

## LETTER XXIX.

*Prosecution of the Campaign in Italy—Insurrection at Pavia—Defeat of the Austrians at Borghetto—Mantua blockaded—Invasion of the Venetian States—The King of Naples secedes from Austria—Armistice purchased by the Pope—Neutrality of Tuscany violated, and Leghorn occupied by the French—Wurmser succeeds Beaulieu—Corsica reunited to France—Battles of Arcola, and Success of the French. A. D. 1795.*

My last letter will have prepared you, my dear son, as I think I may fairly presume, for anticipating a succession of military achievements, between the Austrian and republican armies at this eventful crisis. The Rubicon was passed, and Buonaparte well knew that, situated as he and his army now were, he had placed every thing at stake. It was manifest that he could only hope for success by the most strenuous perseverance in the career which he was now pursuing—he had gone too far to recede with any other prospect than that of utter ruin. Occupying Milan, and conqueror in so many battles, he might be justly considered as in absolute possession of Lombardy, while the broken forces of Beaulieu had been compelled to retreat under that sole remaining bulwark of the Austrian power, the strong fortress of Mantua, where they might await such support as should be detached to them through the Tyrol, but could undertake no offensive operations. To secure his position, the Austrian general had occupied the line formed by the Mincio, his left flank resting upon Mantua, his right upon Peschiera, a Venetian city and fortress, but of which he had taken possession against the reclamation of the Venetian government, who were desirous of observing a neutrality between such powerful belligerents, not perhaps altogether aware how far the victor, in so dreadful a strife, might be disposed to neglect the general law of nations.

The Austrian defence on the right was prolonged by the Lago di Guarda, a large lake out of which the Mincio flows, and which, running thirty-five miles northward into the mountains of the Tyrol, maintained uninterrupted Beaulieu's communication with Germany.

Buonaparte, in the mean time, permitted his forces only the repose of four or five days, ere he again summoned them to active exertion. He called on them to visit the Capitol, there to re-establish (he ought to have said to *carry away*) the statues of the great men of antiquity, and to change, or rather renovate, the destinies of the finest district of Europe. But while thus engaged, he received orders from Paris respecting his farther proceedings, which must have served to convince him that *all* his personal enemies, all who doubted and feared him, were not to be found in the Austrian ranks.

The directory themselves had begun to suspect the prudence of suffering the whole harvest of success which Italy afforded, to be reaped by the adventurous and haughty character who had first thrust in the sickle. They perhaps felt already an instinctive distrust of the waxing influence which was destined one day to overpower their own. Under some such impression, they resolved to divide the army of Italy between Buonaparte and Kellermann, directing the former general to pass the Po, and advance southward on Rome and Naples, with twenty thousand men; while Kellermann, with the other moiety of the Italian army, should press the siege of Mantua, and make head against the Austrians.

This was taking Buonaparte's victory out of his grasp; and he resented the proposal accordingly, by transmitting his resignation, and declining to have any concern in the loss of his army and the fruits of his conquests. He affirmed, that Kellermann, with an army reduced to twenty thousand men, could not face Beaulieu, but would be speedily driven out of Lombardy; and that, in consequence, the army which advanced southward would be overwhelmed and destroyed. One bad general, he said, was better than two

good ones. The directory must have perceived from such a reply, the firm and inflexible nature of the man they had made the leader of their armies, but they dared not, such was his reputation, proceed in the plan they had formed for the diminution of his power; and perhaps, for the first time since the revolution, the executive government of France was compelled to give way to a successful general, and adopt his views instead of their own. The campaign was left to his sole management; he obtained an ascendancy which he took admirable care not to relinquish, and it became the only task of the directory, so far as Italy was concerned, to study phrases for intimating their approbation of the young general's measures.

Whatever were the ultimate designs of Buonaparte against Rome, he thought it prudent to suspend them until he should be freed from all danger of the Austrians, by the final defeat of Beaulieu. For this object, he directed the divisions of his army towards the right bank of the Mincio, with a view of once more forcing Beaulieu's position, after having taken precautions for blockading the citadel of Milan, where the Austrians still held out, and for guarding Pavia and other points, which appeared necessary to secure his conquests.

Napoleon himself fixed his head-quarters at Lodi, upon the 24th of May. But he was scarcely arrived there, when he received the alarming intelligence, that the city of Pavia, with all the surrounding districts, was in arms in his rear; that the tocsin was ringing in every village, and that news were circulated that the prince of Condé's army, united with a strong Austrian force, had descended from the Tyrol into Italy. Some commotions had shown themselves in Milan, and the Austrian garrison there made demonstrations towards favouring the insurrection in Pavia, where the insurgents were completely successful, and had made prisoners a French corps of three hundred men.

