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Captain W. Western & R. W. Kent Regiment

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RECENT WORKS BY CAPTAIN HOENIG.¹
(With Map.)

By Captain W. WESTERN, R. W. Kent Regiment.

THERE is something positively refreshing in Captain Hoenig's writings. Whether one agrees with his conclusions or not—even when he would appear to have been misinformed as to his facts—the conscientious labour of the writer, combined with his absolute independence, give a charm to his writings which is usually wanting in so many of the German military writers of the present day. Captain Hoenig, at least, does not belong to the cult of the “jumping cat.” He has his opinions, and he is sufficiently independent to express them. Captain Hoenig's first book consists of two parts. The first part deals with the strategy of the 17th and 18th August, 1870; the second mainly with the tactics of the VIIth, VIIIth, and IInd German Army Corps.

The second work under review is a pamphlet issued in reply to the various strictures made by certain German military papers on the first work.

The third work is a full account of the capture of the quarries south of Point-du-Jour by the 35th Regiment, and contains information which Captain Hoenig was not possessed of when he wrote the “Twenty-four Hours.”

We propose dealing with the strategy and tactics of those eventful days in the order adopted by Captain Hoenig.

The reasons given for a thorough discussion of Von Moltke's strategy appear to us so sound that they are reproduced verbatim: “A superficial acquaintance with men of judgment, and with military literature, would lead one to suppose that the 17th and 18th August formed a dark spot in the life of Field-Marshal Von Moltke, and formed several dark spots in the lives of others; that consequently it would be better not to dwell on any of their various sins of commission and omission. ‘It is an ill bird that fouls its own nest;’ one should have some consideration towards men who deserve well of their countrymen; it would be unpatriotic and would show a want of tact to discuss matters which would bring unpleasant recollections to one person or another. Such are the arguments most

¹ “Twenty-four Hours of Moltke's Strategy, developed and explained in connection with the Battles of Gravelotte and of St. Privat, on the 18th August, 1870. First complete description of the fighting of the First Army at the Manca Ravine.” By Fritz Hoenig. With two maps. Luckhardt, Berlin, 1921.

“The Royal Headquarters and Army Headquarters on the 17th and 18th August, 1870.” By Fritz Hoenig. With a sketch map. Second Edition. Luckhardt, Berlin, 1922.

“The Fighting near the Quarries of Rozérieulles at the Battle of Gravelotte on the 18th August, 1870.” By Fritz Hoenig. With a map. Second Edition. Luckhardt, Berlin, 1922.

commonly in vogue. As far as consideration and tact are concerned, there should hardly be a difference of opinion nowadays, since Moltke himself has been induced to leave behind him a history of the war of 1870-71. The history was written in order to correct many of the errors of the Official History, which, as we know, was written with tact and consideration."

The reluctance to discuss publicly the events of the 17th and 18th August is patent in our military literature. The cause of this reluctance lies less in a lack of judgment, and of knowledge of the actors, but is due rather to a feeling of consideration for the persons concerned. Though these considerations were and are unsound and unfounded they were still, to a certain extent, comprehensible, owing to the then ruling spirit of the age; for, after all, man is but a slave to that spirit!

A thorough study of these days will, however, cause one to quickly recognize that this was no dark spot in Moltke's life, that though these days were more full of cares and worries than any others, they were also the most glorious in the campaigning life of the Chief of the General Staff. Moltke had to combat various difficulties and different people's sensibilities, he had to spare the peculiarities and authority of undoubtedly deserving men, who did not always understand the Field-Marshal; at the same time he felt it both desirable and necessary that nothing should occur to annoy his Royal Chief, and thereby cause a more serious conflict, at the very moment when the operations were ripening towards a tactical decision. By the 18th of August the feeling of irritation among the most senior Generals had reached such an intensity that it required all Moltke's grandeur of character, all his strength as a great General, all his calmness, all his presence of mind in this turmoil, to rescue his great idea, namely, to maintain the separation, which events had brought about, between the two hostile armies, and then, by passing south of Metz, obtain the advantage of the interior lines against Bazaine, from the dangers which threatened it.

All Moltke's tact, confidence in his own powers, patriotism, and wonderful energy had to come into play to prevent his being ground between two powerful millstones (the King and the Commanders of the 1st and 2nd Armies), for this would have led to the destruction of his plan.

During these momentous hours, not only was a heaven-born General striving with men who could not grasp his ideas, but a hero in strength of character, courage, power of action, patience, and humility was striving against vanity, historical fame, popularity, and years of devoted service; and one may safely affirm that in this struggle anyone else would have been wrecked. If we consider the above conditions, and remember that, in addition to the military considerations, the social position and authority of certain personages had their influence, we must arrive at the conclusion that at no period of his life did Moltke shine more, both as a General and as an individual, than at this time, when he was not understood as he had expected he would be.

Captain Hoenig lays stress on the fact that, on the 18th August, two distinct battles were fought: one at Gravelotte, the other at St. Privat, and that, whereas at the former place the influence of the Royal Headquarters was felt, in the case of the IInd Army all influence over Prince Frederick Charles ceased shortly after 5 p.m. We certainly find no reference made to any reports received after 5 p.m. in the official account. On p. 169, vol. ii,¹ of the same we are informed that it was only during the night of the 18th and 19th August that the Royal Headquarters were informed of Prince Frederick Charles' victory at St. Privat. The battles of the 18th illustrate the fact that if the headquarters of a large force remain in rear of one flank, a general direction by the same over a fight, fought under the conditions that existed on that date, can only be maintained by means of a large amount of wear and tear on the part of the different Staffs, and, at the best, this influence must be an insufficient one.

The battle of Gravelotte was fought by the VIIth, VIIIth, and IInd Army Corps, supported on the right by the Ist Army Corps and on the left by the IXth. Here it was that the King commanded in person. St. Privat was fought by the Guard, XIIth and Xth Corps, supported on the right by the IXth Corps, which formed a weak connecting link between the two wings, and which, as a matter of fact, fought a third battle on its own account.

To understand the strategical situation with which Von Moltke had to deal on the 17th and 18th August, it would appear best to state the exact positions of the contending forces at about 2 p.m. on the former date.

Beginning with the French, the 2nd Corps, with Lapasset's Brigade of the 5th Corps, extended from St. Ruffine to about half-way between Point-du-Jour and Moscow; the 3rd Corps prolonged to the right as far as Montigny-la-Grange; the 4th ran from thence to north of Amanvilliers; the 6th was on the right flank, on both sides of St. Privat. Du Barnil's Cavalry Division was in rear of the 6th Corps, and the Guard Corps, Forton's Cavalry Division, and the main artillery reserve were in rear of the 2nd Corps. With the exception of some weak advanced posts, the main road from Ars by Gravelotte, Malmaison, Verneville, Halonville was free of troops. It was only at Ste. Marie-aux-Chênes that stronger bodies of French troops could be encountered.

The Germans were as follows:—Ist Corps at Courcelles-sur-Nied, 3rd Cavalry Division at Coin-les-Cuvry, 1st Cavalry Division at Corny, VIIth Corps in and near Ars, VIIIth Corps at Gorze, with one brigade in rear at Arry, IXth Corps south of Flavigny, 6th Cavalry Division west of the same, IIIrd Corps at Flavigny and Buxières, Xth Corps at Tronville, 3rd Cavalry Division and 3rd Guard Cavalry Brigade westward of Tronville, XIIth Corps at Mars-la-Tour and Puxieux, Guard at Suzemont, 1st Guard Cavalry Brigade at Sponville, 12th Cavalry Division at Parfondrupt, IInd Corps at Pont-à-Mousson, IVth Corps at Menil-la-Tour.

¹ The references are to the official translation, by Capt. (now Col.) Clarke, R.A., etc.

The opposing armies were consequently massed; the French extended over a front of 8 to 9 miles, the Germans, excluding the 1st, IInd, and IVth Corps, and the 12th Cavalry Division, over a front of between 12 and 13 miles.

For the 18th, the co-operation of the 1st and IInd Corps might be reckoned on, if they were required.

It is apparent that Marshal Bazaine had relinquished all the roads running west and north-west; the only one that he could safely use was the Thionville road.

We further see that the opposing forces were at right angles to each other, the connecting point being at the Bois de Vaux. The outer flanks were about 10 miles apart.

There might have been some excuse for the positions of the French cavalry. The inactivity of the German cavalry and their backward position was strategically indefensible. Captain Hoenig suggests the reason for this want of activity on the part of the cavalry in the first pamphlet under review. At the foot of page 32 he informs us "that undoubtedly the French had suffered no tactical defeat on the 16th; the excessive caution displayed by the Germans throughout the whole of the 17th is a pretty clear indication of their lack of confidence in themselves." Be this as it may, the only General who acted properly was the Crown Prince of Saxony, who sent his cavalry well to the front (to Parfondrupt). A similar proceeding on the part of the remainder of the cavalry would have led to reconnaissances being made towards Aboué and Conflans by the evening of the 17th. Had such been the case, the cavalry must have struck the enemy at Ste. Marie-aux-Chênes; they might, therefore, have fully cleared up the situation on the evening of the 17th, and rendered their reports in ample time for the Chief of the Staff to frame his directions accordingly. Both the French and the Germans were anxious to avoid fighting under any circumstances on the 17th. Both had the same object in view, though for different reasons. This fact gives us an opportunity of showing how Generals differ. A real cavalry leader would, by the manner in which he handled his men, have found out all he wanted to know about the enemy, and probably without the loss of a single man or horse. The Generals on both sides knew but little of what they should have known before they issued definite orders, for the simple reason that the skilled leaders were wanting, who would have understood to keep the cavalry in the palm of their hands, so as to avoid a battle, and at the same time thoroughly reconnoitre the enemy.

A great deal of space has been devoted in discussing the proper position for a Headquarter Staff both before and during a great battle. There has been such a tendency throughout Europe to fall down and worship everything the German Headquarter Staff did, simply because it was successful, that Captain Hoenig has done a universal service in questioning its infallibility. He compares the action of the German Headquarter Staff with that of Napoleon under similar conditions.

The nearer Napoleon was to his enemy, the further forward were

his Headquarters. On the night of the 13th October, 1806, they were in immediate proximity to the enemy. It is, of course, impossible to lay down any precise rules as to where the Headquarter Staff should be, but the following guiding principle should be remembered. The actual position of the Headquarters must always be dependent on the probable intentions of the enemy.

Napoleon's principle of being as close to the front as possible before an impending battle is as sound now as it was then; for, though the field telegraph can convey information practically instantaneously, the road to the battle-field must be travelled over by a horse, whose powers of endurance and speed are, after all, limited. Even if the Chief himself is both excellently mounted and also a first-class rider, the argument still holds good, for the horses conveying the subordinate Staff Officers have to be considered, to say nothing of the staying powers of the Staff themselves. Should the Headquarter Staff be many miles in rear of the troops, it may often be necessary for the Staff to ride forward at a rapid rate, and this must tell on the physical powers of the several members composing it. In action, the strain on the minds of Staff Officers is so great that every endeavour should be made to lessen any unnecessary physical exertion.

Such a course of action assumes that considerations for the sheltering of the Staff are relegated to the background. Should, however, the Commander-in-Chief be a man greatly advanced in years, the question of shelter must be considered, if he is to appear comparatively fresh on the battle-field. A General whose age is between thirty-five and forty-five will think nothing of spending the night in a tent in the midst of his troops, or even, if necessary, of dispensing with rest altogether; but it would be unreasonable to expect this from a General of seventy years and upwards. This shows us how desirable it is for a General to be vigorous and capable of standing hardships, to enable him to face extraordinary discomforts should special circumstances render it necessary for him to do so. Let us contemplate the Napoleon of Jena, Borodino, and Dresden in the position of the German Commander-in-Chief on the 17th August. We should have seen that the former would have undoubtedly stated precisely where he was to be found at certain fixed times, but that during these intervals he would have been here, there, and everywhere; he would have left no means unturned to obtain precise information as to the enemy's position.

On the 13th October, 1806, on his arrival at the front at 4 p.m., Napoleon personally reconnoitred the ground near Jena, although he had previously ridden many miles. (Such reconnaissances, of course, do not preclude the use of cavalry, which, after all, is the best way of obtaining information.)

We may be certain that the news of the battle of the 16th would have caused his early arrival, say at Rézonville, on the 17th, where he would have seen for himself how matters stood; he would have summoned the Commanders of both armies to his side, and, after obtaining the fullest information possible, he would have dictated the orders for the battle. As the right German flank would be exposed

to the greatest amount of danger while the forces were forming up, Napoleon would not have left the neighbourhood while this was occurring, reports would have easily reached him, and instructions be sent with equal facility. He would have spent the night of the 17th somewhere near the right flank, and at about 5 A.M. on the following morning he would have been in the saddle, first to observe how matters stood on the right flank, then, pursuing a northerly direction, he would have attempted to increase his knowledge of the state of affairs in that portion of the arena.

Napoleon, in his earlier days, would, without employing a single squadron of cavalry, have known by 7 A.M. on the 18th August whether any changes had occurred since the previous midnight, and if so, what changes. From that moment he would have remained with his Staff at the proper place for him to be—somewhere near Verneville—and never moved from the place until, possibly, matters were being decided at St. Privat. Napoleon would have considered it his business to be near his left flank, once matters had been put on the right track at the pivot (the right flank).

During the action, the German Headquarters were between Gravelotte and Malmaison; the choice of this spot was strategically wrong, and tactically unfavourable.

The correct position for the Headquarter Staff during a battle, for which preparations have been made, should be either somewhere near the centre, where they are more easily reached, or, should that be impracticable, they should be in rear of the strategic flank. By their position the Headquarter Staff should be able to deal, in all directions, with the most important features of the action, such as the time for commencing the fight, for bringing up the reserves, nature of flanking movements, &c. They should, however, be sufficiently in rear to remove them from the temptation of interfering with minor matters, for then, while attending to details, which it is the business of others to see to, the main threads may be lost, and there is the risk of their committing the greatest fault of all—commanding instead of directing.

A great difficulty the Headquarter Staff had to contend with was the excessive number of individuals who were attached to it.

Political reasons led to the Headquarter and Army Staffs having a large number of princely personages attached to them.

At the Royal Headquarters the age of the King was a constant factor that had to be considered, and at the Headquarters of the different armies other considerations seemed to have had their influence.

On the 16th August, while the battle was being fought, Prince Frederick Charles was at Pont-à-Mousson; he, consequently, reached the battle-field at a late hour. He spent the night of the 16th at Gorze; Steinmetz was at Coin-sur-Seille. The Royal Headquarters reached the heights near Flavigny from Pont-à-Mousson at 6 A.M. on the 19th; Moltke's orders for the following day were issued at 2 P.M. At that hour nothing was known as to the position and intentions of the enemy. Why were these orders issued at such an early period of

the day? The reasons given by Captain Hoenig are as follows:—As the crow flies, the distance from Pont-à-Mousson to Flavigny is 14 miles. Considering the King's advanced years, the exertions to which His Majesty had already been put were considerable, and one can fully understand the anxiety on the part of his Staff to spare him. The events of the following day were hidden in the future; the Germans, however, wished to fight the French. This meant fresh exertions for the Royal leader, and exertions which might well be considered beyond the powers of a man of his age. Consequently, there was a great anxiety to ensure, not only an early rest for the King, but a complete one. It was impossible to obtain this near Flavigny; the smaller farms and hamlets could not contain the numerous Staff, the larger ones were occupied by wounded men. It might have been possible to find suitable accommodation at Novéant; since, however, they could not remain on the field of action, it was considered preferable to return to Pont-à-Mousson. An early start back was therefore necessary. The Royal Headquarters came from Pont-à-Mousson and returned there on the 17th, and on the following morning rode forward again to Flavigny. In four-and-twenty hours they rode 42 miles.

A General who, like Napoleon, was in the habit of reconnoitring himself would, instead, have ridden as far as Auboué and back, a matter of 17 miles, and would, by this means, have known pretty well as much as he wanted to know.

Further, a young Commander would have remained on the spot till the receipt of the reports sent in at the end of the day, and would, in all probability, have spent the night among his troops.

The reports that are received can only be properly fitted together when the events of the day are before one. This is impossible until dusk. The orders issued at 2 P.M. were issued before the French evacuated Gravelotte, for this did not occur till 3 P.M. They were consequently issued while the enemy was known to be making changes in his dispositions. It must, however, always be remembered that Moltke was fully aware of this fact.

