

The Napoleon Series

The Campaign of 1814: Chapter 18, Part XII

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THE CAMPAIGN OF 1814

(after the documents of the imperial and royal archives of Vienna)

THE ALLIED CAVALRY

DURING THE CAMPAIGN OF 1814

CHAPTER XVIII.

OPERATIONS OF THE AUSTRIAN ARMY OF THE SOUTH, FROM 3 MARCH 1814 TO THE END OF THE CAMPAIGN.

Entry of the Allied sovereigns into Paris. --At about 11 o'clock in the morning, the Emperor of Russia, the King of Prussia, and Schwarzenberg,¹ surrounded by the corps commanders and innumerable staff officers, preceded by the Cossacks of the Guard, crossed the barrier of Pantin. Descending the Faubourg Saint-Martin, they went along the boulevards and stopped at the Place de la Concorde to see defile before them the column formed by the light cavalry of the Russian Guard, two battalions of Austrian grenadiers, two battalions of Austrian infantry of the IIIrd Corps, two battalions of the Württemberg 5th Infantry Regiment Prince Frederick, the Russian grenadiers, the Russian and Prussian Guards behind which came the three divisions of Russian cuirassiers.

Conference at the Talleyrand mansion and proclamation of the Allies. --After the review, the Allied troops settled into bivouac, at the Champ de Mars, in the Champs-Élysées, on the Place de la Concorde, and the Emperor

¹Blücher, still too ill, had remained at Montmartre. He only entered Paris on the 1st of April alone, and went to live in the lodging which had been prepared for him in the hôtel de Fouché. (*Tagebuch des Generals der Kavallerie Grafen von Nostitz, Kriegsgeschichtliche Einzelschriften*, 1884, V.)

Alexander settled at the town mansion (hôtel) of Talleyrand. The Prince of Bénévent had already been there for some hours in conference with Nesselrode, and had in principle settled with the Secretary of State of the Czar the principal questions which it was important to resolve at once. When Alexander arrived at the Rue Saint-Florentin, Pozzo di Borgo, the Duke of Dahlberg, the Abbé de Pradt, Baron Louis, and General Dessolles awaited his arrival. A few moments afterwards, the King of Prussia, Schwarzenberg, and Prince Liechtenstein rejoined the Emperor of Russia. Thanks to the previous agreement between Nesselrode and Talleyrand, resolved to do everything possible to secure the fall of the Emperor, thanks to the royalist declarations of the Duke of Dahlberg and Baron Louis, one brought the sovereigns and the Generalissimo, to declare in a proclamation signed by the Emperor of Russia that they would neither negotiate with Napoleon nor with any member of his family, and invited the Senate to appoint "a provisional government which may prepare a constitution."²

The fall of the Emperor, therefore, seemed irrevocably decided, and the idea of entrusting the regency to Marie-Louise had been discarded, as Caulaincourt presented himself at the hôtel Talleyrand. He vainly endeavored to weaken the Emperor of Russia, and not having been able either to make him accept the conditions laid down by the Allies themselves at Châtillon, or to wrest from him the promise of recognizing the King of Rome, he had left with these last words of the Czar: "Bring me back the abdication, and then we shall see about the regency."

Movements and positions of the Allied corps remaining outside Paris. --While Talleyrand and his acolytes, happy at having at last succeeded in satiating the hatred they had devoted to the Emperor at the expense of national honor, were preparing to take advantage of this declaration of Alexander, who solemnly pledged and prepared for making the Senate complicit in their work of intrigue and vengeance, the various corps of the Allied armies, who had remained outside Paris, had used the day of the 31st, some to effect the few movements prescribed by the Generalissimo, some to settle as best they could in cantonments which they were to occupy only a short time.

² Proclamation of the Allies sovereigns: "The armies of the Allied powers have occupied the capital of France. The Allied sovereigns welcome the wishes of the French nation. They state:"

"That if the conditions of peace were to reaffirm the strongest guarantees in connection with the ambition of Bonaparte, they must be more favorable when, *by a return to a wise government*, France itself will give the assurance of this peace."

"The Allied sovereigns proclaim accordingly:"

"That they will no longer negotiate with Napoleon Bonaparte or any member of his family."

"Let them respect the integrity of ancient France, *as it existed under its legitimate kings*."

"They may even do more because they always profess the principle that for the happiness of Europe, France must be great and strong."

"That they will recognize and guarantee the Constitution that the French nation will give itself. They therefore invite the Senate to designate a provisional government which can provide for the needs of the administration and prepare the Constitution that will suit the French people."

"The intentions which I have just expressed are common to all the Allied powers."

"P. H. M. I. (for his Imperial majesty) ALEXANDER."

"The Secretary of State, Count De Nesselrode."