Buonaparte represents these disturbances as effected by Austrian agents; but he had formerly assured us, that the Italians took little interest in the fate of their German masters. The truth is, that, having entered Italy with the most flattering assurances of observing respect for public and private property, the French had disgusted the inhabitants, by exacting the contributions which they had imposed on the country with great severity. As Catholics, the Italians were also disgusted with the open indignities thrown on the places and objects of public worship, as well as on the persons and character of their priests. The nobles and the clergy naturally saw their ruin in the success of the French; and the lower classes joined them for the time, from dislike to foreigners, love of national independence, resentment of the exactions made and the acts of sacrilege committed by the ultramontane invaders. About thirty thousand insurgents were in arms; but having no regular forces on which to rest as a rallying point, they were ill calculated to endure the rapid assault of the disciplined French.

Buonaparte, anxious to extinguish a flame so formidable, instantly returned from Lodi to Milan, at the head of a strong division, took order for the safety of the capital of Lombardy, and moved next morning towards Pavia, the centre of the insurrection. The village of Benasco, which was defended against Lannes, was taken by storm, the inhabitants put to the sword, and the place plundered and burned. Napoleon himself arrived before Pavia, blew the gates open with his cannon, dispersed with ease the half-armed insurgents, and caused the leaders of the insurrection to be put to death, for having attempted to defend the independence of their country. He then seized on the persons of many inhabitants, and sent them to Paris as hostages for the subjection of their fellow-citizens.

The French general published a proclamation in the republican style, in which he reproaches the insurgents for presuming to use arms in defence of their country, and menaces with fire and sword whatever individuals should in future prosecute the same daring course. He made his threat good some weeks afterward, when a similar insurrection took place in those districts called the imperial fiefs, and still later, when an effort at resistance was

of artists who attended the French army, were the price of a respite which was not of long duration. It was particularly stipulated, with republican ostentation, that the busts of the elder and younger Brutus were to be among the number of ceded articles; and it was in this manner that Buonaparte made good his vaunt, of establishing in the Roman capital the statues of the illustrious and classical dead.

The archduke of Tuscany was next to undergo the republican discipline. It is true, that prince had given no offence to the French republic; on the contrary, he had claims of merit with them, from having been the very first power in Europe who acknowledged them as a legal government, and having ever since been in strict amity with them. It seemed also, that while justice required he should be spared, the interest of the French themselves did not oppose the conclusion. His country could have no influence on the fate of the impending war, being situated on the western side of the Apennines. In these circumstances, to have seized on his museum, however tempting, or made requisitions on his territories, would have appeared unjust towards the earliest ally of the French republic; so Buonaparte contented himself with seizing on the grand duke's seaport of Leghorn, confiscating the English goods which his subjects had imported, and entirely ruining the once flourishing commerce of the dukedom. It was a principal object with the French to seize the British merchant vessels, who, confiding in the respect due to a neutral power, were lying in great numbers in the harbour; but the English merchantmen had such early intelligence as enabled them to set sail for Corsica, although a very great quantity of valuable goods fell into the possession of the French.

While the French general was thus violating the neutrality of the grand duke, occupying by surprise his valuable seaport, and destroying the commerce of his state, the unhappy prince was compelled to receive him at Florence, with all the respect due to a valued friend, and profess the utmost obligation to him for his lenity, while Manfredini, the Tuscan minister, endeavoured to throw a veil of decency over the transactions at Leghorn, by allowing that the English were more masters in that port than was the grand duke himself. Buonaparte disdained to have recourse to any paltry apologies. "The French flag," he said, "has been insulted in Leghorn:—you are not strong enough to cause it to be respected. The directory has commanded me to occupy the place." Shortly after, Buonaparte, during an entertainment given to him by the grand duke at Florence, received intelligence that the citadel of Milan had at length surrendered. He rubbed his hands with self-congratulation, and turning to the grand duke, observed, "that the emperor, his brother, had now lost his last possession in Lombardy."

When we read of the exactions and indignities to which the strong reduce the weak, it is impossible not to remember the simile of Napoleon himself, who compared the alliance of France and an inferior state, to a giant embracing a dwarf. "The poor dwarf," he added, "may probably be suffocated in the arms of his friend; but the giant does not mean it, and cannot help it." While Buonaparte made truce with several of the old states in Italy, or rather adjourned their destruction in consideration of large contributions, he was far from losing sight of the main object of the French directory, which was to cause the adjacent governments to be revolutionized and new modelled on a republican form, corresponding to that of the great nation herself. This scheme was, in every respect, an exceedingly artful one. In every state which the French might overrun or conquer, there must occur, as we have already repeatedly noticed, men fitted to form the members of revolutionary government, and who, from their previous situation and habits, must necessarily be found eager to do so. Such men are sure to be supported by the rabble of large towns, who are attracted by the prospect of plunder, and by the splendid promises of liberty, which they always understand as promising the equalization of property. Thus provided with materials for their edifice, the bayonets of the French army were of strength sufficient to prevent the task from being interrupted, and the French republic had soon

to greet sister states, under the government of men who held their offices by the pleasure of France, and who were obliged, therefore, to comply with all her requisitions, however unreasonable.

