efforts to which we should render homage. We do not know which to admire most, the plan of operations which brought the Russian armies from the depths of Moldavia, from Moscow and Polotsk, upon the Beresina, as to a rendezvous of peace—a plan which came near bringing about the capture of their formidable adversary, or the admirable constancy of the lion thus pursued, and who succeeded in opening himself a passage.

Not to allow ourselves to be pressed too closely, to deceive the enemy as to the point of passage, to burst upon the corps which bars our retreat, before that which follows in rear can rally to its assistance, are the only precepts to give. There may be added thereto that of never placing ourselves in a similar position, for it is rare that we can extricate ourselves from it.

If the retreating army ought to do everything to secure its bridges from insult, either by a regular *tête-de-pont*, or by a line of redouts which protect at least the rear guard, it is natural also that the pursuing enemy take every possible measure for destroying the bridges. When the retreat is made descending the course of a river, he may throw upon it wooden buildings, fire ships, mills, as the Aurtrians did against the army of Jourdan, in 1796, near Neuweied upon the Rhine, where they came near compromising the army of the Sambre and Mense. The Arch-Duke Charles did as much in 1809 at the famous passage at Essling. He broke the bridge of the Danube, and brought Napoleon to the brink of ruin.

There are few means of placing a bridge secure from such attacks, unless we have time to prepare stockades of piles. We may also anchor, by cables, a few boats for arresting the materials thrown upon the current, and for having the means of extinguishing the fire ships.

ARTICLE XXXIX.

CANTONMENTS AND WINTER QUARTERS.

So much has been written upon this matter, and it pertains so indirectly to our subject, that we shall say but a few words upon it.

Cantonments in open war are, in general, a rather delicate operation;

however compactly they may be made, it is always difficult to have them sufficiently so not to be exposed to the enemy. A country where there is an abundance of large cities, like Lombardy, Saxony, the low countries, Arabia, old Prussia, presents more facilities for establishing quarters therein than countries where cities are rare. Not only are resources there found for the subsistence of troops, but shelters are found near to each other, which permit the maintaining divisions together. In Poland, in Russia, in a part of Austria and France, in Spain, in Southern Italy, it is more difficult to establish ourselves in winter quarters.

Formerly, each party entered them respectively at the end of October, and contented themselves with taking reciprocally a few battalions too isolated at advanced posts; it was a partisan warfare.

The surprise of the Austrian winter quarters by Turenne, in Upper Alsacé, in 1674, is one of the operations which best indicate what can be undertaken against hostile cantonments, and the precautions which should be taken on our side, in order that the enemy do not form the same enterprises.

To establish cantonments very compactly, and upon a space as extended in depth as in breadth, to the end of avoiding too long a line, always easy to pierce and impossible to rally; to cover them by a river or by a first line of troops barracked and supported by field works; to fix upon places of concentration which may in every case be attained in advance of the enemy; to cause the avenues to the army to be scoured by permanent patrols of cavalry; finally, to establish alarm signals for the case of a serious attack. These are, in my opinion, the best maxims that could be given.

In the winter of 1807, Napoleon cantoned his army behind the Passarge in the face of the enemy; the advanced guards alone were barracked in proximity with the cities of Gutstadt, Osterode, &c. This army exceeded a hundred and twenty thousand men, and there was much skill necessary to maintain and nourish it in this position until the month of June. The country favored, it is true, this system, and we do not find everywhere one as suitable.

An army of a hundred thousand men may find compact winter quarters in countries where cities abound, and of which we have spoken above. When the army is more numerous, the difficulty is increased; it is true, however, that, if the extent of quarters is augmented in proportion to the numerical force, it must be owned also that the means of resistance to oppose to a hostile irruption is increased in the same progression: the essential point is to be able to unite fifty or sixty thousand men in four

and twenty hours; with this force, and the certainty of seeing it augmented still, continually, we may resist until the assembling of the army, however numerous it may be.

In spite of that, it must be admitted that it will ever be a delicate affair to canton when the enemy, remaining united, should wish to obstruct it, and hence it should be concluded that the only sure means for the repose of an army during winter, or in the midst of a campaign, is to have its quarters secured by a river or an armistice.

ARTICLE XL.

DESCENTS.

Descents are one of the operations of war the most rarely to be seen, and which may be ranged in the number of the most difficult, when they take place in the presence of a well prepared army.

Since the invention of artillery, and the changes which it has necessarily produced in the Navy, transport vessels are too subordinate to colossal three deckers, armed with a hundred thunderbolts of war, to be able to effect descents without the assistance of a numerous fleet of men-of-war, which keep the sea at least until the moment of debarkation.

Before this invention, vessels of transport were at the same time vessels of war; they moved at need by the oar, were light, and could run along the coasts; their number was proportioned to the troops to be embarked, and apart from the chance of tempests, we could almost combine the operations of a fleet like those of an army. Therefore does ancient history offer the example of greater debarkations than modern times.*

Who does not recall the great armaments of the Prussians in the Black Sea, the Basphorus and the Archipelago? Those innumerable armies of Xerxes and Darius, transported to Thrace, to Greece; the numerous expeditions of the Carthagenians and the Romans, to Spain and

* I have given, in the preceding expedition, a long notice of the principal expeditions beyond the sea; if space permits, I will reproduce it at the end of this volume.

to Sicily; the expedition of Alexander to Asia Minor; those of Cæsar to England and to Africa; those of Germanicus to the mouths of the Elbe; the Crusades; the expeditions of the people of the north to England, to France, and even to Italy?