"Paris, 31 March 1814, three o'clock in the afternoon. "

Movements of the cavalry of Emanuel and Pahlen. --In the night of the 30th to the 31st of March General Emanuel, at the head of about 2,000 horses of the corps of Langeron, had crossed the Seine at Saint-Cloud. On the morning of the 31st he had continued his movement towards Versailles, Berny and Chevreuse, and picked up a hundred stragglers on his route, but he had not been able to reach the depots where had been hastened to the day before.³

Emanuel, finding nothing in front of him, had immediately obliqued to the left, and on the evening of the 31st his outposts, established on the banks of the Bièvres, connected with those of Pahlen.

This general officer, who had been joined on the morning of the 31st by the Russian cuirassiers of Kretov, whom a counter-order stopped at the barrier of the Trône, and whose Cossacks under Ilovaysky XII were still detached between the Seine and the Marne, had crossed the Seine at the bridge of Austerlitz with a thousand horses and 12 pieces of horse artillery and took the road to Fontainebleau. "From what I have learned," he wrote in the evening to Schwarzenberg, "the bulk of the enemy seems to have followed that route. I found a number of stragglers near the barriers. In Villejuif I came up against the tail of the infantry and I pushed on Rungis where I established my main body. The chain of my outposts goes from the banks of the Seine, near Ablon, to the road to Orléans."⁴

On the approach of the cavalry of Pahlen, the French rear-guard had, moreover, left its position at Chevilly, resumed its retrograde movement, and crossed the Yvette and the Ogre. Pahlen had observed it from afar with the Uhlans of Tchougouiev who stopped at Juvisy and pushed their vedettes towards Ris and Grigny, parallel to the line of small French posts. Although he had not encountered any resistance, General Pahlen was far from reassured. "The prisoners," he said in his dispatch, "pretend that Marshal Marmont is on the road to Fontainebleau. One part of the enemy troops would have taken with him the road to Orléans."

And he added at the end: "It is impossible for me to undertake anything useful and serious on account of the small number of troops I have at my disposal. Some squadrons follow the enemy. I will continue to march tomorrow."⁵

Movements of the IVth and IIIrd Corps. --The bulk of the IVth Corps had crossed the Marne at Charenton, and settled at Villeneuve-Saint-Georges. The cavalry of Prince Adam of Württemberg, forming the advanced guard of the corps, pushed between the Yerres and the Seine on the roads of Corbeil and Melun; the brigade of Jett, marching by the road to Melun, advanced as far as Combs-la-Ville and Lieusaint; the Walsleben Brigade, scouting on the side of Corbeil, occupied Soisy-sous-Étiolles and Draveil. One of its two regiments remained in support of Montgeron.⁶

In the IIIrd Corps, the Grimmer Brigade and a squadron had relieved the Württembergers and the light division of Crenneville before Vincennes, which continued to defend itself. The main body, beginning its movement at 8 o'clock in the morning, having crossed the bridge of Saint-Maur, had embarked on the road to Rozoy and Provins, and was in the evening between Sucy-en-Brie and Boissy-Saint-Léger; the Crenneville Division forming the

³Colonel of the 6th Hussars to the Minister of War, Le Perray, 30 March, 11 o'clock in the evening; Minister of War to General de Préval; General of Préval to the Minister of War, Versailles, 30 March, and General Fririon to the Minister of War. (*Archives of the War.*)

"The parties I left at Saint-Germain and at Versailles abandoned these cities on March 31st, at four o'clock in the morning. Yesterday the 31st, 3,000 horses took up their position at Saint-Cloud. (General de Préval to the Minister of War, Mantes, 1 April, 5 o'clock in the morning, *Archives of the War.*)

⁴STÄRKE, Eintheilung und Tagesbegebenheiten der Haupt-Armee im Monate März (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, III, 1), and Journal of Operations of Langeron (*Topographical Archives*, n° 29103).

⁵ Pahlen to Schwarzenberg, Rungis, 31 March, 7:45 in the evening (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, III, 512), and STÄRKE, Eintheilung und Tagesbegebenheiten der Haupt-Armee im Monate März (*Ibid.*, III, 1).

⁶STÄRKE, Eintheilung und Tagesbegebenheiten der Haupt-Armee im Monate März (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, III, 1).

vanguard of Gyulay, went as far as Brie-Comte-Robert; some squadrons flanked and scouted for the left of the corps on the side of Tournan.⁷

Movements of the Vth Corps. --Positions of the corps of Sacken and of the corps of the Army of Silesia. --The infantry of the Vth Corps defiled by Claye, but did not go beyond Chelles. Only General Frimont pushed with his cavalry to Saint Mandé. The brigade of Geramb, detached from the side of Crécy and Coulommiers, which had even pushed parties on La Ferté-Gaucher, had been ordered to reunite with the bulk of the Vth Corps, and although it had set out immediately it was physically impossible for it to join the Bavarian Field-Marshal until the next day at the earliest.⁸

Sacken, recalled by the Czar and appointed military governor of Paris, had given to Vasilchikov the command of those of his troops, who still remained at Meaux. Finally, Saint-Denis capitulated on the afternoon of the 31st, and had been occupied by one of the regiments of Vorontsov.