Having noticed the effect of Buonaparte's short but brilliant campaign on other states, we must observe the effects which his victories produced on Austria herself. These were entirely consistent with her national character. The same tardiness which has long made the government of Austria slow in availing themselves of advantageous circumstances, cautious in their plans, and unwilling to adopt, or indeed to study to comprehend, a new system of tactics, even after having repeatedly experienced its terrible efficacies, is combined with the better qualities of firm determination, resolute endurance, and unquenchable spirit. The Austrian slowness and obstinacy, which have sometimes threatened them with ruin, have, on the other hand, often been compensated by their firm perseverance and courage in adversity. Upon the present occasion Austria showed ample demonstration of the various qualities we have ascribed to her. The rapid and successive victories of Buonaparte, appeared to her only the rash flight of an eaglet, whose juvenile audacity had over-estimated the strength of his pinion. The imperial council resolved to sustain their diminished force in Italy, with such reinforcements as might enable them to reassume the complete superiority over the French, though at the risk of weakening their armies on the Rhine. Fortune in that quarter, though of a various complexion, had been on the whole more advantageous to the Austrians than elsewhere, and seemed to authorize the detaching considerable reinforcements from the eastern frontier, on which they had been partially victorious, to Italy, where, since Buonaparte had descended from the Alps, they had been uniformly unfortunate.

Beaulieu, aged and unlucky, was no longer considered as a fit opponent to his inventive, young, and active adversary. He was as full of displeasure, it is said, against the aulic council, for the associates whom they had assigned him, as they could be with him for his bad success. He was recalled, therefore, in that species of disgrace which misfortune never fails to infer, and the command of his remaining forces, now drawn back and secured within the passes of the Tyrol, was provisionally assigned to the veteran Melas. Meanwhile, Wurmser, accounted one of the best of the Austrian generals, was ordered to place himself at the head of thirty thousand men, from the imperial forces on the Rhine, and, traversing the Tyrol, and collecting what recruits he could in that warlike district, to assume the command of the Austrian army, which, expelled from Italy, now lay upon its frontiers, and might be supposed eager to resume their national supremacy in the fertile climates out of which they had been so lately driven.

Aware of the storm which was gathering, Buonaparte made every possible effort to carry Mantua before the arrival of the formidable Austrian army, whose first operation would doubtless be to raise the siege of that important place. A scheme to take the city and castle by surprise, by a detachment which should pass to the Seraglio, or islet on which Mantua is situated, by night and in boats, having totally failed, Buonaparte was compelled to open trenches, and proceed as by regular siege. The Austrian general, Canto d'Irles, when summoned to surrender it, replied that his orders were to defend the place to the last extremity. Napoleon, on his side, assembled all the battering ordnance which could be collected from the walls of the neighbouring cities and fortresses, and the attack and defence commenced in the most vigorous manner on both sides; the French making every effort to reduce the city before Wurmser should open his campaign, the governor determined to protract his resistance, if possible, until he was relieved by the advance of that general. But although red-hot balls were expended in profusion, and several desperate and bloody assaults and sallies took place, many more battles were to be fought, and much more blood expended, before Buonaparte was fated to succeed in this important object.

The plan which the directory had adopted for the campaign of 1796, was of a gigantic character, and menaced Austria, their most powerful enemy

upon the continent, with nothing short of total destruction. It was worthy of the genius of Carnot, by whom it was formed, and of Napoleon and Moreau, by whom it had been revised and approved. Under sanction of this general plan, Buonaparte regulated the Italian campaign in which he had proved so successful; and it had been schemed, that to allow Austria no breathing space, Moreau, with the army of the Sambre and Meuse, should press forward on the eastern frontier of Germany, supported on the left by Jourdan, at the head of the army of the Rhine, and that both generals should continue to advance, until Moreau should be in a position to communicate with Buonaparte through the Tyrol. When this junction of the whole forces of France, in the centre of the Austrian dominions was accomplished, it was Carnot's ultimate plan that they should advance upon Vienna, and dictate peace to the emperor under the walls of his own capital.

Of this great project, the part intrusted to Buonaparte was completely executed, and for some time the fortune of war seemed equally auspicious to France upon the Rhine as in Italy. Moreau and Jourdan crossed that great national boundary at Neuwied and Kehl, and moved eastward through Germany, forming a connected front of more than sixty leagues in breadth, until Moreau had actually crossed the river Leck, and was almost touching with his right flank the passes of the Tyrol, through which he was, according to the plan of the campaign, to have communicated with Buonaparte.

During this advance of two hostile armies, amounting each to seventy-five thousand men, which filled all Germany with consternation, the Austrian leader, Wartensleben, was driven from position to position by Jourdan, while the archduke Charles was equally unable to maintain his ground before Moreau. The imperial generals were reduced to this extremity by the loss of the army, consisting of from thirty to thirty-five thousand men, who had been detached under Wurmser, to support the remains of Beaulieu's forces; and reinstate the Austrian affairs in Italy, and who were now on their march through the Tyrol for that purpose. But the archduke was an excellent and enterprising officer, and at this important period he saved the empire of Austria by a bold and decided manœuvre. Leaving a large part of his army to make head against Moreau, or at least to keep him in check, the archduke moved to the right with the rest, so as to form a junction with Wartensleben, and overwhelm Jourdan with a local superiority of numbers, being the very principle on which the French themselves achieved so many victories. Jourdan was totally defeated, and compelled to make a hasty and disorderly retreat, which was rendered disastrous by the insurrection of the German peasantry around his fugitive army. Moreau, also unable to maintain himself in the heart of Germany, when Jourdan, with the army which covered his left flank, was defeated, was likewise under the necessity of retiring, but conducted his retrograde movement with such dexterity, that his retreat through the Black Forest, where the Austrians hoped to cut him off, has been always judged worthy to be compared to a great victory. Such were the proceedings on the Rhine, and in the interior of Germany, which must be kept in view as influencing, at first, by the expected success of Moreau and Jourdan, and afterward by their actual failure, the movements of the Italian army.

