LETTER XX.

Preparations for the Renewal of War—Napoleon's Plan of Campaign—Resolves to measure himself with Wellington—Reviews his grand Army, 14th of June—Battle of Ligny, 16th of June—Retreat of the British on Waterloo, where Lord Wellington resolves to make a Stand—Description of this celebrated Field—The English Army take up their Ground on the 17th, and the French on the next Morning—Strength of the two Armies—Plans of their Generals—Battle of Waterloo commences on the Forenoon of the 18th of June—Ney's Charge at the Head of the Guards—His Repulse—Advance of the British Army—Napoleon's Orders for a Retreat—Behaviour of Napoleon during the Battle—Blucher's Pursuit of the French—Loss of the British—of the French. June, 1815.

THE time had now arrived when the permanency of the new order of things was to be determined, not by votes and oaths, but by an appeal to the sword. The close of the year 1814 had left the whole fortified frontier of the Belgic provinces, on the side of France, occupied by strong garrisons, chiefly of British troops, or of such as were in British pay. From the commencement of the alarm excited by Napoleon's attempt to reinstate himself in the throne of the Bourbons, reinforcements had been unremittingly sent from England, and the duke of Wellington had arrived at Brussels from Vienna to take the supreme command of the British and foreign troops in Belgium. In the latter part of May, 1815, the Prussian army, commanded by prince Blucher, arrived in the neighbourhood of Namur, and frequent conferences relative to a plan of co-operation were held by the two generals. The principal French army was at this period posted near Avesnes in Flanders, and preparations for defence against invasion had been made at Laon and the castle of Guise.

On the 12th of June, Napoleon quitted Paris, and, as he threw himself into his carriage to join his army, "I go," said he, "to measure myself with Wellington." The army of the latter might contain about thirty thousand English troops; but they did not consist of those veteran soldiers who had served under him in Spain and Portugal, the flower of which had been despatched upon the American expedition. The greater part of them were second battalions, or regiments which had been filled up with new recruits. The foreigners were fifteen thousand Hanoverians, with the celebrated German legion, eight thousand strong, which had so often distinguished itself in Spain; five thousand Brunswickers under the gallant duke; and about seventeen thousand Belgian, Dutch, and Nassau troops, commanded by the prince of Orange. On the Germans the utmost reliance was deservedly placed: but some apprehensions were entertained for the steadiness of the Belgian troops. Discontents had prevailed among them, which, at one period, had broken out into open mutiny, and was not subdued without bloodshed. Most of them had served in the French ranks, and it was feared some of them might retain predilections and correspondences dangerous to the general cause. Napoleon himself had anticipations of the same kind. He brought in his train several Belgian officers, expecting there would be a movement in his favour as soon as he entered the Netherlands. But the Flemings disappointed him; they dreaded the return of his tyranny. Some of these troops behaved with distinguished valour; and most of them supported the ancient military character of the Walloons. The Dutch troops were in general enthusiastically attached to the prince of Orange, and the cause of independence.

The Prussian army had been recruited to its highest war establishment within an incredibly short space of time after Napoleon's return had been announced, and was reinforced in a manner surprising to those who do not reflect, how much the resources of a state depend on the zeal of the inhabitants. Their enthusiastic hatred to France, founded partly on the recollection of former injuries, partly on that of recent success, was animated at once by feelings of triumph and of revenge; and they marched to this new war, as to a national crusade against an inveterate enemy. Blucher was, however, deprived of a valuable part of his army by the discontent of the Saxon troops, among whom a mutiny had broken out when the congress announced their intention of transferring part of the Saxon dominions to Prussia. Blucher arrived at Liege, with the Prussian army, which was concentrated on the Sambre and Meuse rivers, occupying Charleroi, Namur, Givot, and Liege. The duke of Wellington covered Brussels where he had fixed his head-quarters, communicating by his left wing with the right of the Prussians. There was a prevalent notion that Napoleon's threatened advance would take place on Namur, as he was likely to find least opposition at that dismantled city.

