

The Napoleon Series

The Campaign of 1814: Chapter 20, Part II

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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 XX.

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

12 March 1814. --Bianchi concentrates his army corps around Mâcon. --After the favorable outcome of the battle at Mâcon, the Austrian Ist Corps was to be expected to continue without restraint or respite its offensive movement on Lyons. The troops of Musnier, exhausted by the efforts which had been demanded of them the day before, by a long march forward, by a prolonged retreat, would have been unable to take part in a new affair on the 12 March, and Bianchi, would have only found before him at Villefranche that the division of Pannetier and the cavalry of Digeon. But the personal situation of the Austrian general by the very organization of the Army of the South did not allow him to act with so much independence. On the one hand, he was obliged to comply with the formal orders of the Generalissimo, who, while he was executing his march from Dijon to Mâcon, had once again recommended him to wait on the position of Mâcon the entry into the line of the Austrian reserves and to continue his movement on the right bank of the Saône only when these troops were on their side at the point of debouching at Bourg-en-Bresse; on the other hand, now under the Crown Prince of Hesse-Homburg, it was impossible for him to undertake an operation as important as the march on Lyons without being authorized by the commander-in-chief of the Austrian Army of the South. Finally, either because he was too weak to continue the offensive with his own strength, since he had deemed it necessary to detach two of his divisions, one, that of the Prince of Wied, to his right on Charolles, the other, that of Wimpffen, on the left bank of the Saône; or that, as the *Tagesbegebenheiten* says, in order to justify the dispositions of the Generalissimo, the news of the arrival of an infantry division which had

strengthened the enemy's army would have led him to believe that an attack of Augereau at the head of 18,000 men was imminent, Bianchi confined himself to taking, on the 12th, his dispositions to resist an operation of this kind, and contented himself with occupation by his troops, joined by the Salins Brigade, of the cantonments serried around Mâcon.¹

Positions of Augereau in front of Villefranche. --Evacuation of Bourg. --Augereau, still unaware of what was passing on the side of Bourg, took advantage of this unexpected halt to give a day of repose to the troops harassed with fatigue of Musnier, in order to make them relieve those of Pannetier and Digeon, and to amass on the position of Saint-Georges-de-Reneins. His outposts were established at Belleville, Saint-Jean d'Ardieres and Cercié.²

On the left bank of the Saône, General Bardet, whose division numbered only 3,400 men, being threatened by the superior forces of Ignatius Hardegg, who was maneuvering on his flanks to turn him, abandoned Bourg to the Austrians and, heading on Meximieux, was established on the evening of the 12th at Marlieux and Chalamont.³

Positions of the Austrian troops on the left bank of the Saône. --The division of Wimpffen stopped at Saint-Etienne-Bois, ten kilometers north of Bourg, while the Prince of Cobourg, approaching the left bank of the Saône, passed through Montrevel, and proceeded from Coligny to Pont-de-Veyle. The Austrian reserves reached Saint-Trivier-de-Courtes, and the Crown Prince of Hesse-Hombourg established his headquarters at Cuisery.

13 March. --Council of War at Saint-Trivier. --Positions of the Austrian Army of the South. --The day of 13 March passed on both sides as quietly as that of the 12th. The Crown Prince of Hesse-Hombourg assembled at Saint-Trivier a council of war, attended by Field-Marshal Bianchi. Due to the difficulties which the configuration of the terrain and the existence of the numerous marshes encountered on the left bank of the Saône towards the confluence of that river would have opposed the march of a large column of troops, it was resolved to pass on the right bank the division of Lieutenant Field-Marshal Baron Wimpffen, and the army corps formed by the Austrian reserves, and placed under the immediate orders of Prince Philip of Hesse-Homburg. These troops were to effect at Mâcon their junction with the 1st Corps, and to march with it to Lyons.⁴ The division of Ignatius Hardegg and the Prince de Cobourg Brigade remained alone on the left bank and had to march on Lyons in two columns: one on the right, along the river, passing through Thoissey and Neuville-l'Archevêque (Neuville-sur-Saône); the other, that of the left, proceeding from Bourg by Marlieux and Chalamont to Meximieux and Montluel. In order to cover the rear of the Army of the South against the enterprises of the partisans of Damas and the armed peasant bands, a detachment of light troops was to push as far as the Loire. Finally, the hussar regiment of Archduke Ferdinand, which was left at Chalon-sur-Saône, was to occupy Charolles and Autun, and seek to connect with the light division of Prince Maurice Liechtenstein, who was operating on the side of Auxerre, and assured by Avallon and Saulieu, communications between the Allied Great Army and the Austrian Army of the South. The reserve battalions of the two infantry regiments Kottulinsky and Joseph Colloredo, with a battery, were appointed to form the garrison of Mâcon. The regiment of Blankenstein Hussars was to rejoin the Great Army, as soon as the junction of the different columns had taken place, and the Army of the South would have resumed its march on Lyons.⁵

Moreover, during the day of the 13th March, both on the right bank and on the left bank of the Saône, the Austrian troops remained for the most part in their positions of the previous day, except, however, the reserves which made that day a very small forage and came from Saint-Trivier to Montrevel.

