crested with ice and snow, seeming by nature designed as the barrier and rampart of the blessed regions which stretched eastward beneath them. We can sympathize with the self-congratulation of the general who had surmounted such tremendous obstacles in a way so unusual. He said to the officers around him, as they gazed upon this magnificent scene, "Hannibal took the Alps by storm: we have succeeded as well by turning their flank."

The dispirited army of Colli was attacked at Mondovi during his retreat, by two corps of Buonaparte's army, from two different points, commanded by Massena and Serrurier. The last general the Sardinians repulsed with loss; but when he found Massena, in the mean time, was turning the left of his line, and that he was thus pressed on both flanks, his situation became almost desperate. The cavalry of the Piedmontese made an effort to renew the combat. For a time they overpowered and drove back those of the French; and general Stengel, who commanded the latter, was slain in attempting to get them into order. But the desperate valour of Murat, unrivalled perhaps in the heavy charge of cavalry-combat, renewed the fortune of the field; and the horse, as well as the infantry, of Colli's army were compelled to a disastrous retreat. The defeat was decisive; and the Sardinians, after the loss of the best of their troops, their cannon, baggage, and appointments, and being now totally divided from their Austrian allies, and liable to be overpowered by the united forces of the French army, had no longer hopes of effectually covering Turin. Buonaparte, pursuing his victory, took possession of Cherasco, within ten leagues of the Piedmontese capital.

Thus fortune, in the course of a campaign of scarce a month, placed her favourite in full possession of the desired road to Italy, by command of the mountain passes, which had been invaded and conquered with so much military skill. He had gained three battles over forces far superior to his own; inflicted on the enemy a loss of twenty-five thousand men in killed, wounded, and prisoners; taken eighty pieces of cannon, and twenty-one stand of colours; reduced to inaction the Austrian army; almost annihilated that of Sardinia; and stood in full communication with France upon the eastern side of the Alps, with Italy lying open before him, as if to invite his invasion. But it was not even with such laurels, and with facilities which now presented themselves for the accomplishment of new and more important victories upon a larger scale, and with more magnificent results, that the career of Buonaparte's earliest campaign was to be closed. The head of the royal house of Savoy, if not one of the most powerful, still one of the most distinguished in Europe, was to have the melancholy experience, that he had encountered with the *man of destiny*, as he was afterward proudly called, who, for a time, had power, in the emphatic phrase of Scripture, "to bind kings with chains, and nobles with fetters of iron."

The shattered relics of the Sardinian army had fallen back, or rather fled,

to within two leagues of Turin, without hope of being again able to make an effectual stand. The sovereign of Sardinia, Savoy, and Piedmont had no means of preserving his capital, nay, his existence on the continent, excepting by an almost total submission to the will of the victor. Let it be remembered, that Victor Amadeus III. was the descendant of a race of heroes who, from the peculiar situation of their territories, as constituting a neutral ground of great strength between France and the Italian possessions of Austria, had often been called on to play a part in the general affairs of Europe, of importance far superior to that which their condition as a second-rate power could otherwise have demanded. In general, they had compensated their inferiority of force by an ability and gallantry which did them the highest credit, both as generals and as politicians; and now Piedmont was at the feet, in her turn, of an enemy weaker in numbers than her own. Besides the reflections on the past fame of his country, the present humiliating situation of the king was rendered more mortifying by the state of his family connexions. Victor Amadeus was the father-in-law of Monsieur (by right Louis XVIII.), and of the comte d'Artois (the reigning king of France). He had received his sons-in-law at his court at Turin, had afforded them an opportunity of assembling around them their forces, consisting of the emigrant noblesse, and had strained all the power he possessed, and in many instances successfully, to withstand both the artifices and the arms of the French republicans. And now, so born, so connected, and with such principles, he was condemned to sue for peace on any terms which might be dictated, from a general of France aged twenty-six years, who, a few months before, was desirous of an appointment in the artillery service of the grand seignior!

An armistice was requested by the king of Sardinia, under those afflicting circumstances, but could only be purchased by placing two of his strongest fortresses,—those keys of the Alps, of which his ancestors had long been the keepers,—Corti and Tortona, in the hands of the French, and thus acknowledging that he surrendered at discretion. The armistice was agreed on at Cherasco, but commissioners were sent by the king to Paris, to arrange with the directory the final terms of peace. These were such as victors give to the vanquished. Besides the fortresses already surrendered, the king of Sardinia was to place in the hands of the French five others of the first importance. The road from France to Italy was to be at all times open to the French armies; and indeed the king, by surrender of the places mentioned, had lost the power of interrupting their progress. He was to break off every species of alliance and connexion with the combined powers at war with France, and become bound not to entertain at his court, or in his service, any French emigrants whatsoever, or any of their connexions; nor was an exception even made in favour of his own two daughters. In short, the surrender was absolute. Victor Amadeus exhibited the utmost reluctance to subscribe this treaty, and did not long survive it. His son succeeded in name to the kingdom of Piedmont; but the fortresses and passes, which had rendered him a prince of some importance, were, excepting Turin, and one or two of minor consequence, all surrendered into the hands of the French.

