

THE
CAMPAIGN OF MARENGO
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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION.

Upon Bonaparte's return from Egypt in October, 1799, he found England, Austria, and the small states dependent upon them waging war against France. The allies were united in an effort to crush the French Republic. They were sanguine of success. Against this formidable coalition France stood alone.

Before Bonaparte's return, a Russian army, commanded by Suwaroff, had also been fighting the French in Italy and Switzerland; but, having been defeated by Masséna, Suwaroff had retreated with the remnants of his army into the valley of the Danube, and thence had proceeded into Russia. The defeat of Suwaroff had caused the Russian Emperor, Paul the First, to believe that his army had not been properly supported by the Austrian armies. He therefore felt angry and bitter towards Austria. As soon as Bonaparte became aware of the state of the Emperor's mind he collected the Russian prisoners then in France, gave them new uniforms and new arms, and sent them back to their own country. These acts and others of a conciliatory nature pleased and flattered the Emperor Paul, and enabled Bonaparte, soon after his return, to detach Russia from the alliance.

Of the two great powers at war with France, England had been more active and more successful upon the sea; Austria, upon the land. In the battle of the Nile, Nelson had dealt the French navy a terrible blow, from the effects of which it never recovered. England was now mistress of the sea. Having her fleets in the Mediterranean and the Gulf of Genoa, she was prepared to assist Austria in her efforts to overthrow the French Republic.

During Bonaparte's absence in Egypt, Austria, aided by Russia, had pushed forward her armies to the boundaries of France. One large Austrian army in western Germany was watching the crossings of the Rhine; another in northwestern Italy was fighting the French along the Apennines and Maritime Alps. From the theatre of operations made memorable by Bonaparte's victories in 1796-97, Austria had almost driven the French eagles. Bonaparte's battles of Montenotte, Lodi, Castiglione, Arcole, and Rivoli seemed to have been won in vain. Austria had all but reconquered Italy. Except along the narrow seaboard between the Apennines and the sea, no French soldiers were to be found upon Italian soil.

Such was the situation when, in November, 1799, Bonaparte became First Consul of France. At this time his acts certainly indicated a desire for peace. He wrote to the governments of England and Austria, deploring the futility of a continuation of the conflict, and suggesting that the war should cease. His

overtures, however, were coldly rejected. He was forced to fight. Against this powerful coalition peace could be obtained only by victorious battle.

Industriously Bonaparte prepared for war. France was in a deplorable state. The treasury was empty; the soldiers were ill fed and ill clad; recruits and supplies were obtained with difficulty; civil war existed in certain parts of western France; and the armies of the Republic had met with defeat again and again. Over the French people this condition of affairs had cast a gloom which the magic of Bonaparte's name alone could dispel.

During the winter of 1799-1800 his energy and activity were apparent everywhere. His proclamations aroused the spirit and patriotism of the French people, and gave them confidence in their government, and hope of success under his leadership. He placed the finances upon a firm basis, crushed out the civil war, caused arms to be manufactured, and supplies to be collected; and from the levies that he ordered he organized sufficient forces to strengthen materially the French military power. Of the two French armies in the field, he sent reinforcements to the Army of the Rhine, gave the command of it to General Moreau, and ordered General Masséna to take command of the Army of Italy, which, half-starved upon the rocks of Genoa, was struggling heroically against overwhelming odds. At this time, too, he began to collect, drill, and organize, in different parts of France, bodies of men who were destined to unite near Lake Geneva, and together with other troops in France already organized, were to form a third army, to be known as the Army of Reserve.

Before entering into the details of the campaign, it is necessary to describe the topography of the theatre of operations, to point out the situations of the opposing forces, and to explain the plans of the contending powers.

Bordering France on the east are Germany, Switzerland, and Italy. The Alps, covering Switzerland like a huge network, give to this country the appearance of an immense bastion, which, extending east, separates Germany from Italy. From Switzerland these mountains extend through and beyond the Tyrol. They separate the valley of the Danube from the valley of the Po. In Switzerland they are known as the Swiss Alps; in the Tyrol, as the Tyrolese Alps. On the north side of them are the States of Swabia, Bavaria, and Upper Austria; on the south side, Piedmont, Lombardy, and Venice.

Extending south from western Switzerland to within about thirty miles of the sea, the French Alps form part of the boundary line between France and Italy; thence, turning east, they approach the Italian shore, and are here known as the Maritime Alps; still farther east, along the shores of the Gulf of Genoa, they are called the Apennines.

With the exception of a few passes, this great mountain chain, almost enclosing northern Italy, forms an insurmountable barrier to the soldier. Even over the passes, especially across the higher ranges, communication was, at the time of which we write, extremely dangerous. The snow and ice, the glaciers, avalanches, frequent storms, and steep declivities, made these mountain roads

hazardous and difficult for the passage of armies. The principal passes in the Swiss Alps are the St. Gothard, the Simplon, and the Great St. Bernard; in the French Alps, the Little St. Bernard, and the Mont Cenis; in the Maritime Alps, the Col di Tenda and the Col di Ormea; and in the Apennines, the Col di Cadibona and the Bochetta.

Lying partly or entirely within this territory are three large rivers and their tributaries. They have their sources in or near the great chain of the Alps, and drain the tributary country. The Po rises in the French Alps, and flows east through northern Italy. The Danube rises in western Germany, and flows east through Bavaria and Austria. The Rhine rises in Switzerland, flows north into Lake Constance, thence, forming the outlet of the lake, flows west to Bale, where it turns abruptly and flows north for the rest of its course.

Early in April, 1800, an Austrian army of one hundred and twenty thousand soldiers, commanded by Marshal Kray, guarded the right bank of the upper Rhine. The right wing extended beyond Strasburg; the left, well up into the Alps east of Switzerland; and the center, forming the greater part of Kray's army, occupied the Black Forest in the angle of the Rhine made by its change of direction at Bale. Kray's line of communication was along several roads down the Danube to the Austrian capital.

Facing the Austrian army, on the opposite side of the river, was the Army of the Rhine, commanded by Moreau. Including the French forces in Switzerland, it numbered one hundred and thirty thousand soldiers, and extended from the St. Gothard on the right to Strasburg on the left. It had for a base of operations the frontier fortresses of France, and Switzerland, which was occupied by the French.

The Austrian army in northwestern Italy consisted of one hundred and twenty thousand soldiers, and was commanded by General Mélas. The greater part of it was in the vicinity of Genoa and along the Apennines and Maritime Alps. The remainder, occupying the fortresses and guarding the entrances to the passes of the Alps, was scattered throughout northwestern Italy. This army had its base of operations on the Mincio; and its line of communication was by several roads down the valley of the Po to its base, thence by two roads: one north through the Tyrol across the Brenner Pass into the valley of the Danube; the other northeast through Friuli across the Pontebba Pass to Vienna.

Opposed to the army of Mélas was the Army of Italy. It consisted of forty thousand soldiers, of whom thirty-six thousand, commanded by Masséna, were holding the passes of the Apennines and Maritime Alps from Genoa to the Col di Tenda. The remainder, four thousand strong, commanded by General Thurreau, was guarding the Mont Cenis Pass in the French Alps. The line of communication of the Army of Italy to its base of operations on the Rhone was by the Genoa-Nice road.

A British fleet, commanded by Admiral Keith was in the Gulf, of Genoa; and a British corps twelve thousand strong, commanded by General Abercromby, was at Port Mahon in Minorca.

Such were the main features of the theatre of operations, and such were the positions and numbers of the opposing armies that were facing each other in Germany, France, Switzerland, and Italy, at the beginning of hostilities early in April, 1800. Against the Austrian armies, supported by the British navy, and a British corps which might at any time be thrown upon the coast of France, Bonaparte could not, with his two armies, expect to make much headway. His chances of success were small; the odds against him were too great. Unless he could increase his own forces, a French victory was doubtful. Thus it was that early in the winter he had seen the necessity of creating an army of reserve, which could be sent to re-enforce Moreau in Germany or Masséna in Italy as circumstances might require. But the Army of Reserve had not yet been assembled. The divisions composing it were still scattered throughout France. Their organization, however, was being rapidly pushed forward, with the intention that early in May they should unite near Lake Geneva and form an army of forty thousand soldiers.

On the French side, Bonaparte, at the head of the French Republic, had for the first time full control of all military operations. Hitherto, great as had been his achievements in Italy and in Egypt, he had acted as a subordinate, merely directing the operations of his own army; but now his military genius was to have full play.

On the Austrian side, the Aulic Council, consisting of twenty-one members, directed all military operations. This council, which held its sessions at Vienna, not only made the plans of campaign, but also issued detailed orders to the Austrian commanders, and furnished them information regarding Bonaparte's plans and manoeuvres.

At this time the ablest soldier in Austria was the Archduke Charles. Already he had greatly distinguished himself in several campaigns. He reasoned that, inasmuch as Austria, England, and Russia had failed to crush the French Republic in 1799, before Bonaparte's return to France, the allies stood little hope of success after Russia had withdrawn from one side, and Bonaparte had been added to the other. He therefore advised his government to accept Bonaparte's offer of peace. To the Aulic Council he also gave valuable advice upon the military situation. But no attention was paid to his suggestions. In fact, before the campaign opened, the Archduke was relieved of his command in the army, and sent into Bohemia in a kind of honorable exile.

The plan of campaign adopted by the allies was that the Austrian army under Kray in Germany should remain on the defensive, holding Moreau in check if possible, while the Austrian army under Mélas in Italy attacked the Army of Italy along the Apennines and Maritime Alps. By this means, the allies expected that the Austrian forces in Italy, so superior in numbers to the French, would be able with the help of the British fleet to blockade Genoa, and to drive the Army of

Italy across the Var into southern France. This movement being accomplished, the purpose was that Mélas, supported by the British navy and Abercromby's corps, should invade France, and attack and capture Toulon. Furthermore, the allies hoped, by adopting this plan, to receive some support from the Royalists in the south of France. If this operation succeeded, it was expected that Moreau would detach a sufficient force from the Army of the Rhine to march on Toulon for the purpose of driving back the allies: whereupon Kray could attack the Army of the Rhine, thus weakened, with much hope of success; that, in fact, he could take the offensive, force the crossings of the Rhine, and invade France.

In this calculation no plans were made to attack the French forces in the great stronghold of Switzerland. If, however, the allies succeeded in their designs, Kray and Mélas could unite their armies in France, thus cut the communications of the French forces in Switzerland, and smother them, as it were, between the two great Austrian armies.

In view of the facts that the allies were flushed with their recent victories, were superior to their adversary in numbers, and also held the mastery of the sea, they expected great results in the coming campaign. With so many advantages on their side, their plans seemed both reasonable and accomplishable; but they reckoned without the genius of Bonaparte.

On the other side, Bonaparte had two plans, both of which it will be well to examine, that the reader may grasp the breadth of Bonaparte's intellect in originating strategic conceptions. Both plans were based upon the fact that the great stronghold of Switzerland, extending like a huge wedge between the Austrian army in Germany and that in Italy, was occupied by the French. This natural fortress, almost impregnable, could be used as a base of operations from which to attack either Kray in Germany or Mélas in Italy.

The first plan conceived by Bonaparte was to leave Masséna in Italy on the defensive to hold Mélas in check, then to unite the Army of Reserve with Moreau's army, cross the Rhine in force between Schaffhausen and Lake Constance, and attack that part of Kray's army occupying the Black Forest in the angle of the Rhine between Lake Constance and Strasburg. By an attack in this direction, Bonaparte calculated that he could defeat Kray, drive him north, sever his communications with Vienna, and either destroy or capture his army. If successful in this operation, he could descend the Danube and seize the Emperor's capital; then by taking possession of the Tyrol and the Carnic Alps, he could occupy the Brenner and Pontebba passes, which operation would sever the communications of Mélas in Italy and cut him off from Vienna. With Kray's army captured or destroyed, with the French holding the only passes by which the Austrians in Italy could retreat, and with Bonaparte in possession of the Austrian capital, the campaign must end; the Austrian Emperor would be compelled to make peace. This plan had many advantages. It would, if successful, be far-reaching in its results; it would not only destroy Kray, but would paralyze the operations of Mélas; it would, to use Bonaparte's expressive words, "reconquer Italy at Vienna".