As the division of Wurmser's army began to arrive on the Tyrolese district of Trent, where the Austrian general had fixed his head-quarters, Buonaparte became urgent, either that reinforcements should be despatched to him from France, or that the armies on the Rhine should make such a movement in advance towards the point where they might co-operate with him, as had been agreed upon at arranging the original plan of the campaign. But he obtained no succours: and though the campaign on the Rhine commenced, as we have seen, in the month of June, yet that period was too late to afford any diversion in favour of Napoleon, Wurmser and his whole reinforcements being already either by that time arrived, or on the point of arriving, at the place where they were to commence operations against the French army of Italy.

The thunder-cloud which had been so long blackening on the mountains

of the Tyrol, seemed now about to discharge its fury. Wurmser, having under his command perhaps eighty thousand men, was about to march from Trent against the French, whose forces, amounting to scarce half so many, were partly engaged in the siege of Mantua, and partly dispersed in the towns and villages on the Adige and Chiese, for covering the division of Serrurier, which carried on the siege. The Austrian veteran, confident in his numbers, was only anxious so to regulate his advance, as to derive the most conclusive consequences from the victory which he doubted not to obtain. With an imprudence which the misfortunes of Beaulieu ought to have warned him against, he endeavoured to occupy with the divisions of his army so large an extent of country as rendered it very difficult for them to maintain their communications with each other. This was particularly the case with his right wing under Quasdonowich, the prince of Reuss, and general Ocskay, who were detached down the valley of the river Chiese, with orders to direct their march on Brescia. This division was destined to occupy Brescia, and cut off the retreat of the French in the direction of Milan. The left wing of Wurmser's army under Melas, was to descend the Adige by both banks at once, and manœuvre on Verona, while the centre, commanded by the Austrian field-marshal in person, was to march southward by the left bank of the Lago di Guarda, take possession of Peschiera, which the French occupied, and, descending the Mincio, relieve the siege of Mantua. There was this radical error in the Austrian plan, that, by sending Quasdonowich's division by the valley of Chiese, Wurmser placed the broad lake of Guarda, occupied by the French flotilla, between his right wing and the rest of his army, and of course made it impossible for the centre and left to support Quasdonowich's, or even to have intelligence of his motions or his fate.

The active invention of Buonaparte, sure as he was to be seconded by the zeal and rapidity of the French army, speedily devised the means to draw advantage from this dislocation of the Austrian forces. He resolved not to await the arrival of Wurmser and Melas, but, concentrating his whole strength, to march into the valley of Chiese, and avail himself of the local superiority thus obtained, to attack and overpower the Austrian division left under Quasdonowich, who was advancing on Brescia, down the eastern side of the lake. For this purpose, one great sacrifice was necessary. The plan inevitably involved the raising of the siege of Mantua. Napoleon did not hesitate to relinquish this great object at whatever loss, as it was his uniform system to sacrifice all secondary views, and to incur all lesser hazards, to secure what he considered as the main object of the campaign. Serrurier, who commanded the blockading army, was hastily ordered to destroy as much as possible of the cannon and stores, which had been collected with so much pains for the prosecution of the siege. A hundred guns were abandoned in the trenches, and Wurmser, on arriving at Mantua, found that Buonaparte had retired with a precipitation resembling that of fear.

On the night of the 31st of July this operation took place; and, leaving the division of Augereau at Borghetto, and that of Massena at Peschiera, to protect, while it was possible, the line of the Mincio, Buonaparte rushed, at the head of an army which his combinations had rendered superior, upon the right wing of the Austrians, which had already directed its march to Lonato, near the bottom of the Lago di Guarda, in order to approach the Mincio, and resume its communication with Wurmser. But Buonaparte, placed by the celerity of his movements between the two hostile armies, defeated one division of the Austrian right at Salo, upon the lake, and another at Lonato. At the same time Augereau and Massena, leaving just enough of men at their posts of Borghetto and Peschiera to maintain a respectable defence against Wurmser, made a forced march to Brescia, which was occupied by another division of the Austrian right wing. But that body, finding itself insulated, and conceiving that the whole French army was debouching on them from different points, was already in full retreat towards the Tyrol, from which it had advanced with the expectation of turning Buonaparte's flank, and destroying his retreat upon Milan. Some French troops were left to accelerate their

flight, and prevent their again making head, while Massena and Augereau, rapidly counter-marching, returned to the banks of the Mincio to support their respective rear-guards, which they had left at Borghetto and Peschiera, on the line of that river.