Viewing this treaty with Sardinia as the close of the Piedmontese campaign, we pause to consider the character which Buonaparte displayed at that period. The talents as a general which he had exhibited were of the very first order. There was no disconnexion in his objects; they were all attained by the very means he proposed, and the success was improved to the utmost. A different conduct usually characterizes those who stumble unexpectedly on victory, either by good fortune or by the valour of their troops. When the favourable opportunity occurs to such leaders, they are nearly as much embarrassed by it as by a defeat. But Buonaparte, who had foreseen the result of each operation by his sagacity, stood also prepared to make the most of the advantages which might be derived from it.

The ardent disposition of Buonaparte did not long permit him to rest after the advantages which he had secured. He had gazed on Italy with an eagle's

eye; but it was only for a moment, ere stooping on her with the wing, and pouncing on her with the talons of the king of birds. A general with less extraordinary talent would perhaps have thought it sufficient to have obtained possession of Piedmont, revolutionizing its government as the French had done that of Holland, and would have awaited fresh supplies and reinforcements from France before advancing to farther and more distant conquests, and leaving the Alps under the dominion of a hostile, though for the present a subdued and disarmed monarchy. But Buonaparte had studied the campaign of Villars in these regions, and was of opinion that it was by that general's hesitation to advance boldly into Italy, after the victories which the marshal de Coigni had obtained at Parma and Guastalla, that the enemy had been enabled to assemble an accumulating force, before which the French were compelled to retreat. He determined, therefore, to give the republic of Venice, the grand duke of Tuscany, and other states in Italy, no time to muster forces, and take a decided part, as they were likely to do, to oppose a French invasion. Their terror and surprise could not fail to be increased by a sudden irruption; while months, weeks, even days of consideration might afford those states, attached as the rulers must be to their ancient oligarchical forms of government, time and composure to assume arms to maintain them. A speedy resolution was the more necessary, as Austria, alarmed for her Italian possessions, was about to make every effort for their defence. Orders had already been sent by the aulic council of war to detach an army of thirty thousand men, under Wurmsers, from the army of the Rhine to the frontiers of Italy. These were to be strengthened by other reinforcements from the interior, and by such forces as could be raised in the mountainous district of the Tyrol, which furnishes perhaps the most experienced and most formidable sharpshooters in the world. The whole was to be united to the fragments of Beaulieu's defeated troops. If suffered to form a junction and arrange their plans for attack or defence, an army, of force so superior to the French in numbers, veterans in discipline, and commanded by a general like Wurmsers, was likely to prevent all the advantages which the French might gain by a sudden irruption, ere an opposition so formidable was collected and organized. But the daring scheme which Napoleon contemplated, corresponding to the genius of him who had formed it, required to be executed with caution, united with secrecy and celerity. These were the more necessary, as, although the thanks of the French government had been voted to the army of Italy five times in the course of a month, yet the directory, alarmed at the more doubtful state of hostilities upon the Rhine, had turned their exertions chiefly in that direction; and, trusting to the skill of their general, and the courage of his troops, had not transmitted recruits and supplies upon the scale necessary for the great undertakings which he meditated. But the idea of penetrating into a country so guarded and defended by nature, as well as by military skill, the consciousness of having surmounted obstacles of a nature so extraordinary, and the hope that they were approaching the reward of so many labours—above all, their full confidence in a leader who seemed to have bound victory to his standard—made the soldiers follow their general, without counting their own deficiencies or the enemy's numbers.

To encourage this ardour, Buonaparte circulated an address, in which, complimenting the army on the victories they had gained, he desired them at the same time to consider nothing as won so long as the Austrians held Milan, and while the ashes of those who had conquered the Tarquins were soiled by the presence of the assassins of Basseville.

All thoughts were therefore turned to Italy. The fortress of Tortona was surrendered to the French by the king of Sardinia; Buonaparte's headquarters were fixed there. Massena concentrated another part of the army at Alexandria, menacing Milan, and threatening, by the passage of the Po, to invade the territories belonging to Austria on the northern bank of that river. As Buonaparte himself observed, the passage of a great river is one of the most critical operations in modern war; and Beaulieu had collected his forces to cover Milan, and prevent the French, if possible, from crossing the Po.