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

²Augereau to the Minister of War and to the Prefect of the Rhône, Villefranche, 12 March. (*Archives of the War.*)

³ Augereau to the Chief of Staff, Villefranche, 13 March (*Archives of the War*), and Prince Schwarzenberg, daily report to the Emperor of Austria, Troyes, 13 March (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, III, 238).

⁴STÄRKE, Eintheilung und Tagesbegebenheiten der Haupt-Armee im Monate März. (*K. K. Kriegs, Archiv.*, III, 1.)

⁵STÄRKE, Eintheilung und Tagesbegebenheiten der Haupt-Armee im Monate März. (*K. K. Kriegs, Archiv.*, III, 1.)

Positions of Augereau and reconnaissance of Saint-Symphorien-d'Annelles. --Augereau, continuing to remain motionless, had sent on Saint-Symphorien d'Annelles only a little reconnaissance, which merely disturbed the Austrian outposts for a moment, and observed the presence of the advanced guard of Bianchi at La Maison Blanche. A brigade of the Pannetier Division and a squadron of the 4th Hussars occupied Belleville; 2 battalions of the 2nd Brigade of the Musnier Division, the 13th Cuirassiers and the reserve artillery were massed at Villefranche. The bulk of the 2nd Brigade of Musnier had taken a position in front of this town, while the 1st brigade of that division and the 12th Hussars occupied Arnas and watched the road to Beaujeu, and that the 2nd Brigade of Pannetier and the bulk of the 4th Hussars, stationed at Saint-Georges-de-Reneins, furnished the outposts.⁶

14 March. --Restoration of Allied communications with Geneva. --Retrograde movement of the troops of Marchand. --The departure of the troops of Bardet and Pouchelon, the evacuation of Farges by the few French troops who had remained there, and who had retreated to Fort l'Écluse, had enabled Bubna to think of the restoration of his communications with the Army of the South. General Marchand had vainly demanded reinforcements from the Marshal, who had merely announced to him that the pending arrival of the Vedel Division, coming from Italy and awaited incessantly at Chambéry, would soon enable him to resume his operations against Geneva.⁷ On the following day, the presence of a large Austrian detachment sent from Bourg to Pont-d'Ain, restored communications with Bubna and intercepted the direct route from Geneva to Lyons.

Knowing henceforth that he could count only on the few troops he had with him, Marchand prepared to retire. He ordered the post of Pont-de-Brugny to fall back on Frangy, that of Frangy to go to Seyssel and destroy the bridge if the Austrians tried to debouch from Nantua on Seyssel and to send a reconnaissance of a battalion on the bridge of Luce which leads to Bellegarde, and as it was important to retain in order to be able, if necessary, to carry out a retrograde movement on Rumilly.⁸ On the same day Augereau informed General Marchand that "because of the gravity of his own situation it was impossible for him to send reinforcements to him, and that if he were forced to leave his position before the arrival of the Vedel Division, he should retire to Chambéry, taking care not to be cut off by Annecy." And he added, in concluding his dispatch, "You will retire even to Grenoble, if need be; but I do not think Bubna dares to attack you."⁹

March of the Column of Prince Philip of Hesse-Hombourg. --Continuing his movement on Mâcon, the Lieutenant Field Marshal Prince Philip of Hesse-Hombourg brought the Austrian reserves from Montrevel to Bâgé-le-Châtel, while the Prince of Cobourg was traveling from Pont-de-Veyle to Thoissey, and some scouts of Hardegg showed themselves at Châtillon-sur-Chalaronne.¹⁰

15 March. --Junction of the two columns of the Austrian Army of the South. --The junction of the two principal columns of the Army of the South was now a fait accompli, and on the 15th in the morning the Crown

⁶Augereau to General Pannetier, Villefranche, 13 March. (Correspondence of Augereau, *Archives of the War*.)

⁷Augereau to General Marchand, Villefranche, 13 March. (*Archives of the War*.)

⁸General Count Marchand to Commandant Jomard, Carouge, 14 March. (*Archives of the War*.)

⁹Augereau to General Marchand, Villefranche, 14 March. (Correspondence of Augereau, *Archives of the War*.)

The Emperor wrote on the same day from Reims to Clarke: "If you thought it more proper to employ General Decaen on the frontier of the Pyrenees, *I think it would be useful to have the Duke of Albuféra come to Lyons; for I am afraid that the Duke of Castiglione has neither the activity nor the necessary means, his army being increased.*" (*Correspondence*, N° 21482, to Clarke, from Reims, 14 March).

