

**KARL
MARX
FREDERICK
ENGELS**

**Collected
Works**



**Volume 22
Marx and Engels
1870-1871**

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Preface

Volume 22 of the *Collected Works* of Marx and Engels contains works written between the latter half of July 1870 and the end of October 1871.

In this relatively brief period there occurred the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71 and what Lenin described as “the greatest working-class uprising of the 19th century” (*Collected Works*, Vol. 41, p. 113), the proletarian revolution of March 18, 1871 in Paris, during which a working-class state—the Paris Commune—was set up for the first time in history. These events arose from the socio-political and revolutionary crisis that had been building up in Europe for some years. The Paris Commune was a great victory for the working class in the struggle against capitalist exploitation and political domination by the bourgeoisie. The lessons of the Commune threw into sharp relief the further tasks and prospects of the working-class movement. On the basis of this experience Marx and Engels significantly enriched the theory of scientific communism.

Many works of Marx and Engels in this volume directly reflect their practical activities in the International Working Men's Association (the International).

In the conditions created by the Franco-Prussian war the General Council of the International had to arm the proletariat, especially the French and the German, with an understanding of their class objectives and prevent the wave of chauvinism that surged through both the belligerent countries from swamping the working-class movement. This was a test that the International passed with flying colours. It succeeded in raising the most advanced workers in its ranks from spontaneous actions and an

instinctive feeling of class brotherhood to awareness of the need for international solidarity and unity of action by the proletariat as a whole.

The volume begins with the First Address of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association on the Franco-Prussian War (July 1870) written by Marx. This document contains the fundamental propositions of Marxism on the attitude of the working class to militarism and war. Marx maintains that the aggressive wars were unleashed by the ruling classes to overcome internal crises and to crush the revolutionary movement, above all, that of the proletariat. He analyses the development of the international contradictions in Europe that led to the Franco-Prussian war and sets out the specific tasks for the workers of the various countries in the current situation.

Marx exposes the Bonapartist government in France, which began the war in the name of preserving and strengthening the empire, reinforcing its dominant role in Europe, and preventing the unification of Germany. On Germany's side the war was, in its initial stage, defensive (see this volume, p. 5). At the same time Marx shows the aggressive role played by the ruling circles of Prussia in its preparation. He makes a clear distinction between the German people's national interests and the dynastic, rapacious aims pursued by the Prussian Junkers and the German bourgeoisie. Marx warned the German workers that a war led by the Prussian militarists could turn into an aggressive war against the French people: "If the German working class allow the present war to lose its strictly defensive character and to degenerate into a war against the French people, victory or defeat will prove alike disastrous" (this volume, p. 6).

Arguing that the military defeat of the Bonapartist empire would usher in the regeneration of France and remove one of the main obstacles to the unification of Germany, Marx supports the French members of the International in their campaign against the regime of Napoleon III. The Address helped the German Social-Democrats to see how aggressive the policy of Bismarck's Prussia actually was and how incompatible with the German people's legitimate national aspirations.

Marx and Engels believed that objectively Germany's achievement of national unity would be in the interests of the German working class and would create favourable conditions for its organisation, which, in turn, would help to consolidate the whole international proletariat.

The Address set the task of strengthening the international

solidarity of the working class, especially in the belligerent countries. Marx gave a high appraisal of the anti-militarist activity of the members of the International in both Germany and France and saw this as a sign that "the alliance of the working classes of all countries will ultimately kill war" (this volume, p. 7). The development of the workers' international brotherhood despite the chauvinistic propaganda of the ruling classes, Marx emphasised, "proves that in contrast to old society, with its economical miseries and its political delirium, a new society is springing up, whose International rule will be *Peace*, because its national ruler will be everywhere the same—*Labour!*" (this volume, p. 7).

The shattering military defeats of the Second Empire heralded its collapse. Marx noted that in Prussian ruling circles claims were being made for the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine. In these conditions it was especially important to help the German Social-Democrats adopt a genuine class position and strengthen their internationalist views. In a letter to the Committee of the German Social-Democratic Workers' Party, Marx and Engels urged the German proletariat to come out wholeheartedly against the annexationist plans of the Prussian military and the bourgeoisie.

The Second Address of the General Council on the Franco-Prussian war, written after the collapse of the Second Empire and the establishment, on September 4, 1870, of the French Republic, when the war had lost its defensive character for Germany and become a blatantly expansionist war (see this volume, p. 263), defined the new tactical line of the International. The Address oriented the proletariat of the European countries towards a resolute struggle against the aggressive plans of the Prussian Junkers and the German bourgeoisie. It noted that there could be no justification for the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine, and that the determination of state borders on the grounds of "military interests" only carried "the seed of fresh wars" (this volume, p. 266). With exceptional insight Marx foresaw the consequences of Bismarck's aggression and the subsequent line-up of rival forces in Europe for several decades.

Developing the principles of proletarian internationalism, the Address outlined the tactics for the various contingents of the international proletariat, thus guiding them towards an understanding of the unity of international and national goals. As in the letter to the Committee of the German Social-Democratic Workers' Party, Marx oriented the German working class and its party towards a struggle against Prussian militarism, for an honourable

peace with France, and for recognition of the French Republic. He stressed the connection between this international task and the fight against internal reaction, against Bismarck's plans to use the victory over France for an attack on the democratic rights of his own people.

The International also urged the English workers to recognise the French Republic (see this volume, p. 269).

For the French workers it was vitally important, on the one hand, to use all republican freedoms "for the work of their own class organisation" (this volume, p. 269) and, on the other, to avoid being carried away by chauvinistic phrase-mongering. Marx warned the French workers of the untimeliness of any attempt to overthrow the government when the enemy was at the gates of Paris.

Both Addresses, which were official documents of the International, offered the working-class movement scientifically grounded guidelines and proposed an overall solution to both the national and international problems facing the proletariat. One of their crucial features was their resolute condemnation of militarism and wars of conquest.

The 59 articles by Engels on the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1871, published in London's *Pall Mall Gazette*, occupy an important place in the volume. Written in the form of separate military reviews, these articles are, in fact, closely interconnected and constitute a complete and unified whole. Although, under the terms stipulated by the paper's editors, they should have been confined to purely military questions, Engels often reaches out beyond these limits and gives his reviews a trenchant class and political message. In his "Notes on the War", which in their political orientation are closely linked with the General Council's Addresses on the Franco-Prussian war, Engels was actually substantiating the tactics of the International at various stages of the war.

These articles by Engels reveal his detailed knowledge of the home and foreign-policy situations of the belligerent powers—their economic and political systems and, above all, the positions of the various classes and parties. All this, combined with Engels' truly encyclopaedic knowledge as a military historian and theoretician, enabled him in many cases to predict the exact course of events and their outcome. He uncovered the strategic plans of the headquarters of the Bonapartist and Prussian armies, established the areas and days of the first major battles and the forces that would take part in them (see this volume, pp. 15-16), anticipated the

situation that would lead to the retreat of the French army under MacMahon to Sedan (this volume, pp. 32-33) and predicted the place, the approximate date and the outcome of the decisive battle which was fought there (this volume, p. 69). The central idea of the articles was to show the dependence of military operations and the outcome of the war on a country's internal condition, and Engels' most important prediction was that the military defeat of Bonapartist France and the consequent fall of the Second Empire were inevitable.

The "Notes" contain much ruthless and far-reaching criticism of Bonapartism. Engels paints a vivid picture of the decay of the Bonapartist regime and its main bastion, the army. "The army organization fails everywhere; and a noble and gallant nation finds all its efforts for self-defence unavailing, because it has for twenty years suffered its destinies to be guided by a set of adventurers who turned administration, government, army, navy—in fact, all France—into a source of pecuniary profit to themselves" (this volume, p. 77). Engels stresses that the Bonapartist regime continued to have a pernicious effect on the army even during the war because its actions were guided by political rather than military considerations. He shows how, because of their fear of the Paris masses, the Bonapartist government refused to send to the front the forces vital for the army, preferring to keep them in the capital as a safeguard against revolution (see this volume, p. 55).

Engels exposes the militarist propaganda of the Prussian ruling circles, who were trying to present the Prussian army as a truly "popular" army, as the "armed people". "The phrase of the 'nation in arms' hides the creation of a large army for purposes of Cabinet policy abroad and reaction at home" (this volume, p. 125). He mercilessly brands the barbaric acts perpetrated by the German command—the bombardment and destruction of cities for which there was no military justification, the brutal treatment of civilians, and the harsh measures taken against the French guerrillas, the *francs-tireurs*.

The "Notes on the War" form a notable contribution to the development of Marxist military theory. They examine the character of wars—expansionist, defensive, and popular—on the basis of actual facts, and reveal the dialectics of their development. Engels demonstrated how "a war in which Germany, at the beginning, merely defended her own against French *chauvinisme* appears to be changing gradually, but surely, into a war in the interests of a new German *chauvinisme*..." (this volume, p. 104). Engels considered in great detail a number of general theoretical problems of the art

of war—the role of logistics, the influence of the political and economic state of the country on the course of operations, the correct deployment of troops on the eve of war, the factor of surprise in attack, and so on. He also showed what great changes had come about in the arming and equipping of troops before the war and how these changes influenced the course of military operations.

After the defeat of the regular French armies, Engels focused his attention on the possibility of creating new military formations and organising guerrilla warfare against the invaders. He showed particular interest in the problems of armed resistance to interventionist forces, in the problems of a people's war, including guerrilla movements, on both the political and the military plane. In complete accord with the line taken in the Second Address of the General Council, Engels resolutely championed the right of the French people to defend their country against enemy invasion by every means. He considered a real war of liberation to be "one in which the nation itself participates" (this volume, p. 193). Engels expected the operations of the guerrillas to inflict damaging material and moral losses on the enemy. "This constant erosion by the waves of popular warfare in the long run melts down or washes away the largest army in detail...", he wrote (this volume, p. 207). At the same time Engels realised that a decisive turn in military operations could not be achieved without the creation of a powerful regular army. He revealed the causes of the unwillingness of the generals and the new bourgeois republican government of France, who feared the revolutionary upsurge of the masses more than the external enemy, to mobilise the country's resources to the full.

The articles by Engels, like the Addresses of the General Council on the Franco-Prussian war, clearly demonstrate how fruitfully the method of historical materialism can be applied in the analysis of a complex military and political situation.

Marx and Engels kept a close watch on the events in France, which were systematically discussed at the meetings of the General Council. In the Second Address on the Franco-Prussian war Marx, foreseeing the further intensification of class contradictions in France, alerted the French workers to the need to strengthen their own class organisation. This would give them, he wrote, "Herculean powers for the regeneration of France, and our common task—the emancipation of labour" (this volume, p. 269).

On March 18, 1871 a proletarian revolution broke out in the French capital and led to the proclamation of the Paris Commune,

the first working-class government known to history. From the very beginning Marx and Engels saw the Commune as an event of world-wide historical significance. They regarded it as the brainchild of the International, as an attempt by the working class to put into practice the great principles of its movement. Marx saw it as the beginning of a new epoch in world history. "With the struggle in Paris the struggle of the working class against the capitalist class and its state has entered upon a new phase," Marx noted in a letter to Ludwig Kugelmann on 17 April 1871. "Whatever the immediate outcome may be, a new point of departure of world-wide importance has been gained" (present edition, Vol. 44).

Marx and Engels welcomed the Commune with all the enthusiasm of proletarian revolutionaries supporting its heroic fighters in every possible way. In their speeches at the meetings of the General Council they reported on the course of the Communards' struggle against the combined forces of the Versailles counter-revolution and the Prussian interventionists (see this volume, pp. 585-86, 588, 590, 593, 595-98). Marx used various channels for establishing contacts with the leaders of the Commune in order to help them avoid mistakes and work out a correct policy. He wrote many letters to the leading figures in the working-class movement of Europe and the United States (see present edition, Vol. 44) to explain the true character of events and expose the slander spread by the ruling classes. With the help of the General Council, led by Marx, a broad campaign in support of the Commune was launched in many countries. The advanced section of the working class and of the progressive intelligentsia in Britain also joined in the campaign.

As soon as the Paris Commune came into being, Marx set about studying and analysing its activities. Published in this volume, the First and Second Drafts of *The Civil War in France*, where he summed up massive factual material, testify to the exceptional scientific thoroughness with which he investigated the revolutionary creative work of the Communards.

The central position in this volume is occupied by Marx's outstanding work *The Civil War in France*, written in the form of an address of the General Council to all members of the International in Europe and the United States of America. Unanimously adopted at the meeting of the General Council on May 30, 1871, it was published as an official document of the International Working Men's Association a fortnight after the defeat of the Commune and became widely known in various countries.

In *The Civil War in France*, written in the form of keen political satire, Marx expounds the key propositions of revolutionary theory. The theory of the state, the revolution, and the dictatorship of the proletariat is developed on the basis of the experience of the Paris Commune. Lenin described this work as one of the fundamental documents of scientific communism. In it, he wrote, Marx had given a “profound, clear-cut, brilliant, *effective*” analysis of the Paris Commune (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 49).

The Civil War in France analyses the historical conditions of the origin of the Paris Commune. As Engels wrote in his 1891 Introduction, this work was an example of the author’s remarkable gift “for grasping clearly the character, the import and the necessary consequences of great historical events, at a time when these events are still in progress before our eyes or have only just taken place” (present edition, Vol. 27). Relying on many years of study of the history of France in general and of the Bonapartist regime in particular, which he had begun in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (see present edition, Vol. 11), Marx revealed the factors responsible for the revolution in Paris.

With biting sarcasm he exposed the leaders of the Versailles counter-revolutionary government, the instigators and organisers of the savage reprisals against the Paris workers. To these “bloodhounds of ‘order’” (this volume, p. 350), who in fear of revolution sank to national betrayal and collusion with the external enemy, Marx contrasted the courage, selflessness and heroism of the Communards.

Many years before this, when analysing the revolutionary events of 1848-49, Marx had concluded that the proletariat would play the decisive role in the future revolution. The experience of the Commune confirmed this conclusion. “This was the first revolution in which the working class was openly acknowledged as the only class capable of social initiative” (this volume, p. 336). For the first time in history the proletariat had attempted to assert its political supremacy and establish a new social order.

Study of the experience of the Paris Commune gave Marx new material for further investigation of such a social institution as the state. Drawing on his previous research in this sphere, Marx examines in *The Civil War in France* and its preliminary drafts the origin and stages of development of the state superstructure of capitalism, the dialectical interaction between this superstructure and the economic basis—capitalist relations of production, and the role of the bourgeois state as an instrument of the oppression of the working people. Its exploitato-

ry essence as a “public force organized for social enslavement” and “an engine of class despotism”, he wrote, remains unchanged, no matter in what forms it appears (see this volume, p. 329).

Because of the class character of the bourgeois state and the political functions of its apparatus of oppression the destruction of the bourgeois state machine becomes a crucial condition for the social emancipation of the proletariat. This conclusion, which Marx had arrived at in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852), was confirmed by the experience of the Commune. “But the working class,” Marx wrote, “cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for their own purpose. The political instrument of their enslavement cannot serve as the political instrument of their emancipation” (this volume, p. 533). Marx attached special importance to this key proposition of revolutionary theory, which was also clearly formulated in the Introduction that he and Engels wrote to the 1872 German edition of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (see present edition, Vol. 23). As we know, this proposition was further developed in the works of Lenin in its application to the specific features of the imperialist epoch.

In *The Civil War in France*, Marx demonstrated a dialectical and concrete historical approach, a differentiated attitude to the various elements of the state machine. He did not rule out the possibility of the victorious working class making use of the socially necessary bodies of the bourgeois state on condition that they were democratically reformed.

Up to the time of the Paris Commune the history of proletarian struggle had provided no practical example of what the working class could substitute for the state machine when it had been smashed. Marx saw in the Commune, short-lived though it was, the features of a state of the new type, a proletarian state, which was to replace the bourgeois state established for the oppression of the mass of the working people. The experience of the Commune allowed Marx to enrich revolutionary theory with a concrete conclusion regarding the form of proletarian state that was needed for its historic mission of building a new socialist society. The “true secret” of the Commune, he wrote in *The Civil War in France*, “was this. It was essentially a working-class government, the produce of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economical emancipation of Labour” (this volume, p. 334).

Marx also considers the nature of the new type of state in his speech at the meeting devoted to the seventh anniversary of the International in September 1871. The Commune, he said, "and there could not be two opinions about it ... was the conquest of the political power of the working classes." The experience of the revolution of 1871, Marx stressed in this speech, clearly proved that to destroy the existing conditions of oppression "a proletarian dictatorship would become necessary" (this volume, p. 634). Summing up the conclusions Marx reached concerning the new type of state in *The Civil War in France*, Engels in his Introduction to the third German edition of this work (1891), marking the twentieth anniversary of the Commune, wrote, "Look at the Paris Commune. That was the dictatorship of the proletariat" (present edition, Vol. 27).

The Paris Commune gave Marx specific facts with which to demonstrate the truly democratic nature of the dictatorship of the proletariat as a form of state power. The Commune consisted mostly of "working men, of acknowledged representatives of the working class" (this volume, p. 331). The principles of electiveness, revocability, and responsibility to the people of all organs of power and of all functionaries, the democratic principles of the organisation of the administrative and judicial system, were put into effect. Marx stresses that the Commune was to be "a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time". (Ibid.)

Marx showed the creative character of the Commune's activity, the way it combined destruction of the organs of the bourgeois state, the instruments of the material and spiritual oppression of the people, with the setting up of new, revolutionary institutions. From this standpoint he analyses the main initiatives of the Commune—the replacement of the standing army by the armed people, the abolition of the police, the separation of church from state, the expropriation of the property of the churches, and the abolition of religious instruction and government supervision in public education. He attaches great importance to the Commune's social initiatives, to its first steps in expropriating big capital's property in the means of production and the handing over of idle factories abandoned by their owners to the workers' cooperative societies.

Marx pointed to the coincidence of the proletariat's class interests with those of the nation at large as one of the key features of the new type of state. The Commune, he observed, was "the true representative of all the healthy elements of French

society, and therefore the truly national Government”, but at the same time it was “a working men’s Government ... the bold champion of the emancipation of labour” (see this volume, p. 338). The Commune was the highest form of proletarian democracy, the form of government where “democracy, introduced as fully and consistently as is at all conceivable, is transformed from bourgeois into proletarian democracy” (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 424).

With the experience of the Commune in mind Marx went on to examine the problem of the allies of the proletariat in the revolution. He analysed the social initiatives that attracted to the Commune not only the indigent populace of Paris but also the middle strata of French society. He expressed his firm conviction that the policy of the Paris Commune as a proletarian state fully corresponded to the essential interests of the working peasantry and that, but for the isolation of Paris from the provinces due to the blockade by the Versailles, the French peasantry would have taken the side of the Communards (see this volume, pp. 492-94).

In *The Civil War in France* Marx poses the problem of the period of transition from capitalism to socialism. In his First Draft he notes the lengthiness and complexity of this process, the need to go through various stages of class struggle. The working class knows, he wrote, “that this work of regeneration will be again and again relented and impeded by the resistances of vested interests and class egotisms” (this volume, p. 491). The existence of a political organisation in the form of the Commune, i.e., the proletarian state, is necessary for these socio-economic reforms to be put into effect. “The working class did not expect miracles from the Commune...”, Marx writes in *The Civil War in France*. “They know that in order to work out their own emancipation, and along with it that higher form to which present society is irresistibly tending by its own economical agencies, they will have to pass through long struggles, through a series of historic processes, transforming circumstances and men” (this volume, p. 335). The classical formulation of the tasks of the transitional period and the dictatorship of the proletariat as the state of this period was later propounded by Marx in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (1875).

From the activities of the Commune Marx also drew material for elaborating the problem of the international character of the working-class struggle for emancipation. Arising out of the specific historical situation in France, the Commune, by taking the first

practical steps in the great cause of emancipating labour, embodied the aspirations of the working class of all countries and was "emphatically international" (this volume, p. 338). The advanced section of the working class of Europe and the United States embraced the Commune as its own cherished cause.

The Commune showed the full importance of properly combining the spontaneous and the conscious in the working-class movement. The Communards' class instinct told them what steps to take. But in the great work of transforming society revolutionary instinct and enthusiasm were not enough. Consisting for the most part of supporters of pre-Marxian forms of socialism, the Commune lacked ideological unity. It was not armed with a revolutionary theory that could ensure a consistent revolutionary policy. The experience of the Commune positively proved the proletariat's need for a militant vanguard, a political party armed with the theory of scientific communism. It was this task, which had become apparent from the experience of the Paris Commune, that Marx and Engels set before the International and the working class at the London Conference.

The content of *The Civil War in France* is supplemented in many ways by the preliminary drafts of this work. Although parts of them are no more than rough notes, the bulk are in finished form and are distinguished by the same power and vividness of expression that mark the final text. Both drafts are of independent theoretical value. In these drafts Marx expounded several important propositions more thoroughly than in the final version. Here we have his propositions on the historical origins of the Commune, his analysis of its socio-economic initiatives, his characterisation of its policy towards the middle strata, and also his theoretical generalisations concerning the historic mission and tasks of the proletarian state.

Of exceptional importance is the thought, formulated in the First Draft, on the class struggle in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism. Marx pointed out: "The Commune does not [do] away with the class struggles, through which the working classes strive to the abolition of all classes and, therefore, of all class rule", but it "affords the rational medium in which that class struggle can run through its different phases in the most rational and human way" (this volume, p. 491).

In the drafts Marx goes deeply into the dialectics of the development of state power in the process of the transformation of society, showing the historically transient character of the proletarian state, of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which he

regards as a stage in the natural historical process of the withering away of the state. The Commune, he writes, "was a Revolution against the *State* itself, this supernaturalist abortion of society..." it was "the reabsorption of the State power by society, as its own living forces instead of as forces controlling and subduing it, by the popular masses themselves..." (this volume, pp. 486, 487).

Proceeding not only from the experience of the Commune but also from the results of his own economic research, Marx stressed in the First Draft of *The Civil War in France* that in the period of the building of a classless society the economic activity of the proletarian state would assume increasing importance. It was the mission of this state to reorganise the whole economy on a new basis, to achieve the "harmonious national and international coordination" of the social forms of production (this volume, p. 491).

Analysing the mistakes of the Communards, Marx declared that, notwithstanding the great breadth of its democratic organisation, the proletarian state must possess sufficiently effective revolutionary organs of power. It must be capable of rebuffing the attacks of the internal and external enemies of the revolution, of defending all that the people have won.

Marx did not gloss over the shortcomings in the Commune's activity. But he valued, above all, its attempts in the conditions of hardship and siege to set about building a new society. He showed the enormous transforming power of the revolution, which changed the face of the French capital. "Working, thinking, fighting, bleeding Paris ... radiant in the enthusiasm of its historic initiative!" (this volume, p. 341). Here was the true hero of Marx's work.

The conclusions Marx drew from the experience and lessons of the Paris Commune were developed by him and by Engels throughout their lives. They became the subject of a profound study and creative application by Lenin in the new historical epoch. Developing the ideas of Marxism, Lenin gave solid and convincing grounds for the necessity of the Soviet form of the proletarian state, while allowing that other forms were also quite possible, depending on the specific national historical conditions of the struggle for the socialist revolution.

The international counter-revolution tried to use the defeat of the Paris Commune to suppress the whole working-class move-

ment. The governments of the European states joined forces to intensify repressive measures against the working class and its organisations, particularly the sections of the International. In a number of countries the sections had to adopt an illegal or semi-legal position. The reactionary press did all it could to discredit the International and its leaders by publishing various kinds of forgeries and spreading slanderous allegations.

The numerous statements sent to various newspapers by Marx and Engels and, as a rule, published in the form of official documents of the General Council ("Statement by the General Council on Jules Favre's Circular", "Statement by the General Council to the Editor of *The Times*", Marx's letters to the editors of the newspapers *De Werker*, *Public Opinion*, *Le Gaulois*, *La Vérité*, et al.), reflect the energetic campaign Marx and Engels waged against the bourgeois press's persecution of the International, against the attempts to distort its principles and aims and undermine its authority.

An address composed by Marx in the name of the General Council and entitled "Mr. Washburne, the American Ambassador, in Paris", exposes the provocatory role of bourgeois diplomacy in the period of the Paris Commune. This document exposes the disreputable, double-faced attitude to the Commune adopted by a diplomatic representative of American capitalist "democracy" (see this volume, pp. 379-82).

The Paris Commune was a turning-point in the development of the international working-class movement. Its lessons were learned by revolutionary proletarian circles. Their urgent task was to strengthen their organisations and achieve ideological unity. Marx and Engels concentrated on helping the new sections of the International in Italy, Spain and other countries, establishing close ties between the sections and the General Council and informing them of its tasks and goals (see this volume, pp. 272-73, 277-80, 294-96).

At the same time the Commune stimulated the polarisation of ideological trends in the working-class movement. The clear statement in *The Civil War in France* of the International's revolutionary platform caused the wavering reformist elements to break away from it. In the summer of 1871 the General Council had to condemn the leaders of the British trade unions Lucraft and Odger, who in defiance of the principles of proletarian internationalism struck their signatures off the General Council's Address *The Civil War in France* and sided with the bourgeoisie (see this volume, pp. 372-73, 610-11).

The General Council condemned and expelled from the International the right-wing Proudhonist Tolain, who had opted for a deputy's seat in the counter-revolutionary Versailles assembly rather than fighting for the Commune. The resolution underscored that "the place of every French member of the I.W.M.A. is undoubtedly on the side of the Commune of Paris" (this volume, p. 297).

The materials presented in this volume reflect Marxism's consistent struggle against anarchism in its Bakunist form—the main ideological opponent of Marxism in those days. The influence of Bakunism was growing in Spain, Italy, in Romance Switzerland and in the South of France, which was mainly due to the fact that new sections of the working class were drawn into the working-class movement, sections that were not as yet sufficiently differentiated from other indigent strata of bourgeois society.

The danger of Bakunism reached a new peak after the defeat of the Paris Commune. Misinterpreting its experience, the Bakunists presented the Commune not as a proletarian state, but as an example of the abolition of all statehood and the renunciation of all political activity on the part of the working class, as the embodiment of their "federalist ideas". They alleged that the Commune had vindicated their tactics, based on notions of the possibility of carrying out a revolution in any place at any time without regard to the historical preconditions for it. While claiming leadership of the international working-class movement, the Bakunists steered a course towards splitting the movement. In a number of countries they set up sections on the basis of their programme, which they presented as the programme of the International. Objectively, the Bakunists held back the awakening of class-consciousness among the proletariat and hindered the working out of its strategy and tactics in the new conditions. Disassociation from Bakunism became an urgent necessity for the further development of the revolutionary working-class movement and its political organisation. A very important role in this process was played by the London Conference of the International that took place on September 17-23, 1871.

This volume contains various documents of the London Conference, a prominent place being given to the speeches by Marx and Engels and the conference decisions and resolutions which they drafted and which were afterwards approved by the General Council.

The conference was held to delineate the basic trends in the

activity of the International Working Men's Association under the new conditions.

As can be seen from the minutes the work of the conference focused on the problem of setting up a proletarian party, and the discussion of its programmatic and tactical principles. In his speech at the opening of the conference Marx said that it had been called to "set up a new organisation to meet the needs of the situation" (this volume, p. 613).

The London Conference was the first international forum of the International that took place under the direct leadership of Marx and Engels. Marx was the main rapporteur on all important issues. Engels took a very active part in preparing and conducting the conference.

During the conference, as Engels noted afterwards, at the 1893 meeting to commemorate the Commune, "the question of founding a political party different and distinct from all other political parties was raised" for the first time in the history of the International (see present edition, Vol. 27). This question became the focal point of the struggle against the Bakuninist and reformist ideology.

In the subsequent debate Marx and Engels emphasised that those who even after the Paris Commune still denied the need for "political action" by the working class thereby repudiated the opportunity of its winning political power, the only means by which the working-class movement could achieve its aims. "The experience of real life and the political oppression imposed on them by existing governments—whether for political or social ends—force the workers to concern themselves with politics," said Engels in his speech. The supreme political act is revolution, the establishment of the political supremacy of the proletariat, but the first condition for this is the creation of a working-class party which "must be constituted ... as an independent party with its own objective, its own politics" (this volume, p. 417). The crucial ninth resolution of the conference, drawn up by Marx and Engels, stated: "against this collective power of the propertied classes the working class cannot act, as a class, except by constituting itself into a political party, distinct from, and opposed to, all old parties formed by the propertied classes; ... this constitution of the working class into a political party is indispensable in order to insure the triumph of the social Revolution and its ultimate end—the abolition of classes..." (this volume, p. 427).

This resolution clearly indicated the basic direction of the further development of the struggle of the working class for

emancipation and defined the main objective facing the workers of every country after 1871—the founding of mass political parties of the proletariat. The immediate future showed that this was the course taken by the working-class movement.

As the documents published in this volume demonstrate, other issues that were debated—the significance of the struggle for the democratic rights of the working class, the drawing of peasants into the movement of the industrial proletariat, the development of the women's working-class movement, the interrelation of the political organisation of the working class and the trade unions, and so on—are all organically connected with the solution of the problem of the proletarian party, with the elaboration of its organisational and tactical principles. Marx and Engels showed that in its political activities the working class and its party should use various means in bourgeois society, combining legal and illegal forms of struggle depending on the conditions under which it had to be waged. They attached great importance to participation in parliamentary elections and getting working-class deputies into parliament. In his speech on political action by the working class Marx cited as an example of the successful use of the parliamentary platform in the interests of the working class the speeches of the socialist deputies Bebel and Liebknecht in the German Reichstag, whose words "the entire world can hear". Every worker elected to parliament, said Marx, is a victory over the ruling classes "but we must choose the right men" (this volume, p. 617).

The speeches of Marx and Engels and the resolutions passed by the conference against anarchistic sectarianism and adventurism are published in this volume. They sharply criticised the Bakuninist dogmas on abstention from political activity, and demonstrated that, in fact, such abstention would mean the workers' passive submission to bourgeois policies (see this volume, pp. 411-12, 415-16). One of the conference resolutions banned the setting up of sectarian, separatist organisations. The rules of any section joining the International should conform to the programmatic and organisation principles of the general Rules of the International Working Men's Association.

The conference opposed the attempts of the Bakuninists, and also the Blanquists to substitute secret conspiratorial societies for mass working-class organisations. In his speech on secret societies Marx noted that "this type of organisation is opposed to the development of the proletarian movement because instead of instructing the workers, these societies subject them to au-

thoritarian mystical laws which cramp their independence and distort their powers of reason" (this volume, p. 621).

At the London Conference Bakuninism suffered a damaging blow, and in the subsequent struggle against Bakuninist sectarianism the decisions of the conference served as a reliable guide for the revolutionary wing of the International.

The conference authorised the General Council to bring out a new edition of the Rules, taking into account all the amendments proposed by the congresses of the International.

The London Conference became a landmark in the development of the international working-class movement, a new step in the process of uniting Marxism with the mass movement of the proletariat. Its decisions determined the programmatic and tactical objectives of the proletarian parties, the creation of which the workers of several countries had already begun. The discussion at the conference and its resolutions reflected the creative development of scientific communism, particularly such aspects of it as the theory of the socialist revolution, of the party of the working class, the tactics of class struggle by the proletariat. The speeches of Marx and Engels at the conference, the documents which they wrote affirmed the organic link between Marxism and the practical aims of the working-class movement.

The significance of the decisions of the London Conference and the historic lessons of the Paris Commune were revealed by Marx in his speech (published in this volume) at the celebration meeting dedicated to the seventh anniversary of the International. Marx noted the role played in the rallying of the militant forces of the proletariat in various countries by the International Working Men's Association. He ended his speech by saying: "The working classes would have to conquer the right to emancipate themselves on the battlefield. The task of the International was to organize and combine the forces of labor for the coming struggle" (this volume, p. 634). In this struggle for the fundamental restructuring of society the International relied on the historical experience of the first proletarian state—the Paris Commune.

* * *

Of the 82 works by Marx and Engels published in this volume 17—such as "On the Cigar-Workers' Strike in Antwerp", "Once Again 'Herr Vogt'", "The Address *The Civil War in France* and the English Press", several letters to the editors of newspapers

and records of speeches—are published in English for the first time.

The Appendices contain records of the speeches of Marx and Engels at the meetings of the General Council, the resumé of some of these speeches in newspaper reports, and the records of Marx's speeches at the London Conference of the International. These documents were too imperfect and fragmentary to be included in the main body of the volume. The speeches of Marx and Engels preserved in Engels' notes are published in the main body. The Appendices also include a newspaper report of Marx's interview with the correspondent of the New York paper *The World*, and a letter from Marx's daughter Jenny to the editors of *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly*. All these documents provide additional material illuminating the activities of Marx and Engels as leaders of the International.

In cases where more or less authentic versions of the documents of the International written by Marx and Engels or with their participation have reached us in several languages, the source—manuscript or printed—with an English text has been used as the basis for publication in this edition. Any substantial variant readings in other languages are given as footnotes.

During the preparation of the volume the dating of works was checked and in some cases corrected, and most of the sources used by the authors were traced. The results of this work are reflected in the endings and the reference apparatus. Any headings supplied by the editors of the volume are given in square brackets.

Obvious misprints in proper names, geographical designations, numerical data, dates, and so on, have been corrected by reference to the sources used by Marx and Engels, usually without comment. The spelling of proper names and geographical designations in English texts is reproduced from the originals, collated with reference works of the 19th century; in some cases the modern spelling is given as a footnote. The English paragraphs, sentences and words in the German or French originals are given in small caps or in asterisks. When the exact titles of documents referred to by Marx and Engels have not been established, they are given underfoot and in the index of quoted and mentioned literature as they are cited in newspaper articles, in square brackets.

The first part of the volume was compiled, prepared and annotated by Alexander Zubkov, the second part, beginning with *The Civil War in France*, by Yevgenia Dakhina (Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the CC CPSU); the preface and the index of quoted and mentioned literature were written by Alexander Zubkov

and Yevgenia Dakhina (Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the CC CPSU). The name index was compiled by Tatyana Nikolayeva and the index of periodicals, by Sergei Chuyanov (Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the CC CPSU). The editor of the volume was Tatyana Yeremeyeva and scientific editor Valeriya Kunina (Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the CC CPSU). The subject index was compiled by Alexander Zubkov. The translations were made by K.M. Cook, David Forgacs, Glenys Ann Kozlov, Rodney Livingstone and Barrie Selman and edited by Nicholas Jacobs, Glenys Ann Kozlov, K. M. Cook, Tatyana Grishina and Yelena Kalinina. The volume was prepared for the press by the editor Tatyana Grishina.

KARL MARX
and
FREDERICK ENGELS

WORKS

July 1870-October 1871

Karl Marx

[FIRST ADDRESS OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF
THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION
ON THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR]

TO THE MEMBERS
OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION
IN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES

In the *Inaugural Address of the International Working Men's Association*, of November, 1864, we said:—"If the emancipation of the working classes requires their fraternal concurrence, how are they to fulfil that great mission with a foreign policy in pursuit of criminal designs, playing upon national prejudices and squandering in piratical wars the people's blood and treasure?"^a We defined the foreign policy aimed at by the International in these words: "Vindicate the simple laws of morals and justice, which ought to govern the relations of private individuals, as the laws paramount of the intercourse of nations."^b

No wonder that Louis Bonaparte, who usurped his power by exploiting the war of classes in France, and perpetuated^c it by periodical wars abroad, should from the first have treated the International as a dangerous foe. On the eve of the plebiscite he ordered a raid on the members of the Administrative Committees of the International Working Men's Association throughout France, at Paris, Lyons, Rouen, Marseilles, Brest, etc., on the pretext that the International was a secret society dabbling in a complot for his assassination, a pretext soon after exposed in its full absurdity by his own judges.² What was the real crime of the French branches of the International? They told the French people publicly and emphatically that voting the plebiscite was voting despotism at home and war abroad.^d It has been, in fact, their work that in all the great towns, in all the industrial centres

^a See present edition, Vol. 20, pp. 12-13.—*Ed.*

^b *Ibid.*, p. 13.—*Ed.*

^c The German edition of 1870 has "maintained" and that of 1891 "prolonged", instead of "perpetuated".—*Ed.*

^d *Manifeste antiplébiscitaire des Sections parisiennes fédérées del' Internationale et de la Chambre fédérale des Sociétés ouvrières*, Paris [1870].—*Ed.*

of France, the working class rose like one man to reject the plebiscite. Unfortunately the balance was turned by the heavy ignorance of the rural districts. The Stock Exchanges, the Cabinets, the ruling classes and the press of Europe celebrated the plebiscite as a signal victory of the French Emperor over the French working class; and it was the signal for the assassination, not of an individual, but of nations.

The war plot of July, 1870, is but an amended edition of the *coup d'état* of December, 1851.³ At first view the thing seemed so absurd that France would not believe in its real good earnest. It rather believed the deputy denouncing the ministerial war talk as a mere stock-jobbing trick.^a When, on July 15th, war was at last officially announced to the *Corps Législatif*,^b the whole opposition refused to vote the preliminary subsidies, even Thiers branded it as "detestable"^c; all the independent journals of Paris condemned it, and, wonderful to relate, the provincial press joined in almost unanimously.

Meanwhile, the Paris members of the International had again set to work. In the *Réveil* of July 12th they published their manifesto "to the workmen of all nations", from which we extract the following few passages:

"Once more," they say, "on the pretext of the European equilibrium, of national honour, the peace of the world is menaced by political ambitions. French, German, Spanish workmen! Let our voices unite in one cry of reprobation against war!... War for a question of preponderance or a dynasty, can, in the eyes of workmen, be nothing but a criminal absurdity. In answer to the warlike proclamations of those who exempt themselves from the impost of blood, and find in public misfortunes a source of fresh speculations, we protest, we who want peace, labour and liberty!... Brothers of Germany! Our division would only result in the complete triumph of despotism on both sides of the Rhine.... Workmen of all countries! Whatever may for the present become of our common efforts, we, the members of the International Working Men's Association, who know of no frontiers, we send you as a pledge of indissoluble solidarity the good wishes and the salutations of the workmen of France."

This manifesto of our Paris section was followed by numerous similar French addresses, of which we can here only quote the declaration of Neuilly-sur-Seine, published in the *Marseillaise* of July 22nd:

^a The reference is to J. Favre's speech in the Corps Législatif of July 7, 1870 reported in the item "Paris, Thursday Evening", *The Times*, No. 26798, July 9, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b E. Ollivier's speech in the Corps Législatif on July 15, 1870, *Le Temps*, No. 3427, July 17, 1870.—*Ed.*

^c A. Thiers' speech in the Corps Législatif on July 15, 1870, *Le Temps*, No. 3426, July 16, 1870.—*Ed.*

"The war, is it just?—No! The war, is it national?—No! It is merely dynastic. In the name of humanity, of democracy, and the true interests of France, we adhere completely and energetically to the protestation of the International against the war."^a

These protestations expressed the true sentiments of the French working people, as was soon shown by a curious incident. *The Band of the 10th of December*, first organised under the presidency of Louis Bonaparte, having been masqueraded into *blouses* and let loose on the streets of Paris, there to perform the contortions of war fever,⁴ the real workmen of the Faubourgs came forward with public peace demonstrations so overwhelming that Piétri, the Prefect of Police, thought it prudent to at once stop all further street politics, on the plea that the real^b Paris people had given sufficient vent to their pent up patriotism and exuberant war enthusiasm.^c

Whatever may be the incidents of Louis Bonaparte's war with Prussia, the death knell of the Second Empire has already sounded at Paris. It will end as it began, by a parody. But let us not forget that it is the Governments and the ruling classes of Europe who enabled Louis Bonaparte to play during eighteen years the ferocious farce of the *Restored Empire*.

On the German side, the war is a war of defence, but who put Germany to the necessity of defending herself? Who enabled Louis Bonaparte to wage war upon her? *Prussia!* It was Bismarck who conspired with that very same Louis Bonaparte for the purpose of crushing popular opposition at home, and annexing Germany to the Hohenzollern dynasty. If the battle of Sadowa had been lost instead of being won, French battalions would have overrun Germany as the allies of Prussia.⁵ After her victory did Prussia dream one moment of opposing a free Germany to an enslaved France? Just the contrary. While carefully preserving all the native beauties of her old system, she superadded all the tricks of the Second Empire, its real despotism and its mock democracy, its political shams and its financial jobs, its high-flown talk and its low *légerdemains*. The Bonapartist regime, which till then only flourished on one side of the Rhine, had now got its

^a "Commune de Neuilly-sur-Seine", *La Marseillaise*, No. 153, July 22, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b The German edition of 1870 has "loyal" and that of 1891 "faithful", instead of "real".—*Ed.*

^c The reference is to the announcement of the Paris Prefect on the banning of demonstrations reported in the item "Paris, le 17 juillet", *Le Temps*, No. 3429, July 19, 1870.—*Ed.*

counterfeit on the other. From such a state of things, what else could result but *war*?

If the German working class allow the present war to lose its strictly defensive character and to degenerate into a war against the French people, victory or defeat will prove alike disastrous. All the miseries that befell Germany after her^a war of independence⁶ will revive with accumulated intensity.

The principles of the International are, however, too widely spread and too firmly rooted amongst the German working class to apprehend such a sad consummation. The voices of the French workmen have re-echoed from Germany. A mass meeting of workmen, held at Brunswick on July 16th, expressed its full concurrence with the Paris manifesto, spurned the idea of national antagonism to France, and wound up its resolutions with these words:

“We are enemies of all wars, but above all of dynastic wars.... With deep sorrow and grief we are forced to undergo a defensive war as an unavoidable evil; but we call, at the same time, upon the whole German working class to render the recurrence of such an immense social misfortune impossible by vindicating for the peoples themselves the power to decide on peace and war, and making them masters of their own destinies.”^b

At Chemnitz, a meeting of delegates representing 50,000 Saxon workers adopted unanimously a resolution to this effect⁷:

“In the name of the German Democracy, and especially of the workmen forming the Democratic Socialist Party, we declare the present war to be exclusively dynastic.... We are happy to grasp the fraternal hand stretched out to us by the workmen of France.... Mindful of the watchword of the International Working Men’s Association: *Proletarians of all countries, unite*, we shall never forget that the workmen of *all* countries are our *friends* and the despots of *all* countries our *enemies*.”^c

The Berlin branch of the International has also replied to the Paris manifesto:

“We,” they say, “join with heart and hand your protestation.... Solemnly we promise that neither the sound of the trumpet, nor the roar of the cannon, neither victory nor defeat shall divert us from our common work for the union of the children of toil^d of all countries.”^e

^a The 1891 German edition has “after the so-called”.—*Ed.*

^b “Politische Uebersicht”, *Der Volksstaat*, No. 58, July 20, 1870.—*Ed.*

^c “Les travailleurs allemands à leurs frères de France”, *L’Internationale*, No. 81, July 31, 1870.—*Ed.*

^d The German editions of 1870 and 1891 have “workers” instead of “children of toil”.—*Ed.*

^e “Réponse des ouvriers allemands au manifeste de l’Internationale”, *La Marseillaise*, No. 153, July 22, 1870.—*Ed.*

Be it so!

In the background of this suicidal strife looms the dark figure of Russia. It is an ominous sign that the signal for the present war should have been given at the moment when the Moscovite Government had just finished its strategical lines of railway and was already massing troops in the direction of the Pruth. Whatever sympathy the Germans may justly claim in a war of defence against Bonapartist aggression, they would forfeit at once by allowing the Prussian Government to call for, or accept, the help of the Cossacks. Let them remember that, after their war of independence against the first Napoleon, Germany lay for generations prostrate at the feet of the Czar.

The English working class stretch the hand of fellowship to the French and German working people. They feel deeply convinced that whatever turn the impending horrid war may take, the alliance of the working classes of all countries will ultimately kill war. The very fact that while official France and Germany are rushing into a fratricidal feud, the workmen of France and Germany send each other messages of peace and goodwill^a; this great fact, unparalleled in the history of the past, opens the vista of a brighter future. It proves that in contrast to old society, with its economical miseries and its political delirium, a new society is springing up, whose International rule will be *Peace*, because its national ruler will be everywhere the same—*Labour!* The Pioneer of that new society is the International Working Men's Association.^b

* * *

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Murray, Charles

^a The German editions of 1870 and 1891 have "friendship" instead of "goodwill".—*Ed.*

^b This sentence is omitted in the 1870 German edition.—*Ed.*

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Frederick Engels

NOTES ON THE WAR⁸

Written in late July 1870-February 1871
First published in *The Pall Mall Gazette* in
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NOTES ON THE WAR.—I^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1703, July 29, 1870]

Scarcely a shot has been fired so far, and yet a first stage of the war has passed away, ending in disappointment to the French Emperor.^b A few observations on the political and military situation will render this evident.

It is now admitted on all hands that Louis Napoleon expected to be able to isolate the North German Confederation⁹ from the Southern States, and to take advantage of the disaffection existing in the newly annexed Prussian provinces.¹⁰ A rapid dash upon the Rhine with as large a force as could be collected, a passage of that river somewhere between Germersheim and Mayence, an advance in the direction of Frankfort and Würzburg, might promise to effect this. The French would find themselves masters of the communications between North and South, and would compel Prussia to bring down to the Main, in hot haste, all available troops, whether ready or not, for a campaign. The whole process of mobilization in Prussia would be disturbed, and all the chances would be in favour of the invaders being able to defeat the Prussians in detail as they arrived from the various parts of the country. Not only political but also military reasons were in favour of such an attempt. The French cadre system admits of a far quicker concentration of say 120,000 to 150,000 men than the Prussian landwehr system.¹¹ The French peace footing differs from the war footing merely by the number of men on furlough, and by the non-existence of dépôts, which are formed on the eve of marching out. But the Prussian peace footing includes less than

^a Written not earlier than July 27, 1870. Signed Z.—*Ed.*

^b Napoleon III.—*Ed.*

one-third of the men who compose the war footing; and moreover, not only the men, but the officers also of these remaining two-thirds are in time of peace civilians. The mobilization of these immense numbers of men takes time; it is, moreover, a complicated process, which would be thrown into complete disorder by the sudden irruption of a hostile army. This is the reason why the war was so much *brusqué* by the Emperor. Unless he intended some such unexpected surprise, the hot language of Gramont,^a and the precipitate declaration of war^b would have been absurd.

But the sudden, violent outburst of German feeling put an end to any such plan. Louis Napoleon found himself face to face, not with King William "Annexander,"^c but with the German nation. And, in that case, a dash across the Rhine, even with 120,000 to 150,000 men, was not to be thought of. Instead of a surprise, a regular campaign with all available forces had to be undertaken. The Guards, the armies of Paris and Lyons, and the corps of the camp at Châlons, which might have sufficed for the first purpose, were now barely sufficient to form the mere nucleus of the great army of invasion. And thus began the second phase of the war—that of preparation for a great campaign; and from that day the chances of ultimate success for the Emperor began to decline.

Let us now compare the forces that are being got ready for mutual destruction; and to simplify matters, we will take the infantry only. The infantry is the arm which decides battles; any trifling balance of strength in cavalry and artillery, including mitrailleurs¹² and other miracle-working engines, will not count for much on either side.

France has 376 battalions of infantry (38 battalions of Guards, 20 *Chasseurs*,^d 300 line, 9 Zouaves, 9 Turcos,¹³ &c.) of eight companies each in time of peace. Each of the 300 line battalions, in time of war, leaves two companies behind to form a *depôt*, and marches out with six companies only. In the present instance, four of the six *depôt* companies of each line regiment (of three battalions) are intended to expand into a fourth battalion by being filled up with men on furlough and with reserves. The remaining two companies

^a The reference is to Duc de Gramont's speech in the Corps Législatif on July 6, 1871, reported in the item "Paris, July 6, Evening", *The Times*, No. 26796, July 7, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b On July 19, 1870.—*Ed.*

^c A coinage of two words, "annexation" and "Alexander", as an allusion to Alexander of Macedon.—*Ed.*

^d Riflemen.—*Ed.*

appear to be intended as a *dépôt*, and may hereafter be formed into fifth battalions. But it will be certainly some time, at least six weeks, before these fourth battalions will be so far organized as to be fit for the field; for the present they and the *Garde Mobile*¹⁴ can be counted as garrison troops only. Thus, for the first decisive battles, France has nothing available but the above 376 battalions.

Of these, the army of the Rhine, according to all we hear, comprises, in the six army corps No. 1 to 6 and the Guards, 299 battalions. Including the Seventh Corps (General Montauban), which is supposed to be intended for the Baltic,¹⁵ the figure is given as high as 340 battalions, which would leave but 36 battalions to guard Algiers, the colonies, and the interior of France. From this it appears that France has sent every available battalion against Germany, and cannot increase her force by new formations fit for the field before the beginning of September at the very earliest.

Now for the other side. The North German army consists of thirteen army corps, composed of 368 battalions of infantry, or, in round numbers, twenty-eight battalions per corps. Each battalion counts, on the peace footing, about 540, and on the war footing 1,000 men. On the order for the mobilization of the army being received, a few officers are told off in each regiment of three battalions for the formation of the fourth battalion. The reserve men are at once called in. They are men who have served two to three years in the regiment, and remain liable to be called out until they are twenty-seven years of age. There are plenty of them to fill up the three field battalions and furnish a good stock towards the fourth battalion, which is completed by men from the *landwehr*. Thus the field battalions are ready to march in a few days, and the fourth battalions can follow in four or five weeks afterwards. At the same time, for every line regiment a *landwehr* regiment of two battalions is formed out of the men between twenty-eight and thirty-six years of age, and as soon as they are ready the formation of the third *landwehr* battalions is taken in hand. The time required for all this, including the mobilization of cavalry and artillery, is exactly thirteen days; and the first day of mobilization having been fixed for the 16th, everything is or should be ready to-day. At this moment, probably, North Germany has in the field 358 battalions of the line, and in garrison 198 battalions of the *landwehr*; to be reinforced, certainly not later than the second half of August, by 114 fourth battalions of the line and 93 third battalions of the *landwehr*. In all these troops there will scarcely be a man who has not passed through his

regular time of service in the army. To these we must add the troops of Hesse-Darmstadt, Baden, Württemberg, and Bavaria, 104 battalions of the line in all; but as the landwehr system in these States has not yet had time to fully develop itself, there may be not more than seventy or eighty battalions available for the field.

The landwehr are principally intended for garrison duty, but in the war of 1866¹⁶ a large portion marched out as a reserve army for the field. This will no doubt be done again.

Of the thirteen North German army corps ten are now on the Rhine, forming a total of 280 battalions; then the South Germans, say 70 battalions; grand total, 350 battalions. There remain available on the coast or as a reserve three army corps or 84 battalions. One corps, together with the landwehr, will be ample for the defence of the coast. The two remaining corps may be, for aught we know, on the road to the Rhine too. These troops can be reinforced by the 20th of August by at least 100 fourth battalions and 40 to 50 landwehr battalions, men superior to the fourth battalions and Gardes Mobiles of the French, which mostly are composed of almost undrilled men. The fact is, France has not more than about 550,000 drilled men at her disposal, while North Germany alone has 950,000. And this is an advantage for Germany, which will tell more and more the longer decisive fighting is delayed, until it will reach its culminating point towards the end of September.

Under these circumstances, we need not be astonished at the news from Berlin that the German commanders hope to save German soil from the sufferings of war^a; in other words, that unless they are attacked soon they will attack themselves. How that attack, unless anticipated by Louis Napoleon, will be conducted is another question.

^a "Berlin, July 26, Evening", *The Times*, No. 26813, July 27, 1870.—*Ed.*

NOTES ON THE WAR.—II^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1705, August 1, 1870]

On the morning of Friday, the 29th of July, the forward movement of the French army will have commenced. In which direction? A glance at the map will show it.

The valley of the Rhine, on the left bank, is closed in to the west by the mountain chain of the Vosges from Belfort to Kaiserslautern. North of this latter town the hills become more undulating, until they gradually merge in the plain near Mayence.

The valley of the Moselle in Rhenish Prussia forms a deep and winding clough, which the river has worked out for itself through a plateau, which rises to the south of the valley into a considerable range called the Hochwald. As this range approaches the Rhine the plateau character becomes more predominant, until the last outlying hills meet the farthest spurs of the Vosges.

Neither the Vosges nor the Hochwald are absolutely impracticable for an army; both are crossed by several good high-roads, but neither are of that class of ground where armies of from 200,000 to 300,000 men could operate with advantage. The country between the two, however, forms a kind of broad gap, twenty-five to thirty miles in width, undulated ground, traversed by numerous roads in all directions, and offering every facility to the movements of large armies. Moreover, the road from Metz to Mayence goes through this gap, and Mayence is the first important point on which the French will probably move.

Here, then, we have the line of operations prescribed by nature. In case of a German invasion of France, both armies being

^a Written not later than July 29, 1870. The first part of the article is signed Z.—Ed.

prepared, the first great encounter must take place in the corner of Lorraine east of the Moselle and north of the railway from Nancy to Strasbourg¹⁷; so, with a French army advancing from the positions where it concentrated last week, the first important action will take place somewhere in this gap, or beyond it, under the walls of Mayence.

The French army was thus concentrated:—Three corps (the 3rd, 4th, and 5th) in a first line at Thionville, St. Avold, and Bitche; two corps (the 1st and 2nd) in second line at Strasbourg and Metz; and as a reserve, the Guards at Nancy and the 6th Corps at Châlons. During the last few days the second line was brought forward into the intervals of the first, the Guard was moved to Metz, Strasbourg was abandoned to the Mobile Guard. Thus the whole body of the French forces was concentrated between Thionville and Bitche, that is, facing the entrance of the gap between the mountains. The natural conclusion from these premisses is that they intend marching into it.

Thus, the invasion will have commenced by occupying the passages of the Saar and the Blies; the next day's proceedings will probably be to occupy the line from Tholey to Homburg; then the line from Birkenfeld to Landstuhl or Oberstein to Kaiserslautern, and so forth—that is to say, unless they are interrupted by an advance of the Germans. There will be, no doubt, flanking corps of both parties in the hills, and they, too, will come to blows; but for the real battle we must look to the ground just described.

Of the positions of the Germans we know nothing. We suppose, however, that their ground of concentration, if they intend to meet the enemy on the left bank of the Rhine, will be immediately in front of Mayence, that is, at the other end of the gap. If not, they will remain on the right bank, from Bingen to Mannheim, concentrating either above or below Mayence as circumstances may require. As to Mayence, which in its old shape was open to bombardment by rifled artillery, the erection of a new line of detached forts, 4,000 to 5,000 yards from the ramparts of the town, seems to have made it pretty secure.

Everything points to the supposition that the Germans will be ready and willing to advance not more than two or three days later than the French. In that case it will be a battle like Solferino¹⁸—two armies deployed on their full front, marching to meet each other.

Much learned and over-skilful manoeuvring is not to be expected. With armies of such magnitude there is trouble enough to make them move simply to the front according to the

preconcerted plan. Whichever side attempts dangerous manoeuvres may find itself crushed by the plain forward movement of the masses of the enemy long before these manoeuvres can be developed.

A military work on the Rhine fortresses, by Herr von Widdern, is much talked of just now at Berlin.^a The author says that the Rhine from Bâle to the Murg is not fortified at all, and that the only defence of South Germany and Austria against a French attack in that direction is the strong fortress of Ulm, occupied since 1866 by a mixed force of Bavarians and Württembergers, amounting to 10,000 men. This force could in case of war be augmented to 25,000 men, and 25,000 more could be stationed in an entrenched camp within the walls of the fortress. Rastatt, which, it is expected, will present a formidable obstacle to the French advance, lies in a valley through which runs the river Murg. The defences of the town consist of three large forts, which command the surrounding country, and are united by walls. The southern and western forts, called "Leopold" and "Frederick," are on the left bank of the Murg; the northern fort, called "Louis," on the right bank, where there is also an entrenched camp capable of holding 25,000 men. Rastatt is four miles from the Rhine, and the intervening country is covered with woods, so that the fortress could not prevent an army from crossing at that point. The next fortress is Landau, which formerly consisted of three forts—one to the south, one to the east, and one to the north-west, separated from the town by marshes on the banks of the little river Queich. The southern and eastern forts have been recently abandoned, and the only one kept in a state of defence is now the north-western. The most important and the best situated fortress in this district is Gernersheim, on the banks of the Rhine. It commands a considerable stretch of the river on both sides, and practically closes it to an enemy as far as Mayence and Coblenz. It would greatly facilitate the advance of troops into the Rhine Palatinate, as two or three bridges might be thrown across the river, besides the floating bridge which already exists there, under cover of its guns. It would also form a basis of operations for the

^a G. Cardinal von Widdern, *Der Rhein und die Rheinfeldzüge. Militär-geographische und Operations-Studien im Bereich des Rheins und der benachbarten deutschen und französischen Landschaften*, Berlin, 1869.—Ed.

left wing of an army posted on the line of the River Queich. Mayence, one of the most important of the Rhine fortresses, is commanded by some of the adjoining hills; this has rendered it necessary to multiply the fortifications in the town, and there is, in consequence, hardly room enough for a large garrison. The whole of the country between Mayence and Bingen is now strongly fortified, and between it and the mouth of the Main (on the opposite bank of the Rhine) there are three large entrenched camps. As to Coblenz, Herr von Widdern says that it would require a force six times as large as the garrison to besiege it with any prospect of success. An enemy would probably begin the attack by opening fire on Fort Alexander from the hill known as the Kuhkopf, where his troops would be sheltered by the woods. The author also describes the fortifications of Cologne and Wesel, but adds nothing to what is already known on the subject.

NOTES ON THE WAR.—III^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1706, August 2, 1870]

At last the plan of campaign of the Prussians begins to emerge from the dark. It will be recollected that, although immense transports of troops have taken place on the right bank of the Rhine, from the east towards the west and south-west, very little was heard of concentrations in the immediate vicinity of the menaced frontier. The fortresses received strong reinforcements from the nearest troops. At Saarbrücken, 500 men of the 40th Infantry and three squadrons of the 7th Lancers (both 8th Corps) skirmished with the enemy; Bavarian Chasseurs and Baden dragoons continued the line of outposts to the Rhine. But no large masses of troops appear to have been placed immediately in rear of this curtain formed by a few light troops. Artillery had never been mentioned in any of the skirmishes. Trèves was quite empty of troops. On the other hand, we heard of large masses on the Belgian frontier; of 30,000 cavalry about Cologne (where the whole country on the left bank of the Rhine, to near Aix-la-Chapelle, abounds in forage); of 70,000 men before Mayence. All this seemed strange; it looked like an almost culpable distribution of troops, contrasted with the close concentration of the French within a couple of hours' march of the frontier. All at once, a few indications drop in from different quarters which seem to dispel the mystery.

The correspondent of the *Temps*, who had ventured as far as Trèves, witnessed on the 25th and 26th the passage of a large body of troops of all arms through that city towards the line of the Saar.^b The weak garrison of Saarbrücken was considerably

^a Written not later than July 31, 1870. Signed Z.—Ed.

^b "On nous écrit de Luxembourg...", *Le Temps*, No. 3439, July 29, 1870.—Ed.

reinforced about the same time, probably from Coblenz, the head-quarters of the 8th Corps. The troops passing through Trèves must have belonged to some other corps, coming from the north across the Eifel. Finally, from a private source¹⁹ we learn that the 7th Army Corps on the 27th was on its march from Aix-la-Chapelle, by Trèves, to the frontier.

Here, then, we have at least three army corps, or about 100,000 men, thrown on the line of the Saar. Two of these are the 7th and 8th, both forming part of the Army of the North under General Steinmetz (7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th corps). We may pretty safely assume that the whole of this army is by this time concentrated between Sarrebourg and Saarbrücken. If the 30,000 cavalry (more or less) were really in the neighbourhood of Cologne, they too must have marched across the Eifel and the Moselle towards the Saar. The whole of these dispositions would indicate that the main attack of the Germans will be made with their right wing, through the space between Metz and Saarlouis, towards the upper Nied valley. If the reserve cavalry *has* gone that way, this becomes a certainty.

This plan presupposes the concentration of the whole German army between the Vosges and the Moselle. The Army of the Centre (Prince Frederick Charles, with the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 12th corps) would have to take up a position either adjoining the left flank of Steinmetz or behind him as a reserve. The Army of the South (the Crown Prince,^a with the 5th Corps, the Guards, and the South Germans) would form the left wing, somewhere about Zweibrücken. As to where all these troops are, and how they are to be transported to their positions, we know nothing. We only know that the 3rd Army Corps began passing through Cologne southwards by the railway on the *left* bank of the Rhine. But we may assume that the same hand which traced the dispositions by which from 100,000 to 150,000 men were rapidly concentrated on the Saar from distant and apparently divergent points, will also have traced similar converging lines of march for the rest of the army.^b

This is, indeed, a bold plan, and is likely to prove as effective as any that could be devised. It is intended for a battle in which the German left, from Zweibrücken to near Saarlouis, maintain a purely defensive fight; while their right, advancing from Saarlouis and west of it, supported by the full reserves, attack the enemy in

^a Frederick William.—*Ed.*

^b The reference is to H.C.B. Moltke.—*Ed.*

force and cut his communications with Metz by a flank movement of the whole of the reserve cavalry. If this plan succeeds, and the first great battle is won by the Germans, the French army risks not only being cut off from its nearest base—Metz and the Moselle—but also being driven to a position where the Germans will be between it and Paris.

The Germans, having their communication with Coblenz and Cologne perfectly safe, can afford to risk a defeat in this position; such a defeat would not be nearly so disastrous in its consequences to them. Still it is a daring plan. It would be extremely difficult to get a defeated army, especially the right wing, safe across the defiles of the Moselle and its tributaries. Many prisoners and a great portion of the artillery would undoubtedly be lost, and the reforming of the army under shelter of the Rhine fortresses would take a long time. It would be folly to adopt such a plan unless General Moltke were perfectly certain to have such overwhelming strength at his command that victory was almost undoubted, and, moreover, unless he knew that the French were not in a position to fall upon his troops while still converging from all sides to the position selected for the first battle. Whether this is really the case we shall probably know very soon—perhaps to-morrow, even.

In the meantime it is well to remember that these strategic plans can never be relied upon for the full effect of what is expected from them. There always occurs a hitch here and a hitch there; corps do not arrive at the exact moment when they are wanted; the enemy makes unexpected moves, or has taken unexpected precautions; and finally, hard, stubborn fighting, or the good sense of a general, often extricates the defeated army from the worst consequences a defeat can have—the loss of communications with its base.

NOTES ON THE WAR.—IV^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1710, August 6, 1870]

On the 28th of July the Emperor reached Metz, and from the following morning he assumed the command of the Army of the Rhine. According to Napoleonic traditions, that date ought to have marked the beginning of active operations; but a week has passed, and we have not yet heard that the Army of the Rhine, as a body, has moved. On the 30th the small Prussian force at Saarbrücken was enabled to repel a French reconnoissance. On the 2nd of August the second division (General Bataille) of the 2nd Army Corps (General Frossard) took the heights south of Saarbrücken and shelled the enemy out of the town, but without attempting to pass the river and to storm the heights which on its northern bank command the town. Thus the line of the Saar had not been forced by this attack. Since then no further news of a French advance has been received, and so far the advantage gained by the affair of the 2nd is almost *nil*.

Now it can scarcely be doubted that when the Emperor left Paris for Metz his intention was to advance across the frontier at once. Had he done so he would have been able to disturb the enemy's arrangements very materially. On the 29th and 30th of July the German armies were still very far from being concentrated. The South Germans were still converging by rail and march towards the bridges of the Rhine. The Prussian reserve cavalry was passing in endless files through Coblenz and Ehrenbreitstein, marching southwards. The 7th Corps was between Aix-la-Chapelle and Trèves, far away from all railways. The 10th Corps was leaving Hanover, and the Guards were leaving Berlin by rail. A resolute

^a Written not earlier than August 5, 1870.—*Ed.*

advance at that time could scarcely have failed to bring the French up to the outlying forts of Mayence, and to ensure them considerable advantages over the retiring columns of the Germans; perhaps even it might have enabled them to throw a bridge over the Rhine, and protect it by a bridgehead on the right bank. At all events, the war would have been carried into the enemy's country, and the moral effect upon the French troops must have been excellent.

Why, then, has no such forward movement taken place? For this good reason, that, if the French soldiers were ready, their commissariat was not. We need not go by any of the rumours coming from the German side; we have the evidence of Captain Jeannerod,^a an old French officer, now correspondent of the *Temps* with the army. He distinctly states that the distribution of provisions for a campaign began on the 1st of August only; that the troops were short of field flasks, cooking tins, and other camping utensils; that the meat was putrid and the bread often musty. It will be said, we fear, that so far the army of the Second Empire has been beaten by the Second Empire itself. Under a *régime* which has to yield bounties to its supporters by all the old regular established means of jobbery, it cannot be expected that the system will stop at the intendance of the army. This war, according to M. Rouher's confession, was prepared long ago; the laying in of stores, especially equipments, was evidently one of the least conspicuous parts of the preparation; and yet at this very point such irregularities occur as to cause nearly a week's delay at the most critical period of the campaign.

Now, this week's delay made all the difference to the Germans. It gave them time to bring their troops to the front and to mass them in the positions selected for them. Our readers are aware that we suppose the whole of the German forces to be by this time concentrated on the left bank of the Rhine, more or less facing the French army.^b All public and private reports received since Tuesday, when we supplied *The Times* with all the opinion it ever had on the subject, and which this morning it swears is its own,^c tend to confirm this view. The three armies of Steinmetz, Prince Frederick Charles, and the Crown Prince represent a grand

^a G. Jeannerod, "Correspondances particulières du Temps. Stiring-Wendel, lundi 1^{er} août", *Le Temps*, No. 3444, August 3, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b See this volume, pp. 19-20.—*Ed.*

^c "The first blow in the war...", *The Times*, No. 26821, August 5, 1870. This leader contains some ideas from the article "Notes on the War.—III" without giving any references to the source.—*Ed.*

total of thirteen army corps, or at least 430,000 to 450,000 men. The total forces opposed to them cannot much exceed, at a very liberal estimate, 330,000 to 350,000 drilled soldiers. If they are stronger, the excess must consist of undrilled and recently formed battalions. But the German forces are far from representing the total strength of Germany. Of field troops alone there are three army corps (the 1st, 6th, and 11th) not included in the above estimate. Where they may be we do not know. We know that they have left their garrisons, and we have traced regiments of the 11th Corps to the left bank of the Rhine and the Bavarian Palatinate. We also know for certain that there are now in Hanover, Bremen, and neighbourhood no troops but landwehr. This would lead to the conclusion that the greater part at least of these three corps had also been forwarded to the front, and in that case the numerical superiority of the Germans would be increased by from some forty to sixty thousand men. We should not be surprised if even a couple of landwehr divisions had been sent to take the field on the Saar; there are 210,000 men of the landwehr now quite ready, and 180,000 men in the fourth battalions, &c., of the line nearly ready, and some of these might be spared for the first decisive blow. Let no one suppose that these men exist, to any extent, on paper only. The mobilization of 1866 is there to prove that the thing has been done, and the present mobilization has again proved that there are more drilled men ready to march out than are wanted. The numbers look incredible; but even they do not exhaust the military strength of Germany.

Thus, at the end of the present week, the Emperor^a finds himself face to face with a numerically superior force. And if he was willing but unable to move forward last week, he may be both unable and unwilling to advance now. That he is not unaware of the strength of his opponents is hinted at by the report from Paris that 250,000 Prussians are massed between Saarlouis and Neuenkirchen. What there is between Neuenkirchen and Kaiserslautern the Parisian telleth not. It is therefore possible that the inactivity of the French army up to Thursday has been partly caused by a change in the plan of campaign; that instead of attacking, the French intend to remain on the defensive, and to take advantage of the greatly increased strength which breech-loaders and rifled artillery give to an army awaiting an attack in an entrenched position. But if this be resolved upon, it will be a very disappointing commencement of the campaign for the French. To

^a Napoleon III.—*Ed.*

sacrifice half Lorraine and Alsace without a pitched battle—and we doubt that any good position for such a large army can be found nearer the frontier than about Metz—is a serious undertaking for the Emperor.

Against such a move of the French the Germans would develop the plan explained before. They would attempt to entangle their opponents into a great battle before Metz could be reached; they would push forward between Saarlouis and Metz. They would try in all cases to outflank the French entrenched position, and to interrupt its communications towards the rear.

An army of 300,000 men requires a great deal of feeding, and could not afford to have its lines of supply interrupted even for a few days. Thus it might be forced to come out and fight in the open, and then the advantage of position would be lost. Whatever may be done, we may be certain that something must be done soon. Three-quarters of a million of men cannot long remain concentrated on a space of fifty miles square. The impossibility of feeding such bodies of men will compel either one side or the other to move.

To conclude. We repeat that we start from the supposition that both French and Germans have brought up every available man to the front to take part in the first great battle. In that case, our opinion still is that the Germans will have a numerical superiority sufficient to ensure them the victory—barring great mistakes on their part. We are confirmed in this supposition by all reports, public and private. But it is manifest that all this does not amount to absolute certainty. We have to infer from indications which may be deceptive. We do not know what dispositions may be taken even while we are writing; and it is impossible to forecast what blunders or what strokes of genius may be displayed by the commanders on either side.

Our last observations to-day shall be upon the storming of the lines of Wissembourg in Alsace by the Germans.²⁰ The troops engaged on their side belonged to the Prussian 5th and 11th, and Bavarian 2nd corps. We have thus direct confirmation not only of the 11th Corps but of all the main forces of the Crown Prince being in the Palatinate. The regiment mentioned in the report^a as “the King’s Grenadier Guards” is the 7th or 2nd West Prussian regiment of grenadiers, which, as well as the 58th regiment, belongs to the 5th Corps. The Prussian system is always to engage

^a “Niederrothenbrach, Thursday, Aug. 4, 5.55 P.M.”, *The Times*, No. 26821, August 5, 1870.—Ed.

the whole of an army corps before troops from another corps are brought up. Now, here, troops from three corps, Prussians and Bavarians, are employed for a piece of work which one corps, at most, could have performed. This looks as if the presence of three corps menacing Alsace was to be impressed upon the French. Moreover, an attack up the valley of the Rhine would be stopped by Strasbourg, and a flank march through the Vosges would find the passes blocked by Bitche, Phalsbourg, Petite Pierre, little fortresses sufficient to stop the high roads. We expect that while three or four brigades of the three German corps attacked Wissembourg, the mass of these corps would be marching by Landau and Pirmasens to Zweibrücken, while, if the first were successful, a couple of MacMahon's divisions would be marching in the opposite direction towards the Rhine. There they would be perfectly harmless, as any invasion of the Palatinate, in the plain, would be arrested by Landau and Germersheim.

This affair at Wissembourg was evidently conducted with such a superiority of numbers as made success almost certain. Its moral effect, as the first serious engagement of the war, must necessarily be great, especially as the storming of an entrenched position is always considered a difficult matter. That the Germans should have driven the French out of entrenched lines, at the point of the bayonet, in spite of rifled artillery, mitrailleurs, and Chassepôts,²¹ will tell on both armies. It is undoubtedly the first instance where the bayonet has been successful against the breech-loader, and on this account the action will remain memorable.

For this very reason it will derange Napoleon's plans. This is a piece of news which cannot be given to the French army even in a highly diluted form, unless accompanied by reports of success in other quarters. And it cannot be kept secret for more than twelve hours at most. We may expect, therefore, the Emperor will set his columns in motion to look out for this success, and it will be wonderful if we do not soon have some account of French victories. But at the same time, probably, the Germans will move, and we shall have the heads of the opposite columns coming into contact at more places than one. To-day, or at latest to-morrow, ought to bring on the first general engagement.

THE PRUSSIAN VICTORIES^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1711, August 8, 1870]

The rapid action of the German Third Army throws more and more light upon Moltke's plans. The concentration of this army in the Palatinate must have taken place by the bridges of Mannheim and Germersheim, and perhaps by intermediate military pontoon bridges. Before entering upon the roads across the Hardt from Landau and Neustadt westwards, the troops massed in the Rhine valley were available for an attack on the French right wing. Such an attack, with the superior forces in hand, and with Landau close to the rear, was perfectly safe, and might lead to great results. If it succeeded in drawing a considerable body of French troops away from their main body into the Rhine valley, in defeating it and driving it up the valley towards Strasbourg, these forces would be out of the way for the general battle, while the German Third Army would still be in a position to take part in it, being so much nearer to the main body of the French. At any rate, an attack upon the French right would mislead them if the chief German attack, as we still believe, in spite of the contrary opinion of a host of military and unmilitary quidnuncs, were intended to be made on the French left.

The sudden and successful attack upon Wissembourg shows that the Germans possessed information as to the positions of the French which encouraged such a manoeuvre. The French, in their haste for a *revanche*, ran headlong into the trap. Marshal MacMahon immediately concentrated his corps towards Wissembourg, and to complete this manoeuvre he is reported to have required two days.^b But the Crown Prince^c was not likely to give him

^a Written on August 8, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b French official report of August 6, 1870, datelined "Metz, Aug. 6, 1.20 P.M.," *The Times*, No. 26823, August 8, 1870.—*Ed.*

^c Frederick William.—*Ed.*

that time. He followed up his advantage at once, and attacked him on Saturday near Woerth on the Sauer, about fifteen miles south-west of Wissembourg.²² MacMahon's position is described by himself as a strong one. Nevertheless, by five o'clock in the afternoon he was driven out of it, and was supposed by the Crown Prince to be in full retreat upon Bitche. By this means he would have saved himself from being driven excentrically upon Strasbourg, and maintained his communications with the mass of the army. By later French telegrams, however, it appears that he has really retreated towards Nancy, and that his head-quarters are now at Saverne.^a

The two French corps sent to resist this German advance consisted of seven divisions of infantry, of whom we suppose at least five to have been engaged. It is possible that the whole of them may have come up successively during the fight, but were no more able to restore the balance than the successive Austrian brigades as they appeared on the battle-field of Magenta.²³ At any rate, we may safely assume that from one-fifth to one-fourth of the total strength of the French was here defeated. The troops on the other side were probably the same whose advanced guard had won Wissembourg—the Second Bavarian, the Fifth and Eleventh North German corps. Of these, the fifth consists of two Posen, five Silesian and one Westphalian regiments, the Eleventh of one Pomeranian, four Hesse-Cassel and Nassau, and three Thuringian regiments, so that troops of the most varied parts of Germany were engaged.

What surprises us most in these passages of arms is the strategical and tactical part played by each army. It is the very reverse of what, from tradition, might have been expected. The Germans attack; the French defend themselves. The Germans act rapidly and in large masses, and they handle them with ease; the French own to having their troops, after a fortnight's concentration, in such a dispersed state that they require two days to bring together two army corps. Consequently they are beaten in detail. They might be Austrians, to judge from the way they move their troops. How is this to be accounted for? Simply by the necessities of the Second Empire. The sting of Wissembourg was enough to arouse all Paris, and, no doubt, to disturb the equanimity of the army too. A *revanche* must be had: MacMahon is sent off at once with two corps to effect it; the movement is palpably false, but, no matter, it must be made, and it is made—with what effect we have

^a "Metz, Aug. 7, 12.2 P.M.", *The Times*, No. 26823, August 8, 1870.—*Ed.*

seen. If Marshal MacMahon cannot be strengthened so as to face the Crown Prince again, the latter, by a march of some fifteen miles to the southward, may seize the rail from Strasbourg to Nancy and push on to Nancy, turning by this move any line the French could hope to hold in advance of Metz. It is the dread of this, no doubt, that leads the French to abandon the Sarre district. Or, leaving the pursuit of MacMahon to his advanced guard, he may file off to his right by the hills at once towards Pirmasens and Zweibrücken, to effect a formal junction with the left of Prince Frederick Charles, who has all the while been somewhere between Mayence and Saarbrücken, while the French persisted in sending him to Trèves. How the defeat of General Frossard's corps at Forbach,²⁴ followed, as it seems, by the advance of the Prussians to St. Avold yesterday, will affect his course we cannot determine.

If the Second Empire absolutely required a victory after Wissembourg, it now requires one, in a much higher degree, after Woerth and Forbach. If Wissembourg was enough to disarrange all previous plans with regard to the right wing, the battles of Saturday necessarily upset all arrangements made for the whole army. The French army has lost all initiative. Its movements are dictated less by military considerations than by political necessities. Here are 300,000 men almost within sight of the enemy. If their movements are to be ruled, not by what is done in the enemy's camp, but by what happens or may happen in Paris, they are half beaten already. Nobody, of course, can foretell with certainty the result of the general battle which is now impending if not going on; but this much we may say, that another week of such strategy as Napoleon III has shown since Thursday^a is alone sufficient to destroy the best and largest army in the world.

The impression gained from the Prussian accounts^b of these battles will only be deepened by the telegrams from the Emperor Napoleon. At midnight on Saturday he sent off the bare facts:—

"Marshal MacMahon has lost a battle. General Frossard has been compelled to fall back."^c

^a August 4.—*Ed.*

^b The reference is to the Prussian telegrams published under the common title "Great Prussian Victories", *The Times*, No. 26823, August 8, 1870.—*Ed.*

^c Napoleon III's telegram of August 7, 1870, datelined "Metz, Aug. 7, 12.30 A.M.", *The Times*, No. 26823, August 8, 1870.—*Ed.*

Three hours later came the news that his communications with Marshal MacMahon were interrupted.^a At six on Sunday morning the serious meaning of General Frossard's defeat was virtually acknowledged by the confession that it was sustained as far west of Saarbrücken as Forbach, and the impossibility of immediately arresting the Prussian advance was further conceded in the announcement "the troops, which had found themselves divided, are concentrated on Metz."^b The next telegram is hard to interpret.

"The retreat will be effected in good order"?^c

What retreat? Not Marshal MacMahon's, for the communications with him were still interrupted. Not General Frossard's, for the Emperor goes on to say, "There is no news from General Frossard." And if at 8.25 A.M. the Emperor could only speak in the future tense of a retreat to be effected by troops of whose position he knew nothing, what value must be assigned to the telegram of eight hours' earlier, in which he says, in the present tense, "the retreat is being effected in good order." All these later messages prolong the note struck in the "Tout peut se rétablir"^d of the first. The victories of the Prussians were too serious to allow of a resort to the tactics which the Emperor would naturally have adopted. He could not venture to conceal the truth in the prospect of being able to efface the effect of it by a contemporaneous account of a later battle with a different result. It was impossible to spare the pride of the French people by disguising from them that two of their armies had been worsted, and therefore the only resource left was to throw himself on the passionate desire to retrieve their losses which the news of similar disasters has before now generated in French hearts. Private telegrams no doubt sketched out for the Empress^e and the Ministers the line their public utterances were to take, or more probably the actual text of their respective proclamations was supplied to them from Metz. From both these we gather that whatever may be the temper of the French people, every one in authority, from the Emperor

^a Napoleon III's telegram of August 7, 1870, datelined "Metz, Sunday, 3.30 A.M.", *The Times*, No. 26823, August 8, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b Napoleon III's telegram of August 7, 1870, datelined "Metz, Aug. 7, 6 A.M.", *The Times*, No. 26823, August 8, 1870.—*Ed.*

^c Napoleon III's telegram of August 7, 1870, datelined "Metz, Aug. 7, 8.25 A.M.", *The Times*, No. 26823, August 8, 1870.—*Ed.*

^d Not all is lost.—*Ed.*

^e E. Montijo.—*Ed.*

downward, is deeply dispirited, than which of itself nothing could be more significant. Paris has been declared in a state of siege^a—an indisputable indication of what may follow upon another Prussian victory, and the Ministerial proclamation ends,

“Let us fight with vigour, and the country will be saved.”^b

Saved, Frenchmen may perhaps ask themselves, from what? From an invasion undertaken by the Prussians in order to avert a French invasion of Germany. If the Prussians had been defeated and a similar exhortation had come from Berlin, its meaning would have been clear, since every fresh victory of French arms would have meant a fresh annexation of German territory to France. But if the Prussian Government are well advised a French defeat will only mean that the attempt to prevent Prussia from pursuing her German policy undisturbed has failed, and we can hardly believe that the levy *en masse*, upon which the French Ministers are said to be deliberating,^c will be available for the renewal of an offensive war.