Captain Hoenig's critics have taken him severely to task for presuming to suggest that the King's age had anything to do with his return to Pont-à-Mousson, and he is accused, if not of committing an act of treason in suggesting it, of at least offending against the canons of respect and good taste. We propose giving the reasons urged by the "Militär Wochenblatt" for the return to Pont-à-Mousson, together with Hoenig's reply to the same. The "Militär Wochenblatt" states that the Royal Headquarters were not only the central point for the Ist and IInd Armies, but also for those portions of the German forces which were still to come up to the front, as well as for the IIIrd Army. Which was the right course to pursue? Was it right to ignore these latter troops owing to the impending general action by the Ist and IInd Armies, or were not the Headquarter Staff compelled to return to the spot whence they could pick up all the threads of the German movements? Telegraphic communications had been established between Pont-à-Mousson and Gorze by midday

on the 17th. The Headquarter Staff were consequently justified in assuming that important reports concerning the enemy near Metz would reach them without delay. Did not General Von Moltke form the opinion that the situation at 2 P.M. on the 17th August was sufficiently cleared, as to prevent the probability of any serious dislocation of the troops on either one side or the other occurring during the course of the day?

Hoenig should at least have discussed these points. He would eventually have arrived at the conclusion that the return to Pont-à-Mousson was undesirable; but he would have been forced to recognize that it is not so easy to act in war as it appears after the event, when additional knowledge clears up everything. He would, above all, have avoided making a serious and unfounded charge against the King, which both duty and proper respect should have rendered impossible; he would equally have avoided making an accusation against Von Moltke, who habitually carefully balanced and weighed any possibly conflicting duties.

It is possible that as outsiders we are less sensitive to criticism about the late German Emperor and Von Moltke than the Germans, for we fail to see where Hoenig has overstepped the bounds of duty or of good taste.

In the pamphlet under review, Hoenig deals largely with the case as it affects him personally. To us that is a matter of secondary importance. The strategical aspect, however, might be further considered with interest.

There was, he says, no reason for considering the position of the IIIrd Army. Even if the general action was delayed till the 19th or 20th August, though the IVth Corps, which formed a portion of the IIInd Army, might have been brought into the sphere of action, no direct assistance could be expected from the IIIrd Army.

The reason armies receive directions is to obviate a series of special orders on the part of the Headquarter Staff. Directions consequently are intended to cover general objects, and longer periods of time.

Orders are intended to meet certain conditions at fixed periods of time. In this manner both the Headquarter and the Army Staffs maintain the freedom of action which is so desirable, and labour is diminished. The Headquarter Staff can further concentrate all its attention on the matter which at the moment appears most important, with the calm conviction that the armies which are not within tactical reach will act according to the general conditions of the campaign. According to the general conditions as known at the Royal Headquarters, the IIIrd Army was pursuing a certain object, which did not appear to call for any interference on the part of the Headquarter Staff. Even supposing any interference to have been necessary, the return to Pont-à-Mousson, where all the means for communicating orders were located, was unnecessary. The lesson to be learnt is that a Staff may be too unwieldy, but the argument that it was necessary to return to Pont-à-Mousson to issue orders is as unsound as the argument that a gunner, in order to make proper use of

his gun, should leave it to get ammunition from the ammunition column.

The Headquarter Staff had not yet rid itself of some of the bad habits which the war of 1866 had proved awkward and inconvenient.

Here are Von Moltke's own views on a certain situation, and related in the third volume of his "*Gesammelten Schriften*," p. 425: "The King spent the night in a hamlet on the battle-field, both my Staff Officers and I had, however, to drive back 22 miles to Gitschen, where the offices were. It was midnight before we arrived. We could get nothing to eat at that hour, and I was so exhausted that I lay down on my cot without removing my sash or great-coat, and fell asleep at once. In the meanwhile fresh orders had to be prepared and laid before His Majesty at Horitz the following morning." We now learn that the evil consequences of having all the means of issuing orders so far in rear had already made themselves felt in 1866. To return to Von Moltke as he was in 1870. Moltke represented a certain school of thought, and he considered everything that his opponent could do and should do from the point of view of this school. Moltke's school, in contemplating the possible action of an opponent, always presupposed that the latter would take the steps from which he would derive most advantage. This must be borne in mind in considering the orders of 2 P.M. on the 17th August, which were as follows:—

"The IInd Army will be formed up at 5 o'clock to-morrow morning, the 18th, and advance in échelon from the left between the Yron and the Gorze brooks (generally between Ville-sur-Yron and Rézonville). The VIIIth Army Corps will accompany this movement on the right flank of the IInd Army. Upon the VIIth Army Corps will devolve, in the first instance, the duty of protecting the movements of the IInd Army against any hostile enterprises from the side of Metz. His Majesty's further arrangements will be dependent upon the measures of the enemy. Reports will, for the present, be sent to His Majesty on the heights south of Flavigny.

(Signed) "V. MOLTKE."

Moltke at that time had no reason for supposing that Bazaine was actuated by political motives. The strategical disadvantages to the French of a decisive action backed on Metz were obvious. To the great strategist the improbability of Bazaine's actual action appeared as great as the conduct of the Prussians during the Jena campaign, when they remained in rear of the Saal, appeared to Napoleon. On the 18th August the French committed an act which exposed them to the greatest strategical dangers. Neither a Napoleon nor a Moltke can believe in such errors without ample proof. If he is not to go wrong, a strategist must always keep in his mind's eye what the enemy's correct move, under certain conditions, would be. Moltke's orders at 2 P.M. on the 17th presupposed that the French would act strategically correctly, but it was so framed that the German-march towards the north would have led them past the French on the 18th.

Napoleon's action in 1806, when he expected to find the Prussians at Gera, was very similar. Napoleon, however, when he discovered his error did not rest till he had rectified it, before the battle. Moltke did not succeed in doing so before he fought his action. Had Moltke and his Royal Chief been thirty years younger, they too would have acted as Napoleon did; their erroneous assumption could have been rectified more quickly and with greater ease than Napoleon was able to rectify his, as the distances with which they had to deal were much less than the distance from Gera to Jena; it was also easier to observe what had occurred, the days were longer, and the means at hand for conveying orders were more numerous and were better schooled. Though no blame can be attached to Moltke, because he only believed in the improbable, when he was thoroughly convinced that it had taken place; blame must rest on him for being unaware till such a late hour of what had occurred. The reason for this ignorance was that both cavalry and Staff Officers had neglected to reconnoitre. The most incredible things occur in war. A methodical mind, and still more a conscientious mind, finds them more difficult to deal with than a bold and roving conqueror would find it. Once again during the campaign Moltke had to deal with the improbable and unforeseen, mainly before the decision to march towards Sedau. There also we find Moltke credited his enemy with doing the right thing, till all doubt was absolutely solved. At Gravelotte Moltke nearly missed the French, although the German right flank had been continuously engaged with the enemy since the 16th. Before the operations leading to Sedan both opponents nearly marched by each other.

It will have struck our readers that Hoenig constantly asserts that had Moltke or some members of his Staff personally undertaken reconnaissances, some, if not many, of the errors of the 18th August would have been obviated. As Napoleon constantly undertook reconnaissances himself; it would be well to consider whether in the future Chiefs of the Staff should take Napoleon or Moltke as their models in this respect.

The successes of the Prussians in 1866 and 1870 were so vast and so tremendous in their political consequences that for years critics were afraid even to suggest that the Prussians could have committed any great mistakes, and a school arose both in Germany and abroad which preached that every action of the Headquarter Staff in the War of 1870-71 must be considered as a model for the future. This school taught that it could not be the business of the Commander-in-Chief personally to make reconnaissances; that he had other instruments for that work. His business was to sift the wheat from the chaff when the reconnaissance reports reached him.

This school is a fit representative of one of the crazes of the spirit of the times, which has already wrought havoc enough. The craze we refer to is the desire to formulate a rule to meet all emergencies, which thinks more of creating an impression on the reader by stating things crisply and concisely than in stating them in a manner which may prove instructive. A matter of such importance as the personal

conduct of a Commander cannot be settled by a simple yes or no. If a Chief receives information bearing on the strategy of the campaign, he would undoubtedly not make a personal reconnaissance. In the case which we are specially considering, on the 17th August, 1870, touch had been established with the enemy by the battles of the 14th and 16th August. It was possible to observe the greater part of the enemy's movements for hours with the naked eye, and follow them to their completion. Uncertainty still prevailed as to whether the full forces of the enemy purposed remaining near Metz, or only a portion of the same. Under the above conditions it certainly does appear that the Commander-in-Chief or his Chief Staff Officer should personally reconnoitre.

The Germans might have ascertained without any difficulty by 6 P.M. that their opponents had no intention of running away from them. The reports that would have come in would have led to the conclusion that the French were awaiting their opponents' attack in a prepared position. The days in August being longer than they are in October, the Germans had better means of finding out what the enemy was doing than Napoleon had at Jena. Their facilities for making all the necessary arrangements were also greater. Gravelotte—St. Privat was a prepared position. Under these circumstances the Commander-in-Chief or his representative should personally conduct a reconnaissance, no matter how good the information he receives may be. The subject must be considered without reference to the age of any individual. In dealing with military science neither the age of a Radetzky, Alexander, Cæsar, nor Napoleon can be considered. Unless a General intends resigning all direction of a battle, he must personally reconnoitre the enemy, as Napoleon did before Jena. The wonderful magicians of the present day think they have solved the matter by stating that now-a-days a leader of armies should only be a strategist even in action. A leader always was a strategist, even during an action, otherwise he would be no leader. If, however, he does not intend the results of his strategical work slipping through his fingers, he will prefer conducting the battle as well. The leadership during the battles of Gravelotte and St. Privat would have been better had the reconnaissances been properly made. Until the 18th August all the previous actions had been improvised; on the above date the Germans were at last in a position to fight a prepared battle, and had more time to make all their arrangements than is usually the case. Yet fate willed it that under Moltke's very eyes the "curse" of improvised fights and the very thing that Moltke hated, namely, difficulty of leadership or absolute want of leadership, should occur. We must, however, bear this great fact in mind: Moltke succeeded in massing nine army corps and six cavalry divisions at the right time, so that, if necessary, they might all have been brought into the fighting line, and in the strategically decisive direction. That is the greatest material and strategical feat that has ever been performed, and had Moltke been Commander-in-Chief instead of being Chief of the Staff he would have conducted the second portion of the task, the direction of the battle, with equal skill.

We should now have had a model of how to form troops up for attack with an inverted front, and from this formation we should have seen a prepared attack made not only against a prepared position, but also against a naturally exceptionally strong one.

It will be noticed that in the Orders of the 17th the 1st Army as such is not mentioned. This annoyed General von Steinmetz, more particularly as the VIIth and VIIIth Corps received distinct instructions, while no reasons for such conduct was given in the order. Hoenig states that on receiving this order Steinmetz was furious. He considered the treatment that he, as Commander of an Army, had received was most inconsiderate. If the Commanders of an army were going to be ignored they were unnecessary. Out of his army only one corps remained at his disposal; the 1st was removed from his direct influence, the VIIIth entirely so. Two Commanding General Officers were not required for the VIIth Corps; he no longer commanded an army, he was a useless cipher!

General von Steinmetz was one of those Generals who when they receive a certain command assume the rights of proprietorship over it. But should any portion of the same be taken away from them for however short a time, they feel offended.

General von Steinmetz would appear to have been an awkward man to deal with. In the "Twenty-four Hours," Hoenig does not enlarge any further on Steinmetz's personal characteristics, but in the pamphlet of "The Royal Headquarters and Army Headquarters" he has, owing to the action of his critics, drawn the veil further apart. We are informed that the relations between General von Steinmetz and Prince Frederick Charles were so strained that it was considered better that they should not meet each other. The relations between Moltke and Steinmetz on the one hand, and between Moltke and Prince Frederick Charles on the other, were also very little better. It was probably on that account that the three Generals mentioned did not meet each other on the 17th. Had they met, many mistakes, mainly of omission, might have been rectified. The relations between General von Steinmetz and General von Goeben would not appear to be of the best, if the following anecdote, related in the pamphlet, be correct. During the battle of Gravelotte, Steinmetz sent Goeben an order to send the 32nd Brigade into action. Perceiving the order was not executed at once, Steinmetz rode up to Goeben, who had dismounted, and said, "Did your Excellency not receive my order?" Goeben replied, "Yes, I received it." Whereupon Steinmetz said, "Does your Excellency intend to carry it out or not?" Goeben answered, "I was considering, your Excellency, whether it was advisable at this period to let my last available troops out of my hand, more especially in the direction named." Steinmetz said, "Your Excellency, I order you to do so." This closed the conversation. Considering that both Officers were of equal rank, and that it was at least very doubtful whether Von Goeben was under Von Steinmetz's orders at that period, the stiffness with which these two Officers addressed each other is peculiar.

The ostensible reason given for Steinmetz's anger is that he was

indignant at any of his subordinates receiving orders direct from the Chief of the Staff, and Hoenig, in discussing the particular order in question, raises a curious point. The VIIth Corps was known to be scattered; the greater part of the corps was pent up in two valleys, separated from each other by large woods difficult to traverse. The VIIIth Corps was near Gorze, $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles west of the 14th Division, separated from it by a difficult woodland country, and withdrawn from the command of Von Steinmetz. A disaster might easily have happened to the VIIth Corps before it received support from that quarter, neither could Von Steinmetz claim that support.

In tactics, as well as in strategy, situations must arise which cannot be dealt with according to book, situations in which certain risks must be run, and which one must pull through somehow. In fact, one must trust to luck. The position in which the VIIth Corps found itself was one of these. It was bad enough that one corps should be thus unfavourably situated, but the greater the number of troops that were brought into this position the worse the situation became. Doubtless a man of Moltke's genius felt this, and that was probably the reason why the VIIIth Corps was removed from Steinmetz's command at this critical period, and Steinmetz probably knew it. One can well understand that his feeling of irritation towards Moltke reached its culminating point at about 4 P.M. on the afternoon of the 17th.

Steinmetz, feeling that the VIIth Corps was in a critical position, and that he had no troops to support it, sent a report to Pont-à-Mousson to that effect. This report reached the Royal Headquarters during the night, after Moltke had retired to rest. Here is another proof of the great delays which may arise when Headquarters are at a distance. Moltke's reply was sent from Pont-à-Mousson at 4 A.M. on the 17th, and was: "The VIIth Army Corps has at first to observe a defensive attitude. The connection with the VIIIth Army Corps can only be sought to the front. *Should it happen that the hostile army throws itself into Metz, a wheel to the right will take place on our side.* The 1st Army, if necessary, will be supported from the second line of the IInd Army."

This answer of Moltke's is of some historical importance, as it is the first intimation of Moltke's plan, namely, to bring about the surrender of the Army and of the fortress. It is true the enemy had not thrown himself into Metz—that occurred after the battle—but he was found in a position which rendered the wheel to the right necessary. It is further worthy of note, that the instructions in no way bound the VIIth Corps to the defensive, but only to a defensive attitude, and that only at first. The mention of a possible necessary support also implies that Moltke did not consider that the farther action of the VIIth Corps was to be defensive. The defensive attitude in fact applies to duties of the VIIth Corps while it was forming the pivot during the wheel, and was not intended to apply to the battle itself.

General von Steinmetz appeared to fear an attack by the French, either from the valley of the Moselle, or from Gravelotte; in the first

case the German communications would be cut, but the armies themselves would not be encountered; in the second case they would have been struck straight in the right flank. However, the first was improbable, and the second equally so, otherwise the French would not voluntarily have evacuated Gravelotte. General von Steinmetz was aware of this fact, and it was as easy then to conclude that no attack would be made against the German right as it is now.

At 8 A.M. on the 18th August, the impression at the Royal Headquarters was that the main forces of the enemy had retired on Metz, and that they reached as far north as Amanvillers. The IInd Army was consequently directed not to extend so far to the left. At that hour the Royal Headquarters were at Flavigny, the headquarters of the IInd Army at Vionville, those of the Ist on the way to Gravelotte. None of the three were where they should have been. The Royal Headquarters should have been on their way to the high ground near Verneville; those of the IInd Army at Caulro Farm; and those of the Ist at Gravelotte.

At 9.30 A.M. they were still in ignorance at Flavigny of the enemy's movements; the impression then prevailing was that the enemy was moving on Briey. It would appear that it was considered impossible to get positive information on that point, although the right wing of the French had for the last twenty-four hours been within 5 miles of Caulro Farm, and there were four German cavalry divisions available.

At about 10 A.M. the Headquarter Staff had a third opinion as to the enemy's intentions, and though nothing new had apparently been discovered, but only a fresh report about the enemy's positions near the Bois de Vaux, which conveyed no fresh intelligence, the orders for the battle were issued at 10.30 A.M. Their influence on the fight in the Mance ravine is so considerable that they are reproduced:—

"From reports received it may be assumed that the enemy intends to maintain his position between Point-du-Jour and Montigny-la-Grange. Four French battalions have moved into the Bois des Genivaux.