¹⁰STÄRKE, Eintheilung und Tagesbegebenheiten der Haupt-Armee im Monate März (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, III, 1), and Correspondence of Augereau, Villefranche, 14 March (*Archives of the War*).

Prince of Hesse-Hombourg, preceded by only a few hours the troops of Prince Philip¹¹ and the Wimpffen Division, which did not finish his passage until the next day, transferred his headquarters to Mâcon.¹²

March of the Ist Army Corps on Symphorien-d'Annelles. --On the same day Bianchi had begun his movement on Lyons, and the bulk of the Ist Corps stopped, on the 15th in the evening, on the line of Symphorien-d'Annelles--La Chapelle-de-Guinchay and his outposts took up a position at Lancié, and on the right the Lieutenant Field Marshal also detached parties which, passing through Courcelles, pushed as far as Beaujeu, whence Major Devaulx drove out an armed assembly.¹³ On the other hand, in order to put Count Ignatius Hardegg more fully in a position to debouch from Bourg on Lyons, and to push at the same time by the road from Pont-d'Ain to Nantua, one had on the 15th sent a reinforcement of four battalions and six squadrons.¹⁴

16 March. --Movements of the divisions of Wimpffen and Hardegg and of the Coburg Brigade. --On the following day, 16 March, the Wimpffen Division marched by Mâcon, and on the orders of the Crown Prince of Hesse-Hombourg, took a position at Varennes, while the 7 and 1/2 squadrons of Blankenstein Hussars were on their way to Dijon where they had to arrive on the 24th.

"I have given to all the troops of the right bank," wrote the commander of the Austrian Army of the South to the Generalissimo, "the order to march forward and reach Belleville in order to be able to operate against Villefranche on the 18th. I have left behind my heavy cavalry, which cannot serve me in a terrain so cut up and so uneven."¹⁵

On the left bank of the Saône, Ignatius Hardegg, who was still at Bourg, had sent for Nantua a flying column composed of a battalion and two squadrons. On his right, the Prince of Cobourg occupied Saint-Trivier-sur-Moignans and Saint-Cyr.

Positions of Augereau, of Bardet, and of Marchand. --Augereau, expecting to be attacked on the morning of the 16th, had confined himself to informing General Pannetier that in case of an attack coming by the road to Beaujeu, he should retire to Villefranche, and had place under arms of the divisions of Musnier and Digeon.¹⁶ Bardet was still at Meximieux.

On the side of Geneva, General Marchand, who had thought it prudent to come and guard the outlets of the Rhône by which the Austrians might have arrived in his rear, had employed his day in inspecting the posts he had established on that side. Four companies occupied Seyssel with the order to burn the bridge there in case of an attack. Four other companies had gone to Chatillon-de-Michaille to observe the road to Nantua, and two companies guarded the stone bridge at Bellegarde, which General Marchand had had mined.¹⁷

¹¹Composition of the Austrian reserve corps of the Prince Philip of Hesse-Hombourg on his arrival in Mâcon: 8 battalions of infantry, 5 of grenadiers and 4 regiments of cuirassiers from the former VIth Corps of the German Confederation.

¹²Crown Prince of Hesse-Homburg to Prince Schwarzenberg, Mâcon, 10 March. (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, III, 291.)

¹³STÄRKE, Eintheilung und Tagesbegebenheiten der Haupt-Armee im Monate März (*Ibid.*, III, 1), and Correspondence of Augereau, Villefranche, 15 March. (*Archives of the War.*)

¹⁴STÄRKE, Eintheilung und Tagesbegebenheiten der Haupt-Armee im Monate März (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, III, 1), and Crown Prince of Hesse-Homburg to Prince Schwarzenberg, Mâcon, 16 March (*Ibid.*, III, 297).

¹⁵Crown Prince of Hesse-Homburg to Prince Schwarzenberg, Mâcon, 16 March. (*K. K. Kriegs, Archiv.*, III, 297.)

¹⁶Augereau to General Pannetier, Villefranche, 16 March, 2 o'clock in the morning. (*Archives of the War.*)

¹⁷Count de Saint-Vallier to the Minister, Grenoble, 18 March. (*Archives of the War.*)

Reduced to his feeble division, General Marchand awaited, with a legitimate impatience, the arrival of the reinforcements from Italy (Vedel Division), whose entry into the line alone would enable him to resist with some chance of success the undertakings of the Austrians.¹⁸ The position of Marchand, who, since the departure of the troops of Generals Bardet and Pouchelon, had to confine himself to taking a defensive position behind the Arve, had in fact become more critical after the evacuation of Bourg. His left flank was completely exposed, and the Austrians could at any moment come to take him in the rear, on one side by Nantua, on the other by the valley of Saint-Rambert, from whence a fine road would have led them to the bridge of Seyssel. Obligated to guard these two points essential to him, to protect himself from all surprise, General Marchand¹⁹ had only been able to leave at Carouge those of General Dessaix, who, with 4,000 men, was scarcely in a position to hold the front of Bubna.