Since the invention of cannon, the too celebrated *Armada* of Philip II was the only colossal enterprise until that which Napoleon formed against England in 1803. All the other expeditions beyond the sea were partial operations; those of Charles V, and of Sebastian of Portugal, upon the Coast of Africa; several descents, like those of the French upon the United States of America, upon Egypt and St. Domingo; those of the English upon Egypt, Holland, Copenhagen, Antwerp, Philadelphia, all enter into the same category. I do not speak of the project of Hoche against Ireland, for it did not succeed, and it shows all the difficulty of these kinds of enterprises.

The large armies which the great States keep up at this day, does not admit of their being attacked by descents of thirty or forty thousand men. We can then only form similar enterprises against secondary States, for it is very difficult to embark a hundred or a hundred and fifty thousand men, with the immense equipment of artillery, munitions, cavalry, &c.

Meanwhile, we have been on the point of seeing resolved in our day this immense problem of *grand descents*, if it be true that Napoleon ever really entertained the serious project of transporting his hundred and sixty thousand veterans from Boulogne into the bosom of the British Islands; unfortunately, the non-execution of that colossal project has left an impenetrable veil over this grave question.

It was not impossible to unite fifty French vessels-of-the-line in La Manche, deceiving the English; this *rëunion* was on the eve of being effected, hence it was not then impossible, if the wind favored the enterprise, for the flotilla to pass in two days, and to effect the debarkation. But what would have become of the army if a gale of wind dispersed the fleet of war vessels, and if the English, returned in force in *La Manche*, defeated it or constrained it to regain its ports?

Posterity will regret, for the sake of the example to ages to come, that this immense enterprise had not been brought to its close, or at least attempted. Doubtless many a brave man would have perished in it; but have not those brave men been less usefully destroyed on the plains of Suabia, of Moravia, of Castile, in the mountains of Portugal, or in the forests of Lithuania? What mortal would not be glorified for contributing to the decision of the greatest cause that has ever been debated be-

tween two great nations? At least will our posterity find, in the preparations which were made for this descent, one of the most important lessons which this memorable age has furnished for the study of military men and statesmen. The labors of every kind performed on the coasts of France from 1803 to 1805, will be one of the most extraordinary monuments of the activity, foresight and skill of Napoleon; they cannot be too highly commended for the study of young military men. But admitting the possibility even of succeeding in a great descent, undertaken upon a coast as neighboring as Boulogne is to Dover, what success could be promised from it, if such an *Armada* had a longer navigation to make to attain its end? What means are there of moving such a multitude of small vessels, even for two days and two nights? and to what chances would not one be exposed by engaging in such a navigation in a high sea, with light pinnaces? Besides that, the artillery, the munitions of war, equipments, provisions, the fresh water necessary to be embarked with this multitude of men, require an immense preparation and equipage.

Experience has demonstrated the difficulties of a distant expedition, even for a corps which does not exceed thirty thousand men. Hence it is evident that a descent can be effected with such a force only in four hypotheses:—

1st. Against colonies, or isolated possessions;

2d. Against powers of the second rank, which could not be immediately sustained

3d. In order to effect a temporary diversion, or to seize a post, the occupation of which for a given time would have a high importance;

4th. For a diversion, at the same time political and military, against a State already engaged in a great war, and whose troops should be employed far from the point.

These kinds of operations are difficult to subject to rules: to deceive the enemy as to the point of debarkation; to choose an anchorage where it can be done simultaneously; to exercise all the activity possible, and to seize promptly upon a point of support in order to protect the successive development of the troops; to land immediately the artillery, to give assurance and protection to the troops disembarked; this is nearly everything which can be recommended to the assailant.

The great difficulty of such an operation arises from the fact that the transport vessels never being able to approach the shore, it is necessary to place the troops on the few shallops which follow the fleet, so that the descent is long and successive, which gives the enemy great advantages,

however little he may be prepared. If the sea be the least rough, the fate of the disembarking troops will be much hazarded; for what can infantry do, huddled in the shallops, battered by the waves, generally tried by sea sickness, and nearly out of condition to use their arms?

With regard to the defender, he can only be advised not to divide his forces too much in order to cover everything. It is impossible to furnish all the shores of a country with coast batteries, and with battalions to defend them; but it is necessary, at least, to cover the approaches to those points where there are great establishments to protect. It is necessary to have signals in order to know promptly the point of debarkation, and to unite, if it be possible, all our means before the enemy has taken solid footing with all his.

The configuration of the coast will as much influence upon the descent as upon the defense. There are countries where coasts are steep, and offer few points accessible at the same time to vessels and to the troops which it is the question to land; then those known points, being few in number, are more easy to watch, and the enterprise on that account becomes more difficult. Finally, descents offer a strategic combination which it is useful to point out. It is, that the principle which forbids a continental army to direct its principal forces between the sea and the hostile army, requires, on the contrary, that the army which operates a descent, preserve always its principal force in communication with the shore, which is at the same time its line of retreat and base of supply. For the same reason his first care should be to assure himself of a fortified port, or, at least, of a tongue of land easy to intrench, and in reach of a good anchorage, so that, in case of reverse, the re-embarkation can be made without too much precipitation and loss.