But in order to avert the dangerous consequences of attempting to force his passage on the river, defended by a formidable enemy in front, Buonaparte's subtle genius had already prepared the means for deceiving the old Austrian respecting his intended operations.

Valenza appeared to be the point of passage proposed by the French; it is one of those fortresses which cover the eastern frontier of Piedmont, and is situated upon the river Po. During the conferences previous to the armistice of the Cherasco, Buonaparte had thrown out hints as if he were particularly desirous to be possessed of this place, and it was actually stipulated in the terms of the treaty, that the French should occupy it for the purpose of effecting their passage over the river. Beaulieu did not fail to learn what had passed, which coinciding with his own ideas of the route by which Buonaparte meant to advance upon Milan, he hastened to concentrate his army on the opposite bank, at a place called Valeggio, about eighteen miles from Valenza, the point near which he expected the attempt to be made, and from which he could move easily in any direction towards the river, before the French could send over any considerable force. Massena also countenanced this report, and riveted the attention of the Austrians on Valenza, by pushing strong reconnoitring parties from Alexandria in the direction of that fortress. Besides, Beaulieu had himself crossed the Po at this place, and, like all men of routine (for such he was, though a brave and approved soldier), he was always apt to suppose that the same reasons which directed himself must needs seem equally convincing to others. In almost all delicate affairs, persons of ordinary talents are misled by their incapacity to comprehend, that men of another disposition will be likely to view circumstances, and act upon principles, with an eye and opinion very different from their own.

But the reports which induced the Austrian general to take the position at Valeggio, arose out of a stratagem of war. It was never Buonaparte's intention to cross the Po at Valenza. The proposal was a feint, to draw Beaulieu's attention to that point, while the French accomplished the desired passage at Placenza, nearly fifty miles lower down the river than Valeggio, where their subtle general had induced the Austrians to take up their line of defence. Marching for this purpose with incredible celerity, Buonaparte, on the 7th of May, assembled his forces at Placenza, when their presence was least expected, and where there were none to defend the opposite bank, except two or three squadrons of Austrians stationed there merely for the purpose of reconnoitring. General Andreossi (for the names distinguished during these dreadful wars begin to rise on the narrative, as the stars glimmer out on the horizon) commanded an advanced guard of five hundred men. They had to pass in the common ferry-boats, and the crossing required nearly half an hour; so that the difficulty, or rather impossibility, of achieving the operation, had they been seriously opposed, appears to demonstration. Colonel Lannes threw himself ashore first with a body of grenadiers, and speedily dispersed the Austrian hussars, who attempted to resist their landing. The vanguard having thus opened the passage, the other divisions of the army were enabled to cross in succession, and in the course of two days the whole were in the Milanese territory and on the left bank of the Po. The military manœuvres by means of which Buonaparte achieved, without the loss of a man, an operation of so much consequence, and which, without such address as he displayed, must have been attended with great loss, and risk of failure, have often been considered as among his most masterly movements.

Beaulieu, informed too late of the real plans of the French general, moved his advanced guard, composed of the division of general Liptay, from Valeggio towards the Po, in the direction of Placenza. But here also the alert general of the French had been too rapid in his movements for the aged German. Buonaparte had no intention to wait an attack from the enemy with such a river as the Po in his rear, which he had no means of recrossing if the day should go against him; so that a defeat, or even a material check, would have endangered the total loss of his army. He was, therefore, pushing forward in order to gain ground on which to manœuvre, and the advanced

divisions of the two armies met at a village called Fombio, not far from Casal, on the 8th of May. The Austrians threw themselves into the place, fortified and manned the steeples, and whatever posts else could be made effectual for defence, and reckoned upon defending themselves there until the main body of Beaulieu's army should come up to support them. But they were unable to sustain the vivacity of the French onset, to which so many successive victories had now given a double impulse. The village was carried at the bayonet's point; the Austrians lost their cannon, and left behind one-third of their men, in slain, wounded, and prisoners. The wreck of Liptay's division saved themselves by crossing the Adda at Pizzighitone, while they protected their retreat by a hasty defence of that fortress.

Another body of Austrians having advanced from Casal, to support, it may be supposed, the division of Liptay, occasioned a great loss to the French army in the person of a very promising officer. This was general la Harpe, highly respected and trusted by Buonaparte, and repeatedly mentioned in the campaigns of Piedmont. Hearing the alarm given by the outposts, when the Austrian patrols came in contact with them, la Harpe rode out to satisfy himself concerning the nature and strength of the attacking party.