The duke of Wellington's first corps, under the prince of Orange, with two divisions of British troops, two of Hanoverians, and two of Belgians, occupied Enghein, Brain le Compte, and Nivelles, and served as a reserve to the Prussian division under Ziethen which was at Charleroi. The second division, commanded by lord Hill, included two British, two Hanoverian, and one Belgian divisions; it was centred at Halle, Oudenard, and Grammont. The reserve, under general Picton, who, at lord Wellington's special request, had accepted of the situation of second in command, consisted of the two remaining British divisions, with three of the Hanoverians, and was stationed at Brussels and Ghent. The cavalry occupied Grammont and Nieve.

Napoleon in person, accompanied by his guard, which had marched from Paris, advanced to Vervins on the 12th of June. The other divisions of his selected grand army had been assembled on the frontier, and the whole, consisting of five divisions of infantry and four of cavalry, were combined at Beaumont on the 14th of the same month, with a degree of secrecy and expedition which showed the usual genius of their commander. The emperor reviewed the troops in person, reminded them that the day was the anniversary of the great victories of Marengo and Friedland, and called on them to remember that the enemies whom they had then defeated were the same against whom they were now arrayed. "Are they and we," he asked, "no longer the same men?" The address produced a powerful effect upon the minds of the French soldiers, always sensitively alive to military and national glory. On the 15th of June, the French army was in motion in every direction. Their advanced-guard of light troops swept the western bank of the Sambre clear of all the allied troops of observation. They then advanced upon Charleroi, which was well defended by the Prussians under general Ziethen, who was at length compelled to retire on the large village of Gosselies. Here his retreat was cut off by the second division of the French army, and Ziethen was compelled to take the route of Fleurus, whereby he united himself with the Prussian force, which lay about the villages of Ligny and St. Ormond. The Prussian general had, however, made such a protracted resistance, as gave time for the alarm being taken.

By this movement the plan of Napoleon was made apparent: it was at once most scientific and adventurous. His numbers were not sufficient to sustain a conflict with the armies of Blucher and Wellington united; but by forcing his way so as to separate the one enemy from the other, he would gain the advantage of acting against either individually with the greater part of his forces, while he could spare enough of detached troops to keep the other in check. To accomplish this masterly manœuvre, it was necessary to push onwards upon a part of the British advance, which occupied the position of Quatre Bras, and the yet more advanced posts of Frasnes, where some of the Nassau troops were stationed. But the extreme rapidity of Napoleon's forced marches had in some measure prevented the execution of his plan, by dispersing his forces so much, that, at a time when every hour was of consequence, he was compelled to remain at Charleroi until his wearied and over-marched army had collected. In the mean time, Ney was

these expectations he was the more confident, inasmuch as he believed Grouchy's force, which had been detached the preceding day in pursuit of Blucher, was sufficient to retard, if not altogether to check, the march of the Prussians; this opinion, however, was too hastily adopted.

Commencing the action according to his usual system, Napoleon kept his guard in reserve, in order to take an opportunity of charging with them, when repeated attacks of column after column, and squadron after squadron, should induce his exhausted enemy to show some symptoms of irresolution. But Napoleon's movements in the present instance were not very rapid. His army had suffered by the storm even more than the English, who were in bivouac at three in the afternoon of the 17th of June; while the French were still under march and unable to get into line on the heights of La Belle Alliance until ten or eleven o'clock of the forenoon of the 18th. The English army had thus some leisure to take food, and to prepare their arms before the action commenced; while Napoleon lost several hours ere he could proceed. Time was indeed inestimably precious to both parties, and hours were of importance; but of this Napoleon was less aware than was his opponent. The tempest, which had raged with tropical violence all night, abated in the morning, but the weather continued gusty and stormy during the whole day. Between the hours of eleven and twelve of the forenoon, on the memorable 18th of June, this dreadful and decisive action commenced with a cannonade on the part of the French, instantly followed by an attack, commanded by Jerome Buonaparte, on the advanced post of Hougomont. The troops of Nassau, which occupied the wood around the chateau, were driven out by the French, but the utmost efforts of the assailants were unable to force the house, gardens, and farm-offices which a party of the British guards sustained with the most dauntless resolution. The French redoubled their efforts, and precipitated themselves in numbers on the exterior hedge, which screens the garden wall, not aware probably of the internal defence afforded by the latter. They fell in great numbers on this point by the fire of the defenders, to which they were exposed in every direction. The number of troops, however, enabled them by possession of the wood, to mask Hougomont for a time, and to push on with their cavalry and artillery against the British right, which formed in squares to receive them. The fire was incessant, but without apparent advantage on either side. The attack was at length repelled so far, that the British again opened their communication with Hougomont, and that important garrison was reinforced by colonel Hepburn and a body of the guards.