"His Majesty is of opinion that it will be desirable to move off the XIIth and the Guard Corps in the direction of Batilly, so as in the event of the enemy retreating on Briey, to meet him at Ste. Marie-aux-Chênes, or, in the event of his remaining on the height, to attack him from Amanvillers. The attack should take place simultaneously, by the Ist Army from the Bois de Vaux and Gravelotte; by the IXth Corps against the Bois des Genivaux and Verneville; by the left wing of the IInd Army from the north.

(Signed) "VON MOLTEK."

One will notice in these orders that the Headquarters were, even then, in a state of uncertainty as to whether the enemy was on the march or not. This is one of the extraordinary incidents that will happen in war.

Before the orders of 10.30 A.M. reached the IInd Army, Prince

Frederick Charles had, at 10 A.M., directed the IXth Corps to march on Verneville and La Folie, and, "in the event of the enemy's right wing being in position there, to open the attack in the first place with the deployment of a large force of artillery" (p. 17, vol. ii).

These instructions were unfortunate, for they exposed the IXth Corps to the risk of making an isolated attack, and, as matters actually occurred, nullified Moltke's intention of making a combined one.

Prince Frederick Charles recognized his error, and at 11.30 A.M. he sent fresh instructions to the IXth Corps to delay the attack. It was, however, too late. A point that will strike one in connection with these instructions issued by Prince Frederick Charles is that, although both the Ist and IInd Armies had not discovered the French right flank in twenty-four hours, it seems to have been considered quite as a matter of course that the IXth Corps should come upon it. Why it should do so is not so obvious.

How was it that, even as late as 9.30 A.M., both the Royal Headquarter Staff and Army Headquarter Staffs believed that the French were on the march? What object would the French have had in so doing? Their object would have been to get away from the Germans *as quickly as possible*. Since the morning of the 17th, the Germans knew that their opponents were on the move. The distance from Gravelotte to Auboué is $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles, to Conflans $9\frac{1}{2}$ miles. Had the enemy been marching since the morning of the 17th, with even only moderate marching capacity, the whole army would have crossed the Orne by 9.30 A.M. on the 18th. How was it, then, that, at that hour, the Germans thought the French were moving away from their position at Point-du-Jour and Leipsic, since, at 9 A.M., Colonel von Loû had reported that there were $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 Army Corps in that position (p. 13, vol. ii)?

If, on the 17th, the Germans believed the French were marching away from them, their error in not watching their enemy was increased. It was most improbable that, on the morning of the 18th, the French should be moving away to the Orne. By that time they must either have accomplished the march, or be close at hand. The former was uncertain; but the French position at Leipsic and Point-du-Jour was an obvious indication that they had adopted the latter alternative.

If, however, the Royal Headquarters were in any state of uncertainty on the matter up to 9.30 A.M., why did they not, on their arrival at Flavigny at 6 A.M., cause the necessary reconnaissances to be made? This flank march of the IInd Army, with the Guard and XIIth Corps crossing each other, and the Cavalry Divisions in rear, within 5 miles of the enemy, is one of the most extraordinary incidents in military history. What would have been the consequences had a hostile General struck this mass, say at 8 A.M., while the manœuvres of the Guard and XIIth Corps were in full swing?

Undoubtedly the attention of the IInd Army was concentrated rather towards the north than towards the east; but, considering the assumption under which the march was made, a reconnaissance in an

easterly direction was as necessary as one in a northerly, and the first Officer (Lieutenant Scholl, p. 18, vol. ii) who rode a little distance away from the troops towards the north-east, discovered at once, without the least difficulty, the French position at St. Privat.

How does the official account describe these events?

Ground which is easily observable is described as the reverse; the crossing of the Guard with the XIIth Corps which delayed the former three hours, is justified and explained as being intentional.

The backward position of the 5th and 6th Cavalry Divisions is attributed to the difficulties of water supply. Not a word about the omissions in respect of reconnaissances or leadership on the part of the Commander of the army. Everything would appear to have fitted in nicely and smoothly, and the greatest skill seems to have been employed in painting white black and black white. This has been done so well that many a reader is successfully deceived.

It will be noticed that, though the orders of 10.30 A.M. still display some uncertainty concerning the position and intention of the enemy, they differ materially in one respect from the orders of the previous day issued at 2 P.M. In the latter, the main direction is a northerly one, with a possible move eastwards; in the former, the direction of the march is reversed. The extraordinary thing about the matter is that, although such a radical change was made in the last issued orders, no additional information had come to hand to cause it.

When we examine the contents of these orders and consider that the reasons for their issue were based on scanty and contradictory reports, without any verbal interchange of impressions on the part of the Commanders of the 1st and 11th Armies, who were close on the spot, we must come to the conclusion that they might equally well have been issued from Pont-à-Mousson, or any other place, instead of from Flavigny. The Headquarter Staff was put to great physical exertions to reach Flavigny on the 17th. Their reasons for so doing were that they expected the fight to be renewed under favourable conditions on that date. This was, however, delayed for twenty-four hours, and in the meantime the ground should have been cleared up to ensure the conditions being favourable when the fight was renewed. This did not occur; the three Staffs, the Headquarter and both Army Staffs, quitted their forward positions at the very period when they should have remained there; and, after a lapse of close upon twenty-four hours, the orders for battle were issued, with but slightly increased knowledge from that which was at hand on the 17th.

We notice both an extraordinary waste of physical power and at the same time an absolute omission to make proper use of the means that were at hand. The works were not working smoothly.

The Headquarter Staff left Pont-à-Mousson in order to be near the front, in a better position to know how matters stood; however, they found out nothing more than might have been heard at Pont-à-Mousson, and they made no particular attempt to do so.

As the three Staffs already mentioned were within a small area of ground, for a matter of eight hours, one might have thought that the

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Army Commanders and the King, or his Chief of the Staff, would naturally have had some verbal communications with each other. We know how, in other cases, notably the Waterloo campaign, the great exertions Commanders of armies have made to ensure having a personal interview. Here, though almost touching each other, all communications were sent by Orderly or Staff Officers.

The orders for the 17th had barely been issued from Flarigny, when further written communications were continued between Ars and Pont-à-Mousson, and *vice versa*, simply because all personal interviews had been avoided. These written communications, instead of ensuring a mutual understanding, only increase the already existing frictions. A personal interview might have explained everything, to the mutual satisfaction of all concerned, and saved a vast amount of the trouble which occurred later.

More might be said, but the above appears sufficient to show that the works were not running as smoothly as is desirable in such a crisis as we have been discussing.

It will be noticed that the orders of the 18th speak of a simultaneous attack on the part of the 1st and IInd Armies.

To make a simultaneous attack against a position, two conditions are necessary: the extent of the position must be accurately known, and the attacker must, at all points of his attack, be equally distant from his objective. Should one or other of these conditions not be satisfied, a simultaneous attack is impossible. The Royal Headquarters were aware that the conditions were not so satisfied. They knew from the reports that reached them, about 10.30 A.M., that the IInd Army was somewhere on the line Caulre Farm—Jarny, that the Guard Corps was considerably in rear of this line, neither ready to, nor capable of, wheeling in any direction. But even if the necessary conditions had been satisfied, a simultaneous attack would have been impossible. When a position extends over a distance of 6 miles, a simultaneous attack against it cannot be made, except in theory. Napoleon's practice in such cases was to worry the enemy along the whole front with his light troops, and make the enemy show his dispositions. When this had occurred, the assaulting troops, who were ready formed up, made the real attack. In future we shall see that this will be the course of action against all prepared positions; and that is why Captain Hoenig lays so much stress upon this identical point.

The main points brought out by Captain Hoenig in the first part of his book, dealing with the strategy of the 17th and 18th August, have been placed before our readers. We will now discuss the second portion of his book, and the second pamphlet, which deal with the tactics on the German right during the battle of Gravelotte.

In the second part of his work Captain Hoenig gives a lengthy and detailed description of the French position. There is nothing in it calling for special notice, excepting that he reminds us that the majority of troops defending the position from Rozerieulles to Moscow, about 2 miles in extent, were troops who had fought at Spichenen and at Vionville, and that three German army corps tried

unsuccessfully to turn them out of it. The French had about 23,000 rifles and 90 guns on the front named. The Germans had 44,000 rifles and 190 guns available. He then discusses the causes for this failure.

He contradicts, on the authority of reliable eye-witnesses, whom, however, he does not mention, the statement in the official account, that the French had covered communications between the main and the advanced position, as well as the statement that Point-du-Jour and Moscow had been converted into small forts (p. 7, vol. ii). The French had contented themselves with loopholing the walls and with constructing shelter trenches on each side of the buildings in question. We are further informed that the undergrowth in the woodlands of the Mance ravine did not render it impossible to keep the infantry in hand; it would only have made it more difficult. Where a man can find standing room, infantry can march. Jackson and Lee might have taught the Germans that such was the case.

From the German point of view there was a great lack of communications from the rear to the front, in the Mance ravine. These are an absolute necessity, when a serious attack is intended; and we know from Moltke's orders, issued at 10.30 A.M., that the 1st Army was intended to attack from the Bois de Vaux and Gravelotte.

On the eve of the battle of Jena, Napoleon, finding there were not sufficient means to bring his artillery up to the front, had a road made for the purpose. The Germans had ample opportunity of cutting two openings in the wood, north and south of the main road, on the west side of the ravine. After St. Hubert had been captured, this work could have been continued up the eastern slope to the far edge of the wood. It might have been completed by 4.30 P.M. Only when that work was completed were the necessary conditions satisfied to enable the troops and their supports to be formed up and deployed for attack. Had the ravine been crossed by three different roads, the French would have been compelled to disseminate their fire, and we may well believe that the failure of the Germans on that part of the field was mainly due to the fact that their opponents were able to concentrate all their fire on the main road, and, thereby, shatter the heads of the German columns as they attempted to deploy after crossing the defile.

One of the theories of an attack in these days is, that the artillery of the offensive, after subduing the defender's artillery, should direct its fire on the defender's infantry, and only when the infantry are shaken, the attacker's infantry should proceed and complete the work.

Probably the reason that this theory has met with such general acceptance is that the majority of English military writers are gunners, or their brethren of the other scientific corps.

Infantry, combined with artillery, must, however, invariably prepare the attack. Undoubtedly artillery has made great advances within the last twenty-two years; but we must remember that in future campaigns no artillery is likely to be so hopelessly overpowered as the French artillery were at Gravelotte. Yet, on the 18th August,

1870, 132 German guns, concentrated on a front of 2,200 yards, were unable, after a fire that lasted seven hours, to shake the hostile infantry.

If it be urged that at St. Privat the German guns met with a success that they did not meet with on the right flank, we would reply that it was not the artillery that drove Marshal Canrobert out of St. Privat, but the empty pouches of his men. Good infantry can only be shaken by a combination of artillery and infantry fire. At Gravelotte the Germans did not take adequate steps to ensure this combined action between the two arms; had they done so, it is possible, nay, probable, that even their frontal attack against Point-du-Jour would have succeeded.

It may be contended that the inferiority of the German infantry weapon to that of the French rendered it impossible for the Germans to attempt to prepare the attack by infantry fire. If, as we will remind our readers, two batteries, exposed to a cross-fire of artillery and infantry, within a range of 800 yards, were able to remain in action for hours (we refer to the two German batteries near St. Hubert), if one cavalry regiment (4th Lancers) remained about half an hour exposed to the same fire, and the 9th Hussars for even a longer period of time, surely one was not asking too much of infantry in expecting them to throw up shelter trenches at about the same range. We would lay stress on that point, for in future campaigns circumstances will arise which will render such a course necessary, in order to ensure an effective position for the preparatory infantry fire. From this position the fire may possibly be maintained for the whole day, and on the following day only will the decisive attack be made. Had the Germans acted in this manner on the 18th August, 1870, it would have been possible for them to have got within 500 yards of the main position of the French, whence the needle gun would have met the Chassepôt on equal terms. There is nothing now in this. Lee's troops made entrenchments miles long under hostile fire. Both for offensive and defensive purposes, a strong infantry position east of the Mance ravine, from whence an effective fire could be poured in against the enemy, was necessary, if the Germans wished to ensure success in that quarter.

The French advanced post of St. Hubert was, it is true, captured with comparative ease. This is due to the fact that the superiority of the German artillery rendered any support to the French infantry in that farm impossible. This is no contradiction to what has been written above, for it is a different thing expecting infantry to advance over perfectly open ground, swept by artillery fire, to support advanced troops, and calling on them to hold the main defensive position, where they are sheltered either naturally or artificially. That the forty-three companies were able to hold on at St. Hubert for some hours is due to the fact that the French artillery were unable to come into action against the place. For when artillery has ranged itself, a farm building surrounded by stone walls is about the worst place troops can be in.

Having pointed out, generally, the points in the German tactics to

which Captain Hoenig takes exception, we will examine, somewhat in detail, the course of action pursued. Before proceeding we must again refer to the personal relations between General von Steinmetz and General von Goeben. It is instructive in this way: It is a notorious fact that, in the French Army, the personal jealousies between the different Generals led to their doing nothing to assist each other. In the German Army, though the relations between several of the Generals were greatly strained, the sense of duty was too strong to cause such a fact to prevent their doing what they knew to be right, though, as we have seen, indirectly, this want of harmony was not without its influence on the course of the campaign.

We know from the official account (p. 70, vol. ii) that before proceeding to attack St. Hubert the VIIIth Army Corps formed up under cover of a hollow north of the main road and west of Gravelotte. In Captain Hoenig's pamphlet on the fighting near the quarries we are informed that, while the troops were resting in this hollow, General von Goeben's Chief of the Staff informed the General Officers Commanding the two divisions of the corps that it was General Steinmetz's intention that the VIIIth Corps should capture the wood lying in its front, occupy it, and maintain itself on its eastern edge. The 29th Brigade would attack south of the main road, the 30th north of the same. After capturing these positions, both brigades were to secure the exit from the main road. The VIIth Army Corps would connect with the 29th Brigade, prolonging the line to the right. After this, General von Steinmetz purposed sending the combined artillery and cavalry of the Ist Army over the Manco ravine. The artillery would engage the enemy at close ranges, while the cavalry was to maintain a constant series of attacks on the shattered foe. The General Officers Commanding the VIIth and VIIIth Corps were to decide as to the actual moment the artillery should cross the ravine. That was the general outline of General von Steinmetz's plan. It could hardly fail if the German infantry held its ground on the eastern edge of the woodland and covered the artillery as it came into action as intended; this would naturally take place with as little delay as possible.

General von Steinmetz was of opinion that the enemy would be unable to resist this artillery fire, but would retire. This would give the cavalry their opportunity.

The Generals to whom this plan was communicated suggested that, in the event of St. Hubert being occupied, it would be necessary to capture it before the artillery advanced, and, even when the capture had been effected, the artillery, in column of route on one road, would be under hostile fire both while in the defile and afterwards while coming into action. General von Steinmetz hoped, however, that by rushing the artillery over he would be able to execute his plan.

We know from the official account that the Commander of the Ist Army held on to the above idea throughout the whole action, the orders given at about 3.15 p.m. for the cavalry and artillery to advance over the ravine were issued in accordance with the intentions mentioned above.

It would appear that this plan was not communicated to Officers

commanding regiments, for none of them knew exactly what was wanted of them.

The question naturally suggests itself, Why did General von Goeben, who habitually communicated personally to his subordinates the tasks they were intended to do, refrain on this occasion from acting as usual? It would appear to be due to the friction that is apt to occur between Generals in war. General von Goeben, not being at that period under General von Steinmetz's command, may have considered these special instructions in the light of an unauthorized interference with his own command. Knowing the man with whom he had to deal, Von Goeben did not choose to have a personal discussion with Steinmetz on the subject. He did not, however, oppose his Chief of the Staff repeating what had been communicated by the Chief of the Staff of the 1st Army. Though not directly under Steinmetz's command, Goeben did not care to oppose Steinmetz's plan, but, as he did not communicate them personally to his subordinates, Captain Hoenig infers that his reason for not doing so is because he considered his plan impracticable. Under the circumstances, General von Goeben should have seen the Commander of the 1st Army and have informed him both of his doubts as to the soundness of the proposed plan, and have reminded him that the VIIth Corps was under the orders of the Commander of the IInd Army. General von Goeben probably thought that he would trust to luck, and if the worst came to the worst, and his artillery was ordered across the ravine, it would be time enough then to express his doubts regarding the practicality of the scheme.