When the Emperor encountered the cavalry of Belliard on the night of the 30th to 31st of March, the convention had not yet been signed, and without the accounts of Belliard and Hulin, no doubt he would have followed his first idea and would not have marched on Paris on the morning of the 31st. The presence of the Emperor, only the news of his arrival, would probably have sufficed to alter the whole situation. Even after the signing of the capitulation, nothing prevented the troops of the Marshals from returning to Paris. Article 3 of the capitulation allowed for such a procedure, since it had simply been stipulated that hostilities might resume on 31 March at 9 o'clock in the morning. The return of the Emperor to Paris, on the 31st of March in the morning, at the head of the troops of Marmont and Mortier, would have revived all the courage. Nothing was still desperate or lost.⁹

Talleyrand, unable to continue his intrigues, would hasten to leave Paris, and although it is impossible to determine the character and scope of the events which would have been the consequence of this resolution, there is every reason to think that the Allies would have hesitated to fight again in the streets of the city itself. This was an event of concern, not without reason, to several of the Allied generals, and Yorck in particular. Capitulation, in fact, had not been sufficient to dispel the fears of the commander of the 1st Corps of the Army of Silesia. Remaining outside Paris while the sovereigns were entering, Yorck, conversing with the officers of his staff, told them that Napoleon, like a wounded boar, would rush headlong on the Allies and gamble his crown by obliging them to give battle to him. Not believing in the sincerity of the sentiments which were lent to the population of the capital, to the few sympathetic manifestations which had marked the entry of the sovereigns, the Prussian general was convinced that at any rate a numerous garrison should be left in Paris itself. Blaming the lightness and carelessness of the strategists of the great headquarters, he criticized all the more severely the entry to Paris that lacked ammunition. His corps had consumed everything, and the last box containing the last reserves of powder and ammunition had flown during the battle of the 30th.¹⁰

Positions of the French troops around Paris. --Unhappily for him, and though he had nothing to spare, Napoleon, yielding to the representations of his lieutenants,¹¹ renounced his first plan. Returning to Fontainebleau, he had

⁷*Id in ibid.*

⁸TAXIS, Tagebuch (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, XIII, 32), and STÄRKE, Eintheilung und Tagesbegebenheiten der Haupt-Armee im Monate März (*Ibidem*, 111, 1).

⁹ In the letter he wrote to the Prefect of the Loiret on the 31st of March, the Emperor said to him: "If we had only delayed the convention by three hours, the arrival of the Emperor would have prevented the fall of the capital." (*Archives of the War.*)

¹⁰DROYSEN, Das Leben des Feldmarschalls Grafen Yorck von Wartenburg, II, 390.

¹¹We find in the *Aufzeichnungen* of General von Bismarck the following phrase which the Württemberg general attributes to Louis XVIII: "The first ingrates to Bonaparte were his companions in glory, men filled with his blessings, enriched with his treasures, ennobled by his power. The marshals sacrificed everything for one purpose,

ordered Marmont to make the advance guard, to unite all his troops at Essonnes, to send the magazine of Corbeil to Fontainebleau, to direct the powder, the depots of cavalry, of infantry, and trains of equipment and artillery leaving from Paris on Orléans where the Government was to settle. Mortier received at the same time the order to mass his army corps between Essonnes and Fontainebleau. Orléans became for a moment the pivot of the army.¹²

Movements and positions of Ney, Souham and Maurin. --While the troops of the marshals settled behind the Essonnes,¹³ the bulk of the Imperial army continued its forced march on Fontainebleau, where the Emperor, still hesitating between two projects: attacking Paris or retreating behind the Loire, wanted to concentrate all his strength. Ney, who was marching at the head of the column with the Guard, had left Troyes on the morning of the 31st. At noon he arrived at Villeneuve-l'Archevêque. The Old Guard was between that town and Pont-sur-Yonne. Two battalions, composed of the best marchers, preceded it with the cavalry of Sebastiani, whom General de Piré had orders to rejoin. The cavalry of Saint-Germain flanked the movement of the Prince of La Moskowa. But although the Marshal's troops had made the strongest possible steps to rejoin the Imperial headquarters, the Imperial Guard stopped on the evening of the 31st at Champigny-sur-Yonne. The cavalry of Saint-Germain remaining at Villeneuve-la-Guyard, at the direction of the Prince de la Moskowa, until the Guard had finished defiling. General Henrion having spent the night at Sens, was to leave 1 April at daybreak to come and take a stand at Fossard. His division was charged with serving as an escort to the artillery park of the army. Generals Lefol and Defrance were ordered to settle at Villeneuve-la-Guyard, and leave 2 April for Fontainebleau. The headquarters of Marshal Ney was at Pont-sur-Yonne the 31st in the evening.¹⁴

Souham, coming from Nogent and arrived at Montereau at three o'clock in the afternoon, had occupied Moret with a battalion and Nemours with National Guards. He made, at the order of Ney, moved by General Montholon, who was to remain the next day behind the Yonne, and not to commence his movement on Fontainebleau until the 2nd at noon.¹⁵

The cavalry of Maurin had arrived at Fontainebleau and had settled at the bivouac at the entrance of the town.¹⁶

Movements of Kaisarov and Seslavin. --Information sent by these generals. --Although it had not been harassed the march of the corps of Ney and the troops of Souham had, however, had been observed and reported to the Allied headquarters by Seslavin and Kaisarov.

that of preserving their position. They forgot all measure, all personal dignity. The masses of the people, the civil officials, the sub-lieutenants, that is to say the army, remained faithful to the Emperor. But the fortune of France was not attached to them alone."