Though this plan promised great results it was not carried out. A rivalry between Moreau and Bonaparte was the principal cause. The former, being jealous of the latter, refused to serve under him. Though the First Consul had shown his confidence in Moreau, and, by appointing him to command the Army of the Rhine, had recognized his great military abilities, nevertheless Moreau objected to having Bonaparte direct the operations of the combined armies in person. In fact, he stated that he would send in his resignation if the First Consul took command of the Army of the Rhine. At a later day this would undoubtedly have resulted in Moreau's losing his command; but at this time Bonaparte was not in a position to force a quarrel with him. He had need of Moreau's great military talents. Furthermore, the commander of the Army of the Rhine had the unbounded confidence of the soldiers under him, and was at that time the only general in France, except Masséna and Bonaparte himself, who was able to direct successfully the operations of a large army. Victory was Bonaparte's object. To be victorious, it was necessary to utilize the services of every great soldier of France.

Doubtless, too, in adopting another plan, Bonaparte was influenced somewhat by the hope of gaining a great victory with the army that he himself had created. If he could cross the Alps with the Army of Reserve and strike a blow which would decide the fate of Italy, he alone would reap the glory. Moreover, by following in the footsteps of Hannibal, he would be more likely to dazzle the French people, and to fix deeply in their minds the splendor of his achievements.

Bonaparte's second plan was that Moreau should cross the Rhine and attack Kray in such a direction as to push him back from Lake Constance towards the north; that he should then detach a corps of twenty or twenty-five thousand soldiers from his army and send them across Switzerland by the St. Gothard Pass into Italy, where they were to unite with the Army of Reserve to be led by Bonaparte in person over the Great St. Bernard Pass. With these forces Bonaparte purposed to march south, cross the Po, seize the line of retreat of the Austrians, and force them to fight a battle to recover their communications.

Should he succeed in this manoeuvre, a single victorious battle would decide the fate of the Austrians in Italy; for it would sever their communications and cut them from their base of operations. To Mélas, therefore, a defeat would mean the ruin, capture, or annihilation of his army; to Austria it would mean the loss of Italy.

The success of this plan depended upon the skill with which Bonaparte could deceive the Austrians in Italy as to his intentions; for should they learn of the existence of the Army of Reserve, and of Bonaparte's intention to cross the Great St. Bernard, they could concentrate near the Italian entrance to the pass, and overwhelm the French divisions in detail as they issued into Italy. It was necessary, therefore, that the strength, destination, even the existence of the Army of Reserve, should be kept as secret as possible. To accomplish this, Bonaparte published in the newspapers, and announced in various ways, that the Army of Reserve was assembling at Dijon in France, and that it would soon be sent to reinforce the Army of Italy. At the same time he took care to collect there only a few thousand men, consisting mostly of conscripts and old soldiers.

The wide publicity given the matter caused the spies of England and Austria to gather at Dijon, but finding there only unorganized conscripts and veterans too old for active service, they sent word to their governments that no such army existed. Consequently the Army of Reserve was believed to be imaginary, and was ridiculed and caricatured throughout Europe.

Both Mélas and Kray were completely deceived. Feeling certain that there were but two French armies with which to contend, they had great hope of success. Moreover, the information received from the Aulic Council confirmed them in this opinion. Mélas, in particular, regarded the matter as a ruse of Bonaparte, intended to divert the Austrians in Italy from invading France. He therefore felt secure in his positions, and pushed forward his forces with renewed energy. Feeling certain that he had fathomed Bonaparte's stratagem, he rested in a security which doomed him to defeat.

Meanwhile the divisions of the Army of Reserve were concentrating. They were marching through France; and were rapidly assembling near Geneva, from which place they were to be led across the Alps into Italy. This army, so secretly organized, and so derided throughout Europe; this army, whose very existence was doubted by the allies, was destined to amaze the world by the brilliancy of its exploits. Bonaparte will lead it over the Great St. Bernard Pass across the Alps, descend like an avalanche into the valley of the Po, cut the communications of the Austrians, and defeat them in the hard-fought battle of Marengo. He will emulate the deeds of Hannibal. He will lead forty thousand soldiers across the highest mountains of Europe, surmount every obstacle in his pathway, overthrow every force sent to oppose his progress, and by a single march and a single battle reconquer northern Italy.

CHAPTER II. GENOA.

IN the fertile valley of the Po, the Austrian army, commanded by Mélas, found supplies in abundance for both men and animals. The equipment, discipline, and morale of the Austrians were good. The successes of the preceding year had encouraged them. They had that confidence in their commander so necessary to secure success. Filled with the enthusiasm of victory and looking hopefully forward to new triumphs, they were ready and anxious to be led against the French.

On the other hand, the Army of Italy, extending along the Apennines and Maritime Alps, found difficulty in obtaining supplies. Cut off from the productive basin of the Po by the Austrians on the north, and from the commerce of the sea by the British fleet on the south, this army had to depend almost entirely upon such supplies as could be sent from France over the Nice-Genoa road. The French soldiers were in a deplorable condition. Neglected by the French government, they were ragged, half-starved, discouraged. They had been defeated again and again. They lacked the discipline and morale so essential to success. A few soldiers had already deserted; many were so emaciated that they could hardly bear arms, and a number were sick with fever.

On assuming command of the Army of Italy, Masséna took steps to improve the condition of his men. With money furnished by Bonaparte he supplied his troops with wheat, and by his energetic measures soon brought about better discipline. In Bonaparte's name, he published a spirited proclamation, which did much to renew the courage of his soldiers and to inspire in them the hope of victory.

Notwithstanding the efforts of Masséna, his soldiers were in a destitute condition. Only the bare necessities of life were furnished them. Ammunition alone was sent them in abundance. Though the Army of Italy numbered but forty thousand men and was opposed to one hundred and twenty thousand Austrians, Bonaparte would not reinforce it by a single soldier. In fact, all the men and *matériel* collected in France were used to strengthen Moreau's army and the Army of Reserve. The Army of Italy was left to fight, as best it could, a force overwhelmingly superior in numbers, *matériel*, and equipment.

At the opening of the campaign, the condition of the Army of Italy was such that but thirty-six thousand men were fit for active service. Of this force, four thousand under Thurreau were in the Mont Cenis Pass, so that there remained

but thirty-two thousand with which to hold the Apennines and Maritime Alps from Genoa to the Col di Tenda. Masséna's right wing, numbering eight thousand under Miollis, held the fortified city of Genoa, which, owing to the outlying works and natural obstacles surrounding it, was an exceedingly strong place; his center, twelve thousand strong, commanded by Soult, defended the Bochetta Pass, which opens upon Genoa, and the Cadibona Pass, which opens upon Savona; his left, consisting of twelve thousand under Suchet, occupied the Col di Tenda, Nice, and the line of the Var.

Inasmuch as the active French army directly in front of Mélas numbered only thirty-two thousand soldiers, and was spread out from Genoa to Nice, he calculated that by directing twenty-five thousand men upon Genoa and a column of forty thousand upon the center of the French line, he could hold in check the French right, while he broke through their center and cut the Army of Italy in two. This feat accomplished, he expected that his left wing of twenty-five thousand, with the aid of the British fleet, would be able to enclose, blockade, and capture Genoa, while his right wing of forty thousand was forcing the remainder of the Army of Italy across the Var.

On the French side, the plan of campaign that offered the best results was one that Bonaparte himself had originated. He ordered Masséna to leave only small detachments at the passes of Tenda, Ormea, and Cadibona, and to concentrate twenty-five or thirty thousand men at Genoa. In written instructions to Masséna, the First Consul set forth his views as follows: —

“Take care”, said he, “not to extend your line too widely. Put but few men on the Alps, or in the defile of the Tenda, where the snow will protect you. Leave some detachments around Nice and in the forts in its vicinity; keep four fifths of your force in Genoa and its neighborhood. The enemy will debouch upon your right in the direction of Genoa, on your center in the direction of Savona, and probably on the two points at once. Refuse one of the two attacks, and throw yourself with all your forces united upon one of the enemy's columns. The nature of the ground will not allow him to avail himself of his superiority in artillery and cavalry; he can only attack you with his infantry, and yours is infinitely superior to his; and, favored by the nature of the place, it may make up for the deficiency in number. In that broken country, if you manoeuvre well, with 30,000 men you may give battle to 60,000. In order to carry 60,000 light-armed troops into Liguria, Mélas must have 90,000, which supposes a total army of 120,000 at least. Mélas possesses neither your talents nor activity; you have no reason to fear him. If he appear in the direction of Nice, you being at Genoa, let him come on, stir not from your position; he will not advance far if you remain in Liguria, ready to throw yourself upon his rear, or upon the troops left in Piedmont”.

Though this plan was excellent for holding in check the Austrians for a time, unfortunately it was beyond the execution of Masséna. Provisions were so scarce in Genoa that it would have been foolish to concentrate nearly the whole of the Army of Italy there. To feed his army was the difficulty that confronted Masséna. For this reason he scattered his troops along the Apennines, and occupied the seaboard from Genoa to Nice. In this position, his- soldiers could

seize the meager supplies that the barren country afforded, and could more easily obtain provisions direct from France. Though it is doubtful whether Massena fully appreciated the advantages of Bonaparte's plan, nevertheless, he would probably have carried it out, had he not been prevented from doing so by a lack of provisions, and by the beginning of hostilities much earlier than either he or Bonaparte expected.

On the 5th of April, Mélas, leaving thirty-five thousand Austrians under General Kaim to occupy the fortresses of northwestern Italy and to watch the passes of the Alps, advanced with sixty-five thousand to attack Masséna. His forces were divided into three columns: General Ott with fifteen thousand men ascended the Trebbia and presented himself before the defiles of the mountains which shoot off from the main chain of the Apennines and extend along the east side of Genoa; General Hohenzollern with ten thousand marched upon the Bochetta Pass on the north side of the city; and Mélas himself with forty thousand ascended the Bormida, and attacked the forces of Soult and Suchet along the Apennines and Maritime Alps. Confining his principal attack to the center of the French line, Mélas succeeded, after hard fighting, in forcing his way through the Cadibona Pass, which movement cut in two the Army of Italy and separated Soult from Suchet. The former fell back towards Genoa; the latter, towards Nice. In these engagements both sides fought fiercely. Though the French had the advantage of position, they were compelled to give way before the onslaughts of superior numbers.

At the Bochetta Pass, the attack made by General Hohenzollern was repulsed; but on the east side of Genoa the French, numbering less than four thousand, could not hold the defiles and crest of the Apennines against General Ott's force of fifteen thousand. The Austrians drove the French across the mountains, then surrounded and invested the French forts that protected the city on that side. By this successful attack, General Ott gained a foothold within cannon-shot of the walls of Genoa.

Thus far Mélas had been successful. The first great step in his undertaking had been accomplished. Now he could close in upon Masséna with his left wing, force him back into Genoa, and hold him there as in a vise; while with his right, strongly reinforced, he could advance against Suchet, perhaps crush him or drive him across the Var into France.

Meanwhile Masséna was in a precarious situation. His army was cut in two; his communications with France were severed. In the face of superior numbers, Suchet was being driven back towards Nice, and Soult was withdrawing the shattered remains of his forces towards Genoa. In front of the city and along the Italian shore, the British fleet was actively supporting the operations of Mélas. On the east side of the city, the Austrians had gained the crests of the mountains; and at the Bochetta Pass they were ready to make another attack, which would prove successful. In fact, Masséna was surrounded. The allies were closing in upon him. Already their guns could be heard at Genoa; soon they might force him inside the walls of the city.

But it was the want of provisions that gave Masséna the greatest anxiety. Food was already scarce, and there was but little hope of receiving any more. Though defeat and famine were staring him in the face, yet he did not allow himself to be discouraged. He realized that it was his duty to maintain a stubborn resistance, and to engage actively as many of the Austrians as possible, in order that Bonaparte could cross the Alps and strike the Austrian rear. By prolonging the conflict he would gain time; and time was of the greatest importance to the success of Bonaparte.

In order to understand how Masséna attempted to carry out his purposes, it is necessary to describe briefly the situation of Genoa and its fortifications. The city lies at the foot of a spur of the Apennines, on the shore of the gulf that bears its name. This spur, running south from the main chain towards the sea, divides into two ridges which extend to the water's edge, one along the east side, the other along the west side of the city. Upon the crests of the ridges, which form two sides of a triangle, having its base on the sea, a number of forts had been constructed and were occupied by the French. Within the triangle was the walled city of Genoa, containing about one hundred thousand inhabitants. Thus the city had two lines of fortifications surrounding it: one along the ridges and crests of the Apennines, the other along the walls of the city.

