

# The Napoleon Series

## The Campaign of 1814: Chapter 18, Part XIII

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# THE CAMPAIGN OF 1814

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

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## THE ALLIED CAVALRY

DURING THE CAMPAIGN OF 1814

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### CHAPTER XVIII.

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

**Movements of the cavalry of Pahlen, Ilovaysky XII and Emanuel.** --The VI<sup>th</sup> Corps, after handing over to the grenadiers the custody of the barriers of Paris, remained for the whole day of 1 April in its positions at Belleville, with the exception, however, of four battalions of eiger of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> Regiments which, crossing the bridge of Austerlitz, advanced on the road to Fontainebleau in order to be inserted with the vanguard of Pahlen.

From Rungis, where he had spent the night, Pahlen<sup>1</sup> had, at 7 o'clock in the morning, informed the Generalissimo that the French rearguard, which had stopped on the evening of the 31<sup>st</sup> at a league and a half from Ris, had fallen back at 4 o'clock in the morning, and marched in the direction of Fontainebleau. The Russian general had at once given orders to follow the retrograde movement of the French troops; but, justly preoccupied with his rear and his communications, he wrote at the same time to the Generalissimo: "I beg Your Highness to let me know on what point will I find my support, since so far there are no troops between the barriers of Paris and me, and that there are

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<sup>1</sup>Pahlen to Schwarzenberg, Rungis, 1 April, 7 o'clock in the morning. (Original in French, *K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, IV, 3.)

not even posts at these barriers."<sup>2</sup> Arrived at 3 o'clock in the afternoon at the Château de Petit-Bourg near Évry, Pahlen was still completing the information sent in the morning,<sup>3</sup> and added to the headquarters that "the few squadrons seen in the rear of Ris were on their approach withdrawn as far as the Essonnes, and that French troops of the three arms occupied a good position on the right bank of the river." The few prisoners which he had picked up on the way had also informed the Russian general that one of the arches of the stone bridge at Corbeil had already been blown up. Pahlen had also communicated with Ilovaysky XII, whose Cossacks had reached the same level as himself on the right bank of the Seine. One of these Cossacks had swam the Seine to announce the presence of French troops at Melun. At the same time that he was writing to the Generalissimo, Pahlen had also corresponded with General Emanuel, who, continuing to advance by the road to Orléans, had picked up only convoys and stragglers and expected to push the same day up to Longjumeau or Montlhéry. The bulk of the advanced guard of the cavalry of the Army of Silesia arrived in effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April in the evening at Montlhéry, and its tip only stopped at Arpajon. Finally, before returning the bulk of his cavalry to Juvisy in the evening and arranging his vedettes along the Essonne, Pahlen had reported to the Generalissimo of the movements which had taken place a little after 3 o'clock in the French lines. "The outposts announce to me," he wrote in a post-script, "that the enemy's infantry took up arms at Essonnes, and that the cavalry were mounted on horseback. We heard the drum and the cries of *Vive l'Empereur!* It is probable that the Emperor has just arrived, and it may well be that the troops of Essonnes are still fighting against me."<sup>4</sup>

**Orders of Napoleon to Marmont and Mortier.** --Pahlen was not mistaken. It was indeed the Emperor who had come to inspect at Essonnes the positions of his troops, and to secure for himself the manner in which Marshals Marmont and Mortier had executed his orders.

In fact, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, at 6 o'clock in the morning, the chief of staff had informed the two marshals that the Emperor, wishing to reunite the government at Orléans, and to assemble all his reserves there, had resolved to place himself with his army between Fontainebleau and Paris, and to have the left of the position of Essonnes occupied by Marmont on the right, and by Mortier, in order to oblige the Allies, in case of attack, to attempt a passage of the river on points which he would have chosen. While awaiting the arrival of the army which was to rejoin him on these positions, he ordered the two marshals to fortify the course of the Essonne, and to put Corbeil and Essonnes in a state of defense. Lastly foreseeing the movements of the cavalry of the Army of Silesia, the Emperor still recommended Marshal Marmont to send cavalry to Arpajon, to protect the place from the Cossacks, and to push his advanced guard and his reconnaissances as far as possible on the road to Paris.<sup>5</sup>

In order to be more completely covered on his left and to be better informed as to what might happen on the side of Arpajon, the Emperor had still sent General Defrance, calling for this purpose from Villeneuve-la-Guyard, the order to go with his division to Saint-Germain-sur-École and to scout on La Ferté-Alais and the road to Arpajon.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>*Id. in ibid.*

<sup>3</sup>Pahlen to Schwarzenberg, Château de Petit-Bourg by Évry, 1 April, 3 o'clock in the afternoon. (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, IV, 1.)

<sup>4</sup>Pahlen to Schwarzenberg, Petit-Bourg, 1 April, 3 o'clock in the afternoon. (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, IV, 1.)

<sup>5</sup>Chief of Staff to Marshals Marmont and Mortier, Fontainebleau, 1 April, 6 o'clock in the morning. (Records of Berthier, *Archives of the War.*)

Mortier, reporting to the Chief of Staff, announced that he had taken a position, his right at Plessis-Chenet, his left at Mennecey, his cavalry at Mennecey and Fontenay-le-Vicomte. The Marshal had also occupied in front of his face the village of Ormoy, situated in the valley of the Essonne, at the very foot of the plateau. The party detached by the Marshal on Arpajon had not yet returned at the moment when he sent his dispatch. (Mortier to the Chief of Staff, Le Plessis-Chenet, 1 April, *Archives of the War.*)

<sup>6</sup>The division of General Defrance counted only 430 combatants and 68 officers at the time of its arrival at Saint-Germain-sur-École. (General Defrance to the Chief of Staff, Saint-Germain-sur-École, 1 April. (*Ibid.*).

