

the first consul was obliged to advance towards Alexandria, apprehensive lest the Austrians should escape from him, and either, by a march to the left flank, move for the Tesino, cross that river, and, by seizing Milan, open a communication with Austria in that direction; or, by marching to the right, and falling back on Genoa, overwhelm Suchet, and take a position, the right of which might be covered by that city, while the sea was open for supplies and provisions, and their flank protected by the British squadron. Either of these movements might have been attended with alarming consequences; and Napoleon, impatient lest his enemy should give him the slip, advanced his head-quarters on the 12th to Voghera, and on the 13th to St. Julian, in the midst of the great plain of Marengo. As he still saw nothing of the enemy, the chief consul concluded that Melas had actually retreated from Alexandria, having, notwithstanding the temptation afforded by the level ground around him, preferred withdrawing, most probably to Genoa, to the hazard of a battle. He was still more confirmed in this belief, when, pushing forward as far as the village of Marengo, he found it only occupied by an Austrian rear-guard, which offered no persevering defence against the French, but retreated from the village without much opposition. The chief consul could no longer doubt that Melas had eluded him, by marching off by one of his flanks, and probably by his right. He gave orders to Dessaix, whom he had intrusted with the command of the reserve, to march towards Rivolta, with a view to observe the communications with Genoa; and in this manner the reserve was removed half a day's march from the rest of the army, which had like to produce most sinister effects upon the event of the great battle that followed.

Contrary to what Buonaparte had anticipated, the Austrian general, finding the first consul in his front, and knowing that Suchet was in his rear, had adopted, with the consent of a council of war, the resolution of trying the fate of arms in a general battle. It was a bold, but not a rash resolution. The Austrians were more numerous than the French in infantry and artillery; much superior in cavalry, both in point of numbers and of discipline; and it has been already said, that the extensive plain of Marengo was favourable for the use of that description of force. Melas, therefore, on the evening of the 13th, concentrated his forces in front of Alexandria, divided by the river Bormida from the purposed field of fight; and Napoleon, undeceived concerning the intentions of his enemy, made with all haste the necessary preparations to receive battle, and failed not to send orders to Dessaix to return as speedily as possible and join the army. That general was so far advanced on his way towards Rivolta before these counter-orders reached him, that his utmost haste only brought him back after the battle had lasted several hours. Buonaparte's disposition was as follows:—The village of Marengo was occupied by the divisions of Gardanne and Chambarthac. Victor, with two other divisions, and commanding the whole, was prepared to support them. He extended his left as far as Castel Ceriolo, a small village which lies almost parallel with Marengo. Behind this first line was placed a brigade of cavalry, under Kellermann, ready to protect the flanks of the line, or to debouch through the intervals, if opportunity served, and attack the enemy. About a thousand yards in the rear of the first line was stationed the second, under Lannes, supported by Champeaux's brigade of cavalry. At the same distance, in the rear of Lannes, was placed a strong reserve, or third line, consisting of the division of Carra St. Cyr, and the consular guard, at the head of whom was Buonaparte himself. Thus the French were drawn up on this memorable day, in three distinct divisions, each composed of a *corps d'armée*, distant about three-quarters of a mile in the rear of each other.

The force which the French had in the field in the commencement of the day was above twenty thousand men; the reserve, under Dessaix, upon its arrival, might make the whole amount to thirty thousand. The Austrians attacked with nearly forty thousand troops. Both armies were in high spirits, determined to fight, and each confident in their general—the Austrians in

the bravery and experience of Melas, the French in the genius and talents of Buonaparte. The immediate stake was the possession of Italy; but it was impossible to guess, how many yet more important consequences the event of the day might involve. Thus much seemed certain, that the battle must be decisive, and that defeat must prove destruction to the party who should sustain it. Buonaparte, if routed, could hardly have accomplished his retreat upon Milan; and Melas, if defeated, had Suchet in his rear. The fine plain on which the French were drawn up, seemed lists formed by nature for such an encounter, when the fate of kingdoms was at issue.