Masséna had but eighteen thousand soldiers to defend Genoa. But with this force in so strongly fortified a place, he knew that he could hold out as long as his provisions lasted. Perhaps, by vigorous fighting, he might be able to unite with Suchet, and in this way re-establish his communications with France.

For the purpose of carrying out these views, Masséna resolved to drive the Austrians from the crest of the Apennines on the east side of the city; then, if possible, to effect a junction with Suchet by a movement along the Genoa-Nice road. Accordingly, on the 7th of April, at the head of a strong force, he issued from the city and vigorously attacked General Ott. The French drove the Austrians from the crest of the Apennines, and, after desperate fighting, seized and reoccupied the Austrian positions.

Having been successful in this attack, Masséna then made preparations for a movement towards Nice. For this purpose, he divided his command into two parts: he left Miollis with eight thousand men to defend Genoa; and with the remaining ten thousand, divided into two columns, one of which was commanded by Soult, the other by himself, he began his westward march. At the same time, Suchet, who had been informed of Masséna's plan, marched eastward from Nice to attack the Austrians from that side. Both Masséna and Suchet met with fierce opposition. Neither could make much headway against the overwhelming forces of Mélas. For several days the fighting was furious, desperate, and bloody. Though Masséna captured several thousand Austrians, he was finally repulsed and driven back. On the 18th of April he reentered Genoa; and Suchet again fell back towards the Var.

Masséna was now enclosed in the city. From this time dates the beginning of the siege of Genoa, — one of the most memorable and stubbornly contested

struggles mentioned in history. In this brief account of these operations, we shall not attempt to describe the sufferings of the French soldiers who fought and starved and died here; nor to dwell upon the heroic deeds of their commander, — as stubborn a soldier and fierce a fighter as ever trod a battlefield; but rather to point out the important facts that had a bearing upon the operations of Bonaparte, and to show why Masséna, in the midst of a starving army and a starving city, still continued to fight on.

The Army of Italy having been cut in two, Mélas gave orders that General Ott should take command of the thirty thousand Austrians then surrounding Genoa, and, if possible, force Masséna to capitulate; and that General Elsnitz, with twenty-five thousand, should proceed vigorously against Suchet, whose active force at this time numbered but ten thousand men. Masséna himself had but fifteen thousand; but nevertheless he had resolved to hold out to the last extremity. He sent an aid-de-camp to the First Consul to apprise him of the situation of the Army of Italy, and to urge him to hasten the movement of the Army of Reserve. Realizing that the scarcity of provisions would prevent a long resistance, Masséna took possession of all the wheat he could find in the city. Even the grain of inferior quality, such as rye and oats, was seized and made into bread. Though the quantity of bread thus obtained was small, and the quality poor, it sufficed to keep alive the soldiers and the poor of Genoa during the first two weeks of the siege. But ten days passed, and the supply of bread was almost exhausted. Moreover, its bad quality was already causing sickness. A number of soldiers were in the hospitals; and many were so weak and emaciated that they could hardly bear the weight of their arms.

Though the outlook was gloomy to Masséna's soldiers, some hope yet remained in his rugged soul. Perhaps a storm or adverse winds might drive the English fleet off the Italian shore, and thus allow the French ships to bring in provisions; perhaps Bonaparte, now that he understood the situation, would hurry across the Alps into Italy, and strike a blow that would cause Mélas to raise the siege of Genoa and set free Masséna's perishing army.

Masséna's force, exclusive of the sick, now numbered but twelve thousand men; part of whom were occupying the outlying works, and the remainder, within the city, were acting as a reserve. His purpose was to attack the Austrians, whenever they advanced towards the city, and to exhaust them as much as possible by partial engagements. By this means he expected to prevent Mélas from sending away a force, either to aid the Austrians in front of Suchet, or to oppose the projected march of Bonaparte across the Alps.

On the 30th of April General Ott, supported by English gun-boats in the Gulf of Genoa, made simultaneous attacks on the east, north, and west sides of the city. In these attacks, he met with considerable success. On all three sides the Austrian columns advanced and occupied more favorable positions. In fact, they gained the crests of several mountain ridges within cannon-shot of the city, and succeeded in capturing several French forts.

Massena fought fiercely. Throwing his reserve first on one side of the city and then on the other, in order to reenforce his troops occupying the outlying works, he finally forced back the Austrians from their commanding positions and recovered the lost forts. The success of Massena at this time was discouraging to General Ott; for he knew that he could not lay close siege to the place until his troops gained the crests of the Apennines and invested, or captured, the outlying works.

Meanwhile the twenty-five thousand Austrians under Elsnitz had, by vigorous fighting, driven Suchet from position to position. They had even forced him to abandon Nice, and to fall back on the Var. On this river, which had been strongly fortified, Suchet rallied his scattered forces. Having received from the departments of southern France a considerable re-enforcement, which increased his total strength to fourteen thousand men, he was able, in this position, to make a successful stand, and to stop the onward rush of the victorious Austrians.

As soon as Bonaparte learned of the hopeless condition of affairs at Genoa, he saw the necessity of hurrying across the Alps with the Army of Reserve. But since the successful execution of his plan depended upon his receiving a large reinforcement from the Army of the Rhine, and since Moreau could not safely detach this force till he had defeated Kray and pushed him back from Lake Constance, Bonaparte was compelled to delay his own movement. Moreau was slow to begin; and his lingering inactivity gave Bonaparte intense anxiety, for it not only paralyzed the operations of the Army of Reserve, but prolonged the sufferings of the Army of Italy. Repeatedly Bonaparte urged Moreau to cross the Rhine and attack Kray. "Hasten", said the First Consul, "hasten by your success to accelerate the arrival of the moment at which Massena can be disengaged. That general wants provisions. For fifteen days he has been enduring with his debilitated soldiers a struggle of despair. Your patriotism is addressed, your self-interest; for if Masséna shall be compelled to capitulate, it will be necessary to take from you a part of your forces, for the purpose of hurrying down the Rhone, in order to assist the departments of the south".

Finally, on the 25th of April, Moreau began his advance against Kray. It is not the intention at this time to describe in detail these operations. At present it is sufficient to say that Moreau executed vigorously his part in Bonaparte's great plan. Having defeated Kray in two battles, he detached, on the 11th of May, a corps of fifteen thousand men from his army, gave the command of it to General Moncey, and ordered him to march by way of the St. Gothard into Italy.

The time had come for Bonaparte to move forward the Army of Reserve. Accordingly, on the 15th of May, he began his advance by way of the Great St. Bernard into Italy. While this army of forty thousand and this corps of fifteen thousand are marching hopefully forward across the Alps, from France and Germany respectively, let us again turn our attention to Masséna, who, amidst famine and death, is desperately fighting on.

On the 5th of May a small vessel, containing grain sufficient to last the besieged garrison for five days, ran the blockade and entered Genoa. Masséna felt

encouraged, and shortly afterwards made a sortie on the east side of the city. Though he drove the Austrians from their positions, this assault was the last of his successes. On the 13th of May he attempted another assault, but was badly defeated. Henceforth his soldiers were so weak that they lacked the strength to undertake any movement beyond the walls of Genoa. In fact, many, not being able to bear the weight of their arms, were compelled to sit down while doing guard duty. Consequently, Masséna was obliged to limit his efforts to the defence of the city, and to the task of providing food for his men.

By the 20th of May the bread and meat were exhausted; even the horses had all been consumed. All the linseed, starch, and cacao found in the city were then collected and made into a kind of bread, which was all but indigestible. This wretched and repulsive food, and a soup made of herbs were all that remained to sustain life. Nevertheless, Masséna would not capitulate. Stubborn and courageous to the last, he seemed bent on defying even starvation and death. Possibly Bonaparte might yet come; for word had been brought that he had crossed the Alps. It was reported that, on the 20th of May, his army had been seen descending the Great St. Bernard into Italy. If so, why did he not come? It was now the 30th of May, and not another word had been heard of him. Could he have met with defeat? Could he, whose movements were usually so rapid, whose blows were so terrible and unexpected — could he have been ten-days in Italy, and not yet have struck the blow that was to shatter the Austrian rear and bring relief to Masséna's perishing soldiers?

With intense anxiety these despairing men looked for the coming of Bonaparte. But he came not. Already discouraged, they now lost all hope. A few went so far as to destroy their arms. Some plotted; others talked wildly of the sufferings and horrors that they were called upon to endure. All urged Masséna to surrender; but he would not yield. He begged his soldiers to hold out a little longer. He told them that the First Consul was advancing to their relief; that if they capitulated now, they would lose the results of all their heroism, all their sufferings. “Yet a few days”, said he, “nay, a few hours, and you will be delivered”.

Thus, for a brief time, Masséna succeeded in raising the hopes of his soldiers. Again they looked expectantly towards the Apennines. Never was anxiety more intense. In every sound, in every echo, in every flash of light along the northern horizon, they thought that they saw signs of the coming of Bonaparte. But they were mistaken. Despair seized them; no hope remained. Even Masséna saw that the end had come; for the last ounce of that wretched food composed of linseed, starch, and cacao, had been consumed. It was now absolutely necessary to surrender. Yet Masséna's inflexible nature would not wholly yield. He declared that he would never capitulate, unless his soldiers should be allowed to march out with the honors of war, and with the liberty to fight again when beyond the enemy's line. And he kept his resolution. The Austrians were compelled to accept these terms.

That the reader may understand why General Ott did not continue the struggle a few days longer, and thus force Masséna to surrender unconditionally, let us consider for a moment the situation at this time in the valley of the Po.

On the 2d of June, two days before Masséna capitulated, Bonaparte entered Milan, and there awaited Moncey's corps, which did not arrive till the 6th of June.

On the 29th of May Mélas learned that Bonaparte was advancing on Milan. On the 31st he learned that Moreau had defeated Kray, and that Moncey's corps was marching by way of the St. Gothard into Italy. At once he comprehended the vast plan of the First Consul. Mélas was in consternation; he had been surprised. To him the Army of Reserve was no longer imaginary; it was a reality. Moreover, it was rapidly approaching a favorable position from which it could strike a formidable blow at the Austrian communications. Mélas saw the necessity of concentrating immediately his scattered forces. He must, if possible, break through the French Army before it closed in upon him. Accordingly, on the 31st of May, he sent orders to General Elsnitz to quit the Var and march on Alessandria; and instructed General Ott to raise the siege of Genoa and hasten north in order to defend the line of the Po.

General Ott received this order on the 2d of June, during the negotiations for the capitulation of Genoa. He realized that he must either raise at once the siege of the city or else accept Masséna's terms.

On the 4th of June Masséna surrendered. On the 5th his active force, numbering eight thousand men, set out over the Genoa-Nice road to join Suchet, who at this time was following closely upon the rear of the Austrians in his front, as they withdrew towards Alessandria. In addition to his active force, Masséna surrendered four thousand sick soldiers at Genoa; but it was stipulated that they should be cared for, and upon their recovery should be sent back to join the French army. Having made these arrangements, Masséna himself proceeded by sea to join Suchet.

During these operations the English fleet in the Gulf of Genoa actively supported the Austrians; but the English corps in Minorca remained inactive. No effort was made to land it either at Genoa or at any other point along the Italian or French coast.

During these engagements the fighting on both sides was desperate, the loss heavy. In prisoners, killed, and wounded, the Austrians lost about twenty thousand; the French, about fourteen thousand. But the loss of the latter was in reality much greater; for out of Masséna's active force of eight thousand that had marched out of Genoa to join Suchet, probably six thousand were unfit for arduous service. The total number, therefore, on the French side put hors de combat, for the time being, may be reckoned at about twenty thousand men.

The active operations of the Army of Italy were ended. They had begun on the 5th of April, and had terminated on the 4th of June. For two months Masséna had shown himself firm as a rock, — had gloriously performed his part in Bonaparte's great plan.

CHAPTER III. MOREAU IN GERMANY.

LYING in the angle of the Rhine between Lake Constance and Strasburg is a mountainous region known as the Black Forest, which takes its name from the dark foliage of its pine timber. The general shape of the Black Forest is that of a triangle; its base resting on the Rhine between Lake Constance and Bale, and its apex pointing north. Its total length is ninety-three miles; its breadth varies from forty-six to thirteen miles, and its average elevation is about three thousand feet. On the south and west sides the mountains are rugged and steep, but on the east side" they descend gradually to the lower level of the adjacent country.