**Orders given to Macdonald. --Movements of the corps of Ney, Macdonald, and Oudinot.** On the evening of the 31<sup>st</sup> of March, at the same time that he informed Macdonald of the capitulation of Paris, the Emperor had ordered him to unite his troops on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, and those of Oudinot on positions where they should have slept. There is, therefore, every reason to suppose that at this moment the Emperor had not yet taken a definite course, and wished, by temporarily stopping a part of his troops, to spare them unnecessary marches and to avoid a loss of time until he had resolved whether to proceed southward and take a position behind the Loire.

When the dispatch of the Chief of Staff<sup>7</sup> was handed over to Macdonald at nine o'clock in the morning, at Villeneuve-l'Archevêque, the corps had been marching since four o'clock in the morning. They then stopped: the 11<sup>th</sup> Corps and the 5<sup>th</sup> of Cavalry at Villeneuve-l'Archevêque, the 7<sup>th</sup> Corps, and the 6<sup>th</sup> of Cavalry at Saint-Liébault.<sup>8</sup> In the interval the Emperor had returned to the idea of the march on Orléans. At nine o'clock in the morning, he ordered Ney to continue his movement rapidly on Fontainebleau, and cancelled the order previously given to Macdonald.<sup>9</sup>

This last order did not reach the Duke of Tarente on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, since at 6 o'clock in the evening the impossibility of supporting his troops and the appearance of numerous Cossack parties on his flanks and on his rear persuaded the Marshal that he should write to the Chief of Staff and inform him that "he had ordered his troops to depart for Sens, where he intended to concentrate them."<sup>10</sup>

The scouts of Tettenborn, marching from Méry on Sens, had shown themselves in force on the right of Oudinot on the side of Prunay and Faux-Villecerf, and had compelled the Duke of Reggio to keep them in check by the Jacquinet Division.<sup>10</sup>

**Biron lifts the siege of Verdun and settles in Bernécourt.** --In the rear of the Allies there had been no incidents on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, either on the side of Langres or on the side of Chanceaux. But Prince Biron of Courland, who after the 27 March affair at Paroches, had invested Verdun the next day, had had to decide to raise the siege of this place at the news of the approach of General Durutte against him at the head of 9,000 to 10,000 men drawn from the garrisons of Metz, Thionville, and Luxembourg. Biron had learned at the same time that M. von Alopeus, Governor-General of Lorraine, had directed on Neufchâteau the Russian troops of General Yuzefovich, relieved under Metz by the Hessians of General Müller whom Durutte had thrown back on the Luxembourg side. Not knowing whether General Durutte would attempt a coup de main at Nancy on the outskirts of Verdun, or on the other hand follow the road to Bar-le-Duc, Biron, after making one of his regiments file from Saint-Mihiel on Nancy, resolved to take a position at Bernécourt, halfway between Saint-Mihiel and Nancy. Not feeling strong enough to stand alone the front of Durutte, Biron had recalled to him of General Yuzefovich.

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<sup>7</sup>Chief of Staff to Marshal Macdonald, Fontainebleau, 31 March, 6 o'clock in the evening. (Records of Berthier, *Archives of the War*.)

<sup>8</sup> Macdonald to the Chief of Staff, Villeneuve-l'Archevêque, 1 April, 9 o'clock in the morning. (*Archives of the War*.)

<sup>9</sup>Chief of Staff to Ney, Macdonald, Oudinot. Fontainebleau, 9 and 11 o'clock in the morning, 1 April. (Records of Berthier, *Archives of the War*.)

<sup>10</sup>Macdonald to the Chief of Staff, Villeneuve-l'Archevêque, 1 April, 6 o'clock in the evening (*Archives of the War*) and Oudinot to Macdonald, Saint-Liébault, 1 April. (*Ibid.*)

The Duke of Tarente, writing at 6 o'clock in the evening to General Friant, said to him: "I have no news from the headquarters. I do not know what we want to do. The capture of Paris dismayed us. What will be the consequences for our unhappy country? "

The Marshal had, before he even received the orders of the Chief of Staff, ordered Molitor to assemble the 11<sup>th</sup> Corps at 1 o'clock in the morning to take a position on the road to Sens on the side of Foissy, Gérard to come between Lailly and Molinons.

The latter, renouncing his movement on Neufchâteau, motivated by the more and more serious attacks of the peasants on the Chaumont side, joined him at Bernécourt on 2 April. A few days later Durutte, informed of the Emperor's march to Paris, and fearing in his turn that he might be cut off from Metz, would return to that place which, until the end of the campaign, the troops of Biron, of Yuzefovich and of Müller invested, and that these three generals were preparing to attack at the moment when they were ordered to cease hostilities at once.

**Attack of Compiègne by the brigade of Krafft and the flying corps of Geismar.** --Of all the corps of the Allied armies operating in the principal theater of war, the Prussian III<sup>rd</sup> Corps (Bülow) was the only one which engaged during the day of the 1<sup>st</sup> of April. Charged with trying to capture Compiègne by a coup de main, General von Krafft had resolved to attack this place by the gates of Hulme and Pierrefonds, while Colonel von Geismar, reinforced by a battalion of Prussian jäger, would renew on the right bank of the Oise its attempts of the day before. Geismar, thus placed on the right wing of the line of investment downstream of Compiègne, began by demolishing with cannon the walls of the gardens, while the Prussian jäger skirmished with the defenders of the city and while some platoons of his cavalry filled the voids of the line. The very composition of the corps of Geismar did not lend itself to a battle of this kind, and the whole morning passed without the attack having made the least progress on this side.