^a On August 7, 1870.—*Ed*

^b [Proclamation of the Council of Ministers to the people of Paris, August 6.] *The Times*, No. 26823, August 8, 1870.—*Ed*.

^c “Paris, August 8”, *The Times*, No. 26823, August 8, 1870.—*Ed*.

NOTES ON THE WAR.—V^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1712, August 9, 1870]

Saturday, the 6th of August, was the critical day for the first phase of the campaign. The first despatches from the German side, by their extreme modesty, rather hid than exposed the importance of the results gained on that day.^b It is only through the later and fuller accounts, and by some rather awkward admissions in the French reports,^c that we are enabled to judge of the total change in the military situation accomplished on Saturday.

While MacMahon was defeated on the eastern slope of the Vosges, Frossard's three divisions, and at least one regiment of Bazaine's corps, the 69th, in all forty-two battalions, were driven from the heights south of Saarbrücken and on beyond Forbach, by Kameke's division of the 7th (Westphalian), and the two divisions of Barnekow and Stülpnagel, of the 8th (Rhenish) Corps, in all thirty-seven battalions. As the German battalions are stronger, the numbers engaged appear to have been pretty equal, but the French had the advantage of position. There were to the left of Frossard the seven infantry divisions of Bazaine and Ladmirault, and to his rear the two divisions of the Guards. With the exception of one regiment, as above stated, not a man of all these came up to support the unlucky Frossard. He had to fall back after a smart defeat, and is now in full retreat upon Metz; and so are Bazaine,

^a Written on August 9, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b See the reports: "Mayence, Sunday, Aug. 7, 6 A.M.," and "Soultz, Aug. 7", *The Times*, No. 26823, August 8, 1870.—*Ed.*

^c See the reports entitled "Great Prussian Victories" and the French official report "Metz, Aug. 7, 12.2 P.M.," *The Times*, No. 26823, August 8, 1870.—*Ed.*

Ladmirault, and the Guards. The Germans are in pursuit and were on Sunday^a in St. Avold, with all Lorraine open to them as far as Metz.

MacMahon, De Faily, and Canrobert, in the meantime, are retreating, not upon Bitche, as was at first stated, but upon Nancy; and MacMahon's headquarters were on Sunday at Saverne. These three corps, therefore, are not only defeated, but also driven back in a direction divergent from the line of retreat of the rest of the army. The strategical advantage aimed at in the attack of the Crown Prince,^b and explained by us yesterday,^c appears thus to have been attained, at least partially. While the Emperor retires due west, MacMahon goes much more towards the south, and will scarcely have reached Lunéville at the time the other four corps will be massed under the shelter of Metz. But from Sarreguemines to Lunéville is only a few miles farther than from Saverne to Lunéville. And it is not to be expected that, while Steinmetz follows up the Emperor and the Crown Prince tries to hold fast MacMahon in the defiles of the Vosges, Prince Frederick Charles, who was on Sunday at Blieskastel, with his advanced guard somewhere near Sarreguemines, should look on quietly. The whole of Northern Lorraine is a splendid cavalry country, and Lunéville in time of peace was always the head-quarters of a large portion of the French cavalry quartered in that neighbourhood. With the great superiority, both as to quantity and quality, in cavalry on the side of the Germans, it is difficult to suppose that they will not at once launch large masses of that arm towards Lunéville, intending to intercept the communications between MacMahon and the Emperor, destroy the railway bridges on the Strasbourg-Nancy line, and, if possible, the bridges of the Meurthe. It is even possible that they may succeed in interposing a body of infantry between the two separated bodies of the French army, compel MacMahon to retreat still farther south, and to take a still more circuitous route to restore his connection with the rest of the army. That something of that sort has already been done seems clear from the Emperor's admission that on Saturday his communications with MacMahon were interrupted^d; and the fear of more serious consequences is ominously expressed in the report

^a On August 7, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b Frederick William.—*Ed.*

^c See this volume, pp. 27-28.—*Ed.*

^d Napoleon III's telegram of August 7, 1870, datelined "Metz, Sunday, 3.30 A.M.," *The Times*, No. 26823, August 8, 1870.—*Ed.*

of a removal of the French head-quarters to Châlons being contemplated.^a

Four of the eight corps of the French army have thus been more or less completely defeated, and always in detail, while of one of them, the Seventh (Félix Douay), the whereabouts is quite unknown. The strategy which rendered possible such blunders is worthy of the Austrians in their most helpless times. It is not Napoleon, it is Beaulieu, Mack, Gyulay, and the like of them, we are reminded of. Imagine Frossard having to fight at Forbach all day, while to his left, and not more than ten miles or so from the line of the Saar, seven divisions were looking on! This would be unaccountable, unless we suppose that there were facing them German forces sufficient to prevent them from either supporting Frossard or assisting him by an independent attack. And this, the only possible exculpation, is admissible only if, as we have always said, the decisive attack of the Germans was intended to be made by their extreme right. The hasty retreat upon Metz again confirms this view; it looks uncommonly like a timely attempt to withdraw from a position where the communications with Metz were already threatened. What German troops there may have been facing, and perhaps outflanking, Ladmirault and Bazaine, we do not know; but we must not forget that of Steinmetz's seven or more divisions only three have been engaged.

In the meantime another North German corps has turned up—the Sixth or Upper Silesian. It passed through Cologne last Thursday,^b and will now be either with Steinmetz or Frederick Charles, whom *The Times* persists in placing on the extreme right, at Trèves,^c in the same number which contains the telegram that he has moved from Homburg to Blieskastel.^d The superiority of the Germans, both as to numbers, morale, and strategical position, must now be such that, for a time, they may with impunity do almost anything they like. If the Emperor intends to keep his four army corps in the entrenched camp at Metz—and he has but the choice between that and an uninterrupted retreat upon Paris—that need not stop the advance of the Germans any more than the attempt of Benedek, in 1866, to reassemble his army under shelter of Olmütz arrested the Prussian advance upon Vienna.²⁵ Benedek!

^a "Metz, Aug. 7, 1.20 P.M.," *The Times*, No. 26824, August 9, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b On August 4, 1870.—*Ed.*

^c "It requires something more than human foresight..." *The Times*, No. 26823, August 8, 1870.—*Ed.*

^d "Mayence, Sunday, Aug. 7, 6 A.M.," *The Times*, No. 26823, August 8, 1870.—*Ed.*

What a comparison for the conqueror of Magenta and Solferino! And yet it is more to the point than any other. Like Benedek, the Emperor had his troops massed in a position from which he could move in any direction, and that a full fortnight before the enemy was concentrated. Like Benedek, Louis Napoleon managed to have corps after corps beaten in detail by superior numbers or superior generalship. But here, we are afraid, the likeness ceases. Benedek had, after a week of daily defeats, strength enough left him for the supreme effort of Sadowa. To all appearances Napoleon has his troops separated, almost hopelessly, after two days' engagements, and cannot even afford to try a general action.

There will now, we suppose, be an end to the intended expedition of troops to the Baltic, if that was ever more than a feint. Every battalion will be wanted on the eastern frontier. Out of the 376 battalions of the French army, 300 were in the six corps of the line and one of Guards which we know stood between Metz and Strasbourg. The seventh corps of the line (Douay) might have been sent either to the Baltic or to join the main army, which accounts for forty more. The rest, thirty-six battalions, can hardly have been sufficient for Algeria and various other duties in the interior. What resources has the Emperor to draw upon for reinforcements? The 100 fourth battalions now in formation and the Garde Mobile. But both of these consist, the first mostly, the second altogether, of raw recruits. By what time the fourth battalions may be ready to march we do not know; they will have to march whether ready or not. What the Garde Mobile is at present we saw last week in the camp of Châlons.²⁶ Both are good material for soldiers, no doubt, but not soldiers yet; not yet troops to withstand the shock of men who are becoming used to the taking of mitrailleurs. On the other hand, in about ten days, the Germans will have 190,000 to 200,000 of the fourth battalions, &c., to draw upon—the flower of their army, besides at least an equal number of landwehr, all fit for duty in the field.

NOTES ON THE WAR.—VI^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1714, August 11, 1870]

There is no doubt now that scarcely ever was there a war undertaken with such an utter disregard of the ordinary rules of prudence as the Napoleonic "military promenade to Berlin."^b A war for the Rhine was Napoleon's last and most telling card; but at the same time its failure implied the downfall of the Second Empire. This was well understood in Germany. The constant expectation of a French war was one of the chief considerations which made very many Germans acquiesce in the changes effected in 1866. If Germany had been dismembered in one sense, it had been strengthened in another; the military organization of North Germany gave a far greater guarantee of safety than that of the larger but sleepy old Confederation.²⁷ This new military organization was calculated to place under arms, in organized battalions, squadrons, and batteries, in eleven days, 552,000 men of the line and 205,000 of the landwehr; and in a fortnight or three weeks more another 187,000 men of the reserve (*Ersatztruppen*) fully fit to take the field. There was no mystery about this. The whole plan, showing the distribution of this force in the various corps, the districts from which each battalion, &c., was to be raised, had often been published. Moreover, the mobilization of 1866 had shown that this was not an organization existing on paper only. Every man was duly registered; and it was well known that in the office of every district commander of the landwehr the orders for calling out each man were ready, and awaited but the filling up of the date. For the French Emperor,^c however, these enormous

^a Written between August 9 and 11, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b See "Nemeßis", *Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 221, August 9, 1870.—*Ed.*

^c Napoleon III.—*Ed.*

forces existed on paper only. The whole force he brought together to open the campaign with were, at the outside, 360,000 men of the Army of the Rhine, and 30,000 to 40,000 more for the Baltic expedition, say 400,000 men in all. With such a disproportion of numbers, and with the long time it takes to get the French new formations (fourth battalions) ready for the field, his only hope of success was a sudden attack, while the Germans were still in the midst of their mobilization. We have seen how this opportunity slipped away; how even the second chance, that of a push forward to the Rhine, was neglected; and we shall now point out another blunder.

The disposition of the French about the time of the declaration of war was excellent. It was evidently part and parcel of a long-considered plan of campaign. Three corps at Thionville, St. Avold, and Bitche in the first line, immediately on the frontier; two corps at Metz and Strasbourg, in a second line; two corps in reserve about Nancy, and an eighth corps at Belfort. With the aid of the railways, all these troops could be massed in a few days for an attack either across the Saar from Lorraine, or across the Rhine from Alsace, striking either north or east as might be required. But this disposition was essentially one for attack. For defence it was absolutely faulty. The very first condition of a disposition of an army of defence is this: to have your advanced troops so far in front of your main body that you receive the news of the enemy's attack in time to concentrate your troops before he arrives upon you. Suppose it takes you one day's march to get your wings to close on your centre, then your advanced guard should be at least one day's march in front of your centre. Now, here, the three corps of Ladmirault, Frossard, and De Failly, and afterwards a portion of MacMahon's too, were close upon the frontier, and yet spread upon a line from Wissembourg to Sierck—at least ninety miles. To draw in the wings on the centre would have required fully two days' march; and yet, even when the Germans were known to be within a few miles in front, no steps were taken either to shorten the length of front, or to push forward advanced guards to such a distance as would secure timely advice of an impending attack. Is it to be wondered at that the several corps were defeated by piecemeal?

Then came the blunder of posting one division of MacMahon's east of the Vosges, at Wissembourg, in a position inviting an attack with superior forces. Douay's defeat brought on MacMahon's next blunder in trying to retrieve the fight east of the Vosges, thereby separating the right wing still more from the centre, and laying

open his line of communications with it. While the right wing (MacMahon's, and portions at least of Faily's and Canrobert's corps) was crushed at Woerth, the centre (Frossard, and two divisions of Bazaine, as it now appears) were severely beaten before Saarbrücken.²⁸ The rest of the troops were too far away to come up to assistance. Ladmiraault was still near Bouzonville, the rest of Bazaine's men and the Guards were about Boulay, the mass of Canrobert's troops turned up at Nancy, part of De Faily's were lost sight of completely, and Félix Douay, we now find, on the 1st of August was at Altkirch, in the extreme south of Alsace, nearly 120 miles from the battle-field of Woerth, and probably with but imperfect means of railway conveyance. The whole arrangement indicates nothing but hesitation, indecision, vacillation, and that in the most decisive moment of the campaign.

And what idea were the soldiers allowed to have of their opponents? It was all very well for the Emperor at the last moment to tell his men that they would have to face "one of the best armies of Europe;"^a but that went for nothing after the lessons of contempt for the Prussians which had been driven into them for years. We cannot show this better than by the evidence of Captain Jeannerod, of the *Temps*, whom we have quoted before,^b and who left the army but three years ago. He was taken prisoner by the Prussians at the "baptism of fire" affair, and spent two days among them, during which time he saw the greater portion of their Eighth Army Corps. He was astounded to find such a difference between his idea of them and the reality. This is his first impression on being brought to their camp:—

Once in the forest, there was a complete change. There were outposts under the trees, battalions massed along the roads; and let nobody try to deceive the public in a manner unworthy of our country and of our present circumstances: from the first step I had recognized the characters which announce an excellent army (*une belle et bonne armée*) as well as a nation powerfully organized for war. In what consisted these characteristics? In everything. The demeanour of the men, the subordination of their smallest movements to chiefs protected by a discipline far stronger than ours, the gaiety of some, the serious and determined look of others, the patriotism to which most of them gave vent, the thorough and constant zeal of the officers, and, above all, the moral worth—of which we may envy them—of the non-commissioned officers; that is what struck me at once, and what has never been from under my eyes from the two days I passed in the midst of that army and in that country where signboards placed from distance to distance, with the

^a Napoleon III's appeal to the army "Au quartier impérial de Metz, le 28 juillet 1870", *Le Temps*, No. 3440, July 30, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b See this volume, p. 23.—*Ed.*

numbers of the local battalions of the landwehr, recall the effort of which it is capable in a moment of danger and of ambition.^a

On the German side it was quite different. The military qualities of the French were certainly not underrated. The concentration of German troops took place rapidly but cautiously. Every available man was brought to the front; and now, the First North German Army Corps having turned up at Saarbrücken in Prince Frederick Charles's army, it is certain that every man, horse, and gun of the 550,000 troops of the line has been brought to the front, there to be joined by the South Germans. And the effect of such an enormous numerical superiority has been, so far, increased by superior generalship.

^a G. Jeannerod, "Correspondances particulières du Temps. Metz, vendredi 5 août", *Le Temps*, No. 3448, August 7, 1870. See also Engels' letter to Marx of August 10, 1870 (present edition, Vol. 44).—*Ed.*

NOTES ON THE WAR.—VII^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1716, August 13, 1870]

The public have been waiting all this week for that great battle before Metz which a French bulletin^b described as impending; and yet not one of our military critics has thought fit to explain that this impending battle was nothing but a tub thrown out to that unruly whale, the people of Paris, to play with. A battle before Metz! Why should the French desire it? They have collected under shelter of that fortress four corps; they are trying to draw towards it some of Canrobert's four divisions; they may hope soon to learn that the remaining three corps, of MacMahon, De Faily, and Douay, have reached the Moselle at Nancy and found shelter behind it. Why should they court a pitched battle before all their army is united again, when the forts of Metz protect them from an attack? And why should the Germans break their heads in an unprepared assault against these forts? If the whole French army was united under the ramparts of Metz, then the French might be expected to sally forth east of the Moselle and offer battle in front of their stronghold, but not till then. But that has yet to be accomplished, and it is still doubtful whether it ever will be.

On Sunday last^c MacMahon was compelled to leave Saverne, which was occupied the same night by the Germans. He had with him the remnants of his own corps, of one division (Conseil-Dumesnil's) of Douay's corps, and, besides, one division of De Faily's, which had covered his retreat. On the same evening the

^a Written between August 11 and 13, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b "Metz, 7 août, 4 h. 30 du matin. Le major général au ministre de l'intérieur", *Le Temps*, No. 3449, August 8, 1870.—*Ed.*

^c On August 7.—*Ed.*

German First and Second armies were in advance of Forbach and nearly in St. Avold. Both these places are nearer to Nancy than Saverne: they are considerably nearer than Saverne to Pont-à-Mousson and Dieulouard, places on the Moselle between Nancy and Metz. Now, when the Germans must, as soon as possible, secure or construct a passage across that river, and that *above* Metz (for various pretty evident reasons); when they are nearer to the river than MacMahon, and thus by hurrying on may prevent his reunion with Bazaine; when they have troops enough and to spare—is it not almost evident that they will attempt something of the sort? Their cavalry, as we predicted it would, is already scouring the whole of Northern Lorraine,^a and must have ere now come into contact with MacMahon's right; it had passed, on Wednesday, Gros-Tenquin, which is only about twenty-five miles from the direct road between Saverne and Nancy. They will, therefore, know perfectly where he is and operate accordingly, and we shall soon learn at what point between Nancy (or, rather, Frouard) and Metz they have struck the Moselle.

This is the reason why we have not heard of any fights since last Saturday's. The soldiers' legs are doing all the work just now; it is a race between MacMahon and Frederick Charles, which of them shall first get across the river. And if Frederick Charles should win this race, then we may expect the French to issue from Metz, not to offer battle in sight of its ramparts, but to defend the passage of the Moselle; which, indeed, may be done by an attack either on the right or the left bank. The two pontoon trains captured at Forbach may have to do duty very soon.

Of De Failly we hear nothing definite. It is, indeed, stated in a Metz bulletin that he has rejoined the army.^b But which? Bazaine's or MacMahon's? Evidently the latter, if there be any truth in the whole report; for between Bazaine and him were the heads of the German columns ever since he got lost. Douay's remaining two divisions—he was still on the Swiss frontier, near Basel, on the 4th of August—must, by the German advance upon Strasbourg, be cut off from the rest of the army for the present; they can only rejoin it by Vesoul. Of Canrobert's troops we find, all at once, at least one division (Martimprey's) in Paris, facing, not the Germans, but the Republicans. The 25th, 26th, and 28th regiments, which belong to it, are mentioned as having been employed on Tuesday among the troops protecting the Corps Législatif.²⁹ The rest

^a See this volume, p. 33.—*Ed.*

^b "Metz, 8 août, 10 h. soir", *Le Temps*, No. 3451, August 10, 1870.—*Ed.*

should now be in Metz, raising the army there to fifteen divisions (infantry), three of which, however, are completely shattered by their defeat at Spicheren.

As to Spicheren, it is wrong to say that the French were in that engagement crushed by superior numbers. We have now a tolerably full report of Generals Steinmetz^a and Alvensleben,^b which shows pretty clearly what troops were engaged on the German side. The attack was made by the 14th division, supported by our old friends, the 40th regiment—in all fifteen battalions. They alone, of infantry, fought for six hours against the three divisions, or thirty-nine battalions, which Frossard brought up successively. When they were nearly crushed, but still held the heights of Spicheren, which they had stormed in the beginning of the fight, the 5th division of the 3rd or Brandenburg Corps came up, and at least three out of its four regiments took part in the fight—all in all, either twenty-four or twenty-seven battalions of Germans. They drove the French from their position, and it was only after the retreat had commenced that the head of the 13th division, which had turned the French right by the valley of the Rossel, reached the field of battle, fell upon Forbach, and turned an orderly retreat into a rout by cutting off the direct road to Metz. The Germans at the close of the fight had another division (the 6th) ready to engage, and, indeed, slightly engaged; but at the same time two French divisions, Montaudon's and Castagny's (both of Bazaine's), had come up, and the 69th regiment, which forms part of the latter, had suffered severely. Thus, if at Wissembourg and Woerth the French were crushed by superior masses, they were beaten by inferior numbers at Spicheren. As to their common report that they were outnumbered,^c it is not to be forgotten that individual soldiers in a battle cannot possibly judge of numbers, and that it is the common assertion of all beaten armies. Besides, it should not be forgotten that the solid qualities of the German army are only now beginning to be recognized. We have it officially from the French head-quarters that the German fire is much superior in steadiness and precision to the French,^d and MacMahon insists that the

^a K. F. Steinmetz, "Mainz, 7 Aug. Vorm. 9 Uhr", *Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 222, August 10, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b K. Alvensleben, "Mainz, 7 Aug. Vorm. 9 Uhr", *Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 222, August 10, 1870.—*Ed.*

^c See the report "Paris, Aug. 7, 10 A.M.", *The Times*, No. 26823, August 8, 1870.—*Ed.*

^d Official report from the French head-quarters of August 10, 1870 "The Battle of Woerth", *The Times*, No. 26826, August 11, 1870.—*Ed.*

French have no chance against the Germans in woods, because these latter know so much better how to take advantage of shelter. As to the cavalry, here is what Jeannerod says in Thursday's *Temps*:—

“Their cavalry is much superior to ours, the privates are better mounted than many officers in our army, and they ride better. ... I have seen one of their Cuirassier regiments which was something splendid.... Their horses, moreover, are far less weighted than ours. The Cuirassiers I saw carried less weight on their big steeds than we do on our small Arabs and South of France horses.”^a

He also praises the great knowledge the officers have of the ground, not only in their own country, but also in France. But no wonder. Every lieutenant is provided with excellent copies of the French ordnance maps, while the French officers are supplied only with a ridiculous map (*une carte dérisoire*) of the seat of war. And so forth. It would have been good for the French army if only one such sincere reporter had been sent to Germany before the war.

^a G. Jeannerod, “Correspondances particulières du Temps. Metz, lundi, midi”, *Le Temps*, No. 3452, August 11, 1870.—*Ed.*

NOTES ON THE WAR.—VIII^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1717, August 15, 1870]

Where is MacMahon? The German horse, in their raid up to the gates of Lunéville and Nancy, appear not to have met with him; otherwise we should have heard of encounters. On the other hand, if he had arrived in safety at Nancy, and thus restored his communications with the army at Metz, such a consoling fact would certainly have been announced at once from the French head-quarters. The only conclusion we can draw from this absolute silence regarding him is this, that he has thought it too dangerous to follow the direct road from Saverne to Lunéville and Nancy; and that, in order not to expose his right flank to the enemy, he has taken a more circuitous route, farther south, passing the Moselle at Bayon or even higher up. If this surmise be correct, there would be very little chance of his ever reaching Metz; and, in that case, it must have been a question for the Emperor or whoever commands at Metz, whether the army had not better at once retreat to Châlons-sur-Marne, the nearest point where a junction with MacMahon may be effected. We are therefore disposed to accept the report of a general retreat of the French line in that direction.

In the meantime, we hear of tremendous reinforcements for the French army. The new Minister of War^b assures the Chamber that in four days two army corps, 35,000 men each, are to be sent to the front.^c Where are they? We know that the eight corps of the Army of the Rhine, and the troops intended for the Baltic, with

^a Written on August 14 or 15, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b Comte de Palikao.—*Ed.*

^c Palikao's speech in the Corps Législatif on August 12, 1870, *The Times*, No. 26829, August 15, 1870.—*Ed.*

the garrison of Algeria, fully accounted for every battalion of the French army, including the marines. We know that 40,000 men, from Canrobert's corps and from the Baltic expedition, are in Paris. We know from General Dejean's speech in the Chamber that the fourth battalions, so far from being ready, required filling up, and that this was to be done by drafting into them men from the Garde Mobile.^a Where, then, are these 70,000 men to come from? especially if, as is but likely, General Montauban de Palikao will not part with the 40,000 men in Paris as long as he can help it. Yet, if there is any meaning in what he said, these two corps must mean the troops at Paris and Canrobert's corps, which hitherto has always been counted as part of the Army of the Rhine; and in that case, the only real reinforcement being the garrison of Paris, the grand total in the field will be raised from twenty-five to twenty-eight divisions, seven at least of which have suffered severely.

Then we hear that General Trochu is named chief of the 12th Corps forming at Paris, and General Vandez (?) chief of the 13th Corps forming at Lyons. The army consisted hitherto of the Guards, and corps Nos. 1 to 7. Of Nos. 8, 9, 10, and 11 we have never heard; now we are suddenly treated to Nos. 12 and 13. We have seen that there are no troops existing out of which any of these corps could be formed; always excepting No. 12, if that means the garrison of Paris. It seems a poor trick to raise public confidence by creating on paper imaginary armies; yet there is no other interpretation than this to be put on the alleged establishment of five army corps, four of which have been hitherto non-existent.

No doubt attempts are being made to organize a fresh army; but what materials are there for it? There is, firstly, the gendarmerie, out of which a regiment of horse and one of foot can be formed; excellent troops, but they will not exceed 3,000 men, and will have to be brought together from all parts of France. So will the douaniers,^b who are expected to furnish the stuff for four-and-twenty battalions; we doubt whether they will complete half that number. Then come the old soldiers of the classes of 1858 to 1863, the unmarried men amongst whom have been called out again by special law.^c These may furnish a

^a P. Ch. Dejean's speech in the Corps Législatif on August 9, 1870, *Le Temps*, No. 3452, August 11, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b Custom-house officers.—*Ed.*

^c The law is set forth in de Forcade La Roquette's speech in the Corps Législatif on August 10, 1870, *Le Temps*, No. 3453, August 12, 1870.—*Ed.*

contingent of 200,000 men, and will form the most valuable addition to the army. With less than one half of these the fourth battalions may be filled up, and the rest formed into new battalions. But here begins the difficulty—where are the officers to come from? They will have to be taken from the fighting army, and although this may be effected by a considerable promotion of sergeants to sub-lieutenants, it must weaken the corps from which they are taken. The whole of these three classes will give, at most, an increase of 220,000 to 230,000 men, and it will take under favourable circumstances at least fourteen to twenty days before even a portion of them can be ready to join the active army. But, unfortunately for them, circumstances are not favourable. It is now admitted that not merely the commissariat, but the whole of the French army administration was utterly ineffective, even to supply the army on the frontier. What, then, will be the state of forwardness of accoutrements and equipments for these reserves which nobody ever expected to be wanted in the field? It is very doubtful, indeed, whether, beyond the fourth battalions, any new formations will be ready before a couple of months. Then it is not to be forgotten that not one of these men ever handled a breech-loader, and that they are, all of them, totally ignorant of the new tactics inaugurated by that arm. And if the present French line, as is now admitted by themselves, fire hastily and at random, and squander their ammunition, what will these newly formed battalions do in the presence of an enemy whose steadiness and precision of fire appear to be very little affected by the din of battle?

There remain the Garde Mobile, the levy of all unmarried men up to thirty years, and the sedentary National Guard. As to the Garde Mobile, what little of it ever had any formal organization appears to have broken down as soon as it was sent to Châlons. Discipline there was none, and the officers, most of them totally unacquainted with their duties, seem to have lost in authority every day; there were not even arms for the men, and now the whole thing appears to be in complete dissolution. General Dejean indirectly acknowledged this^a by the proposal to fill up the ranks of the fourth battalions from the Garde Mobile. And if this, the apparently organized portion of the levy *en masse* be utterly useless, what is to become of the rest of it? Even if there were officers, accoutrements, and arms for them, how long would it

^a P. Ch. Dejean's speech in the Corps Législatif on August 9, 1870, *Le Temps*, No. 3452, August 11, 1870.—*Ed.*

take to make them into soldiers? But there is nothing provided for the emergency. Every officer fit for his post is already employed; the French have not that almost inexhaustible reserve of officers furnished by the "one year's volunteers," about 7,000 of whom enter the German armies every year, and almost every one of whom leaves the service quite fit to undertake an officer's duties. Accoutrements and arms appear to be equally absent; it is even said that the old flint-locks will have to be brought out of store. And under these circumstances, what are these 200,000 of men worth to France? It is all very well for the French to point to the Convention, to Carnot, with his frontier armies³⁰ created out of nothing, and so forth. But while we are far from saying that France is irretrievably beaten, let us not forget that in the successes of the Convention the allied armies³¹ bore a significant part. At that time the armies which attacked France numbered on an average 40,000 men each; there were three or four of them, each acting out of reach of the other, the one on the Schelde, the other on the Moselle, the third in Alsace, &c. To each of these small armies the Convention opposed immense numbers of more or less raw levies which, by acting upon the flanks and rear of the enemy, then entirely dependent upon his magazines, compelled him upon the whole to keep pretty close to the frontier; and, having been formed into real soldiers by five years' campaigning, finally succeeded in driving him across the Rhine. But is it for a moment to be supposed that similar tactics will avail against the present immense army of invasion, which, though formed in three distinct bodies, has always managed to keep together within supporting distance, or that this army will leave the French time to develop their now dormant resources? And to develop them to any extent is possible only in case the French are prepared to do what they never have done before, to abandon Paris and its garrison to their fate, and to continue the struggle with the line of the Loire for their base of operations. It may never come to that, but unless France is prepared to face it, she had better not talk about a levy *en masse*.

NOTES ON THE WAR.—IX^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1720, August 18, 1870]

“The French army commenced to cross over to the left bank of the Moselle. This (Sunday) morning reconnoitring parties announced the presence of the Prussian vanguards. When one-half of the army had crossed, the Prussians attacked in great force, and, after a fight which lasted four hours, were repulsed with considerable losses.”^b

Such was the version of the Emperor’s despatch which Mr. Reuter furnished on Monday^c night. It contained, however, an important error, the Emperor having expressly stated that the reconnoitring parties did not announce the presence of the enemy, though he was near at hand and in force.^d Apart from this, however, nothing apparently could be more straightforward and businesslike than this bulletin. You have the whole thing distinctly before your eyes; the French, busily engaged in that risky operation, the crossing of a river; the wily Prussians, who always know how to take their opponents at a disadvantage, falling upon them as soon as one-half of them has got to the other side; then the gallant defence of the French, crowning its superhuman efforts, finally, by a dashing advance, which repels the enemy with considerable losses. It is quite graphic, and there is only one thing wanting—the name of the place where all this occurred.

From the bulletin we cannot but suppose that this passage of the river, and this attempt to interrupt it which was so victoriously

^a Written on August 18, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b Napoleon III’s official report of August 14, 1870 “Paris, Aug. 15, 9.20 A.M.”, *The Times*, No. 26830, August 16, 1870.—*Ed.*

^c On August 15.—*Ed.*

^d Napoleon III’s official report of August 14, 1870 “Longeville, 10 h. du soir. L’empereur à l’impératrice”, *Le Temps*, No. 3457, August 16, 1870.—*Ed.*

defeated, took place in the open country. But how could this be, when the French had all the bridges inside Metz to cross by—bridges perfectly safe from any hostile interference? when there was, besides, plenty of room for more pontoon bridges to be constructed, in equally safe places, on the five or six miles of river which are covered by the forts round Metz? Surely the French staff do not mean us to imply that they wantonly disregarded all these advantages, led the army outside of Metz, constructed their bridges in the open, and passed the river within sight and reach of the enemy, merely to bring on that “battle before Metz” which had been promised us for a whole week?

And if the passage of the Moselle took place by bridges inside the works of Metz, how could the Prussians attack the French troops still on the right bank so long as these kept, as they might have done, inside the line of detached forts? The artillery of these forts would soon have made the place too hot for any attacking troops.

The whole thing seems impossible. The least the French staff could have done would have been to give the name of the locality, that we might have traced the different phases of this glorious battle on the map. But that name they will not give. Fortunately for us, the Prussians are not so mysterious; they say the fight occurred near Pange, on the road to Metz.^a We look at the map, and the whole thing is clear.³² Pange is not on the Moselle, but eight miles away from it, on the Nied, about four miles outside the detached forts of Metz. If the French were crossing the Moselle, and had one-half of their troops over already, they had, in a military sense, no business whatever to keep strong forces at or near Pange. If they went there, it was for reasons not military.

Napoleon, once compelled to abandon Metz and the line of the Moselle, could not very well without a fight, and, if possible, a real or sham victory, enter upon a retreat which must be continued at least as far as Châlons. The opportunity was favourable. While one-half of his troops crossed, the other would debouch from between the forts east of Metz, push back the Prussian advanced troops, bring on as much of a general engagement as appeared convenient, draw on the enemy until within reach of the guns of the forts, and then, with a showy advance of the whole front, drive them back to a safe distance from the works. Such a plan could not entirely fail; it must lead to something which could be made to look like a victory; it would restore confidence in the army,

^a “Henry, Aug. 15”, *The Times*, No. 26830, August 16, 1870.—*Ed.*

perhaps even in Paris, and make the retreat to Châlons look less humiliating.

This view explains that apparently simple, but in reality absurd, bulletin from Metz. Every word of that bulletin is correct in a certain sense, while the whole context at the first glance is calculated to evoke a totally false impression. This view equally explains how both parties could claim the victory. The Prussians drove back the French till under the shelter of their forts, but having advanced too close to these forts had to retire in their turn. So much for the celebrated "battle before Metz," which might as well not have been fought at all, for its influence upon the course of the campaign will be zero. It will be observed that the Count of Palikao, speaking in the Chamber, was much more cautious.

"There has not been," he said, "what you would call a battle, but partial engagements, in which every man with military intelligence must see that the Prussians have received a check, and have been obliged to abandon the line of retreat of the French army."^a

The Marshal's last assurance seems to have been only momentarily true, for the retreating body of the French has certainly been severely harassed by the Prussians at Mars-la-Tour and Gravelotte.

It was, indeed, high time that Napoleon and his army left Metz. While they were tarrying about the Moselle, the German cavalry passed the Meuse at Commercy and destroyed the railway thence to Bar-le-Duc; they also appeared at Vigneulles, threatening the flank of the columns retreating from Metz to Verdun. What these horsemen dare risk we see from the way in which a squadron of them entered Nancy, levied 50,000 francs, and compelled the townspeople to destroy the railway. Where are the French cavalry? where are the forty-three regiments attached to the eight army corps, and the twelve regiments of reserve cavalry which figure on the *état* of the Army of the Rhine?

The only obstacle in the way of the Germans now is the fortress of Toul, and this would not be of any importance whatever if it did not command the railway. The Germans are sure to want the railway, and therefore they no doubt will take the shortest means to reduce Toul, which, being an old-fashioned fortress without detached forts, is perfectly open to bombardment. We shall probably soon hear that it has surrendered after being bombarded by field guns for something like twelve hours, perhaps less.

^a Engels gives a rendering of Palikao's speech in the Corps Législatif on August 16, 1870 apparently according to *Le Temps*, No. 3459, August 18, 1870.—*Ed.*

If it be true, as French papers say, that MacMahon, having left his army, was in Nancy two days after the battle of Woerth,^a we may assume that his corps is totally disorganized, and that the infection has caught the troops of De Failly too. The Germans are now marching on to the Marne, almost on an equal front line with the two French armies, and having one of them on each flank. Bazaine's line of march is from Metz by Verdun and St. Ménehould to Châlons; that of the Germans from Nancy, by Commercy and Bar-le-Duc, to Vitry; that of MacMahon's troops (for even if the Marshal himself has joined the Emperor at Châlons, it must be without his army) somewhere to the south, but, no doubt, also directed towards Vitry. The reunion of the two French armies thus becomes more doubtful every day; and unless Douay's troops have been ordered from Belfort by Vesoul and Chaumont to Vitry in time, they may have to rejoin the army by way of Troyes and Paris, for Vitry will now soon be impassable by train for French soldiers.

^a Report of the French Command "Metz, 9 août, 1 h. 52, soir", *Le Temps*, No. 3452, August 11, 1870.—*Ed.*

NOTES ON THE WAR.—X^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1721, August 19, 1870]

Undoubtedly, if General Moltke be old, his plans have all the energy of youth. Not satisfied with having once already pushed his compact army between one wing of the French and the rest of their troops, he now repeats the same manoeuvre over again, and apparently with equal success. Had he continued his straight march on to the Marne, and merely harassed the right flank and rear of the French during their parallel march towards the same goal, he would, in the opinion of most military critics, have done quite enough. But it was hardly to be expected that he would have used the legs of his soldiers with such terrible vigour as he now appears to have done. What we took for mere attacks of detached corps upon the exposed flanks and rear of that long marching column which moved from Metz towards Verdun appears now to have been the reconnaissances preceding an attack in force upon it. Three or four German army corps had marched in a semicircle round on the southern side of Metz; their advanced troops reached the French line of march on Tuesday^b morning, and at once fell upon it. The French army began its retreat from Metz on Sunday; the engagements between Pange and Fort Bellecroix on the evening of that day may have retarded that movement, still it was continued on Monday and had not been completed on Tuesday. It took place at least by two different columns, following the two roads which separate, five miles west of Metz, at Gravelotte; the northernmost of these roads passes Doncourt and Etain, the southernmost Vionville, Mars-la-Tour, and Fresnes, and

^a Written on August 19, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b On August 16.—*Ed.*

both unite again at Verdun. It was near Mars-la-Tour that the German attack took place³³; the fight lasted all day, and ended, according to the German account, in the defeat of the French, who lost two eagles, seven cannon, and 2,000 prisoners, and were driven back to Metz.^a On the other hand, Bazaine too claims the victory. He says his troops repelled the Germans, and passed the night on the position won. But there are two very ominous statements in his telegram of Wednesday evening.^b There he says he fought all day on Tuesday between Doncourt and Vionville; that is to say, he fought with his front extending from Doncourt to Vionville, facing west, the Germans barring the way to Verdun on both roads. Whatever success he claims, he does not pretend to say that he cleared the roads to Verdun, or only one of them. Had he done so, his evident duty would have been to continue his retreat during the night as fast as he could, as the enemy would almost certainly be reinforced in the morning. But he stops and passes the night "on the position won," whatever that may mean. Not satisfied with that, he stays there till four o'clock on Wednesday afternoon, and even then announces, not his intention of moving, but of delaying his further movements for a few hours longer, in order to largely increase his ammunition. Thus we may be certain that the night to Thursday was also passed at the same spot; and as the only place whence he could increase his ammunition was Metz, we shall be fully entitled to conclude that the "positions conquered" were positions to the rear, that the retreat to Verdun was and remained cut off, and that by this time Marshal Bazaine will have either gone back to Metz, or attempted to escape by a route farther north.

If this view be correct—and we do not see how the evidence before us can be made to justify any other—a portion of the French army is again cut off from the rest. We do not know what troops may have passed towards Verdun on Monday, and on Tuesday morning before the Germans came up. But the portion driven back to Metz is evidently considerable, and whatever its importance may be, by so much will be reduced the great army which it was attempted to concentrate at Châlons. There is, indeed, a loophole left by which Bazaine might try to escape. A railway runs, close to the Belgian frontier, from Thionville to

^a "The Battle of Vionville. Pont-à-Mousson, Aug. 17", *The Times*, No. 26833, August 19, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b Bazaine's telegram of August 17, 1870 "Aug. 17, 4 P.M.", *The Times*, No. 26833, August 19, 1870.—*Ed.*

Longuyon, Montmédy, and Mézières, where it meets a cross line to Reims and Châlons; but any troops using this border line, or merely marching towards it, might be driven by a pursuing enemy up to the frontier, and compelled either to surrender or to cross it and be disarmed by the Belgians. Moreover, it is not likely that there will be rolling stock enough on this out-of-the-way line to take up a considerable body of troops; and, lastly, we have reports from Verdun that Prussians, who must have passed the Moselle between Metz and Thionville, were on Wednesday at Briey,^a on the direct road from Metz towards the available portion of that railway. Should Bazaine attempt to save his beaten troops in that direction he would, in the best of cases, have the whole of them reduced to utter dissolution. A long retreat, with the enemy on the direct line of communication of the beaten troops, is a most disastrous proceeding. Witness MacMahon's troops, some dribbles of which have continued to arrive by train at Châlons. On the 12th some 5,000 dropped in; in what state let the *Siècle* tell. They consisted of men of all arms and regiments mixed up, without arms, without cartridges, without knapsacks; the cavalry had no horses, the gunners no guns; a motley, disorganized, demoralized crew whom it would take weeks to form into battalions, squadrons, and batteries again. It is enough that correspondents decline to describe the state of the troops of the line at Châlons for fear to divulge matters which might be useful to the enemy.

That grand army which was destined to concentrate at Châlons may never meet there. After Canrobert's troops had been drawn, partly to Paris and partly to Metz, there remained but the eighteen battalions of Mobs there; not worth mentioning in a war like this. Since then some marine infantry from Paris has been sent to Châlons; Douay's two remaining divisions, if there is any common sense left in Bazaine's dispositions, will have arrived by this time; perhaps a few fourth battalions, certainly not many. The newly formed regiments of gendarmes and douaniers^b may, some of them, arrive in the course of a few days. A few small bodies of francs-tireurs³⁴ may also come in; but, leaving all raw levies out of account, the chief portion of that grand army which can be concentrated there before the Germans arrive would, under all circumstances, consist of the troops retiring from Metz. And what these now may be, after Tuesday's fights, we shall have to learn.

^a French report of August 17, 1870 "Verdun, Aug. 17, 4.50 P.M.," *The Times*, No. 26832, August 18, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b Custom-house officers.—*Ed.*

The nomination of General Trochu to the command of the army destined to defend Paris, so closely following upon his appointment to the command of the 12th Corps "forming at Paris," proves that it is not intended to send the mass of the troops now in Paris to the front. Paris must be kept down. And yet, who will be able to keep it down when the truth about last Tuesday's battle becomes known there?

THE CRISIS OF THE WAR^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1722, August 20, 1870]

The Emperor has left the army, but his evil genius has remained with it—that evil genius which hurried on, in hot impatience, the declaration of war and—that accomplished—was henceforth unable to make up its mind to anything. The army was to be ready to march by the 20th of July at latest. The 20th of July came and nothing had been done. On the 29th Napoleon III took the supreme command at Metz, there was still time for an almost unresisted advance up to the Rhine: yet the army did not stir. Hesitation even appears to have gone so far that the Emperor could not determine whether to attack at all, or to take up a position for defence. The heads of the German columns were already converging from all directions towards the Palatinate, and every day they might be expected to attack. Yet the French remained in their positions on the frontier—positions designed for an attack which was never made, and altogether unfit for the defence which was so soon to be their only choice. The hesitation which lasted from the 29th of July to the 5th of August has been characteristic of the whole campaign. The French army, being placed close to the frontier, was without advanced guards at the proper distances in front of the main body, and there were but two ways in which this defect could have been remedied. The advanced guards might have been pushed forward into the enemy's territory; or they might have been left in their actual positions on the border, and the main bodies drawn nearer together a day's march to the rear. But the first plan would have brought on collisions with the enemy under circumstances beyond

^a Written on August 20, 1870.—*Ed.*

the control of the Emperor; while the second would have involved the political impossibility of a retreat before the first battle. Thus, hesitation continued, and nothing at all was done; as if the enemy would be caught by the infection, and equally refrain from moving. But the enemy did move. The very day before the whole of his troops had arrived at the front, on the 4th of August, it was resolved to take advantage of the faulty disposition of the French. The battle of Wissembourg drew the whole of MacMahon's and Faily's corps still more away from the centre of the French position; and on the 6th, the Germans being now fully ready, their Third Army defeated MacMahon's six divisions at Woerth, and drove him, along with De Faily's remaining two divisions, by Saverne towards Lunéville, while the advanced bodies of their First and Second armies beat Frossard's and part of Bazaine's troops at Spicheren, and drove the whole centre and left of the French back upon Metz. Thus, all Lorraine lay between the two retreating French armies, and into this wide gap poured the German cavalry and, behind it, the infantry, in order to make the most of the advantage gained. The Crown Prince^a has been blamed for not having followed up MacMahon's beaten army to and beyond Saverne. But after Woerth the pursuit was carried out in the most correct manner. As soon as the beaten troops were driven so far south that they could regain the rest of the French army only by a circuitous route, the pursuers, marching straight on towards Nancy, kept continually between the two; and that this mode of pursuit (the same as Napoleon's after Jena³⁵) is at least as telling as a direct march in the rear of the fugitives is now shown by the results. Whatever there is still in existence of these eight divisions is either cut off from the main body or has joined it in a state of total disorganization.

Thus much for the consequences of the hesitation which marked the beginning of the campaign. It might surely have been expected that the same mistake would not again have been committed. The Emperor had resigned his command into the hands of Marshal Bazaine, and Marshal Bazaine might certainly have known that, whether he did or did not, the enemy would not allow the grass to grow under his feet.

The distance from Forbach to Metz is not quite fifty miles. Most of the corps had less than thirty miles to march. Three days would have brought all of them safely under shelter at Metz; and on the fourth the retreat towards Verdun and Châlons might have been

^a Frederick William.—*Ed.*

begun. For there could no longer be any doubt as to the necessity of that retreat. Marshal MacMahon's eight divisions and General Douay's remaining two divisions—more than one-third of the army—could not possibly rejoin Bazaine at any nearer point than Châlons. Bazaine had twelve divisions, including the Imperial Guard; so that even after he had been joined by three of Canrobert's divisions, he cannot have had, with cavalry and artillery, above 180,000 men—a force quite insufficient to meet his opponents in the field. Unless, therefore, he intended to abandon the whole of France to the invaders, and to allow himself to be shut up in a place where famine would soon compel him to surrender or to fight on terms dictated by the enemy, it seems as though he could not have had a moment's doubt about retreating from Metz at once. Yet he does not stir. On the 11th, the German cavalry is at Lunéville; still he gives no sign of moving. On the 12th they are across the Moselle, they make requisitions in Nancy, they tear up the railway between Metz and Frouard, they show themselves in Pont-à-Mousson. On the 13th their infantry occupy Pont-à-Mousson, and are thenceforth masters of both banks of the Moselle. At last, on Sunday, the 14th, Bazaine begins moving his men to the left bank of the river; the engagement at Pange is drawn on, by which the retreat is confessedly again retarded; and we may suppose that on Monday the actual retreat towards Châlons was commenced by sending off the heavy trains and artillery. But on that Monday the German cavalry were across the Meuse at Commercy, and within ten miles of the French line of retreat at Vigneulles. How many troops got away on Monday and early on Tuesday morning we cannot tell, but it appears certain that the main body was still behind when the German Third Corps and the reserve cavalry attacked the marching columns near Mars-la-Tour about nine in the morning on Tuesday, the 16th of August. The result is known: Bazaine's retreat was effectually stopped; on the 17th, his own telegrams show that he had at the most only maintained the position it was his one desire to leave behind him.

On Wednesday, the 17th, the two armies seem to have taken breath, but on Thursday any hopes that Bazaine might still have entertained of making good his retreat were fatally stricken down. The Prussians attacked him on that morning, and after nine hours' fighting

“the French [...] army was completely defeated, cut off from its communications with Paris, and driven back towards Metz.”³⁶

On that evening or on the following day the Army of the Rhine must have re-entered the fortress it had left at the beginning of the week. Once cooped up there it will be easy for the Germans to cut off all supplies; the more so, as the country is already thoroughly drained of everything by the prolonged presence of the troops, and as the investing army is sure to require for its own use everything that can be got together. Thus, famine must soon compel Bazaine to move; but in what direction it is difficult to tell. A move to the west is sure to be resisted by overwhelming forces; one to the north is extremely dangerous; one to the south-east might perhaps partially succeed, but it would be wholly barren of immediate results. Even if he reached Belfort or Besançon with a disorganized army, he could not exercise any appreciable influence upon the fate of the campaign. This is the situation to which hesitation in the second phase of the campaign has brought the French army. No doubt it is accurately known to the Government in Paris. The recall of the Mobile Guard from Châlons to Paris proves it. From the moment Bazaine's main forces are cut off, the position of Châlons, which was a mere place of rendezvous, and nothing else, has lost all importance. The nearest place of rendezvous now for all forces is Paris, and thither everything must now move. There is no force whatever which could oppose in the field the Third German Army, now probably moving upon the capital. Before long the French will find out, by a practical trial, whether or not the fortifications of Paris are worth their cost.

Though this crowning catastrophe has been impending for days, it is hardly possible as yet to realize that it has actually come to pass. No expectations went the length of this reality. A fortnight ago Englishmen were speculating on the possible consequences of the French army winning the first great battle. The danger to which their fears most pointed was that Napoleon III might make such an initial success the occasion of a hasty peace at the expense of Belgium. Upon this point they were speedily reassured. The battles of Woerth and Forbach showed that no theatrical triumph was in store for the French arms. The demonstration that Germany had nothing to fear from France seemed to promise well for the speedy ending of the war. The time must soon come, it was thought, when the French would acknowledge that the attempt to control the consolidation of Germany under Prussia had failed, and that, consequently, they had nothing left to fight for, while the Germans would hardly care to go on waging a chequered and doubtful war, when the admission it was designed to extort had been already conceded. The first five days of this

week have again changed the whole face of affairs. The military power of France has to all appearance been utterly overthrown, and for the time being there seems to be no limit to German ambition except the doubtful barrier of German moderation. We cannot attempt as yet to estimate the political results of this tremendous reverse. We can only look on in wonder at its magnitude and its suddenness, and in admiration at the manner in which it has been sustained by the French troops. That after four days of almost constant fighting under the most discouraging conditions possible they should on the fifth have resisted the attack of greatly superior numbers for nine hours reflects infinite credit upon their courage and resolution. Never in its most triumphant campaigns has the French army won more real glory than in its disastrous retreat from Metz.

NOTES ON THE WAR.—XI^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1725, August 24, 1870]

Although still without full details of the three terrible battles fought last week around Metz,³⁷ we have learned enough about them to be able now to give an intelligible account of what actually occurred.

The battle of Sunday, the 14th of August, was commenced by the Germans, with the intention of delaying the retreat of the French towards Verdun. The remnant of Frossard's corps was observed to cross the Moselle towards Longeville on Sunday afternoon; signs of moving were visible among the troops encamped east of Metz. The First (East Prussian) and Seventh (Westphalian and Hanoverian) army corps were ordered to attack. They drove the French in until they themselves got within range of the forts; but the French, foreseeing such a movement, had massed large bodies in sheltered positions in the valley of the Moselle, and in a narrow clough, through which a brook runs east and west, joining the main river to the north of Metz. These masses suddenly fell upon the right flank of the Germans, already suffering from the fire of the forts, and are said to have driven them back in confusion; after which the French must have retired again, for it is certain that the Germans remained in possession of that part of the battle-field which is out of range of the forts, and that they retired to their former bivouacs after daybreak only. We know this both from private letters written by men engaged in the battle,³⁸ and from a correspondent's letter from Metz in Monday's *Manchester Guardian*, who visited the battle-field on Monday morning, and found it in the occupation of the Prussians, by

^a Written on August 23 or 24, 1870.—*Ed.*

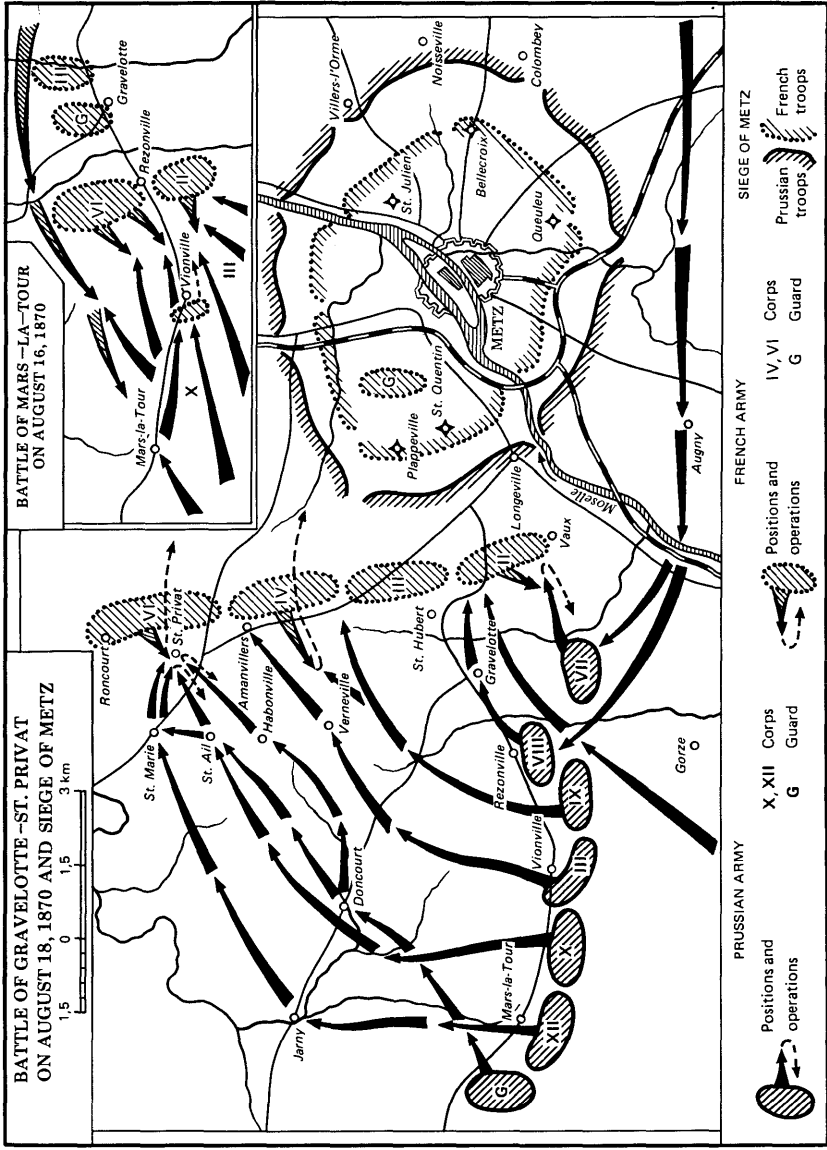
^b August 15.—*Ed.*

whom the French wounded, then still remaining there, were being attended to. Both parties, in a certain sense, may claim to have attained the object for which the contest was engaged: the French enticed the Germans into a trap and made them suffer severely; the Germans delayed the French retreat until Prince Frederick Charles could gain the line by which this retreat was to be effected. On the German side there were two corps, or four divisions, engaged; on the French side, Decaen's and Ladmirault's corps, and part of the Guards, or above seven divisions. The French in this battle were thus in a great numerical superiority. Their position is also said to have been greatly strengthened by rifle pits and trenches, from which they fired with more coolness than usual.

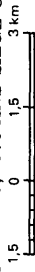
The retreat of the Army of the Rhine towards Verdun was not commenced in force before Tuesday, the 16th. At that time the heads of Prince Frederick Charles's columns—the 3rd Army Corps (Brandenburgers)—were just reaching the neighbourhood of Mars-la-Tour. They attacked at once, and for six hours held the French army at bay. Reinforced later on by the 10th Army Corps (Hanoverians and Westphalians), and portions of the 8th (Rhinelanders) and 9th (Schleswig-Holsteiners and Mecklenburgers), they not only maintained their position, but drove back the enemy, took two eagles, seven cannon, and above 2,000 prisoners. The forces against them consisted of Decaen's, Ladmirault's, Frossard's, and part at least of Canrobert's corps (they had reached Metz from Châlons during the last days the railway *viâ* Frouard was still open), and the Guards, or, in all, from fourteen to fifteen divisions. The eight German divisions were thus again faced by superior numbers, even if, as is likely, not all Bazaine's troops were engaged. It is well to keep this in mind, while the French accounts continue to explain all reverses by their being constantly outnumbered.^a That the French were effectively stopped in their retrograde movement is clear from the fact that they themselves speak of rearguard engagements having taken place on the 17th near Gravelotte, more than five miles to the rear of their own position of the 16th.^b At the same time, the fact that only four German corps could be brought up on Tuesday shows that the success they obtained was incomplete. Captain Jeannerod, who came on the 17th from Briey to Conflans, found there two cavalry regiments of the French Guard much cut up and taking flight at

^a See the report "Paris, Aug. 22", *The Times*, No. 26835, August 22, 1870.—*Ed.*

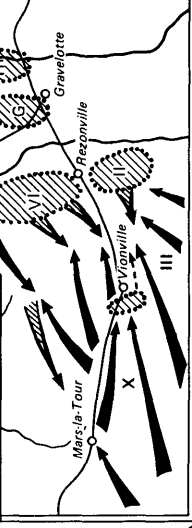
^b "Paris, Aug. 17", *The Times*, No. 26834, August 20, 1870.—*Ed.*



**BATTLE OF GRAVELOTTE-ST. PRIVAT
ON AUGUST 18, 1870 AND SIEGE OF METZ**



**BATTLE OF MARS-LA-TOUR
ON AUGUST 16, 1870**



PRUSSIAN ARMY
 X, XII Corps
 G Guard
 Positions and operations

FRENCH ARMY
 IV, VI Corps
 G Guard
 Positions and operations

SIEGE OF METZ
 Prussian troops
 French troops

the bare cry, "The Prussians are coming!"^a This proves that though the road by Etain, on the evening of the 16th, might not be actually in the possession of the Germans, they were so near as to render impossible any retreat by it without another battle. Bazaine, however, seems to have given up all thought of that, for he entrenched himself in a very strong position near Gravelotte, and there awaited the attack of the Germans, which took place on the 18th.

The plateau, over which runs the road from Mars-la-Tour by Gravelotte to Metz, is intersected by a series of deep ravines, formed by brooks running from north to south towards the Moselle. There is one of these ravines immediately in front (west) of Gravelotte; two others run, in parallel lines, to the rear of the first. Each of these forms a strong defensive position, which had been reinforced by earthworks, and by the barricading and loopholing of such farmyards and villages as occupied places of tactical importance. To receive in this strong entrenched position the enemy, to let them break their heads against it, to hurl them back finally by a mighty "retour offensif,"^b and thus clear the road to Verdun—this was evidently the only hope left to Bazaine. But the attack was made with such forces and with such energy that position after position was taken, and the Army of the Rhine driven back close under the guns of Metz. Against fourteen or fifteen French divisions twelve German divisions were actually engaged, and four more in reserve. The numbers engaged on both sides would be not far from equal; on the whole somewhat in favour of the Germans, four of their six corps having been nearly intact; but this slight numerical superiority would by no means make up for the strength of the French position.

French opinion still hesitates to accept the full reality of the position created for Bazaine and his army, a position the counterpart of that into which General Bonaparte drove Wurmser at Mantua, 1796, and Mack at Ulm, 1805.³⁹ That the brilliant Army of the Rhine, the hope and strength of France, should after fourteen days' campaigning be reduced to the choice either to attempt to force its passage through the enemy under disastrous circumstances, or to capitulate, is more than the French can bring themselves to believe. They look for all possible explanations. One theory is that Bazaine is, so to say, sacrificing himself in order to gain time for MacMahon and Paris. While Bazaine retains two of

^a G. Jeannerod, "Correspondances particulières du Temps, Briey, mercredi 17 août", *Le Temps*, No. 3461, August 20, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b Counter-attack.—*Ed.*

the three German armies before Metz, Paris can organize her defences, and MacMahon will have time to create a fresh army. Bazaine thus remains at Metz, not because he cannot help it, but because it is in the interest of France he should be there. But where, it may be asked, are the elements of MacMahon's new army? His own corps, now numbering at most 15,000 men; De Failly's remaining troops, disorganized and scattered by a long circuitous retreat—he is said to have arrived at Vitry-le-François with but 7,000 or 8,000 men; perhaps one division of Canrobert's; the two divisions of Félix Douay's, the whereabouts of which nobody seems to know: about 40,000 men, including the marines of the intended Baltic expedition. These include every battalion and squadron which is left to France of its old army outside of Metz. To these would come the fourth battalions. They appear now to be arriving in Paris in pretty good numbers, but filled up to a great extent with recruits. The whole of these troops may reach something like 130,000 to 150,000 men; but this new army is not to be compared in quality to the old Army of the Rhine. The old regiments in it cannot but have suffered greatly from demoralization. The new battalions have been formed in a hurry, contain many recruits, and cannot be as well officered as the old army. The proportion of cavalry and artillery must be very small indeed; the mass of the cavalry is in Metz, and the stores necessary for the equipment of new batteries, harness, &c., appear in some instances to exist on paper only. Jeannerod quotes an example in Sunday's *Temps*.^a As to the Mobile Guard, after having been brought back from Châlons to Saint Maur, near Paris, it appears to have dispersed altogether, for want of provisions. And it is to gain time for forces like these that the whole of the best army which France possesses should be sacrificed. And sacrificed it is, if it is true that it is shut up in Metz. If Bazaine had got his army into its present position advisedly, he would have committed a blunder compared to which all previous blunders of the war would sink into nothing. In regard to Bazaine's rumoured retreat from Metz and junction with MacMahon at Montmédy, the refutation of the story to which *The Standard* yesterday gave circulation has been sufficiently accomplished by the writer of the military review in the same journal this morning. Even if any detachments of Bazaine's force have escaped to the north after or in the course of the recent engagements round Mars-la-Tour, the bulk of his army is still locked up in Metz.

^a G. Jeannerod, "Correspondances particulières du Temps. Reims, samedi 20 août, 3 heures", *Le Temps*, No. 3463, August 22, 1870.—*Ed.*

NOTES ON THE WAR.—XII^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1727, August 26, 1870]

The two latest facts of the war are these—that the Crown Prince^b is pushing on beyond Châlons, and that MacMahon has moved his whole army from Reims, whither is not exactly known. MacMahon, according to French reports, finds the war getting on too slowly; in order to hasten its decision he is now said to be marching from Reims to the relief of Bazaine.^c This would indeed be hurrying on matters to an almost final crisis.

In our Wednesday's publication we estimated MacMahon's force at from 130,000 to 150,000 men on the assumption that all the troops from Paris had joined him.^d We were right in supposing that he had at Châlons the remnants of his own and of De Faily's troops; also that Douay's two divisions were at Châlons, whither we know now they went by a circuitous railway journey viâ Paris; also that the marines and other portions of the Baltic corps were there. But we now learn that there are still troops of the line in the forts round Paris; that a portion of MacMahon's and Frossard's men, especially cavalry, have gone back to Paris to be reorganized, and that MacMahon has only about 80,000 regular troops in camp. We may, therefore, reduce our estimate by fully 25,000 men, and set down 110,000 to 120,000 men as the maximum of MacMahon's forces, one-third of which would consist of raw levies. And with this army he is said to have set out to relieve Bazaine at Metz.

Now, MacMahon's next and more immediate opponent is the army of the Crown Prince. It occupied on the 24th with its

^a Written on August 25, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b Frederick William.—*Ed.*

^c "Paris, Aug. 24, Evening", *The Times*, No. 26838, August 25, 1870.—*Ed.*

^d See this volume, p. 66.—*Ed.*

outposts the former camp of Châlons, which fact is telegraphed to us from Bar-le-Duc.^a From this we may conclude that at that town were then the head-quarters. MacMahon's nearest road to Metz is by Verdun. From Reims to Verdun by an almost straight country road there is fully seventy miles; by the high road, *viâ* St. Ménehould, it is above eighty miles. This latter road, moreover, leads through the camp of Châlons—that is to say, through the German lines. From Bar-le-Duc to Verdun the distance is less than forty miles.

Thus not only can the army of the Crown Prince fall upon the flank of MacMahon's march if he use either of the above roads to Verdun, but it can get behind the Meuse and join the remaining two German armies between Verdun and Metz, long before MacMahon can debouch from Verdun on the right bank of the Meuse. And all this would remain unaltered, even if the Crown Prince had advanced as far as Vitry-le-François, or required an extra day to concentrate his troops from their extended front of march; so great is the difference of distance in his favour.

Under these circumstances it may be doubted whether MacMahon will use either of the roads indicated; whether he will not at once withdraw from the immediate sphere of action of the Crown Prince, and choose the road from Reims by Vouziers, Grandpré, and Varennes, to Verdun, or by Vouziers to Stenay, where he would pass the Meuse, and then march south-east upon Metz. But that would only be to secure a momentary advantage in order to make final defeat doubly certain. Both these routes are still more circuitous, and would allow still more time to the Crown Prince to unite his forces with those before Metz, and thus to oppose to both MacMahon and Bazaine a crushing superiority of numbers.

Thus, whichever way MacMahon chooses to get near Metz, he cannot shake off the Crown Prince, who, moreover, cannot be denied the choice of fighting him either singly or in conjunction with the other German armies. From this it is evident that MacMahon's move to the relief of Bazaine would be a gross mistake, so long as he has not completely disposed of the Crown Prince. To get to Metz, his shortest, quickest, and safest road is right across the Third German Army. If he were to march straight upon it, attack it wherever he finds it, defeat it, and drive it for a few days in a south-easterly direction, so as to interpose his

^a German official report "Bar-le-Duc, Aug. 24, 9 P.M", *The Times*, No. 26838, August 25, 1870.—*Ed.*

victorious army like a wedge between it and the other two German armies—in the same way as the Crown Prince has shown him how to do it—then, and not till then, would he have a chance to get to Metz and set Bazaine free. But if he felt himself strong enough to do this, we may be sure he would have done it at once. Thus, the withdrawal from Reims assumes a different aspect. It is not so much a move towards the relief of Bazaine from Steinmetz and Frederick Charles as a move for the relief of MacMahon from the Crown Prince. And from this point of view it is the worst that could be made. It abandons all direct communications with Paris to the mercy of the enemy. It draws off the last available forces of France away from the centre towards the periphery, and places them intentionally farther away from the centre than the enemy is already. Such a move might be excusable if undertaken with largely superior numbers; but here it is undertaken with hopelessly inferior numbers and in the face of the almost certainty of defeat. And what will that defeat bring? Wherever it occurs it will push the remnants of the beaten army away from Paris towards the northern frontier, where they may be driven upon neutral ground or forced to capitulate. MacMahon, if he really has undertaken the move in question, is deliberately placing his army in exactly the same position in which Napoleon's flank march round the southern end of the Thuringian forest in 1806 placed the Prussian army at Jena. A numerically and morally weaker army is deliberately placed in a position where, after a defeat, its only line of retreat is through a narrow strip of territory leading towards neutral territory or the sea. Napoleon forced the Prussians to capitulate by reaching Stettin before them.⁴⁰ MacMahon's troops may have to surrender in that little strip of French territory jutting out into Belgium between Mézières and Charlemont-Givet.⁴¹ In the very best of cases they may escape to the northern fortresses—Valenciennes, Lille, &c., where, at all events, they will be harmless. And then France will be at the mercy of the invader.

The whole plan seems so wild that it can only be explained as having arisen from political necessities. It looks more like a *coup de désespoir*^a than anything else. It looks as if anything must be done, anything risked, before Paris be allowed fully to understand the actual situation. It is the plan not of a strategist, but of an "Algérien,"⁴² used to fight irregulars; the plan not of a soldier, but of a political and military adventurer, such as have had it all

^a An act of despair.—Ed.

their own way in France these last nineteen years. The language ascribed to MacMahon in justifying this resolve is quite in keeping with this. "What would they say" if he did not march to the aid of Bazaine^a? Yes, but "what would they say" if he got himself into a worse position than Bazaine has got himself into? It is the Second Empire all over. To keep up appearances, to hide defeat, is the thing most required. Napoleon staked all upon one card, and lost it; and now MacMahon is again going to play *va banque*, when the odds are ten to one against him. The sooner France is freed from these men the better for her. It is her only hope.

^a "Paris, Aug. 24, Evening", *The Times*, No. 26838, August 25, 1870.—*Ed.*

NOTES ON THE WAR—XIII^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1728, August 27, 1870]

Yesterday a piece of news was telegraphed which caused great sensation among our contemporaries. It came from Berlin, and was to this effect, that the King's head-quarters had been moved to Bar-le-Duc, that corps of the First and Second Armies remained facing Bazaine's army, and that the remainder of the German forces "had resolutely entered upon their march to Paris."^b

Hitherto the movements of the German armies have been kept secret during their execution. It was only when the move had been completed, when the blow had been struck, that we learned whither the troops had been going. It seems strange that this system should be reversed all at once; that taciturn Moltke should, without any visible occasion for it, all of a sudden proclaim to the world that he is marching upon Paris, and "resolutely" too.

At the same time we hear that the advanced troops of the Crown Prince^c are pushed nearer and nearer to Paris, and that his cavalry spread more and more towards the south. Even in Château-Thierry, almost half way between Châlons and Paris, the dreaded Uhlans are said to have been seen.

Might there not be a special reason, not quite evident at the first glance, why this announcement of the intentions of the King of Prussia should be made just now, and why, at the same time, the German cavalry should redouble their activity?

^a Written on August 26, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b Prussian telegram, datelined "Berlin, Aug. 25", *The Times*, No. 26839, August 26, 1870.—*Ed.*

^c Frederick William.—*Ed.*

Let us compare dates. On the evening of Monday, the 22nd, MacMahon commenced his movements through Reims on the road to Rethel, and for more than fourteen hours the columns passed continually through the town. By the evening of Wednesday, if not before, the news of this march might have reached the German head-quarters. There could be but one meaning in it: the intention to set free Bazaine from the trap in which he is shut up. The more MacMahon advanced in the direction he had taken the more would he endanger his communications with Paris and his line of retreat, the more would he place himself between the German army and the Belgian frontier. Let him once get beyond the Meuse, which he is said to intend passing at Laneuville, opposite Stenay, and his retreat may easily be cut off. Now, what could more encourage MacMahon to persist in his dangerous manoeuvre than the news that, while he was hurrying to the relief of Bazaine, the Germans had left only a comparatively small portion of their forces before Metz, and were marching "resolutely" upon Paris with the great body of their troops? Thus on Wednesday night this same piece of news is telegraphed from Pont-à-Mousson to Berlin, from Berlin to London, from London to Paris and Reims, whence no doubt MacMahon has at once been favoured with the information; and while he marches on towards Stenay, Longuyon, and Briey, the army of the Crown Prince, leaving a corps or two in Champagne, where now nothing opposes them, would draw off the rest towards St. Mihiel, pass the Meuse there, and try to gain by Fresnes a position threatening the communications of MacMahon's army with the Meuse, and yet within supporting distance of the German troops before Metz. If this were to succeed, and if MacMahon were to be defeated under these circumstances, his army would have either to pass into neutral territory or to surrender to the Germans.

There can be no doubt that MacMahon's movements are perfectly well known at the German head-quarters. From the moment the battle of Rezonville (or Gravelotte, as it is to be officially called) had settled the fact that Bazaine was shut up in Metz, from that moment MacMahon's army was the next object, not only of the army of the Crown Prince, but also of all other troops which could be spared from before Metz. In 1814, indeed, the Allies, after the junction of Blücher and Schwarzenberg between Arcis-sur-Aube and Châlons, marched upon Paris, entirely disregarding Napoleon's march towards the Rhine,⁴³ and this march decided the campaign. But at that time Napoleon had been defeated at Arcis and was unable to stand against the allied

army; there was no French army shut up by allied troops in a border fortress which he might relieve; and, above all things, Paris was not fortified. Now, on the contrary, whatever may be the military value, numerically and morally, represented by MacMahon's army, there is no doubt that it is quite sufficient to raise the investment of Metz, if that investment be carried out by no more troops than are necessary to hold Bazaine in check. And, on the other hand, whatever may be thought of the fortifications of Paris, nobody will be foolhardy enough to expect that they will fall like the walls of Jericho, before the first trumpet blast of the invaders.^a They will at least compel either a lengthy investment to starve out the defence, or a beginning, if not more, of a regular siege. Thus, while the Germans were "resolutely" arriving before Paris, and brought to a dead stop by the forts, MacMahon would defeat the German troops before Metz, unite with Bazaine, and then France would have an army upon the communications and lines of supply of the Germans strong enough to compel them to retreat more "resolutely" than they had advanced.

If MacMahon's army, then, be too strong to be neglected by the Germans under the circumstances, we must come to the conclusion that the intelligence of the resolute march of King William to Paris, which most of our contemporaries consider of the highest importance, either is a piece of false news thrown out intentionally to mislead the enemy, or, if it be really an indiscreet publication of correct news, represents a resolution come to before MacMahon's latest move was known, in which case it will be speedily reversed. In either case, a corps or two may continue to advance towards Paris, but the mass of all available troops will be marched north-east⁴⁴ to reap to the full those advantages which MacMahon almost throws at their feet.⁴⁵

^a Joshua 6:20.—*Ed.*

NOTES ON THE WAR.—XIV^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1731, August 31, 1870]

The Germans have again been too quick for MacMahon. The Fourth Army, under the Crown Prince Albert of Saxony, comprising at least two corps (the Prussian Guards and the 12th or Royal Saxon Corps), if not more, have pushed at once up to the Meuse, secured passages somewhere between Stenay and Verdun, and sent their cavalry across. The defiles of the Argonnes are in their power. At St. Ménehould last Thursday^b they took 800 Gardes Mobiles prisoners, and at Buzancy on Saturday they defeated a French cavalry brigade. On their road they pushed a strong reconnaissance against Verdun last Thursday,^c but, finding the place in condition to receive them, they did not persist in an attack by main force.

MacMahon, who in the meantime had left Reims on the 22nd and 23rd with an army, according to French reports, of 150,000 men, well equipped, well provided with artillery, ammunition, and provisions,^c had not, on the evening of the 25th, got farther than Rethel, about twenty-three miles beyond Reims. How long he continued there, and when he left it, we do not know for certain. But the cavalry engagement at Buzancy, which is on the road to Stenay, some twenty miles farther on, proves that even on Saturday his infantry had not yet arrived there. This slowness of movement contrasts vividly with the activity of the Germans. No doubt, to a great extent it is caused by the composition of his

^a Written on August 30 or 31, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b August 25.—*Ed.*

^c "Paris, Aug. 23", *The Times*, No. 26837, August 24, 1870; "Paris. Aug. 24, Evening", *The Times*, No. 26838, August 25, 1870.—*Ed.*

army, which contains either more or less demoralized troops, or new formations in which young recruits are predominating; some of them are even mere volunteer corps with numbers of non-professional officers. It is evident that this army can neither have the discipline nor the cohesion of the old "Army of the Rhine," and that it will be almost impossible to move from 120,000 to 150,000 men of this sort both rapidly and with order. Then there are the trains. The great mass of the heavy trains of the Army of the Rhine did certainly escape from Metz on the 14th and 15th, but it may be imagined that they were not in the very best of conditions; it may be assumed that their supply of ammunition and the state of their horses are not all that is to be desired. And finally, we may take it for granted that the French Intendance has not mended since the beginning of the war, and that consequently the provisioning of a large army in an extremely poor country will be no easy matter. But even if we allow very liberally for all these obstacles, we shall still be compelled to see besides in MacMahon's dilatoriness a distinct symptom of indecision. His nearest way to the relief of Bazaine, the direct road by Verdun once given up, was that by Stenay, and in that direction he struck. But before he got farther than Reims he must have known that the Germans had seized upon the passages of the Meuse, and that the right flank of his columns on the road to Stenay was not safe. This rapidity of the German advance appears to have disconcerted his plans. We are told that on Friday he was still at Reims, where he received fresh reinforcements from Paris, and that he intended to move to Mézières next day. As we have had no authentic news of important engagements, this appears very probable. It would imply an almost complete abandonment of his plan to relieve Bazaine; for a movement through the narrow strip of French territory on the right bank of the Meuse, between Mézières and Stenay, would have its great difficulties and dangers, cause fresh delay, and give his opponents ample time to envelop him from all sides. For there can be no doubt now that quite sufficient forces have been sent northwards for this purpose from the army of the Crown Prince. Whatever we hear of the whereabouts of the Third Army points to a northward movement by the three great routes most handy for the purpose—Epernay, Reims, Reims; Reims, Reims; Reims, Reims; and Reims, Reims, Reims, Grandpré. The fact of the engagement at Saint Ménehould being telegraphed from Bar-le-Duc^a renders it even possible that it was

^a German official report "Bar-le-Duc, Aug. 26", *The Times*, No. 26842, August 30, 1870.—*Ed.*

part of the Third Army which there defeated the Mobiles and occupied the town.

But what can be MacMahon's intention if he really moves upon Mézières? We doubt whether he has any very clear idea himself of what he intends doing. We now know that his march northwards was, to a certain extent at least, forced upon him by the insubordination of his men, who grumbled at the "retreat" from the camp of Châlons to Reims, and rather strongly demanded to be led against the enemy. The march to relieve Bazaine was then entered upon. By the end of the week MacMahon may have been pretty well convinced that his army had not the mobility necessary for a direct march upon Stenay, and that he had better take the, for the moment, safer road by Mézières. This would certainly postpone and might render impracticable the intended relief of Bazaine; but had MacMahon ever any very decided faith in his ability to effect that? We doubt it. And then the move on Mézières would, at all events, delay the enemy's march upon Paris, give the Parisians more time to complete their defence, gain time for the organization of the armies of reserve behind the Loire and at Lyons; and in case of need might he not retire along the northern frontier upon the threefold belt of fortresses, and try whether there was not some "quadrilateral" among them? Some such more or less indefinite ideas may have induced MacMahon, who certainly does not seem to be anything of a strategist, to make a second false move after once having entangled himself in a first one; and thus we see the last army which France has, and probably will have, in the field during this war march deliberately to its ruin, from which only the grossest blunders of the enemy can save it; and that enemy has not made one mistake yet.

We say the last army which France probably will have in the field during this war. Bazaine has to be given up, unless MacMahon can relieve him, and that is more than doubtful. MacMahon's army, in the best of cases, will get scattered among the fortresses on the northern frontier, where it will be harmless. The reserve armies that are now spoken about will be raw levies, mingled with a certain number of old soldiers, and unavoidably commanded by chiefly unprofessional officers; they will be armed with all sorts of arms; they will be totally unused to the breech-loaders, which is tantamount to saying that their ammunition will be spent before it is really wanted—in one word, they will be unfit for the field, fit for nothing but the defence of fortifications. While the Germans have not only brought their battalions and squadrons to their full complement again, but keep

sending division after division of landwehr to France, the French fourth battalions are not complete yet. Only sixty-six of them have been formed into "régiments de marche,"^a and sent either to Paris or to MacMahon; the remaining thirty-four were not ready to march out a few days ago. The army organization fails everywhere; and a noble and gallant nation finds all its efforts for self-defence unavailing, because it has for twenty years suffered its destinies to be guided by a set of adventurers who turned administration, government, army, navy—in fact, all France—into a source of pecuniary profit to themselves.

^a Regiments ready for battle.—*Ed.*

NOTES ON THE WAR.—XV^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1733, September 2, 1870]

On the 26th of August, when the whole of our contemporaries, with scarcely one exception, were far too busy descanting upon the immense importance of the Crown Prince's^b "resolute" march upon Paris to have any time left for MacMahon, we ventured to point out that the really important movement of the day was that which the latter general was reported to be making for the relief of Metz. We said that in case of defeat "MacMahon's troops may have to surrender in that little strip of French territory jutting out into Belgium between Mézières and Charlemont-Givet."^c

What we presumed then is now almost accomplished. MacMahon has with him the 1st (his own), 5th (formerly De Failly's, now Wimpffen's), 7th (Douay's), and 12th (Lebrun's) corps, with such troops as could be spared from Paris up to the 29th, including even those rebellious Mobiles of Saint Maur; and, besides, the cavalry of Canrobert's corps, which was left at Châlons. The whole force will represent, perhaps, 150,000 men, barely one half of which are troops of the old army; the rest, fourth battalions and Mobiles, in about equal proportions. It is said to be well provided with artillery, but of this a great portion must consist of newly-formed batteries, and it is notoriously very weak in cavalry. Even if this army should be numerically stronger than we estimate it, this excess must consist of new levies, and will not add to its strength, which we can scarcely deem to be equivalent to a force of 100,000 good soldiers.