In the meanwhile he would not oppose the infantry of the 15th Division being employed as Steinmetz wished.

Be that as it may, Goeben at no period of the battle made the least attempt to send any of his artillery over the Manco ravine, and it is very doubtful whether he ever received a direct order, as the Commanders of the VIIth Corps and 3rd Division did, to send their artillery across.

In the account given of the transaction in the Prussian official, we can only infer that General von Zastrow received orders to send his artillery across the ravine, for it is not stated in as many words that he received orders to do so (p. 93, vol. ii). Neither do we find any mention of General von Hartman receiving similar orders.

Captain Hoenig raises an interesting point about the Gravelotte—Point-du-Jour road.

The road in question formed such an important tactical feature in the fight that it was of the utmost importance to specify clearly before the action whether it fell solely to the VIIth Corps, or whether General von Steinmetz proposed sending other large bodies of troops to the front along it. This circumstance alone should have led to General von Goeben seeking a personal interview with the Commander of the 1st Army. As matters actually stood, both Goeben and Steinmetz had a perfect right to use the road in question, Goeben owing to the position his corps occupied, and Steinmetz in consequence of Moltke's orders that morning.

Unless some agreement was arrived at on that point, misunderstandings and confusion must inevitably result. General von Goeben was a very "level-headed" man, and it throws a peculiar light on the relationships between the two Generals in question, when the junior declined taking any steps to make matters work somewhat smoothly.

The four batteries of the 14th Division came into action at about 12.30 P.M., on the high ground south of Gravelotte, and were reinforced by three of the 13th Division, at about 1.15 P.M. After a short period of time, the German guns established their superiority over their opponents; several limbers and wagons belong to the latter were seen to explode. On the 17th the Officer commanding the divisional artillery had reconnoitred and chosen the position his batteries occupied on the following day. He knew the distance to Point-du-Jour, and his guns were consequently able to range themselves very rapidly; it is mainly due to this fact that the Germans were able to establish their superiority in such a short space of time. As there was ample room for the three batteries of the 13th Division to come into action together, it must be considered that a tactical error was committed in permitting these latter to come into action on both flanks of the guns of the 14th. As this artillery line was being formed, i.e., shortly after 1 P.M., Von Steinmetz received Moltke's instructions, which had been sent off from Flavigny at noon, directing that at first only the artillery should engage. The messenger had taken over an hour to do less than 4 miles.

The infantry of the VIIth Corps notoriously accomplished very little at the battle of Gravelotte. When we examine the aimless way in which brigades and even regiments were split up, it will assist us in understanding how it was that so little was done on the German right flank.

The 26th Brigade was complete and stood near Ars; the 27th Brigade was massed south-west of Gravelotte. The 25th Brigade consisted of the 13th and 73rd Regiments, the 28th of the 53rd and 77th.

The 1st and IIInd battalions 53rd were on the northern edge of the Bois de Vaux, fronting towards the quarries of Rozerieulles, the 7th Jaeger, the divisional battalion of the 13th Division were with them. The III/53rd were on the right of the artillery line. The II/77th were there as well, while the III/77th were with the corps artillery. The I/13th was north of the Mance mill, the IIInd and III/13th somewhere in the Bois de Vaux, supporting the two battalions of the 53rd. The 1st and III/73rd were with the III/53rd and II/77th, the II/73rd at the Mance mill. The front occupied by the VIIth Corps extended over 4 miles. The consequence was that there was no vigour in any of the attacks made by the several portions of that corps.

We find that at Gravelotte the French generally made use of advanced positions, and considering the nature of the ground on the French left and left centre, we are inclined to agree with Captain Hoenig, who defends the action of the French in this respect. The

French main position was a very strong one; both from it and from the advanced positions occupied they were able to conduct a simultaneous fight. Marshal Lieboeuf was undoubtedly right in occupying the western edge of the Bois des Genivaux, disputing the occupation of the same with his opponent, and forcing him to an early deployment and expenditure of force and energy in overcoming the resistance offered. The French could retreat through the wood without difficulty, while they had every reason to hope that a German advance through the same would lead to a dissemination of various units.

The account of the advance, as given in the official account, p. 77, is not sufficiently detailed to bring out the points on which Captain Hoenig lays special stress. We purpose giving an account of this advance, as related in the pamphlet on the fighting near the quarries. The 33rd Regiment was in the first line, the 60th in the second. On advancing into the Mance ravine the whole regiment kept south of the main road and proceeded in échelon from the left; the 3rd battalion, whose left reached the main road, leading, followed by the 2nd in its right rear, the 1st being still further in rear on the right of the 2nd. Before long, however, when most of the companies had extended, the 3rd and 4th companies got in between the 2nd and 3rd battalions and remained there for some time. By the time the foot of the ravine, which was dead ground, had been reached companies and sections had got hopelessly mixed, for under cover of the dead ground order was restored *as far as possible*, and the packs were taken off. In the further advance up the eastern slopes the extension of the regiment must have been very considerable, for it occupied a front of 1,400 yards. Even under favourable circumstances this extension would have rendered any combined movement a matter of great difficulty and one can well imagine that the wooded country, combined with the steep ascent out of the ravine, led to the regiment being frittered away in a series of independent fights by companies and sections, which barely maintained any tactical cohesion, and were absolutely unaware of what the men in their own regiment and in their immediate neighbourhood were doing.

As the various companies reached the eastern edge of the wood they saw in front of them a perfectly open slope, the crest of which appeared lined with shelter trenches. The distance these trenches were from the wood would appear to be about 880 yards. A fortified group of houses (Point-du-Jour) was also noticed, while away to the left a large farmhouse (St. Hubert) appeared artificially fortified. With the exception of the troops at St. Hubert there were no troops in advance of the crest line, so that on this portion of the battle-field, least, there were not any tiers of fire.

As no objective had been specified, these companies were in a most unfavourable position, none of their Commanders knowing what they were intended to do.

The attack of the 30th Brigade was made on, and north of the main road.

Two companies of the II/67th were on the road and one south of it to connect with the 33rd Regiment. The II/67th had two com-

panies in columns of half sections on the road, two extended on the left, the 8th Jaeger prolonged the line to the left, and the 28th extended still further to the left. This latter regiment was in two lines, the flank companies of battalions forming the second line. They were in column of half battalions. The 12/67th was on the extreme left. The 30th Brigade on the left and the 33rd Regiment (29th Brigade) on the right reached the eastern edge of the woods at about 2.15 p.m. The former brigade occupied a front of about 1,100 yards.

By the time it had reached the edge of the wood, the order of several of the companies had changed considerably.

The 3rd and 4/67th, originally north of the road and on the left rear of the III/67th, were now in a hollow 250 yards to the right front of the above-mentioned battalion.

The advance of the artillery to the position east of Mogador was made at about the same time (2.15 p.m.) Their fire was so efficacious that by about 3 p.m. the hostile artillery was totally silenced, and the Germans were able to turn their guns on the infantry manning the shelter trenches. Even if the effect of the fire could not be clearly seen, it might be inferred that it would be a matter of some hours before the French infantry were thoroughly shaken, and under those circumstances it was necessary that steps should be taken to ensure the guns having a sufficient supply of ammunition.

Unfortunately this was not done, and the Germans had at times to cease firing, and it is but too probable that this constrained inactivity on the part of the guns occurred at some of the most critical periods of the fight.

The III and I/28th would appear to have been the first to attempt to make a further advance north of the main road. Starting from the edge of the wood, the battalions made an advance over the open slope against the Moscow heights in company columns. The enemy's fire soon drove them back. The fire had scattered the men of the various companies in every direction, and it was with difficulty that various small groups could be collected together and induced to hold on to the eastern edge of the wood. A portion of the men sought refuge in the hollow of the ravine, either under the pretence of being wounded or of carrying wounded men to the rear.

To return to the 33rd Regiment. South of the road the III/33rd and 3 and 4/33rd worked off to the left, probably under cover of the hill towards St. Hubert, leaving a gap of over 700 yards between themselves and the remainder of the regiment on the right. A portion of the 5/33rd and 8/33rd occupied the gravel pits about half a mile south of St. Hubert, while the 6th and 7th companies proceeded to attack Point-du-Jour. The 1st and 2nd companies occupied the western extremity of the big quarry without opposition. The 6 and 7/33rd advanced by rushes to within about 350 yards of Point-du-Jour, but their losses were so severe that they fell back, and, once under shelter of the wood, nine-tenths of them did not come into action again. (This account differs from the one in the official, p. 69.) General von Goeben noticed from Gravelotte what had

occurred, and sent the other regiment (60th) of the brigade along the main road. By 3 p.m. the gap between the two portions of the 33rd had been filled by the III/60th.

It was about this time that St. Hubert was captured. From the account given in the Prussian official (p. 87) it is possible that a false impression might be conveyed. It is a fact that there were no senior Officers on the spot to conduct and lead the assault, and though the men may have rushed the farmyard of their own account, the impulse was undoubtedly given by the arrival of the 60th. Experience has proved that under conditions similar to those which existed near St. Hubert the approach of support gives an impulse to the firing line, causing it to make another effort to accomplish the task originally allotted to it, before the fresh supports have had an opportunity of getting merged in the firing line. This is what occurred at St. Hubert.

The number of companies of the 60th that gave the original firing line the impulse that carried St. Hubert amounted to ten. Captain Hoenig is of opinion that one company properly directed might have been sufficient. That may be. It is, however, his view as to what constitutes a properly led company in a charge that we propose giving. He states that the men must be kept well in hand, Officers in front, on the flanks, and *in rear*. Probably experience has taught the Germans that Officers under certain circumstances must drive as well as lead their men.

Our readers will remember that in the orders issued by Von Moltke the attack was to take place from the Bois de Vaux as well as from Gravelotte. We will now consider what steps were taken to fulfil this order. At 3 p.m. orders were sent to the 26th Brigade to advance from Ars against Vaux and Jussy. The official account (p. 86) dismisses the action of the infantry of the VIIth Corps with a few words, so we must look to other sources to discover how much or how little they did. The aimless manner in which two of the brigades, forming each a portion of different divisions of the VIIth Corps, were distributed has already been mentioned. In consequence of this, none of the units composing these brigades knew what was wanted of them. The least that might have been done, more especially as the 16th Division was acting as a reserve at Gravelotte with the IInd Army Corps not far in rear, would have been to have got the 25th and 28th brigades together, and then some decision might have been arrived at as to their future action.

The instructions which were sent at 12 noon to Von Steinmetz, directing him only to bring his artillery into action at first, did not cancel the orders of 10.30 a.m.; they only delayed their execution. Von Steinmetz should have given orders to the Commander of the VIIth Corps to make the needful preparations to conduct an attack in support of the 15th Division, from the Bois de Vaux. Instead of being near Gravelotte throughout the action, General von Zastrow should have been opposite the Rozerieulles quarries, near the eastern edge of the wood, by 3.30 p.m. Had such been the case he would have been informed of the first capture of the quarries by the 33rd,

which took place at about 3.33 p.m., whereas, as matters stood, he remained ignorant of either the first or second capture of the same.

If troops are fighting in a wooded country, separated from their Chief by a ravine, and over 2,000 yards away from him, it is the business of the latter to ensure that communication is kept up between him and the troops in front. This did not occur, and, with the exception of the 26th Brigade, the whole of the infantry of the VIIth Corps was wasted, and this under the eyes of Steinmetz and of Zastrow. By 2.30 p.m. the troops might have been massed near the Mance mill, the left of the I and II/53rd and 7th Jaegers been reinforced, and the quarries attacked from this position, which was far from unfavourable. With the quarries captured and held in strength, the battle was decided on that flank. This was perfectly feasible, for the weak detachment of the 33rd remained in possession of their south-western extremity for about three-quarters of an hour, in fact, till after 4 p.m. This would have been the right course to have pursued, and it would have been in accordance with the spirit of Von Moltke's morning orders. The infantry were almost wasted; the greater portion of it acted as escort to the artillery. An artillery line like the one the Germans had near Gravelotte can protect itself, more especially if it has mastered the hostile artillery. Nothing of any consequence occurred on the German right, and as a result the French were able to bring nearly all their forces near Point-du-Jour against the 15th Division.

Captain Hoenig brings a very strong indictment against General von Steinmetz, whether justifiable or not we are unable to say. We reproduce it, however, for it is interesting as a study on the influence manner and temper on the part of people in a responsible position may have on their subordinates. After mentioning the perfect calmness of Von Goeben, who dismounted to ease his horse and remained perfectly still, we are told that the expression on Von Steinmetz's face showed that he was in a violent temper. It is true he spoke but little, but he walked his horse up and down, and when any instructions were given, his manner was gruff and unpleasant. Steinmetz would never receive the advice of anybody; his obstinacy was only equalled by his vanity. There was no harmony between him and the members of his Staff; they did not work with pleasure for him, and the military absolutism to which they were subjected acted as a dead weight on the best of them.

To return to the situation of affairs with the 15th Division at about 3.30 p.m. At this hour this division appeared like a wedge jutting out from the general line of battle, about 400 yards from the main position of the French, and exposed to a continuous frontal and flanking fire. It was split up in a series of small groups without fresh supports in rear. At first sight it may appear incomprehensible that the numerically superior enemy did not drive the whole division back into the ravine and recapture St. Hubert. We shall not be far wrong, however, in attributing the holding power this division possessed to the vast superiority of the German artillery.

From about 1 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. the 15th Division fought with about

10,000 rifles against 16,000 belonging to the French 2nd and 3rd Corps, but they were supported by 156 guns against 90. Of these 10,000, not more than 6,000 rifles remained in the firing line; 2,000 or so were killed or wounded, and another 2,000 had lost their way in the woodland.

General von Goeben could not tell exactly how this division was actually situated, but his shrewd judgment told him that all its offensive powers were spent.

He could see the Mance ravine, in rear of the division, richly studded with men of all sorts, some with rifles, some without; some wore their headdress, others did not. A few of these men were collected together by some senior Officers; the majority, however, concealed themselves in the woods. The detachments that were collected were sent forward into the fighting line, but, as nearly all of them were without Officers or non-commissioned officers, very few reached it.

This wooded portion of the field concealed a large number of stragglers, who only rejoined their corps on the morning of the 19th. The men came from all parts of Prussia. The 33rd were East Prussians, the 60th Brandenburgers, the 28th Rhinelanders, the 67th Magdeburgers, and the 8th Jaegers, also came from the Rhine; they one and all, however, fell victims to the temptation a wood has for humanity under certain circumstances. From the above fact may we not infer that Officers are as necessary in rear of the fighting lines as in front?

The leadership on the part of the Commanders of the 29th and 30th Brigades was in the main good. The Commanders of both brigades kept themselves in constant communication with their divisional and corps leaders. The tactical success obtained in securing possession of the far edge of the wood is due to the leadership of Brigadiers and Colonels. Whether the move of the II/28th northwards was intentional or not, it is impossible to say, but it was, tactically speaking, a most useful one. This battalion kept up a constant flanking fire against the French, and it is a question whether the remainder of the brigade could have maintained their position without this valuable assistance.

The troops themselves committed the error of crowding together when they should have been extended, namely, at the far end of the defile formed by the main road, opposite St. Hubert. Probably in an enveloping movement it will also be impossible to prevent something similar occurring, but one should always endeavour to prevent it. As a matter of fact, the troops extended at the wrong time, for on entering the woods they were greatly scattered; inside the wood they got together, and reached the far edge in little densely packed groups.

In the main, the various attacks were conducted by companies, which generally managed to work in concert with those on their right and left, in spite of heavy losses. The conduct of the four companies of Jaegers is worthy of note. They were able to maintain within themselves sufficient energy to assault St. Hubert, though they were all absorbed in the firing line, and had no supports near

them. They had prepared the assault by an effective fire, and when in possession of the farm, they remained in it until nightfall. Their losses were not inconsiderable, for they amounted to 12 Officers and 197 men. One fact is of especial interest for us. Although the units composing the 15th Division had only been brought together on mobilization, and, as we have seen, came from all parts of Prussia, no friction or tactical disadvantage seems to have resulted thereby. On the contrary, everything appeared, all things considered, to work smoothly. The III and I/28th seem to have contributed less than any of the others to the success on this part of the field. The ground over which they had to attack was undoubtedly unfavourable for them: their losses were, however, not very great, amounting as they did to 22 Officers and 341 men. The impression conveyed is, that the dissolving influence of the woods rendered it exceedingly difficult for the Officers to keep their men together, and to lead them forward to the attack.