On the left bank of the Oise, General von Krafft, having taken a position upstream of Compiègne, had prescribed in the morning two battalions of the Colberg Regiment to test the town by the road of Soissons, to throw back the enemy in to the city, to reconnoiter its strength and position, and to cover the movement of the Russian battery which was marching with them. The other three battalions of the 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade sent to the left were responsible for the attack on the south face.

The two battalions of the regiment of Colberg, repulsing without difficulty the French outposts established about 1,000 yards from the town, penetrated in pursuit into the great park. The Russian battery took up a position, directed its fires against the château, and opened a breach in the rampart. A first sortie from the garrison shook the Prussian skirmishers, whom General von Krafft was obliged to reinforce, and who succeeded in re-occupying their former positions, which a second sortie soon led to its retaking. Until 3 o'clock in the afternoon the combat continued to remain undecided; notwithstanding their number, in spite of the terrible fire of their artillery, the Prussians had not succeeded in extracting an inch of land from the garrison. At this moment General von Krafft, warned that a weak point had been discovered by which it seemed possible to penetrate into the town, resolved to make a general assault. Two companies of jäger and a detachment of fusiliers went to the designated point, penetrated into the small park, climbed the ramparts leading to the terrace and approached the château. Fusillades from the defenders of these terraces, grape shot by the pieces of defense, the Prussians retreated and re-formed behind the gate of the small park. Thrown back during a second attack, they retreated to their first positions.

The attack attempted by the other Prussian column had no more success; it had succeeded in pushing to the gates, but having nothing to attempt a scaling and crushed by the fires of the place, it had been forced to fall back on the suburb.

On the right bank, the Prussian jäger sent in support of the partisans of Geismar and flanked by the Saxon hussars had tried to capture the bridge and penetrate into the city. Arriving at a short distance from the gate, they had been stopped by volleys of shrapnel, then repulsed by the defenders, and obliged, also, to retire into a large house and into walled gardens where they held out well, to the end of the fight.

Definitively renouncing to triumph over the fierce resistance of the garrison, General von Krafft had to resign that same evening to bring his troops back to Lamotte and to recall the detached battalion to the flying corps of Geismar. The Russian colonel remained on the mountain of Margny during the night, and, separating from the Prussians to resume the course of his operations, interrupted by this blow. on the morning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April he returned to Cuvilly.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Major Guillemin to the Minister, Le Mans, 20 April (*Archives of the War*); Tagebuch des Streifcorps unter Befehle des Kaiserlichen russischen Obersten von Geismar, während dem Feldzuge 1814 vom 13<sup>ten</sup> Februar bis 11<sup>ten</sup> April (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, IV, 178); Major VON BAGENSKY, *Geschichte des 9<sup>ten</sup> Infanterie Regiments, genannt Colbergsches*; SCHREIBER, *Geschichte des Infanterie Regiments n<sup>o</sup> 20* and Report of Lieutenant-Colonel von Reckow.

Although the siege had been lifted on the morning of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Prussians sent on the 3<sup>rd</sup> a negotiator to inform the commander of the capitulation of Paris. On the 4<sup>th</sup>, Borstell, having arrived at Vic-sur-Aisne, sent a new parliamentarian to Compiègne. Meanwhile, Major Guillemin, who had taken command of the town after the death of Major Otenin, had been informed of the events in Paris; lacking ammunition, he consented to capitulate and signed an agreement on 5 April, according to which his small garrison reduced to 1300 men, was allowed to leave the place with its arms and baggage, to join the army and to take away its equipment.

**Combat of Gondreville and Crépy-en-Valois.** --The approach of General von Borstell, who had left Bavay on 29 March to come by Pont-sur-Sambre, Avesnes, and Laon, to replace the Prussian III<sup>rd</sup> Corps before Soissons, had allowed Bülow to momentarily leave before this town only the 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade (von Thümen), which was to follow its movement on Paris after the arrival of the troops expected from Flanders and to form its second echelon with the 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade (General-Major von Krafft).

Complying with orders from the general headquarters, the commandant of the III<sup>rd</sup> Corps had directed the remainder of his infantry on Villers-Cotterêts and Nanteuil-le-Haudouin on the morning of the 1<sup>st</sup> of April. His cavalry, under the command of General Lieutenant von Oppen, after having driven from Lévigney some pickets of French cavalry, had even pushed behind them as far as Crépy-en-Valois. But this little town was occupied by some infantry companies and four squadrons of cavalry. Throwing back this advanced guard, the French troops obliged the Prussian cavalry to retreat to Gondreville, where it held out until the arrival of reinforcements, which enabled it not only to force the French cavalry to retreat on Crépy, but to send a squadron to occupy Nanteuil-le-Haudouin and thus bar the small French detachment from the road to Dammartin. General von Oppen resolved accordingly to take this detachment on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, and entrusted this mission to Colonel von Treskow. The vanguard squadron (a squadron of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Dragoons) pushed so fast forward that it took a 6-kilometer lead over the main body. At two kilometers from Crépy, this squadron, after having surprised the French grand guard, charged two squadrons and pushed them towards Crépy. Driven by the ardor of the pursuit, the officer who commanded at this point did not perceive the presence of a third French squadron, which, formed in battle, had let the Prussians pass, and fell on their rear. Fortunately for the commander of the Prussian squadron, the officer who commanded his last platoon had recognized the danger in time, and, charged in turn the French squadron, obliged it to make an about turn and disappear behind Crépy, where the Prussian dragoons reached the market square. Collected by their infantry, the French cavalry, who had had time to re-form, ultimately threw back the Prussian advanced guard outside Crépy. Though reinforced soon after by a squadron of Queen's Dragoons, this vanguard did not succeed in entering Crépy until the French cavalry, threatened by being turned and struck by four other squadrons of Prussian dragoons, were constrained to retreat on Senlis. Colonel von Treskow following them with his brigade, arrived there almost at the same time, driving them from Senlis, and thus cut off the retreat of the few infantrymen who, remaining at Crépy were picked up by the main body of the cavalry of General von Oppen.<sup>12</sup>

The infantry of Bülow did not pass Villers-Cotterêts that day.