Within its limits the Black Forest presents an almost impassable barrier to an army attempting to enter Germany from France. A few roads lead through it; but they lie in the fissures of the mountains, and are therefore difficult for the passage of troops. Extending into the Black Forest opposite Strasburg is the Kinzig Valley, and opposite Brisach are the Hollenthal (valley of Hell) and the valley of Waldkirch. At Bale the valley of the Rhine is narrow, but at a short distance below that point it begins to widen till it reaches a breadth of fifteen miles. Good roads extend along the Rhine on both sides, and bridges span the river at Bale, Strasburg, and Mayence.

The opposing armies were thus stationed: Moreau's right wing, twenty-nine thousand strong, commanded by General Lecourbe, was in Switzerland along the Rhine from Lauffenberg to Lake Constance. Next on the left was the reserve of twenty-six thousand, commanded by Moreau in person; it occupied the entrenched camp at Bale and extended some distance along the Rhine both above and below the city. The center, consisting of thirty thousand soldiers, under General St. Cyr, joined the left of the reserve near Brisach, and stretched north almost to Strasburg. The left wing, nineteen thousand strong, under General Ste. Suzanne, occupied Strasburg and the bridgehead of Kehl on the opposite shore. Besides these forces, about twenty-six thousand were occupying Switzerland and the frontier fortresses of France along the Rhine as far north as Mayence.

On the Austrian side, sixteen thousand soldiers, under General Starray, were posted from Mayence to Renchen; and fifteen thousand, under General Kienmayer were guarding the defiles of the Black Forest from Renchen to the Hollenthal. These two corps constituted Kray's right wing. The main body, forty thousand strong, commanded by Kray himself, was at Villingen and Donaueschingen; and the reserve, numbering nineteen thousand, was guarding the Austrian magazines at Stokach. Cavalry detachments

and outposts, to the number of about five thousand, from these several corps, were observing the Rhine and the defiles of the Black Forest; and an Austrian flotilla was on Lake Constance. Beyond the lake was Kray's left wing, numbering about twenty-five thousand men, of whom six or seven thousand were Tyrolese militia. This wing was commanded by Prince de Reuss, and extended well up into the mountains bordering eastern Switzerland, thence eastward into the Tyrol.

The natural base of operations for Kray's army was the Bohemian Mountains and the Enns River, which are about two hundred miles east of the Black Forest. The Austrian lines of communication to this base were over two roads: one by way of Stokach, Memmingen, and Munich; the other along the Danube by way of Mosskirch, Ulm, and Ratisbon. The temporary base of operations for the Austrians in the Black Forest was Ulm. At this place, during the preceding year, the Archduke Charles had constructed an immense entrenched camp.

Knowing that it was necessary to gain a decisive victory over the Austrians in the Black Forest before the Army of Reserve could begin its operations in Italy, the First Consul submitted a plan of campaign which he desired Moreau to carry out. Bonaparte proposed that Moreau should concentrate his forces on the south side of the Rhine between Schaffhausen and Lake Constance, cross the river in force, and attack the flank and rear of the Austrians in the Black Forest. He calculated that, by an attack in this direction, Moreau would be able to defeat Kray, sever his communications, and either capture or destroy his army.

To this plan Moreau objected. It seemed to him a difficult operation. Cautious by nature, he looked upon the proposed manoeuvres of Bonaparte as being too bold and hazardous. He argued that his left and center would have to make long flank marches in order to join his right; and that while the movements were taking place Kray would be given the opportunity of concentrating his forces near Schaffhausen, where he could oppose the passage of the French corps, or crush them in detail as they crossed the river.

The First Consul replied that the Rhine afforded just the kind of protection necessary to screen the French corps during their concentration; and that these manoeuvres, if successfully executed, would, in a short time, bring about great results.

But Moreau, who appreciated the difficulties of forcing the passage of a large river in the face of an active enemy, believed that the risk was too great, and therefore refused to attempt the execution of Bonaparte's plan. Instead, he proposed the following plan. His left, under Ste. Suzanne, was to cross the Rhine at Kehl, and his center, under St. Cyr, at Brisach. Both corps were to push forward, attack Kienmayer, and drive him into the defiles of the Black Forest. Moreau calculated that these attacks would lead Kray to believe that the French forces were massing in front of his right wing, and would cause him to re-enforce Kienmayer. Having driven the Austrians back into the Black Forest, and thus given the impression that the principal attack of the French would be made from the direction of Strasburg, Ste. Suzanne and St. Cyr were to withdraw

suddenly. The former was to recross the Rhine at Kehl, ascend the river, cross again to the German side at Brisach, and take the position formerly occupied by St. Cyr; the latter was to make a flank march over the spurs and hills towards Schaffhausen by way of St. Blazien. Meanwhile Moreau with the reserve was to cross the Rhine at Bale and march towards Schaffhausen, where, upon his arrival, his right, under Lecourbe, was to cross the river and join him. As soon as these movements were completed, Ste. Suzanne was to march towards Lake Constance by way of Friburg, Neustadt, and Loffingen. By this series of complicated manoeuvres, Moreau expected to unite the bulk of his forces in the vicinity of Schaffhausen, and to march thence against the flank of Kray in the Black Forest.

Though the First Consul was anxious to have his plan adopted; though he had, in fact, already begun to collect boats in the Rhine preparatory to crossing the river near Schaffhausen, yet Moreau persisted in his own views. Nevertheless, Bonaparte hoped to convince him. With this end in view, he explained the proposed manoeuvres and pointed out their advantages to General Dessoles, Moreau's chief of staff. Through this officer, who had an acute intellect and sound judgment, the First Consul hoped to change the views of Moreau himself. Though General Dessoles soon perceived that the plan of Bonaparte was superior to that of Moreau, nevertheless he advised the First Consul to allow Moreau to carry out his own ideas. "Your plan", said he to Bonaparte, "is grander, more decisive, and probably even surer; but it is not adapted to the genius of the man who is to execute it. You have a method of making war which is superior to all others; Moreau has his own, inferior doubtless to yours, but still an excellent one. Leave him to himself; he will act well, slowly perhaps, but surely; and he will obtain as many results for you as are necessary for the success of your general combinations. If, on the contrary, you impose your ideas on him, you will disconcert him, you will wound his self-love, and obtain nothing from him by seeking to obtain too much". The First Consul appreciated the wisdom of these remarks, coming from such a man, and yielded the point. "You are right", said he to General Dessoles. "Moreau is not capable of grasping and executing the plan that I have conceived. Let him follow his own course; only let him push back Marshal Kray upon Ulm and Ratisbon, and afterwards move his right wing in time upon Switzerland. The plan which he does not understand, and dares not execute, I myself will carry out on another part of the theatre of war. What he dares not attempt on the Rhine, I will accomplish on the Alps".

It being settled that Moreau should proceed against the Austrians in his own way, Bonaparte now wished to come to an understanding with him by which a corps of twenty or twenty-five thousand men should, at the proper time, be detached from the Army of the Rhine, and be sent across Switzerland, to unite in Italy with the Army of Reserve. But Moreau did not enter heartily into any of the plans proposed by the First Consul. In fact, both he and Bonaparte seemed to distrust each other. Whether from jealousy, or from honest convictions, Moreau opposed the plans of Bonaparte. Moreover, he had declared that he would not serve under the First Consul, should the latter unite the Army of Reserve with the Army of the Rhine. Naturally this opposition created in the mind of Bonaparte a doubt of Moreau's good faith.

He feared that, at the critical moment, the commander of the Army of the Rhine might fail to send a corps into Italy. He was well aware that the commander of an army is always reluctant to weaken his forces after operations have begun; and he knew that circumstances might arise which would seem to justify Moreau in refusing to obey the orders of his superior. He therefore insisted that Moreau should sign a stipulation whereby he promised that, after pushing Kray back from Lake Constance, he would detach Lecourbe with twenty or twenty-five thousand men, and order him into Italy. This agreement was signed at Bale by Moreau and General Berthier, the latter representing the First Consul.

Nearly a month had passed since the arrangements between Bonaparte and Moreau had been completed. It was now the latter part of April, yet Moreau had made no movement to cross the Rhine and attack Kray. Naturally cautious and slow, he had postponed his advance from day to day, in order, if possible, to supply his army with everything necessary to increase its fighting power. He was short of cavalry and artillery horses, and had little or no camp equipage, and no entrenching tools. But at this time it was impossible for him to obtain everything he needed. Already Bonaparte had sent to the Army of the Rhine all the spare material of war that he could collect in France. Now he was anxious to have Moreau advance. Massena was hard pressed at Genoa, and Bonaparte desired to march into Italy in order to relieve him. But to cross the Alps and throw himself upon the rear of Mélas, while Kray remained undefeated in the Black Forest, was too hazardous an undertaking. Much therefore depended upon the early advance of Moreau. Repeatedly Bonaparte urged him to press forward, and finally sent him a positive order to cross the Rhine and attack Kray.

On the 25th of April Moreau began his movement. Ste. Suzanne crossed the Rhine at Kehl, ascended the Kinzig valley, and pushed Kienmayer's outposts back into the Black Forest. At the same time St. Cyr crossed at Brisach; one division of his corps then advanced towards the Kinzig valley, while the other divisions forced back the Austrians at Friburg, and occupied the entrance to the Hollenthal.

On the next day Kray at Donaueschingen heard of these movements. Having received word that a part of his right wing had been attacked by forty thousand men, he was led to believe that Moreau intended to force his way through the Black Forest by way of the Kinzig valley. He therefore sent seven thousand Austrians from Villingen to reinforce Kienmayer, and to replace these troops withdrew seven thousand men from his reserve at Stokach. At the same time he ordered his extreme right, under Starray, to move towards the main army into the valley of the Murg.

On the 27th of April Ste. Suzanne withdrew his corps from its advanced position preparatory to recrossing the Rhine at Kehl. St. Cyr, having directed his artillery and trains to follow the river road on the right bank towards Schaffhausen, led his infantry across the hills towards St. Blazien. Moreau crossed the Rhine at Bale with the reserve; one of his divisions, commanded by General Richepanse, then ascended the Weiss River, so as to join the right of St.

Cyr's corps; the other two, commanded by Moreau in person, marched up the Rhine towards Schaffhausen.

On the following day Ste. Suzanne recrossed at Kehl, and proceeded up the left bank of the Rhine towards Brisach. St. Cyr, having united a part of his forces with Richepanse's division, occupied St Blazien. Moreau himself forced a passage across the Alle River, and drove back an Austrian brigade there, which retreated towards Bonndorf.

On the 30th of April Ste. Suzanne, having arrived at Brisach, again crossed the Rhine to the German side, and took up the position at Friburg, at the entrance to the Hollenthal, recently occupied by St. Cyr's troops. St. Cyr remained in the vicinity of St. Blazien. Moreau advanced upon the Wutach River, and Lecourbe concentrated his corps on the south bank of the Rhine near Schaffhausen, preparatory to crossing the river at that point.

Thus the French corps continued to push forward. On the 1st of May Moreau reached Schaffhausen, where he was joined by Lecourbe's corps, part of which crossed the river in boats, and the remainder over a bridge temporarily constructed for the purpose. St. Cyr reached Stuhlingen, and Ste. Suzanne, having driven back the Austrian brigade occupying the Hollenthal, arrived at Neustadt.

During these movements the Austrian outposts along the Rhine fell back before Moreau to Stuhlingen, and, upon St. Cyr's arrival at that place, retreated upon Zollhaus. Meanwhile Kray had directed part of his own immediate command upon Loffingen and Zollhaus. Kienmayer, with the greater part of his forces, still remained in the valley of the Kinzig, and Starray in the valley of the Murg.

Thus the first part of Moreau's plan was successfully executed. As yet he had met with no reverse. His forces had driven before them the Austrian outposts and advance brigades, till now three of his corps, numbering eighty-five thousand men, were within supporting distance of one another on the north side of the Rhine near Schaffhausen. From this favorable position he could march at once against Kray in the Black Forest, and outnumber him almost two to one; for Kray could not expect immediate aid from his left wing, which was beyond Lake Constance on the borders of eastern Switzerland and in the Tyrol, or from his right wing, which was far away in the valleys of the Kinzig and the Murg.