They received intelligence, however, which induced them to halt upon this counter-march. Both rear-guards had been compelled to retire from the line of the Mincio, of which river the Austrians had forced the passage. The rear-guard of Massena, under general Pigeon, had fallen back in good order, so as to occupy Lonato; that of Augereau fled with precipitation and confusion, and failed to make a stand at Castiglione, which was occupied by Austrians who intrenched themselves there. Valette, the general who commanded this body, was deprived of his commission in the presence of his troops for misbehaviour; an example which the gallantry of the French generals rendered extremely unfrequent in their service. Wurmser became now seriously anxious about the fate of his right wing, and determined to force a communication with Quasdonowich at all risks. But he could only attain the valley of the Chiese, and the right bank of the Lago di Guarda, by breaking a passage through the divisions of Massena and Augereau. On the 3d of August, at break of day, two divisions of Austrians, who had crossed the Mincio in pursuit of Pigeon and Valette, now directed themselves, with the most determined resolution, on the French troops, in order to clear the way between the commander-in-chief and his right wing.

The late rear-guard of Massena which, by his counter-march, had now become his advanced-guard, was defeated, and Lonato, the place which they occupied, was taken by the Austrians, with the French artillery, and the general officer who commanded them. But the Austrian general, thus far successful, fell into the great error of extending his line too much towards the right, in order doubtless, if possible, to turn the French position on the left flank, thereby the sooner to open a communication with his own troops on the right bank of the Lago di Guarda, to force which had been his principal object in the attack: but in thus manœuvring he weakened his centre, an error of which Massena instantly availed himself. He formed two strong columns under Augereau, with which he redeemed the victory, by breaking through and dividing the Austrian line, and retaking Lonato at the point of the bayonet. The manœuvre is indeed a simple one, and the same by which ten years afterward, Buonaparte gained the battle of Austerlitz; but it requires the utmost promptitude and presence of mind, to seize the exact moment for executing such a daring measure to advantage. If it is but partially successful, and the enemy retains steadiness, it is very perilous; since the attacking column, instead of flanking the broken divisions of the opposite line, may be itself flanked by decided officers and determined troops, and thus experience the disaster which it was their object to occasion to the enemy. On the present occasion, the attack on the centre completely succeeded. The Austrians, finding their line cut asunder, and their flanks pressed by the victorious columns of the French, fell into total disorder. Some, who were farthest to the right, pushed forward, in hopes to unite themselves to Quasdonowich, and what they might find remaining of the original right wing; but these were attacked in front by general Soret, who had been active in defeating Quasdonowich upon the 30th of July, and were at the same time pursued by another detachment of the French, which had broken through their centre.

Such was the fate of the Austrian right at the battle of Lonato, while that of the left was no less unfavourable. They were attacked by Augereau with the utmost bravery, and driven from Castiglione, of which they had become masters by the bad conduct of Valette. Augereau achieved this important result at the price of many brave men's lives; but it was always remembered as an essential service by Buonaparte, who afterward, when such dignities came in use, bestowed on Augereau the title of duke of Castiglione. After their defeat, there can be nothing imagined more confused or calamitous than the condition of the Austrian divisions, who, having attacked, without resting

on each other, found themselves opposed and finally overwhelmed by an enemy who appeared to possess ubiquity, simply from his activity and power of combining his forces.

A remarkable instance of their lamentable state of disorder and confusion, resembling in its consequences more than one example of the same sort, occurred at Lonato. It might, with any briskness of intelligence, or firmness of resolution, have proved a decisive advantage to their arms; it was, in its result, an humiliating illustration, how completely the succession of bad fortune had broken the spirit of the Austrian soldiers. You can hardly have forgotten the incident at the battle of Millesimo, when an Austrian column which had been led astray, retaken, as if it were by chance, the important village of Deگو; or the more recent instance, when a body of Beaulieu's advanced-guard, alike unwittingly, had nearly made Buonaparte prisoner in his quarters. The present danger arose from the same cause, the confusion and want of combination of the enemy; and now, as in the former perilous occurrences, the very same circumstances which brought on the danger served to ward it off.

A body of four or five thousand Austrians, partly composed of those who had been cut off at the battle of Lonato, partly of stragglers from Quasdonowich, received information from the peasantry, that the French troops, having departed in every direction to improve their success, had only left a garrison of twelve hundred men in the town of Lonato. The commander of the division resolved instantly to take possession of the town, and thus to open his march to the Mincio, to join Wurmser. Now it happened that Buonaparte himself, coming from Castiglione with only his staff for protection, had just entered Lonato. He was surprised when an Austrian officer was brought before him blindfolded, as is the custom on such occasions, who summoned the French commandant of Lonato to surrender to a superior force of Austrians, who, he stated, were already forming columns of attack to carry the place by irresistible force of numbers. Buonaparte, with admirable presence of mind, collected his numerous staff around him, caused the officer's eyes to be unbandaged, that he might see in whose presence he stood, and upbraided him with the insolence of which he had been guilty, in bringing a summons of surrender to the French commander-in-chief in the middle of his army. The credulous officer, recognising the presence of Buonaparte, and believing it impossible that he could be there without at least a strong division of his army, stammered out an apology, and returned to persuade his dispirited commander to surrender himself, and the four thousand men and upwards whom he commanded, to the comparatively small force which occupied Lonato. They grounded their arms accordingly, to one-fourth of their number, and missed an inviting and easy opportunity of carrying Buonaparte prisoner to Wurmser's head-quarters.