MacMahon left Reims for Rethel and the Meuse on the evening of the 22nd, but the 13th Corps was despatched from Paris on the

^a Written on September 1, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b Frederick William.—*Ed.*

^c See this volume, p. 69.—*Ed.*

28th and 29th only; and as by that time the direct railway to Rethel, viâ Reims, was menaced by the enemy, these troops had to be sent round by the Northern of France Railway, by St. Quentin, Avesnes, and Hirson. They could not complete their journey before the 30th or 31st, and then fighting had already begun in earnest; so that the troops for which MacMahon had waited were not there after all when wanted. For, while he kept losing time between Rethel, Mézières, and Stenay, the Germans came marching on from all sides. On the 27th a brigade of his advanced cavalry was defeated at Buzancy. On the 28th, Vouziers, an important crossing of roads in the Argonnes, was in German hands, and two of their squadrons charged and took Vrizy, a village occupied by infantry, who had to surrender—a feat, by-the-by, of which there is but one previous example—the taking of Dembe Wielkie by Polish cavalry, from Russian infantry and cavalry, in 1831.⁴⁶ On the 29th no engagements are reported from any trustworthy source. But on the 30th (Tuesday) the Germans, having concentrated sufficient forces, fell upon MacMahon and defeated him. The German accounts speak of a battle near Beaumont,^a and of an engagement near Nouart^b (on the road from Stenay to Buzancy),⁴⁷ but Belgian reports refer to fighting on the right bank of the Meuse, between Mouzon and Carignan.^c The two can be easily reconciled, and supposing the Belgian telegrams to be substantially correct, the German Fourth Army (4th, 12th, and Guards corps) appear to have had the 4th and 12th corps on the left bank of the Moselle, where they were joined by the First Bavarian Corps, the first instalment of the Third Army arriving from the South. They met MacMahon's main forces at Beaumont, marching evidently in the direction of Mézières to Stenay; they attacked them, a portion, probably the Bavarians, falling upon and overlapping their right flank, and pushing them away from their direct line of retreat towards the Meuse at Mouzon, where the difficulty and delay of the passage over the bridge would account for their great losses of prisoners, artillery, and stores. While this was going on, the advanced guard of the 12th German Corps, which appears to have been sent off in a different direction, met the 5th French Corps (Wimpffen's) marching, to all appearances, by way of Le Chêne Populeux, the valley of the Bar, and Buzancy,

^a "Buzancy, Aug. 30", *The Times*, No. 26844, September 1, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b "Varenes, Aug. 30, Afternoon", *The Times*, No. 26844, September 1, 1870.—*Ed.*

^c "Florenville (Belgium), Aug. 31", *The Times*, No. 26844, September 1, 1870.—*Ed.*

towards the flank of the Germans. The encounter took place at Nouart, about seven miles south of Beaumont, and was successful for the Germans; that is to say, they succeeded in stopping Wimpffen's flank movement while the fighting was going on at Beaumont. A third portion of MacMahon's forces, according to the Belgian reports, must have advanced on the right bank of the Meuse, where it is said to have encamped the previous night at Vaux, between Carignan and Mouzon; but this corps, too, was attacked by the Germans (probably the Guards) and completely defeated, with the loss, as is alleged, of four mitrailleurs.^a

The *ensemble* of these three engagements (always supposing the Belgian accounts to be substantially correct) would constitute that complete defeat of MacMahon which we have repeatedly predicted.^b The four corps opposed to him would now number about 100,000 men, but it is questionable whether they were all engaged. MacMahon's troops, as we have said, would be equivalent to about that number of good soldiers.^c That their resistance was nothing like that of the old Army of the Rhine is implied in the remark of a German official telegram, that "out losses are moderate,"^d and the number of prisoners taken. It is too early yet to attempt to criticise MacMahon's tactical arrangements for and during this battle, as we know scarcely anything about them. But his strategy cannot be too strongly condemned. He has thrown away every fair chance of escape. His position between Rethel and Mézières rendered it possible for him to fight so as to have his retreat open to Laon and Soissons, and thereby the means of again reaching Paris or western France. Instead of this, he fought as if his only line of retreat was to Mézières, and as if Belgium belonged to him. He is said to be at Sedan, the victorious Germans will by this time have lined the left bank of the Meuse, not only before that fortress, but also before Mézières, whence their left will, in another day or so, extend to the Belgian frontier near Rocroi, and then MacMahon will be shut up in that little strip of territory upon which we placed our finger six days ago.

Once there, he has but little choice left to him. He has four fortresses around him—Sedan, Mézières, Rocroi, and Charlemont; but upon twelve square miles of territory, with an overpowering

^a "Florenville (Belgium), Aug. 31", *The Times*, No. 26844, September 1, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b See this volume, pp. 69, 72 and 76.—*Ed.*

^c See this volume, p. 78.—*Ed.*

^d William I's telegram to the Queen "Varenes, Aug. 30, Afternoon", *The Times*, No. 26844, September 1, 1870.—*Ed.*

army in front, and a neutral country in the rear, he cannot play at quadrilaterals. He will be starved out or fought out; he will be compelled to surrender either to the Prussians or to the Belgians. But there is one other course open to him. We said just now he had acted as if Belgium belonged to him. What if he really thought so? What if the whole mystery at the bottom of this inexplicable strategy was a settled determination to use Belgian territory as if it belonged to France? From Charlemont there is a straight road through Belgium, by Philippeville, to French territory, near Maubeuge. This road is but one half of the distance from Mézières to Maubeuge through French territory. What if MacMahon intended to use that road for escape, in case he was reduced to the last extremity? The Belgians, he may think, will not be in a condition to effectually resist an army as strong as his; and if the Germans, as is very likely, follow MacMahon into Belgian territory, in case the Belgians cannot stop him, why, then there arise new political complications which may better, but cannot render much worse, the present situation of France. Moreover, if MacMahon should succeed in driving but one German patrol upon Belgian ground, the breach of neutrality would be established, and form an excuse for his subsequent violation of Belgium. Such ideas may have passed through the head of this old Algerian; they are in keeping with African warfare, and, indeed, they are almost the only ones by which such strategy as he has shown can be excused. But even that chance may be cut off from him; if the Crown Prince acts with his usual quickness, he may possibly reach Monthermé and the junction of the rivers Semois and Meuse before MacMahon, and then MacMahon would be pent up between Semois and Sedan on about as much ground as his men require for a camp, and without any hope of a short cut through neutral ground.

THE FRENCH DEFEATS^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1734, September 3, 1870]

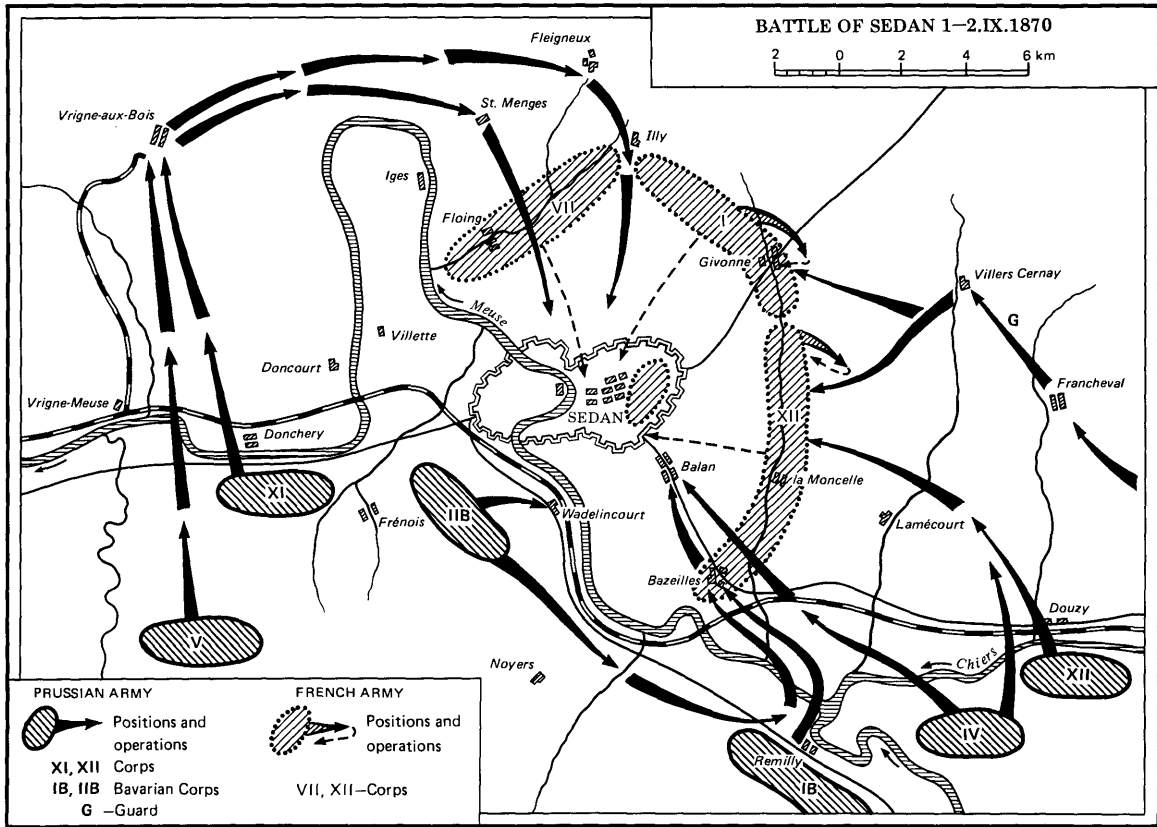
A large army, when driven into a corner, dies hard. It took first of all three battles to teach Bazaine's troops that they were really shut up in Metz, and then thirty-six hours' desperate fighting through day and night on Wednesday and Thursday last⁴⁸ to convince them—if even then convinced—that there was no opening for escape through the toils in which the Prussians had caught them. Nor was the battle of Tuesday enough to compel MacMahon to give in. A fresh battle—apparently the greatest and most bloody of all the series—had to be fought on Thursday,⁴⁹ and he himself wounded, before he was brought to a sense of his real position. The first account of the fighting near Beaumont^b and Carignan^c appears to have been substantially correct, with this exception, that the line of retreat of the French corps engaged at Beaumont, which ran on the left bank of the Meuse to Sedan, was not cut off entirely. Some portion of these troops seem to have escaped on the left bank to Sedan—at least there was fighting again on that same bank on Thursday. Then there appears to be some doubt as to the date of the engagement of Nouart, which the staff in Berlin are disposed to think took place on Monday.^d This would certainly make the German telegrams agree better, and, if so, the turning movement which was ascribed to the French Fifth Corps would equally fall to the ground.

^a Written on September 3, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b Prussian telegram, datelined "Buzancy, Aug. 30", *The Times*, No. 26844, September 1, 1870.—*Ed.*

^c Engels refers to the telegram reproduced from the Belgian *L'Etoile* in *The Times*, No. 26844, September 1, 1870, under the heading "Carignan, Aug. 30, 4 P.M."—*Ed.*

^d Prussian telegram, datelined "Berlin, Sept. 1", *The Times*, No. 26845, September 2, 1870.—*Ed.*



The result of the fighting on Tuesday was disastrous to the French corps engaged. Above twenty cannon, eleven mitrailleurs, and 7,000 prisoners are results almost equivalent to those of Woerth, but conquered much more easily, and with much smaller sacrifices. The French were driven back on both banks of the Meuse to the immediate neighbourhood of Sedan. On the left bank their position after the battle appears to have been defined to the west by the River Bar and the Canal des Ardennes, both of which run along the same valley, and enter the Meuse at Villers, between Sedan and Mézières; on the east, by the ravine and brook running from Raucourt to the Meuse at Remilly. Having thus both flanks secured, their main body would occupy the intervening plateau, ready to meet an attack from any side. On the right bank, the river Chiers, which joins the Meuse about four miles above Sedan, opposite Remilly, must have been crossed by the French after Tuesday's battle. There are three parallel ravines, running north and south from the Belgian frontier, the first and second towards the Chiers, the third and largest immediately in front of Sedan, towards the Meuse. On the second of these, near its highest point, is the village of Cernay; on the third, above, where it is crossed by the road to Bouillon in Belgium, Givonne; and lower down, where the road to Stenay and Montmédy crosses the ravine, is Bazeilles. These three ravines in Thursday's battle must have formed as many successive defensive positions for the French, who naturally would hold the last and strongest with the greatest tenacity. This part of the battle-field is something like that of Gravelotte; but, while there the ravines could be and actually were turned by the plateau whence they sprang, here the proximity of the Belgian frontier rendered an attempt at turning them very risky, and almost compelled a direct front attack.

While the French established themselves in this position, and drew towards them such troops as had not taken part in Tuesday's battle (among others, probably, the 12th Corps, including the Mobiles from Paris), the Germans had a day's time to concentrate their army; and when they attacked on Thursday they had on the spot the whole of the Fourth Army (Guards, 4th and 12th corps) and three corps (5th, 11th, and one Bavarian) of the Third; a force morally if not numerically superior to that of MacMahon. The fighting began at half-past seven in the morning, and at a quarter past four, when the King of Prussia telegraphed,^a it was

^a William I's telegram "On the Battle-Field of Sedan, Sept. 1, 4.15 P.M.," *The Times*, No. 26846, September 3, 1870.—*Ed.*

still going on, the Germans gaining ground on all sides. According to the Belgian reports, the villages of Bazeilles, Remilly, Villers, and Cernay were in flames, and the chapel of Givonne was in the hands of the Germans.^a This would indicate that on the left bank of the Meuse the two villages which supported, in case of a retreat, the French wings had been either taken or rendered untenable; while on the right bank the first and second lines of defence had been conquered, and the third, between Bazeilles and Givonne, was at least on the point of being abandoned by the French. Under these circumstances there can be no doubt that nightfall would see the Germans victorious and the French driven back to Sedan. This, indeed, is confirmed by telegrams from Belgium announcing the fact that MacMahon was completely hemmed in, and that thousands of French troops were crossing the frontier and being disarmed.^b

Under these circumstances there were only two alternatives open to MacMahon—capitulation or a dash across Belgian territory. The defeated army, shut up in and about Sedan—that is, in a district not larger, at best, than it would require for its encampment—could not possibly maintain itself; and even if it had been able to keep open its communication with Mézières, which is about ten miles to the west, it would still be hemmed in in a very confined strip of territory, and unable to hold out. Thus MacMahon, unable to fray a road through his enemies, must either pass on Belgian territory or surrender. As it happened, MacMahon, disabled by his wounds, was spared the pain of a decision. It fell to General De Wimpffen to announce the surrender of the French army. This conclusion can hardly fail to have been hastened by the news, supposing news could reach them, of Bazaine's decisive repulse in his efforts to get away from Metz. The Germans had foreseen his intention, and were prepared to meet him at all points. Not only Steinmetz but Prince Frederick Charles (as appears from the corps mentioned, 1st and 9th^c), were on the watch, and careful entrenchments further strengthened the barrier encircling Metz.

^a "Brussels, Sept. 2, 7.34 A.M.," *The Times*, No. 26846, September 3, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b Telegram from a special correspondent of *The Times*, datelined "Arlon, Sept. 2, 7.46 P.M.," *The Times*, No. 26846, September 3, 1870.—*Ed.*

^c Prussian official report "Malancourt, Sept. 2," *The Times*, No. 26846, September 3, 1870.—*Ed.*

NOTES ON THE WAR.—XVI^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1737, September 7, 1870]

The capitulation of Sedan settles the fate of the last French army in the field. It settles at the same time the fate of Metz and Bazaine's army; relief being now out of the question, they will have to capitulate too, perhaps this week, almost certainly not later than next week.

There remains the colossal entrenched camp of Paris, the last hope of France. The fortifications of Paris form the hugest complex of military engineering works ever constructed; they have never yet been put to the test, and consequently opinions as to their value are not only divided, but absolutely contradictory. By examining the actual facts of the case, we shall gain a safe basis upon which to found our conclusions.

Montalembert, a French cavalry officer, but a military engineer of uncommon and, perhaps, unparalleled genius, was the first to propose and work out during the latter half of the eighteenth century the plan of surrounding fortresses by detached forts at such a distance as to shelter the place itself from bombardment. Before him the outworks—citadels, lunettes, &c.—were more or less attached to the enceinte or rampart of the place, scarcely ever farther distant from it than the foot of the glacis.⁵⁰ He proposed forts large and strong enough to hold out a separate siege, and distant from the ramparts of the town from six hundred to twelve hundred yards, and even more. The new theory was for years treated with contempt in France, while it found willing pupils in Germany when, after 1815, the line of the Rhine had to be fortified. Cologne, Coblenz, Mayence, and later

^a Written between September 3 and 7, 1870.—*Ed.*

on Ulm, Rastatt, and Germersheim, were surrounded with detached forts; the proposals of Montalembert were modified by Aster and others, and a new system of fortifications thus arose, known under the name of the German school. By-and-by the French began to see the utility of detached forts, and, when Paris was fortified, it was at once evident that the immense line of ramparts round that city would not be worth constructing unless covered by detached forts, otherwise a breach effected in one place of the rampart would bring on the fall of the whole.

Modern warfare has shown in more than one instance the value of such entrenched camps, formed by a circle of detached forts, with the main fortress for its nucleus. Mantua, by its position, was an entrenched camp, so was Dantzic, more or less, in 1807, and these two were the only fortresses which ever arrested Napoleon I. Again, in 1813, Dantzic was enabled by its detached forts—field works for the most part—to offer a prolonged resistance.⁵¹ The whole of Radetzky's campaign in 1849 in Lombardy hinged on the entrenched camp of Verona, itself the nucleus of the celebrated Quadrilateral,⁵² so did the whole of the Crimean war depend on the fate of the entrenched camp of Sebastopol, which held out so long merely because the Allies were unable to invest it on all sides, and cut off supplies and reinforcements from the besieged.⁵³

The case of Sebastopol is, for our purpose, most in point, because the extent of the fortified place was larger than in any previous instance. But Paris is much larger even than Sebastopol. The circuit of the forts measures about twenty-four miles. Will the strength of the place be increased in proportion?

The works of themselves are models of their kind. They are of the utmost simplicity; a plain enceinte of bastions, without even a single demi-lune before the curtains,⁵⁴ the forts, mostly bastioned quadrangles or pentagons, without any demi-lunes or other outworks; here and there a horn-work or crown-work⁵⁵ to cover an outlying space of high ground. They are constructed not so much for passive as for active defence. The garrison of Paris is expected to come out into the open, to use the forts as supporting points for its flanks, and by constant sallies on a large scale to render impossible a regular siege of any two or three forts. Thus, whilst the forts protect the garrison of the town from a too near approach of the enemy, the garrison will have to protect the forts from siege batteries; it will have constantly to destroy the besiegers' works. Let us add that the distance of the forts from the ramparts precludes the possibility of an effective bombardment of the town until two or three at least of the forts shall have been

taken. Let us further add that the position, at the junction of the Seine and Marne, both with extremely winding courses, and with a strong range of hills on the most exposed, the north-eastern front, offers great natural advantages, which have been made the best of in the planning of the works.

If these conditions can be fulfilled, and the two million people inside can be regularly fed, Paris is undoubtedly an extremely strong place. To procure provisions for the inhabitants is not a very difficult matter, if taken in hand in time, and carried out systematically. Whether that has been done in the present instance is very doubtful. What has been done by the late Government looks like spasmodic and even thoughtless work. The accumulation of live cattle without provender for them was a perfect piece of absurdity. We may presume that, if the Germans act with their usual decision, they will find Paris but poorly provisioned for a long siege.

But how about that chief condition, the active defence, the garrison which goes out to attack the enemy, instead of striking behind the ramparts? To show the full strength of its works, and to prevent the enemy from taking advantage of its weakness, the absence of protecting outworks in the main ditches, Paris requires to count among its defenders a regular army. And that was the fundamental idea with the men who planned the works; that a defeated French army, its inability to hold the field being once established, should fall back upon Paris, and participate in the defence of the capital; either directly, as a garrison strong enough to prevent, by constant attacks, a regular siege and even a complete investment, or indirectly, by taking up a position behind the Loire, there recruiting its strength, and then falling, as opportunities might offer, upon such weak points as the besiegers, in their immense investing line, could not avoid presenting.

Now, the whole conduct of the French commanders in this war has contributed to deprive Paris of this one essential condition of its defence. There are of all the French army but the troops which remained in Paris and the corps of General Vinoy (the 13th, originally Trochu's); together, perhaps, 50,000 men, almost all, if not indeed all of them, fourth battalions and Mobile Guards. To these may be added perhaps 20,000 or 30,000 men more of fourth battalions, and an indefinite number of Mobile Guards of the provinces, raw levies totally unfit for the field. We have seen at Sedan what little use such troops are in a battle. They, no doubt, will be more trustworthy when they have forts to fall back upon, and a few weeks' drill, discipline, and fighting will certainly

improve them. But the active defence of a large place like Paris implies movements of large masses in the open, regular battles at a distance in front of the sheltering forts, attempts to break through the line of investment or to prevent its completion. And for that, for attacks on a superior enemy, where surprise and dash are required, and where the troops must be kept perfectly in hand for that purpose, the present garrison of Paris will be scarcely available.

We suppose the united Third and Fourth German armies, fully 180,000 strong, will appear before Paris in the course of next week, surround it with flying columns of cavalry, destroy the railway communications, and thereby all chance of extensive supplies, and prepare the regular investment, which will be completed on the arrival of the First and Second armies after the fall of Metz, leaving plenty of men to be sent beyond the Loire to scour the country, and prevent any attempt at the formation of a new French army. Should Paris not surrender, then the regular siege will have to begin, and, in the absence of an active defence, must proceed comparatively rapidly. This would be the regular course of things if there were none but military considerations; but affairs have now come to a point when these may be set aside by political events, to prognosticate which does not belong to our province here.

NOTES ON THE WAR.—XVII^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1739, September 9, 1870]

The time it will take the German armies to march to Paris and there open a new phase of the war gives us leisure to look back upon what has been going on behind the front of the troops in the field, before the fortresses.

Leaving out of the question Sedan, which was included as a corollary in the capitulation of MacMahon's army, the Germans have taken four fortresses—La Petite Pierre and Vitry, without a blow; Lichtenberg and Marsal, after a short bombardment. They have merely blockaded Bitche; they are besieging Strasbourg; they have bombarded, so far without result, Phalsbourg, Toul, Montmédy; and they intend to begin in a few days the regular sieges of Toul and Metz.

With the exception of Metz, which is protected by detached forts far in advance of the town, all other fortresses which resisted have been subjected to bombardment. This proceeding has, at all times, formed a part of the operations of a regular siege; at first, it was principally intended to destroy the stores of provisions and ammunition of the besieged, but since it has become the custom to secure these in bomb-proof vaults, constructed for the purpose, the bombardment has more and more been used to set fire to and destroy as many buildings as possible inside the fortress. The destruction of the property and provisions of the inhabitants of the place became a means of pressure upon them, and, through them, upon the garrison and commander. In cases where the garrison was weak, ill-disciplined, and demoralized, and where the commander was without energy, a bombardment alone often

^a Written between September 7 and 9, 1870.—*Ed.*

effected the surrender of a fortress. This was the case especially in 1815 after Waterloo,⁵⁶ when a whole series of fortresses, garrisoned chiefly by National Guards,⁵⁷ surrendered to a short bombardment without awaiting a regular siege. Avesnes, Guise, Maubeuge, Landrecies, Marienbourg, Philippeville, &c., all fell after a few hours', at best a few days', shelling. It was no doubt the recollection of these successes, and the knowledge that most of the frontier places were garrisoned chiefly by Mobile and sedentary National Guards, which induced the Germans to try the same plan again. Moreover, the introduction of rifled artillery having made shells the almost exclusive projectiles even of field artillery, it is now comparatively easy to bombard a place and set fire to its buildings with the ordinary field guns of an army corps, without awaiting, as formerly, the arrival of mortars and heavy siege howitzers.

Although recognized in modern warfare, it is not to be forgotten that the bombardment of the private houses in a fortress is always a very harsh and cruel measure, which ought not to be had recourse to without at least a reasonable hope of compelling surrender, and without a certain degree of necessity. If places like Phalsbourg, Lichtenberg, and Toul are bombarded, this may be justified on the ground that they stop mountain passes and railways, the immediate possession of which is of the greatest importance to the invader, and might reasonably be expected to follow as the result of a few days' shelling. If two of these places have so far held out, this redounds so much more to the credit of the garrison and the inhabitants. But as to the bombardment of Strasbourg, which preceded the regular siege, the case is quite different.

Strasbourg, a city of above 80,000 inhabitants, surrounded by fortifications in the antiquated manner of the sixteenth century, was strengthened by Vauban, who built a citadel outside the town, nearer the Rhine, and connected it with the ramparts of the town by the continuous lines of what was then called an entrenched camp. The citadel commanding the town, and being capable of independent defence after the town has capitulated, the simplest way to take both would be to attack the citadel at once, so as not to have to go through two successive sieges; but then, the works of the citadel are so much stronger, and its situation in the swampy lowlands near the Rhine renders the throwing up of trenches so much more difficult, that circumstances may, and generally will, advise a previous attack on the town, with the fall of which a further defence of the citadel alone would, in the eyes of a weak

commander, lose much of its purpose; except in so far as it might secure better conditions of surrender. But, at all events, if the town alone be taken, the citadel remains to be reduced, and an obstinate commander may continue to hold out, and keep the town and the besieger's establishments in it under fire.

Under these circumstances what could be the use of a bombardment of the town? If all went well, the inhabitants might demoralize the greater part of the garrison, and compel the commander to abandon the town and throw himself, with the élite of his soldiers, 3,000 to 5,000 men, into the citadel, and there continue the defence and hold the town under his fire. And the character of General Urich (for that, and not Ulrich, is the name of the gallant old soldier) was known well enough to prevent anybody from supposing that he would allow himself to be intimidated into a surrender, both of town and citadel, by any amount of shells thrown into them. To bombard a place which has an independent citadel commanding it is in itself an absurdity and a useless cruelty. Certainly, stray shells or the slow shelling of a siege will always do damage in a besieged town; but that is nothing compared to the destruction and sacrifice of civilian life during a regular, systematic six days' bombardment such as has been inflicted upon the unfortunate city.

The Germans say they must have the town soon, for political reasons. They intend to keep it at the peace. If that be so, the bombardment, the severity of which is unparalleled, was not only a crime, it was also a blunder. An excellent way, indeed, to obtain the sympathies of a town which is doomed to annexation, by setting it on fire and killing numbers of the inhabitants by exploding shells! And has the bombardment advanced the surrender by one single day? Not that we can see. If the Germans want to annex the town and break the French sympathies of the inhabitants, their plan would have been to take the town by as short a regular siege as possible, then besiege the citadel, and place the commander on the horns of the dilemma, either to neglect some of the means of defence at his disposal or to fire on the town.

As it is, the immense quantities of shell thrown into Strasbourg have not superseded the necessity for a regular siege. On the 29th of August the first parallel had to be opened on the north-western side of the fortress, near Schiltigheim, running at a distance of from 500 to 650 yards from the works. On the 3rd of September the second parallel (some correspondents call it by mistake the third) was opened at 330 yards; the useless bombardment has

been stopped by order of the King of Prussia, and it may take till about the 17th or 20th before a practicable breach can be made in the ramparts. But all estimates in this case are hazardous. It is the first instance of a siege in which the percussion shells of modern rifled artillery are used against masonry. In their trials during the dismantling of Jülich the Prussians obtained extraordinary results; masonry was breached and blockhouses were demolished at great distances, and by indirect fire (that is, from batteries where the object fired at could not be seen); but this was merely a peace experiment and will have to be confirmed in actual war. Strasbourg will serve to give us a pretty good idea of the effect of the modern heavy rifled artillery in siege operations, and on this account its siege deserves to be watched with peculiar interest.

THE RISE AND FALL OF ARMIES^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1740, September 10, 1870]

When Louis Napoleon founded the Empire "which was peace,"^b on the votes of the peasants and on the bayonets of their sons, the soldiers of the army, that army did not occupy a particularly prominent rank in Europe, except, perhaps, by tradition. There had been peace since 1815—peace interrupted, for some armies, by the events of 1848 and 1849. The Austrians had gone through a successful campaign in Italy and a disastrous one in Hungary; neither Russia in Hungary nor Prussia in South Germany had gathered any laurels worth speaking of⁵⁸; Russia had her permanent war in the Caucasus and France in Algeria.⁵⁹ But none of the great armies had met another on the field of battle since 1815. Louis Philippe had left the French army in a condition of anything but efficiency; the Algerian troops, and especially the pet corps founded more or less for African warfare—Chasseurs-à-Pied,^c Zouaves, Turcos, Chasseurs d'Afrique^d—were indeed the objects of much attention; but the mass of the infantry, the cavalry, and the matériel in France were much neglected. The Republic did not improve the state of the army. But the Empire came which was peace, and—"si vis pacem, para bellum"^e—to it the army at once became the chief object of attention. At that time France possessed a great many comparatively young officers who

^a Written on September 9 or 10, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b Napoleon III's speech at Bordeaux, October 9, 1852, *Oeuvres*, t. 3, Paris, 1856.—*Ed.*

^c Light infantry.—*Ed.*

^d African infantry.—*Ed.*

^e "If you desire to maintain peace, be prepared for war" (Vegetius, *Epitome institutorum rei militaris*, 3, prol.).—*Ed.*

had served, in high positions, in Africa at the time when there was still some serious fighting there. She possessed, in the Algerian special corps, troops who undoubtedly were superior to any others in Europe. She had, in the numerous substitutes,⁶⁰ a greater number of professional soldiers who had seen service, real veterans, than any other continental Power. The one thing necessary was to elevate as much as possible the mass of the troops to the level of the special corps. This was done to a great extent. The "pas gymnastique" (the "double" of the English), hitherto practised by the special corps only, was extended to the whole infantry, and thus a rapidity of manoeuvring was obtained previously unknown to armies. The cavalry was mounted, as far as possible, with better horses; the matériel of the whole army was looked to and completed; and, finally, the Crimean war was commenced. The organization of the French army showed to great advantage beside that of the English; the numerical proportions of the Allied armies naturally gave the principal part of the glory—whatever there was of it—to the French; the character of the war, circling entirely round one grand siege, brought out to the best advantage the peculiarly mathematical genius of the French as applied by their engineers; and altogether the Crimean war again elevated the French army to the rank of the first army in Europe.

Then came the period of the rifle and the rifled gun. The incomparable superiority of the fire of the rifled over the smooth-bore musket led to the abolition, or in some cases to the general rifling, of the latter.^a Prussia had her old muskets converted into rifles in less than one year; England gradually gave the Enfield, Austria an excellent small-bore rifle (Lorentz), to the whole infantry. France alone retained the old smooth-bore musket, the rifle being confined, as before, to the special corps alone. But while the mass of her artillery retained the short twelve-pounder, a pet invention of the Emperor, but of inferior efficiency to the old artillery on account of the reduced charge—a number of rifled four-pounder batteries—were equipped and held in readiness for a war. Their construction was faulty, being the first rifled guns made since the fifteenth century; but their efficiency was much superior to that of any smooth-bore field gun in existence.

Under these circumstances the Italian war broke out.⁶¹ The Austrian army had rather easy-going ways; extraordinary efforts had seldom been its forte; in fact, it was respectable, and nothing

^a Engels has "former", clearly a slip of the pen.—*Ed.*

more. Its commanders counted some of the best and a great many of the worst generals of the age. Court influence brought the mass of the latter into high command. The blunders of the Austrian generals, the greater ambition of the French soldiers, gave the French army a rather hard-fought victory. Magenta brought no trophies at all; Solferino only a few; and politics dropped the curtain before the real difficulty of the war, the contest for the Quadrilateral, could come off.

After this campaign the French was the model army of Europe. If after the Crimean war the French Chasseur-à-Pied had already become the *beau idéal* of a foot soldier, this admiration was now extended to the whole of the French army. Its institutions were studied; its camps became instructing schools for officers of all nations. The invincibility of the French became almost a European article of faith. In the meantime France rifled all her old muskets, and armed all her artillery with rifled cannon.

But the same campaign which elevated the French army to the first rank in Europe gave rise to efforts which ended in procuring for it, first a rival, then a conqueror. The Prussian army from 1815 to 1850 had undergone the same process of rusting as all other European hosts. But for Prussia this rust of peace became a greater clog in her fighting machinery than anywhere else. The Prussian system at that time united a line and a landwehr regiment in every brigade, so that one half of the field troops had to be formed anew on mobilization. The material for the line and landwehr had become utterly deficient; there was a great deal of petty pilfering among the responsible men. Altogether, when the conflict of 1850 with Austria compelled a mobilization, the whole thing broke down miserably, and Prussia had to pass through the Caudine Forks.⁶² The matériel was immediately replaced at great cost, and the whole organization revised, but in its details only. When the Italian war of 1859 compelled another mobilization, the matériel was in better order, but not even then complete; and the spirit of the landwehr, excellent for a national war, showed itself completely unmanageable during a military demonstration which might lead to a war with either one or the other of the belligerents. The reorganization of the army was resolved upon.

This reorganization, carried out behind the back of the Parliament, kept the whole of the thirty-two landwehr regiments of infantry under arms, gradually filling up the ranks by an increased levy of recruits, and finally forming them into line regiments, increasing their number from forty to seventy-two. The artillery was increased in the same proportion, the cavalry in a

much smaller one. This increase of the army was about proportional to that of the population of Prussia from 1815 to 1860, from 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ millions. In spite of the opposition of the Second Chamber,⁶³ it remained practically in force. The army was, besides, made more efficient in every respect. It had been the first to supply the whole of the infantry with rifles. Now the needle-gun breech-loader, which had hitherto been supplied to a fraction of the infantry only, was given to all, and a reserve stock prepared. The experiments with rifled artillery, carried on for some years, were brought to a close, and the adopted models gradually replaced the smooth-bores. The excessive parade drill, inherited from stiff old Frederick William III, made room more and more for a better system of training, in which outpost duty and skirmishing were chiefly practised, and the models in both branches were to a great extent the Algerian French. For the detached battalions the company column was adopted as the chief fighting formation. Target-shooting was paid great attention to, and capital results were obtained. The cavalry was likewise much improved. The breed of horses, especially in East Prussia, the great horse-breeding country, had been attended to for years, much Arab blood having been introduced, and the fruits now began to become available. The East Prussian horse, inferior in size and speed to the English trooper, is a far superior war horse, and will stand five times as much campaigning. The professional education of the officers, which had been much neglected for a long time, was again screwed up to the prescribed very high level, and altogether the Prussian army was undergoing a complete change. The Danish war⁶⁴ was sufficient to show to any one who would see that this was the case; but people would not see. Then came the thunderclap of 1866, and people could not help seeing. Next, there was an extension of the Prussian system to the North German army, and in its fundamental essentials to the South German armies too; and how easily it can be introduced the result has shown. And then came 1870.

But in 1870 the French army was no longer that of 1859. The speculation, jobbery, and general misuse of public duty for private interest which formed the essential base of the system of the Second Empire, had seized the army. If Haussmann and his crew made millions out of the immense Paris job,⁶⁵ if the whole Department of Public Works, if every Government contract, every civil office, was shamelessly and openly turned into a means of robbing the public, was the army alone to remain virtuous—the army to which Louis Napoleon owed everything—the army,

commanded by men who were quite as fond of wealth as the more fortunate civilian hangers-on of the Court? And when it came to be known that the Government was in the habit of receiving the money for substitutes without providing these substitutes—a thing necessarily known to every regimental officer; when those other peculations in stores &c., commenced which were to supply the funds secretly paid over to the Emperor by the Ministry of War; when the highest places had to be held by men who were in the secret and could not be dismissed whatever they did or neglected—then the demoralization spread to the regimental officers. We are far from saying that peculation at the public expense became common among them; but contempt for their superiors, neglect of duty, and decay of discipline were the necessary consequences. If the chiefs had commanded respect, would the officers have dared, as was the rule, to drive in coaches on the march? The whole thing had become rotten; the atmosphere of corruption in which the Second Empire lived had at last taken effect upon the main prop of that Empire, the army; in the hour of trial, there was nothing but the glorious traditions of the service and the innate bravery of the soldiers to oppose the enemy, and these are not alone sufficient to keep an army in the foremost rank.

NOTES ON THE WAR.—XVIII^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1744, September 15, 1870]

There still appears to exist great misapprehension with regard to the siege operations now going on in France. Some of our contemporaries, *The Times* for instance, incline towards the opinion that the Germans, excellent though they be in the field, do not understand how to carry on a siege^b; others suppose that the siege of Strasbourg is carried on for the purpose not so much of getting hold of the town as of making experiments and exercising the German engineers and artillerists. And all this because neither Strasbourg, nor Toul, nor Metz, nor Phalsbourg has as yet surrendered. It appears to be completely forgotten that the last siege carried on previous to this war, that of Sebastopol, required eleven months of open trenches before the place was reduced.

To rectify such crude notions, which could not be put forth but by people unacquainted with military matters, it will be necessary to recall to them what sort of a proceeding a siege really is. The rampart of most fortresses is bastioned—that is to say, it has at its angles pentagonal projections called bastions, which protect by their fire both the space in front of the works and the ditch lying immediately at their foot. In this ditch, between every two bastions, there is a detached triangular work called the demi-lune, which covers part of the bastions, and the curtain—that is, the portion of rampart between them; the ditch extends round this demi-lune. Outside this main ditch there is the covered way, a

^a Written between September 10 and 15, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b“We are officially informed that...”, *The Times*, No. 26854, September 13, 1870.—*Ed.*

broad road protected by the edge of the glacis, an elevation of ground about seven feet high, and gently sloping down externally. In many cases there are other works added to complicate the difficulties of the attack. The ramparts of all these works are lined at the bottom with masonry or protected by water in the ditches, so as to render an assault on the intact works impossible; and the works are so arranged that the outer ones are always commanded—that is, looked down upon—by the inner ones, while they themselves command the field by the height of their ramparts.

To attack such a fortress the method perfected by Vauban is still the one made use of, although the rifled artillery of the besieged may compel variations if the ground before the fortress be perfectly level to a great distance. But as almost all these fortresses were constructed under the reign of smooth-bore artillery, the ground beyond 800 yards from the works is generally left out of the calculation, and in almost every case will give the besiegers a sheltered approach up to that distance without regular trenches. The first thing, then, is to invest the place, drive in its outposts and other detachments, reconnoitre the works, get the siege guns, ammunition, and other stores to the front, and organize the dépôts. In the present war a first bombardment by field guns also belonged to this preliminary period, which may last a considerable time. Strasbourg was loosely invested on the 10th of August, closely about the 20th, bombarded from the 23rd to the 28th, and yet the regular siege began on the 29th only. This regular siege dates from the opening of the first parallel, a trench with the earth thrown up on the side towards the fortress, so as to hide and shelter the men passing through it. This first parallel generally encircles the works at a distance of from 600 to 700 yards. In it are established the enfilading batteries; they are placed in the prolongation of all the faces—that is, those lines of rampart whose fire commands the field; and this is done upon all that part of the fortress which is subjected to attack. Their object is to fire along these faces, and thus to destroy the guns and kill the gunners placed upon them. There must be at least twenty such batteries, with from two to three guns each; say fifty heavy guns in all. There were also usually placed in the first parallel a number of mortars to bombard the town or the bombproof magazines of the garrison; they will, with our present artillery, be required only for the latter purpose, rifled guns being now sufficient for the former.

From the first parallel, trenches are pushed in advance in lines, the prolongation of which does not touch the works of the

fortress, so that none of the works can enfilade them; they advance in zigzag until they arrive within about 350 yards from the works, where the second parallel is then traced—a trench similar to the first, but shorter in length. This is generally done the fourth or fifth night after the opening of the trenches. In the second parallel are established the counter-batteries, one against each of the attacked faces, and nearly parallel to them; they are to demolish the guns and ramparts face to face, and cross their fire with the enfilading batteries. They will contain in all about sixty guns of heavy calibre. Then, again, the besiegers advance by new zigzags, which become shorter and closer together the nearer they come to the fortress. At about 150 yards from the works the half-parallel is dug out for mortar batteries, and at the foot of the glacis, about sixty yards from the works, the third parallel is placed, which again contains mortar batteries. This may be completed on the ninth or tenth night of open trenches.

In this proximity to the works the real difficulty begins. The artillery fire of the besieged, as far as it commands the open, will by this time have been pretty nearly silenced, but the musketry from the ramparts is now more effective than ever, and will retard the work in the trenches very much. The approaches now have to be made with much greater caution and upon a different plan, which we cannot explain here in detail. The eleventh night may bring the besieger to the salient angles of the covered way, in front of the salient points of the bastions and demi-lunes; and by the sixteenth night he may have completed the crowning of the glacis—that is to say, carried along his trenches behind the crest of the glacis parallel to the covered way. Then only will he be in a position to establish batteries in order to break the masonry of the ramparts so as to effect a passage across the ditch into the fortress, and to silence the guns on the bastion flanks, which fire along the ditch and forbid its passage. These flanks and their guns may be destroyed and the breach effected on the seventeenth day. On the following night the descent into the ditch and a covered way across it to protect the storming party against flanking fire may be completed and the assault given.

We have in this sketch attempted to give an account of the course of siege operations against one of the weakest and simplest classes of fortress (a Vauban's hexagon), and to fix the time necessary for the various stages of the siege—if undisturbed by successful sallies—on the supposition that the defence does not display extraordinary activity, courage, or resources. Yet, even under these favourable circumstances, we see it will take at least

seventeen days before the main ramparts can be breached, and thereby the place opened to an assault. If the garrison be sufficient in number and well supplied, there is no military reason whatever why they should surrender before; from a merely military point of view it is nothing but their duty that they should hold out at least so long. And then people complain that Strasbourg, which has been subjected to but fourteen days of open trenches, and which possesses outworks on the front of attack, enabling it to hold out at least five days longer than the average—that Strasbourg has not yet been taken. They complain that Metz, Toul, Phalsbourg have not yet surrendered. But we do not yet know whether a single trench has been opened against Toul, and of the other fortresses we know that they are not yet regularly besieged at all. As to Metz, there seems at present no intention to besiege it regularly; the starving out of Bazaine's army appears the most effective way of taking it. These impatient writers ought to know that there are but very few commanders of fortresses who will surrender to a patrol of four Lancers, or even to a bombardment, if they have anything like sufficient garrisons and stores at their command. If Stettin surrendered in 1807 to a regiment of cavalry, if the French border fortresses in 1815 capitulated under the effect, or even the fear, of a short bombardment, we must not forget that Woerth²² and Spicheren²⁴ together amounted neither to a Jena³⁵ nor to a Waterloo⁵⁶; and, moreover, it would be preposterous to doubt that there are plenty of officers in the French army who can hold out a regular siege even with a garrison of Gardes Mobiles.

HOW TO FIGHT THE PRUSSIANS^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1746, September 17, 1870]

After the Italian war of 1859, when the French military power was at its height, Prince Frederick Charles of Prussia, the same who is now investing Bazaine's army in Metz, wrote a pamphlet, "How to Fight the French."^b At the present day, when the immense military strength of Germany, organized upon the Prussian system, is carrying everything before it, people begin to ask themselves who is in future, and how, to fight the Prussians. And when a war in which Germany, at the beginning, merely defended her own against French *chauvinisme* appears to be changing gradually, but surely, into a war in the interests of a new German *chauvinisme*, it is worth while to consider that question.

"Providence always is on the side of the big battalions" was a favourite way of *the* Napoleon's to explain how battles were won and lost.⁶⁶ It is upon this principle that Prussia has acted. She took care to have the "big battalions." When, in 1807, Napoleon forbade her to have an army of more than 40,000 men, she dismissed her recruits after six months' drill, and put fresh men in their places; and in 1813 she was able to bring into the field 250,000 soldiers out of a population of four-and-a-half millions. Afterwards, this same principle of short service with the regiment and long liability for service in the reserve was more fully developed, and, besides, brought into harmony with the necessities of an absolute monarchy. The men were kept from two to three years with the regiments, so as not only to drill them well, but also to break them in completely to habits of unconditional obedience.

^a Written about September 16, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b [Friedrich Karl von Preussen,] *Ueber die Kampfweise der Franzosen* [1860].—*Ed.*

Now, here is the weak point in the Prussian system. It has to reconcile two different and finally incompatible objects. On the one hand, it pretends to make every able-bodied man a soldier; to have a standing army for no other object than to be a school in which the citizens learn the use of arms, and a nucleus round which they rally in time of attack from abroad. So far the system is purely defensive. But, on the other hand, this same army is to be the armed support, the mainstay, of a quasi-absolute Government; and for this purpose the school of arms for the citizens has to be changed into a school of absolute obedience to superiors, and of royalist sentiments. This can be done by length of service only. Here the incompatibility comes out. Foreign defensive policy requires the drilling of many men for a short period, so as to have in the reserve large numbers in case of foreign attack; and home policy requires the breaking in of a limited number of men for a longer period, so as to have a trustworthy army in case of internal revolt. The quasi-absolute monarchy chose an intermediate way. It kept the men full three years under arms, and limited the number of recruits according to its financial means. The boasted universal liability to military service does not in reality exist. It is changed into a conscription distinguished from that of other countries merely by being more oppressive. It costs more money, it takes more men, and it extends their liability to be called out to a far longer period than is the case anywhere else. And, at the same time, what originally was a people armed for their own defence now becomes changed into a ready and handy army of attack, into an instrument of Cabinet policy.

In 1861 Prussia had a population of rather more than eighteen millions, and every year 227,000 young men became liable to military service by attaining the age of twenty.^a Out of these, fully one-half were bodily fit for service—if not there and then, at least a couple of years afterwards. Well, instead of 114,000 recruits, not more than 63,000 were annually placed in the ranks; so that very near one-half of the able-bodied male population were excluded from instruction in the use of arms. Whoever has been in Prussia during a war must have been struck by the enormous number of strong hearty fellows between twenty and thirty-two who remained quietly at home. The state of “suspended animation” which special

^a “Resultate der Ersatz-Aushebungsgeschäfts im preussischen Staate in den Jahren von 1855 bis mit 1862”, *Zeitschrift des königlich preussischen statistischen Bureaus*, No. 3, March 1864.—*Ed.*

correspondents have noticed in Prussia during the war exists in their own imagination only.^a

Since 1866 the number of annual recruits in the North-German Confederation has not exceeded 93,000, on a population of 30,000,000. If the full complement of able-bodied young men—even after the strictest medical scrutiny—were taken, it would amount to at least 170,000. Dynastic necessities on the one side, financial necessities on the other, determined this limitation of the number of recruits. The army remained a handy instrument for absolutist purposes at home, for Cabinet wars abroad; but as to the full strength of the nation for defence, that was not nearly made available.

Still this system maintained an immense superiority over the old-fashioned cadre system of the other great continental armies. As compared to them, Prussia drew twice the number of soldiers from the same number of population. And she has managed to make them good soldiers too, thanks to a system which exhausted her resources, and which would never have been endured by the people had it not been for Louis Napoleon's constant feelers for the Rhine frontier, and for the aspirations towards German unity of which this army was instinctively felt to be the necessary instrument. The Rhine and the unity of Germany once secure, that army system must become intolerable.

Here we have the answer to the question, How to fight the Prussians. If a nation equally populous, equally intelligent, equally brave, equally civilized were to carry out in reality that which in Prussia is done on paper only, to make a soldier of every able-bodied citizen; if that nation limited the actual time of service in peace and for drill to what is really required for the purpose and no more; if it kept up the organization for the war establishment in the same effective way as Prussia has lately done—then, we say, that nation would possess the same immense advantage over Prussianized Germany that Prussianized Germany has proved herself to possess over France in this present war. According to first-rate Prussian authorities (including General von Roon, the Minister of War) two years' service is quite sufficient to turn a lout into a good soldier. With the permission of her Majesty's^b martinets, we should even be inclined to say that for the mass of the recruits eighteen months—two summers and one winter—would suffice. But the exact length of service is a

^a "Berlin, July 17", *The Times*, No. 26807, July 20, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b Victoria.—*Ed.*

secondary question. The Prussians, as we have seen, obtained excellent results after six months' service, and with men who had but just ceased to be serfs. The main point is, that the principle of universal liability to service be really carried out.

And if the war be continued to that bitter end for which the German Philistines are now shouting, the dismemberment of France, we may depend upon it that the French *will* adopt that principle. They have been so far a warlike but not a military nation. They have hated service in that army of theirs which was established on the cadre system, with long service and few drilled reserves. They will be quite willing to serve in an army with short service and long liability on the reserve, and they will do even more, if that will enable them to wipe out the insult and restore the integrity of France. And then, the "big battalions" will be on the side of France, and the effect they produce will be the same as in this war, unless Germany adopt the same system. But there will be this difference. As the Prussian landwehr system was progress compared with the French cadre system, because it reduced the time of service and increased the number of men capable to defend their country, so will this new system of really universal liability to serve be an advance upon the Prussian system. Armaments for war will become more colossal, but peace-armies will become smaller; the citizens of a country will, every one of them, have to fight out the quarrels of their rulers in person and no longer by substitute; defence will become stronger, and attack will become more difficult; and the very extension of armies will finally turn out to be a reduction of expense and a guarantee of peace.

NOTES ON THE WAR.—XIX ^{a67}

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1754, September 27, 1870]

The fortifications of Paris have shown their value already. To them alone it is owing that the Germans have not been in possession of the town for more than a week. In 1814 half a day's fighting about the heights of Montmartre compelled the city to capitulate. In 1815, a range of earthworks, constructed from the beginning of the campaign, created some delay; but their resistance would have been very short had it not been for the absolute certainty on the part of the Allies that the city would be handed over to them without fighting.⁶⁸ In this present war, whatever the Germans may have expected from diplomacy has not been allowed to interfere with their military action. And this same military action, short, sharp, and decisive up to the middle of September, became slow, hesitating, *tâtonnante*^b from the day the German columns got within the sphere of operation of that immense fortified camp, Paris. And naturally so. The mere investment of such a vast place requires time and caution, even if you approach it with 200,000 or 250,000 men. A force so large as that will be hardly sufficient to invest it properly on all sides, though, as in this present case, the town contains no army fit to take the field and to fight pitched battles. That there is no such army in Paris the pitiable results of General Ducrot's sally near Meudon have most decisively proved.⁶⁹ Here the troops of the line behaved positively worse than the Garde Mobile; they actually "bolted,"^c the renowned Zouaves leading the way. The thing is

^a Written between September 23 and 27, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b Uncertain.—*Ed.*

^c See official German report "Ferrieres, Sept. 22", *The Times*, No. 26863, September 23, 1870, and French report "Tours, Sept. 25, Evening", *The Times*, No. 26865, September 26, 1870.—*Ed.*

easily explained. The old soldiers—mostly men of MacMahon's, De Faily's, and Félix Douay's corps, who had fought at Woerth—were completely demoralized by two disastrous retreats and six weeks of constant ill-success; and it is but natural that such causes will tell most severely upon mercenaries, for the Zouaves, consisting mostly of substitutes, deserve no other name. And these were the men who were expected to steady the raw recruits with which the thinned battalions of the line had been filled up. After this affair there may be small raids, successful here and there, but there will scarcely be any more battles in the open.

Another point: The Germans say that Paris is commanded by their guns from the heights near Sceaux^a; but this assertion is to be taken with a considerable grain of salt. The nearest heights on which they can have placed any batteries above Fontenay-aux-Roses, about 1,500 metres from the fort of Vanves, are fully 8,000 metres, or 8,700 yards, from the centre of the town. The Germans have no heavier field artillery than the so-called rifled 6-pounder (weight of projectile about 15 lb.), but even if they had rifled 12-pounders, with projectiles of 32 lb., ready to hand, the extreme range of these guns, at the angles of elevation for which their limbers are constructed, would not exceed 4,500 or 5,000 metres. Thus this boast need not frighten the Parisians. Unless two or more forts are taken, Paris need not fear a bombardment; and even then the shells would spread themselves so much over the enormous surface that the damage must be comparatively small and the moral effect almost nothing. Look at the enormous mass of artillery brought to bear upon Strasbourg; how much more will be required for reducing Paris, even if we keep in mind that the regular attack by parallels will naturally be confined to a small portion of the works! And until the Germans can bring together under the walls of Paris all this artillery, with ammunition and all other appliances, Paris is safe. From the moment the siege matériel is ready, from that moment alone does the real danger begin.

We see now clearly what great intrinsic strength there is in the fortifications of Paris. If to this passive strength, this mere power of resistance, were added the active strength, the power of attack of a real army, the value of the former would be immediately increased. While the investing force is unavoidably divided, by the rivers Seine and Marne, into at least three separate portions, which cannot communicate with each other except by bridges

^a "Berlin, Sept. 23, 10 A.M.," *The Times*, No. 26863, September 23, 1870.—*Ed.*

constructed to the rear of their fighting positions—that is to say, by roundabout roads and with loss of time only—the great mass of the army in Paris could attack with superior forces any one of these three portions at its choice, inflict losses upon it, destroy any works commenced, and retire under shelter of the forts before the besiegers' supports had time to come up. In case this army in Paris were not too weak compared with the besiegers' forces, it might render the complete investment of the place impossible, or break through it at any time. And how necessary it is to completely invest a besieged place so long as reinforcements from without are not completely out of the question has been shown in the case of Sebastopol, where the siege was protracted entirely by the constant arrival of Russian reinforcements in the northern half of the fortress, access to which could be cut off at the very last moment only. The more events will develop themselves before Paris, the more evident will become the perfect absurdity of the Imperialist generalship during this war, by which two armies were sacrificed and Paris left without its chief arm of defence, the power of retaliating attack for attack.

As to the provisioning such a large town, the difficulties appear to us even less than in the case of a smaller place. A capital like Paris is not only provided with a perfect commercial organization for provisioning itself at all times; it is at the same time the chief market and storehouse where the agricultural produce of an extensive district is collected and exchanged. An active Government could easily take measures to provide, by using these facilities, ample stores for the duration of an average siege. Whether this has been done we have no means of judging; but why it might not have been done, and rapidly too, we cannot see.

Anyhow, if the fighting goes on "to the bitter end," as we now hear it will,^a resistance will probably not be very long from the day the trenches are opened. The masonry of the scarps is rather exposed, and the absence of demi-lunes before the curtains favours the advance of the besieger and the breaching of the walls. The confined space of the forts admits of a limited number of defenders only; their resistance to an assault, unless seconded by an advance of troops through the intervals of the forts, cannot be serious. But if the trenches can be carried up the glacis of the forts without being destroyed by such sallies of the army in Paris, this very fact proves that that army is too weak—in numbers,

^a "Paris, Sept. 14", *The Times*, No. 26858, September 17, 1870.—*Ed.*

organization, or morale—to sally forth with a chance of success on the night of the assault.

A couple of forts once taken, it is to be hoped the town will desist from a hopeless struggle. If not, the operation of a siege will have to be repeated, a couple of breaches effected, and the town again summoned to surrender. And if that be again rejected, then may come the equally chanceless struggle on the barricades. Let us hope that such useless sacrifices will be spared.

THE STORY OF THE NEGOTIATIONS^{a 70}

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1758, October 1, 1870]

The story we laid before our readers yesterday according to the version of M. Jules Favre we have no difficulty in accepting as correct; always excepting little errors, such as when Bismarck is said to intend the annexation of Metz, Château-Salins, and "Soissons."^b M. Favre evidently is ignorant of the geographical whereabouts of Soissons. The Count said Sarrebourg, which town has long been singled out as falling within the new strategical border line, while Soissons is as much outside of it as Paris or Troyes. In his rendering of the terms of the conversation M. Favre may not be quite exact; but where he asserts facts contested by the officious Prussian press, neutral Europe will be generally disposed to go by his statement. Thus, if at Berlin what M. Favre says about the surrender of Mont Valérien being proposed at one time is disputed, there will be few to believe that M. Favre either invented this or totally misunderstood Count Bismarck's meaning.

His own report shows but too clearly how little M. Favre understood the actual situation, or how confused and indistinct was his view of it. He came to treat about an armistice which was to lead to peace. His supposition that France still has the power of compelling her opponents to abandon all claim to territorial cession we readily excuse; but on what terms he expected to obtain a cessation of hostilities it is hard to say. The points finally insisted upon were the surrender of Strasbourg, Toul, and Verdun—their

^a Written on October 1, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b Here and below the reference is to "The Story of the Negotiations", *The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1757, September 30, 1870.—*Ed.*

garrisons to become prisoners of war. Toul and Verdun appear to have been more or less conceded. But Strasbourg? The demand was taken by M. Favre simply as an insult and as nothing else.

“You forget that you are speaking to a Frenchman, M. le Comte. To thus sacrifice an heroic garrison whose behaviour has been admired universally, and more particularly by us, would be cowardice, and I promise not to say that you have offered us such a condition.”

In this reply we find little consideration of the facts of the case—nothing but an outburst of patriotic sentiment. Since this sentiment operated very powerfully in Paris, it was not, of course, to be set aside at such a moment; but it might have been as well to have pondered the facts of the case too. Strasbourg had been regularly besieged long enough to make its early fall a matter of positive certainty. A fortress regularly besieged can resist a given time; it may even prolong its defence for a few days by extraordinary efforts; but, unless there arrive an army to relieve it, it is mathematically certain that fall it must. Trochu and the engineering staff in Paris are perfectly aware of this; they know that there is no army anywhere to come to the relief of Strasbourg; and yet Trochu's colleague in the Government, Jules Favre, appears to have put all this out of his reckoning. The only thing he saw in the demand to surrender Strasbourg was an insult to himself, to the garrison of Strasbourg, to the French nation. But the chief parties interested, General Uhrich and his garrison, had certainly done enough for their own honour. To spare them the last few days of a perfectly hopeless struggle, if thereby the feeble chances of salvation for France could be improved, would not have been an insult to them, but a well-merited reward. General Uhrich must necessarily have preferred to surrender to an order from the Government, and for an equivalent, rather than to the threat of an assault and for no return whatsoever.

In the meantime, Toul and Strasbourg have fallen, and Verdun, so long as Metz holds out, is of no earthly military use to the Germans, who thus have got, without conceding the armistice, almost everything Bismarck was bargaining for with Jules Favre. It would, then, appear that never was there an armistice offered on cheaper and more generous terms by the conqueror; never one more foolishly refused by the vanquished. Jules Favre's intelligence certainly does not shine in the transaction, though his instincts were probably right enough; whereas Bismarck appears in the new character of the generous conqueror. The offer, as M. Favre understood it, was uncommonly cheap; and, had it been

only what he thought, it was one to be accepted at once. But then the proposal was something more than he perceived it to be.

Between two armies in the field an armistice is a matter easily settled. A line of demarcation—perhaps a belt of neutral country between the two belligerents—is established, and the thing is arranged. But here there is only one army in the field; the other, as far as it still exists, is shut up in fortresses more or less invested. What is to become of all these places? What is to be their status during the armistice? Bismarck takes care not to say a word about all this. If the fortnight's armistice be concluded, and nothing said therein relating to these towns, the *status quo* is maintained as a matter of course, except as regards actual hostilities against the garrisons and works. Thus Bitche, Metz, Phalsbourg, Paris, and we know not how many other fortified places, would remain invested and cut off from all supplies and communications; the people inside them would eat up their provisions just as if there was no armistice; and thus the armistice would do for the besiegers almost as much as continued fighting would have done. Nay, it might even occur that in the midst of the armistice one or more of these places would completely exhaust their stores, and might have to surrender to the blockaders there and then, in order to avoid absolute starvation. From this it appears that Count Bismarck, astute as ever, saw his way to making the armistice reduce the enemy's fortresses. Of course, if the negotiations had continued far enough to lead to a draft agreement, the French staff would have found this out, and would necessarily have made such demands, relatively to the invested towns, that the whole thing probably would have fallen through. But it was M. Jules Favre's business to probe Bismarck's proposals to the bottom, and to draw out what the latter had an interest to hide. If he had inquired what was to be the status of the blockaded towns during the armistice, he would not have given Count Bismarck the opportunity of displaying before the world an apparent magnanimity, which was too deep for M. Favre though it was but skin deep. Instead of that, he fires up at the demand for Strasbourg, with its garrison as prisoners of war, in a way which makes it clear to all the world that even after the severe lessons of the last two months, the spokesman of the French Government was incapable of appreciating the actual facts of the situation because he was still *sous la domination de la phrase*.^a

^a Under the sway of the phrase.—*Ed.*

NOTES ON THE WAR.—XX^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1759, October 3, 1870]

It is a surprising fact, even after the inconceivable blunders which have led to the practical annihilation of the French armies, that France should be virtually at the mercy of a conqueror who holds possession of barely one-eighth of her territory. The country actually occupied by the Germans is bounded by a line drawn from Strasbourg to Versailles, and another from Versailles to Sedan. Within this narrow strip the French still hold the fortresses of Paris, Metz, Montmédy, Verdun, Thionville, Bitche, and Phalsbourg. The observation, blockade, or siege of these fortresses employ nearly all the forces that have so far been sent into France. There may be plenty of cavalry left to scour the country round Paris as far as Orléans, Rouen, and Amiens, and even farther; but a serious occupation of any extensive district is not to be thought of at present. There is certainly a force of some 40,000 or 50,000 landwehr now in Alsace south of Strasbourg, and this army may be raised to double its strength by the greater portion of the besieging corps from Strasbourg. These troops are intended, it appears, for an excursion towards the southern portions of France: it is stated that they are to march upon Belfort, Besançon, and Lyons. Now, every one of these three fortresses is a large entrenched camp, with detached forts at a fair distance from the main rampart; and a siege, or even a serious blockade, of all these three places at once would take more than the forces of this army. We take it therefore for granted that this assertion is a mere blind, and that the new German army will take no more notice of these

^a Written between October 1 and 3, 1870.—*Ed.*

fortresses than it can help; that it will march into and eat up the valley of the Saône, the richest part of Burgundy, and then advance towards the Loire, to open communications with the army round Paris, and to be employed according to circumstances. But even this strong body of troops, while it has no direct communications with the army before Paris, so as to enable it to dispense with direct and independent communications with the Rhine, even this strong body of troops is employed on a mere raid, and unable to hold in subjection an extensive territory. Thus its operations for a couple of weeks to come will not increase the actual hold the Germans have upon French soil, which remains limited to barely one-eighth of the whole extent of France; and yet France, though she will not own to it, is virtually conquered. How is this possible?

The main cause is the excessive centralization of all administration in France, and especially of military administration. Up to a very recent time France was divided, for military purposes, into twenty-three districts, each containing, as much as possible, the garrisons composing one division of infantry, along with cavalry and artillery. Between the commanders of these divisions and the Ministry of War there was no intermediate link. These divisions, moreover, were merely administrative, not military organizations. The regiments composing them were not expected to be brigaded in war; they were merely in time of peace under the disciplinary control of the same general. As soon as a war was imminent they might be sent to quite different army corps, divisions, or brigades. As to a divisional staff other than administrative, or personally attached to the general in command, such a thing did not exist. Under Louis Napoleon, these twenty-three divisions were united in six army corps, each under a marshal of France. But these army corps were no more permanent organizations for war than the divisions. They were organized for political, not for military ends.⁷¹ They had no regular staff. They were the very reverse of the Prussian army corps, each of which is permanently organized for war, with its quota of infantry, cavalry, artillery, and engineers, with its military, medical, judicial, and administrative staff ready for a campaign. In France the administrative portion of the army (Intendance and so forth) received their orders, not from the marshal or general in command, but from Paris direct. If under these circumstances Paris becomes paralyzed, if communication with it be cut off, there is no nucleus of organization left in the provinces; they are equally paralyzed, and even more so, inasmuch as the time-honoured dependency of the provinces on Paris and its initiative has by long habit become part and parcel of the

national creed, to rebel against which is not merely a crime but a sacrilege.

Next to this chief cause, however, there is another, a secondary one but scarcely less important in this case; which is that, in consequence of the internal historical development of France, her centre is placed in dangerous proximity to her north-eastern frontier. This was the case to a far greater extent three hundred years ago. Paris then lay at one extremity of the country. To cover Paris by a greater extent of conquered territory towards the east and north-east was the aim of the almost uninterrupted series of wars against Germany and Spain while the latter possessed Belgium. From the time Henry II seized upon the three bishoprics of Metz, Toul, and Verdun (1552) to the Revolution, Artois, parts of Flanders and Hainaut, Lorraine, Alsace, and Montbéliard were thus conquered and annexed to France to serve as buffers to receive the first shock of invasion against Paris. We must admit that nearly all these provinces were predestined by race, language, and habits to become part and parcel of France, and that France has understood—principally by the revolution of 1789-98—how to thoroughly assimilate the rest. But even now Paris is dangerously exposed. From Bayonne to Perpignan, from Antibes to Geneva, the land frontiers of the country are at a great distance from Paris. From Geneva by Bâle to Lauterbourg in Alsace the distance remains the same; it forms an arc described from the centre, Paris, with one and the same radius of 250 miles. But at Lauterbourg the frontier leaves the arc, and forms a chord inside it, which at one point is but 120 miles from Paris. “Là où le Rhin nous quitte, le danger commence,”^a said Lavallée in his chauvinistic work on the frontiers of France.^b But if we continue the arc from Lauterbourg in a northerly direction, we shall find that it follows almost exactly the course of the Rhine to the sea. Here, then, we have the real cause of the French clamour for the whole of the left bank of that Rhine. It is after the acquisition of that boundary alone that Paris is covered, on its most exposed side, by equidistant frontiers, and with a river for the boundary line into the bargain. And if the military safety of Paris were the leading principle of European politics France would certainly be entitled to have it. Fortunately, that is not the case; and if France chooses to have Paris for a capital she must put up with the drawbacks attached to Paris as well as with the advantages, one of which drawbacks is

^a “Danger begins where the Rhine quits us.”—*Ed.*

^b Th. Lavallée, *Les frontières de la France*, Paris, 1864.—*Ed.*

that an occupation of a small portion of France, including Paris, will paralyze her national action. But if this be the case; if France acquire no right to the Rhine by the accident of having her capital in an exposed situation, Germany ought to remember that military considerations of a similar sort give her no better claim upon French territory.

NOTES ON THE WAR.—XXI^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1762, October 6, 1870]

If we are to believe the reports sent by balloon from Paris, that city is defended by forces innumerable. There are between one and two hundred thousand Gardes Mobiles from the provinces; there are 250 battalions of Parisian National Guards, numbering 1,500, some say 1,800 or 1,900 men each—that is, at the most moderate computation, 375,000 men; there are at least 50,000 troops of the line, besides marine infantry, sailors, francs-tireurs, and so forth. And—so runs the latest information—if these be all disabled, there are still 500,000 citizens behind them fit to bear arms, ready in case of need to take their places.^b

Outside Paris there is a German army composed of six North German Army Corps (4th, 5th, 6th, 11th, 12th, and Guards), two Bavarian corps, and the Württemberg division; in all, eight corps and a half, numbering somewhere between 200,000 and 230,000 men—certainly not more. Yet this German army, although extended on a line of investment of at least eighty miles, notoriously keeps in check that innumerable force inside the town, cuts off its supplies, guards all roads and pathways leading outwards from Paris, and so far has victoriously repulsed all sallies made by the garrison. How is this possible?

First, there can be little doubt that the accounts given of the immense number of armed men in Paris are fanciful. If the 600,000 men under arms of whom we hear so much be reduced to 350,000 or 400,000, we shall be nearer the truth. Still it cannot be

^a Written on October 5 or 6, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b “Une lettre de Paris...”, *Le Moniteur universel*, No. 274, October 4, 1870.—*Ed.*

denied that there are far more armed men in Paris to defend it than outside to attack it.

Secondly, the quality of the defenders of Paris is of the most motley kind. Among the whole of them, we should consider none as really trustworthy troops but the marines and sailors who now man the outer forts. The line—the dregs of MacMahon's army reinforced by reserve men, most of them raw recruits—have shown in the affair of the 19th of September, near Meudon, that they are demoralized. The Mobiles, good material in themselves, are but just now passing through recruit-drill; they are badly officered, and armed with three different kinds of rifle—the Chassepôt,²¹ the converted Minié, and the unconverted Minié.⁷² No efforts, no amount of skirmishing with the enemy, can give them, in the short time allowed, that steadiness which alone will enable them to do that which is most required—to meet and defeat the enemy in the open field. It is the original fault of their organization, the want of trained teachers, officers and sergeants, which prevents them from becoming good soldiers. Still, they appear the best element in the defence of Paris; they are at least likely to submit to discipline. The sedentary National Guard is a very mixed body. The battalions from the faubourgs, consisting of working men, are willing and determined enough to fight; they will be obedient, and show a kind of instinctive discipline if led by men possessing personally and politically their confidence; towards all other leaders they will be rebellious. Moreover, they are undrilled and without trained officers; and unless there be actually a final struggle behind barricades, their best fighting qualities will not be put to the test. But the mass of the National Guards, those armed by Palikao, consist of the bourgeoisie, especially the small shopkeeping class, and these men object to fighting on principle. Their business under arms is to guard their shops and their houses; and if these are attacked by the shells of an enemy firing from a distance their martial enthusiasm will probably dwindle away. They are, moreover, a force organized less against a foreign than against a domestic enemy. All their traditions point that way, and nine out of every ten of them are convinced that such a domestic enemy is, at this very moment, lurking in the very heart of Paris, and only waiting his opportunity to fall upon them. They are mostly married men, unused to hardship and exposure, and indeed, they are grumbling already at the severity of the duty which makes them spend one night out of three in the open air on the ramparts of the city. Among such a body you may find companies and even battalions which, under peculiar cir-

cumstances, will behave gallantly; but, as a body, and especially for a regular and tiresome course of duty, they cannot be relied on.

With such a force inside Paris it is no wonder that the far less numerous and widely dispersed Germans outside feel tranquil as to any attacks from that quarter. Indeed, all engagements that have so far taken place show the Army of Paris (if we may call it so) to be incompetent to act in the field. The first great attack on the blockading troops, on the 19th, was characteristic enough. General Ducrot's corps of some 30,000 or 40,000 men was arrested for an hour and a half by two Prussian regiments (the 7th and 47th), until two Bavarian regiments came to their assistance, and another Bavarian brigade fell upon the flank of the French; when the latter retreated in confusion, leaving in the hands of the enemy a redoubt armed with eight guns, and numerous prisoners. The number of the Germans engaged on this occasion could not exceed 15,000. Since then, the sorties of the French have been conducted quite differently. They have given up all intention of delivering pitched battles; they send out smaller parties to surprise outposts and other small detachments; and if a brigade, a division, or more advance beyond the line of the forts, they are satisfied with a mere demonstration. These fights aim less at the infliction of damage upon the enemy than at the breaking-in of the French levies to the practice of warfare. They will, no doubt, improve them gradually, but only a small proportion of the unwieldy mass of men in Paris can benefit by practice on such a small scale.

That General Trochu, after the fight of the 19th, was perfectly aware of the character of the force under his command his proclamation of the 30th of September clearly shows.^a He certainly lays the blame almost exclusively on the line, and rather pats the Mobiles on the back; but this merely proves that he considers these (and rightly so) as the best portion of the men under him. Both the proclamation and the change of tactics adopted since prove distinctly that he is under no delusion as to the unfitness of his men for operations in the open field. And he must, moreover, know that whatever other forces may remain to France under the name of Army of Lyons,⁷³ Army of the Loire, and so forth, are of exactly the same composition as his own men; and that therefore he need not expect to have the blockade or siege of Paris raised by

^a L. J. Trochu's order to the Paris garrison, the National Guard and the Garde Mobile of September 20, 1870 "Dans le combat d'hier...", *Le Temps*, No. 3393, September 21, 1870. It is reported in the item "The Battle of the Nineteenth", *The Times*, No. 26865, September 26, 1870. *The Pall Mall Gazette* gives the wrong date: "30th of September".—*Ed.*

a relieving army. It is therefore remarkable that we should receive a report according to which Trochu had opposed, in a council of Ministers, the proposal to treat for peace. The report certainly comes from Berlin, not a good quarter for impartial information as to what is going on inside Paris. Be that as it may, we cannot believe that Trochu is hopeful of success. His views of army organization in 1867^a were strongly in favour of fully four years' service with the regiment and three years' liability in the reserve, such as had been the rule under Louis Philippe; he even considered the time of service of the Prussians—two or three years—totally inadequate to form good soldiers. The irony of history now places him in a position where he carries on a war with completely raw—almost undrilled and undisciplined—men against these very same Prussians, whom he but yesterday qualified as but half-formed soldiers; and that after these Prussians have disposed in a month of the whole regular army of France.

^a [L. J. Trochu,] *L'Armée française en 1867*, Paris, 1867.—Ed.

THE RATIONALE OF THE PRUSSIAN ARMY SYSTEM^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1764, October 8, 1870]

A few weeks ago we pointed out that the Prussian system of recruiting the army was anything but perfect.^b It professes to make every citizen a soldier. The army is, in the official Prussian words, nothing but "the school in which the whole nation is educated for war," and yet a very small percentage only of the population passes through that school. We now return to this subject, in order to illustrate it by a few exact figures.

According to the tables of the Prussian Statistical Bureau,^c there were actually levied for the army on the average of the years 1831 to 1854, 9.84 per cent. per annum of the young men liable to service; there remained available every year 8.28 per cent.; there were totally unfit for service from bodily infirmities 6.40 per cent.; there were temporarily unfit, to be re-examined in a future year, 53.28 per cent.; the rest were absent, or comprised under headings too insignificant to be here noticed. Thus, during these four-and-twenty years, not one-tenth of the young citizens were admitted into the national war-school; and that is called "a nation in arms"⁷⁴!

In 1861 the figures were as follows:—Young men of twenty, class 1861, 217,438; young men of previous classes, still to be disposed of, 348,364; total, 565,802. Of these there were absent 148,946, or 26.32 per cent.; totally unfit, 17,727, or 3.05 per cent.; placed in the Ersatz Reserve⁷⁵—that is to say, liberated from

^a Written between October 6 and 8, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b See this volume, pp. 105, 106.—*Ed.*

^c "Resultate der Ersatz-Aushebungsgeschäfts im preussischen Staate in den Jahren von 1855 bis mit 1862", *Zeitschrift des königlich preussischen statistischen Bureaus*, No. 3, March 1864.—*Ed.*

service in time of peace, with liability to be called on in time of war—76,590, or 13.50 per cent.; sent home for future re-examination on account of temporary unfitness, 230,236 or 40.79 per cent.; disposed of on other grounds, 22,369, or 3.98 per cent.; remained available for the army, 69,934 men, or 12.36 per cent.; and of these, 59,459 only, or 10.50 per cent., were actually placed in the ranks.

No doubt since 1866 the percentage of recruits draughted annually has been larger, but it cannot have been so to any considerable extent; and if at present 12 or 13 per cent. of the North German male population pass through the army, it will be much. This certainly does strongly contrast with the fervid descriptions of "special correspondents" during the mobilization in Germany. Every able-bodied man, according to them, then donned his uniform and shouldered his rifle, or bestrode his horse; all kind of business was at a standstill: factories were closed, shops shut up, crops left on the fields uncut; all production was stopped, all commerce abandoned—in fact, it was a case of "suspended animation,"^a a tremendous national effort, but which, if prolonged only a few months, must end in complete national exhaustion. The transformation of civilians into soldiers did certainly go on at a rate of which people out of Germany had no idea; but if the same writers will look at Germany now, after the withdrawal of above a million men from civil life, they will find the factories working, the crops housed, the shops and counting-houses open. Production, if stopped at all, is stopped for want of orders, not for want of hands; and there are plenty of stout fellows to be seen about the streets quite as fit to shoulder a rifle as those who have gone off to France.

The above figures explain all this. The men who have passed through the army do certainly not exceed 12 per cent. of the whole adult male population. More than 12 per cent. of them cannot, therefore, be called out on a mobilization, and there remains fully 88 per cent. of them at home; a portion of whom, of course, is called out as the war progresses to fill up the gaps caused by battles and disease. These may amount to two or three per cent. more in the course of half a year; but still the immense majority of the men is never called upon. The "nation in arms" is altogether a sham.

The cause of this we have before pointed out.^b It is the necessity

^a See "Berlin, July 17", *The Times*, No. 26807, July 20, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b See this volume, pp. 104-07.—*Ed.*

under which the Prussian dynasty and Government are, as long as their hereditary policy is insisted upon, to have an army which is an obedient instrument of that policy. According to Prussian experience, three years' service in the ranks is indispensable to break in the average civilian for that class of work. It has never been seriously maintained, even by the most obstinate martinets in Prussia, that an infantry soldier—and they constitute the vast mass of the army—cannot learn all his military duties in two years; but, as was said in the debates in the Chamber from 1861 to 1866, the true military spirit, the habit of unconditional obedience, is learned in the third year only. Now, with a given amount of money for the war budget, the longer the men serve, the fewer recruits can be turned into soldiers. At present, with three years' service, 90,000 recruits annually enter the army; with two years, 135,000; with eighteen months, 180,000 men might be draughted into it and drilled every year. That there are plenty of able-bodied men to be had for the purpose is evident from the figures we have given, and shall be made more evident by-and-by. Thus we see that the phrase of the "nation in arms" hides the creation of a large army for purposes of Cabinet policy abroad and reaction at home. A "nation in arms" would not be the best instrument for Bismarck to work with.

The population of the North German Confederation is a trifle below 30,000,000. The war establishment of its army is in round numbers 950,000 men, or barely 3.17 per cent. of the population. The number of young men attaining the age of twenty is about 1.23 per cent. of the population in every year, say 360,000. Out of these, according to the experience of the secondary German States, fully one-half are—either there and then, or within two years afterwards—fit for service in the field; this would give 180,000 men. Of the rest, a goodly proportion is fit for garrison duty; but these we may leave out of the account for the present. The Prussian statistics seem to differ from this, but in Prussia these statistics must, for obvious reasons, be grouped in such a way as to make the result appear compatible with the delusion of the "nation in arms." Still the truth leaks out there too. In 1861 we had, besides the 69,934 men available for the army, 76,590 men placed in the Ersatz Reserve, raising the total of men fit for service to 146,524, out of which but 59,459, or 40 per cent., were draughted into the ranks. At all events, we shall be perfectly safe in reckoning one-half of the young men as fit for the army. In that case, 180,000 recruits might enter the line every year, with twelve years' liability to be called out, as at present. This would

give a force of 2,160,000 drilled men—more than double the present establishment, even after ample allowance is made for all reductions by deaths and other casualties; and if the other half of the young men were again looked to when twenty-five years of age, there would be found the material for another 500,000 or 600,000 good garrison troops, or more. Six to eight per cent. of the population ready drilled and disciplined, to be called out in case of attack, the cadres for the whole of them being kept up in time of peace, as is now done—that would really be a “nation in arms;” but that would not be an army to be used for Cabinet wars, for conquest, or for a policy of reaction at home.