The fire of the artillery now became general along the line, and the force of the French attack was transferred to the British centre. It was made with the most desperate fury, and received with the most stubborn resolution. The assault was here made upon the farm-house of St. Jean by four columns of infantry, and a large body of cuirassiers who took the advance. The latter advanced with the utmost intrepidity along the Genappe causeway, where they were encountered and charged by the English heavy cavalry; and a combat was maintained at the sword's point, till the French were driven back on their own position, where they were protected by their artillery. The four columns of French infantry, engaged in the same attack, forced their way forward beyond the farm of La Haye Sainte, and, dispersing a Belgian regiment, were in the act of establishing themselves in the centre of the British position, when they were attacked by the brigade of general Pack, brought up from the second line by general Picton, while, at the same time, a brigade of British heavy cavalry wheeled round their own infantry, and attacked the French charging columns in flank, at the moment when they were checked by the fire of the musketry. The result was decisive; the French columns were broken with great slaughter, and two eagles, with more than two thousand men, were made prisoners. The latter were instantly sent off for Brussels. The British cavalry, however, pursued their success too far. They got involved among the French infantry, and some hostile cavalry which was detached to support them, and were obliged to retire with considerable loss. In this part of the action, the gallant general Picton, so distinguished for enterprise and bravery, met his death, as did also general Ponsonby, who commanded the cavalry. About this time the French made themselves masters of the farm of La Haye Sainte, cutting to pieces about two hundred Hanoverian sharp-shooters, by whom it was most gallantly defended. The French retained this post for some time, till they were at last driven out of it by shells.

The scene of conflict now shifted once more to the right, where a general attack of French cavalry was made on the squares, chiefly towards the centre of the British right, or between them and the causeway. They came up with the most dauntless resolution, in despite of the continued fire of thirty pieces of artillery, placed in front of the line, and compelled the artillerymen by whom they were worked to retreat within the squares. The enemy had no means, however, to secure the guns, or even to spike them, and at every favourable moment the British artillerymen sallied out from their place of refuge, again manned their pieces, and fired on the assailants—a manœuvre which seems peculiar to the British service. The cuirassiers, nevertheless, continued their dreadful onset, riding up to the squares in the full confidence, apparently, of sweeping them before the impetuosity of their charge. Their onset and reception may be compared to a furious ocean dashing itself against a chain of insulated rocks. The British squares stood unmoved, and never gave fire until the cavalry were within ten yards, when men rolled one way, the horses galloped another, and the cuirassiers were in every instance driven back.

Some French writers have presumed to assert, that squares were broken and colours taken, but the assertion is contradicted by the united testimony of every British officer who was present. It was not, however, the fault of the cuirassiers, who displayed an almost frantic valour on the occasion. They rallied again and again, and returned to the onset, till the British could recognise even the faces of individuals among their enemies. Some rode close to the bayonets, fired their pistols, and cut with their swords with reckless and useless valour. Some stood gazing on the British, and were destroyed by the musketry and artillery. Some squadrons, passing through the intervals of the first line, charged the squares of Belgians posted there with as little success. At length, the cuirassiers suffered so severely, on every hand, that they were compelled to abandon the attempt, which they had made with such intrepid and desperate courage. In this unheard-of struggle, the greater part of the French heavy cavalry were absolutely destroyed. Napoleon intimates in his bulletins that this desperate attempt was made without orders, and continued only through the determined courage of the soldiers and their officers. Be this as it may, it is certain that in the destruction of this noble body of cuirassiers, he lost the corps which might have been most effectual in covering his retreat. After the broken remains of this fine cavalry were drawn off, the French confined themselves for a time to a heavy cannonade, from which the British sheltered themselves in part by lying on the ground, while the enemy prepared for an attack on another quarter, and to be conducted in a different manner.