Early in the morning, the Austrians crossed the Bormida, in three columns, by three military bridges, and advanced in the same order. The right and the centre columns, consisting of infantry, were commanded by generals Haddick and Kaine; the left, composed entirely of light troops and cavalry, made a detour round Castel Ceriolo, the village mentioned as forming the extreme right of the French position. About seven in the morning, Haddick attacked Marengo with fury, and Gardanne's division, after fighting bravely, proved inadequate to its defence. Victor supported Gardanne, and endeavoured to cover the village by an oblique movement. Melas, who commanded in person the central column of the Austrians, moved to support Haddick; and by their united efforts, the village of Marengo, after having been once or twice lost and won, was finally carried. The broken divisions of Victor and Gardanne, driven out of Marengo, endeavoured to rally on the second line, commanded by Lannes. This was about nine o'clock. While one Austrian column manœuvred to turn Lannes's flank, in which they could not succeed, another, with better fortune, broke through the centre of Victor's division, in a considerable degree disordered them, and thus uncovering Lannes's left wing, compelled him to retreat. He was able to do so in tolerably good order; but not so the broken troops of Victor on the left, who fled to the rear in great confusion. The column of Austrian cavalry who had come round Castel Ceriolo, now appeared on the field, and threatened the right of Lannes, which alone remained standing firm. Napoleon detached two battalions of the consular guard from the third line, or reserve, which, forming squares behind the right wing of Lannes, supported its resistance, and withdrew from it in part the attention of the enemy's cavalry. The chief consul himself, whose post was distinguished by the furred caps of a guard of two hundred grenadiers, brought up Mounier's division, which had but now entered the field at the moment of extreme need, being the advance of Dessaix's reserve, returned from their half-day's march towards Rivolta. These were, with the guards, directed to support Lannes's right wing; and a brigade detached from them was thrown into Castel Ceriolo, which now became the point of support on Buonaparte's extreme right, and which the Austrians, somewhat unaccountably, had omitted to occupy in force when their left column passed it in the beginning of the engagement. Buonaparte, meantime, by several desperate charges of cavalry, endeavoured in vain to arrest the progress of the enemy. His left wing was put completely to flight; his centre was in great disorder; and it was only his right wing, which, by strong support, had been enabled to stand their ground. In these circumstances the day seemed so entirely against him, that, to prevent his right wing from being overwhelmed, he was compelled to retreat in the face of an enemy superior in numbers, and particularly in cavalry and artillery. It was, however, rather a change of position, than an absolute retreat to the rear. The French right still resting on Castel Ceriolo, which formed the pivot of the manœuvre, had orders to retreat very slowly, the centre faster, the left at ordinary quick time. In this manner the whole line of battle was changed, and instead of extending diagonally across the plain, as when the fight began, the French now occupied an oblong position, the left being withdrawn as far back as St. Julian, where it was protected by the advance of Dessaix's troops. This division, being the sole remaining reserve, had now at length arrived on the field, and, by Buonaparte's directions, had taken a strong position, in front of St. Julian, on which the French were obliged to retreat;

great part of the left wing in the disorder of utter flight, the right wing steadily, and by intervals fronting the enemy, and sustaining with firmness the attacks made upon them.

At this time, and when victory seemed within his grasp, the strength of general Melas, eighty years old, and who had been many hours on horseback, failed entirely; and he was obliged to leave the field, and retire to Alexandria, committing to general Zach the charge of completing a victory which appeared to be already gained. But the position of Dessaix, at St. Julian, afforded the first consul a rallying point, which he now greatly needed. His army of reserve lay formed in two lines in front of the village, their flanks sustained by battalions *en potence*, formed into close columns of infantry; on the left was a train of artillery; on the right, Kellermann, with a large body of French cavalry, which, routed in the beginning of the day, had rallied in this place. The ground that Dessaix occupied was where the high road forms a sort of defile, having on the one hand a wood, on the other a thick plantation of vines. The French soldiers understand better perhaps than any other in the world the art of rallying, after having been dispersed. The fugitives of Victor's division, though in extreme disorder, threw themselves into the rear of Dessaix's position, and, covered by his troops, renewed their ranks and their courage. Yet, when Dessaix saw the plain filled with flying soldiers, and beheld Buonaparte himself in full retreat, he thought all must be lost. They met in the midst of the greatest apparent confusion, and Dessaix thus addressed Napoleon: "The battle is lost!—I suppose I can do no more for you than secure your retreat?"—"By no means," answered the first consul, "the battle is, I trust, gained—the disordered troops whom you see are my centre and left, whom I will rally in your rear—push forward your column." Dessaix, at the head of the ninth light brigade, instantly rushed forward, and charged the Austrians, wearied with fighting the whole day, and disordered by their hasty pursuit. The moment at which he advanced, so critically favourable for Buonaparte, was fatal to himself. He fell, shot through the head; but his soldiers continued to attack with fury, and Kellermann, at the same time charging the Austrian column, penetrated its ranks, and separated from the rest six battalions, which, surprised and panicstruck, threw down their arms; Zach, who, in the absence of Melas, commanded in chief, being at their head, was taken with them. The Austrians were now driven back in their turn. Buonaparte galloped along the French line, calling on the soldiers to advance: "you know," said he, "it is always my practice to sleep on the field of battle." The Austrians had pursued their success with incautious hurry, and without attending to the due support which one corps ought, in all circumstances, to be prepared to afford to another. Their left flank was also exposed, by their hasty advance, to Buonaparte's right, which had never lost order. They were, therefore, totally, unprepared to resist this general, furious, and unexpected attack. They were forced back at all points, and pursued along the plain, suffering immense loss; nor were they again able to make a stand, until driven back over the Bormida. Their fine cavalry, instead of being drawn up in squadrons to cover their retreat, fled in disorder, and at full gallop, riding down all that was in their way. The confusion at passing the river was inextricable—large bodies of men were abandoned on the left side, and surrendered to the French in the course of the night or next morning. It is evident in perusing the accounts of this battle, that the victory was wrested out of the hands of the Austrians, after they had become, by the fatigues of the day, too weary to hold it. Had they sustained their advance by reserves, their disaster would not have taken place. It seems also certain, that the fate of Buonaparte was determined by the arrival of Dessaix at the moment he did, and that in spite of the skilful disposition by which the chief consul was enabled to support the attack so long, he must have been utterly defeated had Dessaix put less despatch in his countermarch. Military men have been farther of opinion, that Melas was guilty of a great error, in not occupying Castel Ceriolo on the advance; and that the appearances of early victory led the Austrians to be by far too unguarded in their advance on St. Julian.