¹² Chief of Staff to Marmont, Mortier, Feltre; Records of Berthier (*Archives of the War*); Journal of Boyer de Rébeval (*Ibid.*), and STÄRKE, Eintheilung und Tagesbegebenheiten der Haupt-Armee im Monate März (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, III, 1).

¹³Marmont de Corbeil in Essonnes. Mortier behind him between Essonnes and Fontainebleau with his headquarters in Mennecy.

¹⁴Ney to the Chief of Staff, Troyes, 31 March, 3 o'clock in the morning; Villeneuve-l'Archevêque, 31 March, noon; Pont-sur-Yonne, 31 March, 7 o'clock in the evening. (*Archives of the War.*)

¹⁵Souham to the Chief of Staff, Montereau, 31 March, 7 o'clock in the evening, and Ney to the Chief of Staff, Pont-sur-Yonne, 31 March, 7 o'clock in the evening. (*Ibid.*)

¹⁶General Maurin to the Chief of Staff, Fontainebleau, 31 March. (*Ibid.*)

The latter, having arrived at Provins on the 31st March at 6 o'clock in the evening,¹⁷ had been able to communicate with Seslavin, whose parties were scouring the country along the Seine from Nogent to Melun. Seslavin had indeed occupied Nogent a few hours after the departure of Souham. He had learned that the Emperor had left the day before to go straight to Paris by Fontainebleau, and that corps of Ney was going to Sens, and was to continue on the following day on Fontainebleau.¹⁸

Movements of Macdonald and of the corps under his orders. --Macdonald, at the head of the 2nd echelon of the Imperial army, had arrived at Troyes on the morning of 31 March, with the 11th Corps and the 5th Corps of Cavalry. After a halt of two hours at Sainte-Savine,¹⁹ he had resumed his march, and his infantry had stopped in the evening between Estissac and Saint-Liébauld. The 5th Corps of Cavalry covered his right and bivouacked on the side of Dierrey-Saint-Pierre and Dierrey-Saint-Julien. Behind him, Oudinot, who had left Vendevre in the morning, had not been able, as the Duke of Tarente had hoped, to reach Fontvannes. Two of his infantry divisions had been unable to go farther than Troyes, where the Duke of Reggio had established his headquarters. The 6th Corps of Cavalry occupied Pont-Sainte-Marie, Creney, and Sainte-Maure, and observed the roads of Piney, Pougy, Ramerupt, Arcis, and Plancy.²⁰

All these corps were ordered to recommence marching the 1st of April at 4 o'clock in the morning, to go to Sens by way of Villeneuve-l'Archevêque.

Movements of Winzingerode, Tettenborn and Chernishev. --Events on the rear of the Allies during the days of 29, 30 and 31 March. --Orders of Duka. --Operations of Prince Maurice of Liechtenstein. --Winzingerode, after having rallied Chernishev on 29 March at Saint-Dizier, had stopped at Montier-en-Der in the evening. Following the French columns from which he had lost track, he had, in the course of the 30th, pushed Tettenborn in the direction of Troyes. But all these movements were executed with so much prudence and slowness that the Cossacks did not arrive at Troyes until the departure of the last French troops. Although more specifically charged with following the corps of the army of Napoleon, Winzingerode had hesitated to attach himself to them before being reassured about what was happening on the side of Chaumont, Langres and Dijon, where the anxiety caused by the appearance of the French troops was still far from being calmed.

In spite of the change of direction of the corps which the Emperor brought back to Paris, the insurrection was spreading on all sides, and had assumed proportions so considerable that the Feldzeugmeister Duka, although momentarily reassured concerning the fate of Langres and Dijon, was obliged to redouble vigilance and precaution. The contradictory information which Raigecourt and Colonel Wieland had sent to the Feldzeugmeister Duka, the absence of positive news from the Generalissimo and the Allied Great Army, did not even enable Duka²¹ to modify

¹⁷ In the dispatch he addressed to Schwarzenberg, from Provins, 31 March at 6 o'clock in the evening (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, III, 518), Kaisarov even announced to the Generalissimo that the first troops of the Imperial army were already crossing the Seine at Montereau. He added that he proposed the next day "to follow with the French army as close as possible to the right bank of the Seine, in order to better discover the movements of the enemy." (Original dispatch in French.)