It was now about six o'clock, and during this long succession of the most furious attacks, the French had gained no success, except occupying for a short time the wood around Hougomont from which they had been expelled, and the farm-house of La Haye Sainte, which also had been recovered. The British, on the other hand, had suffered very severely, but had not lost one inch of ground. Ten thousand men, were however, killed or wounded: some of the foreign regiments had given way, though others had shown the most determined bravery. The ranks were thinned, both by the actual fugitives, and by the absence of individuals, who left the ensanguined field for the purpose of carrying off the wounded, and some of whom would naturally be in no hurry to return to so fatal a scene. But the French, besides losing fifteen thousand men, independent of a column of two thousand prisoners, began now to be disturbed by the operations of the Prussians on their right flank:

and the secret of the duke of Wellington was disclosing itself by its consequences. Blucher, faithful to his engagement, had, early in the morning, put in motion Bulow's division, which had not been engaged at Ligny, to communicate with the English army, and operate a division on the right flank and rear of the French. But though there were only twelve or fourteen miles from Wavre to the field of Waterloo, yet the march was by unavoidable circumstances much delayed. The rugged face of the country, together with the state of the roads, offered the most serious obstacles to the progress of the Prussians, especially as they moved with an unusually large train of artillery. A fire also broke out in Wavre, on the morning of the 18th, which prevented Bulow's corps from marching through that town, and obliged them to pursue a circuitous and inconvenient route. After traversing, with great difficulty, the cross roads by Chapelle Lambert, Bulow, with the fourth Prussian corps, who had been expected by the duke of Wellington about eleven o'clock, announced his arrival by a distant fire about half past four. The first Prussian corps, following the same route with Bulow, was yet later in coming up. The second division made a lateral movement in the same direction as the fourth and first, but by the hamlet of Ohain, nearer to the English flank. The emperor Napoleon instantly opposed to Bulow, who appeared long before the others, the sixth French corps, which he had kept in reserve for that service; and as only the advanced-guard was yet come up, they succeeded in keeping the Prussians in check for the moment. The first and second Prussian corps appeared on the field still later than the fourth. The third corps had put themselves in motion to follow the same direction, when they were furiously attacked by the French under mareschal Grouchy, who, as I have already said, was detached to engage the attention of Blucher, whose whole force the mareschal took for granted he had before him. Instead of being surprised, however, as an ordinary general might have been, with this attack upon his rear, Blucher contented himself with sending back orders to Thielman who commanded the third corps, to defend himself as well as he could upon the line of the Dyle. In the mean time, without weakening the army under his own command, by detaching any part of it to support Thielman, the Prussian veteran rather hastened than suspended his march towards the field of battle, where he was aware that the war was likely to be decided in a manner so complete, as would leave victory or defeat, on every other point, a matter of inferior moment.

About half past six, the second division of the Prussian army began to enter into communication with the British left wing, by the village of Ohain, while Bulow pressed forward from Chapelle Lambert on the French right and rear, by a valley called Frischemont; and now it became evident that the Prussians were to enter seriously into the contest, and to cast the die. Napoleon had still the means of opposing them, and of achieving a retreat, but it must have been at the certainty of being attacked on the ensuing day by the combined armies of England and Prussia. His celebrated guard had not yet taken any part in the conflict; and would now have been capable of affording him protection after a battle, which hitherto he had fought disadvantageously, but without being defeated. But the peculiar difficulty of his situation with all its attendant circumstances must have pressed on his mind at once. He had no succours to look for: a reunion with Grouchy was the only resource which could strengthen his forces: the Russians were advancing upon the Rhine by forced marches: the republicans at Paris were agitating schemes against his authority. It seemed as if every thing must be decided on this memorable day, and on that ensanguined field. Surrounded by these ill-omened circumstances, a desperate effort for victory, before the Prussians could act effectually, might possibly yet drive the English from their position; and he determined to venture on this daring experiment.