Still this would be merely the Prussian phrase turned into a reality. If the semblance of a nation in arms has had such a power, what would the reality be? And we may depend upon it if Prussia, by insisting on conquest, compels France to it, France will turn that semblance into reality—either in one form or another. She will organize herself into a nation of soldiers, and a few years hence may astonish Prussia as much by the crushing numbers of her soldiers as Prussia has astonished the world this summer. But cannot Prussia do the same? Certainly, but then she will cease to be the Prussia of to-day. She gains in power of defence, while she loses in power of attack; she will have more men, but not quite so handy for invasion in the beginning of a war; she will have to give up all idea of conquest, and as to her present home policy, that would be seriously jeopardized.

NOTES ON THE WAR.—XXII^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1766, October 11, 1870]

In one of our preceding Notes we called attention to the fact that even now, after the fall of Strasbourg, nearly the whole of the immense German army in France is fully employed, although not one-sixth of the territory of the country is held by the invaders.^b The subject is so very significant that we feel justified in returning to it.

Metz, with Bazaine's army enclosed within its line of forts, finds occupation for eight army corps (the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, the division of Hessians, and General Kummer's division of landwehr), in all sixteen divisions of infantry. Paris engages seventeen divisions of infantry (the Guards, 4th, 5th, 6th, 11th, 12th North German, 1st and 2nd Bavarian corps, and the Württemberg division). The newly-formed 13th and 14th corps, mostly landwehr, and some detachments from the corps already named, occupy the conquered country, and observe, blockade, or besiege the places which, within it, still belong to the French. The 15th Corps (the Baden division and at least one division of landwehr), set free by the capitulation of Strasbourg, is alone disposable for active operations. Fresh landwehr troops are to be joined to it, and then it is to undertake some operations, the character of which is still very indefinitely known, in a more southerly direction.

Now these forces comprise almost all the organized troops of which Germany disposes, with the very important exception of the fourth battalions of the line. Contrary to what was done in the Austrian war, when they were sent out against the enemy, these 114 battalions have this time been kept at home; in accordance with their original purpose, they serve as cadres for the drill and organization of the men intended to fill up the gaps which battles

^a Written on October 11, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b See this volume, pp. 115-16.—*Ed.*

and disease may have caused in the ranks of their respective regiments. As soon as the thousand men forming the battalion are sufficiently broken in to do duty before the enemy, they are sent off to join the three field battalions of the regiment; this was done on a large scale after the severe fighting before Metz in the middle of September. But the officers and non-commissioned officers of the battalion remain at home, ready to receive and prepare for the field a fresh batch of 1,000 men, taken from the Ersatz Reserve or from the recruits called out in due course. This measure was absolutely necessary in a war as bloody as the present one, and the end of which is not to be foreseen with certainty; but it deprives the Germans of the active services for the time being of 114 battalions, and a corresponding force of cavalry and artillery, representing in all fully 200,000 men. With the exception of these, the occupation of scarcely one-sixth of France and the reduction of the two large fortresses in this territory—Metz and Paris—keeps the whole of the German forces so fully employed that they have barely 60,000 men to spare for further operations beyond the territory already conquered. And this, while there is not anywhere a French army in the field to oppose serious resistance.

If ever there was needed a proof of the immense importance, in modern warfare, of large entrenched camps with a fortress for their nucleus, here that proof is furnished. The two entrenched camps in question have not at all been made use of to the best advantage, as we may show on some other occasion.^a Metz has for a garrison too many troops for its size and importance, and Paris has of real troops fit for the field scarcely any at all. Still, the first of these places at present holds at least 240,000, the second 250,000 enemies in check; and if France had only 200,000 real soldiers behind the Loire, the siege of Paris would be an impossibility. Unfortunately for France, these 200,000 men she does not possess; nor is there any probability of their ever being brought together, organized and disciplined in useful time. So that the reduction of the two great centres of defence is a mere question of weeks. The army in Metz has so far kept up its discipline and fighting qualities wonderfully well, but the constant repulses it has sustained must at length break down every hope of escape. French soldiers are capital defenders of fortresses, and can stand defeat during a siege far better than in the field; but if demoralization once begins among them, it spreads rapidly and irresistibly. As to Paris, we will not take M. Gambetta's 400,000

^a See this volume, pp. 134-37, 138-41.—*Ed.*

National Guards, 100,000 Mobiles, and 60,000 troops of the line too literally, any more than the countless cannons and mitrailleurs that are being manufactured in Paris, or the great strength of the barricades.^a But there is no doubt that there are elements enough in Paris for a very respectable defence; though that defence, by being, from the character of the garrison, necessarily passive, will lack its strongest element—powerful attacks on the besiegers.

Anyhow, it must be evident that if there was a real national enthusiasm alive among the French, everything might still be gained. While the whole forces of the invader, all but 60,000 men and the cavalry which can raid but not subdue, are laid fast in the conquered territory, the remaining five-sixths of France might raise armed bands enough to harass the Germans on every point, to intercept their communications, destroy bridges and railways, provisions and ammunition in their rear, and compel them to detach from their two great armies such numbers of troops that Bazaine might find means to break out of Metz, and that the investment of Paris would become illusory. Already at present the movement of the armed bands is a source of great trouble, though not as yet of danger, to the Germans, and this will increase as the country round Paris becomes exhausted in food and other supplies, and as more distant districts have to be placed under requisition. The new German army now forming in Alsace will probably soon be called away from any expedition towards the South by the necessity of securing the German communications and of subjecting a greater tract of country round Paris. But what would be the fate of the Germans if the French people had been stirred up by the same national fanaticism as were the Spaniards in 1808⁷⁶—if every town and almost every village had been turned into a fortress, every peasant and citizen into a combatant? Even the 200,000 men of the fourth battalion would not suffice to hold down such a people. But such national fanaticism is not nowadays within the habits of civilized nations. It may be found among Mexicans and Turks; its sources have dried up in the money-making West of Europe, and the twenty years during which the incubus of the Second Empire has weighed upon France have anything but steeled the national character. Thus we see a great deal of talking and a minimum of work; a deal of show and an almost total neglect of organization; very little non-official resistance and a good deal of submission to the enemy; very few real soldiers and an immense number of francs-tireurs.

^a L. Gambetta's proclamation, dated October 9, addressed to the citizens of the Departments, *The Times*, No. 26878, October 11, 1870.—*Ed.*

NOTES ON THE WAR.—XXIII^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1768, October 13, 1870]

The Prussian staff officers in Berlin seem to be getting impatient. Through the *Times* and *Daily News* correspondents in Berlin^b they inform us that the siege material has now been for some days ready before Paris, and that the siege will begin presently. We have our doubts about this readiness. Firstly, we know that several tunnels on the only available line of railway have been blown up by the retreating French near La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, and that they are not yet in working order; secondly, we also know that the matériel for a regular and effective siege of such a vast place as Paris is so colossal that it will take a long time to get it together, even had the railway been always open; and thirdly, five or six days after this announcement from Berlin had been made, we have not yet heard of the opening of a first parallel. We must therefore conclude that by readiness to open the siege, or regular attack, we are to understand the readiness to open the irregular attack, the bombardment.

Still, a bombardment of Paris, with any chance of compelling a surrender, would require far more guns than a regular siege. In the latter you may confine your attack to one or two points of the line of defence; in the former, you must constantly scatter such a number of shells over the entire vast area of the town that more fires are made to break out everywhere than the population can extinguish, and that the very operation of extinguishing them

^a Written on October 12 or 13, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b "Berlin, Oct. 8, 10.12 A.M.", *The Times*, No. 26877, October 10, 1870, and "Berlin, Oct. 12", *The Times*, No. 26879, October 12, 1870.—*Ed.*

becomes too dangerous to be attempted. Now we have seen that even Strasbourg, with 85,000 inhabitants, was perfectly able to hold out under a bombardment of almost unparalleled severity; that, with the exception of a few solitary and pretty well-defined districts, which had to be sacrificed, the fires could be well kept down. The cause of this is the comparatively great extent of the town. It is easy to shell a small place of five or ten thousand inhabitants into submission, unless there be plenty of bombproof shelter inside it; but a city of from 50,000 to 100,000 inhabitants can stand a great deal of shelling, especially if built, as most French towns are, of freestone, or with thick brick walls. Paris, within the fortifications, measures twelve kilometres by ten; within the old *barrières*,⁷⁷ which comprise the closely-built part of the town, nine kilometres by seven; that is to say, this part of the town comprises an area of about fifty millions of square metres or nearly sixty millions of square yards. To throw on an average one shell per hour into every one thousand square yards of that surface would require 60,000 shells per hour, or a million and a half of shells for every twenty-four hours, which would presuppose the employment of at least 2,000 heavy guns for the purpose. Yet one shell per hour for a space nearly one hundred feet long by one hundred feet broad would be a weak bombardment. Of course the fire might be concentrated temporarily upon one or more quarters until these were thoroughly destroyed, and then transferred to the neighbouring quarters; but this proceeding, to be effective, would last almost as long as or longer than a regular siege, while it would be necessarily less certain to compel the surrender of the place.

Moreover, Paris, while the forts are not reduced, is in fact out of reach of effective bombardment. The nearest heights outside the town now in the hands of the besiegers, those near Châtillon, are fully 8,000 metres=8,700 yards, or five miles from the Palais de Justice,⁷⁸ which pretty nearly represents the centre of the town. On the whole of the southern side, this distance will be about the same. On the north-east, the line of forts is as far as 10,000 metres, or about 11,000 yards, from the centre of the town, so that any bombarding batteries in that quarter would have to be placed 2,000 yards farther off, or from seven to eight miles from the Palace of Justice. On the north-west, the bends of the Seine and Fort Mont Valérien protect the town so well that bombarding batteries could be erected in closed redoubts or regular parallels only; that is to say, not before the regular siege had begun, to which we here suppose the bombardment to be a preliminary.

Now there is no doubt that the Prussian heavy rifled guns, of calibres of five, six, seven, eight, and nine inches, throwing shells from twenty-five to above three hundred pounds' weight, might be made to cover a distance of five miles. In 1864 the rifled twenty-four pounders on Gammelmark bombarded Sonderburg⁷⁹ at a distance of 5,700 paces=4,750 yards, or nearly three miles, although these guns were old bronze ones, and could not stand more than a 4 lb. or 5 lb. charge of powder to a shell weighing 68 lb. The elevation was necessarily considerable, and had to be obtained by a peculiar adaptation of the gun-carriages, which would have broken down if stronger charges had been used. The present Prussian cast-steel guns can stand charges far heavier in proportion to the weights of their shells; but, to obtain a range of five miles, the elevation must still be very considerable, and the gun-carriages would have to be altered accordingly; and, being put to uses they were not constructed for, would soon be smashed. Nothing knocks up a gun-carriage sooner than firing at elevations even as low as five and six degrees with full charges; but in this case, the elevation would average at least fifteen degrees, and the gun-carriages would be knocked to pieces as fast as the houses in Paris. Leaving, however, this difficulty out of consideration, the bombardment of Paris by batteries five miles distant from the centre of the town, could be at best but a partial affair. There would be enough of destruction to exasperate, but not enough to terrify. The shells, at such ranges, could not be directed with sufficient certainty to any particular part of the town. Hospitals, museums, libraries, though ever so conspicuous from the heights where the batteries might be, could hardly be spared even if directions were given to avoid particular districts. Military buildings, arsenals, magazines, storehouses, even if visible to the besieger, could not be singled out for destruction with any surety; so that the common excuse for a bombardment—that it aimed at the destruction of the means of defence of the besieged—would fail. All this is said on the supposition that the besiegers have the means at hand for a really serious bombardment—that is to say, some two thousand rifled guns and mortars of heavy calibre. But if, as we suppose is the case, the German siege-park is composed of some four or five hundred guns, this will not suffice to produce any such impression on the city as to make its surrender probable.

The bombardment of a fortress, though still considered as a step permitted by the laws of war, yet is a measure implying such an amount of suffering to non-combatants that history will blame any one nowadays attempting it without reasonable chance of

thereby extorting the surrender of the place. We smile at the chauvinisme of a Victor Hugo, who considers Paris a holy city—very holy!—and every attempt to attack it a sacrilege.^a We look upon Paris as upon any other fortified town, which, if it chooses to defend itself, must run all the risks of fair attack, of open trenches, siege batteries, and stray shots hitting non-military buildings. But if the mere bombardment of Paris cannot force the city into surrender, and if, nevertheless, such a bombardment should take place, it will be a military blunder such as few people would lay to the charge of Moltke's staff. It will be said that Paris was bombarded not for military but for political reasons.

^a V. Hugo, "Aux Parisiens, Paris, 2 octobre 1870", *Le Temps*, No. 3406, October 4, 1870.—*Ed.*

THE FATE OF METZ^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1771, October 17, 1870]

If we are to believe the news from Berlin, the Prussian staff seem to anticipate that Paris will be conquered before Metz. But this opinion is evidently founded quite as much on political as on military reasoning. The troubles within Paris for which Count Bismarck has been waiting have not yet begun; but discord and civil war are expected to break out without fail as soon as the big guns of the besiegers shall commence booming over the city. So far, the Parisians have belied the opinion held of them in the German headquarters, and they may do so to the end. If so, the notion that Paris will be taken by the end of this month will almost certainly prove illusory, and Metz may have to surrender before Paris.

Metz, as a mere fortress, is infinitely stronger than Paris. The latter city is fortified on the supposition that the whole or at least the greater portion of the beaten French army will retire upon it and conduct the defence by constant attacks on the enemy, whose attempts to invest the place necessarily weaken him on every point of the long line he has to take up. The defensive strength of the works therefore is not very great, and very properly so. To provide for a case such as has now occurred by the blunders of Bonapartist strategy would have raised the cost of the fortifications to an immense sum; and the time by which the defence could thereby be prolonged would scarcely amount to a fortnight. Moreover, earthworks erected during or before the siege can be made to strengthen the works considerably. With Metz the case is

^a Written between October 13 and 17, 1870.—*Ed.*

very different. Metz was handed down to the present generation by Cormontaigne and other great engineers of the last century as a very strong fortress—strong in its defensive works. The Second Empire has added to these a circle of seven very large detached forts at distances of from two-and-a-half to three miles from the centre of the town, so as to secure it from bombardment even with rifled guns, and to transform the whole into a large entrenched camp second to Paris only. A siege of Metz, therefore, would be a very lengthy operation even if the town held but its normal war garrison. But a siege in the face of the 100,000 men who are now sheltered under its forts would be almost impossible. The sphere in which the French are still masters extends to fully two miles beyond the line of forts; to drive them back to the line of forts, so as to conquer the ground where the trenches would have to be dug, would necessitate a series of hand-to-hand fighting such as was only seen before Sebastopol; and supposing the garrison not to be demoralized by their constant fights or the besiegers not to be tired of such a sacrifice of life, the struggle might last many a month. The Germans have therefore never attempted a regular siege, but are trying to starve the place out. An army of 100,000 men, added to a population of nearly 60,000 and to the numbers of country people who have sought shelter behind the forts, must sooner or later exhaust the stock of provisions if the blockade be strictly enforced; and, even before this shall have taken place, the chances are that demoralization among the garrison will compel surrender. When once an army finds itself completely shut up, all attempts to break through the investing circle fruitless, all hope of relief from without cut off, even the best army will gradually lose its discipline and cohesion under sufferings, privations, labours, and dangers which do not appear to serve any other purpose but to uphold the honour of the flag.

For symptoms of this demoralization we have been watching for some time in vain. The stock of provisions inside the town has been much more considerable than was supposed, and thus the army of Metz has had a pretty good time of it. But the stores, if plentiful, must have been ill assorted; which is quite natural, as they were stray supplies for the army, accidentally left in the town and never intended for the purpose they have now to serve. The consequence is that the diet of the soldiers in the long run becomes not only different from what they are accustomed to, but positively abnormal, and produces sickness of various kinds and of daily increasing severity, the causes of this sickness operating stronger and stronger every day. This phase of the blockade

appears to have now been reached. Among the articles of which Metz is short are bread, the chief ordinary food of the French peasantry, and salt. The latter is absolutely indispensable to maintain health; and, as bread is almost the only form in which the French partake of starch for fat-producing food, the same may in this case be said of the former. The necessity of feeding the men and inhabitants on meat principally has, it is said, produced dysentery and scurvy. Without trusting too much to reports from deserters, who generally say what they think will please their captors, we may still believe such to be the case, as it is just what must occur under the circumstances. That the chances of demoralization must thereby increase rapidly is a matter of course.

The very capable correspondent of *The Daily News* before Metz states, in his description of Bazaine's sortie of the 7th of October, that after the French had established themselves in the villages to the north of Fort Saint-Eloy (north of Metz, in the valley of the Moselle) a mass of at least 30,000 of them was formed more to their right, close to the river, and advanced against the Germans. This column, or group of columns, was evidently intended to break through the circle of investment. This task required the utmost determination. They would have to march straight into a semicircle of troops and batteries concentrating their fire upon them; the severity of this fire would increase up to the point of actual contact with the enemy's masses, when, if they succeeded in routing them, it would at once considerably diminish, while, if they had to retreat, they would have to undergo the same cross-fire a second time. This the men must have known; and, moreover, Bazaine would use for this supreme effort his very best troops. Yet we are told that they never even got within the rifle-fire of the German masses. Before they reached the critical point, the fire of the artillery and of the line of skirmishers had dissolved their cohesion: "the dense columns first staggered and then broke."

This is the first time in this war that we hear such things of the men who could face cold steel and hot fire well enough at Vionville, Gravelotte, and the latter sorties. This inability even to attempt thoroughly the task which they were put to seems to show that the army of Metz is no longer what it was. It seems to indicate, not as yet demoralization, but discouragement and hopelessness—the feeling that it is no use trying. From that to positive demoralization there are not many steps, especially with French soldiers. And though it would be premature to predict from these indications the speedy fall of Metz, yet it will be surprising

if we do not soon discover more symptoms announcing that the defence is on the wane.

The surrender of Metz would have a far less moral, but a far greater material influence upon the course of the war than the fall of Paris. If Paris be taken, France may give in, but she need not any more than now. For by far the greater portion of the troops now investing Paris would be required to hold the town and its environs, and it is more than doubtful whether men enough could be spared to advance as far as Bordeaux. But, if Metz capitulated, more than 200,000 Germans would be set at liberty, and such an army, in the present state of the French forces in the field, would be amply sufficient to go where it liked in the open country, and to do there what it liked. The progress of occupation, arrested by the two great entrenched camps, would at once commence again, and any attempts at guerrilla warfare, which now might be very effective, would then soon be crushed.

NOTES ON THE WAR.—XXIV^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1775, October 21, 1870]

The investment of Paris has now lasted exactly one month. During this time two points relating to it have been practically settled in accordance with our predictions.^b The first is that Paris cannot hope to be relieved, in useful time, by any French army from without. The Army of the Loire is utterly deficient in cavalry and field artillery, while its infantry, with very trifling exceptions, consists of either young or demoralized old troops, badly officered and entirely wanting that cohesion which alone could render them fit to meet in the open old soldiers flushed with constant success such as von der Tann leads against them. Even were the Army of the Loire raised to 100,000 or 120,000 men, which it may be before Paris falls, it would not be able to raise the investment. By their great superiority in cavalry and field artillery, both of which can be spared to a great extent before Paris as soon as the siege train with its gunners has arrived, and by the superiority of their infantry, soldier for soldier, the Germans are enabled to meet such a force with one of inferior numbers without fear of the results. Besides, the troops now scouring the country east and north of Paris to distances of fifty and sixty miles could, in such a case, be sent temporarily to reinforce von der Tann, as well as a division or two from the investing army. As to the Army of Lyons, whatever of that possesses any tangible existence will find plenty of work with General Werder's Fourteenth North German Corps, now in Epinal and Vesoul, and the Fifteenth Corps following in his rear or on his right flank. The Army of the North, with Bourbaki for

^a Written on October 19, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b See this volume, pp. 121-22.—*Ed.*

commander, has as yet to be formed. From all we hear, the Mobiles about Normandy and Picardy are extremely deficient in officers and drill; and the sedentary National Guards, if not most of the Mobiles too, will be required to garrison the twenty-five or more fortresses encumbering the country between Mézières and Havre. Thus efficient relief from this quarter is not very likely, and Paris will have to rely upon itself.

The second point settled is that the garrison of Paris is unfit to act on the offensive on a large scale. It consists of the same elements as the troops outside Paris, and it is equally deficient in cavalry and field artillery. The three sorties of the 19th and 30th of September and of the 13th of October have fully proved their inability to make any serious impression upon the investing forces. As these latter said, "They never were able to break through even our first line." Although General Trochu states in public that his disinclination to attack the enemy in the field is caused by the deficiency in field artillery, and that he will not go out again until that is supplied,^a he cannot help knowing that no field artillery in the world could prevent his first sortie *en masse* from ending in an utter rout. And by the time his field artillery can be ready, if that be more than a mere pretext, the fire of the German batteries against the forts and the closing in of their lines of investment, will have rendered its use in the open impossible.

Trochu and his staff appear to be perfectly aware of this. All their measures point to a mere passive defence, without any more great sorties than may be necessary to satisfy the clamour of an undisciplined garrison. The ramparts of the forts cannot long withstand the projectiles of the heavy German guns, of which more anon. It may be, as the staff in Berlin hopes, that two or three days will suffice to demolish the guns on the ramparts of the southern forts, to breach, from a distance and by indirect fire, the masonry revetment of their escarps in one or two places, and then to storm them while the fire of the batteries from the commanding heights prevents any efficient succour from the works to the rear. There is nothing in the construction of the forts nor in the configuration of the ground to prevent this. In all the forts round Paris, the escarp—that is, the inner side of the ditch, or the outer face of the rampart—is covered with masonry to the height of the horizon merely, which is generally considered insufficient to secure the work from escalade. This deviation from the general

^a L. J. Trochu's despatch to the Mayor of Paris, c. October 16, 1870, *Le Temps*, No. 3418, October 16, 1870.—*Ed.*

rule was justified on the supposition that Paris would always be actively defended by an army. In the present case it will even be an advantage inasmuch as this low masonry will be difficult to hit by indirect fire from batteries from which it cannot be seen. The breaching from a distance will thus be rendered more tiresome, unless the heights on which these batteries are constructed will admit of a really plunging fire; and this cannot be judged of except on the ground.

Under any circumstances, the resistance of these southern forts, commanded as they are by heights within the most effective range of heavy rifled artillery, need not be expected to be a long one. But immediately behind them, between the forts and the enceinte, the activity of the garrison has been chiefly displayed. Numerous earthworks have been everywhere constructed; and though, as a matter of course, we are kept in ignorance of all details, we may be sure that they will have been planned and executed with all that care, foresight, and science which have placed for more than two centuries the French engineering staff in the foremost rank. Here, then, evidently is the fighting ground chosen by the defence; a ground where ravines and hill-slopes, factories and villages, mostly built of stone, facilitate the work of the engineer and favour the resistance of young and but half-disciplined troops. Here, we expect, the Germans will find the toughest work cut out for them. We are, indeed, informed by *The Daily News*, from Berlin, that they will be satisfied with the conquest of some of the forts, and leave hunger to do the rest. But we presume that this choice will not be left to them, unless, indeed, they blow up the forts and retire again to their present mere investing positions; and if they do that the French can gradually by counter approaches recover the lost ground. We presume therefore that the Germans intend to keep whatever forts they may take, as efficient bombarding positions to frighten the inhabitants by occasional shells, or to use them for as complete a bombardment as they can carry out with the means at their command. And in that case they cannot decline the combat offered to them by the defence on the ground chosen and prepared for the purpose, for the forts will be under the close and effective fire of the new works. Here we shall perhaps witness the last struggle in this war offering any scientific interest; may be, the most interesting of all to military science. Here the defence will be enabled to act on the offensive again, though upon a smaller scale, and, thus restoring to a certain extent the balance of the contending forces, may prolong resistance until famine compels surrender. For we must

keep in mind that of the stores of food provided for Paris one month's stock has already been consumed, and nobody outside the town knows whether it is provisioned for more than another month.

There appears to be great confusion of ideas among "special correspondents" as to the German siege guns; and there may well be, considering that the nomenclature of the various calibres among German artillerists is founded upon principles at least as absurd and contradictory as those adopted in England. It may be worthwhile to clear this matter up a little now that these big guns may begin to speak any day. Of old-fashioned siege guns there were in use before Strasbourg, and have now been forwarded to Paris, twenty-five-pounder and fifty-pounder mortars—called so from the weight of a marble ball fitting their bore. Their calibres are about $8\frac{1}{2}$ to $8\frac{3}{4}$ inches respectively, and the real weight of the spherical shells they throw is, for the first 64 lb., and for the second 125 lb. Then there was a rifled mortar, calibre 21 centimetres, or $8\frac{1}{4}$ inches, throwing an elongated shell of 20 inches in length and rather above 200 lb. weight. These mortars have a tremendous effect, not only because the rifling gives their shells greater accuracy, but chiefly because the elongated percussion shell, always falling upon its heavy point, where the percussion fuze protrudes, secures the explosion of the charge at the very moment of penetration, thus combining in one and the same moment the effects of impact with that of explosion. Of rifled shell guns there were 12 lb. and 24 lb. guns, so called from the weight of the spherical solid iron ball they used to fire before being rifled. Their respective calibres are about four-and-a-half and five-and-a-half inches, and the weights of their shells 33 lb. and 64 lb. Besides these, there have been sent to Paris some of the heavy rifled guns intended for ironclad ships and for coast defence against such ships. The exact details of their construction have never been published, but their calibres are of about 7, 8 and 9 inches, and the corresponding shells of the weights of about 120, 200, and 300 lb. respectively. The heaviest guns used either in or before Sebastopol were the English naval 68-pounder, the 8- and 10-inch shell guns, and the French $8\frac{3}{4}$ and 12-inch shell guns, the heaviest projectile of which, the 12-inch spherical shell, weighed about 180 lb. Thus the siege of Paris will as much surpass Sebastopol as Sebastopol surpassed all former sieges by the weight and mass of the projectiles used. The German siege park, we may add, will contain the number of guns we guessed it would—namely, about four hundred.

SARAGOSSA—PARIS^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1776, October 22, 1870]

To form an appropriate idea of such a colossal operation as the siege and defence of Paris, we shall do well to look out, in military history, for some previous siege on a large scale to serve, at least in some degree, as an example of what we may expect to witness. Sebastopol would be a case in point if the defence of Paris took place under normal conditions; that is to say, if there were an army in the field to come to the relief of Paris or to reinforce its garrison, such as was the case with Sebastopol. But Paris defends itself under quite abnormal conditions: it has neither a garrison fit for an active defence, for fighting in the open, nor any reasonable hope of relief from without. Thus the greatest siege on record, that of Sebastopol, inferior only to the one we are about to see opened, offers no correct image of what will be done before Paris; and it will be at later stages of the siege only, and principally by contrast, that the events of the Crimean war will come in for comparison.

Nor will the sieges of the American war⁸⁰ offer better examples. They occurred during a period of the struggle when not only the Southern army, but also, following in its wake, the troops of the North, had lost the character of raw levies and had come under the description of regular troops. In all these sieges the defence was extremely active. At Vicksburg as well as at Richmond there were long preliminary struggles for the mastery of the ground on which alone the siege batteries could be erected; and, with the exception of Grant's last siege of Richmond, there were always attempts at relief too.⁸¹ But here, in Paris, we have a garrison of

^a Written between October 19 and 22, 1870.—*Ed.*

new levies feebly supported by scattered new levies outside the town, and attacked by a regular army with all the appliances of modern warfare. To find a case in point, we shall have to go back to the last war in which an armed people had to fight against a regular army, and actually did fight on a large scale—the Peninsular war. And here we find a celebrated example, which we shall see *is* in point in more than one respect: Saragossa.

Saragossa had but one-third of the diameter and one-ninth of the surface of Paris; but its fortifications, though erected in a hurry and without detached forts, would resemble those of Paris in their general defensive strength. The town was occupied by 25,000 Spanish soldiers, refugees from the defeat of Tudela,⁸² among them not more than 10,000 real soldiers of the line, the rest young levies; there were besides armed peasants and inhabitants, raising the garrison to 40,000 men. There were 160 guns in the town. Outside, a force of some 30,000 men had been raised in the neighbouring provinces to come to its succour. On the other hand, the French Marshal Suchet had no more than 26,000 men wherewith to invest the fortress on both sides of the river Ebro, and, besides, 9,000 men covering the siege at Calatayud. Thus, the numerical proportion of the forces was about the same as that of the armies now respectively in and before Paris: the besieged nearly twice as numerous as the besiegers. Yet the Saragossans could no more afford to go out and meet the besiegers in the open than the Parisians can now. Nor could the Spaniards outside at any time seriously interfere with the siege.

The investment of the town was completed on the 19th of December 1808; the first parallel could be opened as early as the 29th, only 350 yards from the main rampart. On the 2nd of January, 1809, the second parallel is opened 100 yards from the works; on the 11th the breaches are practicable and the whole of the attacked front is taken by assault. But here, where the resistance of an ordinary fortress garrisoned by regular troops would have ceased, the strength of a popular defence only commenced. The portion of the rampart which the French had stormed had been cut off from the rest of the town by new defences. Earthworks, defended by artillery, had been thrown up across all the streets leading to it, and were repeated at appropriate distances to the rear. The houses, built in the massive style of hot Southern Europe, with immensely thick walls, were loopholed and held in force by infantry. The bombardment by the French was incessant; but, as they were badly provided with heavy mortars, its effects were not decisive against the town. Still it was

continued for forty-one days without intermission. To reduce the town, to take house after house, the French had to use the slowest process of all, that of mining. At last, after one-third of the buildings of the town had been destroyed, and the rest rendered uninhabitable, Saragossa surrendered on the 20th of February. Out of 100,000 human beings present in the town at the beginning of the siege 54,000 had perished.

This defence is classical of its kind, and well merits the celebrity it has gained. But, after all, the town resisted only sixty-three days, all told. The investment took ten days; the siege of the fortress fourteen; the siege of the inner defences and the struggle for the houses thirty-nine. The sacrifices were out of all proportion to the length of the defence and the positive result obtained. Had Saragossa been defended by 20,000 good enterprising soldiers, Suchet, with his force, could not have carried on the siege in the face of their sallies, and the place might have remained in the hands of the Spaniards until after the Austrian war of 1809.⁸³

Now we certainly do not expect Paris to prove a second Saragossa. The houses in Paris, strong though they be, cannot bear any comparison as to massiveness with those of the Spanish city; nor have we any authority for supposing that the population will display the fanaticism of the Spaniards of 1809, or that one half of the inhabitants will patiently submit to be killed by fighting and disease. Still that phase of the struggle which came off in Saragossa after the storming of the rampart, in the streets, houses, and convents of the town, might to a certain extent repeat itself in the fortified villages and earthworks between the forts of Paris and the enceinte. There, as we said yesterday—in our twenty-fourth batch of Notes on the War^a—appears to us to lie the centre of gravity of the defence. There the young Mobiles may meet their opponents, even in offensive movements, upon something like equal terms, and compel them to proceed in a more systematical way than the staff in Berlin seemed to imagine when, a short time ago, it expected to reduce the town in twelve or fourteen days from the opening of the siege batteries. There, too, the defence may cut out so much work for the mortars and shell-guns of the attack that even a partial bombardment of the town, at least upon a large scale, may be for the time being out of the question. The villages outside the enceinte will under all circumstances have to be sacrificed wherever they may happen to lie between the German front of attack and the French front of defence; and if therefore

^a See this volume, p. 140.—*Ed.*

by sacrificing them the town can be spared so much the better for the defence.

How long this defence of the ground outside the enceinte can be made to last we cannot even guess at. It will depend upon the strength of the works themselves, upon the spirit with which the defence is conducted, upon the mode of attack. If the resistance become serious, the Germans will rely upon the fire of their artillery chiefly, in order to spare their troops. Anyhow, with the enormous artillery fire they will be able to concentrate upon any given point, it is not likely that it will take them more than a fortnight or three weeks before they arrive at the enceinte. To break and carry that will be the work of a few days. Even then there will be no absolute necessity to give up resistance; but it will be better to defer considering these eventualities until there shall be a greater probability of their actually occurring. Until then, too, we may be allowed to say nothing about the merits and demerits of M. Rochefort's barricades.⁸⁴ Upon the whole, we are of opinion that if the new works between the forts and the enceinte offer a really serious resistance, the attack will confine itself as much as possible—how far depends in a great measure upon the energy of the defence—to artillery fire, vertical and horizontal, and to the starving out of Paris.

NOTES ON THE WAR.—XXV^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1780, October 27, 1870]

While the negotiations for an armistice are pending,⁸⁵ it will be as well to make out the positions of the different corps of the German armies, which do not appear to be generally understood. We say the German armies, for of the French there is very little to be said. What is not shut up in Metz consists almost exclusively of new levies, the organization of which has never been made public, and cannot but vary from day to day. Moreover, the character of these troops, who prove themselves in all engagements more or less unfit for the field, takes away almost all interest in either their organization or their numbers.

As to the Germans, we know that they marched out with thirteen army corps of North Germany (including the Guards), one division of Hessians, one of Badenens, one of Württembergers, and two army corps of Bavarians. The 17th division of the 9th North German Corps (one brigade of which consists of Mecklenburgers) remained on the coast while the French fleet was in the Baltic. In its stead the 25th, or Hessian division, was attached to the 9th Corps, and remains so up to the present day. There remained at home, with the 17th division, nine divisions of landwehr (one of the Guards, and one for each of the eight old provinces of Prussia⁸⁶; the time elapsed since 1866, when the Prussian system was introduced all over North Germany, having been barely sufficient to form the necessary number of reserve men, but not as yet any landwehr). When the recall of the French fleet and the completion of the fourth battalions of the line rendered these forces disposable, fresh army corps were formed

^a Written between October 22 and 27, 1870.—Ed.

out of them and sent to France. We shall scarcely know, before the end of the war, the details of formation of all these corps, but what has leaked out in the meantime gives us a pretty clear insight into the general character of the plan. Before Metz we have, under Prince Frederick Charles, the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th corps, of which the 9th consists, for the time being, of the 18th and 25th divisions, besides two divisions of landwehr, one, the first (East Prussian), under General Kummer; the number of the other is not known—in all sixteen divisions of infantry.

Before Paris there are, under the Crown Prince,^a the 5th, 6th, and 11th North German, the two Bavarian corps, and the division of landwehr of the Guards; under the Crown Prince of Saxony,^b the 4th and 12th North German corps, and the Prussian Guards; under the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg,^c the 13th Corps and the Württemberg division. The 13th Corps is formed of the 17th division mentioned above, and of one division of landwehr. Of these troops, forming in all twenty divisions, there are four divisions sent on detached duty. Firstly, von der Tann with two Bavarian divisions and the 22nd North German division (of the 11th Corps) to the south and west, holding with the Bavarians Orléans and the line of the Loire; while the 22nd division (General Wittich's) successively occupied Châteaudun and Chartres. Secondly, the 17th division is detached towards the north-east of Paris; it has occupied Laon, Soissons, Beauvais, St. Quentin, &c., while other troops—probably flying columns, chiefly composed of cavalry—have advanced almost to the gates of Rouen. If we set down these as equal to another division, we have in all five divisions detached from the army before Paris to scour the country, to collect cattle and provisions, to prevent the formation of armed bands, and to keep at a distance any new bodies of troops which the Government of Tours⁸⁷ may be able to send up. This would leave for the actual investment fifteen divisions of infantry, or seven army corps and a half.

Besides the 13th Corps, the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg commands the whole of the detached troops in Champagne and the other occupied districts west of Lorraine, the garrisons of Sedan, Reims, Épernay, Châlons, Vitry, and the troops besieging Verdun. These consist of landwehr, principally of the 8th landwehr division. The garrisons in Alsace and Lorraine, almost all landwehr, are under the command of the respective military

^a Frederick William.—*Ed.*

^b Albert.—*Ed.*

^c Frederick Francis II.—*Ed.*

governors of these provinces. Moreover, there are the troops echeloned along the line of railway and the main roads whose exclusive duty it is to keep these in working order and open for army transport; these, formed by detachments of the various corps of the line, and amounting at least to the strength of a division, are under the "Etappen-Commandant."^a

The Baden division and another landwehr division have been combined into the 14th Corps, which is now, under General von Werder, advancing upon Besançon, while General Schmeling, with the fourth reserve division, has just successfully besieged Schelestadt, and is now taking in hand Neu Breisach. Here for the first time we find the mention of a "reserve division," which, in Prussian military language, is something essentially different from a landwehr division. In fact, we have so far accounted for six out of the nine landwehr divisions, and it may well be supposed that the garrisoning of Alsace and Lorraine, and in part of the Rhine fortresses, will account for the other three. The application of the term reserve division proves that the fourth battalions of the line regiments are now gradually arriving on French soil. There will be nine of them, or, in some cases, ten, to every army corps; these have been formed in as many reserve divisions, and probably bear the same number as the army corps to which they belong. Thus the fourth reserve division would be the one formed out of the fourth battalions of the Fourth Army Corps recruited in Prussian Saxony. This division forms part of the new 15th Army Corps. What the other division is we do not know—probably one of the three with which General Löwenfeld has just started from Silesia for Strasbourg; the other two would then form the 16th Corps. This would account for four out of thirteen reserve divisions, leaving nine still disposable in the interior of North Germany.

As to the numerical strength of these bodies of troops, the North German battalions before Paris have certainly been brought up again to a full average of 750 men; the Bavarians are reported to be weaker. The cavalry will scarcely average more than 100 sabres to the squadron instead of 150; and, upon the whole, an army corps before Paris will average 25,000 men, so that the whole army actually there will be nearly 190,000 men. The battalions before Metz must be weaker, on account of the greater amount of sickness, and will hardly average 700 men. Those of the landwehr will scarcely number 500.

The Polish press has lately begun to claim a rather large share

^a L. of C. Commandant.—*Ed.*

in the glory of the Prussian arms. The truth of the matter is this: the whole number of the Polish-speaking population in Prussia is about two millions, or one-fifteenth of the whole North German population; in these we include both the Water-Polacks of Upper Silesia and the Masures of East Prussia,⁸⁸ who would both be very much surprised to hear themselves called Poles. The 1st, 2nd, 5th, and 6th corps have an admixture of Polish soldiers, but the Polish element actually predominates in one division only of the 5th, and perhaps in one brigade of the 6th Corps. It has been the policy of the Prussian Government as much as possible to scatter the Polish element in the army over a great number of corps. Thus, the Poles of West Prussia are divided between the 1st and 2nd corps, and those of Posen between the 2nd and 5th, while in every case care has been taken that the majority of the men in each corps should be Germans.

The reduction of Verdun is now being energetically pushed on. The town and citadel are not very strongly fortified, but have deep wet ditches. On the 11th and 12th of October the garrison was driven from the villages surrounding the place, and the investment made close; on the 13th a bombardment was opened with forty-eight guns and mortars (French ones taken in Sedan), placed between 700 and 1,300 yards from the works. On the 14th some old French 24-pounders arrived from Sedan. and on the following day some of the new Prussian rifled 24-pounders which had reduced Toul. They were in full activity on the 18th. The town appeared to suffer severely, being very closely built.

THE FALL OF METZ^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1782, October 29, 1870]

The present war is a war of capitulations, each one of which seems to be destined to surpass its predecessors in magnitude. First came the 84,000 men laying down their arms at Sedan, an event the like of which, or even anything approaching to which, had not been witnessed in any previous war, not even in those of Austria. Now comes the surrender of 170,000 men, together with the fortress of Metz, surpassing Sedan as much as Sedan surpassed all previous capitulations. Is Metz, in its turn, to be surpassed by Paris? If the war be continued there can be little doubt it will.

The three radical blunders which brought Napoleon from the 2nd of August to the 2nd of September, from Saarbrücken to Sedan, and which virtually deprived France of the whole of her armies, were—first, the receiving of the enemy's attack in a position which allowed the victorious Germans to push in between the scattered corps of the French army, and thus to divide it into two distinct bodies, neither of which could rejoin or even act in concert with the other; second, the delay of Bazaine's army at Metz, by which it got hopelessly shut up there; and third, the march to the relief of Bazaine with forces and by a route which positively invited the enemy to take the whole of the relieving army prisoners. The effects of the first blunder were conspicuous throughout the campaign. Those of the third were brought to a close at Sedan; those of the second we have just witnessed at Metz. The whole of that "Army of the Rhine," to which Napoleon promised an arduous campaign^b in a country full of fortresses, is

^a Written between October 27 and 29, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b Napoleon III's appeal to the army "Au quartier impérial de Metz, le 28 juillet 1870", *Le Temps*, No. 3440, July 30, 1870.—*Ed.*

now in, or on the road to, these very same fortresses as prisoners of war, and France is not only virtually, but positively, deprived of nearly all of her regular troops.

The loss of the men themselves, and of the matériel surrendered along with Metz, which must be enormous, is a blow hard enough. But it is not the hardest. The worst for France is that, with these men and this matériel, she is deprived of that military organization of which she is more in need than of anything else. Of men there are plenty; even of drilled men between twenty-five and thirty-five there must be at least 300,000. Matériel can be replaced from stores and factories at home and by commerce from abroad. Under circumstances like these all good breech-loaders are useful, no matter on what model they are constructed, or whether the ammunition of the one will suit the other models. Anything serviceable being welcome, with a proper use of telegraphs and steamers, there might be more arms and cartridges now at the disposal of the Government than could be used. Even field artillery might have been supplied by this time. But what is most wanted is that solid organization which can make an army out of all these armed men. This organization is personified in the officers and non-commissioned officers of the regular army, and finally ceases to be available with their surrender. The number of officers withdrawn from the active service of France, by losses on the battle-field and by capitulations, cannot now be less than from ten to twelve thousand, that of non-commissioned officers being nearly three times as great. With such organizing forces all at once withdrawn from the national defence, it becomes extremely difficult to turn crowds of men into companies and battalions of soldiers. Whoever has seen popular levies on the drill-ground or under fire—be they Baden Freischaaren, Bull-Run Yankees, French Mobiles, or British Volunteers⁸⁹—will have perceived at once that the chief cause of the helplessness and unsteadiness of these troops lies in the fact of the officers not knowing their duty; and in this present case in France who is there to teach them their duty? The few old half-pay or invalided officers are not sufficiently numerous to do it; they cannot be everywhere; the teaching has to be not theoretical only, but practical too; not by word of mouth only, but by act and example. A few young officers or newly-promoted sergeants in a battalion will very soon settle down to their work by the constant observation of what the old officers do; but what is to be done when the officers are almost all new, and not even many old sergeants to be had to be commissioned? The same men who now prove themselves in

almost every encounter unfit to act in masses in the open would have soon learned how to fight if it had been possible to embody them in Bazaine's old battalions; nay, if they had merely had the chance of being commanded by Bazaine's officers and sergeants. And in this final loss for this campaign of almost the last vestige of her military organization, France suffers most by the capitulation of Metz.

It will be time to form a decided opinion upon the conduct of the defence when we shall have heard what the defenders have to say for themselves. But if it be a fact that 170,000 men capable of bearing arms have surrendered, then the presumption is that the defence has not been up to the mark. At no time since the end of August has the investing army been double the strength of the invested. It must have varied between 200,000 and 230,000 men, spread out on a circle of at least twenty-seven miles' periphery, in the first line only; which means to say that the circle occupied by the masses must at least have been thirty-six to forty miles in periphery. This circle was moreover cut in two by the river Moselle, impassable except by bridges at some distance to the rear of the first line. If an army of 170,000 men could not manage to be in superior strength at any one point of this circle, and break through it before sufficient reinforcements could be brought up, we must conclude either that the arrangements of the investing troops were beyond all praise, or that the attempts to get through them were never made as they ought to have been done. We shall probably learn that here, as throughout this war, political considerations have lamed military action.

Unless peace be now concluded, the consequences of this fresh disaster will soon be brought home to France. We suppose that the two landwehr divisions will be left to garrison Metz. The 2nd Corps is already on the road to Paris, which does not absolutely imply that it is intended to take part in the investment of the capital. But supposing that to be the case, there would remain six corps, or at least 130,000 to 140,000 men, whom Moltke can send where he likes. The communications of the army with Germany were kept up without much participation of Prince Frederick Charles's troops; for this purpose he will have to detach few men, if any at all. The rest is disposable for the invasion of the west and south of France. There will be no necessity to keep the whole of them together. They will probably be divided into two or three bodies, forming, with von der Tann's corps, together at least 150,000, and will be ordered to advance into the parts of France hitherto unoccupied by the Germans. One corps will almost

certainly occupy the rich provinces of Normandy and Le Maine as far as the Loire, with Le Mans, where five railways meet, for a centre. Another will push forward in the direction of Bordeaux, after having cleared the line of the Loire from Tours to Nevers, and occupied or destroyed the arsenals and military factories of Bourges. This corps might march from Metz by Chaumont and Auxerre, where the country has not yet been eaten up by requisitions. A third corps might go straight to the south, to open communications with General Werder. The interior of France being almost entirely divested of fortresses deserving of the name, there will be no resistance except the evanescent one of the new levies, and the more passive but also more stubborn one of the populations. Whether, with such armies set free all at once, Moltke will attempt the siege of any more fortresses, or even the reduction of a fortified naval port such as Cherbourg, remains to be seen; he need reduce no more fortresses now, except Phalsbourg and Belfort, which block main lines of railway, and, of course, Paris.

NOTES ON THE WAR.—XXVI^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1787, November 4, 1870]

There can be no longer any reasonable doubt that the army which surrendered at Metz actually numbered 173,000 men, 140,000 of which were fit to bear arms, while rather more than 30,000 were sick and wounded. *The Daily News* gives us, in a telegram from Berlin, what professes to be full particulars of these troops:—67 infantry regiments, 13 battalions of Chasseurs-à-Pied,^b 18 fourth and dépôt battalions; 36 cavalry regiments—viz. 10 Cuirassiers, 1 Guides,⁹⁰ 11 Dragoons, 2 Lancers, 3 Hussars, 6 Chasseurs-à-Cheval,^c and 3 Chasseurs d'Afrique,^d besides 6 dépôt squadrons. We must suppose that this statement comes from the Prussian Staff in Berlin, and contains an abstract either of what they had made out from previous and indirect sources to be the composition of the French forces in Metz, or else of the French returns handed over to the captors on surrender. The latter appears most likely. We know there were within Metz, of infantry, the Guards (8 regiments=30 battalions, and 1 battalion Chasseurs), the Second Corps (Frossard, 3 divisions), the Third (Decaen, late Bazaine, 4 divisions), the Fourth (Ladmirault, 3 divisions), the Sixth (Canrobert, 3 divisions), and 1 division of the Fifth Corps (De Failly's), in all 14 divisions of the line, each containing 1 battalion of Chasseurs and 4 regiments or 12 battalions of the line, excepting 2 divisions of Canrobert's which had no Chasseurs. This would give 12 battalions of Chasseurs and 168 battalions of the line, or, with the Guards, a grand total of 180 battalions Chasseurs

^a Written between October 29 and November 4, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b Light infantry.—*Ed.*

^c Light cavalry.—*Ed.*

^d African infantry.—*Ed.*

and 198 of infantry, and, with the 18 depôt battalions, in all 229 battalions, which is rather more than the 221 given as the total number in *The Daily News*. On the other hand, this list would give but 64 regiments of infantry, while our contemporary has 67. We must therefore conclude that the three missing regiments formed the garrison of Metz, and for that reason do not figure in the status of the "Army of the Rhine." As to the discrepancy in the number of battalions, that is easily accounted for. The losses of many regiments during the battles in August, and the sorties of September and October, as well as by sickness, must have been such that the three battalions had to be formed into two, perhaps even one.

That such a force, as large as Napoleon's army at Leipzig,⁹¹ should be compelled to surrender at all, is a fact unheard of in the history of warfare, and almost incredible even now after it has happened. But it becomes more inconceivable still if we compare the strength of this army with that of the captors. On the 18th of August Bazaine was thrown back, from the heights of Gravelotte, under the guns of the forts of Metz; in a few days after, the investment of the place was completed. But of the army which had fought at Gravelotte, 3 corps, or 75 battalions, were detached under the Crown Prince of Saxony^a on the 24th of August, at latest; for three days afterwards their cavalry defeated MacMahon's Chasseurs-à-Cheval at Buzancy. There remained before Metz 7 corps, or 175 battalions, and 12 landwehr battalions, in all 187 battalions, to invest an army of at least 221 battalions! At that time Bazaine must have had at his disposal 160,000 combatants, if not more. The Prussians certainly had taken every step to send up fresh men from their reserve troops to make up for the losses of the late battles; but it will be impossible to suppose that their battalions were brought up again to the full complement of 1,000 men. Even supposing this to have been the case, with the exception of the landwehr, which forms battalions of five or six hundred only, this will give the Prussians a force of not more than 182,000, or with cavalry and artillery about 240,000 men; that is to say, merely one-half more than the army shut up in Metz. And these 240,000 men were spread out on a front of twenty-seven miles in length, and there was an unfordable river to divide them into two distinct bodies. Under these circumstances, it is impossible to doubt that Bazaine, had he really attempted to break through the investing circle with the mass of his troops, could have done

^a Albert.—*Ed.*

so—unless indeed we suppose that the French, after Gravelotte, were no longer the men they had been before; and for that there is no reason.

That Bazaine, after the proclamation of the Republic, should have refrained from breaking out of Metz through political motives appears to the writer of these Notes quite certain. It is equally certain that every day of delay decreased his chances of success for doing so; still the Prussians themselves appear to think now that, had they been in the same position, they could have performed the feat. But what remains inexplicable is the inaction, or at least the indecision, of Bazaine during the last days of August and the first days of September. On the 31st of August he attempts an attack towards the north-east, and continues it throughout the night and the following morning; yet three Prussian divisions are sufficient to drive him back under the guns of the forts. The attempt must have been extremely feeble, considering the enormous strength with which he might have made it. A general who has sixteen divisions of splendid infantry under him, to be repelled by three divisions of the enemy! It is too bad.

As to the political motives which are said to have caused Bazaine's inactivity after the revolution of the 4th of September, and the political intrigues in which he engaged, with the connivance of the enemy, during the latter part of the investment,⁹² they are thoroughly in keeping with the Second Empire, which, in one form or another, they were intended to restore. It shows to what an extent that Second Empire had lost every comprehension of French character if the general in command of the only regular army France then possessed could think of restoring the fallen dynasty with the help of the invader of his country.

Bazaine's previous military career was none of the brightest. His Mexican campaign⁹³ merely proved that he cared more for reward than for glory or the credit of his country. His nomination to the command-in-chief of the Army of the Rhine was due to accidental circumstances; he got it, not because he was the most eligible but the least ineligible of the possible candidates; and the deciding considerations were anything but strictly military. He will be immortalized as the man who committed the most disgraceful act in French military history—who prevented 160,000 Frenchmen from breaking through the investing army of, under the circumstances, positively inferior strength, and surrendered them as prisoners of war when there was nothing more to eat.

THE EMPEROR'S APOLOGIA^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1788, November 5, 1870]

Like other great men in bad luck, Louis Napoleon appears aware that he owes the public an explanation of the causes which led him, much against his will, from Saarbrücken to Sedan; and consequently we have now been put in possession of what professes to be this explanation of his.^b As there is no evidence, either external or internal, to fix any suspicion of spuriousness upon the document, but rather to the contrary, we take it, for the present, to be genuine. Indeed, we are almost bound to do so, out of mere compliment; for if ever there was a document confirming, both generally and in detail, the view taken of the war by *The Pall Mall Gazette*, it is this Imperial self-justification.

Louis Napoleon informs us that he was perfectly aware of the great numerical superiority of the Germans; that he hoped to counteract it by a rapid invasion of Southern Germany in order to compel that country to remain neutral, and to secure, by a first success, the alliance of Austria and Italy. For this purpose 150,000 men were to be concentrated at Metz, 100,000 at Strasbourg, and 50,000 at Châlons. With the first two rapidly concentrated, the Rhine was to be passed near Karlsruhe, while the 50,000 men from Châlons advanced on Metz to oppose any hostile movement on the flank and rear of the advancing forces. But this plan evaporated as soon as the Emperor came to Metz. He found there only 100,000 men, at Strasbourg there were only 40,000, while

^a Written between November 1 and 5, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b [Napoleon III.] *Campagne de 1870. Des causes qui ont amené la capitulation de Sedan.* Par un officier attaché à l'Etat-Major Général, avec les plans de la place et de bataille, Brussels, 1870.—*Ed.*

Canrobert's reserves were anywhere and everywhere except at Châlons, where they ought to have been. Then the troops were unprovided with the first necessities for a campaign, knapsacks, tents, camp-kettles, and cooking-tins. Moreover, nothing was known of the enemy's whereabouts. In fact, the bold, dashing offensive was from the very beginning turned into a very modest defensive.

There will be scarcely anything new in all this to the readers of *The Pall Mall Gazette*. Our "Notes on the War" sketched out the above plan of attack as the most rational the French could pursue, and traced the causes why it had to be abandoned.^a But there is one fact, which was the proximate cause of his first defeats, for which the Emperor does not account: why he left his several corps in the faulty position of attack close to the frontier, when the intention of attack had been long given up. As to his figures, we shall criticize them by-and-by.

The causes of the breakdown of the French military administration the Emperor finds in

"the defects of our military organization such as it has existed for the last fifty years."

But surely this was not the first time that this organization was put upon its trial. It had answered well enough during the Crimean war. It produced brilliant results at the outset of the Italian war, when it was held up in England, not less than in Germany, as the very model of army organization. No doubt it was shown to have many shortcomings even then. But there is this difference between then and now: then it did work, and now it does not. And the Emperor does not profess to account for this difference, which was the very thing to be accounted for—but, at the same time, the most tender point of the Second Empire, which had clogged the wheels of this organization by all manner of corruption and jobbery.

When Metz was reached by the retreating army,

"its effective force was brought up to 140,000 by the arrival of Marshal Canrobert with two divisions and the reserve."

This statement, compared with the numbers who have just laid down their arms at Metz, compels us to look a little more closely into the Imperial figures. The army of Strasbourg was to be composed of MacMahon's, De Failly's, and Douay's corps, in all ten divisions, and should number 100,000 men; but it is now said

^a See this volume, pp. 15-16 and 22-23.—*Ed.*

not to have exceeded 40,000. Leaving Douay's three divisions entirely out of the question, although one of them came to MacMahon's assistance at or after Woerth, this would give less than 6,000 men per division (13 battalions), or barely 430 men per battalion, even if we do not count one single man for cavalry or artillery. Now, with all the credit we are inclined to give the Second Empire in the matter of jobbery and dilapidation, we cannot bring ourselves to believe that there should have been ninety battalions in the army the effective strength of which, twenty days after the calling out of the reserves and men on furlough, averaged 430 men instead of 900. As to the army of Metz it comprised, in the Guards and ten divisions of the line, 161 battalions; and if we take the 100,000 men given in the pamphlet as consisting of infantry only, without allowing anything for cavalry or artillery, that would still give not more than 620 men per battalion, which is undoubtedly below the reality. More wonderful still, after the retreat to Metz, this army was raised to 140,000 men by the arrival of two divisions of Canrobert and the reserves. The new additions thus consisted of 40,000 men. Now, as the "reserves" arriving at Metz after Spicheren could consist of cavalry and artillery only, the Guards having arrived there long before, they cannot be set down at more than 20,000 men, leaving another 20,000 for Canrobert's two divisions, which, for twenty-five battalions, would give 800 men per battalion; that is to say, Canrobert's battalions, which were the most unready of all, are made by this account to be far stronger than those which had been concentrated and got ready long before. But, if the army of Metz, before the battles of the 14th, 16th, and 18th of August, counted but 140,000 men, how comes it that after the losses of these three days—certainly not less than 50,000 men—after the losses of the later sorties, and the deaths from sickness, Bazaine could still hand over 173,000 prisoners to the Prussians? We have entered into these figures merely to show that they contradict each other and all the known facts of the campaign. They can be dismissed at once as totally incorrect.

Besides the army organization, there were other circumstances hampering the Imperial eagle's flight towards victory. There was, firstly, "the bad weather;" then "the encumbrance of baggage;" and finally,

"the absolute ignorance in which we always remained concerning the position and the strength of the hostile armies."

Three very untoward circumstances indeed. But the bad weather was there for both parties, for in all his devout references

to Providence King William has not once mentioned the fact that the sun shone on the German positions while rain fell on those of the French. Nor were the Germans unencumbered with baggage. As to the ignorance of the whereabouts of the enemy, there exists a letter of Napoleon's to his brother Joseph,^a who complained in Spain^b of the same hardship, and which is anything but complimentary to generals making such complaints. It says that if generals are ignorant of the whereabouts of the enemy it is their own fault, and proves that they do not understand their business. One sometimes doubts, in reading these excuses for bad generalship, whether this pamphlet is really written for grown-up people.

The account given of the part played by Louis Napoleon himself will not please his friends very much. After the battles of Woerth and Spicheren he "resolved immediately to lead back the army to the camp of Châlons." But this plan, though first approved by the Council of Ministers, two days afterwards was considered likely "to produce a deplorable effect on the public mind;" and, on the reception of a letter from M. E. Ollivier (!) to that effect, the Emperor abandoned it. He leads the army to the left bank of the Moselle, and then—"not foreseeing a general battle, and only looking for partial engagements"—leaves it for Châlons. Scarcely is he gone when the battles of the 16th and 18th of August take place, and shut up in Metz Bazaine and his army. In the meantime, the Empress and the Ministry, exceeding their powers, and behind the Emperor's back, convoke the Chamber; and, with the meeting of that eminently powerful body, the Corps Législatif of Arcadians,⁹⁴ the fate of the Empire was sealed. The Opposition—there were twenty-five of them, you know—became all-powerful, and "paralyzed the patriotism of the majority and the progress of the Government"—which Government, we all recollect, was not that of mealy-mouthed Ollivier but of rough Palikao.

"From this period Ministers appeared to be afraid to pronounce the name of the Emperor; and he, who had quitted the army, and had only relinquished the command in order to resume the reins of government, soon discovered that it would be impossible for him to play out the part which belonged to him."

In fact, he was made to see that he was virtually deposed, that he had become impossible. Most people with some self-respect, under the circumstances, would have abdicated. But no; his irresolution, to use the mildest possible expression, continues, and

^a Napoleon I's letter to Joseph Bonaparte of August 16, 1808, in: J. Bonaparte, *Mémoires et correspondance politique et militaire du roi Joseph*, t. IV, Paris, 1854.—*Ed.*

^b J. Bonaparte's letter to Napoleon I of August 14, 1808, *ibid.*—*Ed.*

he follows MacMahon's army, a mere clog, powerless to do good, but not to prevent its being done. The Government in Paris insist upon MacMahon making a move to relieve Bazaine. MacMahon refuses, as this would be tantamount to running his army into the jaws of perdition; Palikao insists.

"As to the Emperor, he made no opposition. It could not enter into his views to oppose the advice of the Government and of the Empress Regent, who had shown so much intelligence and energy under the greatest difficulties."

We admire the meekness of the man who for twenty years had maintained that submission to his own individual will was the only road to salvation for France, and who now, when "a plan of campaign is imposed from Paris, contrary to the most elementary principles of the art of war," makes no opposition, because it could never enter into his views to oppose the advice of the Empress Regent, who had, &c. &c.!

The description of the state of the army with which this fatal march was undertaken is an exact confirmation in every particular of our estimate of it at the time.^a There is only one redeeming feature in it. De Failly's corps, during its retreat by forced marches, had at least managed to lose, without a fight, "almost all its baggage;" but the corps does not appear to have appreciated this advantage.

The army had gone to Reims on the 21st of August. On the 23rd it advanced as far as the river Suippe, at Béthenville, on the direct road to Verdun and Metz. But commissariat difficulties compelled MacMahon to return without delay to a line of railway; consequently, on the 24th, a movement to the left is made and Reims is reached. Here the whole of the 25th is spent in distributing provisions to the troops. On the 26th, head-quarters go to Tourteron, twelve miles further eastward; on the 27th, to Le Chêne Populeux, another six miles. Here MacMahon, finding out that eight German army corps were closing in around him, gave orders to retreat again towards the west; but during the night positive orders from Paris arrived that he was to march to Metz.

"Unquestionably, the Emperor could have countermanded this order, but he was resolved not to oppose the decision of the Regency."

This virtuous resignation compelled MacMahon to obey; and so he reached Stonne, six miles further east, on the 28th. But "these orders and counter-orders occasioned delays in the movements."

^a See this volume, pp. 66 and 78.—*Ed.*

In the meantime

“the Prussian army had made forced marches, while we, encumbered with baggage [again!], had occupied six days with fatigued troops in marching twenty-five leagues.”

Then came the battles of the 30th, 31st [of August], and 1st of September, and the catastrophe, which is narrated very fully, but without giving any new particulars. And then comes the moral to be drawn from it:—

“Certainly the struggle was disproportionate; but it would have been longer sustained, and less disastrous for our arms, if military operations had not been unceasingly subordinated to political considerations.”

It is the fate of the Second Empire and everything connected with it to fall without being pitied. The commiseration which is the least that falls to the lot of great misfortunes does not, somehow or other, appear to be extended to it. Even the “*honneur au courage malheureux*”^a which you cannot nowadays use in French without a certain irony, seems to be denied to it. We doubt whether, under the circumstances, Napoleon will derive much benefit from a document according to which his eminent strategical insight is in every case set at nought by absurd orders, dictated by political motives, from the Government at Paris, while his power to cancel these absurd orders is again set at nought by his unlimited respect for the Regency of the Empress. The best that can be said of this uncommonly lame pamphlet is, that it does acknowledge how necessarily things must go wrong in war “if military operations be unceasingly subordinated to political considerations.”

^a Honour to the courage in distress.—*Ed.*

THE FIGHTING IN FRANCE^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1793, November 11, 1870]

During the first six weeks of the war, while German victories followed each other rapidly, while the expanding force of the invaders was as yet but incompletely spent, and while there were still French armies in the field to oppose them, the contest, generally speaking, remained one of armies. The population of the invaded districts took but little part in the fighting. True, there were a dozen or so of Alsatian peasants court-martialed and shot for participating in battles or for maiming the wounded; but a tragedy like that of Bazeilles was quite the exception. This is proved by nothing better than by the immense impression it made, and by the eager controversy carried on in the press as to the degree in which the treatment of that village was justifiable or otherwise. If it were advisable to reopen that controversy, we could prove, from the testimony of unimpeachable eye-witnesses, that inhabitants of Bazeilles did fall upon the Bavarian wounded, ill-treated them, and threw them into the flames of houses fired by shells; and that in consequence of this, General von der Tann gave the stupid and barbarous order to destroy the whole place—stupid and barbarous chiefly because it meant setting fire to houses in which his own wounded were lying by the hundred. But anyhow, Bazeilles was destroyed in the heat of battle, and in a contest the most exasperating—that of house and street fighting, where reports must be acted upon and decisions taken at once, and where people have no time to sift evidence and to hear counsel on both sides.

During the last six weeks the character of the war has undergone a remarkable change. The regular armies of France

^a Written between November 5 and 11, 1870.—*Ed.*

have disappeared; the contest is carried on by levies whose very rawness renders them more or less irregular. Wherever they attempt to come out in masses in the open, they are easily defeated; wherever they fight under shelter of barricaded and loopholed villages and towns, they find they can offer a serious resistance. They are encouraged in this kind of fighting, in night surprises, and other coups of petty warfare, by proclamations and orders of the Government, who also command the people of the district in which they operate to support them in every way. This resistance would be easily put down if the enemy disposed of forces sufficient for the occupation of the whole country. But this he did not up to the surrender of Metz. The force of the invaders was spent before Amiens, Rouen, Le Mans, Blois, Tours, and Bourges could be reached on the one hand, and Besançon and Lyons on the other. And that this force became spent so soon is in no small degree owing to this greater condensation of the resisting medium. The eternal "four Uhlans"^a cannot now ride into a village or a town far outside their own lines and command absolute submission to their orders without risk of being caught or killed. Requisition columns have to be accompanied by an imposing force, and single companies or squadrons have to guard themselves well from night surprises when quartered in a village, and from ambushes when on the march. There is a belt of disputed ground all around the German positions, and it is just there that popular resistance is most severely felt. And to put down this popular resistance the Germans are having recourse to a code of warfare as antiquated as it is barbarous. They are acting upon the rule that every town or village where one or more of the inhabitants take part in the defence, fire upon their troops, or generally assist the French, is to be burned down; that every man taken in arms who is not, according to their notion, a regular soldier, is to be shot at once; and that where there is reason to believe that any considerable portion of the population of a town have been guilty of some such offence, all able-bodied men are to be massacred at once. This system has now been ruthlessly carried out for nearly six weeks, and is still in full force. You cannot open a German newspaper without stumbling over half a dozen reports of such military executions, which there pass quite as a matter of course, as simple proceedings of military justice carried out with wholesome severity by "honest soldiers" against "cowardly assas-

^a See the item "Berlin, Nov. 1", *The Times*, No. 26899, November 4, 1870.—*Ed.*

sins and brigands." There is no disorder of any kind, no promiscuous plunder, no violation of women, no irregularity. Nothing of the kind. It is all done systematically and by order; the doomed village is surrounded, the inhabitants turned out, the provisions secured, and the houses set fire to, while the real or suspected culprits are brought before a court-martial, when a short shrift and half a dozen bullets await them with unerring certainty. In Ablis, a village of 900 inhabitants, on the road to Chartres, a squadron of the 16th (Sleswig-Holstein) Hussars were surprised at night by French irregulars, and lost one half of their men; to punish this piece of insolence, the whole brigade of cavalry marched to Ablis and burned down the whole place; and two different reports, both from actors in the drama, assert that all able-bodied men were taken out from the inhabitants and shot down, or hacked to pieces without exception.^a This is but one out of very many cases. A Bavarian officer in the neighbourhood of Orléans writes that his detachment had burned down five villages in twelve days^b; and it is no exaggeration to say that wherever the German flying columns are passing in the centre of France, their road but too often remains traced by fire and by blood.

Now it will scarcely suffice in 1870 to say that this is legitimate warfare, and that the interference of civilians or of anybody not properly recognized as a soldier is tantamount to brigandage, and may be put down by fire and sword. All this might apply in the time of Louis XIV and Frederick II, when there were no other contests but those of armies. But from the American war of independence down to the American war of secession, in Europe as well as in America, the participation of the populations in war has become not the exception but the rule. Wherever a people allowed itself to be subdued merely because its armies had become incapable of resistance it has been held up to universal contempt as a nation of cowards; and wherever a people did energetically carry out this irregular resistance, the invaders very soon found it impossible to carry out the old-fashioned code of blood and fire. The English in America,⁹⁵ the French under Napoleon in Spain, the Austrians, 1848, in Italy and Hungary, were very soon compelled to treat popular resistance as perfectly legitimate, from fear of reprisals on their own prisoners. Not even the Prussians in

^a Report from the *Kreisblatt für das Westhavilland* "Rambouillet, Oct. 9". Engels cites it according to *The Times*, No. 26897, November 2, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b H. Voget's report from the *Frankfurter Zeitung* entitled "Aus Orleans, 23. Okt.". Engels cites it according to the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 308, November 4, 1870.—*Ed.*

Baden, 1849, or the Pope^a after Mentana,⁹⁶ had the courage to shoot down indiscriminately their prisoners of war, irregulars and “rebels” though they were. There exist only two modern examples of the ruthless application of this antiquated code of “stamping out:” the suppression of the Sepoy mutiny⁹⁷ by the English in India, and the proceedings of Bazaine and his French in Mexico.

Of all armies in the world, the very last that ought to renew such practices is the Prussian. In 1806 Prussia collapsed merely because there was not anywhere in the country a trace of that spirit of national resistance. After 1807, the reorganizers of the administration and of the army did everything in their power to revive it. At that time Spain showed the glorious example how a nation can resist an invading army. The whole of the military leaders of Prussia pointed out this example to their countrymen as the one to be followed. Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, Clausewitz were all of one mind in this respect; Gneisenau even went to Spain himself to fight against Napoleon. The whole of the new military system then inaugurated in Prussia was an attempt to organize popular resistance to the enemy, at least as far as this was possible in an absolute monarchy. Not only was every able-bodied man to pass through the army and to serve in the landwehr up to his fortieth year; the lads between seventeen and twenty and the men between forty and sixty were to form part of the landsturm or *levée en masse*,^b which was to rise in the rear and on the flanks of the enemy, harass his movements, intercept his supplies and couriers, use whatever arms it could find, employ indiscriminately whatever means were at hand to annoy the invader—“the more effective these means the better”—and, above all,

“to wear no uniform of any kind, so that the landsturmiers might at any time resume their character of civilians and remain unknown to the enemy.”^c

The whole of this “Landsturm Ordnung,” as the law of 1813 regarding it is called, is drawn up—and its author is no other than Scharnhorst, the organizer of the Prussian army—in this spirit of uncompromising national resistance, to which all means are justifiable and the most effective are the best. But then all this was to be done by the Prussians against the French, and if the French act in the same way towards the Prussians that is quite a different

^a Pius IX.—*Ed.*

^b General levy.—*Ed.*

^c Frederick William III, “Verordnung über den Landsturm. Vom 21sten April 1813”, in: *Gesetz-Sammlung für die königlichen preussischen Staaten*, Berlin [1813]. See this volume, p. 195.—*Ed.*

thing. What was patriotism in the one case becomes brigandage and cowardly assassination in the other.

The fact is, the present Prussian Government are ashamed of that old, half-revolutionary Landsturm Ordnung, and try to make it forgotten by their proceedings in France. But every act of wanton cruelty they get committed in France will more and more call it to memory; and the justifications made for such an ignoble mode of warfare will but tend to prove that if the Prussian army has immensely improved since Jena,³⁵ the Prussian Government are rapidly ripening that same state of things which rendered Jena possible.

NOTES ON THE WAR.—XXVII^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1797, November 16, 1870]

Those who believed, with M. Gambetta, that the skilful and well-combined movements by which the Army of the Loire manoeuvred von der Tann's Bavarians out of Orléans would be followed up at once by an advance on Paris have been doomed to disappointment. The engagement of Coulmiers,⁹⁸ or whatever else it may hereafter be called, took place on the 9th, and up to the evening of the 13th the Bavarian outposts appear to have remained unmolested in front of Toury, only twenty-five miles from Orléans.

It redounds greatly to the credit of General d'Aurelle de Paladines that after his first success he not only had the sense, but also the moral strength, to stop in time. With M. Gambetta behind him, proclaiming to his men that they are on the road to Paris, that Paris awaits them and must be freed from the barbarians,^b it cannot have been an easy matter to keep back these young and half-disciplined troops, who are but too ready to cry "trahison" unless they are at once led against the enemy, and to run away when they are made seriously to feel that enemy's presence. That d'Aurelle has made them stop on the road to Paris shows that his efforts to discipline them have not been unsuccessful, and that his first success has gained him their confidence. His dispositions for this first French victory were everything they should have been. Von der Tann cannot have had more than 25,000 men in the neighbourhood of Orléans, which exposed position he was allowed

^a Written on November 16, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b L. Gambetta's proclamation to the troops, c. November 13, 1870, *The Times*, No. 26907, November 14, 1870.—*Ed.*

to continue to hold, in the consciousness that his seasoned troops would, under any circumstances, be able to fray themselves a road through no matter what number of the new levies opposed to them. D'Aurelle could operate against the Bavarians with at least fourfold their numbers, and he did what is usual in such a case: he turned their flanks and displayed, especially on their right rear, such a strength that von der Tann was at once compelled to fall back towards his supports. These joined him at Toury on the 11th, or at latest the 12th; and they consisted of Wittich's 21st division of North German infantry, Prince Albrecht's division of cavalry, and the 13th Corps (17th North German division and Württemberg division). Thus a force of from 65,000 to 70,000 men at least is concentrated under the command of the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg at Toury, and General d'Aurelle may well look at them twice before he ventures upon an attack on them, though they are commanded by a very common-place chief indeed.

But there are other motives besides this which must compel General d'Aurelle to pause before making any fresh movement. If his intention really be to come to the relief of Paris, he must know perfectly well that his own forces are not sufficient to effect this object unless at the same time a vigorous effort is made, from within, to second him. We know that General Trochu has picked out the most disciplined and best organized portion of his troops and formed of them what may be called the active army of Paris. Under the command of General Ducrot, they appear to be intended for those grand sorties without which the defence of a place like Paris is like a soldier fighting with his right arm tied up.

It is not perhaps a matter of accident that this reorganization of the Army of Paris coincides, in point of time, with the advance of the Army of the Loire. General Trochu and General d'Aurelle doubtless have attempted, by means of balloons and carrier pigeons, to arrange a combined movement, to be made at a time agreed upon beforehand; and, unless the Germans previously attack the Army of the Loire, we may expect a sortie on a large scale from Paris on or about the same time that d'Aurelle makes his next forward movement. That sortie would probably be made with at least the whole of Ducrot's three corps, on the south side of the town, where communication with the Army of the Loire might, in case of success, be established, while on the north-east and north-west sides Trochu's "Third Army" would make simulated attacks and diversions, supported by the fire of the forts, to prevent the investing army from sending reinforcements

to the south. We may be sure, on the other hand, that all this is taken into account by General Moltke, and that he will not be caught napping. In spite of the great numerical superiority which the French will be able to bring into the field, we are decidedly of opinion that the difference in the quality of the troops and in the generalship will more than make up for this.

This attempt to free Paris from the grasp of the "barbarians" will have to be made very soon if it is to have any chance at all. Besides the five divisions of infantry which are opposed to the Army of the Loire, there are now before Paris sixteen divisions of infantry (the 2nd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 12th corps, the Guards, the 1st Bavarian Corps, the 21st division, and the division of landwehr of the Guards). This force must be, in Moltke's eyes, quite sufficient to keep Paris effectively blockaded; otherwise he would have drawn towards Paris more troops than the 2nd Corps, out of those that became free by the surrender of Metz. And considering that its positions, facing Paris, are everywhere strongly entrenched, and will shortly be under the protection of tremendous siege batteries, such will no doubt be the case. But we are now beginning to receive news from Prince Frederick Charles, who after the capitulation of Metz had become invisible with three army corps (the 3rd, 9th, and 10th). The first glimpse we since then have had of his troops was the short piece of news that the "9th regiment" had had a brush with the Mobiles just outside Chaumont, in the Haute-Marne, on the 7th of November.^a The 9th belongs to the seventh brigade (of the Second) Corps which had already arrived before Paris, and the whole story became thereby unintelligible. Since then, it has been established that the telegram, by mistake, gave the ninth regiment instead of the ninth brigade, and this clears up the matter. The ninth brigade is the first of the Third Army Corps, and belongs therefore to the army of Prince Frederick Charles. The locality of the engagement, combined with the report generally accredited in military circles in Berlin that the Prince had been marching upon Troyes, which city he was said to have reached on the 7th or 8th, left but little doubt that he had taken the route we supposed the main body of his troops would take, viz. "to march from Metz by Chaumont and Auxerre, and to push forward in the direction of Bordeaux after having cleared the line of the Loire from Tours to Nevers."^b We now learn that

^a Report of a special correspondent of *The Times* "Berlin, Nov. 9, 1.36 P.M.", *The Times*, No. 26904, November 10, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b See this volume, p. 153.—*Ed.*

this army has occupied the line of the Yonne at Sens,^a about fifty miles from Gien on the Loire, and but thirty from Montargis, whence any French position to the north of Orléans could be taken in flank by one good day's march. The detachments reported at Malesherbes and Nemours may have been sent by Prince Frederick Charles to feel for von der Tann's left, or they may be flanking parties on the extreme left of the line of march of the 13th Corps. At any rate, we may now expect that the Prince will very soon establish his communications by flying columns with von der Tann at Toury, on the one hand, and Werder at Dijon on the other. If the Army of the Loire delays its attack until Prince Frederick Charles arrives within reach, it will have, besides the 70,000 men in its front, another 75,000 men on its right flank and rear, and all idea of relieving Paris will have to be abandoned. It will have enough to do to look after its own safety, and will have to recede, hopelessly, before that broad flood-wave of invasion which will then cover central France on a front extending from Chartres to Dijon.

^a "Gien, Nov. 14", *The Times*, No. 26909, November 16, 1870.—*Ed.*

FORTIFIED CAPITALS^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1801, November 21, 1870]

If there is any military question which the experience of the present war may be said to have finally settled, it is that of the expediency of fortifying the capital of a great State. Ever since the day when the fortification of Paris was resolved upon, the controversy as to the usefulness or otherwise, and even as to the possibility of defending such a vast fortress, has been going on in the military literature of all countries. Nothing could settle it but practical experience—the actual siege of Paris, the only fortified capital in existence; and though the real siege of Paris has not yet begun, the fortifications of Paris have rendered such immense services to France already that the question is as good as decided in their favour.

The dangerous proximity of Paris to the north-eastern frontier of France—a frontier, moreover, entirely deprived of any defensible line either of river or mountains—led, first, to the conquest of the nearest border-lands; secondly, to the construction of a triple belt of fortresses running from the Rhine to the North Sea; and, thirdly, to that continuous hankering after the whole of the left bank of the Rhine, which has at last brought France to her present position. The conquests were cut down and defined by the Treaties of 1814 and 1815,⁹⁹ the fortresses were proved to be all but useless, and completely incapable of arresting large armies, by the two invasions of the same years; finally, the shouts for the Rhine were, in 1840, checked for a time by a European coalition against France.¹⁰⁰ Then it was that France, as became a great

^a Written on November 21, 1870.—*Ed.*

nation, attempted to counterbalance the dangerous position of Paris by the only means in her power—by fortifying it.

In this present war France was covered, on her most vulnerable side, by the neutrality of Belgium. Still, one short month sufficed to drive all her organized forces from the field. One half had surrendered themselves prisoners; the other was hopelessly shut up in Metz, their surrender but a question of weeks. Under ordinary circumstances, the war would have been at an end. The Germans would have occupied Paris and as much of the rest of France as they desired, and after the capitulation of Metz, if not before, peace would have been concluded. France has nearly all her fortresses close to the frontier: this belt of fortified towns once broken through on a front sufficiently wide for liberty of movement, the remaining fortresses on the border or the coast might be neglected, and the whole of the central country occupied; after which, the border fortresses would be easily brought to surrender one after another. Even for guerilla warfare fortresses in the interior, as safe centres of retreat, are necessary in cultivated countries. In the Peninsular War, the popular resistance of the Spaniards was rendered possible mainly by the fortresses. The French, in 1809, drove Sir John Moore's English troops out of Spain¹⁰¹; they were victorious everywhere in the field, and yet never conquered the country. The comparatively small Anglo-Portuguese army, on its reappearance, could not have faced them had it not been for the innumerable Spanish armed bands which, easily beaten in open battle, infested the flanks and rear of every French column, and held fast by far the greater portion of the invading army. And these bands could not have held out for any length of time had it not been for the great number of fortresses in the country; fortresses, mostly small and antiquated, but still requiring a regular siege to reduce them, and therefore safe retreats for these bands when attacked in the open field. Such fortresses being absent in France, even a guerrilla war could never be very formidable there, unless there were some other circumstances to make up for their absence. And one such circumstance is the fortification of Paris.