**April 2. --The Emperor reorganizes his army. --Positions of the different corps.** --While the Senate, so long accustomed to obeying the Emperor blindly, became the docile executor of the wishes of Talleyrand, constituted a provisional government composed of the persons chosen by the Vice-Elector, and entrusted the various ministries to the friends of the Prince of Bénévent, while the General Council and the Municipal Council, anticipating the resolution of the Senate, hastened to demand the re-establishment of Louis XVIII, Colonels Fabvier and Damrémont had joined Marmont at the moment when the Emperor had just completed the inspection of his positions.

The news they brought from Paris was not very reassuring; the declaration of the Czar, of which Napoleon had not yet been acquainted, sufficed, moreover, to prove to him that he must either resign himself to disappear, or continue

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<sup>12</sup>Rittmeister VON BÄRENSPRUNG, *Geschichte des westpreussischen Kürassier Regiments n° 5 von seiner Stiftung bis zur Gegenwart.* (This regiment bore in 1814 the name of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of Dragoons of Western Prussia.)

the war. Thus, returning only in the evening towards Fontainebleau, he thought only of pressing the march of Ney, Macdonald, and Oudinot, to proceed immediately to reorganization of his army.

The immobility of the Allies since the capitulation of Paris, the small number of cavalry which they had timidly pushed on the roads of Fontainebleau and Orléans, and the dispersion of their troops, had left the Emperor to attempt once more the fate of arms, to take advantage of their situation, which was not in conformity with the great principles of the art of war, by driving back on the capital forces scarcely superior in number to its own, appealing to the patriotism of the people of Paris, taking advantage of the trouble caused by his approach to return to his capital as the victor. But before resuming operations, it was first necessary for him to proceed to the immediate reconstruction of his army. Thus, on the evening of the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, he gave the Chief of Staff the order to dissolve the provisional regiments, the various detachments which must immediately rejoin their original corps. The park would provide to Marmont and Mortier the number of pieces necessary for these two marshals to have at least 60 guns.

The remains of the division of Boyer de Rébeval were attached to the Duke of Trévise, whose headquarters were at Mennecey. They attached to the corps of Marmont two battalions of the veterans of the Guard, and the division of General Souham, who, coming from Montereau, was ordered to leave early and arrive between 9 and 10 o'clock at Fontainebleau for continuing from there on Essonnes.

General Friant, with the infantry and artillery of the Old Guard, was to settle at the mouth of the Forest of Fontainebleau, about a league behind the positions assigned to the troops of Ney.

The cavalry of the Guard under the orders of Sebastiani, reinforced by the detachments of General d'Ornano and General Guyot, who took command of the Colbert Division, as well as the brigade of Piré, were to leave Fontainebleau as soon as they had been reviewed. The brigade of General Piré, which was about to take up its position at Montceaux, was placed at the disposal of Marmont. As for Sebastiani, whose headquarters were at Pringy, he was ordered to quarter his three divisions, the first two at Auvernaux, Champcueil, Nainville and Perthes, the third at Saint-Sauveur-sur-École and Pringy, to be able to carry them on the Essonne at the first signal. General Defrance, joined by General Vincent's cavalry and attached to the corps of Marmont, was on the morning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> at Fontenay-le-Vicomte to scout the Essonne from La Ferté-Aleps (now La Ferté-Alais) and throw parties on Arpajon.

The cuirassiers of Saint-Germain had to press their march in order to be passed in review in the courtyard of the Cheval Blanc, and to be able to take up their position at Saint Germain and Soisy-sur-École.

Finally the Chief of Staff sent General Allix orders to proceed to Sens, to guard Pont-sur-Yonne and the passages of the river, and to relieve the troops which Macdonald left there until his arrival.<sup>13</sup>

Master of the bridges of Corbeil and Melun, scouting up and connecting on his left with Orléans, where he had just called his family and his ministers, the Emperor wanted as early as the 4<sup>th</sup>, immediately after the corps of Ney, of Macdonald, Oudinot, Molitor, and Gerard, to throw himself at the head of nearly 70,000 men against an adversary who, thinking it had reached its goal on entering Paris, cared little for debouching from the capital, renounced the offensive and feared to compromise everything in a last battle fought south of the capital.

**Movements of the Allied armies. --Orders of Schwarzenberg.** --Everything worked according to the wishes of the Allied sovereigns. The Senate was preparing the official act, which was to pronounce the fall of the Emperor the following day. To avoid this battle, which could bring everything into question, in order to assure his triumph even more completely, and to speed up the fall of his former master, Talleyrand had contrived new plots, devised new machinations. Without falling asleep on the advantages he had gained, he endeavored to take advantage of the

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<sup>13</sup>*Correspondence*, n° 21549, Records of Berthier, and the Chief of Staff to Generals Defrance, Sorbier, Souham, Sebastiani, Drouot, Saint-Germain, Allix, to Marshals Marmont and Mortier. Fontainebleau, 2 April, 4 o'clock in the morning. (*Archives of the War.*)

discouragement and weariness of the marshals; he labored to detach from the Emperor his lieutenants, who covered with his troops the concentration of the Imperial army .

The Generalissimo, to whom these intrigues could only agree, confined himself to taking some measures of safety, and modifying somewhat the position of certain of his corps. Knowing by the reports of Winzingerode, Seslavin and Kaisarov that the French army was gathering at Fontainebleau, Schwarzenberg resolved to concentrate his forces on the left bank of the Seine and to strengthen his position between Longjumeau and Juvisy.