About seven o'clock, Napoleon's guards were formed in two columns under his own eye, near the bottom of the declivity of La Belle Alliance. They were placed under the command of the dauntless Ney, "the bravest of the brave!" Napoleon told the soldiers, and indeed he made Ney also believe it,

that the Prussians whom they saw on the right were retreating before Grouchy, —possibly he himself believed this to be the case. The guard responded for the last time with shouts of *Vive l'empereur*, and moved resolutely forward, having for their support four battalions of the old guard in reserve, who stood prepared to protect the advance of their comrades. A gradual change had taken place in the British line of battle, in consequence of the repeated repulse of the French. Advancing by slow degrees, the right, which, at the beginning of the conflict, presented a segment of a convex circle, now resembled one that was concave—the extreme right, which had been thrown back, being now rather brought forward; so that their fire both of artillery and infantry fell upon the flank of the French, who had also to sustain that which was poured on their fronts from the heights. The British were arranged in a line of four men deep, to meet the advancing columns of the French guard, and poured upon them a storm of musketry which never ceased an instant. The soldiers fired independently, as it is termed; each man loading and discharging his piece as fast as he could. At length, the British moved forward, as if to close round the heads of the columns, and at the same time continued to pour their shot upon the enemy's flanks. The French gallantly attempted to deploy, for the purpose of returning the discharge. But in their effort to do so, under so dreadful a fire, they stopped, staggered, were thrown into disorder, became blended in one mass, and at length gave way, retiring or rather flying, in the utmost confusion. This was the last effort of the enemy, and Napoleon gave orders for the retreat; but to protect them he had now no troops left, except the last four battalions of the old guard, which had been stationed in the rear of the attacking columns. These threw themselves into squares and stood firm. At this moment, however, the duke of Wellington commanded the whole British line to advance, so that, whatever the bravery and skill of these gallant veterans, they also were thrown into disorder, and swept away in the general rout, in defiance of the efforts of Ney, who, having had his horse killed, fought sword in hand, and on foot, in the front of the battle, till the very last.

While this decisive moment was taking place, Bulow, who had concentrated his troops, and was at length qualified to act in force, carried the village of Planchenoit in the French rear, and was now firing so close on their right wing, that the cannonade annoyed the British who were in pursuit, and was consequently suspended. Moving in oblique lines, the British and Prussian armies came into contact with each other on the heights so lately occupied by the French, where they celebrated the victory with loud cheers of mutual congratulation.

The French army was now in total and inextricable confusion and rout; and when the victorious generals met at the farm-house of La Belle Alliance, it was agreed that the Prussians, who were comparatively fresh, should follow up the chase; a duty for which the British, exhausted by the fatigues of a battle of eight hours, were totally inadequate.

During the whole action, Napoleon maintained the utmost serenity. He remained on the heights of La Belle Alliance, keeping pretty near the centre, from which he had a full view of the field, which does not exceed a mile and a half in length. For a considerable part of the day he expressed no solicitude about the issue of the dreadful contest; he noticed the behaviour of particular regiments; and several times praised the English, always, however, talking of them as an assured prey! When forming his guard for the last effort, he descended near them, half down the causeway from La Belle Alliance, to bestow upon them what proved his parting exhortation. He watched intently their progress with a spy-glass, and refused to listen to one or two of his aids-de-camp, who at that moment came from the right to inform him of the appearance of the Prussians. At length, perceiving the attacking columns to stagger and become confused, his countenance (to use the expression of one of his attendants) became as pale as that of a corpse; and muttering to himself, "They are mingled together," he said to those around him, "all is lost for the present," and instantly rode off the field, not stopping or taking

detached against Frasnes and Quatre Bras, but the troops of Namur maintained their post on the evening of the 15th of June. It is possible the French mareschal might have succeeded had he made the attack at Frasnes with his whole force; but hearing a cannonade in the direction of Fleures, he detached a division to support the French in that quarter: a step for which, as he acted on the exercise of his own judgment, instead of yielding precise obedience to his master's orders, he was reprimanded—a circumstance rather curiously contrasted with the subsequent case of Grouchy, upon whom Napoleon threw the whole blame of the defeat of Waterloo, because he did follow his orders precisely, and press the Prussians at Wavre, instead of being diverted from that object by the cannonade on the left. The manœuvre of Napoleon thus failed, though it had nearly been successful. He nevertheless persisted in his effort of dividing, if possible, the British army from the Prussians.