On his return to his own troops, they mistook him and his attendants for the enemy, fired upon and killed him. He was a Swiss by birth, and had been compelled to leave his country on account of his democratical opinions; a grenadier, says Buonaparte, in stature and in courage, but of a restless disposition.

The Austrian regiment of cavalry, which occasioned this loss, after some skirmishing was content to escape to Lodi, a point upon which Beaulieu was again collecting his scattered forces, for the purpose of covering Milan, by protecting the line of the Adda.

"The passage of the Po," said Buonaparte, in his report to the directory, "had been expected to prove the most bold and difficult manœuvre of the campaign, nor did we expect to have an action of more vivacity than that of Dego. But we have now to recount the battle of Lodi." As the conqueror deservedly congratulated himself on this hard-won victory, and as it has become in a manner especially connected with his name and military character, we must, according to our plan, be somewhat minute in our details respecting it.

The Adda, a large and deep river, though fordable at some places and in some seasons, crosses the valley of the Milanese, rising and joining the Po at Pizzighitone; so that, if the few places at which it can be crossed are fortified or defended, it forms a line covering all the Milanese territory to the eastward, from any force approaching from the direction of Piedmont. This line Beaulieu proposed to make good against the victor before whom he had so often retreated, and he conjectured (on this occasion rightly) that, to prosecute his victory by marching upon Milan, Buonaparte would first desire to dislodge the covering army from the line of the Adda, as he could not safely advance to the capital of Lombardy, leaving the enemy in possession of such a defensive line upon their flank. He also conjectured that this attempt would be made at Lodi.

This is a large town, containing twelve thousand inhabitants. It has old Gothic walls, but its chief defence consists in the river Adda, which flows through it, and is crossed by a wooden bridge about five hundred feet in length. When Beaulieu, after the affair of Fombio, evacuated Casal, he retreated to this place with about ten thousand men: the rest of his army was directed upon Milan and Cassano, a town situated, like Lodi, upon the Adda.

Buonaparte calculated that, if he could accomplish the passage of the Adda at Lodi, he might overtake and disperse the remainder of Beaulieu's army, without allowing the veteran time to concentrate them for farther resistance in Milan, or even for rallying under the walls of the strong fortress of Mantua.

The judgment of the French general was in war not more remarkable for seizing the most advantageous moment of attack, than for availing himself to the very uttermost of victory when obtained. The quick-sighted faculty and power of instant decision with which nature had endowed him, had, it may be

judged from his words to a friend at taking leave of him. "In three months," he said, "I will be either at Milan or at Paris;" intimating at once his desperate resolution to succeed, and his sense that the disappointment of all his prospects must be the consequence of a failure.

With the same view of animating his followers to ambitious hopes, he addressed the army of Italy to the following purpose:—"Soldiers, you are hungry and naked.—The republic owes you much, but she has not the means to acquit herself of her debts. The patience with which you support your hardships among these barren rocks is admirable, but it cannot procure you glory. I am come to lead you into the most fertile plains that the sun beholds.—Rich provinces, opulent towns, all shall be at your disposal.—Soldiers, with such a prospect before you, can you fail in courage and constancy?"

This was showing the deer to the hound when the leash is about to be slipped.

The Austro-Sardinian army, to which Buonaparte was opposed, was commanded by Beaulieu, an Austrian general of great experience and some talent, but no less than seventy-five years old; accustomed all his life to the ancient rules of tactics, and unlikely to suspect, anticipate, or frustrate those plans formed by a genius so fertile as that of Napoleon.

Buonaparte's plan for entering Italy differed from that of former conquerors and invaders, who had approached that fine country by penetrating or surmounting at some point or other her Alpine barriers. This inventive warrior resolved to attain the same object, by turning round the southern extremity of the Alpine range, keeping as close as possible to the shores of the Mediterranean, and passing through the Genoese territory by the narrow pass called the Bocchetta, leading around the extremity of the mountains, and between these and the sea. Thus he proposed to penetrate into Italy by the lowest level which the surface of the country presented, which must be of course where the range of the Alps unites with that of the Apennines. The point of junction where these two immense ranges of mountains touch upon each other, is at the heights of Mount Saint Jacques, above Genoa, where the Alps, running north-westward, ascend to Mount Blanc, their highest peak, and the Apennines, running to the south-east, gradually elevate themselves to Monte Velino, the tallest mountain of the range.

To attain his object of turning the Alps in the manner proposed, it was necessary that Buonaparte should totally change the situation of his army; those occupying a defensive line, running north and south, being to assume an offensive position, extending east and west. Speaking of an army as of a battalion, he was to form into column upon the right of the line which he had hitherto occupied. This was an extremely delicate operation, to be undertaken in presence of an active enemy, his superior in numbers; nor was he permitted to execute it uninterrupted.