The Austrian general himself, whose splendid army was thus destroyed in detail, had been hitherto employed in revictualing Mantua, and throwing in supplies of every kind; besides which, a large portion of his army had been detached in the vain pursuit of Serrurier and the troops lately engaged in the siege, who had retreated towards Marcaria. When Wurmser learned the disasters of his right wing, and the destruction of the troops despatched to form a communication with it, he sent to recall the division which we have mentioned, and advanced against the French position between Lonato and Castiglione, with an army still numerous, notwithstanding the reverses which it had sustained. But Buonaparte had not left the interval unimproved. He had recalled Serrurier from Marcaria, to assail the left wing and the flank of the Austrian field-marshal. The opening of Serrurier's fire was a signal for a general attack on all points of Wurmser's line. He was defeated, and nearly made prisoner; and it was not till after suffering great losses in the retreat and pursuit, that he gained with difficulty Trent and Roveredo, the positions adjacent to the Tyrol, from which he had so lately sallied with such confidence of victory. He had lost perhaps one-half of his fine army, and the only consolation which remained was, that he had thrown supplies into

attempted in the town of Lago. On both occasions, the leaders of the armed inhabitants were tried by a military commission, condemned, and shot. On the last, indeed, to revenge the defeat sustained by a squadron of French dragoons, Lago was taken by storm, pillaged, burned, and the men put to the sword; while some credit seems to be taken by Buonaparte in his despatches, for the clemency of the French, which spared the women and children.

It is impossible to read the account of these severities, without contrasting them with the opinions professed on other occasions, both by the republican and imperial governments of France. The first of these exclaimed as at an unheard-of cruelty, when the duke of Brunswick, in his celebrated proclamation, threatened to treat as a brigand every Frenchman, not being a soldier, whom he should find under arms, and to destroy such villages as should offer resistance to the invading army. The French at that time considered with justice, that, if there is one duty more holy than another, it is that which calls on men to defend their native country against invasion. Napoleon, being emperor, was of the same opinion in the years 1813 and 1814, when the allies entered the French territories, and when, in various proclamations, he called on the inhabitants to rise against the invaders with the implements of their ordinary labour, when they had no better arms, and "to shoot a foreigner as they would a wolf." It would be difficult to reconcile these invitations with the cruel vengeance taken on the town of Lago, for observing a line of conduct which, in similar circumstances, Buonaparte so keenly and earnestly recommended to those whom fortune had made his own subjects.

The brief insurrection of Pavia suppressed by these severities, Buonaparte once more turned his thoughts to the strong position of the Austrians, with the purpose of reducing Beaulieu to a more decided state of disability, before he executed the threatened vengeance of the republic on the sovereign pontiff. For this purpose he advanced to Brescia, and manœuvred in such a manner as induced Beaulieu, whom repeated surprises of the same kind had not put upon his guard, to believe, that either the French general intended to attempt the passage of the Mincio at the small but strong town of Peschiera, where that river issues from the Lago di Guarda, or else that, marching northward along the eastern bank, he designed to come round the head of the lake, and thus turn the right of the Austrian position. While Beaulieu disposed his forces as expecting an attack on the right of his line, Buonaparte, with his usual celerity, proposed to attack him on the centre, at Borghetto, a town situated on the Mincio, and commanding a bridge over it, about ten miles lower than Peschiera.

On the 30th of May, the French general attacked, with superior force, and repulsed across the Mincio, an Austrian corps who endeavoured to cover the town. The fugitives endeavoured to demolish the bridge, and did break down one of its arches. But the French, rushing forward with impetuosity, under cover of a heavy fire upon the retreating Austrians, repaired the broken arch so as to effect a passage, and the Mincio, passed as the Po and the Adda had been before, ceased in its turn to be a protection to the army drawn up behind it.

Beaulieu, who had his head-quarters at Valeggio, a village nearly opposite to Borghetto, hastened to retreat, and evacuating Peschiera, marched his dismayed forces behind the Adige, leaving five hundred prisoners, with other trophies of victory, in the hands of the French. Buonaparte had designed that this day of success should have been still more decisive; for he meditated an attack upon Peschiera at the moment when the passage at Borghetto was accomplished; but ere Augereau, to whom this manœuvre was committed, had time to approach Peschiera, it was evacuated by the Austrians, who were in full retreat by Castel Nuovo, protected by their cavalry.