¹⁸ Seslavin, notes in French dated from Nogent, 31 March, 2 o'clock in the afternoon and 9 o'clock in the evening (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, III, 516 and 516 a), and STÄRKE, Eintheilung und Tagesbegebenheiten der Haupt-Armee im Monate März. (*Ibid.*, III, 1).

¹⁹ Macdonald to the Chief of Staff, Sainte-Savine, 31 March, and Chief of Staff to Macdonald. (*Archives of the War.*)

²⁰ Macdonald to the Chief of Staff, Sainte-Savine, 31 March; Chief of Staff to Macdonald and Oudinot; Orders of movement, Vendevre, 30 March, 6 o'clock in the evening, and Troyes, 31 March evening. (*Archives of the War.*)

²¹ Duka, writing on the morning of the 29th to Raigecourt, said to him: "The information you give me does not at all agree with those sent to me by Colonel Wieland. Send strong detachments of cavalry in all directions, especially on the right towards Joinville to learn exactly what the enemy is doing. (Feldzeugmeister Duka to the General-Major, Count de Raigecourt, Dijon, 29 March, 9 o'clock in the morning; *K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, III, 484 a)

the measures he had taken to cover the headquarters of the Emperor Francis. He knew, however, since the evening of the 28th of March, that the French post at Rolampont had retired from Vesaignes to Chaumont. Thinking that French cavalry had abandoned Chaumont, and knowing that everything was calm at Langres, he had ordered Colonel Wieland to send parties to Chaumont and to push patrols on the left towards Château-Villain in order to connect beside Chanceaux²² with Prince Maurice Liechtenstein. A squadron of the light division of this general was to come by Vitteaux as far as the intersection of the roads of Semur and Avallon, in order to cover Dijon and to watch over the bands which had organized themselves in the Moryan.²³

On the morning of the 29th, calmed about what was happening at Langres and at Chaumont, but more and more preoccupied with the progress of the armed peasant bands²⁴ gathered on the side of Semur and Avallon, who were pushing towards Beaune and Chalon, threatening his communications with Lyon, Duka ordered Wieland to fall back on Dijon and regulate his march so as to arrive there on 31 March. The colonel had orders to make follow by the detached squadrons on the side of Chaumont, and to give Raigecourt notice of his movement.²⁵

Maurice Liechtenstein was also to bring back his detached parties from the sides of Langres and of Chaumont, leaving only the troops necessary to supply the posts, and to observe the road to Châtillon-sur-Seine and the valley towards Tonnerre and Montbard, where one expected to see General Allix coming from Avallon.²⁶

Although he had almost nothing before him, although he knew since the 28th that the French had no one left in Arc-en-Barrois, Château-Villain and La Ferté-sur-Aube, Prince Liechtenstein could not, however, suffice for the task which had been imposed upon him. In charge of watching the whole countryside from the Marne to Montbard, he had detached 11 squadrons for this purpose. Finally, obliged by the last orders of Duka, motivated by the false news signaling the appearance of the French cavalry at Semur, to extend south of Montbard as far as Vitteaux, he rightly protested against this measure which deprived him of his reserves and obliged him "to put all his people in detachment or in pickets."²⁷

From the information collected and transmitted by Liechtenstein to the Feldzeugmeister, it appeared that the French had evacuated Bar-sur-Seine and that their first post was on the side of Clairvaux.

But on all sides the reports signaled the presence of numerous bands of armed peasants. An Austrian captain,²⁸ who had accompanied Colonel de Galbois to the French outposts, had informed Prince Maurice Liechtenstein, on his return, that "he had been stopped several times in the woods of La Ferté." Major Wusthoff, detached at Courban, informed Liechtenstein that, because of the great number of armed peasants, he was unable to advance, and must

²²Feldzeugmeister Duka to Major General Count Raigecourt, Dijon, 28 March evening. (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, III, 484.)

²³Feldzeugmeister Duka to Prince Maurice Liechtenstein, Dijon, 28 March, 7 o'clock in the evening, (*Ibid.*, III, 481 m)

²⁴We shall have occasion to speak in detail in Chapter XX: *Operations of the Austrian Army of the South during the month of March*, of the events to which the Feldzeugmeister Duka refers.

²⁵Feldzeugmeister Duka to Colonel Wieland, Dijon, 29 March. (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, III, 484 o).

²⁶Feldzeugmeister Duka to Prince Maurice Liechtenstein, Dijon, 29 March. (*Ibid.*, III, 484 s and u.)

²⁷Feldzeugmeister Duka to Prince Maurice Liechtenstein, Dijon, 29 March, 8 o'clock in the morning (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, III, 484 u), and Prince Maurice Liechtenstein to the Feldzeugmeister Duka, Chanceaux, 29 March (*Ibid.*, III, 484 v and t). Liechtenstein ended the last of these dispatches by saying to Duka: "I will report these facts to the Prince of Schwarzenberg, but, while awaiting his orders, I send my last squadron to Vitteaux."