17 March. --Combat of Belleville. --On the 17th of March the Austrian Army of the South advanced in two columns against Belleville.

The first column (column of the right), comprising all the troops of the Ist Army Corps, was formed between La Maison Blanche and Lancié. It was ordered to turn right from Lancié and head for Belleville, passing by the Cercié defile. The left-hand column (Wimpffen Division), concentrated in the rear of the La Maison Blanche, was supposed to go straight to Belleville by the main road. Prince Philip of Hesse-Homburg, who was ordered to leave Crêches, at 11 o'clock in the morning with the Austrian and German troops belonging to the former VIth Corps of the Confederation, served as a general reserve, and also marched by the main road.²⁰

A little after noon, the advanced guard of Wimpffen attacked the French outposts at Saint-Jean-d'Ardieres and captured this village at the moment when the column head of Bianchi came out of Cercié and entered the road of Belleville. Augereau, not judging this position suitable for a battle, evacuated Belleville broke off the battle and brought his troops back to the position of Saint-Georges-de-Reneins.²¹

Positions of the two armies the evening of 17 March. --In spite of this slight retrograde movement of the French outposts, the two armies bivouacked in each other's presence. The vanguard of the Ist Corps (General Scheither) was established for the night in front of Odenas, on the road from Beaujeu to Villefranche; that of the column of Wimpffen was encamped as best as possible around Belleville, where the Crown Prince of Hesse-Hombourg, determined to fight the battle the next day, established his headquarters. The troops of Prince Philip of Hesse spent the night at Saint-Jean d'Ardieres.²² An infantry regiment posted with two cannons at Les Pillets secured communications between the first and second columns.

On the side of the French, the Pannetier Division, reinforced by the 4th Regiment of Hussars, retained its primitive position in front of Saint-Georges and connected to the left, by Laye and Longsard, with one of the brigades of Musnier established with the 12th Hussars at the debouchment of the road of Beaujeu. The 2nd Brigade of Musnier

¹⁸This division proceeded with a slowness which despaired General Marchand. It was scarcely more than a trip of two days, and was expected at Chambéry on the 20th of March, and on the 15th of March the Duke of Feltre had urged Prince Borghese to reinforce Marchand as soon as possible. (See *Archives of the War*, Minister of War to Prince Camille Borghese, 15 March).

¹⁹ Marchand to the Minister, Frangy, 19 March, evening.

²⁰Effective troops of the Austrian Army of the South troops on the right bank of the Saône on 17 March: Ist Corps, 19,000 men, 3,000 horses and 64 guns. Column of Lieutenant Field Marshal Wimpffen: 12,000 men, 1000 horses and 24 guns. Column of Prince Philippe of Hesse-Hombourg: 16,000 men, 1400 horses and 24 guns.

²¹STÄRKE, Eintheilung und Tagesbegebenheiten der Haupt-Armee im Monate März (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, III, 1), and the Crown Prince of Hesse-Hombourg, a relating of the battles fought during the march of the Army of the South on Lyons (*Ibid.*, III, 812); Augereau to the Minister, Villefranche, 18 March, 10 o'clock in the morning (*Archives of the War*).

²²STÄRKE, Eintheilung und Tagesbegebenheiten der Haupt-Armee im Monate März. (*K. K. Kriegs, Archiv.*, III, 1.)

and the 13th Regiment of Cuirassiers were ordered to leave Villefranche at daybreak and to form the reserve at the crossroads of the roads of Beaujeu and Villefranche.²³

Augereau had at the same time sent to the commander of the first column troops from Catalonia, who were to arrive at Lyons on the 18th of March in the morning, to leave four hours after its arrival to march at Villefranche; inviting General Marchand to direct General Vedel and his artillery to Lyons as soon as the division brought by this general had effected his junction with him.²⁴

Retreat of General Bardet on Miribel. --The natural uneasiness of Augereau, on the point of being attacked by forces so superior in number,²⁵ was increased still more because of the fears inspired by the position of Bardet.

"If Bardet was forced on the left bank," he wrote to the Minister from Villefranche, on the morning of the 18th of March, a few moments before the commencement of the battle of Saint-Georges, "and I would make my retreat, by Vienne on Pont-Saint-Esprit, for all more reason, because I saw by an intercepted letter that the plan of the enemy was to occupy Lyons, and to communicate with General Wellington, who it supposes that he must soon be master of Toulouse."²⁶

The events which the Marshal feared would soon take place.