The advances made by the 60th and 28th against the main French position after the capture of St. Hubert would have been better left alone. Single companies could effect little or no good, and absolutely nothing could be expected of them, if the advances were made without an adequate fire preparation. This was not done. It is true that some companies got to within 250 yards of the French, but their opponents' fire was so overwhelming that they were forced to fall back, and were only brought to a stand at the eastern edge of the wood. Advances made in that fashion against an overwhelmingly powerful enemy naturally lead to the troops attempting them being driven back. Experience has shown that it is during the retirement that the heaviest losses are incurred, and the tactical value of the troops reduced.

This independent procedure on the part of individual companies must be prevented, especially when no definite objective for attack has been pointed out, as was the case here. Fortunately for the Germans their opponents contented themselves at that period with a passive defence of their position: should the enemy, however, make a counter-attack at the proper moment, as the French did later on, a panic is the invariable result, and the fighting value of the troops is used up. This is due, not so much to the material losses incurred, as to the moral effect of a successful counter-attack made at the right moment. Though these attacks which were made by companies up till about 3.30 p.m. may be explained, it is difficult to see how similar attacks made right through the day by nearly every regiment engaged near St. Hubert can be excused. The Prussian tactics at that time were obsolete, and the series of errors they committed bear a striking resemblance to the series of attacks made by them against the French at Jena.

They attempted shock tactics without paving the way for the same by an adequate amount of infantry fire; in fact, one might say that no preparation by fire was ever made, for the Germans never got within effective range to do so. Shock tactics can only be expected to succeed when the previous rifle fire has proved effective.

At about 3 p.m., it appeared to General von Goeben that the energy of the 15th Division was exhausted, and that to enable it to maintain the position it had won against a possible counter-attack, it would be necessary to reinforce it; he consequently decided to send a brigade of the 16th Division forward as a support.

At the same time, General von Steinmetz decided in his own mind that the enemy was contemplating a retreat, and issued orders, not for an attack against the hostile position, but for a pursuit. The result to the Germans was disastrous.

It is worthy of note that Steinmetz, Zastrow, and Goeben had exactly the same means of judging the effect the attack of the 15th Division and the artillery fire had had on the French, yet the two former arrived at a diametrically opposite opinion to the one arrived at by the last-named Officer. Steinmetz and Zastrow appeared so confident in the correctness of their conclusions that each one seemed to outbid the other in endeavouring to obtain for themselves the credit of a victory won before the very walls of Metz!

The orders General von Steinmetz issued at 3 p.m. were as follows: "The 1st Cavalry Division will at once pass over to the heights near Point-du-Jour; the regiment forming the advanced guard, supported by the fire of the batteries of the VIIth Corps, which will accompany the division, will, taking the direction of Moscow Farm, throw itself on the enemy, who is in the act of retiring; its attacks will terminate on the glacis of Metz. The other regiments will all act with it." ("History of the 4th Lancers," p. 95.) The other order issued was that the 26th Infantry Brigade was to advance from Ars on Vaux.

Such was General von Steinmetz's idea of a combined frontal and flank attack. Simultaneously with the above orders issued by the Commander of the 1st Army, General von Zastrow ordered the whole of the artillery of the VIIth Corps to take position on the heights on the opposite side of the Mance ravine, south of the main road. To protect this artillery line the 27th Brigade was directed to advance as far as the western edge of the wood. Captain Hoenig informs us that the Commander of the artillery of the VIIth Corps could hardly believe his ears when he heard the order. He attempted to point out the inadvisability of such a procedure, but his remarks were cut short by his superior Officer, and he had to submit. Recognizing that some disaster must result if the order were carried out, and deeply imbued with the sense of his responsibility, he had recourse to stratagem. While apparently riding down the line to convey the orders received, his Staff Officers whispered to the Field Officers in charge of divisions that they should manage to do something to make it appear that they could not limber up at once, in order that a few minutes might be gained. These few minutes might save them. It was only a question of creating a slight delay. As a matter of fact this stratagem saved many of the batteries, but not all. The 3rd horse, 3rd light, and 4th light batteries of the VIIth Corps had been unable to find space to come into action; they were consequently ready to move off at once, and any delay was impossible in their case; they started off, and as they were

nearer to the defile than the 1st Cavalry Division, they entered it in front of the cavalry. Let us picture to ourselves how matters stood on this oft-mentioned road to Metz. Wire had been placed across it by the French; the infantry had partially removed the obstacle but not entirely. St. Hubert had just been stormed; the 60th and 33rd had made their unsuccessful onslaughts against Point-du-Jour; hundreds of wounded were trailing back along the road, accompanied by still greater numbers of men who were assisting them. The 29th Regiment, forming part of the 31st Brigade, which Von Goeben had sent as a support of the 15th Division, was also advancing along the road. The infantry were unaware that masses of cavalry and artillery were following them, the cavalry were unaware that the infantry and artillery were both exposed to hostile fire while still in the defile, and all three arms were unaware that a strong stream of men out of action was coming towards them; the troops moving to the front were hurrying on as fast as they could.

On one road, swept by a hostile fire, were found troops belonging to five different commands. The 29th (31st Brigade) immediately alongside the regiments of the 27th Brigade, the 1st Cavalry Division and its battery, also the four batteries already named, there were besides the 9th and 15th Hussars, the former belonging to the VIIIth Corps, the latter to the VIIth. Both these two regiments were working independently, each of them fighting their way to the front as best they could. The 31st Brigade was intended to reinforce, the 1st Cavalry to pursue, the 27th Brigade to form a sort of reserve, the artillery to support the movement. For a military movement to meet with success, three things are necessary: order, simplicity of intentions and clearness in the instructions; not one of the three was to be met with in this case. What a hell that road must have appeared to the crowds massed on it!

Above them a dense cloud of smoke through which columns of fire from the burning farms of Moscow and Point-du-Jour might be seen at intervals; behind them the thunder of 144 guns, and in the ravine itself masses of cavalry, artillery, and infantry, crowding and jostling each other! Those in rear trying to force their way to the front, the advance of those in front getting shorter and shorter under the pressure of the hostile fire. Infantry coming from the front in all sorts of conditions, some wounded, others because their moral had failed them. When we look upon this picture need it surprise us when we hear that later on the men's nerves were unequal to bear the strain imposed upon them, and that the movement ended in a catastrophe?

The orders conveyed to the 1st Cavalry Division should be made "famous." A glance at the map must have informed General von Steinmetz that even had his premises been correct, the cavalry pursuit must have terminated, not on the glacis of Metz, but in the Chatel Valley. It was a notorious fact that Steinmetz expected that those under his command should do something brilliant; any ordinary action had no longer any charm for him. Now there is

nothing wonderful in an attack of 2,200 yards. The distance to Metz was about 7,000 yards, and the nature of the ground such that a squadron could with difficulty have found room to attack over it. Energy can degenerate into a disease.

As the artillery and cavalry trotted through the hollow, dense clouds of dust, rising high, informed the expectant foe that something extraordinary was occurring. The volume of dust became so dense that eventually the troops could only hear and feel each other. Then the uncomfortable feeling produced by the absolute cessation of artillery, and practical cessation of infantry fire, as the head of this mass commenced to ascend the road on the far side. The four batteries already mentioned and the Cavalry Division trotted past the 29th. The batteries of the 14th Division had lost so much time in limbering up that they were some distance in rear; they consequently remained limbered up, somewhere south of the main road. The Cavalry Division advanced in the following order:—

4th Lancers, 2nd Cuirassiers, 9th Lancers, the battery of horse artillery. The 2nd Brigade followed, consisting of 8th Lancers, 3rd Cuirassiers, and 12th Lancers.

While this division was advancing as best it could, the 9th and 15th Hussars cut into the column, and compelled the rear of it to halt; and while these thirty-two squadrons were wedged in on the road, two ammunition wagons, the horses of which had bolted, and which belonged to one of the batteries which had in the meanwhile come into action near St. Hubert, came flying down the road from the front. For some minutes it was absolutely impossible to move in any direction; the whole of the cavalry were practically incapable of fighting. When the 4th Lancers eventually attempted to form up near St. Hubert, the unfortunate troops were met by a hail of rifle and artillery fire. The crowding, pushing, and shouting increased; everyone felt the defencelessness of their condition, and the inevitable approach of some catastrophe. Suddenly from the rear a trumpet sounded "Threes about." The whole division, with the exception of the 4th Lancers, retired to Malmaison. General von Hartmann, commanding the cavalry division, had recognized the impossibility of carrying out his instructions. This condition of affairs had, however, lasted half an hour, and it was not until 4.30 p.m. that the division formed up near Malmaison. ("History of the 9th Hussars," p. 162.)

When the tail of the cavalry column began to halt, the artillery of the 14th Division had recognized that it was impossible for it to cross to the opposite heights by the main road; it consequently returned to its old position, whence it resumed its fire. After remaining inactive for half an hour, it had to range itself again. It was essential to the success of General von Steinmetz's plan that the hostile artillery and infantry fire should be kept down as much as possible, and not a German gun should have gone out of action. We may attribute the sudden heavy and destructive opening of both artillery and infantry fire by the French to the fact that a large portion of the German guns had ceased firing, either because

they were limbering up, or because they had limbered up in obedience to the orders received.

The four batteries which crossed the ravine went forward at a trot; it was consequently impossible for the Commander of the Corps Artillery to get sufficiently ahead to select a suitable position for them to come into action. When he reached St. Hubert, he recognized the impracticability of the orders he had received. However, he endeavoured, assisted by the battery Commanders, to select the best position possible. The garden wall, about 2 feet high, offered but a slight protection against the enemy's fire. If the artillery attempted to avail itself of the cover it gave, and came into action against Moscow, its right flank was enfiladed at a distance of 400 yards from Point-du-Jour. If it came into action against Point-du-Jour, its left flank was enfiladed from Moscow. It is true that the artillery might have come into action against both the above-mentioned places, by unlimbering on each side of St. Hubert, but artillery consists of men and horses besides guns, and we know from experience that when horses are being struck down by infantry fire the best intentions are frustrated. One can no longer do what one wants to do—one can only do what is possible—and unlimber the guns coming into action as best they can at the spot one has managed to reach with difficulty. In this case a spot south of St. Hubert was reached. From thence they fired in the direction of Moscow. Their fire must have been effective, for though the French infantry made at least twenty forward movements, they never managed to push them to a real attack against the Germans at, and north of, St. Hubert. Even if the artillery of the VIIth Corps had succeeded in unlimbering near these batteries, the position could never be considered a good one, for, owing to the shape of the ground, it was only possible to shell the slope in front, where the French skirmishers were posted, and not the top of the plateau, where their formed bodies were. Owing to the, comparatively speaking, low ground on which the guns were, the larger masses of troops could neither be seen, nor their position guessed at.

The action of the four batteries is described at length in the official account, and as Hoenig's account does not differ in any essential points from the official version, their action need not be further considered.

When the Commanding Officer of the 4th Lancers approached St. Hubert, the 4th heavy battery, which was at that moment on his left, prevented his forming up to attack, in the direction of Moscow, as originally ordered, for to do so he must have halted while the 4th battery moved out of his way. Remembering the masses of cavalry which were behind him, such a course appeared most unadvisable; he consequently chose the lesser evil, and, changing the objective, determined to front towards Point-du-Jour. While doing so, he heard the trumpet sounding the "retire." The 4th Lancers were under a terrible fire, and a retirement under those circumstances appeared to the Colonel most injudicious. It was, however, impossible to remain where they were. The "gallop" was consequently sounded, and the regiment made straight towards the gravel pits. When within

200 yards of the same, it formed into line, fronting towards Point-du-Jour, about 400 yards from the hostile shelter trenches. A slight dip in the ground afforded some cover, and most of the enemy's bullets went high, so the losses incurred were, comparatively speaking, slight. The Colonel remained in the same position for about half an hour, and then, as there was absolutely nothing for them to attack, he retired his regiment, and rejoined the cavalry division at Malmaison. ("History of the 4th Lancers," p. 96.)

The moral effect of the failure of the combined cavalry and artillery attack on the French must have been considerable, not only on the troops themselves, but on the different Staffs which happened to be near Gravelotte; but the physical and material effects were no less great. While the endeavour to push through the Mance ravine and beyond it was being made, the greater part of the artillery of the VIIth Corps had to cease fire, and by 5 P.M. that corps had lost the use of two batteries, which were practically out of action, near St. Hubert. One had lost its way, and got stuck in the soft ground of the ravine (the 4th heavy), three other batteries could not find room to resume their old positions; so that from 5 P.M. the VIIth Corps was 36 guns weaker than it had been earlier in the day.

The situation of affairs on the French side was very different. General Frossard had noticed how the German batteries near St. Hubert had suffered, and he had an infantry reserve of three battalions near Point-du-Jour, prepared to take advantage of any favourable moment. While the 4th Lancers were retiring, these troops, forming a line extending from the quarries to a point about 300 yards south of the main road, attacked straight to their front. This attack was conducted with an extraordinary amount of vigour and rapidity, and met with a complete success. The quarries were recaptured, the men bolting back towards the wood, shouting, "We are surrounded." The gravel pits were also lost by the 33rd. The French in their advance got beyond the 3rd light battery; they, however, ignored both it and St. Hubert, and the mob on the main road, which offered an easy prey. The 33rd were scattered; portions of them which endeavoured to make a stand on the eastern edge of the wood were fired at by the 60th in the confusion of the moment, and both regiments then bolted indiscriminately down the hill. The Staff Officers at Gravelotte, who were already unfavourably impressed by the return of the cavalry, when they saw these men coming out of the wood panic-stricken, without arms or head-dress, cast many an anxious glance towards Vionville for reinforcements. The infantry bullets got nearer and nearer; several of them reached Gravelotte, and struck the gunners south of the village. The French counter-attack was not, however, supported with sufficient vigour from Moscow, and the danger eventually passed away.

The condition of affairs at 4 P.M. was, however, very critical for the Germans, and it may help us if we mention the positions of the various troops at that hour. On the extreme left, III/69th and 8, 7/69th (31st Brigade), in action against La Folie and Leipsic. 6, 5, and I/69th, resting their right on the main road, had got mixed

up with the 28th (30th Brigade), and fronted towards Moscow and St. Hubert. The extreme left, and the centre near St. Hubert, had consequently received the desirable reinforcements. The 29th, which was the other regiment of the brigade, had got into some confusion, owing to the masses congregated on the main road, and only the 1st and 4th companies were able to reinforce the 15th Division simultaneously with the 69th Regiment. The 1st company, after a fruitless endeavour to advance against Point-du-Jour, had turned towards St. Hubert; the 4th, after an equally unsuccessful endeavour, remained near the 4th heavy battery. As the road got less encumbered, the remaining companies of the 1st battalion came up, one made for St. Hubert, the other remained in the quarries lying to the west of the farm. Not much use could be expected from this reinforcement, as it only came up in dribblets, and each dribblet as it came up attempted the same impossible feat that its predecessor had failed in accomplishing. Each company made an independent assault over the open ground, without endeavouring previously to establish itself where it could pour in an effective rifle fire, and thus prepare the way for an assault.

Had such a course been adopted, had a heavy fire been kept up from those positions, and reserves been brought up close to them, then, at least, some of the conditions necessary to success would have been satisfied. Such a course was feasible; the action of the 3rd light and 3rd horse batteries prove that. After the 1/29th had been decimated south of St. Hubert, the III/29th attempted the same thing, north of the farm against Moscow, and met with identically the same fate. When the energy of this battalion had been expended, the II/29th arrived, and endeavoured to assault over the ground which had proved fatal to the other two battalions of the regiment, one company going in one direction, one in the other. The Commander of the regiment who had failed a few minutes before in leading four companies to the assault, attempted to succeed with *one*. The other two companies attempted nothing, but made for St. Hubert. The Germans were able to fight by battalions, but to fight by battalions or regiments appeared beyond their task. Hoenig attributes this to their never having practised fighting formations by battalions or regiments in peace time. The manner in which troops lost their direction in moving through a wood may be fitly illustrated by the action of the 10/69th. From the left wing of the brigade it had wandered to the extreme right, and arrived with others at St. Hubert; its march was the counterpart of the march of two companies of the 33rd in the woods, south of the main road, earlier in the day.