In consequence of a loss which seemed in the circumstances altogether irreparable, Melas resolved to save the remains of his army, by entering, upon the 15th of June, 1800, into a convention, or rather capitulation, by which he agreed, on receiving permission to retire behind Mantua, to yield up Genoa, and all the fortified places which the Austrians possessed in Piedmont, Lombardy, and the Legations. Buonaparte the more readily granted these terms, that an English army was in the act of arriving on the coast. His wisdom taught him not to drive a powerful enemy to despair, and to be satisfied with the glory of having regained, in the affairs of Montebello and of Marengo, almost all the loss sustained by the French in the disastrous campaign of 1799. Enough had been done to show, that, as the fortunes of France appeared to wane and dwindle after Buonaparte's departure, so they revived with even more than their original brilliancy, as soon as this child of destiny had returned to preside over them. An armistice was also agreed upon, which, it was supposed, might afford time for the conclusion of a victorious peace with Austria; and Buonaparte extended this truce to the armies on the Rhine, as well as those in Italy.

Two days having been spent in the arrangements which the convention with Melas rendered necessary, Buonaparte, on the 17th of June, returned to Milan, where he again renewed the republican constitution, which had been his original gift to the Cisalpine state. He executed several other acts of authority. Though displeased with Massena for the surrender of Genoa, he did not the less constitute him commander-in-chief in Italy; and though doubtful of Jourdan's attachment, who, on the 18th of Brumaire, seemed ready to espouse the republican interest, he did not on that account hesitate to name him minister of the French republic in Piedmont, which was equivalent to giving him the administration of that province. The conciliatory steps had the effect of making men of the most opposite parties see their own interest in supporting the government of the first consul.

The presence of Napoleon was now eagerly desired at Paris. He set out from Milan on the 24th of June, and in his passage through Lyons, paused to lay the foundation-stone for the rebuilding the place Bellecour; a splendid square, which had been destroyed by the frantic vengeance of the jacobins when Lyons was retaken by them from the insurgent party of Girondists and royalists. Finally, the chief consul returned to Paris upon the 2d of July. He had left it on the 6th of May; yet in the space of not quite two months, how many hopes had he realized! All that the most sanguine partisans had ventured to anticipate of his success had been exceeded. It seemed that his mere presence in Italy was of itself sufficient at once to obliterate the misfortunes of a disastrous campaign, and restore the fruits of his own brilliant victories, which had been lost during his absence. It appeared as if he was the sun of France—when he was hid from her, all was gloom—when he appeared, light and serenity was restored. All the inhabitants, leaving their occupations, thronged to the Tuileries to obtain a glimpse of the wonderful man, who appeared with the laurel of victory in one hand, and the olive of peace in the other. Shouts of welcome and congratulation resounded from the gardens, the courts, and the quays, by which the palace is surrounded; high and low illuminated their houses; and there were few Frenchmen, perhaps, that were not for the moment partakers of the general joy.

The Austrians, vanquished at Marengo, and then defeated in Germany by Moreau, determined to sue for peace. On the 8th of January, 1801, the French republic, the cabinet of Vienna, and the empire concluded the treaty of Luneville. Austria ratified all the conditions of the treaty of Campo Formio, and ceded, in addition, Tuscany to the young duke of Parma. The empire recognised the independence of the Batavian, Helvetian, Ligurian, and Cisalpine republics. The pacification now became general by the treaty of Florence, with the king of Naples, on the 18th of February, who ceded the isle of Elba, and the principality of Piombino—with Portugal, by the treaty of Madrid on the 29th of September, 1801—with the emperor of Russia, by