General Bardet had, in fact, had to retire before the superior forces of the Austrians, abandon them to Meximieux and fall back as far as Miribel, three leagues from Lyons. The advanced guard of Count Ignatius Hardegg, whose main body was still at Marlieux, did not dare, in spite of the departure of Bardet, to settle at Meximieux, and stopped at Villars and Chalamont.

On his right the Prince of Coburg, who had advanced from Saint-Cyr to Saint-Trivier-sur-Moignans (Saint-Trivier-en-Dombes), stood at the level of the troops of Ignatius Hardegg and had pushed a few parties and some scouts in the direction of Trévoux.²⁷

In Geneva everything was quiet. Bubna, as the Generalissimo said of him to the Emperor of Austria, awaited the arrival of the Austrian column coming from Nantua to resume the offensive.²⁸

18 March. --Battle of Saint-Georges. --On the morning of the 18 March, the Pannetier Division and the Ordonneau Brigade, forming the first line of little army of Augereau, occupied their post of combat. Their fronts stretched from the village of Saint-Georges-de-Reneins, the point of support of their right, by Laye, the center of the position, as far as Longsard and Le Chambély, which was occupied by their extreme left. The brigade of Gudin was in reserve with the 13th Cuirassiers at the level of Arnas, and supported its right at the road from Mâcon to Villefranche, its left at the road to Beaujeu. The village and the château of Laye had been put in a state of defense.

²³Augereau to General Pannetier, Villefranche, 17 March, evening. (*Archives of the War.*)

²⁴Augereau to the commander of the 1st column of the troops of Catalonia, Villefranche, 17 March, evening (*Ibid.*), and Augereau to General Marchand, Villefranche, 17 March (*Ibid.*)

²⁵The number of troops assembled by the Crown Prince of Hesse-Homburg, on the right bank of the Saône, amounted to about 47,000 men, more than 5,000 horses, and 112 guns. At that time Augereau had only 12,000 men, 2,000 horses and 24 guns.

On the left bank, Hardegg and Coburg, with 4,000 men, 4,000 horses with 24 guns, had before them only the 3,000 men and the 4 cannons of Bardet.

²⁶Augereau to the Minister of War, Villefranche, 18 March, 10 o'clock in the morning. (*Archives of the War.*)

²⁷STÄRKE, Eintheilung und Tagesbegebenheiten der Haupt-Armee im Monate März. (*K. K. Kriegs, Archiv.*, III, 1.)

²⁸Prince Schwarzenberg, daily report to the Emperor of Austria, Arcis-sur-Aube, 17 March. (*Ibid.*, III, 309.)

In spite of the inferiority of his forces, Augereau thought he was in a position to stop the Army of the South, and at the very moment when the Austrians attacked him on all points, he wrote to the Minister of War that "his arrangements were made so as to be assured of the result."²⁹

On the evening of the 17th, the Crown Prince of Hesse-Homburg had sent to Bianchi, Wimpffen, and Prince Philip of Hesse the following disposition: "The army will march to the enemy tomorrow in the same order as today."

"The first column (Bianchi) will gather at 6 o'clock in the morning at Odenas and will go on Arnas passing by Néty."

"The second column (Wimpffen) will form a little after 8 o'clock in front of Saint-Jean-d'Ardières on the main road of Villefranche. It will detach on its left two companies of jäger, an infantry battalion, and a squadron, which will cross Belleville, advance on Saint-Georges, and on entering between the high road and the Saône, seek to attract attention of the enemy."

"The corps of Lieutenant Field-Marshal Prince Philip of Hesse-Hombourg will be formed at 9 o'clock at Saint-Jean-d'Ardières, and will follow at a certain distance the movement of the second column. The operation of tomorrow has for its objective to push the bulk of the army beyond Villefranche and to reach with the vanguards at Anse and La Chassagne."³⁰

The Austrian Ist Corps, charged with overthrowing the position of the French and taking them in rear, descended from the level of Odenas and crossed the Vauxonne. In order to maintain the connection with the second column, Bianchi, as soon as he arrived on the right bank of the Vauxonne, pushed to his left an infantry regiment, a half-squadron, and two pieces, placed under the command of the Colonel Papp, ordering them to proceed by Gandager on Laye. A few moments later, the advanced guard of the Ist Corps (Lieutenant Field-Marshal Lederer) engaged vigorously with the enemy on the side of Marsangues.

The obstinate resistance, with which the Ordonneau Brigade opposed at Marsangues and Laye, obliged Bianchi to reinforce his vanguard, first by the infantry regiment Hiller, and then by the Salins Brigade. Despite their numerical superiority, the Austrians failed in the successive attacks they directed against the left of Augereau. Bianchi, seeing that a frontal attack on the villages of Laye and Longsard would cost him too much, and might even compromise the result of the day, gave the Prince of Wied an order to oblique with his second brigade (General Söldenhofen) to the right of the road from Beaujeu to Villefranche, to take its direction on Les Rues, to outflank the French left and to push on its rear, debouching by Œuilly on Villefranche.