²⁸Captain Pichl to Prince Maurice of Liechtenstein, Courban, 29 March. (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, III, 509 f.)

take great precautions not to be surprised and captured.²⁹ Further east, another detachment, sent to Chalancey and Prauthoy (south of Langres), had given up everywhere against armed peasants and had been unable to penetrate anywhere.

To the left of Liechtenstein, the party sent on the evening of the 28th to Semur had not detected the slightest trace of the French cavalry reported on this side, but it had found the whole country fully boiling, and had been accompanied by fusil shot³⁰ as soon as he retired to return to Chanceaux.

As the insurrection became widespread, Liechtenstein had demanded Duka on the evening of the 29th to have the detachments he had been obliged to relieve from Semur, Avallon and Montbard, and had informed the Feldzeugmeister of his plan to moving on the 30th on Chatillon and the 31st on Bar-sur-Seine.³¹ But on the evening of the 29th, Duka, on the contrary, ordered him to undertake something against General Allix. Liechtenstein, however, was to head towards Joigny, Sens and the Seine valley only when the troops sent by the Feldzeugmeister and reinforced by two regiments of cavalry coming from the Austrian Army of the South would have succeeded in dispersing the armed assemblies of Semur, of Avallon and of Autun.³²

It should, moreover, be remarked that the news from the east was less and less reassuring, and very unlikely to have Duka to weaken the forces he thought necessary to cover Dijon, leaving Liechtenstein to moving further from him. General Hirsch, who commanded at Vesoul, had just pointed out to him the appearance of armed peasants in the woods of Cintrey and Lavoncourt, and to tell him that he had had to charge the detachment established at Combeaufontaine to scour the country on the side of Cintrey. General Hirsch had added in this dispatch: "The country is becoming less and less secure on the side of Lavoncourt, and I beg Your Excellency to send through Gy the couriers coming from Gray. The roads of Bourbonne by Jussey and that of Vauvillers by Luxeuil and Faverney are safe until now. The terrible excesses of the Cossacks, and the unheard-of demands of the conveyors who conducted the baggage of the army, have obliged some of them to have come under fusil shot, attacking our posts of police, correspondence, and safety."³³

Concerned at the extent of the uprising in the eastern departments, knowing that the French troops still occupied Bar-sur-Aube, Feldzeugmeister Duka sent the 30th in the morning, Colonel Wieland³⁴ ordering him to remain at his positions at Til-Châtel. The presence of General Allix in Auxerre, the news of his march on Avallon and Montbard and the appearance of his troops in the valley of the Serain, on the side of Sauvigny, were all causes of concern for Duka who announced to Liechtenstein the sending of reinforcements composed of a regiment of cavalry and a horse battery.

The reports of Liechtenstein, though they continued to be of little reassurance, gave an exact idea of the situation in these parts, the state of mind of the population, the extension of the insurrection and the importance of the services which the Emperor might have given to a general levy, if it had been well organized.

"General Allix," wrote Prince Maurice Liechtenstein on the 30th of March,³⁵ "can scarcely be taken. He stops nowhere, simply organizing armaments and facilitating the formation of bands. He always knows all our

²⁹Prince Maurice de Liechtenstein to Feldzeugmeister Duka, Chanceaux, 29 March. (*Ibid.*, III, 509.)

³⁰Prince Maurice Liechtenstein to the Feldzeugmeister Duka, Chanceaux, 29 March. (*Ibid.*, III, 488 g.)

³¹Prince Maurice Liechtenstein to the Feldzeugmeister Duka, Chanceaux, 29 March. (*K. K. Kriegs, Archiv.*, III, 488 h.)

³²Duka to Maurice Liechtenstein, Dijon, 29 March, 11 o'clock in the evening, (*Ibid.*, III, 488)

³³Major General Hirsch to the Feldzeugmeister Duka, Vesoul, 29 March. (*Ibid.*, III ad 496.)

³⁴Feldzeugmeister Duka to Colonel Wieland, Dijon, 30 March. (*K. K. Kriegs, Archiv.*, III, 509.)

³⁵Prince Maurice Liechtenstein to Feldzeugmeister Duka, Chanceaux, 30 March. (*Ibid.*, III, 488.)

movements. All I can do is to throw him on Montargis and perhaps on Orléans. *The armed peasants are already very much to be feared and will become more formidable from day to day. There is little to be done against them when we have another military mission to fulfill. Moving columns of light infantry should be sent against them, which will scarcely meet with any serious resistance.* The stragglers, the isolated men, the couriers, the small parties of cavalry are the only ones menaced by the armed peasants, who hide themselves in the woods, in the vineyards, on the slopes of the hills; but these bands do not venture into open terrain. The Morvan is the most dangerous area for us. The same is true of that between Autun, Semur, Avallon, Auxerre, and from there to Montargis and Orléans, as from all the territory extending from Autun up towards Nevers and Mâcon, because the country is wooded and rugged, villages rather rare, houses isolated, inhabitants ferocious and ready for anything. If a corps of the army of the South were sent to Paris, it would be necessary to make it pass through Autun and Auxerre to put an end to these bands." And Liechtenstein added as proof of his words: "My detachment, which has remained at Avallon, has had many battles. It had its communications cut off, its couriers kidnapped, its vedettes and its scouts killed or wounded. Only the energetic attitude of Major Wüsthoff at Avallon and Captain Oenhausen at Autun³⁶ drew them out of this critical situation. Major Nagy was on the side of Semur with 60 horses; he entered that city where there were no enemy troops. He has discovered traces of their passage, but he could not find anything about the direction taken by the French. He came back last night and left a small cavalry party at Semur."³⁷