Somewhere about the same time that the 2 and 3/29th made their attacks, the 39th (27th Brigade), which had crossed the ravine south of the main road, came into action. The regiment occupied the ground between the St. Hubert quarries to about half-way towards the gravel pits. The reinforcement it brought checked the French counter-attack, of which we have already spoken, and eventually compelled the enemy to retire. The VIIth Army Corps had, however, invaded the zone in which the VIIIth were fighting, and

though it is true that the artillery of the VIIth Corps had done the same, the tactical disadvantages of artillery being mixed up with strange units are not as great as when this happens to infantry. To retain sufficient power wherewith to deal an effective blow, every endeavour must be made not to mix the larger units of infantry. The intrusion of this fresh battalion among the infantry of the VIIIth Corps, though it checked the French, led to consequences which were detrimental to the general object in view. At 4 p.m. the conglomeration of units forming the garrison of St. Hubert was bad enough, but by 5 p.m. there were portions of seven different regiments crowded in the place. A mixed crowd of men, such as were to be found at St. Hubert, cannot be commanded to any good purpose, and the amount of power which is wasted is very considerable.

Up to 3 p.m. neither General von Steinmetz nor General von Zastrow had grasped that the scattered infantry of the VIIth Corps should be formed up, ready to make an attack from the Bois de Vaux. Two hours later nothing had been done in this direction. Yet there were 10½ fresh battalions available for that object. They were, however, utilized to no good purpose, while all the measures taken to ensure the pursuit of the French only led to a series of defeats. The course which was both correct and practicable was not followed, and had the misdirected energy expended in pursuing the wrong and impracticable course been employed in the flank attack from the Bois de Vaux, it must have met with the success it would have deserved.

By about 5 p.m. the bodies of men and horses, together with overturned guns and limbers, had made any movement on the high road somewhat difficult, and columns of infantry amounting to 2½ regiments would appear to have lined it from St. Hubert back to the edge of the wood for over a couple of hours, forming a perfect catch for the bullets which the French poured into them. It did not occur to anyone to retire this mass, which impeded the deployment and movement of troops, both north and south of the high road, re-form them, and then lead them again to the front in some order, which would have enabled them to have been employed with effect.

It seems incomprehensible that such things could have occurred, since for years one of the most popular tactical schemes practised in the Prussian Army was the passage of a defile; yet at the critical moment everyone from General to Lieutenant would appear to have forgotten all the rules which were supposed to have been drilled into them.

The defile was actually lengthened by a living wall of men crowded up together, the exit out of the hole was blocked, and by 7 p.m., when the French made their last offensive stroke, these troops' moral was so used up that they no longer knew whether friend or foe was in front or rear, and when the 3rd German Division crossing the Mance ravine, with drums beating, advanced up the eastern slope, and unfortunately fired into them, the whole mass fell to pieces like a pack of cards, and utterly bereft of their senses, victims of a wild panic,

the picture they presented, as they rushed shouting and howling to the rear, is one which military history has seldom presented to us.

While the Germans were thus wasting their strength, the French skilfully availed themselves of the opportunities which had been afforded to them. The troops were re-formed, the positions occupied by fresh ones, ammunition replenished, and everything done to maintain and increase the moral of the defenders.

Though, as we have seen, Captain Hoenig does not scruple to point out the mistakes made by the Commander of the 1st Army, and by others, he endeavours to treat General von Steinmetz with justice, and points out that in the official account of the battle, an attack is distinctly made against him—even in cases where he was not to blame.

Steinmetz, at 10.30 A.M., was ordered to commence the attack simultaneously with the IInd Army. He was then ordered only to show his artillery *at first*. This order was received at 1.15 P.M. It must always be borne in mind, however, that the orders of 10.30 A.M. were the important ones, and the orders under which the action was to be fought. Subsequent instructions were only explanatory, and did not nullify the original orders. The instructions received at 1.15 P.M. premised that the fighting audible at 12 noon, near Verneville, was a desultory fight. When, however, these instructions were received, it was clear that the artillery fire audible on the left was not the result of desultory fighting, but that a general action was taking place. These instructions were, consequently, nullified, their premises at the time of reception being false, and the original order of 10.30 resumed its full force; and, as Steinmetz received no fresh ones, he was bound to act on the original order received, and he must be held justified in all that he did up to 3 P.M.

The official account does not treat Steinmetz fairly. The serious faults committed by the IInd Army, such as the faulty reconnaissance made, the crossing of the Guards and XIIth Corps, are glossed over: though both these faults disturbed Moltke's plans materially, while attention is sometimes even drawn by means of italics to mistakes attributed to Steinmetz.

It is incorrect to state that the main idea conveyed in the orders was that the right wing of the Germans was to "hold the main forces of the adversary in check until the left wing of the IInd Army had thoroughly cleared up the situation on his lines of retreat, and in the event of the French forces making a stand to the west of Metz until it had surrounded their left flank from the north" (p. 103).

Undoubtedly such was Moltke's idea. Steinmetz, however, was not informed where the French right really stood, nor when the IInd Army made its simultaneous attack, and he could, under the circumstances, only judge that the attack was being made by the heavy fire audible on his left.

At about 4.30 P.M. the Royal Headquarters were in rear of the right wing of the 1st Army. Up to that time General von Steinmetz had reported to Headquarters what had occurred in his army. First, the success of the artillery duel against the batteries near Point-du-Jour, then the capture of the woodland, next the capture of St. Hubert,

and, finally, the advance of his cavalry and artillery over the Mance Valley. The orders for this last move were issued at 3 p.m.; at that hour the Headquarters were still near Rézonville; it would, consequently, appear that they themselves expected the decisive result to occur near Gravelotte, and had for that reason selected the bad position they took up, so as to be close at hand when the decision was arrived at.

If, as we are officially informed, anything more than a display of artillery on the part of the 1st Army was contrary to Moltke's intentions, why, as the above-mentioned reports reached him, did he not send Steinmetz further instructions telling him to keep the main forces of his army back? How is it possible, under those circumstances, to condemn in this respect General von Steinmetz's action up to 3 p.m.?

There is another point on which the official account is misleading. On p. 110 we are informed that the action of the 26th Brigade in threatening the extreme French left caused Marshal Bazaine to divert his attention from the decisive portion of the battle-field. By that can only be meant that it caused him to keep his reserves near his left.

The 26th Brigade marched on Vaux at about 4 p.m. (p. 106), and, according to the official account itself, Bazaine had by 3 p.m. disposed of nearly all his reserves. How can these statements be reconciled? As a matter of fact, the appearance of the 26th Brigade, as well as of the German troops, on the right bank of the Moselle, had no particular effect on the battle. Bazaine made no alterations on account of the appearance of these troops, beyond reinforcing Lapasset's brigade with a couple of batteries of Guard Artillery, and bringing some artillery near St. Quentin into action.

Judging from the official account, it is not clear what orders were given to the 26th Brigade.

On p. 93 we read that, at 3 p.m., orders were sent to this brigade to attack the extreme left of the enemy and march on Vaux. These orders were received at 4 p.m., and by 6 p.m. the brigade had forced back the skirmishers of Lapasset's brigade and occupied Jussy, which was feebly held, and still more feebly defended, and with this its activity ceased. This action could hardly be considered in the light of an energetic attack on the enemy's left wing. This seems to have been recognized, for we are suddenly told (p. 109) that General von der Goltz, in accordance with the spirit of the instructions received from the Headquarters of the 1st Army, was intended to help the Prussians in making the attack from the Bois de Vaux. One naturally asks, what instructions did General von der Goltz receive? On p. 106 we only hear of one—and none others are mentioned afterwards. On p. 109 we suddenly hear of instructions which, under the circumstances, would have been absolutely correct ones to give.

According to the account given on p. 109, General von Steinmetz did intend attacking from the Bois de Vaux. This view, however, falls to the ground when we consider the arrangements actually made by General von Steinmetz. He made no arrangements for an attack

from the Bois de Vaux: on the contrary, at 4.30 P.M. he requested the Royal Headquarters to direct the IInd Army to assist him by operating against the right wing of the French ("Moltke's History of the 1870-71 War," p. 175, German version).

The official account, in dealing with the southern portion of the battle-field of Gravelotte, is guilty of several inaccuracies and contradictions. It informs us (p. 111): "That the original task of the Ist Army, that of drawing the adversary upon itself, was fulfilled, and by the impetuosity of the troops, to a certain extent, exceeded. For, whilst the VIIIth Army Corps, in accordance with its former instructions, had in general limited itself to maintaining those places which it had originally occupied, the VIIIth had, with the capture of St. Hubert, moved close up to the enemy's main position. The French must, therefore, have expected, at any moment, an attack upon their *left* wing, and kept, in consequence, their reserves in rear of the centre until it was too late to support the *right* wing."

That was not the original task allotted to the Ist Army. Its original task was to attack from the Bois de Vaux and Gravelotte simultaneously with the IInd Army. It was not the impetuosity of the troops which caused the instructions to be exceeded; it was the orders for the pursuit, given by General von Steinmetz and by General von Zastrow, which caused the great loss of life. The capture of St. Hubert was essential, whether the Ist Army was operating on the offensive or on the defensive. Artillery fire alone will neither hold an enemy in check, nor draw the enemy on; an effective defence cannot be obtained by artillery alone: infantry must be put into the fighting line for that purpose. It is not a fact that Bazaine kept his reserves till 5 P.M. in rear of the centre. He had disposed of nearly all of them by 3 P.M.

The Royal Headquarters slowly made their way towards the German right wing, and at about 5 P.M. they established themselves south of Malmaison. Here Count Warlensleben, Quartermaster-General to the Ist Army, reported verbally how matters stood with that Army. Shortly afterwards, Lieutenant-Colonel von Brandstein brought the Headquarters the first definite information about the position of the French right wing. From his report it was evident that the dispositions made by the IInd Army were absolutely in accordance with the spirit of the intentions of the Royal Headquarters. It would have been better, however, if the Royal Headquarters had known from their own knowledge what was occurring on the left—or at least had selected a better position for themselves. Up to 5 P.M. they had been too far in rear; now, though well up to the front, they were in rear of one wing, and it took a long time to communicate with the other. Though, owing to the activity and initiative of Prince Frederick Charles and the then Crown Prince of Saxony, this disadvantage was not severely felt, yet, even up to the end of the day, great uncertainty prevailed about the progress and issue of the battle as far as the IInd Army was concerned.

As long as one had reasonable grounds for expecting to come across the enemy somewhere between Rézonville and Ville-sur-Yron,

the selection of the position near Flavigny might be understood, but once the orders of 10.30 A.M. were issued, Flavigny was no place for the Royal Headquarters to remain at, and after the opening of the battle, any further stay near that place became a blunder. Though the Headquarter Staff of the Commander-in-Chief should not interfere with dispositions made by subordinate Commanders without some excellent reason, it is highly probable that if the German Commander-in-Chief had been near Malmaison at about 1.30 P.M., matters would have taken a different course in the 1st Army. The assumption that the enemy was retreating at about 3 P.M. would, undoubtedly, not have been shared, and the consequent arrangements for pursuit would have been stopped. The late appearance of the Royal Headquarters on the battle-field had already met with a severe punishment, though worse was yet to come.

Shortly after 5 P.M. it was noticed from Malmaison that the hostile infantry fire had considerably decreased, while at times the artillery fire ceased entirely. The correct inference was drawn that it was due to a state of exhaustion on the enemy's part, and it was given to be understood that the King of Prussia desired the simultaneous attack, and the consequent dispositions for its successful issue to be made.

An attack made by large masses presupposes that certain arrangements have been made, such as suitable rendezvous spots and battle formations for the various units, as well as a fair knowledge of the enemy's strength and positions. To use the attacking troops to the best advantage, roads and means for deployment are necessary; the objectives of attack should be clearly known. All these are necessary conditions; they are doubly necessary when one army is to make a simultaneous attack in combination with another.

Although the attempts to break out from the Gravelotte defile against Point-du-Jour had all failed, even after 5 o'clock General von Steinmetz obstinately continued to ram his head against the French position, as he had done previous to that hour. The attraction of that high road was too strong to be overcome. Yet it is absolutely impossible to make a simultaneous attack from one road, more especially when that road forms a defile and is within range of the enemy's rifles. To have made an attack simultaneously with the IInd Army, it was at least necessary that the attack made by the 1st Army should be a combined one.

From 12 noon to 5 P.M. nothing was done to ensure this end. Several lines of advance were necessary to ensure the troops attacking at the same moment, particularly so when the orders directed that the attack should be made in front and flank, and if the means for the proper deployment of the troops failed, they should have been made. Roadways through the woods could well have been made between 12 noon and 5 P.M.; the loss to the troops and expenditure of strength in cutting them would not have been as great as they were under the actual circumstances of the fight, and by the latter hour the troops would have been prepared to attack along a long front, instead of a large proportion of them being massed on

the high road, exposed to a heavy hostile fire, which rendered it difficult, if not impossible, to establish order and cohesion among them.

Even westward of the exit from the defile matters were not much better. Officers were engaged in collecting the men together and leading them back to the fighting line. There were so few Officers available for this duty, that little could be done in this direction. The battle-field, consequently, presented an appearance which was not without its effect on the fresh troops which were brought up. Men were constantly bolting for the cover afforded by the trees, and then they stole away to the rear and hid themselves in likely places where they hoped to escape the eyes of the Officers and the enemy's bullets. This stream continued till after dark, and as fifty-nine companies were collected in and about St. Hubert, they formed, so to speak, the reservoir which fed the stream.

The French, whose fire had nearly died away, suddenly, at about 6.30 p.m., hid themselves in a dense cloud of smoke, opening a violent artillery and infantry fire against their opponents. What caused this sudden outburst? Standing on the highest ground near Point-du-Jour, one notices about half way towards Rézonville, a hollow (924 in map of Gravelotte). The French from their position could see the 3rd German Division just emerging from this hollow, accompanied by the Corps Artillery. Captain Hoenig informs us that Marshal Lebœuf frequently stated to him that the field of helmets appeared to extend from Gravelotte to Rézonville. None of the French Generals would appear to have estimated the number of these fresh opponents correctly. They were of opinion that it was the reserve army under the immediate orders of the King of Prussia, and was estimated to amount to at least two army corps; some estimated that the additional strength to the Germans amounted to three corps.

As the IInd Corps advanced in three distinct groups, this false estimate is easily explained. The French felt they were not strong enough to cope with these new arrivals; it became no longer a question of winning a victory, but of getting out of the business with honour. The only means of doing so was by gaining time; a counter-attack afforded the best means of doing so. Lebœuf and Frossard both agreed to hurl themselves with all their available troops against this reserve army at the moment it attempted to deploy out of the Manœuvrers ravine. The results will show us how difficult such a counter-attack is on the part of the defender, for, as a matter of fact, a combined counter-attack from Point-du-Jour and from Moscow did not take place. The attack was only delivered from Point-du-Jour, and there it was delivered much too soon, and it would appear that Marshal Lebœuf refrained entirely from making his attack, for when Frossard broke out from Point-du-Jour, the former had not completed his preparations; when he was ready, Frossard's offensive stroke was spent, and his troops falling back, and consequently Lebœuf did not attack. The French counter-attack was made too soon to fulfil its object, and was probably made with about half the strength

that was intended. We now understood how it was that St. Hubert was not attacked at all.

This offensive move was, nevertheless, the most vigorous one of the day; Bastoul's and Vergo's divisions took part in it, and it was made both rapidly and skilfully, except that, as just stated, it was premature. About 300 yards from the most advanced shelter trenches of the French and south of the high road, were several irregular groups of skirmishers belonging to the VIIth and VIIIth Corps. These skirmishers kept up an intermittent fire against their opponents, and certainly did not expect to be attacked themselves. The sudden heavy artillery and infantry fire which fell on them made a deep impression, and before they had realized that a new phase in the fight had occurred, a line of skirmishers extending from the quarries of Rozericuelles to beyond the direction of Point-du-Jour appeared out of the smoke, closely followed by columns at fairly regular intervals. The French came forward at the double in excellent order, and as they came down the slope, the fire from the rear ceased, while bugle-calls, beating of drums, and shouts of "En avant" and "Courage" filled the air.

This counter-attack could be seen with the naked eye from the heights near Gravelotte; from there it appeared as if the French had reached the eastern edge of the wood, and, working through it, were continuing their attack on Gravelotte. To most of those standing on these heights it looked as if the guns south of St. Hubert had been captured. It was impossible to estimate the strength of the French counter-attack either at Malmaison or at Gravelotte. The general impression was that it was made by a division of fresh troops; this was, however, a false estimate. The German guns at Gravelotte caused a great thinning out of the French columns, but it was impossible to tell whether they had brought the French onslaught to a stand or not. While still in uncertainty over this matter, there suddenly appeared from out of the western edge of the wood a mob of panic-stricken men, belonging to various regiments, making for the high ground occupied by the German guns. For a moment or two it was impossible to distinguish whether the disorderly array of men coming towards them were friends or foes. These men, panic-stricken, all sense and moral entirely lost, might possibly be French attacking lines. But in a few seconds it was clear that the men coming towards them were German infantry. Absolutely and entirely under the influence of a deadly fear, neither words of command nor anything else could stop them. Several artillery Officers rode amongst them with drawn swords, they were told they would be shot down by their own guns. It was all useless. On such occasions men are past reasoning with. It being impossible to gather this "scum" from the fight, attempts were made to direct their retreat clear of the guns; that also was impossible. Driven by the panic which had mastered them, the fugitives made straight for their own guns, bolted through them; not even the voices of the German gunners could bring them to reason. The men were only halted when well in rear of the artillery, and Officers of all branches, from Generals to

Lieutenants, were engaged in halting them. The Royal Headquarters, as well as the Headquarters of the 1st Army, were greatly troubled at the occurrence, and every endeavour was made to prevent a defeat, culminating in a retreat, occurring on this portion of the battle-field.