While these events were taking place on the Marsangues-Laye-Longsard line and the Ordonneau Brigade held the troops of Bianchi in check, the Hessian brigade of General Gall (advanced guard of the second column) attacked the Pannetier Division that had to momentarily retreat behind Saint-Georges. But Marshal Augereau, seeing that the young troops of General Gall were carried away by their ardor, and debouched from the village without taking time to reform, immediately executed an offensive return against the Hessian infantry, who, surprised by this unexpected attack, was obliged to abandon Saint-Georges, and descended the heights in the greatest disorder, at the moment when the head of the bulk of the second column (Field-Marshal Lieutenant Wimpffen) debouched on the field of battle. In order to restore the combat, to stop the progress of Pannetier, and to give General Gall time to rally his

²⁹Augereau to the Minister of War, Villefranche, 18 March, 10 o'clock in the morning. (*Archives of the War.*)

At this moment, Augereau was in fact convinced of the efficacy of his dispositions. Writing to the Prefect of the Rhône on the morning of the 18th, he said to him in postscript: "*If, by chance, what I am far from believing, we were forced to retire, it would be done on the Dauphine by Vienne, to join the troops coming from Spain. This from you to me.*" (*Ibid.*)

³⁰Crown Prince of Hesse-Hombourg, Belleville, 17 March, evening, disposition for the attack of the position of Saint-Georges.

brigade, Wimpffen launched the Haugwitz Brigade (regiments of Simbschen and Hesse-Homburg) against the Saint-Georges. The bayonet attack attempted by this brigade failed. After a few moments, General Haugwitz and a large number of officers were out of action, and General Czollich, Chief of Staff of Wimpffen, who had taken command of the two regiments, was compelled to bring back from the heights of the left bank of the Vauxonne, his troops, which he had great difficulty in disengaging. The good performance of the Simbschen Regiment and some of the charges made by the dragoons of Würzburg alone enabled him to resist the French and to maintain his positions until the arrival of the main column, which Lieutenant Field Marshal Wimpffen was bringing at double time. "It was only after a long battle with the bayonet, after a hand-to-hand combat, in which the village was taken several times and taken again that the Austrians succeeded in snatching Saint-Georges from the French."³¹

Although the brigade of Ordonneau had succeeded in maintaining hitherto at Laye and Longsard, although the turning movement of the Söldenhofen Brigade (division of Prince Wied) had been retarded by the difficulties which the rugged terrain and the bad state of the roads which opposed to the march of his artillery, Marshal Augereau had realized the danger which threatened his left. The loss of the village of Saint-Georges persuaded him to begin the retreat on Villefranche and to prescribe to Ordonneau to dispute the land foot by foot. He hoped thus to give the right and the center the possibility of retreating, to the cavalry the time to come to take a position behind Saint-Georges and to cover the retrograde movement of the infantry of Pannetier. But before this general had time to reform his regiments, a squadron of dragoons from Würzburg, unexpectedly emerged from Saint-Georges, threw themselves impetuously on the hussars, overwhelmed them, and, supported by three other squadrons of the regiment, pursued them vigorously and threw them back to the infantry in whose ranks they carried the disorder. Lieutenant Field Marshal Lederer, at that time taking command of the vanguard of the two Austrian columns which had just assembled, endeavored at the same time to cut off the retreat of the French troops from the center and the right and to arrive before they left the defile of Saint-Georges.

Fortunately for Augereau, the brigade of Ordonneau, placed on his left, had continued to make a good show of it. Retiring foot by foot, and in good order, it stopped the Austrian cavalry by its fire, obliging them to slow down their pursuit, and succeeded in covering the retreat of the Marshal on Villefranche.

The second brigade of the Prince Wied (Söldenhofen Brigade) reached Les Rues only just in time to send a few cannon shots at the French rear-guard. Too far off to be able to take part in the pursuit, knowing that a part of the French troops, having crossed Villefranche, had taken a position on the heights of Limas, the Prince Wied came to establish himself at Œuilly, and effected a little after 3 o'clock in the afternoon, his junction with the main part of the Bianchi column, which at once took the necessary measures to flush out the French from Limas. But Augereau had only stopped there for the time necessary to restore order in his regiments, and then continued his march on Limonest.

The battle of Saint-Georges had cost the Austrian Army of the South dearly, the losses of which amounted to 23 officers and 1386 men out of combat.³²

Position of the Army of the South on 18 March in the evening. --On the evening of the 18th the Austrian Army of the South occupied the following positions: the vanguard of Scheither (1st column) stopped at La Chassagne; the division of the Prince of Wied at Pommiers, and the rest of the Ist Corps at Limas. The vanguard of the second column crossed the Azergues and pushed as far as Ambérieux, and the bulk of the column bivouacked at Anse. The

³¹History of the Hesse-Homburg Infantry Regiment (*Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift*, 1845, II, 209), and History of the Austrian Infantry Regiment n° 48 (in 1814, Baron Simbschen Regiment) (*Ibid.*, 1845, I).