From the very moment when, on account of the political considerations already mentioned, Schwarzenberg renounced his immense numerical superiority, forbade the continuation of the offensive, and sought only to cover Paris against the possible enterprises of his adversary, one could only approve without reservation the disposition of the Generalissimo and the choice he made of the Palaiseau-Longjumeau-Juvisy line, covered in all its extent by the valleys of the Yvette and the Barley. The Generalissimo had also foreseen the case in which Napoleon forcing the passage of the Yvette would have driven before him the advanced guard of the Allies. Once arrived on the plateau, the Emperor too weak to attack simultaneously the two great masses of the Allies he would have decided to throw himself either against his right (Army of Silesia), or against his left (Allied Great Army). Whatever resolution the Emperor had taken, the wing he had attacked was ordered to fight a purely defensive battle, which, in the mind of the Generalissimo, would allow the other army to advance on its flanks and the rear of the French. For this purpose the park of Morangis had been placed in a state of defense, and the numerous Allied cavalry charged to oppose, harass, and slow down the movements of the Emperor. In case the Emperor should have sought to overwhelm the right of the position of the Allies, a movement had been studied which would have assured the Army of Silesia the possession of the heights extending from the environs of Chevreuse to Versailles. On the contrary, if, owing to the number and strength of the positions of the Allies, the Emperor, abandoning himself to Paris by the left bank of the Seine, drew an offensive movement between the Seine and the Marne, all the necessary measures to ensure the passage of the Seine and the Marne by means of pontoon bridges thrown over at Charenton, and it was thought certain to precede the Emperor and occupy before him the positions on which the French troops had tried to stop the Allies during the day of March 30<sup>th</sup>.

According to this disposition adopted by the Generalissimo on the evening of the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, the III<sup>rd</sup> and IV<sup>th</sup> Corps,<sup>14</sup> which had massed on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April at Charenton, and whose outposts occupied Maisons-Alfort and Créteil, ought to have passed the Seine at Choisy-le-Roi. The destruction of this bridge obliged them to retrace their steps and march through Paris. Slowed at the bridge of Austerlitz by the VI<sup>th</sup> Corps, the infantry of the IV<sup>th</sup> Corps stopped and bivouacked on the evening of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, near Athis. The cavalry pushed their dragoons as far as Ris; the brigade of Jett was established between Viry and Grigny.

The Württemberg regiment of jäger Duke Louis went as far as Fleury-Mérogis, from where it left the same evening after having been relieved by the cavalry of the VI<sup>th</sup> Corps, and came to take the posts on the side of Petit Bourg and Évry -Seine.

The III<sup>rd</sup> Corps stopped behind the IV<sup>th</sup> at Orly and Villeneuve-le-Re, and the V<sup>th</sup> Corps, which had crossed Paris that very morning, took up a position at the right of the III<sup>rd</sup>, at Rungis and Paray.

The guards and reserves remained in Paris and took charge of the investment of Vincennes.

The VI<sup>th</sup> Corps, after having handed over the barriers of Paris to the Russian grenadiers on the morning of the 1<sup>st</sup>, at the break of day, were at the bridge of Austerlitz to throw four of its battalions on the left bank, which, as a support to the vanguard of Pahlen, had set out on the road to Fontainebleau and rejoined the cavalry at Juvisy. The main body, leaving Belleville, stopped in the evening ahead of the positions of the IV<sup>th</sup> corps and bivouacked in the neighborhood of Juvisy. Its advanced guard under Pahlen, reinforced by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division of cuirassiers of Duka and joined by the Cossacks of Ilovaysky XII coming from the left bank of the Marne, pushed as far as Fleury-Mérogis and Bondoufle. Its outposts, established on a line from Villabé to Echarcon, connected to the left with the outposts of the IV<sup>th</sup> corps, to the right with those of the Army of Silesia.

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<sup>14</sup>Prince Schwarzenberg, 1 April, evening, General Dispositions for 2 April.

The Generalissimo had transferred his headquarters to Chevilly.<sup>15</sup>

General Kaisarov, having come with his Cossacks from La Chapelle-Gauthier, had sent his vanguard to the suburbs of Melun the night before, and pushed them with his main body to Brie-Comte-Robert.<sup>16</sup>  
As for Seslavin, coming from Nangis, he had arrived only before the evening of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, at Guignes.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> At 9 o'clock in the evening, Marmont reported to the Chief of Staff of the existence of a considerable camp on the heights of La Cour-de-France. (*Archives of the War*). --TAXIS, Tagebuch (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, XIII, 32), and Report of Barclay de Tolly to Prince Volkonsky of 22 March/3 April (*Journal of Received Pieces*, n° 624).

<sup>16</sup> Kaisarov, in writing on the morning of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, from Guignes to the Count of Crenneville, announced to him that the French were working to rebuild the bridge of Melun, and terminated his dispatch with these words: "In bringing these facts to the knowledge of your Excellency, I pray you, General, to tell me the direction of the corps you command, as well as the knowledge you may have of the position of our army and of the headquarters. Kaisarov at Crenneville. Guignes, 2 April. (Original in French, *K. K. Kriegs, Archiv.*, IV, 21.)

A few hours later, when he arrived at Brie-Comte-Robert, he addressed to the Generalissimo the following report, which it appeared to us useful to reproduce, because it contains some interesting and curious data:

"The enemy has renounced to continue the reconstruction of the bridge of Melun, and has thrown between the arches only a few beams and planks for the passage of some infantry."

"The cavalry which was on this side retreated to the other side of the river. Only some infantry remain on this side. I have my post in front of the town."

"The bridge of Corbeil is blown up. The French army is on the other side of the Seine. The inhabitants suppose it from 80,000 to 100,000 men with 80 pieces of cannon. My station near the town noticed in the night a lot of bivouac fires on the other side."