On the 2nd of September the last French army in the field capitulated.^a And to-day, on the 21st of November, nearly eleven weeks afterwards, almost one-half of all the German troops in France is still held fast around Paris, while the greater portion of

^a The reference is to the French army near Sedan. See this volume, p. 87.—*Ed.*

the remainder are hurried forward from Metz to protect the investment of Paris against a newly-formed Army of the Loire, an army which, whatever its value may be, could not have even come into existence had it not been for the fortifications of Paris. These fortifications have been invested for just two months, and the preparations for the opening of the regular siege are not yet complete; that is to say, the siege of a fortress of the size of Paris, even if defended by none but new levies and a determined population, can begin only when that of a common fortress would have been long brought to a successful close. The event has proved that a town holding two millions of inhabitants can be provisioned almost easier than a smaller fortress exercising less central attraction upon the produce of the surrounding country; for although the provisioning of Paris was taken seriously in hand after the 4th of September, or a fortnight only before the investment was complete, Paris is not yet starved into submission after nine weeks' blockading. In fact, the armies of France resisted but for one month; Paris has, already now, resisted for two months and still holds fast the main body of the invaders. Surely this is more than ever a fortress did before, and repays in full the outlay upon the works. And we must not forget, what we have more than once pointed out already, that the defence of Paris this time is carried on under quite abnormal conditions, because it has to do without an active field army. What would that resistance be, how would it have delayed, if not altogether prevented, the investment, how many more men of the invading armies would it have fettered around Paris, if MacMahon's army had gone to the capital instead of to Sedan?

But this is not all. Not only has the defence of Paris given to France two months of breathing time, which, under less disastrous circumstances, would have been invaluable and may even now turn out so, but it has also given her the benefit of whatever chances political changes may bring on during the siege. We may say as long as we like that Paris is a fortress like any other, yet the fact remains that the actual siege of a place like Paris will produce far more excitement all over the world than a hundred sieges of minor places. The laws of warfare may be what they may, our modern consciousness refuses to acquiesce in having Paris treated as Strasbourg was. The neutrals, under such circumstances, may pretty safely be counted on for trying mediation; political jealousies against the conqueror are almost certain to crop up before the place is completely reduced; in fact, an operation of the magnitude and duration of the siege of Paris is as likely to be

decided in the Cabinet of some non-combatant Power, by alliances and counter-alliances, as in the trenches by dismounting¹⁰² and breaching batteries. Of this we are about to witness an example perhaps. It is just possible that the sudden irruption upon Europe of the Eastern question¹⁰³ may do for Paris what the Army of the Loire cannot do—save it from surrender and free it from blockade. If, as is but too probable, Prussia should be unable to clear herself from complicity—of whatever degree—with Russia, and if Europe be determined not to tolerate the Russian breach of faith, then it is of the utmost importance that France should not be completely prostrated and Paris not be held by the Prussians. It is therefore absolutely necessary that Prussia should be compelled at once to declare herself categorically, and that if she attempt to prevaricate, steps should be taken at once to strengthen the hopes and the resistance of Paris. Thirty thousand British soldiers landed at Cherbourg or Brest would form an ingredient which, added to the Army of the Loire, would give it a degree of steadiness unknown to it heretofore. The British infantry, by its uncommon solidity, even by its corresponding fault, its clumsiness in light infantry movements, is peculiarly adapted thus to steady newly-formed levies; it performed that duty admirably in Spain, under Wellington; it did a similar duty in all Indian wars as regards the less trustworthy native troops. Under such circumstances the influence of such a British army corps would far exceed that due to its mere numbers, as, indeed, has always been the case when a British army corps was thus employed. A couple of Italian divisions thrown towards Lyons and the Saône Valley, as the advanced guard of an Italian army, would soon attract Prince Frederick Charles; there is Austria; there are the Scandinavian kingdoms to menace Prussia on other fronts and attract her troops; Paris itself, on receiving such news, would certainly undergo almost any degree of starvation rather than surrender—and bread there seems to be plenty—and thus the fortifications of the town might actually, even in its present distress, save the country by having enabled it to hold out until help arrived.

NOTES ON THE WAR.—XXVIII^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1803, November 23, 1870]

If ever there was a chance of relief for Paris that chance existed during the last eight days. A resolute advance of the Army of the Loire, reinforced by all troops that could be brought up from the East of France, against Mecklenburg's^b army of observation, combined with a sortie *en masse* made by the whole of Trochu's disciplined forces, both attacks carried out at the same time and before Prince Frederick Charles could come up with the Second Army—this was the only plan which promised success. And if we look at the counter-dispositions of the Germans we can hardly help concluding that it had more chances of success than could be expected at first sight.

Before Paris there were last week seventeen German infantry divisions, including the Württembergers, who had not left their post between the Seine and the Marne, as had been erroneously reported at first. The army of observation, under Mecklenburg, counted two North German and two Bavarian divisions, besides cavalry. After the battle of Coulmiers, D'Aurelle, instead of following up the Bavarian rear, marched north and west in the direction of Chartres, where, for the present, he became lost to our eyes. The Germans followed this movement by a change of front towards the west, von der Tann's Bavarians holding the country from Etampes to Ablis, while the 17th and 22nd divisions marched towards Chartres and Dreux. The latter town had, in the meantime, been reoccupied by French troops; it was supposed that D'Aurelle, reinforced by Kératry and other forces, was trying to

^a Written between November 21 and 23, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b Frederick Francis II.—*Ed.*

turn the army of observation and to arrive suddenly upon the army blockading Paris. So serious did this attempt appear to Count Moltke that he despatched at once the nearest troops, portions of the 5th and 12th Corps, to the support of Mecklenburg, and ordered the 2nd Bavarian and 6th North German Corps, the 21st, and the Württemberg divisions to hold themselves in readiness to march south if required. The reinforcements already sent enabled Mecklenburg to retake Dreux on the 17th, and to follow the enemy up, on the 18th, beyond Châteauneuf. What French troops they were who were here defeated it is impossible to tell. They may have been portions of the Army of the Loire, but they certainly were not the Army of the Loire itself. Since then there is no news whatever of further French movements; while time runs on and Prince Frederick Charles draws nearer and nearer, and ought, by now, to be within supporting distance of Mecklenburg's left wing.

There seems to be little doubt that a great opportunity has been missed by the French. The advance of the Army of the Loire made such a powerful impression upon Moltke that he did not hesitate a moment to give orders which implied, if it became necessary to execute them, nothing less than the raising of the investment of Paris. The portions of the 5th and 12th Corps, which advanced towards Dreux, we will set down at not more than a brigade each, or a division in all; but besides them, two Bavarian, three North German and the Württemberg divisions were told off to hold themselves ready to march against D'Aurelle at the first notice. Thus, out of the seventeen divisions before Paris, seven at least were to march against the relieving army in case of need, and these seven just those which occupied the ground to the south of Paris. The Crown Prince would have retained but the 2nd and greater part of the 5th Corps, wherewith to guard the long extent of ground from the Seine at Choisy, by Versailles, to St. Germain; while the Guards, the 4th, and greater part of the 12th Corps would have had to hold the whole of the northern line from St. Germain round by Gonesse and St. Brice, across the Marne, again to the Seine above Paris. Thus ten divisions of infantry would have held a line of investment of forty miles, or four miles of front for each division. Such a scattering of forces would have reduced the investment to a mere line of observation; and Trochu, with eight divisions under Ducrot and seven more, in his Third Army, under his own immediate command, could have outnumbered his opponents at least three to one on any point he might have chosen for an attack. With such

odds victory ought to have been certain to him. He could have pierced the lines of the Germans, seized upon and destroyed their siege parks, ammunitions, and stores, and caused them such losses in men that a close investment, much less a siege, of Paris would have been rendered impossible for some time to come.

So far, we have merely considered Trochu's chances, independent of those of the Army of the Loire. It is as good as certain that the latter would have been no match for the eleven German divisions told off against it, in case these eleven divisions were all concentrated. But the chances were much against that eventuality. It is likely enough that a bold and quick attack by D'Aurelle, combined with a large sortie made by Trochu at the same time, would have carried disorder into Moltke's arrangements. None of the corps which Trochu happened to attack could have been spared to march off against D'Aurelle. Thus it might remain a matter of accident which of the two French chiefs might have to fight the bulk of the Germans; but the fact remained that their forces together were far superior in numbers to anything the Germans could bring against them. From Paris to Dreux the distance is less than fifty miles. A simultaneous attack upon the Germans from both ends, and with all available forces, would, in all probability, find some of their divisions on the march between the two end-points, and therefore not immediately available. If the attack were really simultaneous, an almost crushing numerical superiority on the French side, either at the Dreux end or at the Paris end, was a positive certainty; and therefore it was almost impossible to miss at least one victory. We know very well what great drawbacks and difficulties attach to combined movements, and how often they miscarry. But in this case it is to be observed that no other condition of success was necessary than that both attacks should be made at exactly the same time. And, further, it is clear that with a distance of forty miles from one army to the other, the Prussians had to combine their movements too.

It is impossible to explain why neither D'Aurelle nor Trochu has done anything to take advantage of the chance thus offered to them. The slight engagements near Dreux and Châteauneuf were certainly not of a nature to drive back the Army of the Loire; there were not more than three German divisions engaged in them, while the Army of the Loire counts at least eight. Whether D'Aurelle is awaiting further reinforcements; whether his pigeon-messages have miscarried; whether there are differences between him and Trochu, we cannot tell. Anyhow, this delay is fatal to

their cause. Prince Frederick Charles keeps marching on, and may be by this time so near to the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg's army that he can co-operate, and the six divisions from before Paris can be spared. And from the day when that takes place, the two French generals will have lost another chance of victory—may be, their last one.

THE MILITARY SITUATION IN FRANCE^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1806, November 26, 1870]

Yesterday we called attention to the fact that since the surrender at Sedan the prospects of France had much improved,^b and that even the fall of Metz, and the setting free thereby of some 150,000 German soldiers, does not now look the crushing disaster it appeared to be at first. If we recur to the same subject to-day, it is in order to prove still more, by a few military details, the correctness of this view.

The positions of the German armies on the 24th of November, as far as they can be made out, were as follows:—

Investing Paris: The Third Army (2nd, 5th, 6th, and 2nd Bavarian corps, the 21st, the Württemberg, and Landwehr Guard divisions) and the Fourth Army (4th, 12th, and Guards corps); in all seventeen divisions.

Army of Observation, protecting this investment: To the north, the First Army (1st and 8th corps); to the west and south-west, Duke of Mecklenburg's army (17th and 22nd divisions, and 1st Bavarian Corps); to the south, the Second Army (3rd, 9th, and 10th corps, and a division of landwehr, a detachment of which was so severely handled at Châtillon by Ricciotti Garibaldi)¹⁰⁴; in all fifteen divisions.

On special duty, in the south-east of France, the 14th Corps (Werder's, consisting of two divisions and a half), and 15th Corps; in Metz and about Thionville, the 7th Corps; on the line of communication, at least a division and a half of landwehr; in all eight divisions at least.

^a Written on November 26, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b "The Prospect for France to-day", *The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1805, November 25, 1870.—*Ed.*

Of these forty divisions of infantry, the first seventeen are at present fully engaged before Paris; the last eight show by their immobility that they have as much work cut out for them as they can manage. There remain disposable for the field the fifteen divisions composing the three armies of observation, and representing with cavalry and artillery a total force of some 200,000 combatants at most.

Now, before the 9th of November, there appeared to be no serious obstacle to prevent this mass of men from overrunning the greater part of central and even southern France. But since then things have changed considerably. And it is not so much the fact of von der Tann having been beaten and compelled to retreat, or that of D'Aurelle having shown his ability to handle his troops well, which has inspired us with a greater respect for the Army of the Loire than we confess we had up to that day; it is chiefly the energetic measures which Moltke took to meet its expected march on Paris which have made that army appear in quite a different light. Not only did he find it necessary to hold in readiness against it, even at the risk of raising *de facto* the investment of Paris, the greater portion of the blockading forces on the south side of the town, but he also changed at once the direction of march of the two armies arriving from Metz, so as to draw them closer to Paris, and to have the whole of the German forces concentrated around that city; and we now hear that, moreover, steps were taken to surround the siege park with defensive works. Whatever other people may think, Moltke evidently does not consider the Army of the Loire an armed rabble, but a real, serious, redoubtable army.

The previous uncertainty as to the character of that army resulted to a great extent from the reports of the English correspondents at Tours.^a There appears to be not one military man among them capable of distinguishing the characteristics by which an army differs from a mob of armed men. The reports varied from day to day regarding discipline, proficiency in drill, numbers, armament, equipment, artillery, transport—in short, regarding everything essential to form an opinion. We all know the immense difficulties under which the new army had to be formed: the want of officers, of arms, of horses, of all kinds of matériel, and especially the want of time. The reports which came to hand, principally dwelt upon these difficulties; and thus, the

^a See "Tours, Sept. 30", *The Times*, No. 26873, October 5, 1870; "Tours, Oct. 5", *The Times*, No. 26877, October 10, 1870; "Tours, Oct. 8", *The Times*, No. 26878, October 11, 1870; "Tours, Oct. 9", *The Times*, No. 26880, October 13, 1870.—*Ed.*

Army of the Loire was generally underrated by people whose sympathies do not run away with their judgment.

Now the same correspondents are unanimous in its praise.^a It is said to be better officered and better disciplined than the armies which succumbed at Sedan and in Metz. This is no doubt the case to a certain extent. There is evidently a far better spirit pervading it than ever was to be found in the Bonapartist armies; a determination to do the best for the country, to co-operate, to obey orders on that account. Then this army has learned again one very important thing which Louis Napoleon's army had quite forgotten—light infantry duty, the art of protecting flanks and rear from surprise, of feeling for the enemy, surprising his detachments, procuring information and prisoners. The *Times'* correspondent with the Duke of Mecklenburg gives proofs of that.^b It is now the Prussians who cannot learn the whereabouts of their enemy, and have to grope in the dark; formerly it was quite the reverse. An army which has learned that has learned a great deal. Still, we must not forget that the Army of the Loire as well as its sister Armies of the West and North has still to prove its mettle in a general engagement and against something like equal numbers. But, upon the whole, it promises well, and there are circumstances which make it probable that even a great defeat will not affect it as seriously as such an event does most young armies.

The fact is that the brutalities and cruelties of the Prussians, instead of stamping out popular resistance, have redoubled its energies; so much so that the Prussians seem to have found out their mistake, and these burnings of villages and massacres of peasants are now scarcely ever heard of. But this treatment has had its effect, and every day the guerilla warfare takes larger dimensions. When we read in *The Times* the reports about Mecklenburg's advance towards Le Mans, with no enemy in sight,^c no regular force offering resistance in the field, but cavalry and francs-tireurs hovering about the flanks, no news as to the whereabouts of the French troops, and the Prussian troops kept close together in pretty large bodies, we cannot help being reminded of the marches of Napoleon's marshals in Spain, or of Bazaine's troops in Mexico. And, that spirit of popular resistance once roused, even armies of 200,000 men do not go very far

^a "Tours, Nov. 19", *The Times*, No. 26917, November 25, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b "Head-Quarters Duke of Mecklenburg's Army, Châteauneuf-en-Thimerais, Nov. 18", *The Times*, No. 26917, November 25, 1870.—*Ed.*

^c "Tours, Nov. 24", *The Times*, No. 26917, November 25, 1870.—*Ed.*

towards the occupation of a hostile country. They soon arrive at the point beyond which their detachments become weaker than what the defence can oppose to them; and it depends entirely upon the energy of popular resistance how soon that line shall be reached. Thus even a defeated army soon finds a safe place from the pursuit of an enemy if only the people of the country arise; and this may turn out to be the case now in France. And if the population in the districts occupied by the enemy should rise, or merely his lines of communication be repeatedly broken, the limit beyond which the invasion becomes powerless will be still more contracted. We should not wonder, for instance, if Mecklenburg's advance, unless powerfully supported by Prince Frederick Charles, turned out to have been pushed too far even now.

For the present everything of course hinges upon Paris. If Paris hold out another month—and the reports on the state of provisions inside do not at all exclude that chance—France may possibly have an army in the field large enough, with the aid of popular resistance, to raise the investment by a successful attack upon the Prussian communications. The machinery for organizing armies appears to be working pretty well in France by this time. There are more men than are wanted; thanks to the resources of modern industry and the rapidity of modern communications, arms are forthcoming in unexpectedly large quantities; 400,000 rifles have arrived from America alone¹⁰⁵; artillery is manufactured in France with a rapidity hitherto quite unknown. Even officers are found, or trained, somehow. Altogether, the efforts which France has made since Sedan to reorganize her national defence are unexampled in history, and require but one element for almost certain success—time. If Paris holds out but one month more, that will go much towards it. And if Paris should not be provisioned for that length of time, Trochu may attempt to break through the investing lines with such of his troops as may be fit for the work; and it would be bold to say, now, that he cannot possibly succeed in it. If he should succeed, Paris would still absorb a garrison of at least three Prussian army corps to keep it quiet, so that Trochu might have set free more Frenchmen than the surrender of Paris would set free Germans. And, whatever the fortress of Paris can do if defended by Frenchmen, it is evident that it could never be successfully held by a German force against French besiegers. There would be as many men required to keep the people down within as to man the ramparts to keep off the attack from without. Thus the fall of Paris may, but does not of necessity, imply the fall of France.

It is a bad time just now for speculating on the probability of this or that event in the war. We have an approximative knowledge of one fact only—the strength of the Prussian armies. Of another, the strength, numerical and intrinsic, of the French forces, we know but little. And, moreover, there are now moral factors at work which are beyond all calculation, and of which we can only say that they are all of them favourable to France and unfavourable to Germany. But this much appears certain, that the contending forces are more equally balanced just now than they ever have been since Sedan, and that a comparatively weak reinforcement of trained troops to the French might restore the balance altogether.

NOTES ON THE WAR.—XXIX^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1811, December 2, 1870]

The long-expected storm has broken out at last. After a prolonged period of marching and manoeuvring on both sides, varied by skirmishes and guerilla fighting only, the war has entered upon another of those critical periods in which blow follows blow. On the 27th of November the French Army of the North was defeated before Amiens; on the 28th a considerable portion of the Army of the Loire was beaten by Prince Frederick Charles at Beaune-la-Rolande; on the 29th Trochu made an unsuccessful sortie on the south side of Paris, and on the 30th he appears to have attacked with all his available forces the Saxons and Württembergers investing Paris on the north-east side.

These different actions are the result of combined operations, such as we repeatedly pointed out^b as offering the only chance of success to the French. If the Army of the North, with inferior numbers, could hold Manteuffel's two corps in check so as to prevent him from reinforcing the Crown Prince of Saxony^c in his lines round the north side of Paris, then that army would have been well employed. But this was not the case. Its advance in the open country was soon stopped by inferior numbers of Prussians; for it appears all but certain, on a comparison of the various reports, that Manteuffel had only one of his corps engaged in the battle.^d The Army of the North would have been better employed

^a Written on December 2, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b See this volume, pp. 169, 178.—*Ed.*

^c Albert.—*Ed.*

^d German official report "Moreuil, Nov. 28", *The Times*, No. 26920, November 29, 1870; "Berlin, 29. Nov.", *Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 334, November 30, 1870. Supplement.—*Ed.*

either by sending its field troops down south to Le Mans by rail, or by constantly harassing Manteuffel's outposts and detachments, but refusing battle except under the walls of one of the numerous fortresses in the North which form its base of operations. But in the present state of France, and with the young soldiers that form her armies, a General cannot always enter upon a retreat even if that be strategically necessary: such a course might demoralize his troops even more than a thorough defeat. In the present case, the Army of the North finds a safe retreat in its fortresses, where it can re-form, and where it would scarcely suit Moltke to send Manteuffel after it just now. But, at the same time, Manteuffel is now free to move in any other direction, and if, as is reported from Lille^a (though the report is denied^b), he has again evacuated Amiens and turned in haste towards Paris, we cannot but confess that the Army of the North has failed in its mission.

On the west, the 21st French Corps at Le Mans, and the 22nd (late Kératry's) in the camp of Conlie, have so far succeeded in drawing the troops of the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg^c a long way from Paris without exposing themselves to any serious defeat. Our supposition that the advance of these German troops had been pushed almost too far^d seems confirmed by the unanimous French reports that they have again evacuated the positions lately taken up east and south-east of Le Mans, which have been reoccupied by the French.^e The latter, however, do not appear to have used their regular forces in a very energetic pursuit of the enemy, as we do not hear of any engagements of importance; and thus the Army of the West has not succeeded any more than that of the North in holding fast the troops opposed to it. Where it is, and what it is doing, we are not told; it may be that the sudden quarrel between Kératry and Gambetta had lamed its movements just at the most decisive moment. At all events, if it could neither beat Mecklenburg's troops nor keep them engaged, it would have acted more wisely in sending such of its troops as are equipped and organized for a campaign by rail towards the Army of the Loire, so as to make the chief attack with concentrated forces.

This chief attack could only be made by the Army of the Loire, being the main body of all the French troops now in the field, and could only be directed against Prince Frederick Charles, his army

^a French report "Lille, Dec. 1", *The Times*, No. 26922, December 1, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b "Lille, Dec. 1, 7 P.M.", *The Times*, No. 26923, December 2, 1870.—*Ed.*

^c Frederick Francis II.—*Ed.*

^d See this volume, p. 183.—*Ed.*

^e "Tours, Nov. 30, 9.50 P.M.", *The Times*, No. 26922, December 1, 1870.—*Ed.*

being the most numerous of the three which cover the investment of Paris. The Army of the Loire is reported to consist of the 15th, 16th, 17th, and 19th French corps which had been in front of Orléans for some time, and the 18th (now Bourbaki's) and 20th in reserve behind the Loire. As the 18th and 20th were both engaged—wholly or in part—on the 28th, they must have passed the Loire before that day, and thus the whole of these six corps must have been available for an attack upon the Second German Army. A French corps, in this war, has always been composed of from three to four divisions of infantry. According to an *ordre de bataille*^a published by a Vienna military paper, the *Kamerad*, about a fortnight ago, the 15th Corps numbered five brigades in two divisions; the 16th, four brigades in two divisions; the 18th, ten brigades in three divisions. Even if we do not go by the report of the *Journal de Bruxelles*, which gives to the Army of the Loire the full complement of eighteen divisions of infantry (or three per corps), as a good many of these must still be in course of formation, there is no doubt that the attack on the 28th might have been made with twelve or fifteen divisions instead of five or six at most. It is characteristic of the troops composing the Army of the Loire that they were defeated by greatly inferior numbers, only three divisions (the two of the 10th Corps and the 5th) of infantry, or less than one-half of the Second Army, having been engaged against them. Anyhow their defeat must have been very severe; not only the German reports tend to show it, but also the fact that the Army of the Loire has not since attempted a fresh attack with more concentrated forces.

From these various transactions it results that the attempt to relieve Paris from without has for the present failed. It failed, firstly, because the inestimable chances of the week preceding the arrival of the First and Second German Armies were allowed to pass away; and, secondly, because the attacks, when they were made, were made without the necessary energy and concentration of forces. The young troops forming the new armies of France cannot, at first, expect success against the seasoned soldiers who oppose them, unless they are matched two against one; and it is therefore doubly faulty to lead them to battle without having taken care that every man, horse, and gun that can be had is actually sent on to the battle-field.

On the other hand, we do not expect that the defeats of Amiens and Beaune-la-Rolande will have any other great effect than that

^a Battle array.—*Ed*

of frustrating the relief of Paris. The lines of retreat of the Armies of the West and of the Loire are perfectly safe, unless the grossest blunders are committed. By far the greater portion of these two armies has not taken part in the defeat. The extent to which the German troops opposing them can follow them up depends upon the energy of popular resistance and guerilla warfare—an element which the Prussians have a peculiar knack of arousing wherever they go. There is no fear now of Prince Frederick Charles marching as unopposed from Orléans to Bordeaux as the Crown Prince^a marched from Metz to Reims. With the broad extent of ground which must now be securely occupied before any further advance southward (other than by large flying columns) can be made, the seven divisions of Prince Frederick Charles will soon be spread out far and wide, and their invading force completely spent. What France requires is time, and, with the spirit of popular resistance once roused, she may yet get that time. The armaments carried on during the last three months must be everywhere approaching completion, and the additional number of fighting men which every fresh week renders disposable must be constantly increasing for some time.

As to the two sorties from Paris, the news^b received up to the moment of writing are too contradictory and too vague for any definite opinion to be formed. It appears, however, upon Trochu's own showing,^c that the results obtained up to the evening of the 30th were not at all of a kind to justify the shouts of victory raised at Tours. The points, then, still held by the French south of the Marne are all protected by the fire of the Paris forts; and the only place which they at one time held outside the range of these forts—Mont Mesly—they had to abandon again. It is more than probable that fighting will have been renewed yesterday before Paris, and to-day, perhaps, near Orléans and Le Mans; at all events, a very few days must now decide this second crisis of the war which, in all probability, will settle the fate of Paris.

^a Frederick William.—*Ed.*

^b The reference is to the French and German telegrams printed under the common title "The Battle before Paris", *The Times*, No. 26923, December 2, 1870.—*Ed.*

^c L. J. Trochu's proclamation to the population of Paris and the army, November 28, 1870, *Journal officiel de la République Française* (Paris), No. 330, November 30, 1870. Evening edition.—*Ed.*

NOTES ON THE WAR.—XXX^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1812, December 3, 1870]

The Second Army of Paris began its offensive movements on the 29th of November by a sortie from the southern front of the town, in the direction of L'Hay and Choisy-le-Roi. According to the Prussian accounts, it was the First Corps of Ducrot's army, under Vinoy, which here attacked the Sixth Prussian Corps under Tümping.^b This attack appears to have been a mere feint to alarm the Prussians, and to induce them to strengthen this side by which the besieged could, if successful, join the Army of the Loire on the shortest road. Otherwise, Vinoy would, no doubt, have been supported by other corps, and would have lost more than a couple of hundred in killed and wounded, and a hundred men in prisoners. The real attack was opened on the following morning. Ducrot this time advanced on the right bank of the Seine, near its junction with the Marne, while a second sortie on the left bank was directed against Tümping, and false attacks west of Saint Denis against the 4th and Guard Corps. What troops were used for these false attacks we do not know; but an official French account says that the sortie against Tümping was made by Admiral De La Roncière Le Noury. This officer commands one of the seven divisions of the Third Army of Paris which remains under Trochu's direct command; it is therefore likely that all the secondary attacks were entrusted to this army, so as to leave the whole of Ducrot's right divisions available for the real attack on the Marne.

^a Written on December 3, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b William I's telegram to Queen Augusta of November 28, 1870, datelined "Versailles, Nov. 29", *The Times*, No. 26922, December 1, 1870.—*Ed.*

This attack again had to be made in two divergent directions. One portion of the troops necessarily was directed eastwards towards Chelles, along the right bank of the Marne, in order to keep off the 12th or Saxon Corps which invests the east side of Paris. This was another subordinate attack; we hear very little of its history except that the Saxons profess to have maintained their position,^a which they probably did. The main body of Ducrot's troops, however, Renault's Second Corps in front, passed the Marne on eight bridges, and attacked the three Württemberg brigades which held the space between the Marne and Seine. As has been already pointed out, the Marne, before joining the Seine, forms by its course an immense S, the upper or northern bend approaching Paris and the lower receding from it. Both these bends are commanded by the fire of the forts; but, while the upper or advancing one favours a sortie by its configuration, the lower or receding one is completely commanded by the ground on the left bank as well as by the forts, and the river moreover, both from the line it takes and from its many branches, is unfavourable to the construction of bridges under fire. The greater part of this bend appears to have remained, on that account, a kind of neutral ground, on each side of which the real fighting took place.

The troops intended for the western attack advanced under the protection of the fire of Fort Charenton and the redoubt of La Gravelle, in the direction of Mesly and Bonneuil. Between these two places there is a solitary hill, commanding the surrounding plain by fully a hundred feet, called Mont Mesly, and necessarily the first object of the French advance. The force told off for this purpose is put down in a telegram from General Obernitz, commanding the Württemberg division, as "a division^b;" but as it at first drove in the 2nd and 3rd Württemberg brigades who opposed it and could not be repelled until reinforcements had come to hand, and as it is moreover evident that Ducrot, who had troops enough in hand, would not make such an important attack with two brigades only, we may safely assume that this is another of the too many cases where the word *Abtheilung* which means any subdivision of an army, is mistranslated by "division," which means a particular subdivision consisting of two or at most three brigades. Anyhow, the French carried Mont Mesly and with it the villages at its foot, and if they could have held and entrenched it,

^a German report "Chelles, Dec. 1", *The Times*, No. 26924, December 3, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b H. Obernitz, "Chateau-le-Piple, Nov. 30", *The Times*, No. 26923, December 2, 1870.—*Ed.*

they would have obtained a result worth the day's fighting. But reinforcements arrived in the shape of Prussian troops from the Second Corps, namely the seventh brigade; the lost positions were reconquered and the French driven back under the shelter of Fort Charenton.

Further to their left the French attempted the second attack. Covered by the fire of the Redoute de la Faisanderie and of Fort Nogent, they passed the Marne at the upper bend of the S, and took the villages of Brie and Champigny, which mark its two open ends. The real position of the 1st Württemberg Brigade, which held this district, lay a little to the rear, on the edge of the high ground stretching from Villiers to Coeuilly. Whether the French ever took Villiers is doubtful; King William says yes,^a General Obernitz says no. Certain it is that they did not hold it, and that the advance beyond the immediate range of the forts was repelled.

The result of this day's fighting of Ducrot's army, "with its back to the Marne," that is, south of it, is thus summed up in the French official despatch:—

"The army then crossed the Marne by eight bridges, and maintained the positions taken, after capturing two guns."^b

That is to say, it retreated again to the right or northern bank of the river, where it "maintained" some positions or other, which were, of course, "taken" by it, but not from the enemy. Evidently, the men who manufacture bulletins for Gambetta are still the same who did that kind of work for Napoleon.

On the 1st of December the French gave another sign that they considered the sortie as defeated. Although the *Moniteur* announced that on that day the attack from the south was to be made under the command of General Vinoy,^c we hear from Versailles, December 1 (time of day not stated), that no movement had been made by the French on that day; on the contrary, they had asked for an armistice to allow them to attend to the killed and wounded on the battlefield between the positions of both armies.^d Had they considered themselves in a position to reconquer that battlefield, they would no doubt have renewed the struggle at once. There can be, then, no reasonable doubt that this

^a William I's telegram "Royal Head-Quarters, Versailles, Nov. 30", *The Times*, No. 26923, December 2, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b "Tours, Dec. 2, 12.15 A.M.", *The Times*, No. 26923, December 2, 1870.—*Ed.*

^c Here and below the reference is to "Tours, le 1^{er} décembre 1870", *Le Moniteur universel*, No. 330, December 2, 1870. Extraordinary edition.—*Ed.*

^d "Royal Head-Quarters, Versailles, Dec. 1", *The Times*, No. 26924, December 3, 1870.—*Ed.*

first sortie of Trochu's has been beaten off, and by considerably inferior numbers too. We may assume that he will soon renew his efforts. We know too little of the way in which this first attempt was managed to be able to judge whether he may then have a better chance; but if he be again driven back, the effect upon both the troops and the population of Paris must be very demoralizing.

In the meantime the Army of the Loire, as we expected,^a has been stirring again. The engagements near Loigny and Patay, reported from Tours,^b are evidently the same as referred to in a telegram from Munich,^c according to which von der Tann was successful west of Orléans. In this case, too, both parties claim the victory. We shall probably hear more from this quarter in a day or two; and as we are still in the dark about the relative positions of the combatants, it would be idle to prognosticate.¹⁰⁶

^a See this volume, p. 188.—*Ed.*

^b "Tours, December 2", *The Times*, No. 26924, December 3, 1870.—*Ed.*

^c "Munich, Dec. 2", *The Times*, No. 26924, December 3, 1870.—*Ed.*

THE CHANCES OF THE WAR ^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1816, December 8, 1870]

The last defeat of the French Army of the Loire and the retreat of Ducrot behind the Marne—supposing that movement to be as decisive as was represented on Saturday^b—finally settle the fate of the first combined operation for the relief of Paris. It has completely miscarried, and people begin again to ask whether this new series of misfortunes does not prove the inability of the French for further successful resistance—whether it would not be better to give up the game at once, surrender Paris, and sign the cession of Alsace and Lorraine.

The fact is, people have lost all remembrance of a real war. The Crimean, the Italian, and the Austro-Prussian war were all of them mere conventional wars—wars of Governments which made peace as soon as their military machinery had broken down or become worn out. A real war, one in which the nation itself participates, we have not seen in the heart of Europe for a couple of generations. We have seen it in the Caucasus, in Algeria, where fighting lasted more than twenty years with scarcely any interruption⁵⁹; we should have seen it in Turkey if the Turks had been allowed, by their allies, to defend themselves in their own home-spun way. But the fact is, our conventionalities allow to barbarians only the right of actual self-defence; we expect that civilized States will fight according to etiquette, and that the real nation will not be guilty of such rudeness as to go on fighting after the official nation has had to give in.

^a Written between December 4 and 8, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b See this volume, pp. 189-92.—*Ed.*

The French are actually committing this piece of rudeness. To the disgust of the Prussians, who consider themselves the best judges in military etiquette, they have been positively fighting for three months after the official army of France was driven from the field; and they have even done what their official army never could do in this campaign. They have obtained one important success and numerous small ones; and have taken guns, convoys, prisoners from their enemies. It is true they have just suffered a series of severe reverses; but these are as nothing when compared with the fate their late official army was in the habit of meeting with at the hands of the same opponents. It is true their first attempt to free Paris from the investing army, by an attack from within and from without at the same time, has signally failed; but is it a necessary sequel that there are no chances left for a second attempt?

The two French armies, that of Paris as well as that of the Loire, have both fought well, according to the testimony of the Germans themselves. They have certainly been beaten by inferior numbers, but that is what was to be expected from young and newly organized troops confronting veterans. Their tactical movements under fire, according to a correspondent in *The Daily News*, who knows what he writes about, were rapid and steady; if they lacked precision that was a fault which they had in common with many a victorious French army. There is no mistake about it: these armies have proved that they *are* armies, and will have to be treated with due respect by their opponents. They are no doubt composed of very different elements. There are battalions of the line, containing old soldiers in various proportions; there are Mobiles of all degrees of military efficiency, from battalions well officered, drilled, and equipped to battalions of raw recruits, still ignorant of the elements of the "manual and platoon;" there are francs-tireurs of all sorts, good, bad, and indifferent—probably most of them the latter. But there is, at all events, a nucleus of good fighting battalions, around which the others may be grouped; and a month of desultory fighting, with avoidance of crushing defeats, will make capital soldiers out of the whole of them. With better strategy, they might even now have been successful; and all the strategy required for the moment is to delay all decisive fighting, and that, we think, can be done.

But the troops concentrated at Le Mans and near the Loire are far from representing the whole armed force of France. There are at least 200,000 to 300,000 more men undergoing the process of organization at points farther away to the rear. Every day brings

these nearer to the fighting standard. Every day must send, for a time at least, constantly increasing numbers of fresh soldiers to the front. And there are plenty more men behind them to take their places. Arms and ammunition are coming in every day in large quantities: with modern gun factories and cannon foundries, with telegraphs and steamers, and the command of the sea, there is no fear of their falling short. A month's time will also make an immense difference in the efficiency of these men; and if two months were allowed them, they would represent armies which might well trouble Moltke's repose.

Behind all these more or less regular forces there is the great landsturm, the mass of the people whom the Prussians have driven to that war of self-defence which, according to the father of King William,^a sanctions every means.^b When Fritz^c marched from Metz to Reims, from Reims to Sedan, and thence to Paris, there was not a word said about a rising of the people. The defeats of the Imperial armies were accepted with a kind of stupor; twenty years of Imperial régime had used the mass of the people to dull and passive dependence upon official leadership. There were here and there peasants who participated in actual fighting, as at Bazeilles, but they were the exception. But no sooner had the Prussians settled down round Paris, and placed the surrounding country under a crushing system of requisitions, carried out with no consideration whatever—no sooner had they begun to shoot francs-tireurs and burn villages which had given aid to the latter—and no sooner had they refused the French offers of peace and declared their intention to carry on a war of conquest, when all this changed. The guerilla war broke out all around them, thanks to their own severities, and they have now but to advance into a new department in order to raise the landsturm far and wide. Whoever reads in the German papers the reports of the advance of Mecklenburg's^d and Frederick Charles's armies will see at a glance what an extraordinary effect this impalpable, ever disappearing and reappearing, but ever impeding insurrection of the people has upon the movements of these armies. Even their numerous cavalry, to which the French have scarcely any to oppose, is neutralized to a great extent by this general active and passive hostility of the inhabitants.

^a Frederick William III.—*Ed.*

^b Frederick William III, "Verordnung über den Landsturm. Vom 21sten April 1813", *Gesetz-Sammlung für die Königlichen Preussischen Staaten*, Berlin [1813].—*Ed.*

^c Crown Prince of Prussia Frederick William.—*Ed.*

^d Frederick Francis II.—*Ed.*

Now let us examine the position of the Prussians. Of the seventeen divisions before Paris, they certainly cannot spare a single one while Trochu may repeat any day his sorties *en masse*. Manteuffel's four divisions will have more work than they can execute in Normandy and Picardy for some time to come, and they may even be called away from them. Werder's two divisions and a half cannot get on beyond Dijon, except on raids, and this will last until at least Belfort shall have been reduced. The long thin line of communication marked by the railway from Nancy to Paris cannot send a single man out of those told off to guard it. The 7th Corps has plenty to do with garrisoning the Lorraine fortresses and besieging Longwy and Montmédy. There remain for field operations against the bulk of central and southern France the eleven infantry divisions of Frederick Charles and Mecklenburg, certainly not more than 150,000 men, including cavalry.

The Prussians thus employ about six-and-twenty divisions in holding Alsace, Lorraine, and the two long lines of communication to Paris and Dijon, and in investing Paris, and still they hold directly perhaps not one-eighth, and indirectly certainly not more than one-fourth, of France. For the rest of the country they have fifteen divisions left, four of which are under Manteuffel. How far these will be able to go depends entirely upon the energy of the popular resistance they may find. But with all their communications going by way of Versailles—for the march of Frederick Charles has not opened to him a new line *viâ Troyes*—and in the midst of an insurgent country, these troops will have to spread out on a broad front, to leave detachments behind to secure the roads and keep down the people; and thus they will soon arrive at a point where their forces become so reduced as to be balanced by the French forces opposing them, and then the chances are again favourable to the French; or else these German armies will have to act as large flying columns, marching up and down the country without definitely occupying it; and in that case the French regulars can give way before them for a time, and will find plenty of opportunities to fall on their flanks and rear.

A few flying corps, such as Blücher sent in 1813 round the flanks of the French, would be very effective if employed to interrupt the line of communication of the Germans. That line is vulnerable almost the whole of its length from Paris to Nancy. A few corps, each consisting of one or two squadrons of cavalry and some sharpshooters, falling upon that line, destroying the rails, tunnels, and bridges, attacking trains, &c., would go far to recall

the German cavalry from the front where it is most dangerous. But the regular "Hussar dash" does certainly not belong to the French.

All this is on the supposition that Paris continues to hold out. There is nothing to compel Paris to give in, so far, except starvation. But the news we had in yesterday's *Daily News* from a correspondent inside that city would dispel many apprehensions if correct. There are still 25,000 horses besides those of the army in Paris, which at 500 kilos each would give $6\frac{1}{4}$ kilo, or 14 lb. of meat for every inhabitant, or nearly a $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. per day for two months. With that, bread and wine *ad libitum*,^a and a good quantity of salt meat and other eatables, Paris may well hold out until the beginning of February. And that would give to France two months, worth more to her, now, than two years in time of peace. With anything like intelligent and energetic direction, both central and local, France, by then, ought to be in a position to relieve Paris and to right herself.

And if Paris should fall? It will be time enough to consider this chance when it becomes more probable. Anyhow, France has managed to do without Paris for more than two months, and may fight on without her. Of course, the fall of Paris may demoralize the spirit of resistance, but so may, even now, the unlucky news of the last seven days. Neither the one nor the other need do so. If the French entrench a few good manoeuvring positions, such as Nevers, near the junction of the Loire and Allier—if they throw up advanced works round Lyons so as to make it as strong as Paris, the war may be carried on even after the fall of Paris; but it is not yet time to talk of that.

Thus we make bold to say that, if the spirit of resistance among the people does not flag, the position of the French, even after their recent defeats, is a very strong one. With the command of the sea to import arms, with plenty of men to make soldiers of, with three months—the first and worst three months—of the work of organization behind them, and with a fair chance of having one month more, if not two, of breathing-time allowed them—and that at a time when the Prussians show signs of exhaustion—with all that, to give in now would be rank treason. And who knows what accidents may happen, what further European complications may occur, in the meantime? Let them fight on, by all means.

^a In plenty.—*Ed.*

PRUSSIAN FRANCS-TIREURS^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1817, December 9, 1870]

For some time past the reports of village-burning by the Prussians in France had pretty nearly disappeared from the press. We began to hope that the Prussian authorities had discovered their mistake and stopped such proceedings in the interest of their own troops. We were mistaken. The papers again teem with news about the shooting of prisoners and the destroying of villages. The Berlin *Börsen Courier* reports, under date Versailles, Nov. 20:—

Yesterday the first wounded and prisoners arrived from the action near Dreux on the 17th. Short work was made with the francs-tireurs, and an example was made of them; they were placed in a row, and one after the other got a bullet through his head. A general order for the whole army has been published forbidding most expressly to bring them in as prisoners, and ordering to shoot them down by drumhead court-martial wherever they show themselves. Against these disgracefully cowardly brigands and ragamuffins [Lumpengesindel] such a proceeding has become an absolute necessity.

Again, the Vienna *Tages-Press* says, under the same date:—

“In the forest of Villeneuve you could have seen, for the last week, four francs-tireurs strung up for shooting at our Uhlans from the woods.”

An official report dated Versailles, the 26th of November,^b states that the country people all around Orléans, instigated to fight by the priests, who have been ordered by Bishop Dupanloup to preach a crusade, have begun a guerilla warfare against the Germans; patrols are fired at, officers carrying orders shot down by labourers seemingly working in the field: to avenge which

^a Written between December 4 and 9, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b “Aus den Hauptquartieren in Versailles. 26. November”, *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 282, December 3, 1870.—*Ed.*

assassinations all non-soldiers carrying arms are immediately executed. Not a few priests are now awaiting trial—seventy-seven.

These are but a few instances, which might be multiplied almost infinitely, so that it appears a settled purpose with the Prussians to carry on these brutalities up to the end of the war. Under these circumstances, it may be as well to call their attention once more to some facts in modern Prussian history.^a

The present King of Prussia^b can perfectly recollect the time of his country's deepest degradation, the Battle of Jena, the long flight to the Oder, the successive capitulations of almost the whole of the Prussian troops, the retreat of the remainder behind the Vistula, the complete downbreak of the whole military and political system of the country. Then it was that, under the shelter of a Pomeranian coast fortress, private initiative, private patriotism, commenced a new active resistance against the enemy. A simple cornet of dragoons, Schill, began at Kolberg to form a free corps (*Gallice*,^c francs-tireurs), with which, assisted by the inhabitants, he surprised patrols, detachments, and field-posts, secured public moneys, provisions, war matériel, took the French General Victor prisoner, prepared a general insurrection of the country in the rear of the French and on their line of communication, and generally did all those things which are now laid to the charge of the French francs-tireurs, and which are visited on the part of the Prussians by the titles of brigands and ragamuffins, and by a "bullet through the head" of disarmed prisoners. But the father of the present King of Prussia^d sanctioned them expressly and promoted Schill. It is well known that this same Schill in 1809, when Prussia was at peace but Austria at war with France, led his regiment out on a campaign of his own against Napoleon, quite Garibaldi-like; that he was killed at Stralsund and his men taken prisoner. Out of these, all of whom Napoleon, according to Prussian war rules, had a perfect right to shoot, he merely had eleven officers shot at Wesel. Over the graves of these eleven francs-tireurs the father of the present King of Prussia, much against his will, but compelled by public feeling in the army and out of it, had to erect a memorial in their honour.

No sooner had there been a practical beginning of freeshooting among the Prussians than they, as becomes a nation of thinkers,

^a See this volume, p. 166.—*Ed.*

^b William I.—*Ed.*

^c In Gallic, i.e. in French.—*Ed.*

^d Frederick William III.—*Ed.*

proceeded to bring the thing into a system and work out the theory of it. The theorist of freeshooting, the great philosophical franc-tireur among them, was no other than Anton Neithardt von Gneisenau, some time field marshal in the service of his Prussian Majesty. Gneisenau had defended Kolberg in 1807; he had had some of Schill's francs-tireurs under him; he had been assisted vigorously in his defence by the inhabitants of the place, who could not even lay claim to the title of national guards, mobile or sedentary, and who therefore, according to recent Prussian notions, clearly deserved to be "immediately executed."^a But Gneisenau was so impressed by the greatness of the resources which an invaded country possessed in an energetic popular resistance that he made it his study for a series of years how this resistance could be best organized. The guerilla war in Spain, the rising of the Russian peasants on the line of the French retreat from Moscow, gave him fresh examples; and in 1813 he could proceed to put his theory in practice.

In August, 1811, already Gneisenau had formed a plan for the preparation of a popular insurrection. A militia is to be organized which is to have no uniform but a military cap (*Gallice*, képi) and black and white belt, perhaps a military great-coat; in short, as near as can be, the uniform of the present French francs-tireurs.

"If the enemy should appear in superior strength, the arms, caps, and belt, are hid, and the militiamen appear as simple inhabitants of the country."^b

The very thing which the Prussians now consider a crime to be punished by a bullet or a rope. These militia troops are to harass the enemy, to interrupt his communications, to take or destroy his convoys of supplies, to avoid regular attacks, and to retire into woods or bogs before masses of regular soldiers.

"The clergy of all denominations are to be ordered, as soon as the war breaks out, to preach insurrection, to paint French oppression in the blackest colours, to remind the people of the Jews under the Maccabees, and to call upon them to follow their example.... Every clergyman is to administer an oath to his parishioners that they will not surrender any provisions, arms, &c., to the enemy until compelled by actual force"—

in fact, they are to preach the same crusade which the Bishop of Orléans^c has ordered his priests to preach, and for which not a few French priests are now awaiting their trial.

^a Order of a Prussian general "Den 25. September", *Kölnische Zeitung*, No. 275, October 4, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b Here and below Engels cites from G. H. Pertz, *Das Leben des Feldmarschalls Grafen Neithardt von Gneisenau*, Vol. II, Berlin, 1865. Engels gives a free rendering of the text.—*Ed.*

^c F.A.P. Dupanloup.—*Ed.*

Whoever will take up the second volume of Professor Pertz's "Life of Gneisenau"^a will find, facing the title-page of the second volume, a reproduction of part of the above passage as a facsimile of Gneisenau's handwriting. Facing it is the facsimile of King Frederick William's marginal note to it:—

"As soon as one clergyman shall have been shot this will come to an end."

Evidently the King had no great faith in the heroism of his clergy. But this did not prevent him from expressly sanctioning Gneisenau's plans; nor did it prevent, a few years later, when the very men who had driven out the French were arrested and prosecuted as "demagogues,"¹⁰⁷ one of the intelligent demagogue-hunters of the time, into whose hands the original document had fallen, from instituting proceedings against the unknown author of this attempt to excite people to the shooting of the clergy!

Up to 1813 Gneisenau never tired in preparing not only the regular army but also popular insurrection as a means to shake off the French yoke. When at last the war came, it was at once accompanied by insurrection, peasant resistance, and francs-tireurs. The country between the Weser and Elbe rose to arms in April; a little later on the people about Magdeburg rose; Gneisenau himself wrote to friends in Franconia—the letter is published by Pertz—calling on them to rise upon the enemy's line of communications. Then at last came the official recognition of this popular warfare, the Landsturm-Ordnung of the 21st of April, 1813^b (published in July only), in which every able-bodied man who is not in the ranks of either line or landwehr is called upon to join his landsturm battalion, to prepare for the sacred struggle of self-defence which sanctions every means. The landsturm is to harass both the advance and the retreat of the enemy, to keep him constantly on the alert, to fall upon his trains of ammunition and provisions, his couriers, recruits, and hospitals, to surprise him at nights, to annihilate his stragglers and detachments, to lame and to bring insecurity into his every movement; on the other hand, to assist the Prussian army, to escort money, provisions, ammunition, prisoners, &c. In fact, this law may be called a complete vade-mecum for the franc-tireur,

^a G. H. Pertz, *Das Leben des Feldmarschalls Grafen Neithardt von Gneisenau*, Vol. II, Berlin, 1865.—*Ed.*

^b Frederick William III, "Verordnung über den Landsturm. Vom 21sten April 1813", *Gesetz-Sammlung für die Königlichen Preussischen Staaten*. Berlin [1813]. See this volume, pp. 166-67.—*Ed.*

and, drawn up as it is by no mean strategist, it is as applicable to-day in France as it was at that time in Germany.

Fortunately for Napoleon, it was but very imperfectly carried out. The King was frightened by his own handiwork. To allow the people to fight for themselves, without the King's command, was too anti-Prussian. Thus the landsturm was suspended until the King was to call upon it, which he never did. Gneisenau chafed, but managed finally to do without the landsturm. If he were alive now, with all his Prussian after-experiences, perhaps he would see his beau-ideal of popular resistance approached, if not realized, in the French francs-tireurs. For Gneisenau was a man—and a man of genius.

NOTES ON THE WAR.—XXXI^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1824, December 17, 1870]

The campaign on the Loire appears to have come to a momentary standstill, which allows us time to compare reports and dates, and to form the very confused and contradictory materials into as clear a narrative of actual events as can be expected under the circumstances.

The Army of the Loire began to exist as a distinct body on the 15th of November, when D'Aurelle de Paladines, hitherto commander of the 15th and 16th Corps, obtained command of the new organization formed under this name. What other troops entered into its composition at that date we cannot tell; in fact, this army received constant reinforcements, at least up to the end of November, when it consisted nominally of the following corps:—15th (Pallières), 16th (Chanzy), 17th (Sônis), 18th (Bourbaki), 19th (Barral, according to Prussian accounts), and 20th (Crouzat). Of these the 19th Corps never appeared either in the French or Prussian reports, and cannot therefore be supposed to have been engaged. Besides these, there were at Le Mans and the neighbouring camp of Conlie, the 21st Army Corps (Jaurès) and the Army of Brittany, which, on the resignation of Kératry, was attached to Jaurès' command. A 22nd Corps, we may add, is commanded by General Faidherbe in the North, with Lille for its base of operations. In the above we have omitted General Michel's corps of cavalry attached to the Army of the Loire: this body of horse, though said to be very numerous, cannot rank, from its recent formation and crude material, otherwise than as volunteer or amateur cavalry.

^a Written between December 13 and 17, 1870.—*Ed.*

The elements of which this army was composed were of the most varied kinds, from old troopers recalled to the ranks, to raw recruits and volunteers averse to all discipline; from solid battalions such as the Papal Zouaves¹⁰⁸ to crowds which were battalions only in name. Some kind of discipline, however, had been established, but the whole still bore the stamp of the great hurry which had presided at its formation. "Had this army been allowed four weeks more for preparation, it would have been a formidable opponent,"^a said the German officers who had made its acquaintance on the field of battle. Deducting all those quite raw levies which were only in the way, we may set down the whole of D'Aurelle's five fighting corps (omitting the 19th) at somewhere about 120,000 to 130,000 men fit to be called combatants. The troops at Le Mans may have furnished about 40,000 more.

Against these we find pitted the army of Prince Frederick Charles, including the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg's^b command; their numbers we now know, through Capt. Hozier, to have been rather less than 90,000 all told. But these 90,000 were, by their experience of war, their organization, and the proved generalship of their leaders, quite competent to engage twice their number of such troops as were opposed to them. Thus, the chances were about even; and that they were so is immensely to the credit of the French people, who created this new army out of nothing in three months.

The campaign began, on the part of the French, with the attack on von der Tann at Coulmiers and the reconquest of Orléans, on November 9; the march of Mecklenburg to the aid of von der Tann; the manoeuvring of D'Aurelle in the direction of Dreux, which drew off Mecklenburg's whole force in that direction, and made him enter upon a march towards Le Mans. This march was harassed by the French irregular troops in a degree hitherto unknown in the present war; the population showed a most determined resistance, francs-tireurs hovered round the flanks of the invaders; but the regular troops confined themselves to demonstrations, and could not be brought to bay. The letters of the German correspondents with Mecklenburg's army, their rage and indignation at those wicked French who insist upon fighting in the way most convenient to themselves and most inconvenient to the enemy, are the best proof that this short campaign about Le

^a "Artenay, 3. Dezember", *Kölnische Zeitung*, No. 341, December 9, 1870. Second edition.—*Ed.*

^b Frederick Francis II.—*Ed.*

Mans was conducted exceedingly well by the defence. The French led Mecklenburg a perfect wild-goose chase after an invisible army up to about twenty-five miles from Le Mans: arrived thus far, he hesitated to go any farther, and turned south. The original plan had evidently been to deal a crushing blow at the Army of Le Mans, then to turn south upon Blois, and turn the left of the Army of the Loire; while Frederick Charles, just then coming up, attacked its front and rear. But this plan, and many others since, miscarried. D'Aurelle left Mecklenburg to his fate, marched against Frederick Charles, and attacked the 10th Prussian Corps on the 24th November at Ladon and Mézières, and a large body of Prussians on the 28th at Beaune-la-Rolande. It is evident that here he handled his troops badly. He had but a small portion of them in readiness, though this was his first attempt to break through the Prussian army and force his way to Paris. All he did was to inspire the enemy with respect for his troops. He fell back into entrenched positions in front of Orléans, where he concentrated all his forces. These he disposed, from right to left, as follows: the 18th Corps on the extreme right; then the 20th and 15th, all of them east of the Paris-Orléans railway; west of it the 16th; and on the extreme left the 17th. Had these masses been brought together in time, there is scarcely any doubt that they might have crushed Frederick Charles's army, then under 50,000 men. But by the time D'Aurelle was well established in his work, Mecklenburg had marched south again, and joined the right wing of his cousin,^a who now took the supreme command. Thus Mecklenburg's 40,000 men had now come up to join in the attack against D'Aurelle, while the French army of Le Mans, satisfied with the glory of having "repulsed" its opponent, quietly remained in its quarters, some sixty miles away from the point where the campaign was decided.

Then all of a sudden came the news of Trochu's sortie of the 30th of November.^b A fresh effort had to be made to support him. On the 1st D'Aurelle commenced a general advance against the Prussians, but it was too late. While the Germans met him with all their forces, his 18th Corps—on the extreme right—appeared to have been sent astray, and never to have been engaged. Thus he fought with but four corps, that is to say, with numbers (of actual combatants) probably little superior to those of his opponents. He was beaten; he appears to have felt himself beaten even before he

^a Frederick Charles.—*Ed.*

^b "Versailles, Dec. 1, 12.16 P.M.", *The Times*, No. 26923, December 2, 1870.—*Ed.*

was so. Hence the irresolution he displayed when, after having on the evening of the 3rd of December ordered a retreat across the Loire, he countermanded it next morning and resolved to defend Orléans.^a The usual result followed: order, counter-order, disorder. The Prussian attack being concentrated on his left and centre, his two right corps, evidently in consequence of the contradictory orders they had received, lost their line of retreat upon Orléans, and had to cross the river, the 20th at Jargeau and the 18th still further east, at Sully. A small portion of the latter appears to have been driven still more eastward, as it was found by the 3rd Prussian Corps on the 7th of December at Nevoy, near Gien, and thence pursued in the direction of Briare, always on the right bank of the river. Orléans fell into the hands of the Germans on the evening of the 4th, and the pursuit was at once organized. While the 3rd Corps was to skirt the upper course of the Loire on the right bank, the 10th was sent to Vierzon, and the Mecklenburg command on the right bank towards Blois. Before reaching that place, this latter force was met at Beaugency by at least a portion of the army of Le Mans, which now at last had joined Chanzy's command, and offered a pertinacious and partly successful resistance. But this was soon broken, for the 9th Prussian Corps was marching, on the left bank of the river, towards Blois, where it would have cut off Chanzy's retreat towards Tours. This turning movement had its effect. Chanzy retired out of harm's way, and Blois fell into the hands of the invaders. The thaw and heavy rains about this time broke up the roads, and thus stopped further pursuit.

Prince Frederick Charles has telegraphed to headquarters that the Army of the Loire is totally dispersed in various directions, that its centre is broken, and that it has ceased to exist as an army.^b All this sounds well, but it is far from being correct. There can be no doubt, even from the German accounts, that the seventy-seven guns taken before Orléans were almost all naval guns abandoned in the entrenchments.^c There may be 10,000, and, including the wounded, 14,000 prisoners, most of them very much demoralized; but the state of the Bavarians who on the 5th of December thronged the road from Artenay to Chartres, utterly disorganized, without arms or knapsacks, was not so much better.

^a "Tours, Dec. 5, 1 P.M.," *The Times*, No. 26926, December 6, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b Frederick Charles, "Versailles, Dec. 6, 12.10 P.M.," *The Times*, No. 26927, December 7, 1870.—*Ed.*

^c "Versailles, Dec. 6," *The Times*, No. 26928, December 8, 1870.—*Ed.*

There is an utter absence of trophies gathered during the pursuit on and after the 5th; and if an army has broken up, its soldiery cannot fail to be brought in wholesale by an active and numerous cavalry such as we know the Prussians to possess. There is extreme inaccuracy here, to say the least of it. The thaw is no excuse; that set in about the 9th, and would leave four or five days of fine frozen roads and fields for active pursuit. It is not so much the thaw which stops the advance of the Prussians; it is the consciousness that the force of these 90,000 men, now reduced to about 60,000 by losses and garrisons left behind, is nearly spent. The point beyond which it is imprudent to follow up even a beaten enemy has very nearly been reached. There may be raids on a large scale further south, but there will be scarcely any further occupation of territory. The Army of the Loire, now divided into two armies under Bourbaki and Chanzy, will have plenty of time and room to re-form, and to draw towards it newly formed battalions. By its division it has ceased to exist as an army, but it is the first French army in this campaign which has done so not ingloriously. We shall probably hear of its two successors again.

In the meantime, Prussia shows signs of exhaustion. The men of the landwehr up to forty years and more—legally free from service after their thirty-second year—are called in. The drilled reserves of the country are exhausted. In January the recruits—about 90,000 from North Germany—will be sent out to France. This *may* give altogether the 150,000 men of whom we hear so much, but they are not yet there; and when they do come they will alter the character of the army materially. The wear and tear of the campaign has been terrible, and is becoming more so every day. The melancholy tone of the letters from the army shows it, as well as the lists of losses. It is no longer the great battles which make up the bulk of these lists, it is the small encounters where one, two, five men are shot down. This constant erosion by the waves of popular warfare in the long run melts down or washes away the largest army in detail, and, what is the chief point, without any visible equivalent. While Paris holds out, every day improves the position of the French, and the impatience at Versailles about the surrender of Paris shows best that that city may yet become dangerous to the besiegers.

NOTES ON THE WAR.—XXXII^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1829, December 23, 1870]

The last week's fighting has proved how correctly we judged the relative positions of the combatants when we said that the armies arrived from Metz on the Loire and in Normandy had then already expended the greater part of their capability for occupying fresh territory.^b The extent of ground occupied by the German forces has scarcely received any addition since. The Grand Duke of Mecklenburg,^c with von der Tann's Bavarians (who, in spite of their disorganization and want of shoes, cannot be spared at the front), with the 10th Corps and 17th and 22nd divisions, has followed up Chanzy's slowly retreating and constantly fighting troops from Beaugency to Blois, from Blois to Vendôme, and Epuisay and beyond. Chanzy defended every position offered by the rivulets falling from the north into the Loire; and when the 9th Corps (or at least its Hessian division) turned his right at Blois, arriving from the left bank of the river, he retreated upon Vendôme, and took up a position on the line of the Loire. This he held on the 14th and 15th against the attacks of the enemy, but abandoned it on the evening of the latter day, and retreated slowly, and still showing a bold front, towards Le Mans. On the 17th he had another rear-guard affair with von der Tann at Epuisay; where the roads from Vendôme and Morée to Saint-Calais unite, and then withdrew, apparently without being followed up much farther.

The whole of this retreat appears to have been conducted with great discretion. After it was once settled that the old Army of the

^a Written on December 22 or 23, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b See this volume, p. 196.—*Ed.*

^c Frederick Francis II.—*Ed.*

Loire was to be split up into two bodies, one of which, under Bourbaki, was to act south of Orléans, and the other, under Chanzy, to whom also the troops near Le Mans were given, to defend Western France north of the Loire—after this arrangement was once made, it could not be Chanzy's object to provoke decisive actions. On the contrary, his plan necessarily was to dispute every inch of ground as long as he safely could without being entangled into such; to inflict thereby as heavy losses as he could upon the enemy, and break in his own young troops to order and steadiness under fire. He would naturally lose more men than the enemy in this retreat, especially in stragglers; but these would be the worst men of his battalions, which he could well do without. He would keep up the morale of his troops, while he maintained on the part of the enemy that respect which the Army of the Loire had already conquered for the Republican troops. And he would soon arrive at a point where the pursuers, weakened by losses in battle, by sickness, and by detachments left behind on their line of supply, must give up the pursuit or risk defeat in their turn. That point, in all probability, would be Le Mans; here were the two camps of instruction at Yvre-l'Évêque and at Conlie, with troops in various states of organization and armament, and of unknown numbers; but there must have certainly been more organized battalions there than Chanzy would require to repel any attack Mecklenburg could make on him. This appears to have been felt by the Prussian commander, or rather his chief of the staff, General Stosch, who actually directs the movements of Mecklenburg's army. For after having learned that the 10th North German Corps, on the 18th, pursued Chanzy beyond Epuisay, we hear now that General Voigts-Rhetz (who commands this same 10th Corps) on the 21st has defeated a body of French near Monnaie, and driven them beyond Notre Dame d'Oé. Now, Monnaie is about five-and-thirty miles south of Epuisay, on the road from Vendôme to Tours, and Notre Dame d'Oé is a few miles nearer Tours. So that after following up Chanzy's principal forces towards and close to Le Mans, Mecklenburg's troops appear now to be directed—at least in part—towards Tours, which they probably will have reached ere now, but which it is not likely that they will be able to occupy permanently.

Prussian critics blamed the eccentric retreat of the Army of the Loire after the battles before Orléans, and pretended that such a faulty step could only have been forced on the French by the vigorous action of Prince Frederick Charles, by which he "broke

their centre.”^a That the mismanagement of D’Aurelle, at the very moment when he received the shock of the enemy, had a good deal to do with this eccentric retreat, and even with the subsequent division of the army into two distinct commands, we may readily believe. But there was another motive for it. France, above all things, wants time to organize forces, and space—that is to say, as much territory as possible—from which to collect the means of organization in men and matériel. Not being as yet in a position to court decisive battles, she must attempt to save as much territory as possible from the occupation of the enemy. And as the invasion has now reached that line where the forces of the attack and those of the defence are nearly balanced, there is no necessity to concentrate the troops of the defence as for a decisive action. On the contrary, they may without great risk be divided into several large masses, so as to cover as much territory as possible, and so as to oppose to the enemy, in whatever direction he may advance, a force large enough to prevent permanent occupation. And as there are still some 60,000, or perhaps 100,000, men near Le Mans (in a very backward state of equipment, drill, and discipline, it is true, but yet improving daily), and as the means to equip, arm, and supply them have been organized and are being brought together in western France—it would be a great blunder to abandon these merely because strategic theory demands that under ordinary circumstances a defeated army should withdraw in one body; which could in this case have been done only by going south and leaving the west unprotected. On the contrary, the camps near Le Mans contain in themselves the stuff to render the new Army of the West, in course of time, stronger than even the old Army of the Loire was, while the whole south is organizing reinforcements for Bourbaki’s command. Thus, what at the first glance appears as a mistake, was in reality a very proper and necessary measure, which does not in any way preclude the possibility of having the whole of the French forces, at some later time, in a position to co-operate for decisive action.

The importance of Tours is in the fact that it forms the most westerly railway junction between the north-west and the south of France. If Tours be permanently held by the Prussians, Chanzy has no longer any railway communication with either the Government at Bordeaux or Bourbaki at Bourges. But with their present forces, the Prussians have no chance of holding it. They

^a “Die Loire-Armee ist durch ihre Niederlagen...”, *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 289, December 11, 1870.—Ed.

would be weaker there than von der Tann was at Orléans early in November. And a temporary loss of Tours, though inconvenient, may be borne.

There is not much news from the other German columns. Prince Frederick Charles, with the Third Corps, and perhaps half of the Ninth, has completely disappeared from sight, which does not prove much for his powers to advance. Manteuffel is reduced to play the part of a huge flying column for requisitions; his force of permanent occupation does not appear to go beyond Rouen. Werder is surrounded by petty warfare on all sides, and while he can hold out at Dijon by sheer activity only, now finds out that he has to blockade Langres too if he wants his rear secured. Where he is to find the troops for this work we do not learn; he himself has none to spare, and the landwehr about Belfort and in Alsace have fully as much on their hands as they can manage. Thus everywhere the forces appear to be nearly balanced. It is now a race of reinforcements, but a race in which the chances are immensely more favourable to France than they were three months ago. If we could say with safety that Paris will hold out till the end of February, we might almost believe that France would win the race.

THE GERMAN POSITION IN FRANCE^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1830, December 24, 1870]

The wear and tear of this war is beginning to tell upon Germany. The first army of invasion, comprising the whole of the line troops of both North and South, was of the strength of about 640,000 men. Two months of campaigning had reduced that army so much that the first batch of men from the depot battalions and squadrons—about one-third of the original strength—had to be ordered forward. They arrived towards the end of September and beginning of October, and though they must have amounted to some 200,000 men, yet the field battalions were far from being again raised to their original strength of 1,000 men each. Those before Paris counted from 700 to 800 men, while those before Metz were weaker still. Sickness and fighting soon made further inroads, and when Prince Frederick Charles reached the Loire, his three corps were reduced to less than half their normal strength, averaging 450 men per battalion. The fighting of this month and the severe and changeable weather must have told severely upon the troops both before Paris and in the armies covering the investment; so that the battalions must now certainly average below 400 men. Early in January the recruits of the levy of 1870 will be ready to be sent into the field, after three months' drill. These would number about 110,000, and give rather less than 300 men per battalion. We now hear that part of these have already passed Nancy, and that new bodies are arriving daily; thus the battalions may soon be again raised to about 650 men. If, indeed, as is probable from several indications, the disposable remainder of the younger undrilled men of the depot-reserve (Ersatz

^a Written on December 23 or 24, 1870.—*Ed.*

Reserve) have been drilled along with the recruits of the regular levy, this reinforcement would be increased by some 100 men per battalion more, making in all 750 men per battalion. This would be about three-fourths of the original strength, giving an army of 480,000 effectives, out of one million of men sent out from Germany to the front. Thus, rather more than one-half of the men who left Germany with the line regiments or joined them since, have been killed or invalided in less than four months. If this should appear incredible to any one, let him compare the wear and tear of former campaigns, that of 1813 and 1814 for instance, and consider that the continued long and rapid marches of the Prussians during this war must have told terribly upon their troops.

So far we have dealt with the line only. Besides them, nearly the whole of the landwehr has been marched off into France. The landwehr battalions had originally 800 men for the Guards and 500 men for the other battalions; but they were gradually raised to the strength of 1,000 men all round. This would make a grand total of 240,000 men, including cavalry and artillery. By far the greater part of these have been in France for some time, keeping up the communications, blockading fortresses, &c. And even for this they are not numerous enough; for there are at present in process of organization four more landwehr divisions (probably by forming a third battalion to every landwehr regiment), comprising at least fifty battalions, or 50,000 men more. All these are now to be sent into France; those that were still in Germany, guarding the French prisoners, are to be relieved in that duty by newly formed "garrison battalions." What these may be composed of we cannot positively tell before we receive the full text of the order creating them, the contents of which, so far, are known by a telegraphic summary only.^a But if, as we know to be the fact, the above four new landwehr divisions cannot be raised without calling out men of forty and even above, then what remains for the garrison battalions of drilled soldiers but men from forty to fifty years of age? There is no doubt the reserve of drilled men in Germany is by this measure fully exhausted, and, beyond that, a whole year's levy of recruits.

The landwehr force in France has had far less marching, bivouacking, and fighting than the line. It has mostly had decent quarters, fair feeding, and moderate duty; so that the whole of its losses may be put down at about 40,000 men, dead or invalided.

^a "Berlin, Dec. 21. Evening", *The Times*, No. 26940, December 22, 1870.—*Ed.*

This would leave, including the new battalions now forming, 250,000 men; but it is very uncertain how soon, even if ever, the whole of these can be set free for service abroad. For the next two months we should say 200,000 would be a high estimate of the effective landwehr force in France.

Line and landwehr together, we shall thus have in the second half of January a force of some 650,000 to 680,000 Germans under arms in France, of which from 150,000 to 200,000 are now on the road or preparing for it. But this force will be of a far different character from that which has hitherto been employed there. Fully one-half of the line battalions will consist of young men of twenty or twenty-one years—untried men of an age at which the hardships of a winter campaign tell most fearfully upon the constitution. These men will soon fill the hospitals, while the battalions will again melt down in strength. On the other hand, the landwehr will consist more and more of men above thirty-two, married men and fathers of families almost without exception, and of an age at which open-air camping in cold or wet weather is almost sure to produce rheumatism rapidly and by wholesale. And there can be no doubt that the greater portion of this landwehr will have to do a deal more marching and fighting than hitherto, in consequence of the extension of the territory which is to be given into its keeping. The line is getting considerably younger, the landwehr considerably older than hitherto; the recruits sent to the line have barely had time to learn their drill and discipline, the new reinforcements for the landwehr have had plenty of time to forget both. Thus the German army is receiving elements which bring its character much nearer than heretofore to the new French levies opposed to it; with this advantage, however, on the side of the Germans that these elements are being incorporated into the strong and solid cadres of the old army.

After these, what resources in men remain to Prussia? The recruits attaining their twentieth year in 1871, and the older men of the Ersatz Reserve, the latter all undrilled, almost all of them married, and at an age when people have little inclination or ability to begin soldiering. To call these out, men who have been induced by long precedent to consider their relation to the army an all but nominal one, would be very unpopular. Still more unpopular would it be if those able-bodied men were called out who for one reason or another have escaped the liability to service altogether. In a purely defensive war all these would march unhesitatingly; but in a war of conquest, and at a time when the success of that policy of conquest is becoming doubtful, they

cannot be expected to do so. A war of conquest, with anything like varying fortunes, cannot be carried out, in the long run, by an army consisting chiefly of married men; one or two great reverses must demoralize such troops on such an errand. The more the Prussian army, by the lengthening out of the war, becomes in reality a "nation in arms," the more incapable does it become for conquest. Let the German Philistine shout ever so boisterously about Alsace and Lorraine, it still remains certain that Germany cannot for the sake of their conquest undergo the same privations, the same social disorganization, the same suspension of national production, that France willingly suffers in her own self-defence. That same German Philistine, once put in uniform and marched off, may come to his cool senses again on some French battlefield or in some frozen bivouac. And thus it may be, in the end, for the best if both nations are, in reality, placed face to face with each other in full armour.

NOTES ON THE WAR—XXXIII^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1841, January 6, 1871]

Christmas has ushered in the commencement of the real siege of Paris. Up to that time there had only been an investment of the giant fortress. Batteries had been constructed, it is true, for heavy siege guns; a siege park had been collected, but not a gun had been placed in position, not an embrasure cut, not a shot fired. All these preparations had been made on the southern and south-western front. On the other fronts there were breastworks thrown up as well, but these seem to have been intended for defensive purposes only, to check sorties, and to protect the infantry and field artillery of the besiegers. These entrenchments were naturally at a greater distance from the Paris forts than regular siege batteries would have to be; there was between them and the forts a larger belt of debatable ground on which sorties could take place. When Trochu's great sortie of the 30th of November had been repelled, he still remained master of a certain portion of this debatable ground on the eastern side of Paris, especially of the isolated plateau of Avron, in front of Fort Rosny. This he began to fortify; at what exact date we do not know, but we find it mentioned on the 17th of December that both Mont Avron and the heights of Varennes (in the loop of the Marne) had been fortified and armed with heavy guns.

Barring a few advanced redoubts on the south front, near Vitry and Villejuif, which do not appear to be of much importance, we have here the first attempt, on a large scale, of the defenders to extend their positions by counter-approaches. And here we are naturally referred, for a comparison, to Sebastopol. More than

^a Written between January 2 and 6, 1871.—*Ed.*

four months after the opening of the trenches by the Allies, towards the end of February, 1855, when the besiegers had suffered terribly by the winter, Todleben began to construct advanced works at what were then considerable distances in front of his lines. On the 23rd of February he had constructed the redoubt Selenginsk, 1,100 yards from the main rampart; on the same day an assault of the Allies on the new work failed; on the 1st of March, another redoubt (Volynsk) was completed in a still more forward position, and 1,450 yards from the rampart. These two works were called by the Allies the "ouvrages blancs."^a On the 12th of March, the Kamtschatka lunette, 800 yards from the ramparts, was completed, the "Mamelon vert"^b of the Allies, and in front of all these works rifle-pits were dug out. An assault, on the 22nd of March, was beaten off, and the whole of the works, as well as another to the (proper) right of the Mamelon, the "Quarry," was completed, and all these redoubts connected by a covered way. During the whole of April and May the Allies in vain attempted to recover the ground occupied by these works. They had to advance against them by regular siege approaches, and it was only on the 7th of June, when considerable reinforcements had arrived, that they were enabled to storm them. Thus, the fall of Sebastopol had been delayed fully three months by these advanced field works, attacked though they were by the most powerful naval guns of the period.

The defence of Mont Avron looks very paltry side by side with this story. On the 17th, when the French had had above fourteen days for the construction of their works, the batteries are completed. The besiegers in the meantime sent for siege artillery, chiefly old guns already used in the previous sieges. On the 22nd the batteries against Mont Avron are completed, but no action is taken until every danger of a sortie *en masse* of the French has passed away, and the encampments of the Army of Paris, round Drancy, are broken up on the 26th. Then on the 27th the German batteries open their fire, which is continued on the 28th and 29th. The fire of the French works is soon silenced, and the works abandoned on the 29th, because, as the official French report says, there were no casemates in them to shelter the garrison.^c

This is undoubtedly a poor defence and a still poorer excuse for it. The chief fault seems to rest with the construction of the works. From all descriptions we are led to conclude that there was not on

^a White redoubts.—*Ed.*

^b Green hill, Mamelon.—*Ed.*

^c "Bordeaux, January 1", *The Times*, No. 26949, January 2, 1871.—*Ed.*

the hill a single closed redoubt, but only batteries open to the rear, and even without efficient protection on the flanks. These batteries, moreover, appear to have been facing one way only, towards the south or south-east, while close by, to the north-east, lay the heights of Raincy and Montfermeil, the most eligible sites of all for batteries against Avron. The besiegers took advantage of these to surround Avron with a semicircle of batteries which soon silenced its fire and drove away its garrison. Then why was there no shelter for the garrison? The frost is but half an excuse, for the French had time enough; and what the Russians could do in a Crimean winter and on rocky soil must have been possible too this December before Paris. The artillery employed against Avron was certainly far more efficient than that of the Allies before Sebastopol; but it was the same as that used against the redoubts of Düppel,⁷⁹ also field-works, and they held out three weeks. It is surmised that the infantry garrison ran away and left the artillery uncovered. That may be so, but it would not excuse the engineers who constructed the works. The engineering staff inside Paris must be very badly organized if we are to judge it from this sample of its handiwork.

The rapid demolition of Mont Avron has sharpened the appetite of the besiegers for more successes of a similar sort. Their fire has been opened upon the eastern forts, especially Noisy, Rosny, and Nogent. After two days' bombardment these forts were all but silenced. What more there is being done against them we do not hear. Neither is there any mention of the fire of the entrenchments which had been constructed in the intervals between these forts. But we may be certain that the besiegers are doing their best to push forward approaches, if only in a rough way, against these forts, and to secure a firm lodgment on Mont Avron. We should not wonder if they succeeded better in this than the French, in spite of the weather.

But what is the effect of all this upon the course of the siege? No doubt, if these three forts should fall into the hands of the Prussians, that would be an important success, and enable them to bring their batteries to within 3,000 or 4,000 yards of the enceinte. There is, however, no necessity that they should fall so soon. These forts all have bomb-proof casemates for their garrisons, and the besiegers, so far, have not got any rifled mortars, of which they altogether possess but a small stock. These mortars are the only sort of artillery which can destroy bomb-proof shelter in a very short time; the old mortars are too uncertain in their range to have a very rapid effect, and the 24-pounders (with 64 lb. shell)

cannot be sufficiently elevated to produce the effect of vertical fire. If the fire of these forts appears to be silenced, that signifies merely that the guns have been placed under shelter so as to keep them available for an assault. The Prussian batteries may demolish the parapets of the ramparts, but that will not constitute a breach. To breach the very well-covered masonry of the escarp, even by indirect fire, they will have to construct batteries within at least 1,000 yards from the forts, and that can be done by regular parallels and approaches only. The "abridged" process of besieging, of which the Prussians talk so much, consists in nothing but the silencing of the enemy's fire from a greater distance, so that the approaches can be made with less danger and loss of time; this is followed up by a violent bombardment, and a breaching of the rampart by indirect fire. If all this does not compel surrender—and in the case of the Paris forts it is difficult to see how it could do so—nothing remains but to push up the approaches in the usual way to the glacis and risk an assault. The assault of Düppel was undertaken after the approaches had been pushed to about 250 yards from the ruined works, and at Strasbourg the saps had to be driven quite in the old-fashioned way up to the crest of the glacis and beyond.

With all this, we must recur again and again to the point so often urged in these columns, that the defence of Paris must be carried on actively, and not passively only.^a If ever there was a time for sorties, that time is now. It is not, at this moment, a question of breaking through the enemy's lines; it is this—to accept a localized combat which the besieger forces upon the besieged. That the fire of the besieger can, under almost any circumstances, be made superior, on any given point, to that of the besieged, is an old and uncontested axiom; and unless the besieged make up for this his inherent deficiency by activity, boldness and energy in sorties, he gives up his best chance. Some say the troops inside Paris have lost heart; but there is no reason why they should. They may have lost confidence in their leader, but that is another thing altogether; and if Trochu persists in his inactivity, they may well do so.

We may as well advert in a word or two to the ingenious hypothesis of some people that Trochu intends to withdraw, with his troops, to the fortified peninsula of Mont Valérien, as to a citadel, after the fall of Paris. This profound surmise has been concocted by some of the super-clever hangers-on of the staff at

^a See this volume, pp. 89-90, 109-10 and 129.—*Ed.*

Versailles, and is based chiefly on the fact that a good many carts go backwards and forwards between Paris and that peninsula. He must certainly be an uncommonly clever general who chooses to construct for himself a citadel on a low alluvial peninsula, surrounded on all sides by commanding heights, from which the camps of his troops can be surveyed like a panorama, and consequently fired into at easy ranges. But as long as the Prussian staff has existed, it has been troubled with the presence of some men of superhuman sharpness. With them the enemy is always most likely to do the very unlikeliest thing of all. As the German saying goes, "they hear the grass growing." Whoever has occupied himself with Prussian military literature must have stumbled over this sort of people, and the only wonder is that they should find anybody to believe them.