No sooner did Beaulieu learn that the French general was concentrating his forces, and about to change his position, than he hastened to preserve Genoa, without possession of which, or at least of the adjacent territory, Buonaparte's scheme of advance could scarce have been accomplished. The Austrian divided his army into three bodies. Colli, at the head of a Sardinian division, he stationed on the extreme right at Ceva; his centre division under d'Argenteau, having its head at Sasiello, had directions to march on a mountain called Monte Notte, with two villages of the same name, near to which was a strong position at a place called Montelegino, which the French had occupied in order to cover their flank during their march towards the east. At the head of his left wing, Beaulieu himself moved from Novi upon Voltri, a small town within ten miles of Genoa, for the protection of that ancient city, whose independence and neutrality were likely to be held in little reverence. Thus it appears, that while the French were endeavouring to penetrate into Italy by an advance from Sardinia by the way of Genoa, their line of march was threatened by three armies of Austro-Sardinians, descending from the skirts of the Alps, and menacing to attack their flank.

But, though a skilful disposition, Beaulieu had, from the very mountainous character of the country, the great disadvantage of wanting connexion between the three separate divisions; neither, if needful, could they be easily united on any point desired, while the lower line, on which the French moved, permitted constant communication and co-operation.

On the 10th of April, 1796, d'Argenteau, with the central division of the Austro-Sardinian army, descended upon Monte Notte, while Beaulieu on the left attacked the van of the French army, which had come as far as Voltri. General Cervoni, commanding the French division which sustained the attack of Beaulieu, was compelled to fall back on the main body of his countrymen; and had the assault of d'Argenteau been equally animated or equally successful, the fame of Buonaparte might have been stifled in the birth. But colonel Rampon, a French officer, who commanded the redoubts near Montelegino, stopped the progress of d'Argenteau by the most determined resistance. At the head of not more than fifteen hundred men, whom he inspired with his own courage, and caused to swear either to maintain their post or die there, he continued to defend the redoubts, during the whole of the 11th, until d'Argenteau, whose conduct was afterward greatly blamed for not making more determined efforts to carry them, drew off his forces for the evening, intending to renew the attack next morning.

But on the morning of the 12th, the Austrian general found himself surrounded with enemies. Cervoni, who retreated before Beaulieu, had united himself with la Harpe, and both advancing northward during the night of the 11th, established themselves in the rear of the redoubts of Montelegino, which Rampon had so gallantly defended. This was not all. The divisions of Augereau and Massena had marched, by different routes, on the flank and on the rear of d'Argenteau's column; so that next morning, instead of renewing his attack on the redoubts, the Austrian general was obliged to extricate himself by a disastrous retreat, leaving behind him colours and cannon, one thousand slain, and two thousand prisoners.

Such was the battle of Monte Notte, the first of Buonaparte's victories; eminently displaying that truth and mathematical certainty of combination which enabled him on many more memorable occasions, even when his forces were inferior in numbers, and apparently disunited in position, suddenly to concentrate them and defeat his enemy, by overpowering him on the very point where he thought himself strongest. He had accumulated a superior force on the Austrian centre, and destroyed it, while Colli, on the right, and Beaulieu himself on the left, each at the head of numerous forces, did not even hear of the action till it was fought and won.

In consequence of the success at Monte Notte, and the close pursuit of the defeated Austrians, the French obtained possession of Cairo, which placed them on that side of the Alps which slopes towards Lombardy, and where the streams from these mountains run to join the Po. Beaulieu had advanced to Voltri, while the French withdrew to unite themselves in the attack upon d'Argenteau. He had now to retreat northward with all haste to Dego, in the valley of the river Bormida, in order to resume communication with the right wing of his army, consisting chiefly of Sardinians, from which he was now nearly separated by the defeat of the centre. General Colli, by a corresponding movement on the right, occupied Millesimo, a small town about nine miles from Dego, with which he resumed and maintained communication by a brigade stationed on the heights of Biastro. From the strength of this position, though his forces were scarce sufficiently concentrated, Beaulieu hoped to maintain his ground till he should receive supplies from Lombardy, and recover the consequences of the defeat of Monte Notte. But the antagonist whom he had in front had no purpose of permitting him such respite.

Determined upon a general attack on all points of the Austrian position, the French army advanced in three bodies upon a space of four leagues in extent. Augereau, at the head of the division which had not fought at Monte Notte, advanced on the left against Millesimo; the centre, under Mas-