"In the morning we saw the enemy march past Paris, side by side with the mountains (sic) and the river. Napoleon slept at the château of Coudray."

"Part of the town of Corbeil we saw occupied by two or three battalions with four cannons, and my Cossacks have been skirmishing all day. I went to Brie-Comte-Robert, with the intention of observing more closely Melun and Corbeil, having a party at Villeneuve, which was to discover the road from Choisy, and proceeded to Charenton."

"Having all these points in view, I guard all the crossings of the Seine and see all the movements on the other side of the river."

"Being in perfect ignorance of the direction our army takes, I have been obliged to follow the Emperor's course, and if my movements were not in conformity with those of the Great Army, deign, Your Highness, to bear your indulgence and to honor me with your orders. General Seslavin will, I hope, go from Nangis to Guignes."

Major-General Kaisarov to the Prince of Schwarzenberg, Brie-Comte-Robert, 2 April. (Original in French, *K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, IV, 4.)

<sup>17</sup>Report of Major-General Seslavin to General Lieutenant Sabaneyev, Guignes, 28 March/4 April. (*Journal of Received Documents*, n° 648.)

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April, at 7 o'clock in the evening, General Maurin reported to the Chief of Staff on the events of the day, and pointing out the movements of Kaisarov and Seslavin, he informed him that after the departure of the Duke of Vicence and the Russian officer accompanying him, a party of 50 Cossacks had attempted to penetrate the town by the road to Montereau and had been driven out of its outposts. Other Cossack parties had appeared on several points and patrolled in view of Melun, and he added: "After the crossing of the carriage of the Duke of Vicence, one

Blücher, who was still ill and unable to exercise his command, had, immediately after the entry of the Allies to Paris requested Frederick William III to leave the Army of Silesia, at the head of which the sovereigns placed Barclay de Tolly. On the morning of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, Gneisenau, returning to the suite of the King of Prussia, also resigned his functions, which General von Müffling exercised during the last days.

On the morning of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Army of Silesia, forming the right wing of the Allied armies, left its cantonments north of Paris to form on the left bank of the Seine, at the level of the Great Army of Schwarzenberg. The I<sup>st</sup> Corps (Yorck) and the Prussian II<sup>nd</sup> Corps, under the command of Prince Augustus of Prussia, replacing General von Kleist, detained in Paris by the King of Prussia, defiling by the barrier of the Étoile and the bridge of Jena, entered the road to Orléans and, passing through Bourg-la-Reine and La Croix-de-Berny, stopped on the evening of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, the I<sup>st</sup> Corps at Palaiseau, the II<sup>nd</sup> at Champlan. The advanced guard, under the command of Katzler, established itself at Villejust, and pushed its outposts as far as Montlhéry, while Zieten occupied Orsay with the reserve cavalry, covered the right of the Army of Silesia, scouted by its patrols, which, sent on Gometz-la-Ville and Janvry, connected on the left to the outposts of Katzler.<sup>18</sup>

The corps of Langeron, after having crossed the Seine at the Pont de la Revolution (Pont de la Concorde), had followed the Prussian II<sup>nd</sup> Corps, and took a position to its left around Longjumeau.

Vorontsov (the infantry of the corps of Winzingerode) had used the Royal Bridge to cross the Seine and settled a little behind the corps of Langeron at Chilly-Mazarin and Morangis. The headquarters of Barclay de Tilly settled in Massy.

The corps of Sacken, under the command of General Lieutenant Vasilchikov, and coming from Meaux, where only a small detachment had been left, arrived the 2<sup>nd</sup> in the evening at La Villette.

Bülow, after provisionally entrusting the blockade of Soissons to the Thümen Brigade, which was to be relieved by the Borstell Brigade from Belgium, had, at the head of seven battalions, eight squadrons and three batteries and a half of the Prussian III<sup>rd</sup> Corps, marched on Paris and stopped on the 2<sup>nd</sup> in the evening at Nanteuil-le-Haudouin.

Winzingerode confined himself to following cautiously and far enough away from the march of the corps on the way to join the Emperor, and had entered Troyes only on the afternoon of the 1<sup>st</sup> of April.

Macdonald, arrived at Sens at five o'clock in the evening without having been otherwise disturbed except by an insignificant hurrah attempted by a few hundred Cossacks, was preparing to resume on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, at 4 o'clock in the morning, his march by Pont-sur-Yonne and Villeneuve-la-Guyard.

General Allix, who had not yet received the general's order to return to Sens, had left Seignelay on the morning of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, and had stopped at Maligny in the evening, after having sent a battalion to Chablis, and another to Tonnerre.

Finally, in spite of the Emperor's movement on Paris and the disappearance of the French troops who had appeared for a while on the side of Chaumont and Langres, the peasants had not lost their courage, and on 2 April, Raigeourt was still writing Duka to tell him that a reconnaissance sent from Langres to Fayl-Billot had been assaulted in the

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had only conserved the bridge for the infantry and some horses. According to the words of two Cossacks taken prisoner, Seslavin would be two leagues from here with four regiments of cavalry."