On the night of the 30th to the 31st, Allix, established at Sauvigny-en-Terre-Plaine, was preparing to resume his movement on Montbard at two o'clock in the morning, when a courier from the Minister of War ordered him to return to Sens. Immediately modifying his dispositions, Allix traveled along the valley of the Serain by Noyers and Chablis on Seignelay, where he arrived on the 1st of April in the evening.³⁸

The patrols of Liechtenstein were therefore able to go from Montbard to Semur without encountering anything, without seeing either regular French troops or peasant bands. The detachment sent for reconnaissance on Tonnerre, where the French had no one left, had however been attacked on its return by armed peasants ambushed in the woods.

To the right of Liechtenstein the detachment which he held to Courban continued to be immobilized, and did not even dare, because of the great number and the audacity of the bands and the extent of the woods, to scout or push on Bar-sur-Aube.³⁹

Operations of the Prussian III^d Corps against Soissons. --To the North of Paris, while awaiting the arrival of Borstell, whom the Duke of Saxe-Weimar had only left on the 29th and 30th of March, Bülow continued without success to besiege Soissons. An energetic sortie of the garrison had succeeded in destroying and overturning, in the afternoon of the 28th, the works of approach of the Prussians. Under the protection of his batteries Bülow had, however, not only repaired the destroyed works, but had, in the night of the 29th to the 30th, completed the screened passage of the bastion of Saint-Jean. The energy of Commandant Gérard did not flag for a moment, and in the night of the 30th to 31st he succeeded in setting fire to the blind.

On the morning of the 31st, to the surprise of Gérard and the garrison, the Prussians had taken away their artillery, disarmed their siege batteries, abandoned the trenches, and returned to the heights which surround and dominate Soissons. Bülow was preparing to raise the siege of Soissons. However, before he began his movement on Paris, he had given General von Krafft, on the 30th, the order to march with his brigade to Compiègne, and to seize this place by a brusque attack.

³⁶We shall have occasion to speak in detail of the events of Autun in Chapter XX.

³⁷ Prince Maurice Liechtenstein to Feldzeugmeister Duka, Chanceaux, 30 March. (*Ibid.*, III, 488.)

³⁸ General ALLIX, *Political and Military Memories*.

³⁹ Prince Maurice Liechtenstein to Feldzeugmeister Duka, Chanceaux, 31 March. (*K. K. Kriegs, Archiv.*, III, 509.)

Movements of the flying corps of Geismar from 29 to 31 March. --Affair of Venette and attempt on Compiègne. --On the morning of the 29th of March, Colonel von Geismar, departed from Montdidier, had pushed with his flying corps as far as Cuvilly, to the intersection of the roads leading from Roye and Montdidier to Pont Sainte-Maxence and Compiègne. Informed by his spies that reinforcements, estimated at 2,000 men of Polish troops, were expected in that place, he resolved to reconnoiter it the next day, and to try to take it by a coup de main.

Although he had endeavored to conceal the direction taken by his column, for which he had been obliged to follow only the cross-roads, though he marched briskly, he neither succeeded in surprising the garrison, nor in deceiving the vigilance of Major Otenin. When the flying corps came to the plateau of Margny, his approach had been pointed out, the garrison was under arms, the tocsin sounded everywhere. Colonel von Geismar, obliged to give up a now impossible coup de main, at least wished to reconnoiter the outskirts of the fortress, and for this purpose pushed two detachments on the villages of Venette and Margny occupied by some armed peasants, that were burned by the Cossacks.⁴⁰

Master of these two villages, Geismar was able to reconnoiter near the very edge of the square, and to realize that it was impossible to attempt anything against it without the assistance of infantry troops. He therefore decided to return to his bivouac at Cuvilly, where he remained during the day of the 30th. Before leaving Venette and Margny he had reported on the situation to Bülow, asking him to have one of his brigades support the attack he planned to attempt on the 31st.

On the morning of the 31st, Geismar again turned against Compiègne. The fire of Venette and Margny had borne fruit, and the armed peasants were careful not to disturb or to point out his march on Margny. The reconnaissance of the 29th, however, had awakened Compiègne, and Major Otenin, expecting at all times to have to resist a serious attack, had placed some of his troops in front of the bridge on the right bank of the Oise River, thus surveying the roads of Venette, Cuvilly, and Noyon.