At six o'clock on the evening of the 15th, lord Wellington, then at Brussels, received intelligence of the advance of the French army; but it was not sufficiently authenticated to induce him to put his army in motion, on an occasion when a false movement might have proved ruinous. About eleven of the same night, more certain accounts reached Brussels, that the advance of the French was upon the line of the Sambre. Reinforcements were now hastily moved on to Quatre Bras, and the duke of Wellington arrived there in person at an early hour of the morning of the 16th, and instantly rode from that position to Bric, where he had an interview with Blucher. It appeared at this time that the whole French force was about to be directed against the Prussians; and Blucher was prepared to receive them. Three of his divisions, to the number of eighty thousand men, had been got into position on a chain of gentle heights, running from Bric to the Sambre. In front of their line lay the villages of the greater and lesser St. Amand, as also that of Ligny, all of which were strongly occupied. From the extremity of his right, Blucher could communicate with the British at Quatre Bras, upon which the British commander was, as fast as distance would permit, concentrating his army. The fourth Prussian division, being that of Bulow, stationed between Liege and Hainault, was at too great a distance to be brought up, though every effort was made for the purpose. Blucher, however, undertook, notwithstanding the absence of Bulow, to receive a battle in this position, trusting to the support of the English army, who, by a flank movement to the left, were to march to his assistance.

Napoleon had, in the mean time, settled his own plan of battle. He determined to leave mareschal Ney with a division of forty-five thousand men, with instructions to drive the English from Quatre Bras, before their army was concentrated and reinforced, and thus prevent their co-operating with Blucher, while he himself, with the main body of his army attacked the Prussian position at Ligny. Ney being thus on the French left wing at Frasnes and Quatre Bras, and Napoleon on the right at Ligny, a division under d'Erlon, amounting to ten thousand men, served as a centre of the army, and was placed near Marchiennes, from which it might march laterally either to support Ney or Napoleon, as circumstances might require. As two battles took place on the 16th of June, it is necessary to take distinct notice of both. That of Ligny was the principal action. The French emperor was unable to concentrate his forces, so as to commence the attack upon the Prussians, until three o'clock in the afternoon, at which hour it began with uncommon fury all along the Prussian line. After a continued attack of two hours, the French had only obtained possession of a part of the village of St. Amand. The position of the Prussians, however, was thus far defective, that the main part of their army being drawn up on the heights, and the remainder occupying villages which lay at their foot, the reinforcements despatched to the latter were necessarily exposed, during their descent, to the fire from the French artillery, placed on the meadows below. Notwithstanding this disadvantage, by which the Prussians suffered much, Napoleon thought the issue of the contest so doubtful, that he sent for d'Erlon's division, which, as already mentioned, was stationed near Marchiennes, half-way between Quatre Bras and Ligny. In the mean while, observing that Blucher drew his reserve together on St. Amand, he changed his point of attack, and directed all his force against Ligny, of which, after a desperate resistance, he at length obtained possession. The French guards, supported by their heavy cavalry, ascended the heights, and attacked the Prussian position in the rear of Ligny, and the reserves of the Prussian infantry having been despatched to St. Amand, Blucher had no means of repelling the attack, except by that of his cavalry. He therefore placed himself at their head, and charged in the most determined manner, but without success. The cavalry of Blucher were forced back in disorder. The veteran prince mareschal, as he directed the retreat, was involved in one of the charges of the cavalry, his horse struck down by a cannon-shot, and he himself prostrated on the ground. His aid-de-camp threw himself beside the valiant Prussian, determined to share his fate, and had the precaution to fling his cloak over him, to prevent his being recognised by the French soldiers. The enemy's cuirassiers passed over him, and it was not until they were repulsed, and in their turn pursued by the Prussian cavalry, that Blucher was raised and remounted. His death or captivity, at that eventful moment, might have proved highly detrimental to the issue of the campaign, as it may be reasonably questioned whether any thing short of personal influence and exertion could, after this hard-fought and unfortunate day, have again brought the Prussian army into action on the eventful 18th of June. When relieved and again mounted, Blucher directed the retreat upon Tilly, and achieved it unmolested by the enemy, who did not continue their pursuit beyond the heights which the Prussians had been compelled to abandon. Such was the battle of Ligny, in which the Prussians, as Blucher truly said, lost the field but not their honour. The Prussians are said to have lost in this sanguinary action, ten thousand men; those of the French were not much fewer. But the French emperor had struck an important blow: he had overpowered a stubborn and inveterate enemy, and opened the campaign with favourable auspices. The degree of advantage, however, which Napoleon might have derived from the Prussian retreat, was greatly limited by the indifferent success of Ney against lord Wellington. Of this second action I have now to give you some account.