As an instance of how the moral energy of the German firing line was spent when this attack occurred, it was sufficient for one man to shout "Columns!" "Columns!" to make a company, which was about 300 yards in front of the wood, bolt straight back to seek shelter inside it.

The French attack, as a matter of fact, never reached the wood. The troops who had made this attack had been fighting all day, and the destructive effect of the German shells, combined with the appearance of fresh infantry on their right flank, was sufficient to stop the French about 150 yards short of the woodland. The extent of the advance was distinctly marked by the line of corpses. From Gravelotte, however, it was impossible to tell this.

The German infantry, which had succeeded in turning the tide of French success, were four battalions belonging to the 32nd Brigade, which General von Goeben had sent forward towards St. Hubert at about 6 o'clock. The appearance of this column caused the French not only to halt in their attack, but to bolt back towards Point-du-Jour. The four battalions followed up their advantage, and from St. Hubert it appeared that the frontal attack against Point-du-Jour would finally meet with success. The advance was anxiously followed, but shortly before the bend of the road near 1076 was reached, a rain of bullets fell upon the battalions; they halted and wavered, and this attack, begun with so much hope, was wrecked. Throughout the many hours the fight had lasted, this was the first combined attack of several battalions on the enemy's position, the first great infantry attack on Point-du-Jour. Though the General Commanding the 16th Division had not succeeded in his attempt, he had at least succeeded in restoring the battle, and he might rest content with having done so much.

It has been said that one of the reasons the French made no attack from Leipsic was because Marshal Lebœuf had expended all his reserves. By this, however, we must not suppose that the whole of his corps had become absorbed in the firing line. Lebœuf had committed the great fault of letting all his four divisions out of his hands without having any troops in reserve for him to use as required. The General Officers Commanding Divisions, however, with the exception of Aymard, had all, comparatively speaking, strong reserves at their immediate disposal. It would always have been possible throughout the day for the Marshal to have collected sufficient troops together to have formed a division. The Germans owe to the faulty management by Marshal Lebœuf of his corps their immunity from any serious counter-attack on his part.

The panic south of the high road has been described; another occurred shortly after, on the road and its immediate vicinity.

The 9th Hussars had followed the four battalions of the 32nd

Brigade down the road and halted under cover of the high ground westward of St. Hubert. While in that position the remounts and additional drafts joined it from Trier. The Colonel, instead of sending them back to the rear at once, turned them into a 5th squadron, which formed up in rear of the 4th. This 5th squadron was a most undesirable addition to the regiment, for the horses would not stand fire, were nervous and excitable, and were not thoroughly trained. When the attack of the 32nd Brigade came to a standstill, the hostile fire increased in violence, and the hussars plainly saw their own infantry in retreat. The Colonel ordered his men to mount, intending to retire the regiment a few yards. The orders to retire, halt, and front were well executed by the original four squadrons. The 5th, misunderstanding both signals, at first retired at a trot. The horses, frightened by the bullets, went faster and faster, and eventually bolted. They clattered through Gravelotte, to the consternation and astonishment of the beholders, and charged the remnants of the infantry who were being slowly collected together after the rearward movement, which had been already mentioned. But the worst was still to come. On the right side of the road a large number of wagons and spare horses were hal'ed, in excellent order, the left side being kept free for the movement of troops. The teams became restive at the approach of the hussars, could not be quieted; they tried to follow them; those that succeeded bolted, and all helped to increase the horrible confusion that reigned. It was in vain that Officers attempted to stop this mad flight of men and horses; they all of them forced their way to the rear. The confusion was indescribable. The Royal Headquarter Staff and the Commander of the 1st Army looked on sullenly at the disagreeable spectacle. The IIInd Army Corps, which was approaching, in spite of all its enthusiasm, could not avoid being badly impressed by this sight. No one could see a reason for the panic. Blows with the sword and oaths were powerless to stop the maddened fugitives. It was only when the lungs of men and horses gave out that the wild stream stopped, and endeavours were made to collect them, naturally, well in rear of the IIInd Army Corps. Several fugitives appeared in Vionville and the neighbourhood, exclaiming, "We are beaten, we are beaten." Several Officers lost their spare horses and never saw them again.

The remainder of the regiment remained till the end of the battle near St. Hubert; one squadron charged to cover the retirement of the infantry.

This is mentioned, as it would be unfair to judge of the hussars by the conduct of the 5th squadron. The panic above described is, when explained, easily understood; it also is not without its instruction for the future.

The orders given to the IIInd Corps to attack Point-du-Jour with all their available forces would appear to have been given by the King himself, and they were given directly contrary to the desires expressed by Steinmetz, for, as already mentioned, when making his personal report to the King at 4.30 p.m., he had requested that the IIInd Corps be employed against his enemy's right wing, a frontal

attack being hopeless. We find that two hours after Steinmetz had declared a certain action impossible, the King declared it was to be done. The question arises whether General von Steinmetz urged any reasons in favour of his opinion as to the inadvisability of a frontal attack. Captain Hoenig says he did not, and the reason is not difficult to seek. The meeting of the King and General von Steinmetz took place at too great a distance from their respective Staffs to enable anyone to hear what words were exchanged between the two. It was evident, however, from the excited gestures of the King and the serious expression on Steinmetz's face as he rode away, that the former had expressed his disapproval of the measures taken by the latter up to the hour of their meeting. From that moment General von Steinmetz's ill-temper increased, and he carefully avoided coming again in contact with the King, and simply acted strictly in accordance with any orders he received.

If, however, General von Steinmetz would not express his doubts about the advisability of the orders given to the IInd Corps, it was done by no less a person than General von Moltke. After the order to attack Point-du-Jour had been issued to the IInd Corps, and the preparations were sufficiently advanced to enable one to point out to the King that the direction adopted by the corps would be undesirable, all the consequences of the order appeared so clearly before General von Moltke that he expressed his great doubts, both as to the advisability of any further attack at that late hour of the day, and more especially of a frontal attack.

Even as early as 10.30 A.M., the orders were given to attack from Bois de Vaux, as well as from Gravelotte. Since his arrival at Malmaison, he had noticed how little had been done from the former direction, and that the enemy's left wing had not been pressed as he intended it should be. The objections to an attack made at dusk, without adequate preparations, were obvious, and the hopelessness of its succeeding without support from the direction of the Bois de Vaux was pointed out to the King. The latter, however, declined to cancel the orders he had previously given; the manner of executing the same was left to General von Steinmetz.

The wish to force the battle to a decisive issue before the day closed, after a struggle of many hours, is comprehensible, and the belief that the opponent was exhausted by his efforts was a fair one. The King's opinion should not therefore be criticized as unsound, but, to give effect to it, the best means should have been chosen. When we consider the stress laid in the morning on the flank attack being made from the Bois de Vaux, and the orders issued by the King for frontal attack without the combination of a flank one, we perceive a want of harmony between the two. In describing this important occurrence, the Field Marshal expresses himself as follows:—

"At about this hour (6 P.M.) the King and his Staff had ridden forward to the height south of Malmaison. But it was not possible to distinguish how matters had shaped themselves on the enemy's left wing, which was over 4 miles from the spot where the Staff stood. Along the entire front, from La Folie to Point-du-Jour, the hostile

artillery had very nearly died out, whilst from the north the report of heavier artillery fire was audible. The day was drawing to its close; it was necessary to force a decision. The King ordered the Ist Army to make a fresh advance, and he consequently placed the IInd Corps, which had just appeared after a long march, at General von Steinmetz's disposal.

"All the available battalions of the VIIth Corps were, *with the exception of five acting as a reserve*, therefore again sent across the Mance valley.

"The line was prolonged towards Point-du-Jour and the quarries by the battalions already formed up in the Bois de Vaux.

"The 2nd French Corps, which had to meet this attack, had just been reinforced by the Guard Division of the Voltigeurs. The whole of their reserves were brought into the firing line. The artillery redoubled its activity, and a destructive rifle fire was poured in against the advancing foe. Then the French proceeded themselves to the attack; their men, being in dense swarms of skirmishers, drove the smaller bodies of Germans, who were leaderless, and were lying down in the open field, back towards the edge of the wood. Here, however the French attack reached its limit, but the Germans had a fresh corps at their disposal.

"The IInd Corps, which was the last to be despatched by rail towards the theatre of war, had followed up the advance of the army by forced marches, without, however, having been able to partake in any of the previous combats. It had commenced its march at 2 A.M. from Pont-à-Mousson, and had arrived *viâ* Busières and Rézonville, to the southward of Gravelotte, in the evening. *The wish of the Pomeranians to come to conclusions with the enemy that self-same day was loudly expressed.*

"*It would have been better if the Chief of the Staff of the Army (himself) had not permitted this corps to advance at such a late hour. An intact body of men like these would have been most desirable for the following day. On the same evening, however, it was hardly to be expected that they would be able to cause the balance of victory to incline decisively towards the Germans.*

"It might have been desirable that the less exhausted IInd Corps should have been sent into the firing line, to hold and occupy it, while the various portions of the VIIth and VIIIth Corps, which were all mixed up together, were collected and re-formed in rear of them."

Captain Hoenig states that on reading the last words that appeared in italics, he had at first felt inclined to omit what he had already written on that point, but on receiving fresh information on the subject he came to the conclusion that his account was strictly in accordance with the facts. He tells us that several eye-witnesses informed him that when Moltke found that the King would not act on his advice, but that the desire of the former became an order, Moltke slowly turned away from the King, rode off about 100 yards to the right, and appeared to occupy himself with something else. He intended the idea to be conveyed that he did not agree with the orders issued. Those who witnessed the occurrence understood it in

that sense, and were greatly impressed thereby. Later on, as the IInd Corps approached the western edge of the wood, Moltke followed it for a few paces along the high road, accompanied by a number of Officers of the General Staff, while the King remained near Malmaison with Bismarck, Roon, and Podbielski. The Headquarter Staff were not together again till after dark.

It is difficult to believe that a General like Moltke did not recognize on the spot that an order, which he afterwards condemned, was in itself a mistake. It seems so little probable that one asks what motive Moltke could have had in writing as he did, why he should take on himself the responsibility for an action which took place against his advice? The motive is to be found in the preface to his own history of the war. Moltke says, "What is published in a military history always fits in with the story of a successful action, but it is a duty one owes to the dead, to one's love of country, not to disturb any prestige which may accrue to any individuals, owing to any of our victories being attributed to them." From this, it would appear that Moltke deliberately took upon himself the responsibility for the order given to the IInd Corps to attack that night, in order to put an end to any discussion on the subject, and to shelter his King from any adverse criticism.

The orders given to General von Steinmetz were, that he was to set "all his available troops in action against the heights of Point-du-Jour," the details being left to him.

At 6.45 Steinmetz ordered Von Zastrow to lead all the battalions of the VIIth Corps still this side of the wood over the Manco valley. Whether they were to be led from the west against the front, or from the south-west against the flank, is not known.

The Commander of the IInd Corps was ordered to attack Point-du-Jour in front, and, with the assistance of the troops of the VIIth Corps on his right, capture the hostile position under all circumstances.

On reference to the extract from Moltke's history, it will be seen that Von Zastrow did not carry out his orders. He wanted no reserves at that hour. The IInd Corps formed the reserve for the army.

General von Fransecky did not expect any satisfactory results from the orders he had received; he knew Steinmetz too well, however, to care to make any representations to him on the matter. He decided to deal with matters as they stood. He knew that from where he stood brigades had repeatedly entered the wood, only to emerge on the other side as companies, and that every one of the attacks made in that manner had failed. He ordered the infantry, keeping well closed up, and maintaining all their tactical units, to follow the high road. The head of the column, after passing the eastern edge of the wood, was immediately to wheel to the south, gain ground towards Point-du-Jour, and then await the deployment of the rear of the column, in order that the enemy might be crushed by the rush of a compact body of men. In this manner, thanks to their superior discipline, the Germans hoped to make a successful night attack. The 3rd Division could not possibly deploy and be ready for attack before 8 P.M. The cavalry was to remain at Gravelotte.

Only two and a half batteries prolonged the line of German guns to the south; the remainder had to halt west and south of Gravelotte.

Though the IInd Corps was, compared with the VIIth and VIIIth Corps, a fresh body of troops, owing to the hour at which this final attack was made, this advantage was nearly balanced by the fact that the German artillery was compelled to cease its fire, for from their position it was impossible to distinguish their own troops from the enemy's. The attack by the Germans was necessarily purely an infantry attack, unsupported by any artillery; the French, however, were able, for the first time, to bring their guns into action and direct them against the attacking infantry without fear of being crushed.

The 3rd Division marched down into the defile with bands playing and colours flying. Unfortunately, the music had not the inspiring effect it was intended it should have. It has already been stated that the men near St. Hubert formed a reservoir which fed the stream which was continually flowing westward. A large number of these men were collected at the bottom of the ravine. Their reasoning powers had left them for the time, and, on hearing the sound of the music—unable to distinguish whether it came from friend or foe—they rose from their concealment and bolted for the rear. This naturally created a certain amount of confusion, but the advancing troops were not particularly disorganized by the event. When, however, the troops in and near St. Hubert were fired at from the rear, the slight bonds that kept them together were snapped, and a flood of fugitives burst on to the 54th, the leading regiment. The shock was so violent, that the fugitives broke through it and swamped it; the regiment consequently got out of the direction it was ordered to move in. As other troops were advancing close alongside the 54th, the fugitives charged them also; and it was with the greatest difficulty that order was kept. Thus we see that, in the dark, there were two opposing streams, one rushing in disorder from front to rear, the other moving forward towards it. Matters remained like this for some hours, until the IInd Corps was formed up in close order near the enemy's position. Under the circumstances, all idea of a night attack had to be abandoned. Any combined movement by the IInd Corps had been nipped in the bud by this fresh panic, the worst and longest one of the day. The Generals had to be satisfied if they could manage to dam the disorderly stream of fugitives, and, instead of a deep wall of men, in column extending from front to rear, establish a thin line along the entire front opposite Point-du-Jour.

Thanks to a good state of discipline, this difficult task was successfully accomplished. It was of course impossible to think of continuing the fight; every condition to bring it to a successful issue was wanting. It is impossible to give a more detailed account of this panic and of its effect in rear of the fighting troops, for darkness had concealed everything. It is a blessing that the French forces were spent, for at this period, a fresh brigade, boldly led, would have obtained, locally, a decisive victory, for, at that time, the greater

portion of the 3rd German Division was, comparatively speaking, defenceless. It was wedged in near the wood and on the road, the fugitives from the front pressed against it from one direction, and the remaining forces in rear pressed on it from the other; this, combined with the woody nature of the country and the darkness, rendered it impossible for the division to deploy for a considerable time. This was the most critical moment of the day, but luck favoured the Germans, and no disaster occurred.

The modern battle is wonderfully destructive of the moral of the soldier. It can be reduced to a low ebb by the mere effect of remaining for a considerable time under hostile fire, as well as by an unsuccessful attack, the only difference being that the effect is more quickly felt in the latter than in the former case. The effect of a long exposure to hostile fire is even, possibly, the more destructive to the moral of the two. A panic and a flight are usually the consequences of the sudden appearance of something unexpected. Troops which are not even threatened get seized with it. It is perfectly comprehensible that, after a long strain, the moral power of the best suffers; but in spite of this, one rule must never be relaxed—attention must be paid to the enemy, and his movements watched. Even when troops are lying as close to the ground as possible, unable to advance, some Officer must watch at every important point, and should he be placed out of action, he must be replaced by another. It is only by these means that false reports, false impressions, &c., can be dealt with in time to prevent their effect being harmful.

The number of men who streamed away to the rear was very large. The firing line became thinner and weaker, and the Generals eventually discovered that there were only a few hundred rifles when they thought they had brigades engaged with the enemy.