NOTES ON THE WAR.—XXXIV^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1842, January 7, 1871]

Although there has been a fair amount of fighting since we last surveyed the relative positions of the combatants in the provinces,^b there has been very little change, thus proving the correctness of our view that the forces of both were nearly balanced for the time being.

Chanzy's Army of the West has maintained itself in front of Le Mans; the army of Mecklenburg opposes it on a line stretching from Blois by Vendôme to Verneuil. There has been a good deal of desultory fighting about Vendôme, but nothing has been changed in the relative position of the armies. In the meantime Chanzy has drawn towards himself all the drilled and armed men from the camp of Conlie, which has been broken up; he is reported to have entrenched a strong position around Le Mans, as a stronghold to fall back upon, and is now again expected to assume the offensive.^c As M. Gambetta left Bordeaux on the 5th for Le Mans this may be quite correct. Of the actual strength and organisation of Chanzy's forces we have no knowledge whatever beyond the fact that he had, previous to his retreat upon Le Mans, three army corps. Nor are we much better informed as to the forces immediately opposed to him; the troops of Mecklenburg and those of Prince Frederick Charles's original army have been so much intermixed that the original *ordre de bataille*^d is no longer in

^a Written on January 6 or 7, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b See this volume, pp. 208-11.—*Ed.*

^c Report of the Berlin Correspondent of *The Times*, "Berlin, Dec. 29", *The Times*, No. 26949, January 2, 1871; Report of a Correspondent of *The Times* "Bordeaux, Dec. 25", *The Times*, No. 26950, January 3, 1871.—*Ed.*

^d Battle array.—*Ed.*

force. We shall have to treat both as one army, which they indeed are, since Frederick Charles has the command of the whole; the only distinction is, that Mecklenburg commands those troops which, *à cheval*^a of the Loir, face west, while the Prince has under his immediate orders those which, along the Loire from Blois to Gien, face south and watch Bourbaki. The whole of both these bodies counts ten divisions of infantry and three of cavalry, but considerable detachments have been left on the line of march from Commercy, by Troyes, to the Loire; these are only gradually coming up, as they are being relieved by the new arrivals of landwehr.

On the 11th of December Prince Frederick Charles had arrived at Briare, with intent to advance upon Nevers, in order to turn Bourbaki's right and to cut off his direct communication with the troops opposed to Werder. But we have only recently learned that on receiving the news of the resolute and unexpected resistance which Mecklenburg encountered on the part of Chanzy, he gave up his plan at once and turned back with the mass of his troops in the direction of Tours^b; which, as we know, his troops came in sight of but never entered. Thus we now learn that Chanzy's clever and gallant retreat was the cause not only of his own safety, but of Bourbaki's too. This latter general must still be in the neighbourhood of Bourges and Nevers. If, as has been presumed, he had marched off eastwards against Werder or against the Prussian line of communications, we should have heard of him ere now. Most probably he is reorganizing and reinforcing his army, and if Chanzy should advance we are sure to hear of him too.

North of the Seine Manteuffel, with the 1st Corps, holds Rouen and neighbourhood, while he has sent the 8th Corps into Picardy. This latter corps has had a hard time of it. General Faidherbe does not allow his Northern Army much rest. The three northernmost departments of France, from the Somme to the Belgian frontier, hold about twenty fortresses of various sizes, which, though wholly useless nowadays against a large invasion from Belgium, yet form a most welcome and almost unattackable basis of operations in this case. When Vauban planned this triple belt of fortresses, nearly two hundred years ago, he surely never thought that they would serve as a great entrenched camp, a sort of multiplied quadrilateral, to a French army against an enemy advancing from the heart of France. But so it is, and, small as this

^a On both banks.—*Ed.*

^b "Berlin, Dec. 27", *The Times*, No. 26947, December 30, 1870.—*Ed.*

piece of territory is, it is for the nonce impregnable, and an important piece of ground too, on account of its manufacturing resources and its dense population. Driven back into this safe retreat by the battle of Villers-Bretonneux (27th of November),¹⁰⁹ Faidherbe reorganized and strengthened his army; towards the end of December he again advanced upon Amiens, and delivered on the 23rd an undecided battle to Manteuffel on the Hallue. In this battle he had four divisions (35,000 men as he counts them) against the two divisions of the 8th Prussian Corps (24,000 men by Prussian accounts). That with such a proportion of forces, and against as renowned a general as von Goeben, he should have held his own, is a sign that his Mobiles and Mobilisés are improving. In consequence of the frost and of shortcomings of his commissariat and train, as he says, but probably also because he did not trust in the steadiness of his men for a second day's hard fighting, he retreated almost unmolested behind the Scarpe.^a Von Goeben followed, left the greater part of the 16th division to keep the communications and to invest Péronne, and advanced with only the 15th division and Prince Albert the younger's flying column (which at most was equivalent to a brigade) to Bapaume and beyond. Here, then, was a chance for Faidherbe's four divisions. Without hesitating a moment, he advanced from his sheltered position and attacked the Prussians. After a preliminary engagement on the 2nd of January, the main bodies fought in front of Bapaume on the following day. The clear reports of Faidherbe,^b the great numerical superiority of the French (eight brigades—or 33,000 men at least—against three Prussian brigades, or 16,000 to 18,000 men, to calculate the numbers according to the data given above for the two armies), the indefinite language of Manteuffel,^c leave no doubt that in this battle the French had the best of it. Besides, Manteuffel's bragging is well known in Germany: everybody there recollects how as Governor of Sleswig, and being rather tall, he offered "to cover every seven feet of the country with his body." His reports, even after censorship in Versailles, are certainly the least trustworthy of all Prussian accounts. On the other hand, Faidherbe did not follow up his success, but retired after the battle to a village some miles in rear of the battle-field, so

^a L.-L. Faidherbe's despatch to the Prefect of North "Lille, Dec. 25", *The Times*, No. 26944, December 27, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b L.-L. Faidherbe, "Arras, Jan. 4", *The Times*, No. 26953, January 6, 1871.—*Ed.*

^c E. Manteuffel, "Versailles, Jan. 5", *The Times*, No. 26953, January 6, 1871.—*Ed.*

that Péronne was not relieved and, as has already been pointed out in these columns, the fruits of the fighting were all for the Prussians. It is impossible to take Faidherbe's excuses for his retreat as being meant seriously.^a But, whatever his reasons may have been, unless he can do more with his troops than beat three Prussian brigades and then retire, he will not relieve Paris.

In the meantime, Manteuffel has an important reinforcement at hand. The 14th division (Kameke) of the 7th Corps, after reducing Montmédy and Mézières, is approaching his fighting-ground accompanied by its siege train. The fighting near Guise seems to mark a stage in this advance; Guise is on the direct road from Mézières to Péronne, which naturally seems to be the next fortress set down for bombardment. After Péronne, probably Cambrai, if all be well with the Prussians.

In the south-east, Werder has been in full retreat since the 27th of December, when he evacuated Dijon. It took some time before the Germans mentioned a word about this, and then the Prussians were quite silent; it leaked out in a quiet corner of the *Karlsruher Zeitung*.^b On the 31st he evacuated Gray also, after an engagement, and is now covering the siege of Belfort at Vesoul. The Army of Lyons, under Crémer (said to be an emigrated Hanoverian officer) is following him up, while Garibaldi seems to be acting more westward against the Prussian chief line of communications. Werder, who is said to expect a reinforcement of 36,000 men, will be pretty safe at Vesoul,^c but the line of communications appears anything but secure. We now learn that General Zastrow, commander of the 7th Corps, has been sent thither, and is in communication with Werder. Unless he is appointed to quite a new command, he will have the 13th division with him, which has been relieved, in Metz, by landwehr, and he will also dispose of other forces for active operations. It must be one of his battalions which has been attacked, and is said to have been routed, near Saulieu, on the road from Auxerre to Chalon-sur-Saône. What the state of the communications is on the secondary lines of railway (always excepting the main line from Nancy to Paris, which is well guarded and so far safe) is shown by a letter from Chaumont (Haute-Marne) to the *Cologne Gazette*,^d complaining that now for

^a L.-L. Faidherbe, "Arras, Jan. 4", *The Times*, No. 26953, January 6, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b This report is mentioned in the item "Incidents of the War", *The Times*, No. 26953, January 6, 1871.—*Ed.*

^c Telegram from a correspondent of *The Times* "Berlin, Jan. 5, 10.30 P.M.", *The Times*, No. 26953, January 6, 1871.—*Ed.*

^d The reference is to the *Kölnische Zeitung*.—*Ed.*

the third time the francs-tireurs have broken up the railway between Chaumont and Troyes; the last time, on the 24th of December, they replaced the rails loosely, so that a train with 500 landwehr got off the rails and was stopped, upon which the francs-tireurs opened fire from a wood, but were beaten off. The correspondent considers this not only unfair but "infamous."^a Just like the Austrian cuirassier in Hungary in 1849: "Are not these hussars infamous scoundrels? They see my cuirass, and yet they cut me across the face."

The state of these communications is a matter of life and death to the army besieging Paris. A few days' interruption would affect it for weeks. The Prussians know this, and are now concentrating all their landwehr in north-western France to hold in subjection a belt of country sufficiently broad to ensure safety to their railways. The fall of Mézières opens them a second line of rails from the frontier by Thionville, Mézières, and Reims; but this line dangerously offers its flank to the Army of the North. If Paris is to be relieved, it might perhaps be done easiest by breaking this line of communications.

^a "Chaumont, 29. Dez.", *Kölnische Zeitung*, No. 1, January 1, 1871.—*Ed.*

NOTES ON THE WAR.—XXXV^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1848, January 14, 1871]

The armies in the field have entered upon two operations which might easily bring on a crisis of the war. The first of these is Bourbaki's march against Werder; the second, Prince Frederick Charles's march against Chanzy.

The rumour of Bourbaki's march eastward has been current for nearly a week, but there was nothing in it to distinguish it from the rest of the rumours which are now flying about so plentifully. That the movement might be good in itself was no reason to believe in its reality. However, there can be now no doubt that Bourbaki, with at least the 18th and 20th Corps, and the 24th, a new corps, has arrived in the East of France, and has turned Werder's position at Vesoul by a movement viâ Besançon upon Lure, between Vesoul and Belfort. Near Lure, Werder attacked him at Villersexel on the 9th, and an engagement ensued, in which both parties claim the victory. It was evidently a rearguard-engagement, in which Werder apparently has made good his retreat. Whichever may have won in this first encounter, other and more general battles are sure to follow in a day or two, and to bring matters here to a crisis.¹¹⁰

If this movement of Bourbaki be undertaken with sufficient forces—that is to say, with every man, horse, and gun that was not absolutely required elsewhere—and if it be carried out with the necessary vigour, it may prove the turning point of the war. We have before now pointed out the weakness of the long line of the German communications, and the possibility of Paris being relieved by an attack in force upon that line.^b This is now upon

^a Written on January 13 or 14, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b See this volume, p. 225.—*Ed.*

the cards, and it will depend on the playing of them whether it is really to come off.

Of the forces now invading France, nearly the whole of the troops of the line are engaged either in the siege of Paris or in the covering of that siege. Out of thirty-five divisions (including the landwehr of the Guard, who have all the time been used as line troops), thirty-two are thus employed. Two are with Werder (three Baden and one Prussian brigade), and one, under Zastrow, has gone to join him. Besides these, Werder has at least two divisions of landwehr to carry on the siege of Belfort and to occupy the fortresses in Southern Alsace. Thus the whole length and breadth of country north-east of the line from Mézières by Laon and Soissons to Paris, and thence by Auxerre and Châtillon to Hüningen, near Basel, with all its reduced fortresses, has to be held by the remainder of the landwehr, as far as it has been made disposable. And when we consider that there are also the prisoners of war in Germany to be watched and the fortresses at home to be garrisoned; that only nine Prussian army corps (those existing before 1866) had old soldiers enough to fill up the landwehr battalions, while the others will have to wait five years yet before they can do this—we may imagine that the forces remaining disposable for the occupation of this part of France cannot have been over-numerous. True, eighteen *dépôt* battalions are now being sent to garrison the fortresses in Alsace and Lorraine, and the newly forming “garrison battalions” are to relieve the landwehr in the interior of Prussia. But the formation of these garrison battalions is reported in the German press to proceed but slowly, and thus the army of occupation will still for some time be comparatively weak and barely able to hold in check the population of the provinces it has to guard.

It is against this portion of the German army that Bourbaki is moving. He evidently attempted to interpose his troops between Vesoul and Belfort, whereby he would isolate Werder, whom he might beat singly, driving him in a north-westerly direction. But as Werder now probably is before Belfort and united with Tresckow, Bourbaki has to defeat both in order to raise the siege; to drive the besiegers back into the Rhine valley, after which he might advance on the eastern side of the Vosges towards Lunéville, where he would be on the main line of the German communications. The destruction of the railway tunnels near Phalsbourg would block up the Strasbourg line for a considerable period; that of the Frouard Junction would stop the line from Saarbrücken and Metz; and it might even be possible to send a flying column

towards Thionville to destroy the line near that place too, so as to break the last through line the Germans have. That column could always retire into Luxembourg or Belgium and lay down its arms; it would have amply repaid itself.

These are the objects which Bourbaki must have in view. With the neighbourhood of Paris exhausted, the interruption of the communications from Paris to Germany even for a few days would be a very serious matter for the 240,000 Germans before Paris, and the presence of 120,000 to 150,000 French soldiers in Lorraine might be a more effective means of raising the siege than even a victory of Chanzy over Frederick Charles, by which the latter would after all be driven back upon the besieging forces, to be backed up by them. True, the Germans have another line of railway communication by Thionville, Mézières, and Reims, which Bourbaki might probably not be able to reach even with flying columns; but then there is the absolute certainty of a general rising of the people in the occupied districts as soon as Bourbaki would have succeeded in penetrating into Lorraine; and what the safety for traffic of that second line of railway would be under such circumstances we need not explain any further. Besides, Bourbaki's success would, as a first consequence, compel Goeben to fall back, and thus the Army of the North might find a chance of cutting off this line between Soissons and Mézières.

We consider this movement of Bourbaki as the most important and the most promising one which has been made by any French general in this war. But, we repeat, it must be carried out adequately. The best plans are worthless if they be executed feebly and irresolutely; and we shall probably not learn anything positive about Bourbaki's forces or the way he handles them until his struggles with Werder have been decided.

But we are informed that in view of some such contingency, the Corps of Werder is to be enlarged into a great "fifth army," under Manteuffel, who is to hand over his "first army" to Goeben, and to bring to Werder's assistance the 2nd, 7th, and 14th Corps.^a Now, of the 7th Corps, the 13th division has already been sent towards Vesoul, under Zastrow; the 14th division has only just taken Mézières and Rocroi, and cannot, therefore, be expected at Vesoul so very soon; the 14th Corps is the very one which Werder has had all along (the Baden division and the 30th and 34th Prussian regiments, under Goltz); and, as to the 2nd Corps, which

^a "Berlin, Jan. 11", *The Times*, No. 26958, January 12, 1871; "Versailles, Jan. 11", *The Times*, No. 26959, January 13, 1871.—*Ed.*

is before Paris, we expect that it will not start before that city shall have surrendered, because it cannot be well spared there. But even if it were sent off now it would only arrive after Werder's decisive action with Bourbaki had taken place. As to other reinforcements for Werder from reserves which may be supposed to exist in Germany, we have to consider, firstly, that whatever landwehr can be made disposable has already been, or is being, forwarded now; and, secondly, that the *depôt* battalions, the only other reserve force in existence, have just been emptied of their drilled men, and are at this moment mere cadres. Thus, Bourbaki will at all events have to fight his first and most decisive actions before the intended reinforcements can have arrived; and, if victorious, he will be in the favourable position to deal with these reinforcements one after another as they arrive successively and from very different directions.

On the other hand, Prince Frederick Charles, in spite of his victorious march to Le Mans, may yet have made the first mistake committed by the Germans in this war, when he left Bourbaki entirely free, in order to concentrate all his forces against Chanzy. Now, Chanzy was no doubt his more immediate opponent, and for the moment the most dangerous one too. But Chanzy's country is not the one where decisive successes can be had over the French. Chanzy has just suffered a severe defeat¹¹; that settles his attempts for the relief of Paris for the present. But it so far settles nothing else. Chanzy may withdraw if he likes either towards Brittany or towards the Calvados. In either case he finds at the extreme end of his retreat a great naval arsenal, Brest or Cherbourg, with detached forts to shelter him until the French fleet can transport his men south of the Loire or north of the Somme. In consequence, the West of France is a country where the French can carry on a war to amuse the enemy—a war of alternate advances and retreats—without ever being brought to bay against their will. We should not wonder if Chanzy had been urged on to fight by Gambetta, who was reported to have joined him,^a and who would be sure to subordinate military to political considerations. After his reverse, and the loss of Le Mans, Chanzy could do nothing better than draw off Frederick Charles as far away to the westward as possible, so that this portion of the Prussian forces may be quite out of harm's way when Bourbaki's campaign begins to develop itself.

^a "Bordeaux, Jan. 5", *The Times*, No. 26954, January 7, 1871.—*Ed.*

Faidherbe, in the north, is evidently too weak to do anything decisive against Goeben. As it appears that Chanzy cannot defeat Frederick Charles and thereby relieve Paris, it would be better to send plenty of men to the north, to get rid of Goeben both at Amiens and Rouen, and to attempt with concentrated forces an advance upon the railway line from Mézières to Paris; especially now, while Bourbaki is threatening the other German line of railway. The communications are the tenderest part of an army's position; and if the northern line, which lies so much exposed to an attack from the north both at Soissons and Rethel, should once be seriously menaced while Bourbaki is at work on the southern edge of Lorraine, we might see all of a sudden a very pretty commotion in Versailles.

NOTES ON THE WAR.—XXXVI^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1852, January 19, 1871]

Ever since, after Sedan, Paris was first seriously menaced by hostile attack, we have insisted upon the great strength of a fortified capital like Paris; but we have never omitted to add that, for the full development of its defensive powers, it required a large regular army to defend it^b; an army too powerful to be shut up in the works of the place, or to be prevented from manoeuvring in the open around the fortress, which would serve as its pivot and partly as its base of operations.

Under normal conditions, this army would almost always be at hand, as a matter of course. The French armies, defeated near the frontier, would fall back upon Paris as their last and chief stronghold; they would under ordinary circumstances arrive here in sufficient strength, and find sufficient reinforcements to be able to fulfil the task assigned to them. But this time the strategy of the Second Empire had caused the whole of the French armies to disappear from the field. One of them it had managed to get shut up, to all appearance hopelessly, in Metz; the other had just surrendered at Sedan. When the Prussians arrived before Paris, a few half-filled depôts, a number of provincial Mobiles (just levied), and the local National Guard (not half formed), were all the forces ready for its defence.

Even under these circumstances the intrinsic strength of the place proved so formidable to the invaders, the task of attacking *lege artis*^c this immense city and its outworks appeared so gigantic

^a Written between January 14 and 19, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b See this volume, pp. 89-90, 109-10 and 129.—*Ed.*

^c According to the rules.—*Ed.*

to them, that they abandoned it at once, and chose to reduce the place by famine. At that time Henri Rochefort and others were formed into a "Commission of Barricades,"⁸⁴ charged with the construction of a third interior line of defence, which should prepare the ground for that line of fighting so peculiarly Parisian—the defence of barricades and the struggle from house to house. The press at the time made great fun of this commission; but the semi-official publications of the Prussian staff leave no doubt that it was above all the certainty of having to encounter a determined struggle at the barricades which caused them to decide in favour of reduction by famine. The Prussians knew very well that the forts, and after them the enceinte, if defended by artillery alone, must fall within a certain time; but then would come a stage of the struggle in which new levies and even civilians would be a match for veterans; in which house after house, street after street, would have to be conquered, and, considering the great number of the defenders, with the certainty of an immense loss of life. Whoever will refer to the papers on the subject in the Prussian *Staats-Anzeiger* will find this reason to be stated as the decisive one against a regular siege.

The investment began on September 19, exactly four months ago to-day. On the following day General Ducrot, who commanded the regular troops in Paris, made a sortie with three divisions in the direction of Clamart, and lost seven guns and 3,000 prisoners. This was followed by similar sorties on the 23rd and 30th of September, 13th and 21st of October, all of which resulted in considerable loss to the French without other advantages than, perhaps, accustoming the young troops to the enemy's fire. On the 28th another sortie was made against Le Bourget with better success; the village was taken and held for two days; but on the 30th the second division of the Prussian guards—thirteen battalions, then less than 10,000 men—retook the village. The French had evidently made very poor use of the two days, during which they might have converted the massively built village into a fortress, and neglected to keep reserves at hand to support the defenders in time, otherwise such a moderate force could not have wrested the place from them.

After this effort there followed a month of quietness. Trochu evidently intended to improve the drill and discipline of his men before again risking great sorties, and very properly so. But, at the same time, he neglected to carry on that war of outposts, reconnaissances and patrols, of ambushes and surprises, which is now the regular occupation of the men on the French front round

Paris—a kind of warfare than which none is more adapted to give young troops confidence in their officers and in themselves, and the habit of meeting the enemy with composure. Troops which have found out that in small bodies, in single sections, half companies, or companies, they can surprise, defeat, or take prisoner similar small bodies of the enemy will soon learn to meet him battalion against battalion. Besides, they will thus learn what outpost duty really is, which many of them appeared to be ignorant of as late as December.

On the 28th of November, at last, was inaugurated that series of sorties which culminated in the grand sortie of the 30th of November across the Marne, and the advance of the whole eastern front of Paris. On the 2nd of December the Germans retook Briey and part of Champigny, and on the following day the French recrossed the Marne. As an attempt to break through the entrenched lines of circumvallation which the besiegers had thrown up, the attack completely failed; it had been carried out without the necessary energy. But it left in the hands of the French a considerable portion of hitherto debatable ground in front of their lines. A strip of ground about two miles in width, from Drancy to the Marne, near Neuilly, came into their possession; a country completely commanded by the fire of the forts, covered with massively built villages easy of defence, and possessing a fresh commanding position in the plateau of Avron. Here, then, was a chance of permanently enlarging the circle of defence; from this ground, once well secured, a further advance might have been attempted, and either the line of the besiegers so much “bulged in” that a successful attack on their lines became possible, or that, by concentrating a strong force here, they were compelled to weaken their line at other points, and thus facilitate a French attack. Well, this ground remained in the hands of the French for a full month. The Germans were compelled to erect siege batteries against Avron, and yet two days’ fire from these batteries sufficed to drive the French from it; and, Avron once lost, the other positions were also abandoned. Fresh attacks had indeed been made on the whole north-east and east front on the 21st; Le Bourget was half-carried, Maison Blanche and Ville-Evrard were taken; but all this vantage-ground was lost again the same night. The troops were left on the ground outside the forts, where they bivouacked at a temperature varying from nine to twenty-one degrees below freezing point, and were at last withdrawn under shelter because they naturally could not stand the exposure. The whole of this episode is more characteristic

than any other of the want of decision and energy—the *mollesse*,^a we might almost say the drowsiness—with which this defence of Paris is conducted.

The Avron incident at last induced the Prussians to turn the investment into a real siege, and to make use of the siege artillery which, for unforeseen cases, had been provided. On the 30th of December the regular bombardment of the north-eastern and eastern forts commenced; on the 5th of January that of the southern forts. Both have been continued without interruption, and of late have been accompanied by a bombardment of the town itself, which is a wanton piece of cruelty. Nobody knows better than the staff at Versailles, and nobody has caused it oftener to be asserted in the press, that the bombardment of a town as extensive as Paris cannot hasten its surrender by one moment. The cannonade of the forts is being followed up by the opening of regular parallels, at least against Issy; we hear of the guns being moved into batteries nearer to the forts, and unless the defence acts on the offensive more unhesitatingly than hitherto, we may soon hear of actual damage being done to one or more forts.

Trochu, however, continues in his inactivity, masterly or otherwise. The few sorties made during the last few days appear to have been but too “platonically”, as Trochu’s accuser in the *Siècle*^b calls the whole of them. We are told the soldiers refused to follow their officers. If so, this proves nothing but that they have lost all confidence in the supreme direction. And, indeed, we cannot resist the conclusion that a change in the chief command in Paris has become a necessity. There is an indecision, a lethargy, a want of sustained energy in all the proceedings of this defence which cannot entirely be laid to the charge of the quality of the troops. That the positions, held for a month, during which there occurred only about ten days of severe frost, were not properly entrenched, cannot be blamed upon any one but Trochu, whose business it was to see to its being done. And that month, too, was the critical period of the siege; at its close the question was to be decided which party, besiegers or besieged, would gain ground. Inactivity and indecision, not of the troops but of the commander-in-chief, have turned the scale against the besieged.

And why is this inactivity and indecision continued even now? The forts are under the enemy’s fire, the besiegers’ batteries are being brought nearer and nearer; the French artillery, as is owned

^a Irresolution.—Ed.

^b The article from *Le Siècle* is set forth in the item “Bordeaux, 7. Januar”, *Königlich Preussischer Staats-Anzeiger*, No. 8, January 9, 1871.—Ed.

by Trochu himself, is inferior to that of the attack. Defended by artillery alone, the very day may be calculated when, under these circumstances, the ramparts—masonry and all—of the forts will give way. Inactivity and indecision cannot save them. Something must be done; and if Trochu cannot do it, he had better let some one else try.

Kinglake has preserved a transaction in which Trochu's character appears in the same light as in this defence of Paris. When the advance to Varna had been resolved upon by both Lord Raglan and Saint-Arnaud,¹¹² and the British Light Division had already been despatched, Colonel Trochu—"a cautious thinking man, well versed in strategic science," of whom

"it was surmised that it was part of his mission to check anything like wildness in the movements of the French Marshal"

— Colonel Trochu called upon Lord Raglan, and entered upon negotiations, the upshot of which was that Saint-Arnaud declared he had resolved to send to

"Varna but one division, and to place the rest of his army in position, not in advance, but in the rear of the Balkan range,"^a

and invited Lord Raglan to follow his example. And that at a moment when the Turks were all but victorious on the Danube without foreign aid!

It may be said that the troops in Paris have lost heart, and are no longer fit for great sorties, that it is too late to sally forth against the Prussian siege works, that Trochu may save his troops for one great effort at the last moment, and so forth. But if the 500,000 armed men in Paris are to surrender to an enemy not half their number, placed moreover in a position most unfavourable for defence, they will surely not do so until their inferiority is brought home to all the world and to themselves. Surely they are not to sit down, eat up the last meal of their provisions, and then surrender! And if they have lost heart, is it because they acknowledge themselves hopelessly beaten, or because they have no longer any trust in Trochu? If it is too late to make sorties now, in another month they will be still more impracticable. And as to Trochu's grand finale, the sooner it is made the better; at present the men are still tolerably fed and strong, and there is no telling what they will be in February.

^a A. W. Kinglake, *The Invasion of the Crimea: Its Origin, and an Account of Its Progress down to the Death of Lord Raglan*, Vol. II, Edinburgh and London, 1863, pp. 40, 42.—Ed.

NOTES ON THE WAR.—XXXVII^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1854, January 21, 1871]

This has been a most unfortunate week for the French arms. After Chanzy's defeat came the repulse of Bourbaki before Belfort, and now comes the check which, according to Prussian accounts,^b Faidherbe has just suffered in front of St. Quentin.¹¹³

There can be no mistake about Bourbaki's failure. Ever since the affair at Villersexel on the 9th, he has displayed a slowness of movement which indicated either indecision on the part of the General or insufficient strength on the part of the troops. The attack upon the entrenched positions which Werder had prepared for the protection of the siege of Belfort beyond the Lisaine (or Isel on other maps) was not commenced before the 15th, and on the evening of the 17th Bourbaki gave it up in despair. There can be no doubt now that the expedition had been undertaken with insufficient forces. The 15th Corps had been left near Nevers; of the 19th we have not heard for a month; the troops brought up from Lyons reduce themselves to one army corps, the 24th. We now hear of considerable reinforcements being hurried up to Dijon, but, in the face of the strong reinforcements rapidly arriving on the other side, they will not enable Bourbaki at once to resume the offensive.

It may be questioned whether Bourbaki ought to have led his young troops to the assault of entrenched positions defended by breech-loaders; but we know little as yet of the tactical conditions under which the three days' fight took place: he may have been unable to act otherwise.

^a Written on January 21, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b "Royal Head-Quarters, Versailles, Jan. 20", *The Times*, No. 26966, January 21, 1871.—*Ed.*

That the Prussian headquarters did not look upon Bourbaki's expedition with the same contemptuous shrug as most people did here in London is shown by the extreme eagerness with which they took steps to meet it. From these steps there can be no doubt that Bourbaki's move was known in Versailles as soon as he began his eastward march, if not before. On the 2nd of January the 2nd Corps received orders to march from Paris in a south-easterly direction, towards the basin of the Upper Seine. About the same time Zastrow left the neighbourhood of Metz with the 13th division for Châtillon. Immediately after the reduction of Rocroi, on the 9th, the 14th division (the remaining one of Zastrow's 7th Corps) was ordered from Charleville towards Paris, thence to follow the 2nd Corps; and on the 15th already we find its advance (a battalion of the 77th regiment) engaged near Langres. At the same time landwehr troops were hurried on towards southern Alsace from Germany, and Manteuffel evidently owes his new command^a to no other cause than this first serious movement against the weakest point of the whole German line. Had Bourbaki brought sufficient forces to overthrow Werder, he might have cast him back into the Rhine valley, placed the chain of the Vosges between Werder and his own troops, and marched with the greater part of his forces against these reinforcements, which he might have attacked in detail as they arrived from different directions. He might have penetrated as far as the Paris-Strasbourg Railway, in which case it is very doubtful whether the investment of Paris could have been continued. His defeat proves nothing against the strategy of his movement: it proves merely that it was carried on with insufficient forces. The writer of these Notes is still of opinion that the shortest and safest plan to relieve Paris is an attack upon the Strasbourg-Paris Railway,^b the only through line of rail the Germans have, for we know now that the other line, viâ Thionville and Mézières, is still impracticable, and will remain so for some time yet, on account of the blowing-up of a tunnel in the Ardennes. This, by the way, is the second instance in this war in which the demolition of a tunnel stops a railway for months, while the destruction of bridges and viaducts has been in every case repaired in an incredibly short time.

As to Chanzy, he evidently made a very great mistake in accepting a pitched battle at all. He must have been aware of Bourbaki's move for nearly a month; he must have known that

^a See this volume, p. 228.—*Ed.*

^b *Ibid.*

this was the real move for the relief of Paris, and that in the meantime he might have the whole weight of Frederick Charles's army brought to bear against himself. He was not compelled to accept battle; on the contrary, he might have drawn on his opponent farther than was safe for the latter, by a slow retreat under continuous rear-guard engagements, such as those by which he first established his reputation in December. He had plenty of time to get his stores sent off to places of safety, and he had the choice of retiring either upon Brittany with its fortified naval ports, or by Nantes to the south of the Loire. Moreover, Frederick Charles, with all his forces, could not have followed him very far. Such a military retreat would be more in keeping with our previous experience of Chanzy; and as he must have known that the new reinforcements he had received were not yet fit for a general action either by equipment, armament, or discipline, we cannot but come to the conclusion that the battle before Le Mans was fought not for military but for political reasons, and that the man responsible for it is not Chanzy but Gambetta. As to Chanzy's retreat now, it is, of course, rendered far more difficult by the preceding defeat; but Chanzy excels in retreats, and, so far, the victors do not appear to have materially damaged the cohesion of his army. Otherwise they would have substantial proofs to show for their assertion that this army "shows signs of dissolution."^a Whether the retreat of Chanzy's army is really an eccentric one is not certain. At all events, from the fact that part of his troops retreated towards Alençon, and another part towards Laval, it does not necessarily follow that the first portion will be driven into the peninsula of the Cotentin towards Cherbourg, and the other into that of Brittany towards Brest. As the French fleet can steam from the one port to the other in a few hours, even this would be no severe disaster. In Brittany, the country, by its numerous thickset hedges—as thick as those in the Isle of Wight, only far more plentiful—is eminently adapted for defence, especially by raw troops, whose inferiority almost disappears there. Frederick Charles is not likely to entangle himself in a labyrinth where the armies of the first Republic fought for years against a mere peasant insurrection.¹¹⁴

The conclusion we must come to upon the whole of the campaign of January is this—that the French lost it everywhere by trying to do too many different things at the same time. They can

^a "Saarbrücken, 19. Jan.", *Kölnische Zeitung*, No. 20, January 20, 1871. First edition.—*Ed.*

hope to win only by concentrating their masses upon one point, at the risk of being temporarily driven back on the other points, where, of course, they should avoid pitched battles. Unless they do this, and soon, Paris may be considered doomed. But if they act on this old-established principle they may still win—however black things may look for them to-day. The Germans now have received all the reinforcements they can expect for three months to come; while the French must have in their camps of instruction at least from two to three hundred thousand men, who during that time will be got ready to meet the enemy.

NOTES ON THE WAR.—XXXVIII^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1858, January 26, 1871]

We are again in a critical period of the war, which may turn out to be *the* critical period. From the moment we heard that bread had been rationed out in Paris by the Government, there could be no longer any doubt that the beginning of the end had come. How soon after that the offer of surrender would follow was a mere question of detail. We suppose, then, that it is intended to surrender to some 220,000 besiegers a besieged force of some 500,000 armed men on any terms the besiegers choose to impose. Whether it will be possible to carry this out without another struggle remains to be seen; at all events, any such struggle could not materially alter the state of things. Whether Paris holds out another fortnight, or whether a portion of these 500,000 armed men succeed in forcing a road across the lines of investment, will not much affect the ulterior course of the war.

We cannot but hold General Trochu mainly responsible for this result of the siege. He certainly was not the man to form an army out of the undoubtedly excellent material under his hands. He had nearly five months' time to make soldiers out of his men; yet at the end they appear to fight no better than at the beginning of the siege. The final sortie from Valérien¹¹⁵ was carried out with far less dash than the previous one across the Marne; there appears a good deal of theatrical display in it—little of the rage of despair. It will not do to say that the troops were not fit to be sent out to storm breastworks manned by the German veterans. Why were they not? Five months are a sufficient time to make very respectable soldiers out of the men Trochu had at his command,

^a Written on January 25 or 26, 1871.—*Ed.*

and there are no circumstances better adapted for that purpose than those of the siege of a large entrenched camp. No doubt the men after the sorties of November and December had lost heart; but was it because they knew their inferiority with regard to their opponents, or because they had lost all faith in the pretended determination of Trochu to fight the matter out? All reports from Paris agree in ascribing the want of success to the absence of confidence of the soldiers in the supreme command. And rightly so. Trochu, we must not forget, is an Orleanist, and, as such, lives in bodily fear of La Villette, Belleville, and the other "revolutionary" quarters of Paris. He feared them more than the Prussians. This is not a mere supposition or deduction on our part. We know, from a source which admits of no doubt, of a letter sent out of Paris by a member of the Government^a in which it is stated that Trochu was on every side urged on to take the offensive energetically, but that he constantly refused, because such a course might hand over Paris to the "demagogues."

The fall of Paris, then, appears now all but certain. It will be a hard blow to the French nation, immediately after St. Quentin, Le Mans, and Héricourt, and its moral effect under these circumstances will be very great. Moreover, there are events impending in the south-east which may render this blow morally crushing. Bourbaki appears to be tarrying in the neighbourhood of Belfort in a way which seems to imply that he does not at all comprehend his situation. The 24th Corps, under Bressolles, on the 24th was still at Blâmont, about twelve miles south of Montbéliard, and close to the Swiss frontier; and even supposing that this was Bourbaki's rearguard, it is not to be expected that the other two corps he had with him would be far away. In the meantime, we find that Prussian detachments, as early as the 21st, had cut, at Dôle, the railway between Besançon and Dijon; that they have since occupied St. Vith, another station on the same line nearer to Besançon; and that they are thus confining Bourbaki's retreat, towards Lyons, to the narrow strip between the Doubs and the Swiss frontier, a country of parallel longitudinal mountain chains and valleys where a comparatively small force may find plenty of positions in which it can stop the retreat of an army such as Bourbaki's has shown itself to be. These detachments on the Doubs we take to be the 13th Division of Zastrow's 7th Corps, or perhaps a portion of Fransecky's 2nd Corps, which has turned up on the 23rd at Dijon. The 60th regiment, which with the 21st

^a J. Favre.—*Ed.*

forms the 8th Brigade (or 4th brigade of the 2nd Corps), was repulsed before that town by Garibaldi, and lost its colours. As Garibaldi has but 15,000 men at the utmost, he will not be able to hold the town against the superior forces which are sure to have arrived before it in the meantime. He will be driven back, and the Prussian advance will be continued towards and beyond the Doubs. Unless Bourbaki has in the meantime used the legs of his men to good advantage, he may be driven, with all his army, into the fortress of Besançon to play Metz over again, or into a corner of the Jura abutting on Swiss territory, and compelled to lay down his arms either on this side or on the other of the frontier.¹¹⁶ And if he should escape with the greater portion of his troops, it is almost certain that large numbers of stragglers, much baggage, and perhaps artillery, will have to be sacrificed.

After the three days' fighting at Héricourt, Bourbaki had no business to remain a day longer in his exposed position near the frontier, with Prussian reinforcements marching towards his communications. His attempts to relieve Belfort had failed; every chance of a further offensive movement in that direction had disappeared; his position became every day more dangerous, and nothing but rapid retreat could save him. By all appearances he has neglected that too, and if his imprudence should lead to a second Sedan, the blow to the French people might be morally overwhelming.

Morally, we say, for materially it need not be. Germany is certainly not so exhausted as Gambetta pretends,^a but Germany is at this very moment displaying a greater absolute and relative strength than she will again display for months to come. For some time the German forces must decline, while nothing prevents the French forces, even after the surrender of the Paris garrison and Bourbaki, should it come to that, from again increasing. The Prussians themselves appear to have given up all hopes of being able to conquer and occupy the whole of France; and as long as the compact block of territory in the South remains free, and as long as resistance, passive and occasionally active (like the blowing up of the Moselle bridge near Toul), is not given up in the North, we do not see how France can be compelled to give in unless she be tired of the war.

^a Gambetta's despatch to Trochu from Lyons, December 23, 1870, *Journal officiel* (Paris), No. 9, January 9, 1871; Gambetta's despatch to Jules Favre, December 31, 1870, *Journal officiel* (Paris), No. 10, January 10, 1871.—*Ed.*

NOTES ON THE WAR.—XXXIX^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1860, January 28, 1871]

Twice only since Sedan have the operations of a French army caused serious uneasiness to General Moltke. The first instance occurred about the middle of November, when the Army of the Loire, after the defeat of von der Tann at Coulmiers, filed off to the left in order to approach Paris from the west, and advanced to Dreux. Then Moltke, with a resolution worthy of such a crisis, prepared for the immediate raising of the siege in case Mecklenburg,^b even with all the temporary reinforcements detached to his aid, should not be strong enough to stem the enemy's advance. That advance was stemmed, and the siege could continue. The second time it was Bourbaki's march towards the east which troubled the repose of the headquarters at Versailles. How serious this move was considered to be was shown by the steps taken at once to meet it. Werder's troops—the 14th Corps and the reserve divisions of Tresckow and Schmeling—were at once reinforced by two more corps, of which one, the second, marched off from Paris as early as the 2nd of January. The language of the semi-official communications became guarded; on the 11th the *Provinzial-Correspondenz* calls attention to the fact that “in the east of France important and decisive battles are impending,” and that Bourbaki intends, after relieving Belfort, to break through the Prussian line of communication at Nancy.^c Non-official correspondents, though still guarded, speak more plainly; we will only quote one of them, Wickede, of the *Cologne Gazette*.^d Immediately after the engage-

^a Written on January 28, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b Frederick Francis II.—*Ed.*

^c The news is reported in the *Kölnische Zeitung*, No. 12, January 12, 1871, Second edition, with reference to the *Provinzial-Correspondenz*.—*Ed.*

^d The reference is to the *Kölnische Zeitung*.—*Ed.*

ment of Villersexel, by which Werder had secured his communications with and retreat upon Tresckow's troops before Belfort, he says,

"Care has been taken that the French shall not relieve Belfort, and after the late successful engagements we may with probability hope that they will not succeed in advancing by Chaumont to Nancy or some other point of our railway line, which a short time ago there was some reason to fear they might do."^a

And on the 16th of January, from Nancy, he writes that, after the arrival of Manteuffel with three divisions beyond Châtillon,

"the apprehension that a hostile corps ... might take possession of Nancy—an apprehension which we justly (mit Recht) might have felt a few days ago—has now quite disappeared."^b (Immediately after this letter there is one from Baden beginning with the words: "There can be no doubt that the situation before Belfort looks very serious.")^c

But Herr Wickede was doomed to further apprehensions, for on the following day he had to communicate that news had arrived of the occupation of Flavigny^d (eleven miles from Nancy) by French troops. Immediately the guards were reinforced, strong patrols were sent out, the whole of the twenty engines at the station got their steam up, officers, Government employés and other Germans packed their trunks, and got ready for immediate departure. The men at Flavigny were expected to be Garibaldi's advanced guard; they turned out to be some twenty francs-tireurs from the Vosges, and soon disappeared again. But the Prussian garrison of Nancy was not completely tranquillized until the 19th, when the news of Bourbaki's final repulse on the Lisaine came to hand, and then at last Wickede could again resume his former strain.

Ought not the French, after all these defeats, to arrive at the conviction that further resistance is hopeless? Such was the opinion of those most directly concerned about an operation which, after its failure, *The Times* classifies as simply absurd.^e There might have been a difference of opinion as to whether the

^a J. Wickede, "Die letzten Kriegereignisse in Frankreich", *Kölnische Zeitung*, No. 16, January 16, 1871. First edition.—*Ed.*

^b "Aus Lothringen. 16. Jan.", *Kölnische Zeitung*, No. 18, January 18, 1871. First edition.—*Ed.*

^c "Aus Baden. 17. Jan.", *Kölnische Zeitung*, No. 18, January 18, 1871. First edition.—*Ed.*

^d "Aus Lothringen. 17. Jan.", *Kölnische Zeitung*, No. 19, January 19, 1871. Second edition.—*Ed.*

^e "M. Gambetta has put forth...", *The Times*, No. 26967, January 23, 1871.—*Ed.*

operation was likely to have been undertaken with sufficient forces; or whether, in case of success, its consequences could be developed in time to save Paris before starvation compelled surrender; or whether or not this was the best direction for a move against the German communications. But to put down such a move, the most effective one known to strategy, as simply absurd was left to the Moltkes of *The Times*.

In the meantime Count Moltke has operated with his usual mastery. He was too late to reinforce Werder before the arrival of Bourbaki; he chose the next best thing, and concentrated his reinforcements at Châtillon, where Manteuffel had three divisions (3rd, 4th, and 13th) on or before the 15th, and where they were joined by the 60th regiment (of the 3rd Corps), left in the neighbourhood by Prince Frederick Charles. We may expect that, by this time, he will have been joined by the 14th division too. At all events, on his advance south, he had at least forty-one if not fifty-three, battalions with him. With these troops he marched upon the river Doubs, leaving to the south the town of Dijon, where he merely occupied Garibaldi by the attack on the 23rd, but evidently without any intention to delay his advance by seriously engaging him or carrying the town. On the contrary, he steadily pursued the main object—the cutting off of Bourbaki's retreat. According to the latest telegrams that object was nearly attained.^a His troops were across the Doubs, at Quingey and Mouchard, at which latter place the railway from Dijon to Pontarlier and Switzerland crosses that from Besançon to Lyons. There still remains one good road by which Bourbaki might escape, but that road is, at Champagnole, not more than twenty-five miles from Mouchard, and may be occupied by this time. In that case there would only remain to Bourbaki the country road passing by the source of the Doubs, where he could scarcely get on with his artillery; and even that road may be cut off before he is out of harm's way. And if he does not succeed in breaking through the opposing troops in a country very favourable to the defence, he has but the choice of withdrawing under the shelter of the forts of Besançon or of surrendering in the open—the choice between Metz and Sedan, unless he surrenders to the Swiss.

It is inconceivable that he should have tarried so long near Belfort, for the latest Prussian telegrams represent him still to be north-east of Besançon. If he could not defeat Werder before

^a "Imperial Head-Quarters, Versailles, January 26", *The Times*, No. 26972, January 28, 1871.—*Ed.*

Manteuffel's arrival, how much less could he expect to do so afterwards? Bourbaki's duty evidently was to withdraw at once to a position of safety after his final repulse before Belfort. Why he has not done so is totally inexplicable. But if the worst should befall him, after his mysterious journey from Metz to Chiselhurst,¹¹⁷ after his refusal to salute the Republic at Lille, the late commander of the Imperial Guard is sure to have doubts raised as to his loyalty.

NOTES ON THE WAR.—XL^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1864, February 2, 1871]

If we are to believe the latest telegram from Berne^b—and there is now no room to discredit it—our anticipations regarding the fate of Bourbaki's army^c have been realized. The Swiss Federal Council is reported to have received the official news that this army, about 80,000 strong, had passed upon Swiss territory, where, of course, it would have to lay down its arms. The exact points at which this took place have not been stated, but it must have been somewhere south of Blâmont and not more south than Pontarlier. The various detachments would pass the frontier at different points, the greatest mass of the troops probably at Les Brenets, where the road from Besançon to Neuchâtel enters Swiss territory.

Thus another French army has passed away, through—to use the mildest phrase—the irresolution of its chief. Bourbaki may be a dashing officer at the head of a division; but the nerve required to brace oneself up to a bold resolution in a decisive moment is quite a different thing from the nerve which enables a man to command a division with *éclat* under fire; and like many men of undoubted and brilliant personal courage, Bourbaki seems deficient in the moral courage necessary to come to a decisive resolution. On the evening of the 17th at latest, when his inability to pierce Werder's lines became fully evident to himself, his mind ought to have been made up at once as to his line of conduct. He must have known that Prussian reinforcements were approaching

^a Written on February 2, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b "Berne, Feb. 1", *The Times*, No. 26976, February 2, 1871.—*Ed.*

^c See this volume, p. 242.—*Ed.*

his line of retreat from the north-west; that his position with a victorious enemy in his front, and a long line of retreat, close to a neutral frontier, in his rear, was extremely dangerous; that the object of his expedition had irretrievably failed; and that his most pressing, nay, his only duty, under the circumstances, was to save his army. In other words, that he must retire as hastily as the state of his army would allow. But this resolution to retire, to confess by deeds that he had failed in his expedition, appears to have been too much for him. He dallied about the scene of his last battles, unable to advance, unwilling to retire, and thus gave Manteuffel the time to cut off his retreat. Had he marched off at once, and only done fifteen miles a day, he could have reached Besançon on the 20th, and the neighbourhood of Dôle on the 21st, just about the time when the first Prussians made their appearance there. These Prussians could not be very strong; and even Bourbaki's advanced guard must have been sufficient if not to drive them off entirely, still to confine them to the right or western bank of the Doubs, which would have been quite sufficient to secure Bourbaki's line of retreat, especially with an adversary of the force of Manteuffel, who will act correctly enough so long as the execution of Moltke's orders meets with no resistance, but who sinks below the level of mediocrity as soon as that resistance calls into play his own mental powers.

It is one of the most curious points in the document agreed to between Bismarck and Jules Favre,¹¹⁸ that the four departments where Bourbaki and Garibaldi are acting are not included in the general armistice, but that the Prussians virtually reserve to themselves the power of continuing to fight there as long as they please.^a It is an unprecedented stipulation, which shows more than any other that the conqueror, in the true Prussian fashion, exacted to the full every concession his momentary superiority enabled him to impose. The armistice is to extend to the West, where Frederick Charles finds that he had better not advance beyond Le Mans; to the North, where Goeben is arrested by the fortresses; but not to the south-east, where Manteuffel's advance promised a second Sedan. Jules Favre, in consenting to this clause, virtually consented to the surrender of Bourbaki, either to the Prussians or to the Swiss; the only difference in his favour being that he shifted the responsibility of the act from his shoulders to those of Bourbaki.

^a The main terms of the armistice and capitulation of Paris are set forth in the report "Imperial Head-Quarters, Versailles, Jan. 30", *The Times*, No. 26974, January 31, 1871.—*Ed.*

Altogether, the capitulation of Paris is an unprecedented document. When Napoleon surrendered at Sedan he declined entering on negotiations beyond those for the surrender of himself and army; he, as a prisoner, being disabled from binding the Government and France. When M. Jules Favre surrenders Paris and its army he enters upon stipulations binding the rest of France, though exactly in the same position as Napoleon at Sedan. Nay, worse. Napoleon, almost up to the day of his capitulation, had been in free communication with the rest of France; M. Jules Favre, for five or six weeks, has enjoyed but rare and fragmentary opportunities of learning what was going on outside Paris. His information as to the military situation outside the forts could be supplied to him by Bismarck only; and upon this one-sided statement, furnished by the enemy, he ventured to act.

M. Jules Favre had a choice between two evils. He could do as he has done, secure a three weeks' armistice on the enemy's terms, and bind the real Government of France, that of Bordeaux,⁸⁷ to it. Or he could refuse to act for the rest of France, offer to treat for Paris alone, and in case of difficulties raised by the besiegers, do as the commandant of Phalsbourg did—throw open the gates and invite the conquerors to enter. The latter course would have been more in the interest of his dignity and of his political future.

As to the Bordeaux Government, it will have to adhere to the armistice and to the election of a National Assembly. It has no means to compel the generals to repudiate the armistice, it will hesitate to create divisions among the people. The surrender of Bourbaki to the Swiss adds another crushing blow to the many the French have lately received; and, as we stated in anticipation of the event,^a we believe that this blow, following immediately upon the surrender of Paris, will so much depress the spirits of the nation that peace will be made. As to the material resources of France, they are so far from being exhausted that the struggle might be continued for months. There is one striking fact which shows how immense are the difficulties in the way of a complete conquest of France. Prince Frederick Charles, after seven days' fighting, had driven back Chanzy's army, in a state of utter dissolution. With the exception of a few brigades, there were positively no troops left to oppose him. The country in his front was rich and comparatively unexhausted. Yet he stops his march at Le Mans, pursuing beyond with his advanced guard only, and not beyond short distances. Our readers will recollect that we were

^a See this volume, p. 242.—*Ed.*

prepared for no other result^a; for it may be said, with a certain amount of truth that in conquering a large country, while the extent to be occupied increases arithmetically, the difficulties of occupation increase geometrically.

Still we think that the repeated disasters of the January campaign must have shaken the morale of the nation to such an extent that the proposed National Assembly will not only meet, but also probably make peace; and thus, along with the war, these Notes upon it will come to a close.

^a See this volume, p. 238.—*Ed.*

THE MILITARY ASPECT OF AFFAIRS IN FRANCE^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1869, February 8, 1871]

If the series of disasters to the French arms which mark the January campaign—the defeats of Faidherbe and Chanzy, the fall of Paris, the defeat and surrender to the Swiss of Bourbaki—if all these crushing events, concentrated in the short period of three weeks, may well be considered to have broken the spirit of resistance in France, it now seems not improbable that the Germans, by their extravagant demands,¹¹⁹ may rouse that spirit again. If the country is to be thoroughly ruined by peace as well as by war, why make peace at all? The propertied classes, the middle class of the towns and the larger landed proprietors, with part of the smaller peasantry, hitherto formed the peace party; they might have been reckoned upon to elect peace deputies for the National Assembly; but if such unheard-of demands are persisted in, the cry of war to the knife may rise from their ranks as well as from those of the workmen of the large towns. At any rate, it is well not to neglect whatever chance there may be that the war may be resumed after the 19th of February¹²⁰; especially since the Germans themselves, if we may trust *The Daily News* of to-day, are not so satisfied with the prospect of affairs as to abstain from serious preparations for the resumption of hostilities. Let us, therefore, cast another glance at the military aspect of affairs.

The twenty-seven departments of France now occupied by the Prussians contain an area of 15,800,000 hectares, with a population (allowing for the fortresses still unsundered) of rather less than 12,500,000. The extent of all France comprises 54,240,000 hectares, and its population is 37,382,000. It thus appears that, in

^a Written on February 7 or 8, 1871.—*Ed.*

round numbers, thirty-eight and a half millions of hectares, with a population of 25,000,000, remain still unconquered,—fully two-thirds of the people, considerably more than two-thirds of the soil. Paris and Metz, the resistance of which so long retarded further hostile advance, have certainly fallen. The interior of the unconquered country contains no other entrenched camp—Lyons excepted—capable of playing the same part which these two fortresses have played. Rather less than 700,000 Frenchmen (not counting the National Guard of Paris) are prisoners of war or interned in Switzerland. But there are other circumstances which may make up for this deficiency, even if the three weeks' armistice should not be used for the creation of new camps, surrounded by field works; for which there is ample time.

The great bulk of unconquered France lies south of the line Nantes-Besançon; it forms a compact block, covered on three sides by the sea or by neutral frontiers, with only its northern boundary line open to the enemy's attack. Here is the strength of the national resistance; here are to be found the men and the material to carry on the war if it is resumed. To conquer and occupy this immense rectangle of 450 miles by 250 against a desperate resistance—regular and irregular—of the inhabitants, the present forces of the Prussians would not suffice. The surrender of Paris, leaving four corps for the garrison of that capital, will set free nine divisions; Bourbaki's surrender sets free Manteuffel's six line divisions; in all, fifteen divisions, or 150,000 to 170,000 additional soldiers for operations in the field, added to Goeben's four and Frederick Charles's eight divisions. But Goeben has plenty on his hands in the north, and Frederick Charles has shown by his halt at Tours and Le Mans that his offensive powers are exhausted to the full, so that for the conquest of the South there remain but the above fifteen divisions; and for some months to come no further reinforcements can arrive.

To these fifteen divisions the French will have to oppose in the beginning mostly new formations. There were about Nevers and Bourges the 15th and 25th Corps; there must have been in the same neighbourhood the 19th Corps, of which we have heard nothing since the beginning of December. Then there is the 24th Corps, escaped from Bourbaki's shipwreck, and Garibaldi's troops, recently reinforced to 50,000 men, but by what bodies and from what quarters we do not know. The whole comprises some thirteen or fourteen divisions, perhaps even sixteen, but quite insufficient as to quantity and quality to arrest the progress of the new armies which are sure to be sent against them if the armistice

should expire without peace having been made. But the three weeks' armistice will not only give these French divisions time to consolidate themselves; it will also permit the more or less raw levies now in the camps of instruction, and estimated by Gambetta at 250,000 men, to transform at least the best of their battalions into useful corps fit to meet the enemy; and thus, if the war should be renewed, the French may be in a position to ward off any serious invasion of the South, not perhaps at the boundary line of the Loire or much north of Lyons, but yet at points where the presence of the enemy will not efficiently impair their force of resistance.

As a matter of course, the armistice gives ample time to restore the equipment, the discipline, and the morale of Faidherbe's and Chanzy's armies, as well as of all the other troops in Cherbourg, Havre, &c. The question is whether the time will be so employed. While thus the strength of the French will be considerably increased, both as to numbers and quality, that of the Germans will scarcely receive any increment at all. So far, the armistice will be a boon to the French side.

But beside the compact block of southern France, there remain unconquered the two peninsulas of the Bretagne with Brest, and of the Cotentin with Cherbourg, and, moreover, the two northern departments with their fortresses. Havre, too, forms an unconquered, well-fortified spot on the coast. Every one of these four districts is provided with at least one well-fortified place of safety on the coast for a retreating army; so that the fleet, which at this moment has nothing, absolutely nothing, else to do, can keep up the communications between the South and all of them, transport troops from one place to another, as the case may require, and thereby all of a sudden enable a beaten army to resume the offensive with superior forces. Thus while these four western and northern districts are in a measure unassailable, they form so many weak points on the flanks of the Prussians. The line of actual danger for the French extends from Angers to Besançon; for the Germans it extends, in addition to this, from Angers by Le Mans, Rouen, and Amiens to the Belgian frontier. Advantages on this latter line gained over the French can never become decisive if moderate common sense be used by them; but those gained over the Germans may, under certain conditions, become so.

Such is the strategical situation. By using the fleet to advantage the French might move their men in the West and North, so as to compel the Germans to keep largely superior forces in that neighbourhood, and to weaken the forces sent out for the

conquest of the South, which it would be their chief object to prevent. By concentrating their armies more than they have hitherto done, and, on the other hand, by sending out more numerous small partisan bands, they might increase the effect to be obtained by the forces on hand. There appear to have been many more troops at Cherbourg and Havre than were necessary for the defence; and the well executed destruction of the bridge of Fontenoy, near Toul, in the centre of the country occupied by the conquerors, shows what may be done by bold partisans. For, if the war is to be resumed at all after the 19th of February, it must be in reality a war to the knife, a war like that of Spain against Napoleon; a war in which no amount of shootings and burnings will prove sufficient to break the spirit of resistance.

BOURBAKI'S DISASTER^a

[*The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1878, February 18, 1871]

By the correspondent of *The Standard* we are at last furnished with an eyewitness's report of what took place in Bourbaki's army during its disastrous January campaign. The correspondent was with General Cr mer's division, which formed the extreme left during the advance, and the rearguard during the retreat. His account, though naturally one-sided and full of inaccuracies in matters which did not occur under his eyes, is very valuable because it furnishes facts and dates hitherto unknown, and thus throws much light upon this phase of the war.

Bourbaki's army, 133,000 men with 330 guns, was, it appears, scarcely deserving the name of an army. The linesmen, with passable officers, were inferior in physique to the Mobbles, but the latter had scarcely any officers acquainted even with the rudiments of their duties. The accounts received from Switzerland confirm this^b; if they give a worse account of the physique of the men, we must not forget the effect of a month's campaigning under hunger and cold. The equipment as to clothing and shoes appears to have been by all accounts miserable. A commissariat or even a mere organization for carrying out with some order and regularity the levying of requisitions and the distribution of the food thus procured, appears to have been as good as totally absent.

Now of the four-and-a-half corps employed, three (the 15th, 18th, and 20th) had been handed over to Bourbaki as early as the 5th of December; and very soon after that date the plan to march

^a Written about February 18, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b [Letter to the Editor of *The Times* from Lausanne, dated Feb. 9], *The Times*, No. 26989, February 17, 1871.—*Ed.*

eastwards must have been resolved upon. All his movements, up to the 5th of January, were mere marches for concentration, undisturbed by the enemy; they therefore were no obstacle in the way of improving the organization of this army—quite the contrary. Napoleon, in 1813, formed his raw levies into soldiers on the march to Germany. Thus Bourbaki had a full month to work in; and when after the time thus given him his troops arrived in presence of the enemy in the state described, he cannot possibly be considered free from blame. He does not appear to advantage as an organizer.

The original plan is said to have been to march upon Belfort in four columns—one on the eastern side of the Doubs through the Jura, to take or turn Montbéliard and the Prussian left; a second column along the valley of the river, for the front attack; a third column by a more westerly route, through Rougemont and Villersexel, against the enemy's right; and Crémer's division to arrive from Dijon by Lure beyond the Prussian right. But this was altered. The whole of the first three columns advanced on the one road through the valley, by which it is asserted that five days were lost, during which Werder was reinforced, and that the whole army being thrown upon one line of retreat, again lost time, and thus was cut off from Lyons and forced upon the Swiss frontier. Now, it is quite evident that throwing some 120,000 men—and men so loosely organized as these—in one column on one single line of march, would cause confusion and delay; but it is not so certain that this blunder was actually committed to the extent here implied. From all previous reports, Bourbaki's troops arrived before Belfort in a broad front, extending from Villersexel to the Swiss boundary line,^a which implies the use of the various roads mentioned in the original plan. But whatever may have been the cause, the delay did occur, and was the chief cause of the loss of the battle at Héricourt. The engagement of Villersexel took place on the 9th. Villersexel is about twenty miles from the Prussian position at Héricourt, and it took Bourbaki five days—up to the evening of the 14th—to bring his troops up in front of that position so as to be able to attack it next morning! This we pointed out in a previous article as the first great mistake in the campaign,^b and we now see from the correspondent's report that it was felt to be so by Crémer's officers even before the battle of Héricourt began.

^a See, e.g. the item "Onans, Jan. 13", *The Times*, No. 26961, January 16, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b See this volume, p. 236.—*Ed.*

In that three days' battle 130,000 Frenchmen fought against 35,000 to 40,000 Germans, and could not force their entrenched position. With such a numerical superiority, the boldest flank movements were possible. Forty or fifty thousand men thrown resolutely upon the rear of the Germans while the rest occupied them in front could scarcely have failed to force them from their position. But instead of that merely the front, the entrenched front, of the position was attacked, and thus an immense and barren loss was caused. The flank attacks were carried out so weakly that a single German brigade (Keller's) not only sufficed to repel that on the German right, but was enabled to hold Frahier and Chenebier so as in turn to outflank the French. Bourbaki's young troops were thus put to the severest task which can be found for a soldier in battle, while their own superior numbers would have rendered it easier to carry the position by manoeuvring. But probably the last five days' experience had proved to Bourbaki that it was useless to expect mobility from his army.

After the final repulse on the 17th of January followed the retreat to Besançon. That this retreat may have taken place mainly by the one road in the Doubs valley is probable; but we know that large bodies retreated by other roads nearer the Swiss frontier. Anyhow, on the afternoon of the 22nd the rearguard, under Crémer, arrived in Besançon. Thus the advanced guard must have arrived there as early as the 20th, and have been ready to march on the 21st against the Prussians, who on that day reached Dôle. But no. No notice is taken of them until after Crémer's arrival, who all at once, changing his place from the rear to the vanguard, is sent out to meet them on the 23rd towards Saint Vit. On the following day Crémer is ordered back to Besançon; two days are wasted in indecision and inactivity, until, on the 26th, Bourbaki, after passing in review the 18th Corps, attempts suicide. Then a disorderly retreat commences in the direction of Pontarlier. But on that day the Germans at Mouchard and Salins were nearer the Swiss frontier than the fugitives, and their retreat was virtually cut off. It was no longer a race; the Germans could occupy leisurely the outlets of all the longitudinal valleys by which escape was still possible; while other troops pressed on the French rear. Then followed the engagements around Pontarlier, which brought this fact home to the defeated army; the result of which was the Convention of Les Verrières and the surrender of the whole body to the Swiss.¹²¹

The whole behaviour of Bourbaki, from the 15th to the 26th, seems to prove that he had lost all confidence in his men, and that

consequently he also lost all confidence in himself. Why he suspended the march of his columns at Besançon until Crémer's arrival, thus throwing away every chance of escape; why he recalled Crémer's division, the best in the army, immediately after sending it out of Besançon to meet the Prussians, who blocked the direct road to Lyons; why after that he dallied another two days, which brings the time lost in Besançon to fully six days—it is impossible to explain unless by supposing that Bourbaki was eminently deficient in that resolution which is the very first quality of an independent commander. It is the old tale of the August campaign over again¹²²; and it is curious that this singular hesitation should again show itself in a general inherited from the Empire, while none of the generals of the Republic—whatever else may have been their faults—have shown such indecision, or suffered such punishment for it.

Karl Marx

TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC
WORKERS' PARTY¹²³

London, August 2, 1870

Friends,

First my thanks for the detailed report on the Workers' Party in Germany. I immediately communicated it to the General Council.

The work which I was asked to write on the relations of land ownership in Germany had to be put to one side for the time being owing to sheer lack of time.¹²⁴

As you will have seen from the Address of the General Council which I sent to you last week, I have incorporated into this address parts of the *appeal* issued at the Brunswick MEETING (of 16th July, 1870)^a...

According to article 3 of the Rules^b the General Council cannot defer the date of the Congress. In the present, *exceptional*, circumstances, however, it would accept responsibility for such a step, if the necessary support from the sections was forthcoming. It would therefore be desirable for a reasoned application to this effect to be sent to us *officially* from Germany.

First published in an abbreviated form in the book: C. Koch, *Der Process gegen den Ausschuss der social-demokratischen Arbeiterpartei...*, Braunschweig, 1871

Printed according to W. Bracke's book *Der Braunschweiger Ausschuss der socialdemokratischen Arbeiter-Partei in Lötzen und vor dem Gericht*, Braunschweig, 1872

Published in English for the first time

^a See this volume, p. 6. The appeal was published in the column "Politische Uebersicht" in *Der Volksstaat*, No. 58, July 20, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b See present edition, Vol. 20, p. 15.—*Ed.*

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

[LETTER TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIAL-
DEMOCRATIC WORKERS' PARTY]¹²⁵

...The military camarilla, professors, middle-class people and public-house politicians are pretending this^a is the way to protect Germany from war with France forever. On the contrary, it is the most tried and tested way of turning war into a *European institution*. It is, in fact, the surest means of perpetuating military despotism in the rejuvenated Germany, as a necessity for maintaining a *western Poland*—Alsace and Lorraine. It is the most infallible way of turning the imminent peace into a mere armistice, until France is sufficiently recovered to demand the lost territory back. It is the most infallible way of ruining Germany and France through internecine strife.

The villains and fools, who have discovered these guarantees for eternal peace, should surely know from Prussian history, from Napoleon's drastic remedy in the Peace of Tilsit,¹²⁶ how such coercive measures to silence a viable people have precisely the opposite effect to that intended. And what is France, even after losing Alsace and Lorraine, compared with Prussia after the Peace of Tilsit!

If French chauvinism had some material justification, as long as the *old state* relations persisted, in the fact that since 1815 the capital, Paris, and thus France itself, were exposed after a few lost battles—will it not derive new vigour once the eastern border runs along the Vosges and northern at Metz?

Not even the most rabid^b Teuton dares to claim that the people of Alsace and Lorraine desire the blessings of *German* govern-

^a The reference is to the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine.—*Ed.*

^b "Most rabid" was written down in Engels' hand in his copy instead of the dots in the printed text.—*Ed.*

ment. It is the principle of pan-Germanism and "secure" borders which is being proclaimed here, and which would lead to fine results for Germany and Europe from the eastern side^a!

Anyone who is not deafened by the clamour of the hour, and has *no interest* in deafening the German people, must realise that the war of 1870 just as necessarily carries within it the seed of a *war between Germany and Russia*, as the war of 1866 does the war of 1870.

I say *necessarily, inevitably*, except in the unlikely event of *revolution in Russia* breaking out first.

Should this unlikely event not occur, the war between Germany and Russia must already be treated as a *fait accompli* (an accomplished fact).

It depends entirely on the present conduct of the German victors whether the war will prove useful or harmful.

If they take Alsace and Lorraine, France will join *with* Russia to wage war on Germany. There is no need to point out the disastrous consequences.

If they conclude an honourable peace with France, that war will emancipate Europe from the Muscovite dictatorship, make Prussia merge into Germany, allow the western continent peaceful development and, finally, help a social revolution to break out in Russia, whose elements only need such an impulse from without for their development—thus benefitting the Russian people, too.

But I fear that the villains and fools will play their mad game unhindered unless the German working class en masse raises its voice.

The present war is opening up a new epoch in the history of the world in that Germany has proved that, even without German Austria, it is capable of going its own way, *independently of foreign countries*. That, to begin with, it is finding its *unity* in the *Prussian barracks* is a punishment which it amply deserves. But one result has been achieved immediately. Petty trifles, such as, for example, the conflict between North German National Liberals and South German supporters of the People's Party,¹²⁷ will no longer pointlessly get in the way. The state of affairs will develop and become simpler on a grand scale. If the German working class then fails to play the historic role allotted to it, it will only have itself to blame. *This war has shifted the centre of gravity of the*

^a See the Appeal of a group of German political figures to the King and the German people of August 30, 1870, "Berlin, 31. Aug.", *Kölnische Zeitung*, No. 242; September, 1, 1870. Second edition.—*Ed.*

continental labour movement from France to Germany. This means that greater responsibility now rests with the German working class...

Written between August 22 and 30, 1870

Printed according to Engels' copy
of the leaflet

Included in the text of the Manifesto of the Committee of the Social-Democratic Workers' Party published as a leaflet on September 5 and in the newspaper *Der Volksstaat*, No. 73, September 11, 1870

Karl Marx

SECOND ADDRESS OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL
OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING
MEN'S ASSOCIATION
ON THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR¹²⁸

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING MEN'S
ASSOCIATION
IN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES

In our first Manifesto of the 23rd of July we said:— “The death knell of the Second Empire has already sounded at Paris. It will end as it began, by a parody. But let us not forget that it is the Governments and the ruling classes of Europe who enabled Louis Napoleon to play during eighteen years the ferocious farce of the *Restored Empire*.”^a

Thus, even before war operations had actually set in, we treated the Bonapartist bubble as a thing of the past.

If we were not mistaken as to the vitality of the Second Empire, we were not wrong in our apprehension lest the German war should “lose its strictly defensive character and degenerate into a war against the French people”.^b The war of defence ended, in point of fact, with the surrender of Louis Bonaparte, the Sedan capitulation, and the proclamation of the Republic at Paris. But long before these events, the very moment that the utter rottenness of the Imperialist arms became evident, the Prussian military *camarilla* had resolved upon conquest. There lay an ugly obstacle in their way—*King William's own proclamations at the commencement of the war*. In his speech from the throne to the North German Diet, he had solemnly declared to make war upon the emperor of the French, and not upon the French people.^c On the 11th of August he had issued a manifesto to the French nation, where he said:^d

^a See this volume, p. 5.—*Ed.*

^b *Ibid.*, p. 6.—*Ed.*

^c William I's speech from the throne to the North-German Diet on July 19, 1870, *The Times*, No. 26807, July 20, 1870.—*Ed.*

^d This sentence and the following quotation from the Manifesto are omitted in Marx's German translation published as a separate edition in 1870. The further text up to the words “They at once gave the cue...” is abbreviated.—*Ed.*

“The Emperor Napoleon having made, by land and sea, an attack on the German nation, which desired and still desires to live in peace with the French people, I have assumed the command of the German armies *to repel his aggression*, and I have been led by *military events to cross the frontiers of France.*”^a

Not content to assert the defensive character of the war by the statement that he only assumed the command of the German armies “*to repel aggression*”, he added that he was only “led by military events” to cross the frontiers of France. A defensive war does, of course, not exclude offensive operations dictated by “military events”.

Thus this pious king stood pledged before France and the world to a strictly defensive war. How to release him from his solemn pledge? The stage-managers had to exhibit him as giving, reluctantly, way to the irresistible behest of the German nation. They at once gave the cue to the liberal German middle class, with its professors, its capitalists, its aldermen, and its penmen. That middle class which in its struggle for civil liberty had, from 1846 to 1870, been exhibiting an unexampled spectacle of irresolution, incapacity, and cowardice, felt, of course, highly delighted to bestride the European scene as the roaring lion of German patriotism. It revindicated its civic independence by affecting to force upon the Prussian Government the secret designs of that same government. It does penance for its long-continued and almost religious faith in Louis Bonaparte’s infallibility, by shouting for the dismemberment of the French Republic. Let us for a moment listen to the special pleadings of those stout-hearted patriots!

They dare not pretend that the people of Alsace and Lorraine pant for the German embrace; quite the contrary. To punish their French patriotism, Strasbourg, a town with an independent citadel commanding it, has for six days been wantonly and fiendishly bombarded by “German” explosive shells, setting it on fire, and killing great numbers of its defenceless inhabitants! Yet, the soil of those provinces once upon a time belonged to the whilom German Empire. Hence, it seems, the soil and the human beings grown on it must be confiscated as imprescriptible German property. If the map of Europe is to be remade in the antiquary’s vein, let us by no means forget that the Elector of Brandenburg, for his Prussian dominions, was the vassal of the Polish Republic.¹²⁹

The more knowing patriots, however, require Alsace and the German-speaking part of Lorraine as a “material guarantee”

^a William I’s proclamation to the French nation of August 11, 1870, *Kölnische Zeitung*, No. 222, August 12, 1870.—*Ed.*

against French aggression. As this contemptible plea has bewildered many weak-minded people, we are bound to enter more fully upon it.

There is no doubt that the general configuration of Alsace, as compared with the opposite bank of the Rhine, and the presence of a large fortified town like Strasbourg, about halfway between Basle and Germersheim, very much favour a French invasion of South Germany, while they offer peculiar difficulties to an invasion of France from South Germany. There is, further, no doubt that the addition of Alsace and German-speaking Lorraine would give South Germany a much stronger frontier, inasmuch as she would then be master of the crest of the Vosges mountains in its whole length, and of the fortresses which cover its northern passes. If Metz were annexed as well, France would certainly for the moment be deprived of her two principal bases of operation against Germany, but that would not prevent her from constructing a fresh one at Nancy or Verdun. While Germany owns Coblenz, Mainz, Germersheim, Rastatt, and Ulm, all bases of operation against France, and plentifully made use of in this war, with what show of fair play can she begrudge France Strasbourg and Metz, the only two fortresses of any importance she has on that side? Moreover, Strasbourg endangers South Germany only while South Germany is a separate power from North Germany. From 1792-95 South Germany was never invaded from that direction, because Prussia was a party to the war against the French Revolution; but as soon as Prussia made a peace of her own in 1795,¹³⁰ and left the South to shift for itself, the invasions of South Germany, with Strasbourg for a base, began, and continued till 1809. The fact is, a *united* Germany can always render Strasbourg and any French army in Alsace innocuous by concentrating all her troops, as was done in the present war, between Saarlouis and Landau, and advancing, or accepting battle, on the line of road between Mainz and Metz. While the mass of the German troops is stationed there, any French army advancing from Strasbourg into South Germany would be outflanked, and have its communications threatened. If the present campaign has proved anything, it is the facility of invading France from Germany.

But, in good faith, is it not altogether an absurdity and an anachronism to make military considerations the principle by which the boundaries of nations are to be fixed? If this rule were to prevail, Austria would still be entitled to Venetia and the line of the Mincio, and France to the line of the Rhine, in order to

protect Paris, which lies certainly more open to an attack from the North East than Berlin does from the South West. If limits are to be fixed by military interests, there will be no end to claims, because every military line is necessarily faulty, and may be improved by annexing some more outlying territory; and, moreover, they can never be fixed finally and fairly, because they always must be imposed by the conqueror upon the conquered, and consequently carry within them the seed of fresh wars.

Such is the lesson of all history. Thus with nations as with individuals. To deprive them of the power of offence, you must deprive them of the means of defence. You must not only garrotte but murder. If ever conqueror took "material guarantees" for breaking the sinews of a nation, the first Napoleon did so by the Tilsit treaty,¹²⁶ and the way he executed it against Prussia and the rest of Germany. Yet, a few years later, his gigantic power split like a rotten reed upon the German people. What are the "material guarantees" Prussia, in her wildest dreams, can, or dare impose upon France, compared to the "material guarantees" the first Napoleon had wrenched from herself? The result will not prove the less disastrous. History will measure its retribution, not by the extent of the square miles conquered from France, but by the intensity of the crime of reviving, in the second half of the 19th century, *the policy of conquest!*

But, say the mouthpieces of Teutonic patriotism, you must not confound Germans with Frenchmen. What *we* want is not glory, but safety. The Germans are an essentially peaceful people. In their sober guardianship, conquest itself changes from a condition of future war into a pledge of perpetual peace. Of course, it is not Germans that invaded France in 1792, for the sublime purpose of bayonetting the revolution of the 18th century. It is not Germans that befouled their hands by the subjugation of Italy, the oppression of Hungary, and the dismemberment of Poland. Their present military system, which divides the whole adult male population into two parts—one standing army on service, and another standing army on furlough, both equally bound in passive obedience to rulers by divine right—such a military system is, of course, a "material guarantee" for keeping the peace, and the ultimate goal of civilising tendencies! In Germany, as everywhere else, the sycophants of the powers that be poison the popular mind by the incense of mendacious self-praise.

Indignant as they pretend to be at the sight of French fortresses in Metz and Strasbourg, those German patriots see no harm in the vast system of Moscovite fortifications at Warsaw, Modlin, and

Ivangorod. While gloating at the terrors of imperialist invasion, they blink at the infamy of autocratic tutelage.

As in 1865 promises were exchanged between Louis Bonaparte and Bismarck, so in 1870 promises have been exchanged between Gorchakov and Bismarck.¹³¹ As Louis Bonaparte flattered himself that the war of 1866, resulting in the common exhaustion of Austria and Prussia, would make him the supreme arbiter of Germany, so Alexander flattered himself that the war of 1870, resulting in the common exhaustion of Germany and France, would make him the supreme arbiter of the Western Continent. As the Second Empire thought the North German Confederation incompatible with its existence, so autocratic Russia must think herself endangered by a German empire under Prussian leadership. Such is the law of the old political system. Within its pale the gain of one state is the loss of the other. The Czar's paramount influence over Europe roots in his traditional hold on Germany. At a moment when in Russia herself volcanic social agencies threaten to shake the very base of autocracy, could the Czar afford to bear with such a loss of foreign prestige? Already the Moscovite journals repeat the language of the Bonapartist journals after the war of 1866. Do the Teuton patriots really believe that liberty and peace^a will be guaranteed to Germany by forcing France into the arms of Russia? If the fortune of her arms, the arrogance of success, and dynastic intrigue lead Germany to a dismemberment of France, there will then only remain two courses open to her. She must at all risks become the *avowed* tool of Russian aggrandisement,^b or, after some short respite, make again ready for another "defensive" war, not one of those new-fangled "localised" wars, but a *war of races*—a war with the combined Slavonian and Roman races.^c

The German working class has resolutely supported the war, which it was not in their power to prevent, as a war for German independence and the liberation of France and Europe from that pestilential incubus, the Second Empire. It was the German workmen who, together with the rural labourers, furnished the sinews and muscles of heroic hosts, leaving behind their half-

^a The 1870 German edition has "independence" before the words "liberty and peace".—*Ed.*

^b The 1870 German edition has here: "a course which is in accord with the tradition of the Hohenzollerns".—*Ed.*

^c The German edition of 1870 contains the following sentence: "This is the prospect of peace which is 'guaranteed' by the brain-sick patriots of the German middle class."—*Ed.*

starved families. Decimated by the battles abroad, they will be once more decimated by misery at home.^a In their turn they are now coming forward to ask for “guarantees”,—guarantees that their immense sacrifices have not been brought in vain, that they have conquered liberty, that the victory over the Imperialist armies will not, as in 1815, be turned into the defeat of the German people¹³²; and, as the first of these guarantees, they claim an *honourable peace for France*, and the *recognition of the French Republic*.

The Central Committee^b of the German Socialist-Democratic Workmen’s Party issued, on the 5th of September, a manifesto, energetically insisting upon these guarantees.

“We,” they say, “we protest against the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine. And we are conscious of speaking in the name of the German working class. In the common interest of France and Germany, in the interest of peace and liberty, in the interest of Western civilisation against Eastern barbarism, the German workmen will not patiently tolerate the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine.... We shall faithfully stand by our fellow-workmen in all countries for the common international cause of the Proletariat!”^c

Unfortunately, we cannot feel sanguine of their immediate success. If the French workmen amidst peace failed to stop the aggressor, are the German workmen more likely to stop the victor amidst the clangour of arms? The German workmen’s manifesto demands the extradition of Louis Bonaparte as a common felon to the French Republic. Their rulers are, on the contrary, already trying hard to restore him to the Tuileries as the best man to ruin France. However that may be, history will prove that the German working class are not made of the same malleable stuff as the German middle class. They will do their duty.