General Maurin to the Major-General. Melun, 2 April, 7 o'clock in the evening. (*Archives of the War.*)

<sup>18</sup>Marshal Mortier pointed out to the Chief of Staff in his dispatch of the morning of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, on the appearance of the first Allied scouts on the road to Montlhéry at Arpajon, where these scouts appeared in the afternoon of the 2<sup>nd</sup>. The bridge of La Ferté-Aleps was cut or guarded, the only point where the Russian and Prussian cavalry could cross the Essonne. Mortier to the Chief of Staff, Mennecy, 3 April in the morning. (*Archives of the War.*)

woods, and that at Luzy, about a league south of Chaumont, bands had attacked an infantry company and a squadron of cavalry.<sup>19</sup>

**Arrival of Caulaincourt at Fontainebleau.** --But while the Emperor, fully preparing for the continuation of the struggle, did not renounce the hope of obtaining a pacific solution, Talleyrand watched over Paris. The hatred which he had devoted to the Emperor, and his hatred, which was again revived by the fear of the dangers which the preservation of the Imperial dynasty might inflict on his person, had inspired new subtleties to his inventive genius, and rendered useless the supreme efforts and the indefatigable devotion of Caulaincourt. If it had been impossible for him to persuade the Emperor Alexander to refuse a fresh and final hearing to the Duke of Vicence, the Vice-Elector had maneuvered in such a manner as to annihilate the possible results of this interview, and to bring about the rupture of negotiations which might perhaps compromise and delay, in any case, the realization of his hopes.

Despite the efforts of Talleyrand, Caulaincourt had been able to convince himself of the impossibility of persuading the Czar to consent to a peace treaty based on the conditions demanded by the Allies at Châtillon. Thus, in the last audience, he had contented himself with obtaining from Alexander, under the condition of an abdication of the Emperor, "a return favorable to the interests of the regent and her son."<sup>20</sup>

The Duke of Vicence did not delude himself about the situation, and at the moment when he was setting out on the evening of the 2<sup>nd</sup> for Fontainebleau, he knew that the Senate, summoned by Talleyrand, was about to pronounce on a proposition of whose acceptance was certain.<sup>21</sup> When, on his arrival at Fontainebleau, Caulaincourt repeated the words of Alexander to the Emperor, Napoleon had already guessed what had happened in Paris. Expecting the vengeance of Talleyrand, he listened, with a calmness mixed with indignation the communications of his envoy, which he did not succeed in containing to the very end, and not wishing to take a part so unexpectedly grave, he refused to yield to the pressing entreaties of the Duke of Vicence. As soon as day appeared, without wishing to explain himself, without making the slightest allusion to the communications which had just been made to him, he mounted his horse. Decided to make a final effort to take Paris back from the Allies, he would try to communicate once more to his troops the enthusiasm which his presence usually provoked, to awaken confidence in his genius more necessary than ever to revive the ardor of soldiers harassed with fatigue, to extract a last effort from them, to oblige the marshals to shake off their torpor and to prevent the dissolving effects of the alarming news spread in the camps by the emissaries of Talleyrand.

**3 April. --Orders of Schwarzenberg and Barclay de Tolly. --Positions and movements of the Allied armies.** --At the headquarters of Chevilly and Massy, little thought had been given to the imminence and the possibility of an offensive return of Napoleon. Instead, a movement of the Imperial army towards the Loire was expected. But the Czar was above all to risk nothing; he had reached his goal by entering Paris. He now wished to secure the undisputed possession of the capital and wanted to be in a position to deal with any eventuality. By order, the bulk of Sacken's old corps, now commanded by Vasilchikov, massed at Charenton, supplying only workers and guards to the pontoon bridges which were being thrown over at Villeneuve-Saint-Gorges, Choisy-le-Roi and Conflans.<sup>22</sup> The hussars of the Sacken corps were confined to L'Hay.

The Generalissimo, on the other hand, was disinterested, at least in appearance, by the work undertaken by Talleyrand. He had, it is true, had the precaution and the skill of leaving no hope to Caulaincourt. Metternich had

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<sup>19</sup>Major-General Count Raigeourt to the Feldzeugmeister Duka, Langres, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of April. (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, IV, 308 and 309.)

<sup>20</sup>FAIN, *Manuscript of 1814*.

<sup>21</sup>This proposal, which was immediately put to the vote, was accepted without discussion, and the decree for reasons of forfeiture presented by Lambrecht in the sitting of April 3 was voted for unanimously. The Legislative Body ratified the Senate's decision, but refused to accept its considerations.

<sup>22</sup>Report from Barclay de Tolly to Prince Volkonsky. Mussy, 3 April. (*Journal of Received Pieces*, n° 624.)

adopted the same tactics, and, like Schwarzenberg, had been careful to close his ears at all the openings of the Duke of Vicence.

The orders, which Schwarzenberg sent from Chevilly on the morning of the 3 April, permit one, moreover, to gain an exact account of the idea which he had of the situation. Not wanting to compromise anything, and especially determined not to undertake anything, he confined himself to indicating to his lieutenants the part which, in case of improbable but possible events, they would have to play, some if the Emperor Napoleon resumed the offensive, the others if one learned that the Imperial army was withdrawing towards the Loire.

In this arrangement, sent from Chevilly on the morning of the 3 April, Schwarzenberg confined himself to prescribing to the commanders of the III<sup>rd</sup>, IV<sup>th</sup>, and V<sup>th</sup> Corps to keep their troops ready for the first signal on the Champlan-Morangis-Juvisy line. The III<sup>rd</sup> and IV<sup>th</sup> Corps in the first line, from the château of Morangis to Champlan, the V<sup>th</sup> Corps in reserve on the left of these two corps. The Crown Prince of Württemberg, whose troops had been at Juvisy the previous day, had orders to put the park of Savigny-sur-Orge in a state of defense, to occupy the villages of Viry and Ris and to establish its outposts on a line from Fleury-Mérogis to the Seine.

The VI<sup>th</sup> Corps, remaining in its position of the preceding day, occupied the park of Morangis, guarding the crossings of the Yvette, and dispatched to the heights of Épinay-sur-Orge and Villemoisson detachments, drawn from its advanced guard, which were to scout in front of themselves as far as Montlhéry, and to connect to the left, on the side of Fleury-Mérogis, with the outposts of the Crown Prince of Württemberg.<sup>23</sup>

Kaisarov<sup>24</sup> and Seslavin, for their part, were to redouble their vigilance, and to announce at once the least movements of the French army.