At about 7 P.M. an event occurred which, for some extraordinary reason, is not mentioned at all in the official account of the battle, although it was the most important tactical success that was gained on this portion of the field during the day. This was the capture of the quarries of Rozerieulles. Their capture paved the way to an eventful victory before the 3rd Division had been engaged. It must be observed, however, that Brigade Commanders and Officers junior to that rank received either insufficient orders, or none at all; they received no objective for the attack; their orders were simply to "attack." In the case of a frontal attack, such an order may be permissible, for under those circumstances it is often impossible to specify particularly what the objective is to be. But in the case of a flank attack the circumstances are different, and an objective should be definitely selected. About the time St. Hubert was captured, it will be remembered that the 33rd rushed from the gravel pits to capture the quarries. The official account only mentions the account casually, and, in addition, puts a false complexion on the facts, for it states that the 33rd were driven back by the overpowering fire of the French (p. 89), and, consequently, the quarries could not have been captured.

The quarries of Rozerieulles form the natural objective for a frontal

attack as well as for an attack from the right towards Châtel St. Germain. The distance from the edge of the wood to their south-west corner is about 350 yards. Their length is about 700 yards, their extreme width 440.

The south-west corner of the quarries was open, but the main portion, lying between the main road and the road running to the gravel pits, did not convey the impression of being so. This was because it was divided into five subdivisions, by four walls cutting across it, so that coming from the westward one could only see as far as the next wall. The distance between the walls averaged from 90 to 130 yards. This series of walls was a disadvantage to the French, for they could not regularly occupy each of them, while to the Germans they were a distinct advantage, for as each portion was captured they could shelter themselves under cover of them.

The French, after having retaken the quarries at about 4 p.m., did not remain there, but retired back to the high road. Of this fact, however, the Germans were ignorant, and at about 7 o'clock portions of the 33rd, 39th, and 40th, under the command of a Captain, stormed the south-western portion of the quarries. They doubled from the wood, where they had been formed, to the quarries; on reaching them the whole party were utterly out of breath, and were, for a few moments, incapable of any action whatever. When they had recovered their breath, they pushed on through the quarries till they reached the most easterly wall. This wall had barely been occupied when a closed body of French infantry were seen on the high road, marching towards Metz. When they arrived opposite the Germans, they were fired at, at 150 yards elevation. The column was evidently surprised, and unaware that the Germans had penetrated into the quarries. A second column attacked the German left wing, advanced to within about 70 yards, fired nine volleys, and then retired to continue their march. As they did so, they suffered severely from the fire of the Germans. A third body of troops acted in the same manner, and met with the same fate. A fourth then made a frontal attack, with a deal of resolution and in close formation, but this was repulsed, and a pause ensued in the fight. It was then noticed that the only places where the Germans, who were lying down, were wounded, were in the legs and feet, from which fact we may deduce that separating the legs when lying down is not always advantageous. Shortly afterwards this body of men were reinforced by about two more companies, and firing having completely ceased at about 9.15 p.m., the Germans evacuated the quarries at about 10 p.m.

Had this success, obtained by a handful of men, been followed up as it should have been, the defeat on the French left would have been as decisive as their defeat near St. Privat.

Owing to the distance of the quarries of Roserieulles from the positions occupied by General von Steinmetz and General von Zastrow, any report that the quarries were in German occupation at 7 p.m. would have reached them too late. It is not the business, however, of Officers in the firing line to send back reports; no blame can, therefore, be attached to them for not sending any. General von

Zastrow should have taken steps to ensure that reports reached him of every important occurrence from the Manco Mill and the Rosericulles quarries. If a lancer regiment was able to remain formed up for a considerable period east of the wood, what difficulty was there in posting Staff Officers and Adjutants near the east edge of the wood as well, so as to see and report on what was occurring? That is where they should have been during the action, not west of the wood near Gravelotte. The simplest rules were not followed; there was no indication of any plan having been formed; the troops in front never knew what was intended of them; the Generals in command did not know where their troops were or what troops belonged to them. There was no connection between the men in the firing line and the Generals in rear, and both the men and the Generals were fumbling about in the dark. And yet at peace manœuvres the number of reports that come in about matters of no importance is marvellous. Had this connection from front to rear been maintained, General von Steinmetz would have known at 3 o'clock that the quarries were captured, but both he and General von Zastrow were as ignorant of the first capture as they were of the second. Even with the leadership that existed, had information of the first capture been received, sufficiently powerful reinforcements would have reached the quarries in time to give a decisive turn to the fight. Perhaps the reason for suppressing in the official account the whole of this most heroic deed on the part of the men was that it was feared that thoughtful men with the above facts before them would have formed their own opinions about the stamp of leaders the Germans had. The troops did all in their power to show from which direction the victory would be decided, but their leaders appreciated it no better than they understood Moltke's orders for battle. The attack made by the IInd and VIIth Corps at 7 P.M. was made in complete ignorance of the true condition of affairs that the capture of the quarries had brought victory within their grasp.

While the battle was raging with all its vehemence in front, a terrible scene was being enacted in another portion of the field. The French who had been severely wounded in the action of the 16th August had been brought to the various farmhouses in the neighbourhood, such as Malmaison and Mogador. When the Royal Headquarter Staff took up their stand between these two named places, the target they presented was too tempting for the French artillery to resist. Mogador, though the Genera flag did not float above it, was to all intents and purposes a hospital, and was full of wounded. The unfortunate victims of the 16th, owing either to a lack of organization or to some forgetfulness on the part of the French, had been abandoned when the army retired to the Leipsic—Point-du-Jour position. The wounded had no means of communicating with the outer world, and the Germans were in entire ignorance of the existence of any wounded in the building. Eventually the French shells set fire to it. There is nothing extraordinary in a burning building; during a battle one is occupied with matters of more pressing importance, and the building is generally left to burn itself out. The wounded

were burnt to death, and it was only the next day that the Germans were aware that Mogador had been turned into a temporary hospital.

Captain Hoenig's works on Gravelotte only deal with the action of the German right, but for purposes of comparison we are given a general idea of the manner in which Prince Frederick Charles acted as an army Commander. As soon as he heard the sound of the guns, at about 10 A.M., he directed his steps towards them. At 1 P.M. he was between St. Marcel and Verneville, at 2 P.M. at Habonville, and there he remained near the decisive point till the close of the battle. Napoleon could not have acted better, and Prince Frederick Charles by his action during the battle, ably seconded by the Commander of the XIIth Corps, succeeded in minimizing the consequences of the strategical errors committed on the previous day. Both the Royal Princes fully grasped the strategical situation; they both attempted to reach the last line of retreat of the French, the valley of the Moselle, and they succeeded in doing so. Napoleon, who has been unapproached, committed errors. The true General is the man who understands how to put matters right after a mistake has been committed, and before the full effects of the error have been able to make themselves felt. Though we may find ourselves compelled to criticize unfavourably the extreme caution and want of enterprise shown before the battle, we must in justice state that as soon as the Commander of the IIInd Army received the report giving the position of the French left, he showed himself fully capable of dealing with the situation; his method of conducting the battle need fear no hostile criticism.

The remarks made by Captain Hoenig on the choice of positions selected by the Royal Headquarters Staff have already been given, and need not be reproduced.

General von Moltke had watched the last conflict of the day from the slopes of Point-du-Jour, and at about 10.30 P.M. he rode back with the Headquarters towards Rézonville. The impression which the fighting of the Ist Army had left on him was not favourable, and it was with reluctance that the General left the scene of action. He was, however, fully resolved that after the VIIth and VIIIth Corps had been rallied in rear of the IIInd the battle should be renewed and brought to a decisive issue early the following day. Though many things must have occurred which were displeasing to the General, he at least knew from his own observation the position of affairs with the Ist Army, and that during the night nothing could occur to alter it. With the IIInd Army matters were different. St. Privat had fallen at about the same hour that the IIInd Corps deployed for attack, and shortly afterwards the French evacuated Amanvillers. Prince Frederick Charles had taken steps to destroy the communications in the valley of the Moselle, thereby fully acting up to the spirit of Moltke's intentions. The Prince had witnessed the battle and remained near the scene till the fight had completely died away, and at 8.30 P.M. had issued suitable orders in case anything occurred during the night. Owing to the great distance between St. Privat and

Gravelotte, the Prince's report did not reach Moltke on the battle-field, but only at Rézonville during the night. On the other hand, the Prince had received no further instructions from Moltke, and had fought the battle entirely independently. Splendidly supported by the Commander of the XIIth Corps, the glory of the victory of St. Privat must be awarded rather to Prince Frederick Charles than to Moltke. For though the orders of 10.30 prescribed the enveloping movement, they were issued on false premises, and the Prince knew how to fulfil Moltke's desires without any further assistance on finding that the actual conditions were different to the pre-supposed ones. His circumspection and calmness are as attractive as the clumsiness and misdirected energy of the Commander of the 1st Army are the reverse.

We know that at 5 A.M. on the 19th August the Commander of the IIInd Army made arrangements to shut the French completely up in Metz and cut off all their communication with the exterior world. We see how thoroughly Moltke's idea of envelopment was grasped. The credit of forming this idea belongs to Moltke, and to Moltke alone; the credit for executing it is solely Prince Frederick Charles's. The victory at St. Privat led to the evacuation of Point-du-Jour. The 18th August, 1870, was the most eventful day in the life of the Prince. His victory released General von Steinmetz from a painful situation. This, however, only increased the feeling of irritability the latter had towards the former. In addition to the serious consideration of the relations between Moltke and Steinmetz, the relations between the latter and the Prince had to be considered. The result was that Steinmetz ceased to command the 1st Army. Steinmetz compiled a memoir relating to these conflicts which he desired should be published after the Emperor had perused it. The Emperor, however, was of opinion that such a publication would be inadvisable, and the General was too good a soldier not to look upon such an expression of opinion otherwise than in the light of an order. This is all the more creditable to Steinmetz, as the official account of the battle in many places heaps blame upon him where he was not to blame. The reader is referred to pages 16, 71, 103, 111 in the English translation of the official account.

The battle of Gravelotte-St. Privat was a strategical battle, and was practically won when the German Army had completed their wheel to the right. In spite of many slips, the movement succeeded, and Moltke was then in a position to choose his favourite form of attack, a frontal one, combined with an envelopment of one or both of the opponent's flanks. In this case he chose the latter, and though his intentions were not fully carried out, the action of the IIInd Army was sufficient to ensure a brilliant strategical victory.

The tactics adopted by the 1st Army were, as has been shown, most indifferent. The troops slipped out of the hands of their natural leaders. It will be noticed that out of the 57 battalions which were engaged near Gravelotte, only four (the 72nd and one battalion of the 40th) battalions made a combined attack. On every other occasion we find that brigades, regiments, and battalions lost

all cohesion. The brave attempts made by separate companies to attack the French position were invariably beaten back.

The Germans, as they attempted to deploy from the road, were very much in the position of rabbits who are being bolted; they were shot down by the French with the greatest ease. The artillery of the VIIIth Corps was well handled, and the handling of the infantry of this corps compared favourably with the handling of the infantry of the VIIth and IIInd Corps. Though it is often impossible to preserve any distinct lines of demarcation for the action of separate corps, yet there was no reason for the 39th, belonging to the 27th Brigade, being mixed up with the 29th Brigade.

The reserve brigade, the 31st, was sent into action at the right moment. Its action was not as successful as Von Goeben had hoped it would be; that, however, was the fault of Steinmetz and Zastrow, who sent the cavalry and artillery in the same direction at the same time. All the other troops combined did not obtain a greater measure of success than the 15th Division. Though the reinforcement of that division by brigades is unusual, yet, under the circumstances of the case, it was difficult to avoid doing so. It was a mistake sending the 9th Hussars over the Mance Valley; the arrival of the fresh horses at that identical moment was a real piece of ill luck.

The crowding at and near St. Hubert, which took place from 5 P.M., was most faulty. The farm was not occupied in a sensible manner, and nowhere did the infantry establish themselves in a proper fire position. It was this latter error which led to all the subsequent reverses; nothing was done to rectify it, or even to minimize it; hence the Germans never obtained superiority of rifle fire over their opponents. It must have been known that no attack could hope to succeed until this superiority had been established, and yet company after company was sent forward, all of them with equal want of success. The losses incurred by the French 2nd Corps, which amounted to 62 Officers and 2,043 men killed and wounded, is a conclusive proof that this fire superiority never was established.

The sole reason for the repeated successes obtained by the French in their counter-attacks was that the Germans had not established themselves in any fire position; otherwise their infantry would not so repeatedly have been knocked out of time. These successful counter-attacks also teach us how small the defensive power of skirmishers becomes, when they consist only of the remnants of men who have been repulsed, and who have become played out by repeated and continued disconnected attacks. The moment that Steinmetz and Zastrow actively intervened in the course of the action, mistake followed mistake. Neither of them understood Moltke's orders, and both of them refrained from making any preparations for an attack from the only direction from which a decisive result was to be expected, namely, from the Bois de Vaux. Never before has the infantry of a corps been so scattered and broken up as that of the VIIIth Corps. After the IIInd Corps had been placed at Steinmetz's disposal, the errors he committed were inconceivable. The orders he

issued for the attack form a strong contrast to the orders for pursuit issued a few hours previously. The consequences of the order were, that in a space of a square kilometre, 48 battalions were placed in the dark in front of the enemy's rifles, and without the support of their own guns. They had not established themselves in any fire position. In spite of all this, the hostile position might have been captured at that hour; nay, it should have been captured. If the high opinion people have of the German discipline is justified, why did not twenty-four fresh battalions attack energetically for a matter of three minutes, instead of remaining for eight hours, till the next morning, before the muzzles of the French rifles? The answer is simple. There was no energy left in them; and yet histories and other books prate of their heroic deeds, and of their go!

Both the artillery and infantry contributed to the capture of St. Hubert; it is due solely to the artillery that the Germans kept possession of the farm, for they never gave the French guns the opportunity of shelling the place. Had they been able to do so, the remnants of the 59th company gathered together at that spot would have scattered in all directions.

It will be noticed that the losses were severest among the infantry whose attacks failed. The losses of the four battalions of the 32nd Brigade, who made the only combined attack of the whole day, were, on the contrary, unimportant. The whole brigade only lost 7 Officers and 104 men. Under these circumstances, one cannot exactly see that they had any sufficient reason to retire as they did. In the VIIth Corps the only regiments which suffered considerably were the 39th and 73rd. It is sufficient to consult the appendix in the official account to see that the action of the infantry of the VIIth Corps is hardly deserving of notice.

Moltke's greatest feat was the successful issue of the operations round Metz, which culminated in the battle of the 18th. The losses, which at Sedan were considerably less, the capitulation following immediately after the fight, together with the political consequences of the day, have all combined to lead even experts astray. A hundred intelligent laymen will mention Sedan for one who will mention Gravelotte-St. Privat. Moltke, however, thought differently. The imprisonment of Bazaine's army in Metz was the turning point of the whole war, everything else that occurred was but a sequel to the same.

The balance of military and political power lay with Bazaine's army. Once it was disposed of the war was as good as won; it only became a question of time. The German nation has, owing to the streams of blood which flowed before Metz, never thoroughly known what occurred at these several battles. Mars-la-Tour and Gravelotte are not popular names in Germany, and will not become so, the sacrifice at which the victories were won being too great.

Up to the 18th August the great Moltke had to contend with totally different difficulties than those with which he had to contend between the 23rd August and the 2nd September. Previous to Sedan, as previous to Gravelotte, both armies quitted their line of

advance, wheeled to the north, and were eventually thrown in an easterly direction against their opponent. All the circumstances were more favourable during the second series of operations than during the first. Above all, during the operations which led to Sedan, Moltke was working with two Generals who understood him, and who endeavoured to anticipate his wishes, while previous to the 18th, one General had constantly to be kept in check, and the other had sometimes to be urged on. The latter richly atoned for any error he may have committed by his conduct on the 18th; the former must, owing to his conduct at Gravelotte, be removed from the list of great Generals. Moltke's greatest deed is the Gravelotte-St. Privat campaign.

We have endeavoured to place before our readers Captain Hoenig's views on the battle under review. No mere epitome can, however, do them full justice; it is necessary to study his book. It may occur to those who read it that Captain Hoenig at times exaggerates, or uses needlessly strong expressions, and also that he constantly repeats himself. We should, however, remember that an advocate is always privileged to use stronger expressions than a judge, and even to remind the jury at times of facts which he fears may possibly have escaped their notice. Such is Captain Hoenig's position; the judge and jury are the military public for whom he publishes his works, and he may rest assured that their verdict will not be unfavourable to the views he advocates.