The left of the Austrian line, cut off from the centre by the passage of the French, had been stationed at Puzzuolo, lower on the Mincio. When Sebottendorf, who commanded the imperial troops stationed on the left bank, heard the cannonade, he immediately ascended the river, to assist his

commander-in-chief to repel the French, or to take them in flank if it was already crossed. The retreat of Beaulieu made both purposes impossible; and yet this march of Sebottendorf had almost produced a result of greater consequence than would have been the most complete victory.

The French division which first crossed the Mincio, had passed through Valeggio, without halting, in pursuit of Beaulieu, by whom the village had been just before abandoned. Buonaparte with a small retinue remained in the place; and Massena's division were still on the right bank of the Mincio, preparing their dinner. At this moment the advanced-guard of Sebottendorf, consisting of hulans and hussars, pushed into the village of Valeggio. There was but barely time to cry to arms; and, shutting the gates of the inn, to employ the general's small escort in its defence, while Buonaparte, escaping by the garden, mounted his horse, and galloped towards Massena's division. The soldiers threw aside their cookery, and marched instantly against Sebottendorf, who with much difficulty, and not without loss, effected a retreat in the same direction as his commander-in-chief Beaulieu. This personal risk induced Buonaparte, to form what he called the corps of guides, veterans of ten years' service at least, who were perpetually near his person, and, like the *triarri* of the Romans, were employed only when the most desperate efforts of courage were necessary. Bessieres, afterward duke of Istria, and mareschal of France, was placed at the head of this chosen body, which gave rise to the formation of the celebrated imperial guards of Napoleon.

The passage of the Mincio obliged the Austrians to retire within the frontier of the Tyrol; and they might have been considered as completely expelled from Italy, had not Mantua and the citadel of Milan still continued to display the imperial banners. The castle of Milan was a place of no extraordinary strength, the surrender of which might be calculated on so soon as the general fate of war had declared itself against the present possessors. But Mantua was by nature one of those almost impregnable fortresses, which may long, relying on its own resources, defy any compulsion but that of famine.

The town and fortress of Mantua are situated on a species of island, five or six leagues square, called the Seraglio, produced by three lakes, which communicate with, or rather are formed by, the Mincio. This island has access to the land by five causeways, the most important of which was, in 1796, defended by a regular citadel, called, from the vicinity of a ducal palace, La Favorita. Another was defended by an intrenched camp extending between the fortress and the lake. The third was protected by a hornwork. The remaining two causeways were only defended by gates and drawbridges. Mantua, low in situation, and surrounded by water, in a warm climate, is naturally unhealthy; but the air was likely to be still more destructive to a besieging army (which necessarily lay in many respects more exposed to the elements, and were besides in greater numbers, and less habituated to the air of the place), than to a garrison who had been seasoned to it, and were well accommodated within the fortress.

To surprise a place so strong by a coup-de-main was impossible, though Buonaparte represents his soldiers as murmuring that such a desperate feat was not attempted. But he blockaded Mantua with a large force, and proceeded to take such other measures to improve his success, as might pave the way to future victories. The garrison was numerous, amounting to from twelve to fourteen thousand men; and the deficiencies of the fortifications, which the Austrians had neglected in over-security, were made up for by the natural strength of the place. Yet of the five causeways, Buonaparte made himself master of four; and thus the enemy lost possession of all beyond the walls of the town and citadel, and had only the means of attaining the mainland through the citadel of La Favorita. Lines of circumvallation were formed, and Serrurier was left in blockade of the fortress, which the possession of four of the accesses enabled him to accomplish with a body of men inferior to the garrison.

To complete the blockade, it was necessary to come to some arrangement with the ancient republic of Venice. With this venerable government Napoleon had the power of working his own pleasure; for although the state might have raised a considerable army to assist the Austrians, to whom its senate, or aristocratic government, certainly bore good-will, yet, having been in amity with the French republic, they deemed the step too hazardous, and vainly trusting that their neutrality would be respected, they saw the Austrian power completely broken for the time, before they took any active measures either to stand in their defence, or to deprecate the wrath of the victor. But when the line of the Mincio was forced, and Buonaparte occupied the Venetian territory on the left bank, it was time to seek by concessions that deference to the rights of an independent country, which the once haughty aristocracy of Venice had lost a favourable opportunity of supporting by force.

There was one circumstance which rendered their cause unfavourable. Louis XVIII., under the title of a private person, the comte de Lisle, had received the hospitality of the republic, and was permitted to remain at Verona, living in strict seclusion. The permission to entertain this distinguished exile, the Venetian government had almost mendicated from the French revolutionary rulers, in a manner which we would term mean, were it not for the goodness of the intention, which leads us to regard the conduct of the ancient mistress of the Adriatic with pity rather than contempt. But when the screen of the Austrian force no longer existed between the invading armies of France and the Venetian territories—when the final subjugation of the north of Italy was resolved on—the directory peremptorily demanded, and the senate of Venice were obliged to grant, an order, removing the comte de Lisle from the boundaries of the republic.