Like them, we hail the advent of the Republic in France, but at the same time we labour under misgivings which we hope will prove groundless. That Republic has not subverted the throne, but only taken its place become vacant.^d It has been proclaimed, not as a social conquest, but as a national measure of defence. It is in the

^a The 1870 German edition has: “And the patriotic clamourers will say, to comfort them, that capital has no native country and that wages are regulated by the *non-patriotic international* law of demand and supply. Is it, therefore, not the high time for the German working class to raise its voice and no longer allow the gentlemen of the middle class to speak *in its name*.”—*Ed.*

^b In the 1870 German edition the word “central” is omitted.—*Ed.*

^c “Manifest des Ausschusses der sozial-demokratischen Arbeiterpartei. An alle deutschen Arbeiter! Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, 5. Sept. 1870”, *Der Volksstaat*, No. 73, September 11, 1870.—*Ed.*

^d The 1870 German edition has: “its place made vacant by German bayonets”.—*Ed.*

hands of a Provisional Government composed partly of notorious Orleanists, partly of middle-class Republicans, upon some of whom the insurrection of June, 1848,¹³³ has left its indelible stigma. The division of labour amongst the members of that Government looks awkward. The Orleanists have seized the strongholds of the army and the police, while to the professed Republicans have fallen the talking departments. Some of their first acts go far to show that they have inherited from the Empire, not only ruins, but also its dread of the working class. If eventual impossibilities are in wild phraseology demanded from the Republic, is it not with a view to prepare the cry for a "possible" government? Is the Republic, by some of its middle-class managers, not intended to serve as a mere stopgap and bridge over an Orleanist Restoration?

The French working class moves, therefore, under circumstances of extreme difficulty. Any attempt at upsetting the new Government in the present crisis, when the enemy is almost knocking at the doors of Paris, would be a desperate folly. The French workmen must perform their duties as citizens^a; but, at the same time, they must not allow themselves to be deluded by the national *souvenirs*^b of 1792, as the French peasants allowed themselves to be deluded by the national *souvenirs* of the First Empire. They have not to recapitulate the past, but to build up the future. Let them calmly and resolutely improve the opportunities of Republican liberty, for the work of their own class organisation. It will gift them with fresh Herculean powers for the regeneration of France, and our common task—the emancipation of labour. Upon their energies and wisdom hinges the fate of the Republic.

The English workmen have already taken measures to overcome, by a wholesome pressure from without, the reluctance of their Government to recognise the French Republic.¹³⁴ The present dilatoriness of the British Government is probably intended to atone for the Anti-Jacobin war and its former indecent haste in sanctioning the *coup d'état*.¹³⁵ The English workmen call also upon their Government to oppose by all its power the dismemberment of France, which part of the English press is shameless enough to howl for.^c It is the same press that for twenty years deified Louis Bonaparte as the providence of

^a The 1870 German edition has: "and they do it".—*Ed.*

^b Remembrances.—*Ed.*

^c The 1870 German edition has: "which part of the English press of course supports just as noisily as do the German patriots".—*Ed.*

Europe, that frantically cheered on the slaveholders' rebellion.¹³⁶ Now, as then, it drudges for the slaveholder.

Let the sections of the *International Working Men's Association* in every country stir the working classes to action. If they forsake their duty, if they remain passive, the present tremendous war will be but the harbinger of still deadlier international feuds, and lead in every nation to a renewed triumph over the workman by the lords of the sword, of the soil, and of capital.

Vive la République!

The General Council:

Robert Applegarth; Martin J. Boon; Fred. Bradnick; Caihil; John Hales; William Hales; George Harris; Fred. Lessner; Lopatin; B. Lucraft; George Milner; Thomas Mottershead; Charles Murray; George Odger; James Parnell; Pfänder; Rühl; Joseph Shepherd; Cowell Stepney; Stoll; Schmutz

Corresponding Secretaries:

<i>Eugène Dupont</i>for France	<i>Giovanni Bora</i> for Italy
<i>Karl Marx</i>for Germany and Russia	<i>Zévy Maurice</i> for Hungary
<i>A. Serrailier</i> for Belgium, Holland and Spain	<i>Anton Zabicki</i> for Poland
<i>Hermann Jung</i> ..for Switzerland	<i>James Cohen</i> for Denmark
	<i>J. G. Eccarius</i> for the United States

William Townshend, Chairman

John Weston, Treasurer

J. George Eccarius, General Secretary

Office: 256, High Holborn, London, W.C.,
September 9th, 1870

Written between September 6 and 9,
1870

Approved at the meeting of the General
Council on September 9, 1870

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and French in September-December 1870

Reproduced from the text of the
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tion), verified with the text of the
1870 German edition

Karl Marx

[CONCERNING THE ARREST OF THE MEMBERS
OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE
OF THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC WORKERS' PARTY]¹³⁷

The Central Committee of the German section of the "International Workmen's Association" resident at Brunswick issued on the 5th inst. a manifesto to the German working class, calling upon them to prevent the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine, and to bring about an honourable peace with the French Republic.^a Not only has their manifesto been confiscated by the order of the commanding-general, Vogel von Falckenstein, but all the members of the committee, even the unfortunate printer of the document, were arrested and chained like common felons, and sent to Lötzen, in Eastern Prussia.

Written about September 14, 1870

Reproduced from *The Pall Mall Gazette*

Published in *The Pall Mall Gazette*,
No. 1744, September 15, 1870 and *The Echo*,
September 15, 1870

^a "Manifest des Ausschusses der sozial-demokratischen Arbeiterpartei. An alle deutschen Arbeiter! Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, 5. Sept. 1870", *Der Volksstaat*, No. 73, September 11, 1870.—*Ed.*

L'INTERNATIONALE

ORGANE DES SECTIONS BELGES
DE L'ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES TRAVAILLEURS.

PARAISANT LE SAMEDI.

Frederick Engels

TO THE SIXTH CONGRESS OF THE BELGIAN SECTIONS OF
THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION ¹³⁸

London, December 23, 1870

Citizens!

The General Council of the International Working Men's Association extends its congratulations on your Sixth Congress. The very fact that this Congress is meeting proves once again that the Belgian proletariat is continuing without respite in its efforts to emancipate the working class, even while a murderous, fratricidal war is filling the whole of Europe with horror, displacing for the time being all other topics in the minds of the public.

With particular satisfaction we have seen the Belgian sections follow, with regard to this war, the line of action and proclaim the ideas prescribed by the interests of the proletariat of all countries: to repudiate any idea of conquest and to preserve the French Republic. Moreover, in this respect our Belgian friends are in perfect harmony with the workers of other countries.

Since the occupation of Rouen by the Prussians, our last remaining links with France have been temporarily severed. But in England, America and Germany the movement among the workers against the war of conquest and for the preservation of the French Republic has developed very rapidly. In Germany, particularly, this movement has grown to such an extent that the Prussian government has seen itself obliged, for the sake of its policy of conquest and reaction, to deal harshly with the workers. The Central Committee of German Socialist-Democracy, meeting in Brunswick, have been arrested, and many members of this party have suffered the same fate; finally two deputies of the North German Parliament, citizens Bebel and Liebknecht, who

represented there the views and interests of the working class, have been put behind bars. The International is accused of having given all these citizens the password for a vast revolutionary conspiracy; here we have, without a shadow of doubt, the second edition of the famous plot by the International in Paris, a plot which the Bonapartist police claimed to have discovered and which later went up in smoke in such a pitiful fashion.² Despite these persecutions the international workers' movement is advancing and gaining in strength all the time.

The current congress will provide you with the opportunity to ascertain the number of sections and other affiliated societies, as well as the membership of each of them, and so to get a precise idea of the progress being made by our movement in Belgium. We would like you to communicate to the General Council the result of these statistics on the state of our association in Belgium, statistics that we intend to complete for other countries as well. It goes without saying that we consider this communication to be confidential, and the facts that it will make known to us will not be made public.

Further, the General Council allows itself to hope that in the course of the year 1871 the Belgian sections will likewise feel able to recall the resolutions of the various international congresses regarding the remittances intended for it. The present war makes remittances from most of the continental countries out of the question, and we are well aware that the workers of Belgium are also affected by the general depression which is ensuing from this war; the General Council is also raising this question to remind the Belgian sections that without material support it is impossible for it to disseminate propaganda on the scale it would wish.

Owing to the absence of the secretary for Belgium, citizen Serrailier, the General Council has charged the undersigned with sending this communication to the congress.

Greetings and Fraternity,^a

Frederick Engels

Written on December 23, 1870 on the instruction of the General Council given at the meeting of December 20, 1870

First published, without the last three paragraphs, in *L'Internationale*, No. 103, January 1, 1871

Printed according to the newspaper, verified with the manuscript; the paragraphs omitted in the newspaper are printed according to the manuscript

Translated from the French

^a The newspaper has further: "For the General Council."—*Ed.*

Karl Marx

ON THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND
MEETINGS IN GERMANY

TO THE EDITOR OF *THE DAILY NEWS*

Sir,

In accusing the French Government of

“having rendered impossible the free expression of opinion in France through the medium of the press and of national representatives”,^a

Bismarck did evidently but intend to crack a Berlin *Witz*.^b If you want to become acquainted with “true” French opinion please apply to Herr Stieber, the editor of the Versailles *Moniteur*, and the notorious Prussian police spy!

At Bismarck’s express command Messrs. Bebel and Liebknecht have been arrested, on the charge of high treason, simply because they dared to fulfil their duties as German national representatives, viz., to protest in the Reichstag against the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine, vote against new war subsidies, express their sympathy with the French Republic, and denounce the attempt at the conversion of Germany into one Prussian barrack.^c For the utterance of the same opinions the members of the Brunswick Socialist Democratic Committee have, since the beginning of last September, been treated like galley-slaves, and are still undergoing a mock prosecution for high treason. The same lot has befallen

^a O. Bismarck’s despatch headlined “Versailles, den 9. Januar 1871”, *Königlich Preussischer Staats-Anzeiger*, No. 15, January 14, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b Joke.—*Ed.*

^c A. Bebel’s speech in the Reichstag on November 26, 1870. *Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des Reichstages des Norddeutschen Bundes*. I. *Legislatur-Periode*. II. *Ausserordentliche Session 1870*. Berlin, 1870; W. Liebknecht’s speech in the Reichstag on November 26, 1870, *ibid.*—*Ed.*

numerous workmen who propagated the Brunswick manifesto.^a On similar pretexts, Mr. Hepner, the sub-editor of the Leipzig *Volksstaat*, is prosecuted for high treason. The few independent German journals existing outside Prussia are forbidden admission into the Hohenzollern estates. German workmen's meetings in favour of a peace honourable for France are daily dispersed by the police. According to the official Prussian doctrine, as naively laid down by General Vogel von Falckenstein, every German "trying to counteract the prospective aims of the Prussian warfare in France", is guilty of high treason. If M. Gambetta and Co. were, like the Hohenzollern, forced to violently put down popular opinion, they would only have to apply the Prussian method, and, on the plea of war, proclaim throughout France the state of siege. The only French soldiers on German soil moulder in Prussian gaols. Still the Prussian Government feels itself bound to rigorously maintain the state of siege, that is to say, the crudest and most revolting form of military despotism, the suspension of all law. The French soil is infested by about a million of German invaders. Yet the French Government can safely dispense with that Prussian method of "rendering possible the free expression of opinion". Look at this picture and at that! Germany, however, has proved too petty a field for Bismarck's all-absorbing love of independent opinion. When the Luxemburgers gave vent to their sympathies with France, Bismarck made this expression of sentiment one of his pretexts for renouncing the London neutrality treaty.¹³⁹ When the Belgian press committed a similar sin, the Prussian ambassador at Brussels, Herr von Balan, invited the Belgian ministry to put down not only all anti-Prussian newspaper articles, but even the printing of mere news calculated to cheer on the French in their war of independence. A very modest request this, indeed, to suspend the Belgian Constitution, "pour le roi de Prusse!"^b No sooner had some Stockholm papers indulged in some mild jokes at the notorious "piety" of Wilhelm Annexander,^c than Bismarck came down on the Swedish cabinet with grim missives. Even under the meridian of St. Petersburg he contrived to spy too licentious a press. At his humble supplication, the editors of the principal Petersburg papers were summoned

^a "Manifest des Ausschusses der sozial-demokratischen Arbeiterpartei. An alle deutschen Arbeiter! Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, 5. September, 1870", *Der Volksstaat*, No. 73, September 11, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b Literally: for the sake of Prussian King, and figuratively: for nothing.

^c A blend of the words "annexion" and "Alexander", an ironical comparison with Alexander of Macedon.—*Ed.*

before the Censor-in-Chief, who bid them beware of all strictures upon the feal Borussian vassal of the Czar. One of those editors, M. Saguljajew, was imprudent enough to emit the secret of this *avertissement* through the columns of the *Golos*. He was at once pounced upon by the Russian police, and bundled off to some remote province.^a It would be a mistake to believe that those gendarme proceedings are only due to the paroxysm of war fever. They are, on the contrary, the true methodical application of Prussian law principles. There exists in point of fact an odd proviso in the Prussian criminal code, by dint of which every foreigner, on account of his doings or writings in his own or any other foreign country, may be prosecuted for “insult against the Prussian King” and “high treason against Prussia”!^b France—and her cause is fortunately far from desperate—fights at this moment not only for her own national independence, but for the liberty of Germany and Europe.

I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

Karl Marx

London, January 16, 1871

First published in *The Daily News*,
January 19, 1871

Reproduced from the newspaper

^a Marx learned of this from a letter by the Russian revolutionary Lopatin, dated December 15, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b *Entwurf des Strafgesetzbuchs für die Preussischen Staaten, nach den Beschlüssen des Königlichen Staatsraths*, Berlin, 1843.—*Ed.*

Frederick Engels

TO THE SPANISH FEDERAL COUNCIL
OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING MEN'S
ASSOCIATION^{a 140}

London, 13 February 1871

Citizens,

The General Council was very pleased to receive your letter of December 14. Your previous letter dated 30 July also reached us; it was passed to Citizen Serraillier,^b the Secretary for Spain, with the instruction to forward our answer to you. But soon Citizen Serraillier went to France to fight for the Republic, and then he was confined in Paris. If, therefore, you have not received any answer to your letter of 30 July, which is still in his hands, it is due to these circumstances. Now, the General Council, at its meeting of the 7th inst. has charged the undersigned F. E. to handle correspondence with Spain in the interim and has passed on your last letter to him.^c

In the meantime, we have been regularly receiving the Spanish workers' newspapers *La Federacion* from Barcelona, *La Solidaridad* from Madrid (until December 1870), *El Obrero* from Palma (until its suspension) and recently *La Revolucion social* from Palma (first issue only). These newspapers have kept us up-to-date with what is happening in Spain with regard to the labour movement; we have seen with much satisfaction that the ideas of social revolution are increasingly becoming the common property of the working class of your country.

Without doubt the empty rantings of the old political parties have, as you say, attracted too much popular attention, thus

^a The title is in Spanish.—*Ed.*

^b Serraillier informed the General Council of this at its meeting of August 9, 1870.—*Ed.*

^c The General Council took this decision at its meeting of January 31 and approved it at its meeting of February 7, 1871.—*Ed.*

constituting a major obstacle to our propaganda. This happened everywhere in the first years of the proletarian movement. In France, in England, in Germany the socialists had to, and still have to, combat the influence and the action of the old political parties, whether aristocratic or bourgeois, monarchist or even republican. Everywhere experience has shown that the best means of freeing the workers from this domination by the old parties is to found in each country a proletarian party with a political programme of its own, a political programme that is very clearly distinguished from those of the other parties since it must express the conditions for the emancipation of the working class. The details of this political programme might vary according to the special circumstances in each country; but the fundamental relations between labour and capital being everywhere the same, and the fact of political domination by the propertied classes over the exploited classes existing everywhere, the principles and the goal of the proletarian political programme will be identical, at least in all the western countries. The propertied classes, landed aristocracy and bourgeoisie, hold the working people in thralldom, not only by virtue of their wealth, by the simple exploitation of labour by capital, but also through the coercive power of the state, the army, the bureaucracy, the courts. To refrain from fighting our enemies in the political arena would be to abandon one of the most powerful means of action, and particularly of organisation and propaganda. Universal suffrage gives us an excellent means of action. In Germany the workers, strongly organised as a political party, have succeeded in sending six deputies to the self-styled national assembly; and the opposition which our friends Bebel and Liebknecht have been also able to put up against the war of conquest has had a more powerful effect on behalf of our international propaganda than years of propaganda by the press and by meetings would have had. In France, too, at this moment workers' representatives have just been elected and will proclaim out loud our principles to the national assembly. At the next elections the same thing will happen in England.

We are pleased to hear that you wish to send us the contributions from the branches in your country; we shall receive them with thanks. Please send them in the form of a banker's draft drawn on a bank here in London, payable to John Weston, our treasurer, by registered letter to the undersigned either at 256 High Holborn, London (seat of our Council) or to his home address 122 R.P.R.^a

^a Regent's Park Road.—*Ed.*

We wait with great interest the statistics of your federation which you promise to send us.

As for the Congress of the International, it is pointless to think about it as long as the present war continues. But if, as seems likely, peace is soon restored, the Council will take up this important matter straightaway and will consider your kind invitation to hold it in Barcelona.

We have no sections yet in Portugal; perhaps it would be easier for you than for us to open relations with the workers of that country. If this is so, would you please write to us again on this matter. Likewise, we believe that it would be best, to begin with at any rate, if you yourselves will make contact with the typesetters of Buenos Aires, provided you let us know later on what results have been achieved. Meanwhile, you would render us a kind service and further the cause by sending us a copy of *Anales de la Sociedad tipografica de Buenos Aires* for our information.

For the rest, the international movement continues to make progress despite all obstacles. In England the central Trades' Councils^a of Birmingham and Manchester, and through them the workers of the two most important manufacturing cities in the country, have just affiliated direct to our Association. In Germany we are currently suffering the same persecution at the hands of the governments there as Louis Bonaparte subjected us to in France a year ago. Our German friends, more than fifty of whom are in prison, are literally suffering for the international cause; they have been arrested and persecuted because they opposed the policy of conquest with all their strength and because they demanded that the German people should fraternise with the French people. In Austria many of our friends have been imprisoned but the movement is making progress nevertheless. Everywhere in France our sections have been the life and soul of the resistance against the invasion. They have seized local power in the big cities of the South, and if Lyons, Marseilles, Bordeaux and Toulouse have evinced an energy unknown elsewhere, it was thanks to the efforts of the Internationals. In Belgium we are well organised; our Belgian sections have just celebrated their sixth regional Congress. In Switzerland the differences which had arisen between our sections some time ago seem to be sorting themselves out. From America we have received the membership of new French, German and Czech (Bohemian) sections, and, as regards

^a Engels gives the English name "Trades' Councils" in parentheses, after the French one.—Ed.

the others, we continue to maintain fraternal relations with the great organisation of American workers, the Labor League.^{a 141}

Hoping to receive more news from you soon, we send you our fraternal greetings.

For the General Council of the
International Working Men's Association

F.E.

Written on February 13, 1871 by the
General Council's decision of January 31,

1871

First published in: Marx and Engels,
Works, First Russian Edition, Vol. XXVI,
1935

Printed according to the manuscript

Translated from the French

^a Engels gives the English name "The Labor League" in parentheses, after the French one.—*Ed.*

Frederick Engels

THE ASPECT OF AFFAIRS IN RUSSIA ¹⁴²

TO THE EDITOR OF *THE PALL MALL GAZETTE*^a

Sir,—

The English Government declare that they know nothing of an alliance between Russia and Prussia.^b In Germany nobody disputes the existence of such an alliance; on the contrary, the pro-Prussian press exults in the fact, the anti-Prussian papers are indignant at it. One of the latter, the *Volksstaat*, thinks that Mr. Gladstone merely intended to insinuate by his denegations that this was not a treaty of alliance, but rather of vassalage,^c and that in this case he would be in the right. Indeed, the telegrams exchanged between Versailles and St. Petersburg, between “Yours till death, William,” and his more reserved nephew Alexander, leave no longer any room for doubt as to the relations existing between what are now the two great military monarchies of the Continent. These telegrams, by the way, were first published in the *Journal de St. Pétersbourg*^d; and what is quite as significant is the fact that they have not been reprinted in their full tenor in the German press, the Emperor William’s assurance of devotion till death being especially suppressed. At all events, the full context of the correspondence cannot leave a doubt that the Emperor William means to express the deep sense of the obligation under which he

^a F. Greenwood.—*Ed.*

^b The reference is to the speech of W. E. Gladstone in the House of Commons on March 7, 1871 published in *The Times*, No. 27005, March 8, 1871.—*Ed.*

^c “Politische Uebersicht”, *Der Volksstaat*, No. 21, March 11, 1871.—*Ed.*

^d William I’s telegram to the Emperor Alexander II datelined “Versailles, 26 février, 2 heures 7 m.”, *Journal de St.-Pétersbourg*, No. 37, February 17 (March 1), 1871; Alexander II’s telegram to William I datelined “Pétersbourg, 15 (27) février 1871”, *Journal de St.-Pétersbourg* (same issue).—*Ed.*

considers himself to be towards Russia, and his readiness to place his services in return at Russia's disposal. The Emperor being past seventy, and his presumptive heir's^a sentiments being doubtful, there is certainly a strong incentive for Russia to strike the iron while it is hot.

Moreover, the internal situation in Russia is far from satisfactory. The finances are almost helplessly deranged; the peculiar form in which the emancipation of the serfs and the other social and political changes connected with it have been carried out has disturbed agricultural production to an almost incredible degree. The half-measures of a liberal character which in turn have been accorded, retracted, and again accorded, have given to the educated classes just elbow-room enough to develop a distinct public opinion; and that public opinion is upon all points opposed to the foreign policy the present Government have hitherto appeared to follow. Public opinion in Russia is essentially and violently Panslavist—that is to say, antagonistic to the three great “oppressors” of the Slavonic race: the Germans, the Hungarians, and the Turks. A Prussian alliance is as distasteful to it as would be an Austrian or a Turkish alliance. It demands, besides, immediate warlike action, in a Panslavist sense. The quiet, slow, but eminently safe underground action of Russian traditional diplomacy sorely tries its patience. Such successes as were obtained at the Conference,¹⁴³ important though they be in themselves, are as nought to the Russian Panslavists. They hear nothing but the “cry of anguish” of their oppressed brethren in race; they feel nothing more intensely than the necessity of restoring the lost supremacy of holy Russia by a grand coup, a war of conquest. They know, moreover, that the Heir Presumptive^b is one of them. All this considered, and the grand strategic railway lines towards the south and south-west having now been completed far enough to serve efficiently for purposes of attack against Austria or Turkey, or both, is there not a strong inducement for the Russian Government and for the Emperor Alexander personally to apply the old Bonapartist means, and to stave off internal difficulties by a foreign war while the Prussian alliance appears still safe?

Under such circumstances the new Russian loan of twelve millions sterling obtains a very peculiar significance. It is true, a patriotic protest has been circulated at the Stock Exchange—it is stated to have been without signatures, and appears to have

^a Frederick William.—*Ed.*

^b Alexander, the future Emperor Alexander III.—*Ed.*

remained so—and we are told that the amount of the loan has been more than covered. What purposes, among others, these twelve millions are to be used for we are informed by the *Ostsee Zeitung*, of Stettin, a paper which for many years not only has had the very best information about Russian affairs, but which also has had the independence to publish it. The Franco-German war, says the Petersburg correspondent of this paper (under date of March 4, new style), has convinced the Russian military authorities of the total inefficiency of the system of fortification hitherto followed in the construction of the Russian fortresses, and the Ministry of War has already settled the plan for the necessary alterations.

“It is reported that the new system, based upon the introduction of detached forts, is to be applied, in the first instance, to the more important frontier fortresses, the reconstruction of which is to be commenced forthwith. The first fortresses which are to be provided with detached forts are Brest-Litowski, Demblin, and Modlin.”

Now, Brest-Litowski, Demblin (or Iwangorod), and Modlin (or Nowo-Georgiewsk, by its official Russian name), are exactly the three fortresses which, with Warsaw as a central point, command the greater portion of the kingdom of Poland; and Warsaw does not receive any detached forts now, for the very good reason that it has had them for many a year past. Russia, then, loses no time in fastening her hold upon Poland, and in strengthening her base of operations against Austria, and the hurry with which this is done is of no good augury for the peace of Europe.

All this may still be called purely defensive armament. But the correspondent in question has not done yet:—

“The warlike preparations in Russia, which were commenced at the outbreak of the Franco-German war, are continued with unabated zeal. Lately the Ministry of War has ordered the formation of the fourth battalions. The execution of this order has already begun with all regiments, those in the kingdom of Poland included. The detachments set apart for the railway and telegraph service in the field, as well as the sanitary companies, have already been organized. The men are actively instructed and drilled in their various duties, and the sanitary companies are even taught how to apply the first bandages to wounded, how to stop bleeding, and how to bring round men who have fainted.”

Now in almost every great continental army the regiments of infantry consist, on the peace footing, of three battalions, and the first unmistakable step from the peace-footing to the war-footing is the formation of the fourth battalions. On the day Louis Napoleon declared war, he also ordered the formation of the fourth battalions.^a In Prussia, their formation is the very first thing

^a The reference is to the order on the formation of the fourth battalions of July 14, 1870, reported in *Le Temps*, No. 3427, July 17, 1870.—*Ed.*

done after the receipt of the order for mobilization.^a In Austria it is the same, and so it is in Russia. Whatever may be thought of the suddenly revealed necessity of detached forts for the Polish fortresses, or of the equally sudden *empressement*^b to introduce into the Russian service the Prussian *Krankenträger*^c and railway and telegraph detachments (in a country where both railways and telegraphs are rather scarce)—here, in the formation of the fourth battalions, we have an unmistakable sign that Russia has actually passed the line which divides the peace footing from the war footing. Nobody can imagine that Russia has taken this step without a purpose; and if this step means anything, it means attack against somebody. Perhaps that explains what the twelve millions sterling are wanted for.—

Yours, &c.,
E.

Written about March 15, 1871
First published in *The Pall Mall Gazette*,
No. 1900, March 16, 1871

Reproduced from the newspaper

^a The reference is to the order on mobilisation of July 16, 1870, reported in *The Times*, No. 26805, July 18, 1870.—*Ed.*

^b Zeal.—*Ed.*

^c Stretcher-bearer.—*Ed.*

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels
TO THE EDITOR OF *THE TIMES*^{a 144}

Sir,

In your impression of the 16th March your Paris correspondent states:

“Karl Marx...has written a letter to one of his principal affiliés in Paris, stating that he is not satisfied with the attitude which the members of that society (the “International”) have taken up in that city etc.”^b

This statement your correspondent has evidently taken from the *Paris-Journal* of the 14th March where also the publication, in full, of the pretended letter^c is promised. The *Paris-Journal* of the 19th March does indeed contain a letter dated London, 28th February 1871^d and purporting to be signed by me, the contents of which agree with the statement of your correspondent. I now beg to declare that this letter is, from beginning to end, an impudent forgery.

Drafted by F. Engels on March 21, 1871

Reproduced from Engels' draft

First published in *The Times*, No. 27017,
March 22, 1871 as an item on Marx's letter

^a J. T. Delane.—*Ed.*

^b “The State of Paris”, *The Times*, No. 27012, March 16, 1871.—*Ed.*

^c “Le Grand Chef de l'Internationale”, *Paris-Journal*, No. 71, March 14, 1871.—*Ed.*

^d “Lettre du Grand Chef de l'Internationale”, *Paris-Journal*, No. 76, March 19, 1871.—*Ed.*

Karl Marx

[STATEMENT BY THE GENERAL COUNCIL TO THE
EDITOR OF
THE TIMES AND OTHER PAPERS]¹⁴⁵

TO THE EDITOR OF *THE TIMES*

Sir,—

I am directed by the General Council of the International Working Men's Association to solicit your favour to publish the following in the columns of your journal:—

A statement has gone the round of the English press that the Paris members of the International Working Men's Association had in so far joined the so-called Anti-German League¹⁴⁶ as to declare all Germans to be henceforth excluded from our association.^a

This statement is the very reverse of fact. Neither the Federal Council of our association in Paris, nor any of the Paris sections represented by that council, have ever passed any such resolution. The so-called Anti-German League, as far as it exists at all, is the exclusive work of the upper and middle classes: it was started by the Jockey Club,¹⁴⁷ and kept up by the adhesions of the Academy, of the Stock Exchange, of some bankers and manufacturers, etc. The working-classes have nothing whatever to do with it.

The object of these calumnies is evident. A short time before the outbreak of the late war the International was made the general scapegoat for all untoward events. This is now repeated over again. While the Swiss and the Prussian press accuses it of having created the late outrages upon Germans in Zurich,¹⁴⁸ French papers, such as the *Courrier de Lyon*, *Courrier de la Gironde*, *La Liberté*, etc., tell of certain secret meetings of Internationals

^a This statement entitled "Les scrupules de l'Internationale" was first published in *Paris-Journal*, No. 67, March 10, 1871.—*Ed.*

having been held at Geneva and Berne, the Prussian Ambassador in the chair, in which meetings a plan was concocted to hand over Lyons to the united Prussians and Internationals for the sake of common plunder.^a

Yours respectfully,

J. George Eccarius,
General Secretary of the
International Working Men's Association

256, High Holborn, March 22

Written on March 21, 1871

Approved at the meeting of the General Council on March 21, 1871^b

Published in *The Times*, No. 27018, March 23, 1871, in *The Eastern Post*, No. 130, March 25, 1871 and in other press organs of the International

Reproduced from *The Times*, verified with the General Council's Minute Book

^a "On lit dans le Courrier de Lyon...", *Courrier de la Gironde*, March 14, 1871; "On lit dans le Courrier de Lyon...", *Courrier de la Gironde*, March 16, 1871; "Chronique des Départements", *La Liberté*, March 18, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b Before its despatch to the Editor of *The Times*, the statement was datelined March 22.—*Ed.*

Karl Marx
 TO THE EDITORIAL BOARDS
 OF THE *VOLKSSTAAT* AND THE *ZUKUNFT*¹⁴⁹

TO THE EDITORIAL BOARD OF THE *VOLKSSTAAT*

The *Paris-Journal*, one of the most successful organs of the Paris police press, published an article in its March 14 issue, under the sensational heading "Le Grand Chef de l'Internationale"^a ("Grand Chef" is probably the French translation of Stieber's "Haupt-Chef"¹⁵⁰).

"He," begins the article, "is, as everyone knows, a German, what is even worse, a Prussian. He calls himself Karl Marx, lives in *Berlin*," etc. "Well now. This Karl Marx is displeased with the behaviour of the French members of the *International*. This in itself shows what he is like. He finds that they continually spend too much time dealing with politics and not enough with social questions. This is his opinion, he has formulated it quite categorically in a letter to his brother and friend, Citizen *Serrailier*, one of the Paris high priests of the *International*. Marx begs the French members, especially those affiliated to the Paris association, not to lose sight of the fact that their association has a single goal: to organise the work and the future of the workers' societies. But people are disorganising the work rather than organising it, and he believes that the offenders must be reminded again of the association's rules. We declare that we are in a position to publish this remarkable letter from Mr. Karl Marx as soon as it is passed on to the members of the *International*."

In its issue of March 19, the *Paris-Journal* does indeed have a letter allegedly signed by me^b which was immediately reprinted by the whole of the reactionary press in Paris and then found its way into the London papers. In the meantime, however, the *Paris-Journal* has got wind of the fact that I live in *London* and *not in Berlin*. Therefore, it has marked the letter as coming from London this time, in contradiction to its first announcement. This

^a "Le Grand Chef de l'Internationale", *Paris-Journal*, No. 71, March 14, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b "Lettre du Grand Chef de l'Internationale", *Paris-Journal*, No. 76, March 19, 1871.—*Ed.*

additional correction suffers, however, from the nuisance that my friend *Serrailier*, who is in London, and myself had to correspond with each other in a roundabout way via Paris. The letter, as I have already explained in *The Times*,^a is a brazen *fake* from beginning to end.

That same *Paris-Journal* and other organs of Paris's "good Press" are spreading the rumour that the Federal Council of the *International* in Paris has taken the decision, which is not within its competence, to expel the Germans from the International Working Men's Association.^b The London dailies hastily grabbed the welcome news and published it in malicious instigating leaders about the suicide of the *International* at long last. Unfortunately, today *The Times* contains the following announcement by the *General Council of the International Working Men's Association*:^c

"A communication according to which the Paris members of the International Working Men's Association declared that all Germans were to be expelled from the *International*, thereby behaving in the manner of the *Anti-German League*, is doing the rounds in the English press. The communication stands in absolutely glaring contradiction to the facts. Neither the Federal Council of our association in Paris nor any of the Paris sections that it represents have ever dreamed of taking such a decision. The so-called Anti-German League, in so far as it exists at all, is exclusively the work of the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie. It was brought to life by the Jockey Club and kept going with the consent of the Academy, the Stock Exchange, some of the bankers and factory owners, and so forth. The working class has never had anything to do with it.

"The purpose of this calumny is immediately obvious. Shortly before the recent war broke out, the *International* had to be the scapegoat for all the unpopular events. The same tactics are now being repeated. While Swiss and Prussian papers, e.g., are denouncing it as the originator of the injustices against the Germans in Zürich, the French papers, like the *Courrier de Lyon*, the *Courrier de la Gironde*, the *Paris Liberté* and so forth, are simultaneously reporting on certain secret meetings of the *Internationals* in *Geneva* and *Berne*, under the chairmanship of the *Prussian ambassador*, at which the plan is to be devised of handing

^a See this volume, p. 285.—*Ed.*

^b "Les scrupules de l'Internationale", *Paris-Journal*, No. 67, March 10, 1871.—*Ed.*

^c See this volume, pp. 286-87.—*Ed.*

over *Lyon* to the united Prussians and the Internationals for the purpose of jointly plundering it.”

So much for the statement of the General Council. It is quite natural that the important dignitaries and the ruling classes of the old society who can only maintain their own power and the exploitation of the productive masses of the people by *national* conflicts and antagonisms, recognise their common adversary in the *International Working Men's Association*. *All and any* means are good to destroy it.

London, March 23, 1871

Karl Marx
Secretary of the General Council of the
International Working Men's Association
for *Germany*

Published in the newspapers *Der Volksstaat*, No. 26, March 29, 1871, *Die Zukunft*, No. 73, March 26, 1871, *L'Egalité* (in an abbreviated form), No. 6, March 31, 1871, and in the magazine *Der Vorbote*, No. 4, April 23, 1871

Printed according to *Der Volksstaat*

Karl Marx

[TO THE EDITOR OF *DE WERKER*] ¹⁵¹

London, March 31, 1871

Citizen,

My so-called letter addressed to the Paris members of the International is quite simply, as I have already stated in *The Times* of the 22nd March,^a a fabrication by the *Paris-Journal*,^b one of these disreputable papers spawned in the imperialist gutter. Moreover, all the organs of the "good press" throughout Europe have, so it seems, received the order to employ *falsification* as their major weapon of war against the *Internationale*. In the eyes of these honest advocates of religion, order, the family and property the crime of *falsification* is not even a peccadillo.

Greetings and Fraternity,

Karl Marx

First published in the newspaper
De Werker, No. 23, April 8, 1871

Printed according to the manu-
script, verified with the newspaper

Translated from the French

Published in English for the first
time

^a See this volume, p. 285.—*Ed.*

^b "Lettre du Grand Chef de l'Internationale", *Paris-Journal*, No. 76, March 19, 1871.—*Ed.*

Karl Marx

TO THE EDITOR OF *THE TIMES*¹⁵²

Sir,—

Will you allow me to again intrude upon your columns in order to contradict widely-spread falsehoods?

A Lombard telegram, dated Paris, March 30, contains an extract from the *Gaulois*^a which, under the sensational heading, "Alleged Organization of the Paris Revolution in London," has adorned the London papers of Saturday last.^b Having during the late war successfully rivalled the *Figaro* and the *Paris-Journal* in the concoction of Munchausiades that made the Paris *petite presse*^c a byword all over the world, the *Gaulois* seems more than ever convinced that the news-reading public will always cling to the tenet, "*Credo quia absurdum est.*"^d Baron Munchausen himself, would he have undertaken to organize at London "in the early part of February," when M. Thiers did not yet hold any official post, "the insurrection of the 18th of March," called into life by the attempt of the same M. Thiers to disarm the Paris National Guard? Not content to send MM. Assi and Blanqui on an imaginary voyage to London, there to conspire with myself in secret conclave, the *Gaulois* adds to that conclave two imaginary persons—one "Bentini, general agent for Italy," and one "Dermott, general agent for England." It also graciously confirms the

^a "The 'Internationale' and the Commune", *The Times*, No. 27027, April 3, 1871; "C'est paraît-il, à Londres...", *Le Gaulois*, No. 997, March 31, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b See e. g. "Alleged Organization of the Paris Revolution in London", *The Daily News*, No. 7776, April 1, 1871.—*Ed.*

^c Yellow press.—*Ed.*

^d "I believe because it is impossible" (Tertullian, *De carne Christi* 5, 4).—*Ed.*

dignity of “supreme chief of the *Internationale*,” first bestowed upon me by the *Paris-Journal*.^a These two worthies notwithstanding, the General Council of the International Working Men’s Association will, I am afraid, continue to transact its business without the incumbrance of either “chief” or “president.”

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obediently,

Karl Marx

London, April 3

First published in *The Times*, No. 27028,
April 4, 1871 and *The Daily News*,
No. 7780, April 6, 1871

Reproduced from *The Times*

^a See “Le Grand Chef de l’Internationale”, *Paris-Journal*, No. 71, March 14, 1871.—*Ed.*

Frederick Engels

[ON THE CIGAR-WORKERS' STRIKE IN ANTWERP]¹⁵³

In *Antwerp 500 cigar-workers* are out of work. The manufacturers gave them the choice: either to dissolve their trade union (which belongs to the International Working Men's Association) or to be dismissed. Every one of them without exception decisively rejected this unreasonable demand, and so the manufacturers closed their workshops.

The workers have funds of 6,000 Fr. (1,600 Talers); they have already established contact with the cigar-workers of Holland and England and any influx of workers from these countries is being prevented. From England they are to receive fairly considerable financial aid. £176 (1,200 Talers) has already been sent, and further assistance will be provided. Anyway, the Antwerpens are only asking for an *advance*, since they say they are in a position to pay back any aid which they are given. If the German cigar-workers or any other trade unions are in a position to offer assistance to their brothers in Antwerp, it is to be hoped that they will not hold back. Remittances should be made to Ph. *Coenen*, Boomgaardsstraat 3, Antwerp. But, at any rate, it is their duty to stop German cigar-workers moving to Antwerp as long as the manufacturers there insist on their demands.

Written on April 5, 1871

First published in *Der Volksstaat*, No. 30,
April 12, 1871

Printed according to the newspaper

Published in English for the first time

Frederick Engels

[OUTLINE OF AN APPEAL OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL TO THE WEAVERS' AND SPINNERS' TRADE UNIONS OF MANCHESTER FOR ASSISTANCE TO THE SPANISH TEXTILE WORKERS' STRIKE]¹⁵⁴

Messrs Batlló Brothers, Barcelona, own a large Cotton spinning and weaving concern and employ about 900 workpeople. Not only do they pay, by far, worse wages than any other firm in the trade, but they have also continually attempted to reduce wages still more by superseding men by women and grown up people by children. Lately, they have without exception discharged all such hands as were suspected of belonging to the Trades' Union of the United Carders, Spinners and Weavers. On the 26th February a large meeting was held by the members of this Union to consider the state of things in Messrs Batlló's works. A new list of wages was unanimously adopted which, although establishing a slight rise upon the prices hitherto paid, was still very much below the very lowest rates paid by others; and a deputation was appointed to demand the adoption of this list and in case of this being refused, the people employed at the mill were to strike work.

The deputation was not even received, Messrs B. refusing to receive any but a deputation from their own workmen. This fresh deputation submitted the new list of prices but met with a flat refusal. The whole of the workpeople at once struck, with the exception of about 25, most of whom have since joined the strike. This took place on the 27th February, and consequently, the hands have now been on strike for nearly nine weeks, and the funds at the disposal of the Union are beginning to run slow. The remaining branches of the International in Spain are doing their best to collect money for them, but they have just now a good many strikes to support. Not to mention minor affairs, the coopers of Santander and the Tanners of Valencia are on strike because

their masters insist upon their giving up their Trades' Unions as well as the International; and thus, there are altogether some 1500 men out at present in Spain whom the various branches of the International there have to support.

Barcelona and neighbourhood are the South Lancashire of Spain, there are large and numerous Cotton Spinning and Weaving establishments there and the greater part of the population of this district lives upon the Cotton Trade. They have lately suffered much from the competition of English yarns and it would make a particularly good impression in Spain if the Lancashire Cotton Trade could do something in favour of the Cotton Spinners and Powerloom Weavers of Spain. The active and intimate commercial relation between the different countries of the world have led to this that every event affecting society in one country necessarily produces its effects upon all other countries; and it would not at all be astonishing if a general reduction of wages in the Spanish Cotton Trade (such as appears inevitable if this strike be unsuccessful) should in the long run contribute to keep wages low in South Lancashire also.

First published in: Marx and Engels,
Works, First Russian Edition, Vol. XXVI,
1935

Reproduced from the manuscript

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

[RESOLUTION OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL EXPELLING HENRI LOUIS TOLAIN FROM THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION]¹⁵⁵

The General Council of the I.W.M.A.

Considering the resolution of the Federal Council of the Paris Sections expelling Citizen Tolain from the Association^a because, after having been elected to the National Assembly as a representative of the Working Classes, he has deserted their cause in the most disgraceful manner; which resolution the General Council is called upon to confirm;

Considering that the place of every French member of the I.W.M.A. is undoubtedly on the side of the Commune of Paris and not in the usurpatory and counter-revolutionary Assembly of Versailles;

Confirms the resolution of the Paris Federal Council and declares that Citizen Tolain is expelled from the I.W.M.A.

The General Council was prevented from taking action in this matter sooner by the fact that the above resolution of the Paris Federal Council was laid before them, in an authentic shape, on the 25th April only.

Written between April 22 and 25, 1871

Reproduced from the manuscript,
verified with the newspapers

Approved at the meeting of the General
Council on April 25, 1871

Published in the newspapers *The Eastern Post*, No. 135, April 29, 1871; *L'Internationale*, No. 122, May 14, 1871; *Der Volksstaat*, No. 42, May 24, 1871 and *Vorbote*, No. 7, July 1871

^a [Resolution of the Federal Council of the Paris Sections of the I.W.M.A. expelling Tolain] *La Révolution politique et sociale*, No. 3, April 16, 1871.—Ed.

Frederick Engels

ONCE AGAIN "HERR VOGT"¹⁵⁶

Ever since the Augsburg Campaign of 1859 had brought him such a sound drubbing,¹⁵⁷ Herr Vogt appeared to have had his fill of politics. He put all his energy into the natural sciences where he already had, in his own words, such "astounding" discoveries to his credit. Thus, at the same time as Küchenmeister and Leuckart had described the immensely complex evolution of the intestinal worm and thereby made a really great advance in science, he had made the astounding discovery that intestinal worms fall into two classes: round-worms, which are round, and flat-worms, which are flat. Now he has made an even greater discovery beside the first one. The discovery of large numbers of fossilised human bones from pre-historic times had started a fashion for the comparative study of the skulls of different human races. Skulls were measured from every conceivable angle, the measurements were compared, they were discussed, but no conclusion was reached until Vogt, confident of victory as ever, announced the solution to the riddle: all human skulls fall into two classes, namely those which are long (dolichocephalic) and those which are rounded (brachycephalic). What the most scrupulous and diligent observers had not achieved in the course of laborious studies over a period of years, was solved by Vogt by dint of the simple application of his worm principle. If, in addition to these astounding discoveries, we also mention the discovery of a new species in the realm of political zoology, the discovery namely of the Brimstone Gang,¹⁵⁸ even the least modest person would have to allow that Vogt had done as much as could be done in a lifetime.

But the great spirit of our Vogt was still restless. Politics retained its irresistible charm for the man who had already achieved so much in the ale-houses. The wounds from the drubbing of Anno^a sixty had by now happily healed; Marx's *Herr Vogt*^b was no longer obtainable in the book shops, and all the rotten scandals were long since dead and buried. Our Vogt had undertaken lecture tours and received the plaudits of the German philistines, had swaggered around at every scientific conference, at all ethnographic and antiquarian congresses, forcing his company on the true giants of science. Consequently, he could again think himself "respectable" after a fashion, and believe himself called upon to coach the German philistines, whom he had coached in scientific matters, in political affairs as well. Great events were underway: Napoléon le Petit¹⁵⁹ had capitulated at Sedan, the Prussians were at the gates of Paris, Bismarck was demanding Alsace and Lorraine. It was high time for Vogt to make his weighty contribution.

This contribution was called: *Carl Vogt's Political Letters to Friedrich Kolb*, Biel, 1870. It consisted of twelve letters that first appeared in the Vienna *Tages-Presse* and were reprinted in Vogt's *Moniteur*, the Biel *Handels-Courier*.¹⁶⁰ Vogt came out against the annexation and against the Prussianization of Germany, and he was furious that in these views he was simply following in the footsteps of the hated Social-Democrats, i.e. the Brimstone Gang. There is no need to go into the general content of the pamphlet, since Vogt's opinion on such matters is quite immaterial. Moreover, the arguments he adduces are just those of the most banal beer-swilling philistines with their political claptrap, except that on this occasion Vogt reflects the views of the Swiss rather than the German philistines. What interests us is solely the agreeable personality of Herr Vogt himself as it winds its way through its various phases and transformations.

So, we take Vogt's little pamphlet and compare it with that other unfortunate product of his pen, the *Studies on the Present Situation in Europe* of 1859,¹⁶¹ the after-effects of which had caused him so much distress for so long. Here we find that for all the intellectual affinity between the two, for quite the same slovenliness of his style—on page 10 Vogt reaches his "views with his own ears", and ears like that must indeed be quite remarkable^c—we find that Herr Vogt today maintains the exact opposite of what he preached

^a In the year.—*Ed.*

^b See present edition, Vol. 17, pp. 21-329.—*Ed.*

^c A pun: "eigene" means "one's own" and also "remarkable".—*Ed.*

eleven years ago. The *Studies* were intended to persuade the German philistine that Germany had no interest in intervening in the war that Louis Bonaparte planned against Austria at that time. To this end, Louis Bonaparte had to be represented as a "Man Appointed by Destiny", who was to liberate peoples, and had to be defended against the current attacks from Republican quarters and even from various bourgeois liberals. And the would-be Republican Vogt allows himself to descend to this—admittedly with an extremely bitter-sweet expression and not without people seeing how much it pained him, but he did so, nevertheless. Malicious tongues and members of the Brimstone Gang wanted to maintain that the good Vogt only submitted to all these belly-aches and grimaces in return for what the English call a CONSIDERATION, i.e. hard cash, from the Bonapartist camp. And indeed all manner of suspicious things had occurred. Vogt had made offers of money to various people on condition that they would support his views in the press, i.e. that they would praise Louis Bonaparte's liberationist intentions.^a Herr Brass whose virtue is well known to be above suspicion ever since he took over the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, publicly spurned the "French feeding-trough Vogt wished to put before him".^b But we prefer to say no more about these disagreeable matters and instead surmise that Vogt's belly-aches and grimaces were his by nature. Now, in the meantime, the disaster of Sedan⁴⁹ had taken place and with it everything has changed for Herr Vogt. The French liberator emperor himself is now treated with a certain reserve, and all that we learn about him is that

"the revolution was at his heels. Even without the war the Empire would not have seen the New Year of 1871 at the Tuileries" (p. 1).

But his wife! Just listen:

"Of course, if Eugénie had been victorious (for this uneducated Spanish woman who cannot even spell correctly, stands, or rather stood in the field with an entire dragon's tail of fanatical priests and peasants behind her), if Eugénie had been victorious, the situation would for a moment have become even more terrible" than after the Prussian victories, etc.

So, what it amounts to is this: when the French defeated the Austrians in 1859,¹⁸ it was Bonaparte the liberator who conquered; if they had been victorious over the Prussians in 1870, it would

^a C. Vogt, *Mein Prozess gegen die Allgemeine Zeitung. Stenographischer Bericht, Dokumente und Erläuterungen*, Geneva, 1859.—Ed.

^b "Neues aus Kantonen", *Neue Schweizer Zeitung*, No. 11, November 12, 1859.—Ed.

have been uneducated Eugénie with her dragon's tail who was victorious. The progress can be seen.

An even worse fate is in store for the dragon's tail of Louis Bonaparte, for it turns out now that he has one, too. Already on p. 4 we find a reference to his "terrible squandering of the resources of the Empire", and on p. 16, to the "rabble that stood at the head of the Imperial army and administration". This squandering and this rabble were already fully apparent in 1859 and long before. Vogt, who overlooked them at the time, now sees them quite clearly. Further progress. But even this is not sufficient. Even though Vogt does not exactly abuse his erstwhile liberator, he still cannot refrain from quoting from a letter by a French scholar who writes:

"If you have any influence at all, try to save us from the worst disgrace of all—*celle de ramener l'infâme*" (that of bringing the *infamous one*. Louis Bonaparte, back). "Rather Henri V, the Orléans, a Hohenzollern, anyone rather than this *crowned Traupmann*¹⁶² *who contaminates everything he touches*" (p. 13).

For all that, however bad the Ex-Emperor and his uneducated spouse with their respective dragon's tails might be, Vogt consoles us that at least one member of the family is an exception: Prince Napoleon, better known by the name of Plon-Plon. Of him Vogt says on p. 33 that Plon-Plon himself told Vogt that "he would have no respect for the South Germans if they were to act otherwise" (i.e. if they did not join in the war against the French); that he was also convinced that the war would end in failure and had made no secret of it. So, who would venture to accuse Vogt of ingratitude? Is it not touching to see how the "republican" extends a fraternal hand to the "Prince" even in misfortune, and writes him a reference to which the latter may appeal when the great competition opens to find a replacement for the "infamous one"?

In the *Studies* Russia and Russian politics are commended throughout. Since the abolition of serfdom the Russian Empire has been "an ally of the liberation movement rather than its opponent"; Poland is well on the way to merging with Russia (as was demonstrated by the uprising of 1863!), and Vogt thinks it perfectly natural that Russia should

"form the strong point around which the Slav nations strive increasingly to unite".

And the fact that at that time, in 1859, Russian policies and those of Louis Napoleon went hand in hand, was, of course, a great virtue in Vogt's eyes. Now, however, all is changed—we now

hear:

"I do not doubt for a moment that a conflict between the Slav and the Germanic world is imminent ... and that Russia will assume the leadership of one side in it" (pp. 30, 31).

And he goes on to argue that, after the annexation of Alsace, France will immediately take the side of the Slavs in this conflict, and will even do everything possible to hasten the breaking out of the conflict in order to regain Alsace. Thus, the same Franco-Russian alliance that had been deemed a piece of good fortune for Germany in 1859 is now held out as a bugbear and nightmare. But Vogt knows his German philistine. He knows he can say anything to him and even contradict himself a dozen times over. But we can't help asking ourselves how Vogt could have had the effrontery eleven years previously to praise to the skies an alliance between Russia and Bonapartist France as the best guarantee of the free development of Germany and Europe?

And as for Prussia! In the *Studies* Prussia is clearly given to understand that she should lend in direct support to Louis Napoleon's plans against Austria and confine herself to the defence of the territory of the German Confederation, and then "she would receive her reward at the subsequent peace negotiations in the form of concessions in the North German plains". The frontiers of the later North German Confederation⁹—the Erzgebirge, the Main and the sea—were already being held out to Prussia as bait even at this time. And in the Postscript to the second edition which appeared during the Italian War, at a time when the flames were already licking at the Bonapartists' fingernails and there was no time to be wasted on circumlocutions and figures of speech, Vogt suddenly bursts out with the candid demands that Prussia launch a civil war in Germany in order to set up a unified central government and incorporate Germany into Prussia—such a unification of Germany would not cost as many weeks as the war in Italy^a would cost months. Well and good. Exactly seven years later, and likewise in agreement with Louis Napoleon, Prussia acts precisely in accordance with the Bonapartist insinuations mechanically echoed by Vogt; she plunges into a civil war, seizes her reward in the North German plains in the meantime, establishes a unified central government at least for the North—and what does Herr Vogt do? Herr Vogt suddenly comes up to us, whining and bewailing the fact that "the war of 1870 was

^a C. Vogt, *Studien zur gegenwärtigen Lage Europas*, Geneva and Berne, 1859.—Ed.

the necessary and inexorable consequence of the war of 1866"⁵¹ (P. 3.) He complains about the policy of insatiable conquest pursued by Prussia which always "bites at a proffered conquest like a shark at a piece of bacon" (p. 20).

"Nowhere have I ever seen a state and a people who so deserved this name (robber state) as Prussia" (p. 35).

He deplores the incorporation of Germany into Prussia as the greatest misfortune that could happen to Germany and Europe (Letters 8 and 9). So, that's what Bismarck gets for following Vogt's advice, and that's what Vogt gets for offering advice to Bismarck.

Thus far, all seemed to be going fine for our Vogt for the present. The old scandals really had been forgotten by the philistines, the *Studies* were long since dead and buried. Vogt could again present himself as a respectable citizen and a passable democrat, and he could even flatter himself that his *Political Letters* were helping to stem the tide of ordinary philistinism in Germany. Even the fatal coincidence of his views with those of the Social-Democrats on the annexation issue could only redound to his credit: since Vogt had not gone over to the Brimstone Gang, the Brimstone Gang must have gone over to Vogt! But all at once a narrow, thin line catches the eye in the recently published appropriations lists of the secret funds of Louis Napoleon:

"Vogt—il lui a été remis en Août 1859 ... frs 40,000."

"Vogt—in August 1859 has been sent a remittance of 40,000 francs."^a

Vogt? Who is Vogt? What a misfortune for Vogt that the description was not more specific! Had it said, Professor Karl Vogt in Geneva, giving the name of the street and the number of his house, Vogt could have said: It's not me, it's my brother, my wife, my eldest son—anyone but me—but as things stand! Just plain Vogt without title, first name, address—well, that can only be the one Vogt, the world-famous scholar, the great discoverer of the round-worms and the flat-worms, of the long skulls and the short skulls, and of the Brimstone Gang, the man whose reputation is so well known, even to the police administering the secret fund, that any more detailed description would be superfluous! And then—is there any other Vogt who could have rendered such services to the Bonapartist government in 1859 that it should have paid him 40,000 francs in the August of that year (*and Vogt just happened to be in Paris at the time*)? That you rendered the services, Herr Vogt, is public

^a *Papiers et correspondance de la famille impériale*. Edition collationnée sur le texte de l'imprimerie nationale. T. 2. Paris, 1871.—Ed.

knowledge. Your *Studies* are the proof of it. The first edition of those *Studies* came out in the spring, the second appeared in the summer. You yourself have admitted that you offered many people money to act in the Bonapartist interests from April 1, 1859 until well into the summer of that year.^a *In August 1859, after the war had come to an end, you were in Paris*—and are we now supposed to believe that the Vogt to whom Bonaparte paid out 40,000 francs in August 1859 was another, wholly unknown Vogt? Impossible. We swear by all round-worms and flat-worms: until you can prove the opposite to us, we must assume that you are the Vogt in question.

But you will perhaps say, that is an assertion based on nothing but the word of the present French government, that is to say, of the members of the Commune, or what amounts to the same thing, the communists, also known as the Brimstone Gang. Who can believe such people? But the answer to this is that the publication of the *Correspondence and papers of the Imperial family* was arranged by the *Government of National Defence*, whose official act it is for which it takes responsibility. And what was your opinion of this government, of Jules Favre, Trochu, etc.?

“The men who have been expedited to the top, are second to no one in their intelligence, energy and tested principles—but they cannot achieve the impossible.”

That is what you say on p. 52. No, Herr Vogt, they cannot achieve the impossible, but they could at least have suppressed your name in gratitude for your warm recognition, something which it has rarely been their lot to receive!

But, as you yourself point out, Herr Vogt, “Money is still the equivalent of the damage which the individual suffers to his person” (p. 24), and if your worthy person has suffered any “damage”, hopefully only “moral” damage, in consequence of your political somersaults of 1859, you can at least console yourself with the “equivalent”.

When the alarms of war broke loose last summer you were

“convinced that the entire performance of the French Government was designed to conceal the tremendous squandering of the resources of the Empire by pretending war preparations. Under Louis Philipp it was the *wood-worm* that was called upon to perform the same function: all the outgoings of the secret budget were attributed to the timber account of the navy. Under the Empire the wood-worms of the entire globe would not have sufficed to conceal the deficit” (p. 4).

^a Vogt's letter of April 21, 1871 entitled “An die Redaktion des schweiz. Handels-Couriers”, *Schweizer Handels-Courier*, No. 113, April 23, 1871.—Ed.

So, we have arrived back to our beloved worms, the wood-worms in this case. To which class do they belong, to the round-worms or the flat-worms? Who could resolve this riddle? Only you, Herr Vogt, and you resolve it in reality. According to the *Correspondence etc.*, you are yourself one of the "wood-worms" and have helped to consume "the outgoings of the secret budget" to the tune of 40,000 francs. And that you are a "round-worm" is evident to everyone who knows you.

Written not later than May 4, 1871

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Published in English for the first
time

Karl Marx

**THE CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE
ADDRESS OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL
OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION ¹⁶³**

Written between the middle of April and
the end of May 1871

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THE
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ADDRESS
OF
THE GENERAL COUNCIL
OF THE
INTERNATIONAL WORKING-MEN'S
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THIRD EDITION, REVISED.

Printed and Published for the Council by
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The title-page of the third English edition
of *The Civil War in France*

TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION
IN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES

I

On the 4th of September, 1870, when the working men of Paris proclaimed the Republic, which was almost instantaneously acclaimed throughout France, without a single voice of dissent, a cabal of place-hunting barristers, with Thiers for their statesman and Trochu for their general, took hold of the Hôtel de Ville. At that time they were imbued with so fanatical a faith in the mission of Paris to represent France in all epochs of historical crisis, that, to legitimate their usurped titles as Governors of France, they thought it quite sufficient to produce their lapsed mandates as representatives of Paris. In our second address on the late War, five days after the rise of these men, we told you who they were.^a Yet, in the turmoil of surprise, with the real leaders of the working class still shut up in Bonapartist prisons and the Prussians already marching upon Paris, Paris bore with their assumption of power, on the express condition that it was to be wielded for the single purpose of national defence. Paris, however, was not to be defended without arming its working class, organizing them into an effective force, and training their ranks by the war itself. But Paris armed was the Revolution armed. A victory of Paris over the Prussian aggressor would have been a victory of the French workman over the French capitalist and his State parasites. In this conflict between national duty and class interest, the Government of National Defence did not hesitate one moment to turn into a Government of National Defection.

The first step they took was to send Thiers on a roving tour to all the courts of Europe, there to beg mediation by offering the

^a See this volume, p. 268.—*Ed.*

barter of the Republic for a king. Four months after the commencement of the siege, when they thought the opportune moment come for breaking the first word of capitulation, Trochu, in the presence of Jules Favre and others of his colleagues, addressed the assembled mayors of Paris in these terms:—

“The first question put to me by my colleagues on the very evening of the 4th of September was this: Paris, can it, with any chance of success stand a siege by the Prussian army? I did not hesitate to answer in the negative. Some of my colleagues here present will warrant the truth of my words and the persistence of my opinion. I told them, in these very terms, that, under the existing state of things, the attempt of Paris to hold out a siege by the Prussian army, would be a folly. Without doubt, I added, it would be an heroic folly; but that would be all.... The events” (managed by himself) “have not given the lie to my prevision.”^a

This nice little speech of Trochu was afterwards published by M. Corbon, one of the mayors present.

Thus, on the very evening of the proclamation of the Republic, Trochu’s “plan” was known to his colleagues to be the capitulation of Paris. If national defence had been more than a pretext for the personal government of Thiers, Favre, & Co., the upstarts of the 4th of September would have abdicated on the 5th—would have initiated the Paris people into Trochu’s “plan,” and called upon them to surrender at once, or to take their own fate into their own hands. Instead of this, the infamous impostors resolved upon curing the heroic folly of Paris by a regimen of famine and broken heads, and to dupe her in the meanwhile by ranting manifestoes, holding forth that Trochu, “the Governor of Paris, will never capitulate,”^b and Jules Favre, the Foreign Minister, will “not cede an inch of our territory, nor a stone of our fortresses.”^c In a letter to Gambetta, that very same Jules Favre avows that what they were “defending” against were not the Prussian soldiers, but the working men of Paris. During the whole continuance of the siege the Bonapartist cut-throats, whom Trochu had wisely intrusted with the command of the Paris army, exchanged, in their intimate correspondence, ribald jokes at the well-understood mockery of defence (see, for instance, the correspondence of Alphonse Simon Guiod, supreme commander of the artillery of the Army of Defence of Paris and Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour, to

^a “Paris au jour le jour”, *Le Figaro*, No. 74, March 19, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b L. J. Trochu, [Proclamation aux habitants de Paris. Paris, 6 janvier 1871], *Journal officiel* (Paris), No. 7, January 7, 1871.—*Ed.*

^c J. Favre, “Circulaire adressée aux agents diplomatiques de France... Le 6 septembre 1870”, *Journal officiel* (Paris), No. 246, September 7, 1870.—*Ed.*

Susane, general of division of artillery, a correspondence published by the *Journal officiel* of the Commune^a). The mask of imposture was at last dropped on the 28th of January, 1871.¹⁶⁴ With the true heroism of utter self-debasement, the Government of National Defence, in their capitulation, came out as the Government of France by Bismarck's prisoners—a part so base that Louis Bonaparte himself had, at Sedan, shrunk from accepting it. After the events of the 18th of March, on their wild flight to Versailles, the *capitulards*¹⁶⁵ left in the hands of Paris the documentary evidence of their treason, to destroy which, as the Commune says in its manifesto to the provinces,

“those men would not recoil from battering Paris into a heap of ruins washed by a sea of blood.”^b

To be eagerly bent upon such a consummation, some of the leading members of the Government of Defence had, besides, most peculiar reasons of their own.

Shortly after the conclusion of the armistice, M. Millière, one of the representatives of Paris to the National Assembly, now shot by express order of Jules Favre, published a series of authentic legal documents^c in proof that Jules Favre, living in concubinage with the wife of a drunkard resident at Algiers,^d had, by a most daring concoction of forgeries, spread over many years, contrived to grasp, in the name of the children of his adultery, a large succession, which made him a rich man, and that, in a lawsuit undertaken by the legitimate heirs, he only escaped exposure by the connivance of the Bonapartist tribunals. As these dry legal documents were not to be got rid of by any amount of rhetorical horse-power, Jules Favre, for the first time in his life, held his tongue, quietly awaiting the outbreak of the civil war, in order, then, frantically to denounce the people of Paris as a band of escaped convicts in utter revolt against family, religion, order, and property. This same forger had hardly got into power, after the 4th of September, when he sympathetically let loose upon society Pic and Taillefer, convicted, even under the Empire, of forgery, in the scandalous affair of the *Étendard*.¹⁶⁶ One of these men, Taillefer, having dared to return to Paris under the Commune,

^a See “Le Gouvernement de la Défense nationale”, *La Situation*, No. 189, April 29, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b “Manifeste”, *Le Vengeur*, No. 30, April 28, 1871.—*Ed.*

^c See J.-B. E. Millière, “Le Faussaire”, *Le Vengeur*, No. 6, February 8, 1871.—*Ed.*

^d Jeanne Charmont, who lived separate from her husband Vernier.—*Ed.*

was at once reinstated in prison; and then Jules Favre exclaimed, from the tribune of the National Assembly, that Paris was setting free all her jailbirds!

Ernest Picard, the Joe Miller^a of the Government of National Defence, who appointed himself Finance Minister of the Republic after having in vain striven to become the Home Minister of the Empire, is the brother of one Arthur Picard, an individual expelled from the Paris Bourse as a blackleg (see report of the Prefecture of Police, dated 31st July, 1867), and convicted, on his own confession, of a theft of 300,000 francs, while manager of one of the branches of the *Société Générale*,¹⁶⁷ rue Palestro, No. 5 (see report of the Prefecture of Police, 11th December, 1868).^b This Arthur Picard was made by Ernest Picard the editor of his paper, *L'Électeur libre*. While the common run of stockjobbers were led astray by the official lies of this Finance-Office paper, Arthur was running backwards and forwards between the Finance Office and the Bourse, there to discount the disasters of the French army. The whole financial correspondence of that worthy pair of brothers fell into the hands of the Commune.

Jules Ferry, a penniless barrister before the 4th of September, contrived, as Mayor of Paris during the siege, to job a fortune out of famine. The day on which he would have to give an account of his maladministration would be the day of his conviction.

These men, then, could find, in the ruins of Paris only, their tickets-of-leave*: they were the very men Bismarck wanted. With the help of some shuffling of cards, Thiers, hitherto the secret prompter of the Government, now appeared at its head, with the ticket-of-leave men for his Ministers.

Thiers, that monstrous gnome, has charmed the French bourgeoisie for almost half a century, because he is the most consummate intellectual expression of their own class-corruption. Before he became a statesman he had already proved his lying powers as an historian. The chronicle of his public life is the record of the misfortunes of France. Banded, before 1830, with the Republicans, he slipped into office under Louis Philippe by betraying his protector Laffitte, ingratiating himself with the king by exciting mob-riots against the clergy, during which the church

* In England common criminals, after serving the greater part of their terms, are often given TICKETS-OF-LEAVE authorising them to live under the surveillance of the police. They are called TICKET-OF-LEAVE MEN. (*Engels' Note to the 1871 German edition.*)

^a The 1871 and 1891 German editions have "Karl Vogt" instead of "Joe Miller" and the 1871 French edition has "Falstaff".—*Ed.*

^b See "Le Sieur Picard", *La Situation*, No. 168, April 4, 1871.—*Ed.*

of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois and the Archbishop's palace were plundered, and by acting the minister-spy upon, and the jail-accoucheur of, the Duchess de Berry.¹⁶⁸ The massacre of the Republicans in the Rue Transnonain, and the subsequent infamous laws of September against the press and the right of association, were his work.¹⁶⁹ Reappearing as the chief of the Cabinet in March, 1840, he astonished France with his plan of fortifying Paris.¹⁷⁰ To the Republicans, who denounced this plan as a sinister plot against the liberty of Paris, he replied from the tribune of the Chamber of Deputies:—

“What! to fancy that any works of fortification could ever endanger liberty! And first of all you calumniate any possible Government in supposing that it could some day attempt to maintain itself by bombarding the capital;... but that government would be a hundred times more impossible after its victory than before.”^a

Indeed, no Government would ever have dared to bombard Paris from the forts, but that Government which had previously surrendered these forts to the Prussians.

When King Bomba tried his hand at Palermo,¹⁷¹ in January, 1848, Thiers, then long since out of office, again rose in the Chamber of Deputies:

“You know, gentlemen, what is happening at Palermo. You, all of you, shake with horror” (in the parliamentary sense) “on hearing that during forty-eight hours a large town has been bombarded—by whom? Was it by a foreign enemy exercising the rights of war? No, gentlemen, it was by its own Government. And why? Because that unfortunate town demanded its rights. Well, then, for the demand of its rights it has got forty-eight hours of bombardment.... Allow me to appeal to the opinion of Europe. It is doing a service to mankind to arise, and to make reverberate, from what is perhaps the greatest tribune in Europe, some words” (indeed words) “of indignation against such acts.... When the Regent Espartero, who had rendered services to his country,” (which M. Thiers never did) “intended bombarding Barcelona, in order to suppress its insurrection, there arose from all parts of the world a general outcry of indignation.”^b

Eighteen months afterwards, M. Thiers was amongst the fiercest defenders of the bombardment of Rome by a French army.¹⁷² In fact, the fault of King Bomba seems to have consisted in this only, that he limited his bombardment to forty-eight hours.

A few days before the Revolution of February, fretting at the long exile from place and pelf to which Guizot had condemned him, and sniffing in the air the scent of an approaching popular

^a L. A. Thiers' speech at the sitting of the Chamber of Deputies, on January 13, 1841, *Le Vengeur*, No. 14, April 12, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b L. A. Thiers' speech at the sitting of the Chamber of Deputies on January 31, 1848, *Le Rappel*, No. 673, April 17, 1871; *Le Vengeur*, No. 21, April 19, 1871.—*Ed.*

commotion, Thiers, in that pseudo-heroic style which won him the nickname of *Mirabeau-mouche*, declared to the Chamber of Deputies:

"I am of the party of Revolution, not only in France, but in Europe. I wish the Government of the Revolution to remain in the hands of moderate men ... but if that Government should fall into the hands of ardent minds, even into those of Radicals, I shall, for all that, not desert my cause. I shall always be of the party of the Revolution."^a

The Revolution of February came. Instead of displacing the Guizot Cabinet by the Thiers Cabinet, as the little man had dreamt, it superseded Louis Philippe by the Republic. On the first day of the popular victory he carefully hid himself, forgetting that the contempt of the working men screened him from their hatred. Still, with his legendary courage, he continued to shy the public stage, until the June massacres¹³³ had cleared it for his sort of action. Then he became the leading mind of the "Party of Order"¹⁷³ and its Parliamentary Republic, that anonymous interregnum, in which all the rival factions of the ruling class conspired together to crush the people, and conspired against each other to restore each of them its own monarchy. Then, as now, Thiers denounced the Republicans as the only obstacle to the consolidation of the Republic; then, as now, he spoke to the Republic as the hangman spoke to Don Carlos—"I shall assassinate thee, but for thy own good." Now, as then, he will have to exclaim on the day after his victory: *L'Empire est fait*—the Empire is consummated. Despite his hypocritical homilies about necessary liberties¹⁷⁴ and his personal grudge against Louis Bonaparte, who had made a dupe of him, and kicked out parliamentarism—and outside of its factitious atmosphere the little man is conscious of withering into nothingness—he had a hand in all the infamies of the Second Empire, from the occupation of Rome by French troops to the war with Prussia, which he incited by his fierce invective against German unity—not as a cloak of Prussian despotism, but as an encroachment upon the vested right of France in German disunion. Fond of brandishing, with his dwarfish arms, in the face of Europe the sword of the first Napoleon, whose historical shoe-black he had become,^b his foreign policy always culminated in the utter humiliation of France, from the London convention of 1840¹⁰⁰ to the Paris capitulation of 1871, and the present civil war,

^a L. A. Thiers' speech at the sitting of the Chamber of Deputies on February 2, 1848, *Le Moniteur universel*, No. 34, February 3, 1848.—Ed.

^b The reference is to Thiers' books *Histoire de la Révolution française* and *Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire*.—Ed.

where he hounds on the prisoners of Sedan and Metz against Paris by special permission of Bismarck.¹⁷⁵ Despite his versatility of talent and shiftiness of purpose, this man has his whole lifetime been wedded to the most fossil routine. It is self-evident that to him the deeper under-currents of modern society remained for ever hidden; but even the most palpable changes on its surface were abhorrent to a brain all the vitality of which had fled to the tongue. Thus he never tired of denouncing as a sacrilege any deviation from the old French protective system. When a minister of Louis Philippe, he railed at railways as a wild chimera; and when in opposition under Louis Bonaparte, he branded as a profanation every attempt to reform the rotten French army system. Never in his long political career has he been guilty of a single—even the smallest—measure of any practical use. Thiers was consistent only in his greed for wealth and his hatred of the men that produce it. Having entered his first ministry under Louis Philippe poor as Job, he left it a millionaire. His last ministry under the same king (of the 1st of March, 1840) exposed him to public taunts of speculation in the Chamber of Deputies, to which he was content to reply by tears—a commodity he deals in as freely as Jules Favre, or any other crocodile. At Bordeaux^a his first measure for saving France from impending financial ruin was to endow himself with three millions a year,^b the first and the last word of the “Economical Republic,” the vista of which he had opened to his Paris electors in 1869. One of his former colleagues of the Chamber of Deputies of 1830, himself a capitalist and, nevertheless, a devoted member of the Paris Commune, M. Beslay, lately addressed Thiers thus in a public placard:—

“The enslavement of labour by capital has always been the corner-stone of your policy, and from the very day you saw the Republic of Labour installed at the Hôtel de Ville, you have never ceased to cry out to France: “These are criminals!”^c

A master in small state roguery, a virtuoso in perjury and treason, a craftsman in all the petty stratagems, cunning devices, and base perfidies of Parliamentary party-warfare; never scrupling, when out of office, to fan a revolution, and to stifle it in blood when at the helm of the State; with class prejudices standing him in the place of ideas, and vanity in the place of a heart; his private life as infamous as his public life is odious—even now, when

^a The 1891 German edition has “in 1871”.—*Ed.*

^b “All the Government officials...”, *The Daily News*, No. 7763, March 18, 1871.—*Ed.*

^c Ch. Beslay, “Au citoyen Thiers...”, *Le Mot d'Ordre*, No. 64, April 28, 1871.—*Ed.*

playing the part of a French Sulla, he cannot help setting off the abomination of his deeds by the ridicule of his ostentation.

The capitulation of Paris, by surrendering to Prussia not only Paris, but all France, closed the long-continued intrigues of treason with the enemy, which the usurpers of the 4th September had begun, as Trochu himself said, on that very same day.^a On the other hand, it initiated the civil war they were now to wage, with the assistance of Prussia, against the Republic and Paris. The trap was laid in the very terms of the capitulation. At that time above one-third of the territory was in the hands of the enemy, the capital was cut off from the provinces, all communications were disorganized. To elect under such circumstances a real representation of France was impossible, unless ample time were given for preparation. In view of this, the capitulation stipulated that a National Assembly must be elected within eight days; so that in many parts of France the news of the impending election arrived on its eve only. This Assembly, moreover, was, by an express clause of the capitulation, to be elected for the sole purpose of deciding on peace or war, and, eventually, to conclude a treaty of peace.^b The population could not but feel that the terms of the armistice rendered the continuation of the war impossible, and that for sanctioning the peace imposed by Bismarck, the worst men in France were the best. But not content with these precautions, Thiers, even before the secret of the armistice had been broached to Paris, set out for an electioneering tour through the provinces, there to galvanize back into life the Legitimist party,¹⁷⁶ which now, along with the Orleanists, had to take the place of the then impossible Bonapartists. He was not afraid of them. Impossible as a government of modern France, and, therefore, contemptible as rivals, what party were more eligible as tools of counter-revolution^c than the party whose action, in the words of Thiers himself (Chamber of Deputies, 5th January, 1833),

“had always been confined to the three resources of foreign invasion, civil war, and anarchy”?^d

They verily believed in the advent of their long-expected retrospective millennium. There were the heels of foreign invasion

^a See “Paris au jour le jour”, *Le Figaro*, No. 74, March 19, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b See *Convention entre l'Allemagne et la France pour la suspension des hostilités et la capitulation de Paris; signée à Versailles, le 28 janvier 1871*, art. 2.—*Ed.*

^c The 1871 and 1891 German editions have “reaction”.—*Ed.*

^d Cited in *La Tribune de Bordeaux*, April 25, 1871.—*Ed.*

trampling upon France; there was the downfall of an Empire, and the captivity of a Bonaparte; and there they were themselves. The wheel of history had evidently rolled back to stop at the “chambre introuvable”^a of 1816.¹⁷⁷ In the Assemblies of the Republic, 1848 to '51, they had been represented by their educated and trained Parliamentary champions; it was the rank-and-file of the party which now rushed in—all the Pourceaugnacs of France.

As soon as this assembly of “Rurals” had met at Bordeaux,¹⁷⁸ Thiers made it clear to them that the peace preliminaries must be assented to at once, without even the honours of a Parliamentary debate, as the only condition on which Prussia would permit them to open the war against the Republic and Paris, its stronghold.^b The counter-revolution had, in fact, no time to lose. The Second Empire had more than doubled the national debt, and plunged all the large towns into heavy municipal debts. The war had fearfully swelled the liabilities, and mercilessly ravaged the resources of the nation. To complete the ruin, the Prussian Shylock was there with his bond for the keep of half a million of his soldiers on French soil, his indemnity of five milliards, and interest at 5 per cent on the unpaid instalments thereof.¹⁷⁹ Who was to pay the bill? It was only by the violent overthrow of the Republic that the appropriators of wealth could hope to shift on to the shoulders of its producers the cost of a war which they, the appropriators, had themselves originated. Thus, the immense ruin of France spurred on these patriotic representatives of land and capital, under the very eyes and patronage of the invader, to graft upon the foreign war a civil war—a slaveholders’ rebellion.

There stood in the way of this conspiracy one great obstacle—Paris. To disarm Paris was the first condition of success. Paris was therefore summoned by Thiers to surrender its arms. Then Paris was exasperated by the frantic anti-republican demonstrations of the “Rural” Assembly and by Thiers’s own equivocations about the legal status of the Republic; by the threat to decapitate and decapitalize Paris; the appointment of Orleanist ambassadors; Dufaure’s laws on over-due commercial bills and house-rents,¹⁸⁰ inflicting ruin on the commerce and industry of Paris; Pouyer-Quertier’s tax of two centimes upon every copy of every imaginable publication; the sentences of death against Blanqui and

^a The 1871 and 1891 German editions have further: “the Chamber of Landraths and Junkers”.—*Ed.*

^b L. A. Thiers’ speech in the National Assembly on February 28, 1871, *Le Moniteur universel*, No. 60, March 1, 1871.—*Ed.*

Flourens; the suppression of the Republican journals; the transfer of the National Assembly to Versailles; the renewal of the state of siege declared by Palikao, and expired on the 4th of September; the appointment of Vinoy, the *Décembriseur*,¹⁸¹ as governor of Paris—of Valentin, the Imperialist *gendarme*, as its prefect of police—and of D'Aurelle de Paladines, the Jesuit general, as the commander-in-chief of its National Guard.^a

And now we have to address a question to M. Thiers and the men of national defence, his understrappers. It is known that, through the agency of M. Pouyer-Quertier, his finance minister, Thiers had contracted a loan of two milliards. Now, is it true, or not,—

1. That the business was so managed that a consideration of several hundred millions was secured for the private benefit of Thiers, Jules Favre, Ernest Picard, Pouyer-Quertier, and Jules Simon? and—

2. That no money was to be paid down until after the “pacification” of Paris?¹⁸²

At all events, there must have been something very pressing in the matter, for Thiers and Jules Favre, in the name of the majority of the Bordeaux Assembly, unblushingly solicited the immediate occupation of Paris by Prussian troops. Such, however, was not the game of Bismarck, as he sneeringly, and in public, told the admiring Frankfort Philistines on his return to Germany.^b

II

Armed Paris was the only serious obstacle in the way of the counter-revolutionary conspiracy. Paris was, therefore, to be disarmed. On this point the Bordeaux Assembly was sincerity itself. If the roaring rant of its Rurals had not been audible enough, the surrender of Paris by Thiers to the tender mercies of the triumvirate of Vinoy the *Décembriseur*, Valentin the Bonapartist *gendarme*, and Aurelle de Paladines the Jesuit general, would have cut off even the last subterfuge of doubt. But while insultingly exhibiting the true purpose of the disarmament of Paris, the conspirators asked her to lay down her arms on a pretext which was the most glaring, the most barefaced of lies. The artillery of

^a See “The scanty news from the capital of Revolution...”, *The Daily News*, No. 7774, March 30, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b See report from Germany in the column “Révélations”, *La Situation*, No. 156, March 21, 1871.—*Ed.*

the Paris National Guard, said Thiers, belonged to the State, and to the State it must be returned.^a The fact was this:—From the very day of the capitulation, by which Bismarck's prisoners had signed the surrender of France, but reserved to themselves a numerous body-guard for the express purpose of cowing Paris, Paris stood on the watch. The National Guard reorganized themselves and intrusted their supreme control to a Central Committee elected by their whole body, save some fragments of the old Bonapartist formations. On the eve of the entrance of the Prussians into Paris, the Central Committee took measures for the removal to Montmartre, Belleville, and La Villette of the cannon and mitrailleuses treacherously abandoned by the capitulars in and about the very quarters the Prussians were to occupy. That artillery had been furnished by the subscriptions of the National Guard. As their private property, it was officially recognized in the capitulation of the 28th of January, and on that very title exempted from the general surrender, into the hands of the conqueror, of arms belonging to the Government.^b And Thiers was so utterly destitute of even the flimsiest pretext for initiating the war against Paris, that he had to resort to the flagrant lie of the artillery of the National Guard being State property!