Kray now began to appreciate the insecurity of his position. He perceived that his reserve and immense magazines at Stokach were in danger. Should Moreau capture this place and push rapidly forward towards Ulm, he would sever the Austrian communications, and thus place Kray in a position where a defeat would ruin his army. In order to prevent, if possible, such a result, Kray decided to unite his forces at Stokach, and there give battle to Moreau. With this end in view, Kray caused the following movements to be made. On the 2d of May the Austrian brigade that had been driven from Neustadt by the advance of Ste. Suzanne, moved to Bonndorf; the Austrians at Bonndorf marched to Zollhaus; and those at Zollhaus, to Geisingen, where Kray had collected the Austrian troops

under his immediate command. On the 3d of May his columns advanced towards Stokach over the Geisingen-Engen road.

Meanwhile Moreau was not idle. On the 3d of May he moved on Engen with the reserve; St. Cyr on Zollhaus; and Lecourbe, having directed two brigades to ascend the Aach River, in order to connect with the right of the reserve, marched on Stokach with about twenty thousand men, attacked and defeated the twelve thousand Austrians there, captured the immense magazines, and forced the Austrians back towards Ulm by way of Mosskirch and by way of Memmingen. But after this victory Lecourbe, not receiving any orders from Moreau to push forward and seize Mosskirch, remained in the vicinity of Stokach, awaiting the result of the operations of Moreau at Engen.

Meanwhile Kray, on his way to Stokach, had reached Engen before the arrival of Moreau. In this position his troops, numbering about forty-five thousand men, faced south with their left at Engen and their right extended towards Zollhaus. Moreau soon arrived with the reserve. His forces, counting the two brigades on his right detached from Lecourbe's corps, numbered about forty thousand men. At once Moreau began the battle. Fiercely and desperately the French and Austrians fought for several hours, but neither gained a decided advantage. Finally, late in the day, St. Cyr, who had received orders from Moreau to hurry forward from Zollhaus, arrived and began an attack upon the right of the Austrians, which caused them to give way. But this attack was made too late to produce any decisive result. The Austrians, though forced at last to yield, were not crushed; in fact, Engen was little more than a drawn battle. But, during the night, Kray, having learned of the capture of Stokach, began to fear that Lecourbe would push forward, seize Mosskirch, and sever his communications with Ulm. He therefore decided to retreat. Leaving a rear guard to hold Moreau in check, he directed his forces upon Tuttlingen, Liptengen, and Mosskirch. At the battle of Engen each side lost in killed, wounded, and captured, about seven thousand men.

Kray now determined to unite as many of his troops as possible at Mosskirch, and there to make a stand against the French, who were pushing eagerly forward towards Ulm. Already he had sent word to General Starray and General Kienmayer to descend the left bank of the Danube, and join him at the earliest possible moment.

On the 4th of May Moreau directed his own corps and that of Lecourbe on Mosskirch; St. Cyr arrived at Geisingen; and Ste. Suzanne, who had been forcing his way through the Black Forest, was at Donaueschingen.

On the following day Kray, having been joined by the remnants of his reserve, beaten at Stokach, took position at Mosskirch with forty thousand men. His right was at Tuttlingen, about twelve miles distant; but Kienmayer and Starray were beyond supporting distance on the north side of the Danube. On this day Moreau attacked Kray with fifty thousand men, and, after hard fighting, succeeded in forcing the Austrians back towards Sigmaringen. But Kray did not retire far. Being anxious for the safety of the Austrian troops

at Tuttlingen, he halted, formed line of battle, and with the right of his line strongly reinforced, attacked the French and drove them from the Tuttlingen-Mosskirch road. This success opened his communications with the Austrians at Tuttlingen, and enabled them to join him. Being thus reinforced, he again attacked the left flank of Moreau, and attempted to seize the Stokach-Mosskirch road. But in his attempt to outflank the French, he was in turn outflanked by them, and was again compelled to retire.

In the battle of Mosskirch the Austrians lost in killed, wounded, and prisoners, about five thousand men; the French, about three thousand. In this battle both sides fought fiercely, but neither gained a decided success. Nevertheless, Kray saw the necessity of retreating; for St. Cyr, who had taken no part in the battle, was now about to join Moreau; and Ste. Suzanne was pushing rapidly forward towards Mosskirch by way of Tuttlingen. In other words, Kray, with less than fifty thousand men, could not expect to hold his own in a second battle at Mosskirch against the united French corps.

Kray crossed the Danube at Sigmaringen, and, being joined by the two corps of his right wing, retired towards Ulm by way of Rietlingen and Biberach. He was followed by Moreau. Lecourbe marched by way of Memmingen, St. Cyr by way of Biberach, and Ste. Suzanne descended the Danube towards Ulm. At Biberach Kray attempted to make a stand, in order to save the Austrian magazines there, but was defeated with considerable loss. Lecourbe also defeated an Austrian garrison occupying Memmingen, and captured the place.

On the 11th of May Kray continued his retreat on Ulm, which, through the foresight of the Archduke Charles in the preceding year, had been converted into a strongly entrenched camp. At Ulm Kray sought and found safety for his army. Here he collected the shattered remains of his defeated forces, and for several weeks made a successful stand against Moreau. Here, eyeing each other with suspicion, these two armies remained for a time, each ready to take advantage of any false movement of the other, while more stirring operations and greater deeds were happening in the valley of the Po.

It is difficult to estimate accurately the losses sustained by the contending armies in these operations. Probably the loss of the Austrians was about twenty thousand men; that of the French, about fifteen thousand. At the opening of hostilities, Kray's forces, not counting the left wing under the Prince de Reuss, since it took no part in the active operations, numbered ninety-five thousand men. At Ulm Kray had seventy-five thousand. On the other hand, Moreau had crossed the Rhine with one hundred and four thousand soldiers, and had reached Ulm with nearly ninety thousand; but he was about to send fifteen thousand men into Italy, which would leave the opposing armies about equal in numbers.

The time had arrived for the commander of the Army of the Rhine to carry out the agreement entered into between himself and the First Consul. In fact, since the battle of Engen, Bonaparte had awaited anxiously for Moreau to start the promised reinforcements towards Italy. Fearing that Moreau might still delay in the matter, the First Consul had sent Carnot, the French minister of war, to

Moreau's headquarters, in order to make the necessary arrangements, and to insist that the troops should be detached and ordered forward at the earliest possible moment.

Moreau did not comply fully with the agreement entered into with the First Consul, but on the 11th and 12th of May he selected fifteen thousand men from the different French corps, united these troops into a single corps and ordered it to proceed into Italy.

Though Moreau had not succeeded in severing the communications of Kray, and in capturing or destroying his army, he had been generally successful in his manoeuvres; he had pushed the Austrians back from Lake Constance, defeated them at Stokach and Engen, forced them to retreat after the battle of Moskirch, and compelled them to seek security in the entrenched camp of Ulm. Though he had retained General Lecourbe and his corps in the valley of the Danube, and had failed to send into Italy the full number agreed upon in the stipulation with the First Consul, nevertheless, he had weakened his army by fifteen thousand men, and, by so doing, had given Bonaparte the opportunity of bringing to a successful issue one of the most striking and dramatic campaigns of his career.

CHAPTER IV. MARENGO



ANXIOUSLY Bonaparte at Paris awaited the success of the Army of the Rhine. Matters were urgent and time was precious, for Masséna could hold out but a few days longer at Genoa. Until the French should be victorious in Germany, the First Consul could not expect Moreau to send a detachment across Switzerland into Italy. As soon as word should be brought that this reinforcement was on its way, Bonaparte purposed to lead the Army of Reserve across the Alps against Mélas, who was fighting the French so vigorously at Genoa and along the Var.

On the 6th of May Bonaparte left Paris to direct the operations of the Army of Reserve. He had already assembled the several parts of that army near Lake Geneva, and had collected vast supplies there, which were to be used by the army in its march into Italy. On his arrival at Dijon, he reviewed the few thousand conscripts and old soldiers at that place. After this review, which was intended to

confirm the spies still further in their belief that the Army of Reserve was purely imaginary, he proceeded to Geneva, and thence to Lausanne, at which places the greater part of the army was assembled. On his arrival there, Bonaparte began, the final preparations for crossing the Alps. At first, he thought of leading the Army of Reserve into Switzerland, in order to unite it with Moncey's corps, which had been detached from the Army of the Rhine, and thence march through the St Gothard Pass into Italy. He also considered the plan of marching into Switzerland, and thence of descending into Italy by way of the Simplon Pass. But after receiving the report of General Marescot, who had been sent to examine the several passes of the Alps, he decided to conduct the greater part of his forces over the Great St. Bernard Pass. By taking this route, which was much the shortest, he could reach Milan earlier, and thus gain the great advantage of time.

The plan of Bonaparte was to conduct thirty-five thousand men of the Army of Reserve over this pass into Italy, and to send the remaining five thousand over the Little St. Bernard Pass, which lies in the Alps but a few miles south of the Great St. Bernard. At the same time a small detachment was to proceed from Switzerland into Italy by way of the Simplon Pass; and Thurreau's division of four thousand, which formed the left of the Army of Italy, was to descend from the Mont Cenis Pass and attack the Austrians in the vicinity of Turin. These movements having been accomplished, Bonaparte intended to direct the greater part of the Army of Reserve on Milan, where it was to unite with Moncey's corps, which was marching over the St. Gothard into Italy. Should this part of the plan be successfully executed, Bonaparte then purposed to march south with a strong force, cross the Po near Placentia, and occupy the Stradella Pass. This pass, which is enclosed on the north by the Po and on the south by the spurs that shoot northward from the main chain of the Apennines, is a strong position on the direct road between Alessandria and Mantua. While holding the pass, Bonaparte expected to debouch westward therefrom against Mélas, who, he calculated, would advance eastward from Alessandria and meet him in the plains of the Scrivia.

It is clear, from the histories of this campaign, that the plan as here set forth had not been determined on in all its details before the movements began. In fact, until Bonaparte descended the eastern slope of the Alps, he had not fully decided whether he would march directly on Milan, or on Alessandria and the fortress of Tortona, in order thus to bring relief more quickly to Massena. Circumstances would then determine the matter. But there is little doubt that before leaving Paris he had mapped out in his own mind the essential features of the plan as here set forth. Upon this point Bourrienne, in his "Memoirs of Napoleon Bonaparte", writes as follows: —

"On the 17th of March, in a moment of gaiety and good humor, he (Bonaparte) desired me to unroll Chauchard's great map of Italy. He lay down upon it and desired me to do likewise. He then stuck into it pins, the heads of which were tipped with wax, some red and some black. I silently observed him, and awaited with no little curiosity the result of this plan of campaign. When he had stationed the enemy's corps, and drawn up the pins with the red heads on the points where he hoped to bring his own troops, he said to me, 'Where do you think

I shall beat Mélas?’ — ‘How the devil should I know?’ — ‘Why, look here, you fool; Mélas is at Alessandria with his headquarters. There he will remain until Genoa surrenders. He has in Alessandria his magazines, his hospitals, his artillery, and his reserves. Crossing the Alps here’ (pointing to the Great Mont St. Bernard) ‘I shall fall upon Mélas, cut off his communications with Austria, and meet him here in the plains of the Scrivia’ (placing a red pin at San Giuliano). Finding that I looked on this manoeuvre of pins as mere pastime, he addressed to me some of his usual compliments, such as fool, ninny, etc., and then proceeded to demonstrate his plans more clearly on the map”.

The correspondence of Bonaparte at this time shows that he had a full knowledge of the positions and condition of the Austrian forces in Italy. From information sent him by Suchet, he learned that the Austrian army was greatly scattered; that but a small portion of it was occupying that part of northern Italy between the Po and Switzerland; and that as yet General Mélas did not believe in the existence of the Army of Reserve. It was this knowledge which caused the First Consul to believe that he could execute successfully this bold and hazardous undertaking.

From Villeneuve, at the east end of Lake Geneva, the road across the Alps into Italy passes through the towns of Martigny and Saint Pierre, thence over the Great St. Bernard, through the village of Saint Remy, into the valley of the Aosta, and thence it continues along the Dora Baltea River, through the towns of Aosta, Chatillon, Bard, and Ivrea, into the plains of Piedmont. Not far south of the Great St. Bernard lies the Little St. Bernard Pass, which opens also into the valley of the Aosta. In 1800 these two roads were much more difficult of passage than they are at the present time. When Bonaparte crossed the Alps, the road from Saint Pierre to Saint Remy was simply a bridle path over which no vehicle could pass. Even now it would be a hazardous undertaking to conduct a large army into Italy over the Great St. Bernard. Crossing the Alps at an elevation of more than eight thousand feet, the pass lies in a region of perpetual snow and ice, where the glaciers, the shock of avalanches, and the frequent and blinding storms make the passage of troops difficult and dangerous.