On the morning of the 16th, Frasnes had been evacuated by the British who now took a position at Quatre Bras, a point of importance, as four roads diverge from it in different directions. On the left of the causeway, leading from Charleroi to Brussels, is a wood called Bois de Bossa, which, during the early part of the day, was strongly contested by sharp-shooters on both sides, but at length carried by the French and maintained for a time. About three o'clock in the afternoon, the main attack commenced but was repulsed. The British infantry, however, and particularly the 42d regiment of Highlanders, suffered severely from an unexpected charge of lancers, whose approach was hid from them by the character of the ground, intersected with hedges, and covered with heavy crops of rye. Two companies of the Highlanders were cut off, not having time to form the square; the others succeeded in getting into order, and beating off the lancers. Ney then attempted a general charge of heavy cavalry; but they were received with such a galling fire from the British infantry, joined to a battery of two guns, that it could not be sustained; the whole causeway was strewed with men and horses, and the fugitives, who escaped to the rear, announced the loss of an action which was far from being decided, considering that the British had few infantry and artillery, though reinforcements of both were coming fast forwards. The French, as already said, had, about three o'clock obtained possession of the Bois de Bossa, and driven out the Belgians; but they were in return themselves expelled by the British guards, who successfully resisted every attempt made by the French to penetrate into the wood during the day. As the English reinforcements arrived in succession, mareschal Ney became desirous of an additional force, and sent to procure the assistance of

Erlon's division; but those troops had been previously ordered to succour the emperor's own army. As the affair of Ligny was, however, over before they arrived, the division was sent towards Frasnes to assist Ney; but his battle was also by this time over, and thus d'Erlon's troops marched from one flank to the other, without firing a musket in the course of the day. The battle of Quatre Bras terminated with the light; the British retained possession of the field, which they had maintained with so much obstinacy, because the duke of Wellington conceived that Blucher would be able to make good his ground at Ligny, and was consequently desirous that the armies should retain the line of communication which they had occupied in the morning.

The Prussians, having evacuated all the villages which they held in the neighbourhood of Ligny, had concentrated their forces to retreat upon the river Dyle, in the vicinity of Wavre. By this retrograde movement they were placed about six leagues to the rear of their former position, and had united themselves to Bulow's division, which had not been engaged in the affair of Ligny. But of this retreat lord Wellington was ignorant until about seven o'clock the next morning, when he himself deemed it necessary to commence a retrograde movement towards Waterloo, in order the better to recover his communication with the Prussians, and resume the execution of the plan of co-operation which had been previously arranged between him and Blucher, but which had been in some degree disconcerted by the sudden irruption of the French and the loss of the battle of Ligny by the Prussians. The retreat was conducted with the greatest regularity, though it was as usual unpleasant to the feelings of the soldier. The news of the battle of Ligny spread through the ranks, and even the most sanguine did not venture to hope that the Prussians would be so soon able to renew the engagement. The weather was tempestuous in the extreme; the rain fell in torrents. But this so far favoured the British, by rendering the ploughed fields impracticable for the horse, so that their march was covered from the attacks of the French cavalry on the flanks, and the operations of those by whom they were pursued were confined to the causeway. At Genappe, however, a small town where a narrow bridge over the river Dyle can only be approached by a confined street, there was an attack on the British rear, which the English light cavalry were unable to repell; but the heavy cavalry being brought up, repulsed the French, who gave the rear of the army no farther disturbance for the day. In the evening, the duke of Wellington arrived on the memorable field of Waterloo, which he had previously fixed upon as the position in which he had, in certain events, determined to make a stand for covering Brussels.