³²STÄRKE, Eintheilung und Tagesbegebenheiten der Haupt-Armee im Monate März. (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, III, 1.) --Crown Prince of Hesse-Hombourg, relating of the battles fought during the march of the Army of the South on Lyons. (*Ibid.*, III, 312.) --relating of the combat delivered on 18 March 1814, by the second column (left column of the Army of the South). ---History of the Austrian Dragoon Regiment n° 4 (in 1814, Würzburg Dragoons.) (*Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift*, 1838, I, 312-316). - History of the Austrian Hesse-Homburg Infantry Regiment. (*Ibid.*, 1845, II, 209.) -- History of the Austrian Infantry Regiment n° 48 (in 1814, Baron Simbschen Regiment) (*Ibid.*, 1845, I) --Augereau to the Minister of War, Limonest, 18 March, morning. (*Archives of the War.*)

corps of Prince Philip of Hesse-Homburg, arrived at the battlefield at the moment when the action ended, coming to Villefranche, where the commander of the Army of the South established his headquarters.

On the left bank of the Saône, Ignatius Hardegg had come from Marlieux and Chalamont to settle at Meximieux,³³ and had pushed a few parties on Montluel and Miribel.

The Prince of Cobourg had once more approached the left bank of the Saône, and had advanced from Saint-Trivier-sur-Moignans to Frans. While he was executing this march, Lieutenant-Colonel Count Thurn, who flanked his movement and observed since the day before the Saône de Guercins as far as Montmerle, had repulsed a French detachment which was trying to cross the Saône below Montmerle and had obliged it to re-embark and return to the right bank of the river.³⁴

On the side of Geneva, Bubna, had sent a column charged with capturing the fort of the L'Écluse.

Affairs against the armed peasants. --The national uprising continued to spread in the departments of the Ain and the Jura in spite of the retreat and the departure of the French troops. The National Guards of the Canton de Belley and the valley of Saint-Rambert had, during the day of the 18th of March, a series of engagements sufficiently lively with the Austrian cavalry. Between Nantua and Saint-Claude a large Austrian column, attacking Saint-Claude by La Cluse, had been attacked by 400 armed peasants at Maillat, and had set fire to the village.³⁵

19 March. --Movements of the corps of the Crown Prince of Hesse-Homburg. --The Crown Prince of Hesse-Homburg, determined to attack Augereau on the 20th of March, if he persisted in remaining at Limonest, and once more tried to resign himself to abandon Lyons, took advantage of the day of 19 March to bring his corps closer to the points occupied by the French and to establish them near the positions they were charged with attacking. The column of Wimpffen went straight ahead of Ambérieux on Les Chères, and occupied by its outposts a line which, extending on the right bank of the Azergues to the left from Poleymieux and passing by Lissieu, supported its right to this stream at short distance from Lozane. The 1st Corps had pushed at the same time from La Chassagne to the Azergues, had made sure of the bridge of Dorieux, and had established its camps on the left bank of this river, on the heights between Saint-Jean-des-Vignes and Lozane. The advanced guard and the light troops of the 1st Corps passed on the right bank of the Azergues, whose division of Wied-Runkel guarded all the passes, and came to occupy Dommartin. A flying column, composed exclusively of cavalry, covered the extreme right and stood at La Tour-de-Salvagny. The corps of Prince Philippe of Hesse-Hombourg remained at Villefranche, with the exception of the Moser Brigade, which was sent to Anse.³⁶

Augereau modifies the position of his divisions. --The movements executed by the Austrians, and which could easily be traced from the heights of Limonest, left no doubt of the plans of the Crown Prince of Hesse-Hombourg. The fate of Lyons depended on a battle. In order to try to save the city, Augereau decided to accept the struggle, despite the great inferiority of his forces. Due to the preparations of his adversary, he modified, in the course of the 19th, the distribution of his troops on the position of Limonest.

³³STÄRKE, Eintheilung und Tagesbegebenheiten der Haupt-Armee im Monate März. (*K. K. Kriegs, Archiv.*, III, 1.)

³⁴History of the Austrian Regiment of Hussars n° 3 Archduke Ferdinand. (*Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift*, 1845, IV, 317.)