The illustrious exile protested against this breach of hospitality, and demanded, before parting, that his name, which had been placed on the golden book of the republic, should be erased, and that the armour presented by Henry IV. to Venice, should be restored to his descendant. Both demands were evaded, as might have been expected in the circumstances, and the future monarch of France left Verona on the 21st of April, 1796, for the army of the prince of Condé, in whose ranks he proposed to place himself, without the purpose of assuming any command, but only that of fighting as a volunteer in the character of the first gentleman of France. Other less distinguished emigrants, to the number of several hundreds, who had found an asylum in Italy, were, by the successes at Lodi and Borghetto, compelled to fly to other countries.

Buonaparte, immediately after the battle of Borghetto, and the passage of the Mincio, occupied the town of Verona, and did not fail to intimate to its magistrates, that if the *pretender*, as he termed him, to the throne of France, had not left Verona before his arrival, he would have burned to the ground a town which, acknowledging him as king of France, assumed, in doing so, the air of being itself the capital of that republic. This might, no doubt, sound gallant in Paris; but Buonaparte knew well that Louis of France was not received in the Venetian territory as the successor to his brother's throne, but only with the hospitality due to an unfortunate prince, who, suiting his claim and title to his situation, was content to shelter his head, as a private man might have done, from the evils which seemed to pursue him.

The neutrality of Venice, was, however, for the time admitted, though not entirely from respect for the law of nations; for Buonaparte is at some pains to justify himself for not having seized without ceremony on the territories and resources of that republic, although a neutral power as far as her utmost exertions could preserve neutrality. He contented himself for the time with occupying Verona, and other dependencies of Venice upon the line of the Adige. "You are too weak," he said to the provveditore Fescarelli, "to pretend to enforce neutrality with a few hundred Slavonians on two such nations as France and Austria. The Austrians have not respected your terri-

tory where it suited their purpose, and I must, in requital, occupy such part as falls within the line of the Adige."

But he considered that the Venetian territories to the westward should in policy be allowed to retain the character of neutral ground, which the government, as that of Venice was emphatically called, would not, for their own sakes, permit them to lose; while otherwise, if occupied by the French as conquerors, these timid neutrals might upon any reverse have resumed the character of fierce opponents. And, at all events, in order to secure a territory as a conquest, which, if respected as neutral, would secure itself, there would have been a necessity for dividing the French forces, which it was Buonaparte's wish to concentrate. From interested motives, therefore, if not from respect to justice, Buonaparte deferred seizing the territory of Venice when within his grasp, conscious that the total defeat of the Austrians in Italy would, when accomplished, leave the prey as attainable and more defenceless than ever. Having disposed his army in its position, and prepared some of its divisions for the service which they were to perform as moveable columns, he returned to Milan to reap the harvest of his successes.

The first of these consisted in the defection of the king of Naples from the cause of Austria, to which, from family connexion, he had yet remained attached, though of late with less deep devotion. His cavalry had behaved better during the engagement on the Mincio, than has been of late the custom, with Neapolitan troops, and had suffered accordingly. The king, discouraged with the loss, solicited an armistice, which he easily obtained; for his dominions being situated at the lower extremity of Italy, and his force extending to sixty thousand men at least, it was of importance to secure the neutrality of a power who might be dangerous, and who was not, as matters stood, under the immediate control of the French. A Neapolitan ambassador was sent to Paris to conclude a final peace; in the mean while, the soldiers of the king of the Two Sicilies were withdrawn from the army of Beaulieu, and returned to their own country. The dispositions of the court of Naples continued, nevertheless, to vacillate, as opportunity of advantage, joined with the hatred of the queen (sister of Marie Antoinette), or the fear of the French military superiority, seemed to predominate.

The storm now thickened round the devoted head of the pope. Ferrara and Bologna, the territories of which belonged to the holy see, were occupied by the French troops. In the latter place, four hundred of the papal troops were made prisoners, with a cardinal who acted as their officer. The latter was dismissed on his parole, but when summoned to return to the French head-quarters, his eminence declined to obey, and amused the republican officers a good deal by alleging that the pope had dispensed with his engagement. Afterward, however, there were officers of no mean rank in the French service, who could contrive to extricate themselves from the engagement of a parole, without troubling the pope for his interference on the occasion. Influenced by the approaching danger, the court of Rome sent Azara, the Spanish minister, with full powers to treat for an armistice. It was a remarkable part of Buonaparte's character, that he knew as well when to forbear as when to strike. Rome, it was true, was an enemy whom France, or at least its present rulers, both hated and despised, but the moment was then inopportune for the prosecution of their resentment. To have detached a sufficient force in that direction, would have weakened the French army in the north of Italy, where fresh bodies of German troops were already arriving, and might have been attended with great ultimate risk, since there was a possibility that the English might have transported to Italy the forces which they were about to withdraw from Corsica, amounting to six thousand men. But though these considerations recommended to Napoleon a negotiation with the pope, his holiness was compelled to purchase the armistice at a severe rate. Twenty-one millions of francs, in actual specie, with large contributions in forage and military stores, the cession of Ancona, Bologna, and Ferrara, not forgetting one hundred of the finest pictures, statues, and similar objects of art, to be selected according to the choice of the committee