Having once reached the fertile valley of the Po, Bonaparte expected to find food and forage there in abundance; but during the march from Villeneuve to Ivrea it was necessary to provide supplies in advance for the army. For this purpose he had collected them at Lake Geneva. He now caused them to be distributed at different points along this route. He also sent money to the monks in charge of the Great St. Bernard Hospital, in order that they should purchase bread, cheese, and wine for the soldiers. At Villeneuve, Martigny, Saint Pierre, and Saint Remy, he established hospitals for the sick and injured. To the foot of the defile at Saint Pierre he sent forward a company of mechanics to dismount the guns and to divide the gun-carriages and caissons into numbered parts for transportation on pack mules. The ammunition too was carried in this way. But the cannon themselves could not be thus transported. For this purpose sledges with rollers had been made, but they were found to be of no use. Finally, the cannon were enclosed within the trunks of trees hollowed out for the purpose. Thus protected, they were dragged across the Alps by the soldiers themselves. A

second company of mechanics was ordered to march with the first division and to establish itself at Saint Remy, in order to put together the carriages and caissons, to remount the pieces, and to make the necessary repairs.

On the 14th of May Bonaparte was ready to begin the movement. The Army of Reserve numbered forty thousand soldiers and forty cannon; about four thousand were cavalry. Four corps of the army, numbering thirty-five thousand men, commanded by Murat, Victor, Duhesme, and Lannes, had taken position from Villeneuve to Saint Pierre. A fifth corps, of five thousand men, commanded by Chabran, was in Savoy at the foot of the Little St. Bernard Pass. Bonaparte himself was at Martigny, at which place he issued the orders for the movement. He had sent Berthier forward to receive the divisions on the Italian side of the Alps.

On the 15th of May the movement began. Lannes crossed first. He began his march from Saint Pierre at two o'clock in the morning, in order to avoid as much as possible the danger from the avalanches, which are less frequent in the cool of the day. He reached the summit safely, and his soldiers were pleasantly surprised to find there the bread, cheese, and wine which Bonaparte had provided for them. Lannes halted but a moment at the Great St. Bernard Hospital; he then began the descent and arrived at Saint Remy on the same day. He was followed in turn by the corps in his rear. At the same time Chabran crossed the Little St. Bernard Pass, and Thurreau began to advance over the Mont Cenis Pass. The entire Army of Reserve crossed between the 15th and 20th of May. During this famous passage of the Alps the soldiers were filled with energy and enthusiasm. Though heavily laden, they themselves, by sheer strength, dragged their cannon over the rough and slippery paths. No exertion seemed to tire them. As they pressed on, all were gay and cheerful. As they climbed the mountain side, their spirits rose. With shouts and cheers and songs, they made that Alpine region ring. In that cold, clear air they felt their blood quicken. They felt, too, the energy, the enthusiasm, the magnetism, of their commander. They not only hoped for, but they expected victory. Were they not imitating the daring deeds of the great Hannibal? Were they not about to enter that Italy where their comrades had fought so gloriously before? Were they not commanded by the "Little Corporal", their idol, whose deeds of desperate daring at the bridges of Lodi and Arcole had won their everlasting admiration?

Thus the Army of Reserve crossed the Alps. By the 20th of May all five corps had reached the valley of the Aosta. Owing to the careful preparations made, there had been scarcely any accidents and no serious delays during the passage. But the greatest difficulty was yet to be met. Some distance down the valley of the Aosta, upon a perpendicular rock commanding a narrow defile, Fort Bard had been constructed. Though this fort was garrisoned by only two or three hundred Austrians, it was impregnable and controlled the whole valley. After descending the Great St. Bernard Pass, Lannes had pushed on down the valley, but was stopped by the fire of the fort. At once he made an effort to capture the place, but was repulsed. He soon saw that it could not be taken by force. Though he gained the road that led past the fort, the deadly fire of the Austrians prevented him from advancing. For a time it seemed that this small but formidable fort

would stop the progress of the whole army. Lannes was greatly disturbed. He reported the matter to Berthier, and Berthier sent at once a courier to inform Bonaparte of the situation. The First Consul was still at Martigny, where he had remained for the purpose of hastening forward all the artillery and the rear divisions of the army. This news was a complete surprise to Bonaparte. The effect which it produced upon him is thus described by Thiers: —

“This announcement of an obstacle, considered insurmountable at first, made a terrible impression on him; but he recovered quickly, and refused positively to admit the possibility of a retreat. Nothing in the world should reduce him to such an extremity. He thought that, if one of the loftiest mountains of the globe had failed to arrest his progress, a secondary rock could not be capable of vanquishing his courage and his genius. The fort, said he to himself, might be taken by bold courage; if it could not be taken, it still could be turned. Besides, if the infantry and cavalry could pass it, with but a few four-pounders, they could then proceed to Ivrea at the mouth of the gorge, and wait until their heavy guns could follow them. And if the heavy guns could not pass the obstacle which had arisen, and if, in order to get any, those of the enemy had to be taken, the French infantry were brave and numerous enough to assail the Austrians and take their cannon.

“Moreover, he studied his maps again and again, questioned a number of Italian officers, and learning from them that many other roads led from Aosta to the neighboring valleys, he wrote letter after letter to Berthier, forbidding him to stop the progress of the army, and pointing out to him with wonderful precision what reconnoissances should be made around the fort of Bard”.

Having sent these instructions to Berthier and having seen the last division well on its way, the First Consul hurried across the Alps towards Fort Bard. Meanwhile a foot-path, leading along the mountain side around the fort, was discovered by Lannes. By a few repairs the path was soon rendered passable for the men and horses, but not for the artillery. How to get the cannon past the fort was the question. Finally, the following method was adopted. During a dark night the road in front of the fort was strewn with manure and straw, and, to deaden the sound of the artillery wheels, they were wrapped with tow and straw; then the soldiers themselves quietly hauled the guns past the fort. The stratagem succeeded; all the artillery was thus transported. In this way the Army of Reserve surmounted this obstacle, which for a time gave Bonaparte greater anxiety than the passage of the Great St. Bernard itself.

At this time the lower valley of the Aosta was guarded by three thousand Austrians under General Haddick. On the 20th of May Lannes arrived at Ivrea, which was occupied by the enemy. He attacked the Austrian garrison there, defeated it, and captured the place. Thence, continuing his march towards Chivasso, he again attacked the Austrians on the Chiusella, defeated them, drove them from position to position, and finally, having forced them back towards Turin, captured Chivasso. Meanwhile Bonaparte, having left Chabran's corps to blockade Fort Bard, followed Lannes with the remainder of the army.

During these operations, General Thurreau descended the Mont Cenis Pass and attacked General Kaim, who, with five thousand men, was at Susa guarding the Mont Cenis route into Italy. Before the spirited attacks of Thurreau, Kaim was obliged to abandon Susa and fall back to Busseleto on the road to Turin.

On the 27th of May Bonaparte with the greater part of the Army of Reserve was near Chivasso, Thurreau was at Susa, a French detachment, under Bethencourt, was descending the Simplon Pass, and Moncey's corps was struggling heroically towards Milan over the St. Gothard. Thus far the plans of the First Consul had been successful. He had crossed the Alps, forced his way past Fort Bard, and driven the enemy out of the valley of the Aosta. Now, the thunder of his cannon could be heard on the plains of Piedmont. But what of the Austrians! Where were they? Where was Mélas?

Still incredulous as to the existence of an army of reserve, Mélas was bending every energy to capture Genoa and to force the crossings of the Var. In the engagements and battles with Masséna and Suchet, the army of Mélas, which originally numbered one hundred and twenty thousand, had been reduced to one hundred thousand men. These troops were greatly scattered. On the 13th of May they were thus stationed : thirty thousand under General Ott were besieging Genoa; twenty-five thousand under General Elsnitz were fighting Suchet along the Var; ten thousand under General Vukassovich were watching the Italian entrances of the St. Gothard and Simplon passes; three thousand, commanded by General Haddick, were in the lower valley of the Aosta, watching the St. Bernard passes; five thousand, commanded by General Kaim, were occupying Susa at the foot of the Mont Cenis Pass; and two thousand were scattered along the Maritime Alps near the Tenda Pass. In addition, six thousand were on their way from Tuscany to reinforce Mélas; three thousand remained in Tuscany, and sixteen thousand more occupied Alessandria, the fortresses of Tortona and Mantua, and various other garrisons of northern Italy.

Such was the situation of the Austrians when, on the 21st of May, Mélas received information of the passage of French troops over the Great St. Bernard. Immediately he collected ten thousand soldiers from the Austrian forces in front of Suchet and in the vicinity of the Tenda Pass, and marched on Turin. At first, he believed that the French troops appearing in Italy were merely a detachment sent thither to harass his rear; but at Coni, where he arrived on the 22d of May, he learned to a certainty that Bonaparte himself was in Italy; that the French soldiers were already issuing into the plains of Piedmont; and that the First Consul had with him both cannon and cavalry. Mélas was surprised. He knew not what to do. Having been repeatedly informed by his own spies, and even by the Aulic Council, that the Army of Reserve was a mere fiction, he could now hardly bring himself to believe that it was a reality. It might, after all, be but a large detachment; for how could Bonaparte cross the Alps with an army? How could he pass Fort Bard with cannon and cavalry? It must be remembered, too, that at this time Mélas had not learned that Moncey was marching on Milan. As yet, therefore, he was not completely undeceived. He knew that a French force was at the foot of the Mont Cenis Pass, and that French troops were issuing from the valley of the Aosta into

the plains of Piedmont; but he did not know the number of the French forces nor did he know the intentions of Bonaparte. Consequently he delayed issuing the orders for the concentration of his scattered troops.

Having reached Turin with ten thousand men, Mélas was joined by General Haddick's command, which had been driven from the valley of the Aosta by Lannes, and by General Kaim's division, which had been driven from Susa by Thurreau. But this junction gave Mélas only sixteen or seventeen thousand Austrians to oppose the thirty-five thousand French near Chivasso under Bonaparte.

At this time Mélas expected the French to cross the Po and attack him near Turin; but such was not the intention of Bonaparte. In order to deceive Mélas, the First Consul ordered Lannes to make preparations as if the French intended to cross the Po at Chivasso, then to march rapidly down the river, through Crescentino and Candia, on Pavia. At the same time Bonaparte himself, with the corps of Victor, Duhesme, and Murat, set out for Milan by way of Vercelli and Novara. On the 31st of May Bonaparte arrived at the Ticino River. To oppose the passage of the French, Vukassovich had collected a considerable force on the east bank. Bonaparte crossed the river, attacked and defeated the Austrians, thence, continuing his march eastward, entered Milan on the 2d of June. Vukassovich, having left a garrison in the castle of Milan, fell back behind the Adda. At Milan Bonaparte delayed several days to await the arrival of Moncey's corps, the advance guard of which was just beginning to appear in Italy. During the delay Bonaparte directed a part of his forces on Brescia, Lodi, and Cremona. As a result of these movements, Vukassovich retired behind the Mincio and sought safety under the guns of Mantua. Bonaparte also directed Murat on Placentia in order to seize the crossings of the Po there.

Meanwhile the detachment under Bethencourt, marching by way of the Simplon Pass, had reached Arona at the lower end of Lake Maggiore. On the 1st of June Fort Bard surrendered to Chabran. Having left a garrison in this place, and one also in Ivrea, he then took up a position with the remainder of his corps along the Po from Chivasso to the Sesia River. From the Sesia to Pavia the corps of Lannes occupied the line of the Po. On the 1st of June Lannes had captured this place, and had seized the large magazines there, which contained provisions, several pieces of artillery, and a number of pontoon boats.

Thus it will be seen that the French were in possession of the whole of northern Italy lying between the Po and Switzerland. Looking south from Milan, Bonaparte had in his front the line of the Po, which he held from Chivasso to Cremona. Far away to his right was the Great St. Bernard Pass, which he had just crossed, and which was now guarded by the French garrisons of Fort Bard and Ivrea. To his left, at a distance of eighty miles, was the Mincio, which formed on that side the dividing line between the French and the Austrians; and in his rear were the St. Gothard and Simplon passes, which offered him a safe retreat into Switzerland in case he should meet with a reverse. Already, within this territory, he had seized all the Austrian communications, captured several

Austrian garrisons, occupied several cities, and taken possession of immense quantities of provisions and munitions of war.