The English army occupied a chain of heights, extending from a ravine and village termed Marco-Braine, on the right, to a hamlet called Tor-la-Haye, on the left. Corresponding to this chain of heights, there runs one somewhat parallel to them, on which the French were posted. A small valley winds between them of various breadth at different points, but not generally exceeding half a mile. The declivity on either side into the valley has a varied, but on the whole a gentle slope, diversified by a number of undulating irregularities of ground. The field is crossed by two highroads, or causeways, both leading to Brussels—one from Charleroi through Quatre Bras and Genappe, by which the British army had just retreated, and another by Nivelles. These roads traverse the valley, and meet behind the village of Mont St. Jean, which lay in the rear of the British army. The farm-house of Mont St. Jean, which must be carefully distinguished from the hamlet, was much closer to the rear of the British army than the latter. On the Charleroi causeway, in front of the line, there is another farm-house, called La Haye Sainte, situated nearly at the foot of the declivity leading into the valley. On the opposite chain of eminences, a village called La Belle Alliance gives name to the range of heights. It exactly fronts Mont St. Jean, and these two points formed the respective centres of the French and English position. An old-fashioned Flemish villa, called Hougomont, stood in the midst of the valley, surrounded with gardens, offices, and a wood, about two acres in extent, of tall beech-trees. Behind the heights of Mont St. Jean, the ground again sinks into a hollow, which served to afford some sort of shelter to the second line of the British. In the rear of this second valley is the great and extensive forest of Soignes, through which runs the causeway to Brussels. On the road, two miles in the rear of the British army, is placed the small town of Waterloo.

By the march from Quatre Bras to Waterloo, lord Wellington had restored his communication with Blucher, which had been dislocated by the retreat of the Prussians to Wavre. When established there, Blucher was once more upon the same line with the British, the distance between the Prussian right flank and the British left being about five leagues. The ground which lay between the two extreme points, called the heights of St. Lambert, was exceedingly rugged and wooded; and the cross roads which traversed it were dreadfully broken up by the late tempestuous weather. The duke despatched intelligence of his position in front of Waterloo to prince Blucher, acquainting him at the same time with his resolution to give battle to the enemy, provided the prince would afford him the support of two divisions of the Prussian army. Blucher replied that he would move to the duke of Wellington's support, not with two divisions only, but with his whole army; and that he asked no longer time to prepare for his movement, than was necessary to supply food, and serve out cartridges to his soldiers.

It was three o'clock on the afternoon of the 17th when the British came on the field, and took up their bivouac for the night in the order of battle in which they were to fight the next day. It was much later before Napoleon reached the heights of La Belle Alliance in person, and his army did not come up in full force till the morning of the 18th. Great part of the French had passed the night in the little village of Genappe; and Napoleon's own quarters had been at the farm-house called Caillon, about a mile in the rear of La Belle Alliance. In the morning, when Napoleon had formed his line of battle, his brother Jerome Buonaparte commanded on the left—counts Reille and d'Erlon the centre—and count Lobau on the right. Mareschals Soult and Ney acted as lieutenants-general to the emperor. The French force on the field consisted probably of about seventy-five thousand men. At the highest computation the British force did not exceed that number. Each army was commanded by the chief, under whom they had offered to defy the world. The British army was divided into two lines; the right of the first line consisted of the second and fourth English divisions; the third and sixth Hanoverians; and the first corps of Belgians, under lord Hill. The centre was composed of the corps of the prince of Orange, with the Brunswickers, and troops of Nassau, having the guards, under general Cooke, on the right, and the division of general Alton on the left. The left wing consisted of the divisions of Picton, Lambert, and Kemp. The second line was in most instances formed of the troops least worthy of confidence, or which had suffered too severely in the action on the 16th, to be again exposed until extreme necessity called for it. The cavalry were stationed in the rear, distributed all along the line, but chiefly posted on the left of the centre, to the east of the Charleroi causeway. The whole British position formed a sort of curve, the centre of which was nearest the enemy, and the extremities, particularly on the right, drawn considerably backwards. The plans of these two commanders were extremely simple. The object of the duke of Wellington was, to maintain his line of defence, until the Prussians coming up should give him a decided superiority of force. They were expected about eleven or twelve o'clock; but the extreme badness of the roads, owing to the violence of the storm, detained them several hours later. Napoleon's plan of operation was equally plain and decided. He trusted, by means of his usual rapidity of attack, to break and destroy the British army before the Prussians should arrive on the field; after which, he calculated on having an opportunity of destroying the Prussians, by attacking them on their march through the broken ground interposed between them and the British. In