The approach of Geismar had been immediately pointed out to him by his scouts. Besides, the Russian Colonel, thinking he could find before Compiègne the Prussian infantry, without which he could undertake nothing, confined himself to skirmish with the French forward positions between Margny and Venette. But the bulk of the Prussian 6th Brigade (General von Krafft) coming from Soissons had not passed Trosly-Breuil and Cuise-la-Motte.

Colonel von Sydow, coming from Noyon, arrived at the end of the day at Venette and Margny, with some battalions and a few guns; it was too late to engage, and Geismar and Sydow, awaiting the arrival of General von Krafft, who was to join them during the night, settled at the bivouac on the heights.⁴¹

1 April. --Almost complete immobility of the Allied armies during the day of the 1st of April. On the evening of the 31st of March, at the end of the conference held at the Hôtel de Saint-Florentin, military operations had ceased to occupy the first place in the preoccupations of the sovereigns present in Paris and of the Generalissimo. Politics had regained the upper hand. Without speaking of the King of Prussia, who saw nothing but through Alexander's eyes, the Generalissimo himself, perhaps because of the absence of the Emperor Francis, found himself in need of paying more attention, to give more importance to the works of Talleyrand than to the movements of marshals Marmont and Mortier, and to the plans of Napoleon.

⁴⁰Major Otenin to the Minister of War and Mayor of Compiègne to the Minister, Compiègne, 29 March. (*Archives of the War.*)

"The horsemen of Geismar burned 60 houses in Venette and massacred the inhabitants there." Colonel Geismar in his Tagebuch (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, IV, 178) says that he burned Venette "because the inhabitants had sounded the tocsin to give alarm and call everyone to arms."

⁴¹Major Guillemin (from the 24th Infantry) to the Minister of War, Le Mans, 20 April (*Archives of the War*); Tagebuch des Streifcorps unter Befehle des the Kaiserlichen Russischen Obersten von Geismar, während dem Feldzüge 1814 vom 13^{ten} Februar bis 11^{ten} April (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, IV, 178); SCHREIBER, *History of the Prussian Infantry Regiment n° 21* and *Zeitschrift für Kunst und Wissenschaft des Krieges*, year 1830.

The Senate had been summoned extraordinarily by Talleyrand to nominate a provisional government. The members of this government, carefully chosen by him, either among his private friends, such as the Duke of Dahlberg and the Marquis de Jaucourt, or among the militant royalists like the Abbé de Montesquiou, or among those who failed to obtain favors from the Emperor, who hoped like General de Beurnonville⁴² to obtain from a new regime rewards to which they had no right, and were to be nothing but docile instruments in the hands of the vice-elect. The results of this session absorbed to such a degree the attention scarcely thought of taking the strictly necessary measures imposed by the military situation, by the necessity of facing an unlikely yet possible attack. They confined themselves to letting Wrede continue his march from Chelles to Rosny and Paris. The bulk of the Vth Corps stopped at Saint-Mandé in the evening. The advanced guard occupied the Faubourg Saint-Antoine.⁴³

The destruction of the bridges of Choisy-le-Roi, and the impossibility of crossing the IIIrd and IVth corps on to the left bank of the Seine, nevertheless compelled the Generalissimo to modify the orders given to the Crown Prince of Württemberg and to Gyulay, and recall their troops on Charenton. The cavalry of Württemberg remained alone in the advanced guard at Créteil and at Maisons-Alfort.

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⁴² It was only two years later, in July 1816, that Beurnonville finally obtained the baton of marshal. In the file of the Marshal kept in the Administrative Archives, we find some curious information which leaves no doubt as to the aims of Beurnonville. In July 1816, by putting his records of service before the eyes of Louis XVIII, the former Minister of War of the Convention reminded the king that: "When the Allies entered Paris on 30 March 1814, he was made a member of the Provisional Government, and it was he who, after having fought the regency in the night of the 5th to the 6th of April with the Emperor of Russia, persuaded the King of Prussia to declare against it."

Claiming the marshalate to which he was raised on 3 July 1816, he had added with his hand to this memorandum the following note, rather curious if we refer to the period at which it was written: "The Battle of Jemmappes was the only one which had not given marshals to France, and was the oldest as the first of all."

One finds in another piece in the same dossier, another document of no less interest, dated 14 April 1819: "*As early as 3 June 1814, the King had deigned to tell General de Beurnonville that he would repair the injustice which, he had experienced at the first promotion of marshals and that he would be the first he would do. His Majesty was not ignorant that at the time when this military dignity had been suppressed in France in September, 1792, he had been replaced by the rank of army general, which had been conferred on Generals Dumouriez, Kellermann, Beurnonville, who must have enjoyed his prerogatives; that General de Beurnonville should, therefore, have been made marshal the second of the first promotion after General Kellermann, General Dumouriez having left French service; he consequently raised him to the dignity of Marshal de France on 3 July 1816, and on the 14th of the same month Marshal de Beurnonville took his oath in the hands of the King. (Ministry of War, Administrative Archives.)*

⁴³TAXIS, Tagebuch. (K.. K.. *Kriegs Archiv.*, XIII, 32.)