Thus situated, Bonaparte was almost ready to strike the blow that should decide the fate of Italy. In a few days he would cross the Po, march through the Stradella Pass, and encounter Mélas on the bloody field of Marengo. The delay at Milan was but the lull before the storm. While Bonaparte remained there, completing his arrangements and awaiting the arrival of Moncey, Mélas was beginning to appreciate the situation, and, though still somewhat confused and undecided, was destined shortly to make an heroic effort to save his army.

For several days after Mélas reached Turin, he remained in doubt as to the intentions of Bonaparte. In fact, he was deceived by the preparations that Lannes had made to cross the Po at Chivasso. Again: in descending the river towards Pavia, Lannes so masked the main part of the Army of Reserve, that Mélas did not immediately become aware of the movement on Milan. But on the 29th of May he learned that Bonaparte was marching on Milan; and, on the 31st he learned that Moreau had defeated Kray, and that Moncey's corps was marching by way of the St. Gothard into Italy. At once he comprehended the vast plan of Bonaparte. He saw that nothing could now prevent the Army of Reserve from uniting with Moncey's corps; and that, with these combined forces, Bonaparte would doubtless march south from Milan, cross the Po, and sever the Austrian communications. Thus he saw himself being rapidly enclosed in a net from which there would soon be little or no hope of escape. Being now completely undeceived as to the intentions of Bonaparte, Mélas had no further cause for delay. He must concentrate his troops at once, in order to break through the French forces rapidly closing in upon him. He must, if possible, preserve his communications, and thus save his army from capture or annihilation.

Accordingly, he determined to concentrate at Placentia and the Stradella Pass all the available Austrian troops that were fighting the French near Genoa. By this means he hoped to seize and hold the crossings of the Po from Pavia to Cremona, and thus to retain possession of the great highway leading from Alessandria through the Stradella Pass to Mantua. He also determined to unite at Alessandria all the available Austrian troops in Piedmont and along the Var. By this means he expected to assemble there an army of at least thirty thousand men, and thence to proceed eastward through the Stradella Pass to Mantua. By following this plan, he hoped to make his escape with the greater part of his army. Having once reached the Mincio, he could unite his forces with those of Vukassovich; and, perhaps, in this strong position, flanked on one side by Lake Garda, and on the other by the fortress of Mantua, he might be able to make a successful stand against Bonaparte.

In accordance with this plan, he sent imperative orders to General Elsnitz to quit the Var and march on Alessandria, and to General Ott to raise the siege of Genoa and hasten north in order to seize Placentia and the crossings of the Po near that point. Meanwhile he himself, having left a sufficient force to hold Thurreau in check, hastened with the remainder of his army to march on Alessandria.

Upon receiving the orders of Mélas, General Elsnitz, whose command then numbered but seventeen thousand, began to withdraw his forces from the Var. He directed his columns towards the Tenda Pass, expecting to cross the Apennines at that point, and thence to march on Alessandria by way of Coni, Alba, and Asti. But Suchet, being well aware of the desperate situation of Mélas, was anticipating the recall of Elsnitz and was prepared for it. Suchet's forces numbered fourteen thousand men. By skillful manoeuvring and by a rapid march across the foothills of the Apennines, he succeeded in reaching the Tenda Pass ahead of his adversary. Having thus turned the flank of the Austrians, and obtained possession of their line of retreat, he fell upon them, defeated them, cut them in two, and killed, wounded, or captured more than half of their army. As a result General Elsnitz was compelled to retreat eastward and cross the Apennines over the Ormea Pass. With only eight thousand men he arrived at Ceva on the 7th of June en route to Alessandria. Meanwhile Suchet, having proceeded eastward to Savona, was joined by a part of Masséna's command, which had marched out of Genoa on the 5th of June. With these combined forces, Suchet marched to Acqui, and there, still acting under the orders of Masséna, awaited the results of Bonaparte's operations.

When, on the 2d of June, General Ott received the orders of Mélas, the negotiations for the capitulation of Genoa were pending. He delayed until the 4th of June to receive the surrender of Masséna. On the 6th, having left a sufficient force to garrison the city, he sent a brigade towards Placentia by way of Bobbio; and with the remainder of his forces, numbering sixteen thousand soldiers, he himself marched towards the same place by way of Novi, Tortona, and the Stradella Pass.

During these operations, Bonaparte remained at Milan, perfecting his arrangements and issuing the orders for the movements of his troops. He had already sent forward Berthier to direct the operations along the Po. On the 6th of June Moncey's corps arrived. This reinforcement of fifteen thousand men increased the effective forces under the immediate command of Bonaparte to about sixty thousand. Immediately upon the arrival of Moncey, thirty-two thousand soldiers under Lannes, Victor, and Murat, began to cross the Po. The remainder of the army were thus stationed: four thousand, under Thurreau, were at the foot of the Mont Cenis Pass; two small detachments were occupying Fort Bard and Ivrea; ten thousand were posted at Vercelli and along the Ticino from the foot of Lake Maggiore to Pavia; three thousand were at Milan; and ten thousand were along the Adda, and at Cremona and Placentia. All these troops, except the division of Thurreau, which was isolated and held in check by an Austrian force near Turin, were available for the operations about Milan and along the Po.

On the 6th of June Lannes and Victor crossed the Po near Belgiojoso, a few miles below Pavia, and marched thence to the Stradella Pass. On the following day Murat crossed at Placentia. In these passages the French met with considerable opposition from small detachments of cavalry and infantry that Mélas had directed thither from Alessandria and elsewhere to hold the crossings of the Po until General Ott should arrive; but these detachments having been

defeated and driven back, the French occupied Placentia and the Stradella Pass. At the latter place a fortified camp was constructed, and between Pavia and Placentia five bridges were built for the use of the French in case they should be forced to retreat.

During these operations two Austrian couriers were captured. One was carrying despatches from Mélas to Vienna; the other, from the Aulic Council to Mélas. The dispatches of the former told of the surrender of Genoa, and of the plans and movements of Mélas. Those of the latter informed the Austrian commander that the Army of Reserve was a mere myth, and that he should pay no attention to the rumors concerning it, but should make every effort to capture Genoa and force the crossings of the Var.

The news that Genoa had surrendered was discouraging to Bonaparte, for he at once appreciated the fact that he must now fight the forces of General Ott in addition to those which Mélas was assembling at Alessandria. There was, however, a compensating advantage in knowing the plans of his adversary, for, having learned that General Ott was marching on Placentia, he at once saw that he might defeat this corps, and perhaps destroy it, before it could reach Placentia or unite with Mélas. Accordingly, he sent to Berthier, Lannes, and Murat the following instructions: "Concentrate yourselves at the Stradella. On the 8th or 9th at the latest, you will have upon your hands fifteen or eighteen thousand Austrians, coming from Genoa. Meet them and cut them to pieces. It will be so many enemies less upon our hands on the day of the decisive battle which we are to expect with the entire army of Mélas".

In accordance with these instructions, Lannes and Victor faced about their columns and proceeded westward towards Tortona. Lannes, commanding the vanguard, preceded Victor by a distance of five miles. The remainder of the French forces on the south bank of the Po marched to the Stradella Pass. On the 9th of June Lannes with nine thousand men encountered the sixteen thousand under Ott at Montebello. Immediately a furious battle began. For several hours both sides fought desperately. The Austrian superiority in numbers would have crushed an ordinary soldier, but Lannes was of uncommon mould. Impetuous, stubborn, brave, fierce, and terrible on the battlefield, he would not yield. In the face of a deadly fire he encouraged his soldiers, and by his presence and heroic action held them firm before the repeated onslaughts of the Austrians. Nevertheless, he would eventually have been defeated had not Victor arrived opportunely on the battlefield with six thousand men. This reinforcement turned the tide of battle in favor of the French. The Austrians were defeated, cut to pieces, and compelled finally to retreat. They lost in killed, wounded, and captured five thousand men; the French, three thousand. With the remnants of his corps General Ott fell back across the Scrivia, and thence proceeded to Alessandria. This battle secured for Lannes the title of "Duke of Montebello". It covered him with glory, and brought to his name an imperishable renown.

The First Consul, who had left Milan on the morning of the 9th of June, arrived at Montebello just at the termination of the battle. Expecting that Mélas would at once advance with all the troops that he had collected at Alessandria,

Bonaparte began on the 10th of June to rearrange his troops, and to make preparations for battle. Being deficient in both cavalry and artillery, while Mélas was well supplied with both, Bonaparte decided to fall back to a position near Casteggio, in front of the Stradella Pass, where his flanks would be protected by the Po on one side, and by the spurs of the Apennines on the other. With the corps of Lannes and Victor he made a retrograde movement to this point. Here he collected all his forces south of the Po, now numbering twenty-nine thousand men. In this strong position he remained for several days, expecting hourly that the Austrians would push forward from Alessandria and attack him. But they failed to appear.

On the 11th of June General Desaix, who had served under Bonaparte in Egypt, arrived at the French headquarters. He was a distinguished general, and a warm friend of the First Consul. At once Bonaparte gave him the command of a corps, consisting of two divisions.

On the following day Bonaparte, surprised at the non-appearance of the Austrians, began to fear that they were trying to escape. He thought that Mélas might attempt to evade him, either by marching directly on Genoa, or by crossing the Po at Valenza, and thence marching on Pavia and Milan. Finally, he could bear the suspense no longer. He decided to advance and seek Mélas. Accordingly, on the afternoon of the 12th of June, having left a force to occupy the entrenched camp at the Stradella Pass, he advanced towards Alessandria. At Tortona he left a force to blockade the fortress. On the 13th of June he crossed the Scrivia and debouched into the plain of Marengo, which lies between the Scrivia and Bormida rivers. Thus far he had met with no Austrians. His anxiety increased. He had but few cavalry, and, consequently, was unable to make a thorough reconnoissance of the surrounding country. During the afternoon of that day, he directed Victor on Marengo. Here the French found only a small detachment, which was quickly driven across the Bormida. A party sent forward to reconnoitre the crossings of the Bormida, reported that no Austrians were to be found there in force.

From all these indications, Bonaparte came to the conclusion that the Austrians had left Alessandria. He reasoned that, if Mélas intended to attack the French and force his way through the Stradella Pass, he would neither have given up the plain without a struggle, nor have failed to occupy in force the village of Marengo. Moreover, he thought that Mélas would surely not neglect to hold the Bormida with a strong force so long as he remained at Alessandria. But if he had gone, what route had he taken?

On that day Bonaparte received word that no Austrians had appeared at Pavia or along the Ticino. It seemed probable, therefore, that Mélas might be marching on Genoa; and that he would attempt either to make a stand there, where he could be supported by the British fleet, or else to march thence through Bobbio, Piacentia, and Cremona to Mantua. With this thought in his mind, Bonaparte directed Desaix with one division of his corps, numbering six thousand men, on Novi, in order to intercept Mélas, should he be attempting to escape by this route.

Thus it happened that on the evening of the 13th of June Bonaparte was unprepared for the battle of the next day. His forces were scattered. Desaix was on his way to Novi; Victor was at Marengo; Lannes and Murat were on the plain in rear of Victor; the Consular Guard, two regiments of cavalry, and Monnier's division, which belonged to the corps of Desaix, were along the Scrivia near Tortona. These forces numbered twenty-eight thousand men, of whom three thousand and five hundred were cavalry. Bonaparte had about forty cannon. That night he slept in a small town about two miles east of San Giuliano. He expected to receive on the next day some information that would enlighten him as to the movements and intentions of Mélas; but he had no thought of a battle on the morrow.

Meanwhile, at Alessandria there was much confusion. By the defeat of General Ott at Montebello, Mélas had lost possession of the direct road from Alessandria through the Stradella Pass to Mantua. He could not, therefore, make his escape by this route without first defeating the French. He hardly knew what to do. Already his communications were severed. Doubtless the French would soon advance towards Alessandria. Perhaps, in a few days, they would force the crossings of the Bormida, and attempt to shut him up within the city. In this uncertain state of mind Mélas called a council of war. To the officers composing the council three plans suggested themselves. Should they cross the Po at Valenza, march to Pavia, and attempt to make their escape by forcing their way across the Ticino; or should they march to Genoa, and in that place, supported by the British fleet, make preparations to stand a siege; or, lastly, should they cross the Bormida, meet the French face to face, and fight to recover their communications and save their army?