Besides, as Toll still wrote to Prince Volkonsky, Schwarzenberg was determined to avoid any engagement during the days of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of April. He reckoned on the effect which the proclamation of the provisional government, which he had found means of throwing and spreading to the outposts established on the banks of the Essonne, would produce on the spirit of the French army.

With the exception of the Russian grenadiers who, leaving Paris, settled at Rungis behind the V<sup>th</sup> Corps, the Great Army remained in a state of absolute immobility throughout the whole of the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

In the event of an attack Schwarzenberg intended to deploy the Army of Silesia on the heights north of Longjumeau and Barclay de Tolly, commenting on the disposition of the Generalissimo, had made known to his lieutenants that he would accept the struggle on the left bank of the Yvette. Believing, however, in the possibility of a retreating movement of the bulk of the French army towards the Loire, he had ordered Yorck to push the vanguard of General von Katzler as far as Limours, with orders to send parties of cavalry ahead of him to Rochefort on the road to

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<sup>23</sup>Toll to Prince Volkonsky, Chevilly, 3 April 1814.

<sup>24</sup>Prince of Schwarzenberg to Major-General Kaisarov, Chevilly, 3 April 1814 (original in French): "I have just received the important news which you had the goodness to communicate to me dated from La Chapelle-Gautier on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April."

"I thank you very much, General, for the zeal you have placed in reporting on all the movements of the enemy. Please continue as accurately as possible."

"It is of the utmost importance to know at once all the maneuvers and movements which the enemy may undertake."

"I urge you, Sir, to employ all your attention, and to employ all your means to inform us of the progress of the enemy at the very moment when he undertakes them."

"As he could either march forward by Essonnes, or, under the protection of a corps left at the river of Essonne, try on one side to reach the road to Orléans and throw himself on our right flank, on the other side crossing on to the right bank of the Seine to march upon Paris, it is necessary to direct your principal attention to these three points." (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, IV, 24.)

Chartres, on his left to Angervilliers and Saint-Maurice, and to occupy Fontenay-le-Vicomte by a detachment charged with falling back on the side of Arpajon, with the cavalry of General Emanuel. The information furnished by this general officer<sup>25</sup> seems to have led Barclay de Tolly to believe that the Emperor had left only a curtain of troops on the Essonne, and was preparing to march with the bulk of his forces on Orléans.<sup>26</sup>

The new commander-in-chief of the Army of Silesia had for this reason sent early in the morning to Bülow the order to occupy Versailles with an advanced guard of three to four battalions and 800 horses and to march with the bulk of the III<sup>rd</sup> Corps, which had just arrived in Paris, from Montmartre to Bourg-la-Reine and Antony, in order to be able to proceed from there, according to events, either on Versailles, Longjumeau, or on Rungis.

Winzingerode had, without hurrying, continued from Troyes to Sens. General Chernishev, who preceded him with his Cossacks, had arrived on the 3 April in the afternoon, and was preparing to march on the following day by Chéroy, to cross the Loing at Souppes, and to act on the left flank of the enemy.<sup>27</sup> Farther south, Maurice Liechtenstein followed with his light division the movements of Allix, who had just received at Maligny the order from the Chief of Staff, enjoining him to come to Sens and to relieve the troops left on this point by Oudinot.<sup>28</sup>

The retreat of the French troops had not defeated the courage of the people. One of the patrols which Liechtenstein had sent from Aisy-sur-Armançon to Tonnerre, had been received with fusil fire, and had had to fly in haste, leaving some hussars and light horse on the ground.<sup>29</sup>

On the northern side the Prussians confined themselves to observing and blockading Soissons. Everything had been quiet before Compiègne. The Prussians did not think fit to renew the unsuccessful attack of 1 April. Borstell, who had come from Belgium and arrived at Vic-sur-Aisne on the evening of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, had, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April, sent a parliamentarian to announce to the commandant of the place the capitulation of Paris. Major Guillemin, lacking

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<sup>25</sup>Major -General Emanuel to General Comte de Langeron, 3 April 1814: "I conclude from the destruction of the bridges of Essonne that the enemy might wish to march on Orléans by Malesherbes. (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, IV, ad 30.)

<sup>26</sup>Count Barclay de Tolly to Prince Schwarzenberg: Massy, 3 April 1814.

"I have the honor to send to your Highness a report addressed from Arpajon by General Emanuel to General Count Langeron, announcing his arrival on this point, from which he has pushed parties on Étampes."

"General Count Pahlen is still at Fleury; his outposts at Vert-le-Grand are connected to those of General Emanuel."

"The enemy still strongly occupies the left bank of the Essonne, but it has destroyed all the crossings, which shows that it does not intend to take the offensive on this side, but it could well move on Orléans and this is what General Emanuel will seek to discover."

"I have no news of the detachment sent on Chartres."

"Versailles is occupied by troops of the corps of Yorck, who will be relieved by a brigade of the corps of Bülow. (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, IV, 30.)

<sup>27</sup> Major-General Seslavin to Lieutenant-General Count Toll, Guignes, 5 April. (Text transmitted by Toll to Radetzky, *K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, IV, 68 a.)

<sup>28</sup> Chief of Staff to General Allix, 2 April. (Records of Berthier, *Archives of the War.*)

<sup>29</sup> Prince Maurice Liechtenstein to Feldzeugmeister Duka, Aisy, 3 April. (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, IV, ad 325.)

The Feldzeugmeister Duka was due the following day (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, IV, 325, Dijon, 4 April), to send to Liechtenstein the order "to severely chastise the inhabitants of Tonnerre for the part they took in the insurrection."

ammunition, accepted, as we have said, an agreement under which the little garrison, taking with it its equipment, freely joined the French army.

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