³⁵Crown Prince of Hesse-Hombourg, a relating of the battles fought by the Army of the South during its march on Lyons (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, III, 312); STÄRKE, Eintheilung und Tagesbegebenheiten der Haupt-Armee im Monate März (*Ibid.*, III, 1), and General Marchand to the Minister of War, Frangy, 20 March (*Archives of the War*). "1500 Austrians and 650 cavalrymen, traveling from Nantua by La Cluse to Saint-Claude, had been stopped at Maillat by 400 peasants. They burned the village to take revenge for the resistance they had encountered."

³⁶STÄRKE, Eintheilung und Tagesbegebenheiten der Haupt-Armee im Monate März. (*K. K. Kriegs, Archiv.*, III, 1.)

Fearing that the Austrians would repeat the maneuver they had tried at Saint-Georges and outflank his left by using the road to L'Arbresle, recognizing that his adversary would be careful not to direct his main attack by the great route of Mâcon, and would not attempt to carry off the series of steep cliffs which lead to the position of Limonest, he only left between the Saône and the high road, on the heights which dominate Couzon au Mont-d'Or, Saint-Romain-de-Couzon, Limonest and Saint-Fortunas, the division of Musnier. The Pouchelon Brigade (of the Pannetier Division) came to establish themselves with the 4th Regiment of Hussars and the 13th Regiment of Cuirassiers on the plateau which runs in the direction of the south of the village of Limonest towards Dardilly which he made occupied by the brigade of Estève, charged with the task of taking La Tour-de-Salvagny from the morning of the 20th.³⁷ In order to defeat the Austrians, who had attempted to come by La Tour-de-Salvagny, General Digeon, with the 12th Hussars, formed the reserve and took a position in front of Grange-Blanche, where General Beurmann, arrived from Catalonia at Lyons on the night of the 19th to the 20th was to join him on the morning of March 20th.³⁸

Positions and movements of the Austrian troops on the left bank of the Saône. --On the left bank of the Saône Ignatius Hardegg had not moved from Meximieux; but his vanguard had made contact with the posts of General Bardet beyond Montluel, which he had ordered to attack the next day.³⁹ The bulk of the troops of Bardet were in position at Miribel. Two battalions, detached by the general at Caluire, were in charge of containing the column of the Prince of Coburg, who was marching along the Saône by the road to Trévoux.⁴⁰

Bombardment of the fort of L'Écluse. --Affairs against armed peasants on the side of Nantua. --On the 18th of March, General Klebelsberg had summoned the commander of the fort of L'Écluse, occupied by only a hundred men, to give him the place, and replied to his refusal by bombarding him without success for three hours. After having exhausted his ammunition, Klebelsberg resumed the road to Geneva; but during his retreat, he was constantly harassed by the armed peasants, who reappeared before him rapidly to the other side of the Peron, and carried off a hundred men.⁴¹

The Austrian column of Captain Schell, sent from Bourg by Nantua to Chatillon-de-Michaille and Seyssel, had been even more ill-treated. Stopped at every step by the armed peasants, it had not been able to pass through the defiles, and Count Hardegg had had to send to Ambérieux a flying column composed of a regiment of infantry and two cannons under the orders of Colonel Leiningen, to chastise the inhabitants and clear the road to Nantua.

20 March. --Dispositions of the Crown Prince of Hesse Homburg. --On the evening of the 19th, the Crown Prince of Hesse Homburg sent the following dispositions to the commanders of his two columns and his reserve:

"The 1st Army Corps will begin its march on the 20th of March, at 6 o'clock in the morning, and will march by Dorieux and Dommartin against the left wing of the enemy in position on the heights of Dardilly."

"The second column (left column) at 7 o'clock will reassemble in Montluzan, marching by the main road and attack the position of Limonest."

³⁷Augereau had for a moment intended to detach an infantry battalion and 100 horses, and to send them to La Tour-de-Salvagny. --See Augereau to General Digeon, Limonest, 19 March (*Archives of the War*), and Augereau to General Pannetier (*Ibid.*).

³⁸Augereau to Generals Musnier, Pannetier, Digeon and Beurmann, Limonest, 19 March. (*Archives of the War.*)

³⁹STÄRKE, Eintheilung und Tagesbegebenheiten der Haupt-Armee im Monate März. (*K. K. Kriegs, Archiv.*, III, 1.)

⁴⁰Augereau to the Minister, Report on the Battle of Limonest, Vienne, 31 March. (*Archives of the War.*)

⁴¹STÄRKE, Eintheilung und Tagesbegebenheiten der Haupt-Armee im Monate März, (*K. K. Kriegs, Archiv.*, III, 1.) and Marchand to the Minister, Frangy, 19 March, evening (*Archives of the War*).

"The column of Prince Philip of Hesse-Hombourg will form the same hour at Les Échelles (at Les Chères), and will follow the movement of the column of Lieutenant Field-Marshal Wimpffen."⁴²

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⁴²Crown Prince of Hesse-Hombourg, Villefranche, 19 March, evening, dispositions for the day of 20 March.