The third plan was adopted. The Austrian officers reasoned that, it was doubtful whether either of the first two plans would succeed; that the false position that they now occupied was due neither to Mélas nor to themselves, but to the Aulic Council, which had repeatedly misinformed them as to the actual state of affairs; and that now the only honorable course was to fight, and, if possible, cut their way through the French forces. "If we succeed", said they, "victory will regain for us the road to Placentia and Mantua; if not, we shall have done our duty, and the responsibility of any disaster that may befall us will rest upon other heads than ours".

Mélas concurred in the views of his officers. Though seventy years old, age had not dimmed his courage. His army at Alessandria numbered thirty-two thousand men, and contained two hundred pieces of artillery and seven thousand cavalry.

On the 13th of June he decided that on the next day he would cross the Bormida and attack Bonaparte.

The plain of Marengo lies between the Scrivia and Bormida rivers, which rise in the Apennines and flow northward towards the Po. The town of Marengo, from which this battle takes its name, is situated near the east bank of the Bormida on the great highway leading from Alessandria to Mantua. About

two miles north of Marengo is the village of Castelceriolo. On the main road, just east of Alessandria, two bridges span the Bormida. They were held by the Austrians, and were defended by a single bridge-head on the right bank. The surrounding country is generally quite flat, but towards the village of San Giuliano, which lies on the main road about three miles east of Marengo, several hillocks thereabout render the ground uneven.

At daybreak on the morning of the 14th of June, the Austrians began to cross the Bormida and to issue from the bridge-head on the right bank. Three thousand soldiers under General O'Reilly crossed first. They drove back the French outposts and advanced towards Marengo. This vanguard was followed by a division under Haddick, and that in turn by another under Kaim. At eight o'clock these forces, having deployed, began the battle. Being well supplied with cannon, they opened the attack with a heavy artillery fire, then pressed forward towards Marengo.

Meanwhile, word was sent to Bonaparte that the whole Austrian army was advancing. During the deployment of the Austrians, Victor at Marengo had taken up a position in front of the village along the muddy stream of Fontanone. Here he received the attacks of the Austrians, and finally succeeded in driving them back. But the Austrian line was soon strongly reinforced. Mélas directed two more divisions on Marengo, and, having detached Ott's division, directed it on Castelceriolo, in order to take the French in flank on that side.

About ten o'clock Lannes brought his corps into line on the right of Victor. He was supported by a cavalry brigade under Champeaux. Kellerman's brigade of cavalry supported Victor. Meanwhile General Ott, having arrived near Castelceriolo, began to threaten the French right, which movement obliged Lannes to form front in that direction with a part of his corps. The French line of battle, numbering about fifteen thousand men, was about two miles long. It followed the general direction of the Fontanone northward from Marengo towards Castelceriolo, and westward from Marengo towards the Bormida. Facing this line were the Austrian troops, numbering twenty-nine thousand five hundred men. General Ott formed the left, and the reserve under General Elsnitz was in the rear. Having been informed that Suchet had reached Acqui, Mélas had, during the morning, sent two thousand five hundred of his reserve cavalry to reconnoitre in that direction.

At ten o'clock Mélas attacked with fury the whole French line. He made a determined effort to drive back Victor's corps and to gain possession of Marengo. Along the stream in front of the village the struggle was fierce and bloody. Both sides fought desperately. Mélas felt that he must conquer. Knowing that his situation was critical, and that nothing short of victory could save his army, he fought with the courage of despair. The French, too, fought like demons. Their victory at Montebello had encouraged them; and now, having sought and found their enemy, they expected to be again triumphant. With determination they resisted the onsets of Mélas. Before the furious attacks of superior numbers, in the face of cannon, sabre, and steel, they stood to their work like men. But all their efforts were unavailing. Against so fierce an attack Victor could not long hold his

position. He was compelled to fall back to Marengo, where he again made a desperate effort to stop the advance of the Austrians. For a time he held on to the village, but was finally forced to give way. His corps was routed; his soldiers became demoralized. In disorder they retired towards San Giuliano, followed by the victorious Austrians. Meanwhile, Lannes had held his position against the attacks of Mélas in his front and of Ott on his right. But when Victor gave way, Lannes found himself in a desperate situation. This movement uncovered the left of his corps and threatened it with destruction. Thus outflanked on both wings and hard pressed in front, he saw defeat near at hand. In fact the Austrians were on the point of sweeping everything before them. Though the French were still fighting bravely, it was evident that they must soon fall back into the plain, or else be routed and destroyed.

Such was the situation at eleven o'clock when Bonaparte arrived. Having received word early in the morning that the whole Austrian army was advancing towards Marengo, he immediately sent Desaix orders to return, then hurried to the front with all the troops that he could collect. He brought with him the Consular Guard, Monnier's division, and two regiments of cavalry, —in all about seven thousand men. A single glance sufficed to show Bonaparte what should be done. He formed the Consular Guard into squares to hold the Austrian cavalry in check, directed a column on Castelceriolo, sent the greater part of Monnier's division to reinforce Lannes, and ordered Murat with the reserve cavalry to protect as best he could the retreat of Victor's corps. Again the struggle was renewed with increased fury; but all the efforts of Bonaparte and of Lannes could not now turn the tide of battle in favor of the French. With an almost resistless momentum, Mélas pressed forward. Seeing victory just within his grasp, he strained every nerve to crush and annihilate his adversary. He ordered his reserves to the front and threw them into the fight. Repeatedly his cavalry charged the French, cut in on their flanks, and threatened them with destruction; and, while the left of his line was resisting bravely the heroic efforts of Lannes, he himself issued from Marengo with his victorious troops, and directed them upon the flank of the French.

It was no longer possible for Bonaparte to hold his ground. He ordered a retreat. Again the heroism of Lannes displayed itself on that sanguinary field. Fighting as he retired, he fell back slowly and in admirable order. For more than two hours he prolonged the conflict, while being forced back from position to position over a distance of nearly two miles. But, finally, his indomitable spirit was compelled to yield. His corps was driven from the field. At length, shattered, crushed, almost demoralized, it retired behind the hillocks near San Giuliano, where the remnants of Victor's corps had assembled.

The Austrians had conquered. On the plain of Marengo Mélas had defeated Bonaparte. The victory seemed complete. There appeared to be no longer any hope for Bonaparte. The French had been driven three miles beyond Marengo. The greater part of their cavalry had been destroyed. More than two thirds of their cannon had been captured. Fragments only of their infantry organizations remained. On that bloody field six thousand French soldiers had been killed, wounded, or captured. Such was the result of the struggle at Marengo on the

morning of the 14th of June, 1800. Who would have thought that before the close of that eventful day the vanquished would become the victors?

Thus far Mélas had exhibited great energy and courage; but when the French had been driven from the field, and the excitement of the conflict had ended, he felt deeply the effects of his exertion. The weight of years, too, bore heavily upon him. Fully convinced that he had gained a complete victory over Bonaparte, he left the command of the army to his chief of staff, General Zach, and, having sent dispatches to his government announcing the result, returned to Alessandria exhausted with fatigue.

General Zach now rearranged his troops for the purpose of following the French, whom he believed to be completely routed. But the Austrians were not in a condition to pursue the enemy promptly and vigorously. Their cavalry, in particular, had been roughly handled by Victor and Lannes during the morning; and, moreover, it was much weakened by the two thousand five hundred men that Mélas had detached towards Acqui to observe Suchet. Considerable time was therefore spent in perfecting the arrangements of Zach. In fact, it was near four o'clock when he began to advance. At the head of about five thousand Austrians he pushed forward along the high-road leading from Marengo to San Giuliano. He was followed at a distance of three quarters of a mile by the corps of Kaim, and it in turn by the Hungarian infantry. At the same time General Ott marched eastward from Castelceriolo towards Ghilina. The Austrian troops were only partially deployed. Not expecting great resistance, they were moving forward in marching order rather than in order of battle.

Meanwhile the French, not being vigorously pursued, had halted, and, unperceived by the Austrians, had begun to rally behind the hillocks near San Giuliano. At this time Bonaparte was awaiting anxiously the arrival of Desaix. Early in the morning he had sent him an order to return; but before it reached its destination Desaix, having heard the sound of the first cannonshot at Marengo, halted his division. Judging from the thunder of the guns that a battle had begun between the French and Austrians on the plain of Marengo, he hurriedly dispatched several cavalry troops to Novi, in order to assure himself that no Austrians were in that vicinity, then faced about his troops and marched to the sound of the cannon. Hour after hour he pushed eagerly forward. At about four o'clock in the afternoon the head of his column appeared near San Giuliano.

Upon the arrival of Desaix Bonaparte's spirits rose. Though most of the French officers favored a retreat, Bonaparte was opposed to this course. Desaix, too, concurred in the views of the First Consul. In fact, Desaix was anxious to renew the struggle. Though he saw that the battle was lost, he did not despair of yet gaining another.

Accordingly, Bonaparte at once formed Desaix's division, and the French troops about San Giuliano, into line of battle. Desaix's division was placed across the highway along which the Austrians were advancing. On his right were Lannes, Monnier, and the Consular Guard; in his rear was Victor. Kellerman's brigade of cavalry took a position to the left and rear of Desaix,

and Champeaux's brigade to the right and rear of Lannes. Bonaparte had only twelve guns remaining. He placed them on the right of Desaix towards the front of the battle-line.

Such were the positions of the French, when suddenly there appeared from behind the rising ground in their front the column of Zach. Though this column was preceded by an advance guard with cavalry on each flank, the greater part of the Austrian troops were marching somewhat carelessly, and were surprised when they came thus unexpectedly upon the whole French army in position for battle. Immediately, the French guns opened upon Zach; at the same time Desaix made a furious assault upon him. Kellerman, too, having been directed towards the right and rear of Desaix's division during the early stages of the battle, then moved forward past the right of Desaix and attacked vigorously the Austrian cavalry. Having routed it, he wheeled his troopers to the left and struck in flank the Austrian column, which was already much shaken by the assault of Desaix. Everywhere the Austrians were overwhelmed; two thousand were captured, among whom was General Zach himself. Bonaparte now pushed eagerly forward with his entire force, and in turn attacked and defeated the corps of Kaim and the Hungarian infantry. Continuing to advance, he forced the Austrians back to Marengo. Here they attempted to make a stand, but were again defeated and routed. In disorder they retired towards Alessandria.

Meanwhile General Ott, hearing the firing towards Marengo, marched in that direction; but he only arrived in time to cover the retreat of the main body across the Bormida. By ten o'clock that night all the Austrian troops had recrossed the river. Thus Bonaparte won in the afternoon the battle that he had lost in the morning. Thus a great disaster was turned into a great victory. Once more the Austrians were crushed; once more the French were triumphant.

On the following morning, Bonaparte made preparations to assault the bridge-head and to cross the Bormida, in order to attack the Austrians in Alessandria. But in the meantime Mélas sent an officer to the French headquarters to propose terms of surrender. On the same day, the 15th of June, the negotiations were completed, and an armistice between Mélas and Bonaparte was signed. By the terms of surrender Mélas was allowed to march out of Alessandria with the honors of war, and to proceed thence to Mantua; in return, he was to evacuate the whole of northern Italy as far as the Mincio, to surrender the fortresses of Coni, Alessandria, Genoa, and Tortona, and the fortified cities of Milan, Turin, Pizzighettone, Placentia, Ceva, Savona, and Arona.

In proportion to the number of combatants at Marengo the losses on both sides were large. Seven thousand Austrians were killed or wounded, and three thousand were captured. The French loss in killed and wounded was equal to that of the Austrians, but only one thousand were captured. Among the first of the French soldiers killed in the battle of the afternoon was Desaix. While gallantly leading his division against the Austrians he was shot through the body and fell dead on the battlefield. His loss was deeply felt by the First Consul and by the French nation.

On the 15th of May Bonaparte had begun the passage of the Great St. Bernard with the Army of Reserve. On the 15th of June he received the surrender of the Austrian army in Italy. In one month, he had crossed the Alps, entered Milan, severed the Austrian communications, fought and won a great battle, and, as a result, obtained possession of the greater part of northern Italy.

Thus ended the campaign of Marengo. It brought about a temporary peace between France and Austria; it excited to a high pitch the military spirit of the French people; and it fixed ultimately upon the head of Bonaparte an emperor's crown. Upon the political history of Europe it produced far-reaching results. It precipitated a contest between England and France, between France and Europe, which, at irregular intervals for fifteen years, was destined to continue, until, finally, on the field of Waterloo, Napoleon's cannon were silenced forever.