The seizure of her artillery was evidently but to serve as the preliminary to the general disarmament of Paris, and, therefore, of the Revolution of the 4th of September. But that Revolution had become the legal status of France. The republic, its work, was recognized by the conqueror in the terms of the capitulation. After the capitulation, it was acknowledged by all the foreign Powers, and in its name the National Assembly had been summoned. The Paris working men's revolution of the 4th of September was the only legal title of the National Assembly seated at Bordeaux, and of its executive. Without it, the National Assembly would at once have to give way to the Corps Législatif, elected in 1869 by universal suffrage under French, not under Prussian, rule, and forcibly dispersed by the arm of the Revolution. Thiers and his ticket-of-leave men^c would have had to capitulate for safe-conducts signed by Louis Bonaparte, to save them from a voyage to Cayenne.¹⁸³ The National Assembly, with its power of attorney to settle the terms of peace with Prussia, was

^a L. A. Thiers' proclamation of March 17, 1871 to the inhabitants of Paris, *The Daily News*, No. 7765, March 20, 1871.—Ed.

^b *Convention entre l'Allemagne et la France pour la suspension des hostilités et la capitulation de Paris: signée à Versailles, le 28 janvier 1871, art. 7.*—Ed.

^c See this volume, p. 314.—Ed.

but an incident of that Revolution, the true embodiment of which was still armed Paris, which had initiated it, undergone for it a five months' siege, with its horrors of famine, and made her prolonged resistance, despite Trochu's plan, the basis of an obstinate war of defence in the provinces. And Paris was now either to lay down her arms at the insulting behest of the rebellious slaveholders of Bordeaux, and acknowledge that her Revolution of the 4th of September meant nothing but a simple transfer of power from Louis Bonaparte to his Royal rivals; or she had to stand forward as the self-sacrificing champion of France, whose salvation from ruin, and whose regeneration were impossible, without the revolutionary overthrow of the political and social conditions that had engendered the second Empire, and, under its fostering care, matured into utter rotteness. Paris, emaciated by a five months' famine, did not hesitate one moment. She heroically resolved to run all the hazards of a resistance against the French conspirators, even with Prussian cannon frowning upon her from her own forts. Still, in its abhorrence of the civil war into which Paris was to be goaded, the Central Committee continued to persist in a merely defensive attitude, despite the provocations of the Assembly, the usurpations of the Executive, and the menacing concentration of troops in and around Paris.

Thiers opened the civil war by sending Vinoy, at the head of a multitude of *sergents-de-ville* and some regiments of the line, upon a nocturnal expedition^a against Montmartre, there to seize, by surprise, the artillery of the National Guard. It is well known how this attempt broke down before the resistance of the National Guard and the fraternization of the line with the people. Aurelle de Paladines had printed beforehand his bulletin of victory, and Thiers held ready the placards announcing his measures of *coup d'état*. Now these had to be replaced by Thiers' appeals, imparting his magnanimous resolve to leave the National Guard in the possession of their arms, with which, he said, he felt sure they would rally round the Government against the rebels.^b Out of 300,000 National Guards only 300 responded to this summons to rally round little Thiers against themselves. The glorious working men's Revolution of the 18th March took undisputed sway of Paris. The Central Committee was its provisional Government. Europe seemed, for a moment, to doubt whether its recent

^a The 1871 and 1891 German editions have "night raids".—*Ed.*

^b See L. A. Thiers' proclamation of March 17, 1871 to the inhabitants of Paris, *The Daily News*, No. 7765, March 20, 1871.—*Ed.*

sensational performances of state and war had any reality in them, or whether they were the dreams of a long bygone past.

From the 18th of March to the entrance of the Versailles troops into Paris, the proletarian revolution remained so free from the acts of violence in which the revolutions, and still more the counter-revolutions, of the "better classes" abound, that no facts were left to its opponents to cry out about, but the execution of Generals Lecomte and Clément Thomas, and the affair of the Place Vendôme.

One of the Bonapartist officers engaged in the nocturnal attempt against Montmartre, General Lecomte, had four times ordered the 81st line regiment to fire at an unarmed gathering in the Place Pigalle, and on their refusal fiercely insulted them. Instead of shooting women and children, his own men shot him. The inveterate habits acquired by the soldiery under the training of the enemies of the working class are, of course, not likely to change the very moment these soldiers change sides. The same men executed Clément Thomas.

"General" Clément Thomas, a malcontent ex-quartermaster-sergeant, had, in the latter times of Louis Philippe's reign, enlisted at the office of the Republican newspaper *Le National*, there to serve in the double capacity of responsible man-of-straw (*gérant responsable*^a) and of duelling bully to that very combative journal. After the revolution of February, the men of the *National* having got into power, they metamorphosed this old quartermaster-sergeant into a general on the eve of the butchery of June, of which he, like Jules Favre, was one of the sinister plotters, and became one of the most dastardly executioners. Then he and his generalship disappeared for a long time, to again rise to the surface on the 1st November, 1870. The day before the Government of Defence, caught at the Hôtel de Ville, had solemnly pledged their parole to Blanqui, Flourens, and other representatives of the working class, to abdicate their usurped power into the hands of a commune to be freely elected by Paris.¹⁸⁴ Instead of keeping their word they let loose on Paris the Bretons of Trochu, who now replaced the Corsicans of Bonaparte.¹⁸⁵ General Taxisier alone, refusing to sully his name by such a breach of faith, resigned the commandership-in-chief of the National Guard, and in his place Clément Thomas for once became again a general. During the whole of his tenure of

^a Responsible editor. The 1871 and 1891 German editions have further: "who takes upon himself the responsibility including imprisonment".—*Ed.*

command, he made war, not upon the Prussians, but upon the Paris National Guard. He prevented their general armament, pitted the bourgeois battalions against the working men's battalions, weeded out the officers hostile to Trochu's "plan," and disbanded, under the stigma of cowardice, the very same proletarian battalions whose heroism has now astonished their most inveterate enemies. Clément Thomas felt quite proud of having reconquered his June^a pre-eminence as the personal enemy of the working class of Paris. Only a few days before the 18th of March, he laid before the War Minister, Le Flô, a plan of his own for "finishing off *la fine fleur* (the cream) of the Paris *canaille*."^b After Vinoy's rout, he must needs appear upon the scene of action in the quality of an amateur spy. The Central Committee and the Paris working men were as much responsible for the killing of Clément Thomas and Lecomte as the Princess of Wales^c was for the fate of the people crushed to death on the day of her entrance into London.

The massacre of unarmed citizens in the Place Vendôme is a myth which M. Thiers and the Rurals persistently ignored in the Assembly, intrusting its propagation exclusively to the servants' hall of European journalism. "The men of order," the reactionists of Paris, trembled at the victory of the 18th of March. To them it was the signal of popular retribution at last arriving. The ghosts of the victims assassinated at their hands from the days of June, 1848, down to the 22nd of January, 1871,¹⁸⁶ arose before their faces. Their panic was their only punishment. Even the sergents-de-ville, instead of being disarmed and locked up, as ought to have been done, had the gates of Paris flung wide open for their safe retreat to Versailles. The men of order were left not only unharmed, but allowed to rally and quietly to seize more than one stronghold in the very centre of Paris. This indulgence of the Central Committee—this magnanimity of the armed working men—so strangely at variance with the habits of the "party of order," the latter misinterpreted as mere symptoms of conscious weakness. Hence their silly plan to try, under the cloak of an unarmed demonstration, what Vinoy had failed to perform with his cannon and mitrailleuses. On the 22nd of March a riotous mob of swells started from the quarters of luxury, all the *petits crevés*^d in

^a 1848.—*Ed.*

^b "*La Sociale* publie une curieuse lettre..." , *Le Vengeur*, No. 21, April 19, 1871. *Canaille*—rabble.—*Ed.*

^c Alexandra.—*Ed.*

^d Dandy, swell.—*Ed.*

their ranks, and at their head the notorious familiars of the Empire—the Heeckeren, Coëtlogon, Henri de Pène, etc. Under the cowardly pretence of a pacific demonstration, this rabble, secretly armed with the weapons of the bravo, fell into marching order, ill-treated and disarmed the detached patrols and sentries of the National Guards they met with on their progress, and, on debouching from the Rue de la Paix, with the cry of “Down with the Central Committee! Down with the assassins! The National Assembly for ever!” attempted to break through the line drawn up there, and thus to carry by a surprise the head-quarters of the National Guard in the Place Vendôme. In reply to their pistol-shots, the regular *sommations* (the French equivalent of the English Riot Act)¹⁸⁷ were made, and, proving ineffective, fire was commanded by the general of the National Guard.^a One volley dispersed into wild flight the silly coxcombs, who expected that the mere exhibition of their “respectability” would have the same effect upon the Revolution of Paris as Joshua’s trumpets upon the walls of Jericho.^b The runaways left behind them two National Guards killed, nine severely wounded (among them a member of the Central Committee^c), and the whole scene of their exploit strewn with revolvers, daggers, and sword-canes, in evidence of the “unarmed” character of their “pacific” demonstration.^d When, on the 13th of June 1849, the National Guard made a really pacific demonstration in protest against the felonious assault of French troops upon Rome, Changarnier, then general of the Party of Order, was acclaimed by the National Assembly, and especially by M. Thiers, as the saviour of society, for having launched his troops from all sides upon these unarmed men, to shoot and sabre them down, and to trample them under their horses’ feet. Paris, then, was placed under a state of siege. Dufaure hurried through the Assembly new laws of repression.¹⁸⁸ New arrests, new proscriptions—a new reign of terror set in.^e But the lower orders manage these things otherwise. The Central Committee of 1871 simply ignored the heroes of the “pacific demonstration;” so much so, that only two days later they were enabled to muster,

^a Jules Bergeret.—*Ed.*

^b Joshua 6:20.—*Ed.*

^c Louis Charles Maljournal.—*Ed.*

^d See “Le Journal officiel de Paris raconte...”, *Le Rappel*, No. 650, March 25, 1871.—*Ed.*

^e Marx gives a detailed analysis of the events of June 13, 1849 in *The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850*, Ch. II (see present edition, Vol. 10, pp. 71-100).—*Ed.*

under Admiral Saisset, for that *armed* demonstration, crowned by the famous stampede to Versailles. In their reluctance to continue the civil war opened by Thiers' burglarious attempt on Montmartre, the Central Committee made themselves, this time, guilty of a decisive mistake in not at once marching upon Versailles, then completely helpless, and thus putting an end to the conspiracies of Thiers and his Rurals. Instead of this, the Party of Order was again allowed to try its strength at the ballot-box, on the 26th of March, the day of the election of the Commune. Then, in the mairies of Paris, they exchanged bland words of conciliation with their too generous conquerors, muttering in their hearts solemn vows to exterminate them in due time.

Now, look at the reverse of the medal. Thiers opened his second campaign against Paris in the beginning of April. The first batch of Parisian prisoners brought into Versailles was subjected to revolting atrocities, while Ernest Picard, with his hands in his trousers' pockets, strolled about jeering them, and while Mesdames Thiers and Favre, in the midst of their ladies of honour (?) applauded, from the balcony, the outrages of the Versailles mob.^a The captured soldiers of the line were massacred in cold blood; our brave friend, General Duval, the ironfounder, was shot without any form of trial. Galliffet, the kept man of his wife, so notorious for her shameless exhibitions at the orgies of the Second Empire, boasted in a proclamation of having commanded the murder of a small troop of National Guards, with their captain and lieutenant, surprised and disarmed by his Chasseurs.^b Vinoy, the runaway, was appointed by Thiers Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour, for his general order to shoot down every soldier of the line taken in the ranks of the Federals. Desmarests, the gendarme, was decorated for the treacherous butcher-like chopping in pieces of the high-souled and chivalrous Flourens, who had saved the heads of the Government of Defence on the 31st of October 1870.¹⁸⁹ "The encouraging particulars" of his assassination were triumphantly expatiated upon by Thiers in the National Assembly.^c With the elated vanity of a parliamentary Tom Thumb, permitted to play the part of a Tamerlane, he denied the rebels against his littleness every right of civilized warfare, up to the right

^a See "The Advance of the Insurgents on Versailles", *The Daily News*, No. 7781, April 7, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b See notice on proclamation of General de Galliffet, April 3, 1871, *The Daily News*, No. 7783, April 10, 1871.—*Ed.*

^c Marx gives a rendering of Thiers' speech in the National Assembly on April 3, 1871 according to *The Daily Telegraph*, No. 4932, April 5, 1871.—*Ed.*

of neutrality for ambulances.¹⁹⁰ Nothing more horrid than that monkey allowed for a time to give full fling to his tigerish instincts, as foreseen by Voltaire.^a (See note, p. 35.^b)

After the decree of the Commune of the 7th April,¹⁹¹ ordering reprisals and declaring it to be its duty "to protect Paris against the cannibal exploits of the Versailles banditti, and to demand an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," Thiers did not stop the barbarous treatment of prisoners, moreover insulting them in his bulletins as follows:—"Never have more degraded countenances of a degraded democracy met the afflicted gazes of honest men,"^c—honest like Thiers himself and his ministerial ticket-of-leave men. Still the shooting of prisoners was suspended for a time. Hardly, however, had Thiers and his Decembrist generals become aware that the Communal decree of reprisals was but an empty threat, that even their gendarme spies caught in Paris under the disguise of National Guards, that even sergents-de-ville taken with incendiary shells upon them, were spared,—when the wholesale shooting of prisoners was resumed and carried on uninterruptedly to the end. Houses to which National Guards had fled were surrounded by gendarmes, inundated with petroleum (which here occurs for the first time in this war), and then set fire to, the charred corpses being afterwards brought out by the ambulance of the Press at the Ternes.^d Four National Guards having surrendered to a troop of mounted Chasseurs at Belle Epine, on the 25th of April, were afterwards shot down, one after another, by the captain, a worthy man of Galliffet's. One of his four victims, left for dead, Scheffer, crawled back to the Parisian outposts, and deposed to this fact before a commission of the Commune.^e When Tolain interpellated the War Minister upon the report of this commission, the Rurals drowned his voice and forbade Le Flô to answer. It would be an insult to their "glorious" army to speak of its deeds. The flippant tone in which Thiers' bulletins announced the bayoneting of the Federals surprised asleep at Moulin Saquet, and the wholesale fusillades at Clamart shocked the nerves even of the not oversensitive London *Times*.^f

^a Voltaire, *Candide ou l'optimisme*, Ch. 22.—*Ed.*

^b See this volume, pp. 356-57.—*Ed.*

^c L. A. Thiers' proclamation of April 4, 1871, *The Daily News*, No. 7779, April 5, 1871.—*Ed.*

^d See "Les gendarmes usent...", *Le Mot d'Ordre*, No. 56, April 20, 1871.—*Ed.*

^e See [Rapport de la Commission d'enquête de la Commune], *Le Mot d'Ordre*, No. 65, April 29, 1871; see also *Journal officiel* (Paris), No. 118, April 28, 1871.—*Ed.*

^f See "Voici, sur le même fait, le bulletin...", *Le Rappel*, No. 692, May 6, 1871; "The Massacre at Clamart", *The Times*, No. 27056, May 6, 1871.—*Ed.*

But it would be ludicrous to-day to attempt recounting the merely preliminary atrocities committed by the bombardiers of Paris and the fomenters of a slaveholders' rebellion protected by foreign invasion. Amidst all these horrors, Thiers, forgetful of his parliamentary laments on the terrible responsibility weighing down his dwarfish shoulders, boasts in his bulletins that *l'Assemblée siège paisiblement* (the Assembly continues meeting in peace),^a and proves by his constant carousals, now with Decembrist generals, now with German princes, that his digestion is not troubled in the least, not even by the ghosts of Lecomte and Clément Thomas.

III

On the dawn of the 18th of March, Paris arose to the thunderburst of "Vive la Commune!" What is the Commune, that sphinx so tantalizing to the bourgeois mind?

"The proletarians of Paris," said the Central Committee in its manifesto of the 18th March, "amidst the failures and treasons of the ruling classes, have understood that the hour has struck for them to save the situation by taking into their own hands the direction of public affairs. ...They have understood that it is their imperious duty and their absolute right to render themselves masters of their own destinies, by seizing upon the governmental power."^b

But the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery, and wield it for its own purposes.^c

The centralized State power, with its ubiquitous organs of standing army, police, bureaucracy, clergy, and judicature—organs wrought after the plan of a systematic and hierarchic division of labour—originates from the days of absolute monarchy, serving nascent middle-class society as a mighty weapon in its struggles against feudalism. Still, its development remained clogged by all manner of mediaeval rubbish, seigniorial rights, local privileges, municipal and guild monopolies and provincial constitutions. The gigantic broom of the French Revolution of the eighteenth century swept away all these relics of bygone times, thus clearing simultaneously the social soil of its last hindrances to the superstructure of the modern State edifice raised under the

^a Cited in: Th. Astrie, "L'homme rouge", *La Situation*, No. 176, April 14, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b Marx quotes from "La Révolution du 18 mars", *Le Petit Journal*, No. 3002, March 22, 1871; see also *Journal officiel* (Paris), No. 80, March 21, 1871.—*Ed.*

^c See Marx's letter to Ludwig Kugelmann of April 12, 1871 (present edition, Vol. 44).—*Ed.*

First Empire, itself the offspring of the coalition wars of old semi-feudal Europe against modern France. During the subsequent *régimes* the Government, placed under parliamentary control—that is, under the direct control of the propertied classes—became not only a hotbed of huge national debts and crushing taxes; with its irresistible allurements of place, pelf, and patronage, it became not only the bone of contention between the rival factions and adventurers of the ruling classes; but its political character changed simultaneously with the economic changes of society. At the same pace at which the progress of modern industry developed, widened, intensified the class antagonism between capital and labour, the State power assumed more and more the character of the national power of capital over labour, of a public force organized for social enslavement, of an engine of class despotism.^a After every revolution marking a progressive phase in the class struggle, the purely repressive character of the State power stands out in bolder and bolder relief. The Revolution of 1830, resulting in the transfer of Government from the landlords to the capitalists, transferred it from the more remote to the more direct antagonists of the working men. The bourgeois Republicans, who, in the name of the Revolution of February, took the State power, used it for the June massacres, in order to convince the working class that “social” republic meant the republic ensuring their social subjection, and in order to convince the royalist bulk of the bourgeois and landlord class that they might safely leave the cares and emoluments of government to the bourgeois “Republicans.” However, after their one heroic exploit of June, the bourgeois Republicans had, from the front, to fall back to the rear of the “Party of Order”—a combination formed by all the rival fractions and factions of the appropriating class in their now openly declared antagonism to the producing classes. The proper form of their joint-stock Government was the *Parliamentary Republic*, with Louis Bonaparte for its President. Theirs was a *régime* of avowed class terrorism and deliberate insult towards the “vile multitude.” If the Parliamentary Republic, as M. Thiers said, “divided them (the different fractions of the ruling class) least,” it opened an abyss between that class and the whole body of society outside their spare ranks. The restraints by which their own divisions had under former *régimes* still checked

^a In the 1871 German edition the end of this sentence reads as follows: “the state power more and more assumed the character of public power for the oppression of labour, the character of a machine of class domination”.—*Ed.*

the State power, were removed by their union; and in view of the threatening upheaval of the proletariat, they now used that State power mercilessly and ostentatiously as the national war-engine of capital against labour. In their uninterrupted crusade against the producing masses they were, however, bound not only to invest the executive with continually increased powers of repression, but at the same time to divest their own parliamentary stronghold—the National Assembly—one by one, of all its own means of defence against the Executive. The Executive, in the person of Louis Bonaparte, turned them out. The natural offspring of the “Party-of-Order” Republic was the Second Empire.

The Empire, with the *coup d'état* for its certificate of birth, universal suffrage for its sanction, and the sword for its sceptre, professed to rest upon the peasantry, the large mass of producers not directly involved in the struggle of capital and labour. It professed to save the working class by breaking down Parliamentarism, and, with it, the undisguised subserviency of Government to the propertied classes. It professed to save the propertied classes by upholding their economic supremacy over the working class; and, finally, it professed to unite all classes by reviving for all the chimera of national glory. In reality, it was the only form of government possible at a time when the bourgeoisie had already lost, and the working class had not yet acquired, the faculty of ruling the nation. It was acclaimed throughout the world as the saviour of society. Under its sway, bourgeois society, freed from political cares, attained a development unexpected even by itself. Its industry and commerce expanded to colossal dimensions; financial swindling celebrated cosmopolitan orgies; the misery of the masses was set off by a shameless display of gorgeous, meretricious, and debased luxury. The State power, apparently soaring high above society, was at the same time itself the greatest scandal of that society and the very hotbed of all its corruptions. Its own rottenness, and the rottenness of the society it had saved, were laid bare by the bayonet of Prussia, herself eagerly bent upon transferring the supreme seat of that *régime* from Paris to Berlin. Imperialism is, at the same time, the most prostitute and the ultimate form of the State power which nascent middle-class society had commenced to elaborate as a means of its own emancipation from feudalism, and which full-grown bourgeois society had finally transformed into a means for the enslavement of labour by capital.

The direct antithesis to the Empire was the Commune. The cry of “Social Republic,” with which the revolution of February was

ushered in by the Paris proletariat, did but express a vague aspiration after a Republic that was not only to supersede the monarchical form of class-rule, but class-rule itself. The Commune was the positive form of that Republic.

Paris, the central seat of the old governmental power, and, at the same time, the social stronghold of the French working class, had risen in arms against the attempt of Thiers and the Rurals to restore and perpetuate that old governmental power bequeathed to them by the Empire. Paris could resist only because, in consequence of the siege, it had got rid of the army, and replaced it by a National Guard, the bulk of which consisted of working men. This fact was now to be transformed into an institution. The first decree of the Commune, therefore, was the suppression of the standing army, and the substitution for it of the armed people.^a

The Commune was formed of the municipal councillors, chosen by universal suffrage in the various wards of the town, responsible and revocable at short terms. The majority of its members were naturally working men, of acknowledged representatives of the working class. The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time. Instead of continuing to be the agent of the Central Government, the police was at once stripped of its political attributes, and turned into the responsible and at all times revocable agent of the Commune. So were the officials of all other branches of the Administration. From the members of the Commune downwards, the public service had to be done at *workmen's wages*. The vested interests and the representation allowances of the high dignitaries of State disappeared along with the high dignitaries themselves.^b Public functions ceased to be the private property of the tools of the Central Government. Not only municipal administration, but the whole initiative hitherto exercised by the State was laid into the hands of the Commune.

Having once got rid of the standing army and the police, the physical force elements of the old Government, the Commune was anxious to break the spiritual force of repression, the "parson-power," by the disestablishment^c and disendowment of all

^a Decree abolishing conscription of March 29, 1871, *The Daily News*, No. 7776, April 1, 1871; see also *Journal officiel* (Paris), No. 1 (89), March 30, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b The source from which Marx cites this has not been established. See [Decret sur les traitements publics. Paris, 2 avril 1871], *Journal officiel* (Paris), No. 92, April 2, 1871.—*Ed.*

^c Decree of April 2, 1871 separating the church from the state, *The Daily Telegraph*, No. 4931, April 4, 1871; see also *Journal officiel* (Paris), No. 93, April 3, 1871.—*Ed.*

churches as proprietary bodies. The priests were sent back to the recesses of private life, there to feed upon the alms of the faithful in imitation of their predecessors, the Apostles. The whole of the educational institutions were opened to the people gratuitously, and at the same time cleared of all interference of Church and State. Thus, not only was education made accessible to all, but science itself freed from the fetters which class prejudice and governmental force had imposed upon it.

The judicial functionaries were to be divested of that sham independence which had but served to mask their abject subserviency to all succeeding governments to which, in turn, they had taken, and broken, the oaths of allegiance. Like the rest of public servants, magistrates and judges were to be elective, responsible, and revocable.

The Paris Commune was, of course, to serve as a model to all the great industrial centres of France. The communal *régime* once established in Paris and the secondary centres, the old centralized Government would in the provinces, too, have to give way to the self-government of the producers. In a rough sketch of national organization which the Commune had no time to develop,^a it states clearly that the Commune was to be the political form of even the smallest country hamlet, and that in the rural districts the standing army was to be replaced by a national militia, with an extremely short term of service. The rural communes of every district were to administer their common affairs by an assembly of delegates in the central town, and these district assemblies were again to send deputies to the National Delegation in Paris, each delegate to be at any time revocable and bound by the *mandat impératif* (formal instructions) of his constituents. The few but important functions which still would remain for a central government were not to be suppressed, as has been intentionally mis-stated, but were to be discharged by Communal, and therefore strictly responsible agents. The unity of the nation was not to be broken, but, on the contrary, to be organized by the Communal constitution, and to become a reality by the destruction of the State power which claimed to be the embodiment of that unity independent of, and superior to, the nation itself, from which it was but a parasitic excrescence. While the merely repressive organs of the old governmental power were to be amputated, its legitimate functions were to be wrested from an authority

^a "Déclaration au peuple français", adopted at the sitting of the Commune on April 19, is quoted according to the report in *The Daily News*, No. 7793, April 21, 1871; see also *Journal officiel* (Paris), No. 110, April 20, 1871.—Ed.

usurping pre-eminence over society itself, and restored to the responsible agents of society. Instead of deciding once in three or six years which member of the ruling class was to misrepresent the people in Parliament, universal suffrage was to serve the people, constituted in Communes, as individual suffrage serves every other employer in the search for the workmen and managers in his business. And it is well known that companies, like individuals, in matters of real business generally know how to put the right man in the right place, and, if they for once make a mistake, to redress it promptly. On the other hand, nothing could be more foreign to the spirit of the Commune than to supersede universal suffrage by hierarchic investiture.

It is generally the fate of completely new historical creations to be mistaken for the counterpart of older and even defunct forms of social life, to which they may bear a certain likeness. Thus, this new Commune, which breaks the modern State power, has been mistaken for a reproduction of the mediaeval Communes, which first preceded, and afterwards became the substratum of, that very State power.—The communal constitution has been mistaken for an attempt to break up into a federation of small States, as dreamt of by Montesquieu^a and the Girondins,¹⁹² that unity of great nations which, if originally brought about by political force, has now become a powerful coefficient of social production.—The antagonism of the Commune against the State power has been mistaken for an exaggerated form of the ancient struggle against over-centralization. Peculiar historical circumstances may have prevented the classical development, as in France, of the bourgeois form of government, and may have allowed, as in England, to complete the great central State organs by corrupt vestries, jobbing councillors, and ferocious poor-law guardians in the towns, and virtually hereditary magistrates in the counties. The Communal Constitution would have restored to the social body all the forces hitherto absorbed by the State parasite feeding upon, and clogging the free movement of, society. By this one act it would have initiated the regeneration of France.—The provincial French middle-class saw in the Commune an attempt to restore the sway their order had held over the country under Louis Philippe, and which, under Louis Napoleon, was supplanted by the pretended rule of the country over the towns. In reality, the Communal Constitution brought the rural producers under the intellectual lead of the central towns of their districts, and there

^a Ch. L. de Montesquieu, *De l'Esprit des Loix*, London, 1769, Book 9, Ch. 1.— *Ed.*

secured to them, in the working men, the natural trustees of their interests.—The very existence of the Commune involved, as a matter of course, local municipal liberty, but no longer as a check upon the, now superseded, State power. It could only enter into the head of a Bismarck, who, when not engaged on his intrigues of blood and iron, always likes to resume his old trade, so befitting his mental calibre, of contributor to *Kladderadatsch* (the Berlin *Punch*), it could only enter into such a head, to ascribe to the Paris Commune aspirations after that caricature of the old French municipal organization of 1791, the Prussian municipal constitution which degrades the town governments to mere secondary wheels in the police-machinery of the Prussian State.^a The Commune made that catch-word of bourgeois revolutions, cheap government, a reality, by destroying the two greatest sources of expenditure—the standing^b army and State functionarism. Its very existence presupposed the non-existence of monarchy, which, in Europe at least, is the normal incumbrance and indispensable cloak of class-rule. It supplied the Republic with the basis of really democratic institutions. But neither cheap government nor the “true Republic” was its ultimate aim; they were its mere concomitants.

The multiplicity of interpretations to which the Commune has been subjected, and the multiplicity of interests which construed it in their favour, show that it was a thoroughly expansive political form, while all previous forms of government had been emphatically repressive. Its true secret was this. It was essentially a working-class government,^c the produce of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economical emancipation of Labour.

Except on this last condition, the Communal Constitution would have been an impossibility and a delusion. The political rule of the producer cannot coexist with the perpetuation of his social slavery. The Commune was therefore to serve as a lever for uprooting the economical foundations upon which rests the existence of classes, and therefore of class rule. With labour emancipated, every man

^a O. von Bismarck's speech in the Diet on May 2, 1871, *Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des Deutschen Reichstages*. 1. Legislatur-Periode. 1. Session 1871, Bd. 1, Berlin, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b This word is omitted in the 1871 and 1891 German editions.—*Ed.*

^c The phrase “working-class government” is italicised in the 1871 and 1891 German editions.—*Ed.*

becomes a working man, and productive labour ceases to be a class attribute.

It is a strange fact. In spite of all the tall talk and all the immense literature, for the last sixty years, about Emancipation of Labour, no sooner do the working men anywhere take the subject into their own hands with a will, than uprises at once all the apologetic phraseology of the mouthpieces of present society with its two poles of Capital and Wage-slavery (the landlord now is but the sleeping partner of the capitalist), as if capitalist society was still in its purest state of virgin innocence, with its antagonisms still undeveloped, with its delusions still unexploded, with its prostitute realities not yet laid bare. The Commune, they exclaim, intends to abolish property, the basis of all civilization! Yes, gentlemen, the Commune intended to abolish that class-property which makes the labour of the many the wealth of the few. It aimed at the expropriation of the expropriators. It wanted to make individual property a truth by transforming the means of production, land and capital, now chiefly the means of enslaving and exploiting labour, into mere instruments of free and associated labour.—But this is Communism, “impossible” Communism! Why, those members of the ruling classes who are intelligent enough to perceive the impossibility of continuing the present system—and they are many—have become the obtrusive and full-mouthed apostles of co-operative production. If co-operative production is not to remain a sham and a snare; if it is to supersede the Capitalist system; if united co-operative societies are to regulate national production upon a common plan, thus taking it under their own control, and putting an end to the constant anarchy and periodical convulsions which are the fatality of Capitalist production—what else, gentlemen, would it be but Communism, “possible” Communism?

The working class did not expect miracles from the Commune. They have no ready-made utopias to introduce *par décret du peuple*.^a They know that in order to work out their own emancipation, and along with it that higher form to which present society is irresistibly tending by its own economical agencies, they will have to pass through long struggles, through a series of historic processes, transforming circumstances and men. They have no ideals to realize, but to set free elements of the new society with which old collapsing bourgeois society itself is pregnant. In the full consciousness of their historic mission, and

^a By the people's decree.—*Ed.*

with the heroic resolve to act up to it, the working class can afford to smile at the coarse invective of the gentlemen's gentlemen with the pen and inkhorn, and at the didactic patronage of well-wishing bourgeois-doctrinaires, pouring forth their ignorant platitudes and sectarian crotchets in the oracular tone of scientific infallibility.

When the Paris Commune took the management of the revolution in its own hands; when plain working men for the first time dared to infringe upon the Governmental privilege of their "natural superiors,"^a and, under circumstances of unexampled difficulty, performed their work modestly, conscientiously, and efficiently,—performed it at salaries the highest of which barely amounted to one-fifth of what, according to high scientific authority,^b is the minimum required for a secretary to a certain metropolitan school-board,¹⁹³—the old world writhed in convulsions of rage at the sight of the Red Flag, the symbol of the Republic of Labour, floating over the Hôtel de Ville.

And yet, this was the first revolution in which the working class was openly acknowledged as the only class capable of social initiative, even by the great bulk of the Paris middle class—shopkeepers, tradesmen, merchants—the wealthy capitalists alone excepted. The Commune had saved them by a sagacious settlement of that ever-recurring cause of dispute among the middle classes themselves—the debtor and creditor accounts.¹⁹⁴ The same portion of the middle class, after they had assisted in putting down the working men's insurrection of June, 1848, had been at once unceremoniously sacrificed to their creditors by the then Constituent Assembly.¹⁹⁵ But this was not their motive for now rallying round the working class. They felt that there was but one alternative—the Commune, or the Empire—under whatever name it might reappear. The Empire had ruined them economically by the havoc it made of public wealth, by the wholesale financial swindling it fostered, by the props it lent to the artificially accelerated centralization of capital, and the concomitant expropriation of their own ranks. It had suppressed them politically, it had shocked them morally by its orgies, it had insulted their Voltairianism by handing over the education of their children to the *frères Ignorantins*,¹⁹⁶ it had revolted their national feeling as Frenchmen by precipitating them headlong into a war which left only one equivalent for the ruins it made—the disappearance of

^a In the 1871 and 1891 German editions this phrase is followed by the phrase "of the propertied".—*Ed.*

^b The German editions have further "Professor Huxley".—*Ed.*

the Empire. In fact, after the exodus from Paris of the high Bonapartist and capitalist *Bohême*, the true middle-class Party of Order came out in the shape of the "Union Républicaine,"¹⁹⁷ enrolling themselves under the colours of the Commune and defending it against the wilful misconstruction of Thiers. Whether the gratitude of this great body of the middle class will stand the present severe trial, time must show.

The Commune was perfectly right in telling the peasants that "its victory was their only hope."¹⁹⁸ Of all the lies hatched at Versailles and re-echoed by the glorious European penny-a-liner, one of the most tremendous was that the Rurals represented the French peasantry. Think only of the love of the French peasant for the men to whom, after 1815, he had to pay the milliard of indemnity!¹⁹⁹ In the eyes of the French peasant, the very existence of a great landed proprietor is in itself an encroachment on his conquests of 1789. The bourgeois, in 1848, had burthened his plot of land with the additional tax of forty-five cents in the franc²⁰⁰; but then he did so in the name of the revolution; while now he had fomented a civil war against the revolution, to shift on to the peasant's shoulders the chief load of the five milliards of indemnity to be paid to the Prussians. The Commune, on the other hand, in one of its first proclamations, declared that the true originators of the war would be made to pay its cost.^a The Commune would have delivered the peasant of the blood tax,—would have given him a cheap government,—transformed his present blood-suckers, the notary, advocate, executor, and other judicial vampires, into salaried communal agents, elected by, and responsible to, himself. It would have freed him of the tyranny of the *garde champêtre*,^b the gendarme, and the prefect, would have put enlightenment by the schoolmaster in the place of stultification by the priest. And the French peasant is, above all, a man of reckoning. He would find it extremely reasonable that the pay of the priest, instead of being extorted by the tax-gatherer, should only depend upon the spontaneous action of the parishioners' religious instincts. Such were the great immediate boons which the rule of the Commune—and that rule alone—held out to the French peasantry. It is, therefore, quite superfluous here to expatiate upon the more complicated but vital problems which the

^a [V.] Grélier, "Le comité central de la garde nationale est décidé...", *Journal officiel* (Paris), No. 80, March 21, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b Village police.—*Ed.*

Commune alone was able, and at the same time compelled, to solve in favour of the peasant, viz., the hypothecary debt, lying like an incubus upon his parcel of soil, the *prolétariat foncier* (the rural proletariat), daily growing upon it, and his expropriation from it enforced, at a more and more rapid rate, by the very development of modern agriculture and the competition of capitalist farming.

The French peasant had elected Louis Bonaparte president of the Republic; but the Party of Order created the Empire. What the French peasant really wants he commenced to show in 1849 and 1850, by opposing his maire to the Government's prefect, his schoolmaster to the Government's priest, and himself to the Government's gendarme. All the laws made by the Party of Order in January and February, 1850,²⁰¹ were avowed measures of repression against the peasant. The peasant was a Bonapartist, because the great Revolution, with all its benefits to him, was, in his eyes, personified in Napoleon. This delusion, rapidly breaking down under the Second Empire (and in its very nature hostile to the Rurals), this prejudice of the past, how could it have withstood the appeal of the Commune to the living interests and urgent wants of the peasantry?

The Rurals—this was, in fact, their chief apprehension—knew that three months' free communication of Communal Paris with the provinces would bring about a general rising of the peasants, and hence their anxiety to establish a police blockade around Paris, so as to stop the spread of the rinderpest.

If the Commune was thus the true representative of all the healthy elements of French society, and therefore the truly national Government, it was, at the same time, as a working men's Government, as the bold champion of the emancipation of labour, emphatically international. Within sight of the Prussian army, that had annexed to Germany two French provinces, the Commune annexed to France the working people all over the world.

The Second Empire had been the jubilee of cosmopolitan blacklegism, the rakes of all countries rushing in at its call for a share in its orgies and in the plunder of the French people. Even at this moment the right hand of Thiers is Ganesco, the foul Wallachian, and his left hand is Markowski, the Russian spy. The Commune admitted all foreigners to the honour of dying for an immortal cause. Between the foreign war lost by their treason, and the civil war fomented by their conspiracy with the foreign invader, the bourgeoisie had found the time to display their patriotism by organizing police-hunts upon the Germans in

France. The Commune made a German working-man^a its Minister of Labour. Thiers, the bourgeoisie, the Second Empire, had continually deluded Poland by loud professions of sympathy, while in reality betraying her to, and doing the dirty work of, Russia. The Commune honoured the heroic sons of Poland^b by placing them at the head of the defenders of Paris. And, to broadly mark the new era of history it was conscious of initiating, under the eyes of the conquering Prussians on the one side, and of the Bonapartist army, led by Bonapartist generals, on the other, the Commune pulled down that colossal symbol of martial glory, the Vendôme column.^{c202}

The great social measure of the Commune was its own working existence. Its special measures could but betoken the tendency of a government of the people by the people. Such were the abolition of the nightwork of journeymen bakers^d; the prohibition, under penalty, of the employers' practice to reduce wages by levying upon their workpeople fines under manifold pretexts,^e—a process in which the employer combines in his own person the parts of legislator, judge, and executor, and filches the money to boot. Another measure of this class was the surrender, to associations of workmen, under reserve of compensation, of all closed workshops and factories, no matter whether the respective capitalists had absconded or preferred to strike work.^f

The financial measures of the Commune, remarkable for their sagacity and moderation, could only be such as were compatible with the state of a besieged town. Considering the colossal robberies committed upon the city of Paris by the great financial companies and contractors, under the protection^g of Haussmann,²⁰³ the Commune would have had an incomparably better title to confiscate their property than Louis Napoleon had against the

^a Leo Frankel.—*Ed.*

^b J. Dombrowski and W. Wróblewski.—*Ed.*

^c [Décret sur la démolition de la colonne Vendôme. Paris, 12 avril 1871], *Le Rappel*, No. 670, April 14, 1871; see also *Journal officiel* (Paris), No. 103, April 13, 1871.—*Ed.*

^d [Arrêté sur la suppression du travail de nuit dans les boulangeries. Paris, 20 avril 1871], *L'Avant-Garde*, No. 451, April 22, 1871; see also *Journal officiel* (Paris), No. 111, April 21, 1871.—*Ed.*

^e [Arrêté sur abolition des amendes ou retenues sur les salaires. Paris, 27 avril 1871], *Journal officiel* (Paris), No. 119, April 29, 1871.—*Ed.*

^f Decree of April 16, 1871 on handing over the workshops and manufactories to cooperative workmen societies, *The Daily News*, No. 7790, April 18, 1871; see also *Journal officiel* (Paris), No. 107, April 17, 1871.—*Ed.*

^g The 1871 and 1891 German editions have "rule".—*Ed.*

Orléans family. The Hohenzollern and the English oligarchs who both have derived a good deal of their estates from Church plunder, were, of course, greatly shocked at the Commune clearing but 8,000f. out of secularisation.

While the Versailles Government, as soon as it had recovered some spirit and strength, used the most violent means against the Commune; while it put down the free expression of opinion all over France, even to the forbidding of meetings of delegates from the large towns; while it subjected Versailles and the rest of France to an espionage far surpassing that of the Second Empire; while it burned by its gendarme inquisitors all papers printed at Paris, and sifted all correspondence from and to Paris; while in the National Assembly the most timid attempts to put in a word for Paris were howled down in a manner unknown even to the *Chambre introuvable*¹⁷⁷ of 1816^a; with the savage warfare of Versailles outside, and its attempts at corruption and conspiracy inside Paris—would the Commune not have shamefully betrayed its trust by affecting to keep up all the decencies and appearances of liberalism as in a time of profound peace? Had the Government of the Commune been akin to that of M. Thiers, there would have been no more occasion to suppress Party-of-Order papers at Paris than there was to suppress Communal papers at Versailles.

It was irritating indeed to the Rurals that at the very same time they declared the return to the Church to be the only means of salvation for France, the infidel Commune unearthed the peculiar mysteries of the Picpus nunnery, and of the Church of Saint Laurent.²⁰⁴ It was a satire upon M. Thiers that, while he showered grand crosses upon the Bonapartist generals in acknowledgment of their mastery in losing battles, signing capitulations, and turning cigarettes at Wilhelmshöhe,²⁰⁵ the Commune dismissed and arrested its generals whenever they were suspected of neglecting their duties. The expulsion from, and arrest by, the Commune of one of its members²⁰⁶ who had slipped in under a false name, and had undergone at Lyons six days' imprisonment for simple bankruptcy, was it not a deliberate insult hurled at the forger, Jules Favre, then still the foreign minister of France, still selling France to Bismarck, and still dictating his orders to that paragon Government of Belgium? But indeed the Commune did not pretend to infallibility, the invariable attribute of all governments of the old stamp. It published its doings and sayings, it initiated the public into all its shortcomings.

^a The 1871 and 1891 German editions have "Chamber of Junkers".—Ed.

In every revolution there intrude, at the side of its true agents, men of a different stamp; some of them survivors of and devotees to past revolutions, without insight into the present movement, but preserving popular influence by their known honesty and courage, or by the sheer force of tradition; others mere bawlers, who, by dint of repeating year after year the same set of stereotyped declamations against the Government of the day, have sneaked into the reputation of revolutionists of the first water. After the 18th of March, some such men did also turn up, and in some cases contrived to play pre-eminent parts. As far as their power went, they hampered the real action of the working class, exactly as men of that sort have hampered the full development of every previous revolution. They are an unavoidable evil; with time they are shaken off; but time was not allowed to the Commune.

Wonderful, indeed, was the change the Commune had wrought in Paris! No longer any trace of the meretricious Paris of the Second Empire. No longer was Paris the rendezvous of British landlords, Irish absentees,²⁰⁷ American ex-slaveholders and shoddy men, Russian ex-serfowners, and Wallachian boyards. No more corpses at the Morgue, no nocturnal burglaries, scarcely any robberies; in fact, for the first time since the days of February, 1848, the streets of Paris were safe, and that without any police of any kind.

"We," said a member of the Commune, "hear no longer of assassination, theft, and personal assault; it seems indeed as if the police had dragged along with it to Versailles all its Conservative friends."⁴

The *cocottes* had refound the scent of their protectors—the absconding men of family, religion, and, above all, of property. In their stead, the real women of Paris showed again at the surface—heroic, noble, and devoted, like the women of antiquity. Working, thinking, fighting, bleeding Paris—almost forgetful, in its incubation of a new society, of the cannibals at its gates—radiant in the enthusiasm of its historic initiative!

Opposed to this new world at Paris, behold the old world at Versailles—that assembly of the ghouls of all defunct *régimes*, Legitimists and Orleanists, eager to feed upon the carcass of the nation,—with a tail of antediluvian Republicans, sanctioning, by their presence in the Assembly, the slaveholders' rebellion, relying for the maintenance of their Parliamentary Republic upon the

^a P. Lafargue, "Une visite à Paris. Du 7 au 18 avril", *La Tribune de Bordeaux*, April 24, 1871.—*Ed.*

vanity of the senile mountebank at its head, and caricaturing 1789 by holding their ghastly meetings in the *Jeu de Paume*.^{*} There it was, this Assembly, the representative of everything dead in France, propped up to the semblance of life by nothing but the swords of the generals of Louis Bonaparte. Paris all truth, Versailles all lie; and that lie vented through the mouth of Thiers.

Thiers tells a deputation of the mayors of the Seine-et-Oise,—

“You may rely upon my word, which I have *never* broken!”^a

He tells the Assembly itself that “it was the most freely elected and most Liberal Assembly France ever possessed”^b; he tells his motley soldiery that it was “the admiration of the world, and the finest army France ever possessed”^c; he tells the provinces that the bombardment of Paris by him was a myth:

“If some cannon-shots have been fired, it is not the deed of the army of Versailles, but of some insurgents trying to make believe that they are fighting, while they dare not show their faces.”^d

He again tells the provinces that

“the artillery of Versailles does not bombard Paris, but only cannonades it.”^e

He tells the Archbishop of Paris^f that the pretended executions and reprisals (!) attributed to the Versailles troops were all moonshine.^g He tells Paris that he was only anxious “to free it from the hideous tyrants who oppress it,”^h and that, in fact, the Paris of the Commune was “but a handful of criminals.”ⁱ

The Paris of M. Thiers was not the real Paris of the “vile multitude,” but a phantom Paris, the Paris of the *francs-fileurs*,²⁰⁸ the Paris of the Boulevards, male and female—the rich, the

* “The tennis court where the National Assembly of 1789 adopted its famous decisions.” (*Engels’ Note to the 1871 German edition.*)

^a “Méditation des municipalités de la Seine”, *Le Rappel*, No. 684, April 28, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b L. A. Thiers’ speech in the National Assembly on April 27, 1871, *Le Rappel*, No. 685, April 29, 1871.—*Ed.*

^c Quoted in: Th. Astrie, “L’homme rouge”, *La Situation*, No. 176, April 14, 1871.—*Ed.*

^d “La circulaire de M. Thiers”, *Le Vengeur*, No. 21, April 19, 1871.—*Ed.*

^e “Le Moniteur des communes contient...”, *Le Rappel*, No. 692, May 6, 1871.—*Ed.*

^f G. Darboy.—*Ed.*

^g “La commission des Quinze...”, *Le Rappel*, No. 673, April 17, 1871; L. A. Thiers’ letter to G. Darboy of April 14, 1871, *Le Rappel*, No. 676, April 20, 1871.—*Ed.*

^h “Voici, sur le même fait, le bulletin...”, *Le Rappel*, No. 692, May 6, 1871.—*Ed.*

ⁱ L. A. Thiers’ speech in the National Assembly on April 27, 1871, *Le Rappel*, No. 685, April 29, 1871.—*Ed.*

capitalist, the gilded, the idle Paris, now thronging with its lackeys, its blacklegs, its literary *bohème*, and its *cocottes* at Versailles, Saint-Denis, Rueil, and Saint-Germain; considering the civil war but an agreeable diversion, eyeing the battle going on through telescopes, counting the rounds of cannon, and swearing by their own honour and that of their prostitutes, that the performance was far better got up than it used to be at the Porte St. Martin.²⁰⁹ The men who fell were really dead; the cries of the wounded were cries in good earnest; and, besides, the whole thing was so intensely historical.

This is the Paris of M. Thiers, as the Emigration of Coblenz was the France of M. de Calonne.²¹⁰

IV

The first attempt of the slaveholders' conspiracy to put down Paris by getting the Prussians to occupy it, was frustrated by Bismarck's refusal. The second attempt, that of the 18th of March, ended in the rout of the army and the flight to Versailles of the Government, which ordered the whole administration to break up and follow in its track. By the semblance of peace-negotiations with Paris, Thiers found the time to prepare for war against it. But where to find an army? The remnants of the line regiments were weak in number and unsafe in character. His urgent appeal to the provinces to succour Versailles, by their National Guards and volunteers, met with a flat refusal.^a Brittany alone furnished a handful of *Chouans*²¹¹ fighting under a white flag, every one of them wearing on his breast the heart of Jesus in white cloth, and shouting "Vive le Roi!" (Long live the King!)^b Thiers was, therefore, compelled to collect, in hot haste, a motley crew, composed of sailors, marines, Pontifical Zouaves,¹⁰⁸ Valentin's gendarmes, and Piétri's sergents-de-ville and *mouchards*.^c This army, however, would have been ridiculously ineffective without the instalments of imperialist war-prisoners, which Bismarck granted in numbers just sufficient to keep the civil war a-going, and keep the Versailles Government in abject dependence on Prussia. During the war itself, the Versailles police had to look after the Versailles army, while the gendarmes had to drag it on by

^a Report from *La Défense républicaine, Le Mot d'Ordre*, No. 65, April 29, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b "The Communal Delegation...", *The Daily News*, No. 7779, April 5, 1871.—*Ed.*

^c Agents provocateurs.—*Ed.*

exposing themselves at all posts of danger. The forts which fell were not taken, but bought. The heroism of the Federals convinced Thiers that the resistance of Paris was not to be broken by his own strategic genius and the bayonets at his disposal.

Meanwhile, his relations with the provinces became more and more difficult. Not one single address of approval came in to gladden Thiers and his Rurals. Quite the contrary. Deputations and addresses demanding, in a tone anything but respectful, conciliation with Paris on the basis of the unequivocal recognition of the Republic, the acknowledgment of the Communal liberties, and the dissolution of the National Assembly, whose mandate was extinct,^a poured in from all sides, and in such numbers that Dufaure, Thiers's Minister of Justice, in his circular of April 23rd to the public prosecutors, commanded them to treat "the cry of conciliation" as a crime!^b In regard, however, of the hopeless prospect held out by his campaign, Thiers resolved to shift his tactics by ordering, all over the country, municipal elections to take place on the 30th of April, on the basis of the new municipal law dictated by himself to the National Assembly. What with the intrigues of his prefects, what with police intimidation, he felt quite sanguine of imparting, by the verdict of the provinces, to the National Assembly that moral power it had never possessed, and of getting at last from the provinces the physical force required for the conquest of Paris.

His banditti-warfare against Paris, exalted in his own bulletins, and the attempts of his ministers at the establishment, throughout France, of a reign of terror, Thiers was from the beginning anxious to accompany with a little byplay of conciliation, which had to serve more than one purpose. It was to dupe the provinces, to inveigle the middle-class element in Paris, and, above all, to afford the professed Republicans in the National Assembly the opportunity of hiding their treason against Paris behind their faith in Thiers. On the 21st of March, when still without an army, he had declared to the Assembly:

"Come what may, I will not send an army to Paris."^c

On the 27th March he rose again:

^a J. Dufaure's speech in the National Assembly, April 26, 1871, *Le Mot d'Ordre*, No. 65, April 29, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b J. Dufaure, [Circularaire aux procureurs généraux. Versailles, 23 avril 1871], *Le Mot d'Ordre*, No. 62, April 26, 1871.—*Ed.*

^c L. A. Thiers' speech in the National Assembly, March 21, 1871, *The Daily News*, No. 7768, March 23, 1871.—*Ed.*

"I have found the Republic an accomplished fact, and I am firmly resolved to maintain it."

In reality, he put down the revolution at Lyons and Marseilles²¹² in the name of the Republic, while the roars of his Rurals drowned the very mention of its name at Versailles. After this exploit, he toned down the "accomplished fact" into an hypothetical fact. The Orléans princes, whom he had cautiously warned off Bordeaux, were now, in flagrant breach of the law, permitted to intrigue at Dreux. The concessions held out by Thiers in his interminable interviews with the delegates from Paris and the provinces, although constantly varied in tone and colour, according to time and circumstances, did in fact never come to more than the prospective restriction of revenge to the

"handful of criminals implicated in the murder of Lecomte and Clément Thomas,"^a

on the well-understood premiss that Paris and France were unreservedly to accept M. Thiers himself as the best of possible Republics, as he, in 1830, had done with Louis Philippe. Even these concessions he not only took care to render doubtful by the official comments put upon them in the Assembly through his Ministers. He had his Dufaure to act. Dufaure, this old Orleanist lawyer, had always been the justiciary of the state of siege, as now in 1871, under Thiers, so in 1839 under Louis Philippe, and in 1849 under Louis Bonaparte's presidency.²¹³ While out of office he made a fortune by pleading for the Paris capitalists, and made political capital by pleading against the laws he had himself originated. He now hurried through the National Assembly not only a set of repressive laws which were, after the fall of Paris, to extirpate the last remnants of Republican liberty in France²¹⁴; he foreshadowed the fate of Paris by abridging the, for him, too slow procedure of courts-martial,²¹⁵ and by a new-fangled, Draconic code of deportation. The Revolution of 1848, abolishing the penalty of death for political crimes, had replaced it by deportation. Louis Bonaparte did not dare, at least not in theory, to re-establish the *régime* of the guillotine. The Rural Assembly, not yet bold enough even to hint that the Parisians were not rebels, but assassins, had therefore to confine its prospective vengeance against Paris to Dufaure's new code of deportation. Under all these circumstances Thiers himself could not have gone on with his comedy of conciliation, had it not, as he intended it to do,

^a L. A. Thiers' speech in the National Assembly, April 27, 1871, *Le Rappel*, No. 685, April 29, 1871.—Ed.

drawn forth shrieks of rage from the Rurals, whose ruminating mind did neither understand the play, nor its necessities of hypocrisy, tergiversation, and procrastination.

In sight of the impending municipal elections of the 30th April, Thiers enacted one of his great conciliation scenes of the 27th April. Amidst a flood of sentimental rhetoric, he exclaimed from the tribune of the Assembly:

“There exists no conspiracy against the Republic but that of Paris, which compels us to shed French blood. I repeat it again and again. Let those impious arms fall from the hands which hold them, and chastisement will be arrested at once by an act of peace excluding only the small number of criminals.”

To the violent interruption of the Rurals he replied:

“Gentlemen, tell me, I implore you, am I wrong? Do you really regret that I could have stated the truth that the criminals are only a handful? Is it not fortunate in the midst of our misfortunes that those who have been capable to shed the blood of Clément Thomas and General Lecomte are but rare exceptions?”^a

France, however, turned a deaf ear to what Thiers flattered himself to be a parliamentary siren’s song. Out of 700,000 municipal councillors returned by the 35,000 communes still left to France, the united Legitimists, Orleanists, and Bonapartists did not carry 8,000. The supplementary elections which followed were still more decidedly hostile. Thus, instead of getting from the provinces the badly-needed physical force, the National Assembly lost even its last claim to moral force, that of being the expression of the universal suffrage of the country. To complete the discomfiture, the newly-chosen municipal councils of all the cities of France openly threatened the usurping Assembly at Versailles with a counter Assembly at Bordeaux.

Then the long-expected moment of decisive action had at last come for Bismarck. He peremptorily summoned Thiers to send to Frankfort plenipotentiaries for the definitive settlement of peace. In humble obedience to the call of his master, Thiers hastened to despatch his trusty Jules Favre, backed by Pouyer-Quertier. Pouyer-Quertier, an “eminent” Rouen cotton-spinner, a fervent and even servile partisan of the Second Empire, had never found any fault with it save its commercial treaty with England,²¹⁶ prejudicial to his own shop-interest. Hardly installed at Bordeaux as Thiers’s Minister of Finance, he denounced that “unholy” treaty, hinted at its near abrogation, and had even the effrontery to try, although in vain (having counted without Bismarck), the immediate enforcement of the old protective duties against Alsace,

^a L. A. Thiers’ speech in the National Assembly on April 27, 1871, *Le Rappel*, No. 685, April 29, 1871.—Ed.

where, he said, no previous international treaties stood in the way. This man, who considered counter-revolution as a means to put down wages at Rouen, and the surrender of French provinces as a means to bring up the price of his wares in France, was he not *the one* predestined to be picked out by Thiers as the helpmate of Jules Favre in his last and crowning treason?

On the arrival at Frankfort of this exquisite pair of plenipotentiaries, bully Bismarck at once met them with the imperious alternative: Either the restoration of the Empire, or the unconditional acceptance of my own peace terms! These terms included a shortening of the intervals in which the war indemnity was to be paid, and the continued occupation of the Paris forts by Prussian troops until Bismarck should feel satisfied with the state of things in France; Prussia thus being recognized as the supreme arbiter in internal French politics! In return for this he offered to let loose, for the extermination of Paris, the captive Bonapartist army, and to lend them the direct assistance of Emperor William's troops. He pledged his good faith by making payment of the first instalment of the indemnity dependent on the "pacification" of Paris. Such a bait was, of course, eagerly swallowed by Thiers and his plenipotentiaries. They signed the treaty of peace on the 10th of May,^a and had it endorsed by the Versailles Assembly on the 18th.

In the interval between the conclusion of peace and the arrival of the Bonapartist prisoners, Thiers felt the more bound to resume his comedy of conciliation, as his Republican tools stood in sore need of a pretext for blinking their eyes at the preparations for the carnage of Paris. As late as the 8th May he replied to a deputation of middle-class conciliators—

"Whenever the insurgents will make up their minds for capitulation, the gates of Paris shall be flung wide open during a week for all except the murderers of Generals Clément Thomas and Lecomte."

A few days afterwards, when violently interpellated on these promises by the Rurals, he refused to enter into any explanations; not, however, without giving them this significant hint:—

"I tell you there are impatient men amongst you, men who are in too great a hurry. They must have another eight days; at the end of these eight days there will be no more danger, and the task will be proportionate to their courage and to their capacities."^b

^a *Traité de paix entre l'Empire Allemand et la France, signé à Francfort s. m., le 10 mai 1871...—Ed.*

^b The source from which Marx quotes this text has not been established. See L. A. Thiers' speech in the National Assembly on May 11, 1871, *Journal officiel* (Versailles), No. 132, May 12, 1871.—*Ed.*

As soon as MacMahon was able to assure him that he could shortly enter Paris, Thiers declared to the Assembly that

“he would enter Paris with the *laws* in his hands, and demand a full expiation from the wretches who had sacrificed the lives of soldiers and destroyed public monuments.”^a

As the moment of decision drew near he said—to the Assembly, “I shall be pitiless!”^b—to Paris, that it was doomed; and to his Bonapartist banditti, that they had State license to wreak vengeance upon Paris to their hearts’ content.^c At last, when treachery had opened the gates of Paris to General Douay, on the 21st May, Thiers, on the 22nd, revealed to the Rurals the “goal” of his conciliation comedy, which they had so obstinately persisted in not understanding.

“I told you a few days ago that we were approaching *our goal*; to-day I come to tell you *the goal* is reached. The victory of order, justice, and civilization is at last won!”^d

So it was. The civilization and justice of bourgeois order comes out in its lurid light whenever the slaves and drudges of that order rise against their masters. Then this civilization and justice stand forth as undisguised savagery and lawless revenge. Each new crisis in the class struggle between the appropriator and the producer brings out this fact more glaringly. Even the atrocities of the bourgeois in June, 1848, vanish before the ineffable infamy of 1871. The self-sacrificing heroism with which the population of Paris—men, women, and children—fought for eight days after the entrance of the Versaillese, reflects as much the grandeur of their cause, as the infernal deeds of the soldiery reflect the innate spirit of that civilization of which they are the mercenary vindicators. A glorious civilization, indeed, the great problem of which is how to get rid of the heaps of corpses it made after the battle was over!

To find a parallel for the conduct of Thiers and his

^a The source from which Marx quotes here has not been established. See L. A. Thiers’ speech in the National Assembly on May 22, 1871, *Journal officiel* (Versailles), No. 143, May 23, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b L. A. Thiers’ speech in the National Assembly on May 24, 1871, *Journal officiel* (Versailles), No. 145, May 25, 1871.—*Ed.*

^c L. A. Thiers, [Circulaire aux préfets et aux autorités civiles, judiciaires et militaires. Versailles, 25 mai 1871], *Journal officiel* (Versailles), No. 146, May 26, 1871.—*Ed.*

^d The source from which Marx quotes here has not been established. See L. A. Thiers’ speech in the National Assembly on May 22, 1871, *Journal officiel* (Versailles), No. 143, May 23, 1871.—*Ed.*

bloodhounds we must go back to the times of Sulla and the two Triumvirates of Rome.²¹⁷ The same wholesale slaughter in cold blood; the same disregard, in massacre, of age and sex; the same system of torturing prisoners; the same proscriptions, but this time of a whole class; the same savage hunt after concealed leaders, lest one might escape; the same denunciations of political and private enemies; the same indifference for the butchery of entire strangers to the feud. There is but this difference, that the Romans had no mitrailleuses for the despatch, in the lump, of the proscribed, and that they had not "the law in their hands," nor on their lips the cry of "civilization."

And after those horrors, look upon the other, still more hideous, face of that bourgeois civilization as described by its own press!

"With stray shots," writes the Paris correspondent of a London Tory paper, "still ringing in the distance, and untended wounded wretches dying amid the tombstones of Père la Chaise—with 6,000 terror-stricken insurgents wandering in an agony of despair in the labyrinth of the catacombs, and wretches hurried through the streets to be shot down in scores by the mitrailleuse—it is revolting to see the *cafés* filled with the votaries of absinthe, billiards, and dominoes; female profligacy perambulating the boulevards, and the sound of revelry disturbing the night from the *cabinets particuliers*^a of fashionable restaurants."^b

M. Edouard Hervé writes in the *Journal de Paris*, a Versaillist journal suppressed by the Commune:—

"The way in which the population of Paris (!) manifested its satisfaction yesterday was rather more than frivolous, and we fear it will grow worse as time progresses. Paris has now a *fête* day appearance, which is sadly out of place; and, unless we are to be called the *Parisiens de la décadence*,^c this sort of thing must come to an end."

And then he quotes the passage from Tacitus:—

"Yet, on the morrow of that horrible struggle, even before it was completely over, Rome—degraded and corrupt—began once more to wallow in the voluptuous slough which was destroying its body and polluting its soul—*alibi proelia et vulnera, alibi balneae popinaeque*—(here fights and wounds, there baths and restaurants)."^d

M. Hervé only forgets to say that the "population of Paris" he speaks of is but the population of the Paris of M. Thiers—the

^a Private rooms.—*Ed.*

^b "The End of the Insurrection", *The Standard*, No. 14613, June 2, 1871. It also quotes from Hervé's article published in the *Journal de Paris*, No. 138, May 31, 1871.—*Ed.*

^c Parisians of the period of decadence.—*Ed.*

^d Tacitus, *Histories*, III, 83.—*Ed.*

*francs-fileurs*²⁰⁸ returning in throngs from Versailles, Saint-Denis, Rueil, and Saint-Germain—the Paris of the “Decline.”

In all its bloody triumphs over the self-sacrificing champions of a new and better society, that nefarious civilization, based upon the enslavement of labour, drowns the moans of its victims in a hue-and-cry of calumny, reverberated by a world-wide echo. The serene working men’s Paris of the Commune is suddenly changed into a pandemonium by the bloodhounds of “order.” And what does this tremendous change prove to the bourgeois mind of all countries? Why, that the Commune has conspired against civilization! The Paris people die enthusiastically for the Commune in numbers unequalled in any battle known to history. What does that prove? Why, that the Commune was not the people’s own government, but the usurpation of a handful of criminals! The women of Paris joyfully give up their lives at the barricades and on the place of execution. What does this prove? Why, that the demon of the Commune has changed them into Megaeras and Hecates! The moderation of the Commune during two months of undisputed sway is equalled only by the heroism of its defence. What does that prove? Why, that for months the Commune carefully hid, under a mask of moderation and humanity, the blood-thirstiness of its fiendish instincts, to be let loose in the hour of its agony!

The working men’s Paris, in the act of its heroic self-holocaust, involved in its flames buildings and monuments. While tearing to pieces the living body of the proletariat, its rulers must no longer expect to return triumphantly into the intact architecture of their abodes. The Government of Versailles cries, “Incendiarism!” and whispers this cue to all its agents, down to the remotest hamlet, to hunt up its enemies everywhere as suspect of professional incendiarism. The bourgeoisie of the whole world, which looks complacently upon the wholesale massacre after the battle, is convulsed by horror at the desecration of brick and mortar!

When governments give state-licenses to their navies to “kill, burn, and destroy,” is that a license for incendiarism? When the British troops wantonly set fire to the Capitol at Washington and to the summer palace of the Chinese Emperor,²¹⁸ was that incendiarism? When the Prussians, not for military reasons, but out of the mere spite of revenge, burnt down, by the help of petroleum, towns like Châteaudun and innumerable villages, was that incendiarism?^a When Thiers, during six weeks, bombarded

^a This phrase is omitted in the 1871 and 1891 German editions.—Ed.

Paris, under the pretext that he wanted to set fire to those houses only in which there were people, was that incendiarism?—In war, fire is an arm as legitimate as any. Buildings held by the enemy are shelled to set them on fire. If their defenders have to retire, they themselves light the flames to prevent the attack from making use of the buildings. To be burnt down has always been the inevitable fate of all buildings situated in the front of battle of all the regular armies of the world. But in the war of the enslaved against their enslavers, the only justifiable war in history, this is by no means to hold good! The Commune used fire strictly as a means of defence. They used it to stop up to the Versailles troops those long straight avenues which Haussmann had expressly opened to artillery-fire²⁰³; they used it to cover their retreat, in the same way as the Versaillese, in their advance, used their shells which destroyed at least as many buildings as the fire of the Commune. It is a matter of dispute, even now, which buildings were set fire to by the defence, and which by the attack. And the defence resorted to fire only then, when the Versaillese troops had already commenced their wholesale murdering of prisoners.—Besides, the Commune had, long before, given full public notice^a that, if driven to extremities, they would bury themselves under the ruins of Paris, and make Paris a second Moscow,²¹⁹ as the Government of Defence, but only as a cloak for its treason, had promised to do. For this purpose Trochu had found them the petroleum. The Commune knew that its opponents cared nothing for the lives of the Paris people, but cared much for their own Paris buildings. And Thiers, on the other hand, had given them notice that he would be implacable in his vengeance. No sooner had he got his army ready on one side, and the Prussians shutting up the trap on the other, than he proclaimed: "I shall be pitiless! The expiation will be complete, and justice will be stern!"^b If the acts of the Paris working men were vandalism, it was the vandalism of defence in despair, not the vandalism of triumph, like that which the Christians perpetrated upon the really priceless art treasures of heathen antiquity; and even that vandalism has been justified by the historian as an unavoidable and comparatively trifling concomitant to the Titanic struggle between a new society arising and an old one breaking down. It was still less the vandalism of Haussmann, razing historic Paris to make place for the Paris of the sightseer!

^a "Aux grandes villes", *Journal officiel* (Paris), No. 136, May 16, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b From L. A. Thiers' speeches in the National Assembly on May 22 and 24, 1871. See this volume, p. 348.—*Ed.*

But the execution by the Commune of the sixty-four hostages, with the Archbishop of Paris^a at their head! The bourgeoisie and its army in June, 1848, re-established a custom which had long disappeared from the practice of war—the shooting of their defenceless prisoners. This brutal custom has since been more or less strictly adhered to by the suppressors of all popular commotions in Europe and India; thus proving that it constitutes a real “progress of civilization”! On the other hand, the Prussians, in France, had re-established the practice of taking hostages—innocent men, who, with their lives, were to answer to them for the acts of others. When Thiers, as we have seen, from the very beginning of the conflict, enforced the humane practice of shooting down the Communal prisoners, the Commune, to protect their lives, was obliged to resort to the Prussian practice of securing hostages. The lives of the hostages had been forfeited over and over again by the continued shooting of prisoners on the part of the Versaillese. How could they be spared any longer after the carnage with which MacMahon’s praetorians²²⁰ celebrated their entrance into Paris? Was even the last check upon the unscrupulous ferocity of bourgeois governments—the taking of hostages—to be made a mere sham of? The real murderer of Archbishop Darboy is Thiers. The Commune again and again had offered to exchange the archbishop, and ever so many priests into the bargain, against the single Blanqui, then in the hands of Thiers. Thiers obstinately refused. He knew that with Blanqui he would give to the Commune a head; while the archbishop would serve his purpose best in the shape of a corpse. Thiers acted upon the precedent of Cavaignac. How, in June, 1848, did not Cavaignac and his men of order raise shouts of horror by stigmatizing the insurgents as the assassins of Archbishop Affre! They knew perfectly well that the archbishop had been shot by the soldiers of order. M. Jacquemet, the archbishop’s vicar-general, present on the spot, had immediately afterwards handed them in his evidence to that effect.^b

All this chorus of calumny which the Party of Order never fail, in their orgies of blood, to raise against their victims, only proves that the bourgeois of our days considers himself the legitimate successor to the baron of old, who thought every weapon in his own hand fair against the plebeian, while in the hands of the plebeian a weapon of any kind constituted in itself a crime.

^a G. Darboy.—*Ed.*

^b The reference is to Jacquemet’s statement of June 26, 1848, published in *La Situation*, No. 185, April 25, 1871.—*Ed.*

The conspiracy of the ruling class to break down the Revolution by a civil war carried on under the patronage of the foreign invader—a conspiracy which we have traced from the very 4th of September down to the entrance of MacMahon's praetorians through the gate of St. Cloud—culminated in the carnage of Paris. Bismarck gloats over the ruins of Paris, in which he saw perhaps the first instalment of that general destructions of great cities he had prayed for when still a simple Rural in the Prussian *Chambre introuvable* of 1849.²²¹ He gloats over the cadavres of the Paris proletariat. For him this is not only the extermination of revolution, but the extinction of France, now decapitated in reality, and by the French Government itself. With the shallowness characteristic of all successful statesmen, he sees but the surface of this tremendous historic event. Whenever before has history exhibited the spectacle of a conqueror crowning his victory by turning into, not only the gendarme, but the hired bravo of the conquered Government? There existed no war between Prussia and the Commune of Paris. On the contrary, the Commune had accepted the peace preliminaries, and Prussia had announced her neutrality. Prussia was, therefore, no belligerent. She acted the part of bravo, a cowardly bravo, because incurring no danger; a hired bravo, because stipulating beforehand the payment of her blood-money of 500 millions on the fall of Paris. And thus, at last, came out the true character of the war, ordained by Providence as a chastisement of godless and debauched France by pious and moral Germany! And this unparalleled breach of the law of nations, even as understood by the old world lawyers, instead of arousing the "civilized" Governments of Europe to declare the felonious Prussian Government, the mere tool of the St. Petersburg Cabinet, an outlaw amongst nations, only incites them to consider whether the few victims who escape the double cordon around Paris are not to be given up to the hangman at Versailles!

That after the most tremendous war of modern times, the conquering and the conquered hosts should fraternize for the common massacre of the proletariat—this unparalleled event does indicate, not, as Bismarck thinks, the final repression of a new society upheaving, but the crumbling into dust of bourgeois society. The highest heroic effort of which old society is still capable is national war; and this is now proved to be a mere governmental humbug, intended to defer the struggle of classes, and to be thrown aside as soon as that class struggle bursts out into civil war. Class rule is no longer able to disguise itself in a

national uniform; the national Governments are *one* as against the proletariat!

After Whit-Sunday, 1871, there can be neither peace nor truce possible between the working men of France and the appropriators of their produce. The iron hand of a mercenary soldiery may keep for a time both classes tied down in common oppression. But the battle must break out again and again in evergrowing dimensions, and there can be no doubt as to who will be the victor in the end,—the appropriating few, or the immense working majority. And the French working class is only the advanced guard of the modern proletariat.

While the European Governments thus testify, before Paris, to the international character of class rule, they cry down the International Working Men's Association—the international counter-organization of labour against the cosmopolitan conspiracy of capital—as the head fountain of all these disasters. Thiers denounced it as the despot of labour, pretending to be its liberator.^a Picard ordered that all communications between the French Internationals and those abroad should be cut off^b; Count Jaubert, Thiers's mummified accomplice of 1835, declares it the great problem of all civilized governments to weed it out.^c The Rurals roar against it, and the whole European press joins the chorus. An honourable French writer, completely foreign to our Association, speaks as follows:—

“The members of the Central Committee of the National Guard, as well as the greater part of the members of the Commune, are the most active, intelligent, and energetic minds of the International Working Men's Association;men who are thoroughly honest, sincere, intelligent, devoted, pure, and fanatical in the *good* sense of the word.”^d

The police-tinged bourgeois mind naturally figures to itself the International Working Men's Association as acting in the manner of a secret conspiracy, its central body ordering, from time to time, explosions in different countries. Our Association is, in fact, nothing but the international bond between the most advanced working men in the various countries of the civilized world.

^a L. A. Thiers, [Circulaire à préfets et sous-préfets. Versailles, 28 mars 1871], *Le Rappel*, No. 655, March 30, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b “The French Assembly”, *The Daily News*, No. 7774, March 30, 1871.—*Ed.*

^c The source from which Marx cites this has not been established. See H. F. Jaubert's speech in the National Assembly on May 12, 1871, *Journal officiel* (Versailles), No. 133, May 13, 1871.—*Ed.*

^d [J. F. E. Robinet,] *Political Notes on the Present Situation of France and Paris*. By a French Positivist, London [1871].—*Ed.*

Wherever, in whatever shape, and under whatever conditions the class struggle obtains any consistency, it is but natural that members of our association should stand in the foreground. The soil out of which it grows is modern society itself. It cannot be stamped out by any amount of carnage. To stamp it out, the Governments would have to stamp out the despotism of capital over labour—the condition of their own parasitical existence.

Working men's Paris, with its Commune, will be for ever celebrated as the glorious harbinger of a new society. Its martyrs are enshrined in the great heart of the working class. Its exterminators history has already nailed to that eternal pillory from which all the prayers of their priests will not avail to redeem them.

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M. J. Boon, Fred. Bradnick, G. H. Buttery, Caihil, Delahaye, William Hales, A. Hermann, Kolb, Fred. Lessner, Lochner, J. P. MacDonnell, George Milner, Thomas Mottershead, Ch. Mills, Charles Murray, Pfänder, Roach, Rochat, Rühl, Sadler, A. Serrailier, Cowell Stepney, Alf. Taylor, William Townshend.

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Fred. Engels, for Belgium and
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J. G. Eccarius, for the United
States.

Hermann Jung, Chairman.

John Weston, Treasurer.

George Harris, Financial Sec.

John Hales, General Sec.

Office—256, High Holborn, London, W.C.,
May 30th, 1871.

NOTES

I.

"The column of prisoners halted in the Avenue Uhrich, and was drawn up, four or five deep, on the footway facing to the road. General Marquis de Galliffet and his staff dismounted and commenced an inspection from the left of the line. Waling down slowly and eyeing the ranks, the General stopped here and there, tapping a man on the shoulder or beckoning him out of the rear ranks. In most cases, without further parley, the individual thus selected was marched out into the centre of the road, where a small supplementary column was, thus, soon formed.... It was evident that there was considerable room for error. A mounted officer pointed out to General Galliffet a man and woman for some particular offence. The woman, rushing out of the ranks, threw herself on her knees, and, with outstretched arms, protested her innocence in passionate terms. The general waited for a pause, and then with most impassible face and unmoved demeanour, said, 'Madame, I have visited every theatre in Paris, your acting will have no effect on me' ('ce n'est pas la peine de jouer la comédie').... It was not a good thing on that day to be noticeably taller, dirtier, cleaner, older, or uglier than one's neighbours. One individual in particular struck me as probably owing his speedy release from the ills of this world to his having a broken nose.... Over a hundred being thus chosen, a firing party told off, and the column resumed its march, leaving them behind. A few minutes afterwards a dropping fire, in our rear commenced, and continued for over a quarter of an hour. It was the execution of these summarily-convicted wretches."—*Paris Correspondent "Daily News,"* June 8th.^a—

This Galliffet, "the kept man of his wife, so notorious for her shameless exhibitions at the orgies of the Second Empire," went, during the war, by the name of the French "Ensign Pistol."

"*The Temps*, which is a careful journal, and not given to sensation, tells a dreadful story of people imperfectly shot and buried before life was extinct. A great number were buried in the square round St. Jacques-la-Boucherie; some of them very superficially. In the daytime the roar of the busy streets prevented any notice being taken; but in the stillness of the night the inhabitants of the houses in the neighbourhood were roused by distant moans, and in the morning a clenched

^a "An Adventure in Paris", *The Daily News*, No. 7834, June 8, 1871.—*Ed.*

hand was seen protruding through the soil. In consequence of this, exhumations were ordered to take place.... That many wounded have been buried alive I have not the slightest doubt. One case I can vouch for. When Brunel was shot with his mistress on the 24th ult. in the courtyard of a house in the Place Vendôme, the bodies lay there until the afternoon of the 27th. When the burial party came to remove the corpses, they found the woman living still, and took her to an ambulance. Though she had received four bullets she is now out of danger."—*Paris Correspondent "Evening Standard,"*^a June 8th.

II.

The following letter appeared in *The Times* of June 13th²²²:—

"To the Editor of 'The Times.'

"Sir,—

"On June 6, 1871, M. Jules Favre issued a circular to all the European Powers, calling upon them to hunt down the International Working-Men's Association.^b A few remarks will suffice to characterize that document.

"In the very preamble of our statutes it is stated that the International was founded 'September 28, 1864, at a public meeting held at St. Martin's Hall, Long Acre, London.'^c For purposes of his own Jules Favre puts back the date of its origin behind 1862.

"In order to explain our principles, he professes to quote 'their (the International's) sheet of the 25th of March, 1869.' And then what does he quote? The sheet of a society which is not the International.^d This sort of manoeuvre he already recurred to when, still a comparatively young lawyer, he had to defend the *National* newspaper, prosecuted for libel by Cabet.²²³ Then he pretended to read extracts from Cabet's pamphlets while reading interpolations of his own—a trick exposed while the Court was sitting, and which, but for the indulgence of Cabet, would have

^a "M. Jules Favre's Reply to Prince Napoleon. The International Society", *The Evening Standard*, No. 14619, June 9, 1871; see also *Le Temps*, No. 3718, June 7, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b J. Favre, [Circulaire adressée aux agents diplomatiques de la République française], "Versailles, le 6 juin 1871", *Journal officiel* (Versailles), No. 159, June 8, 1871.—*Ed.*

^c Karl Marx, *Provisional Rules of the Association* (see present edition, Vol. 20, p. 15).—*Ed.*

^d *Programme de l'Alliance internationale de la Démocratie Socialiste*, Geneva, 1868.—*Ed.*

been punished by Jules Favre's expulsion from the Paris bar. Of all the documents quoted by him as documents of the International, not one belongs to the International. He says, for instance,

"The Alliance declares itself Atheist, says the General Council, constituted in London in July, 1869."

"The General Council never issued such a document. On the contrary, it issued a document^a which quashed the original statutes of the 'Alliance'—L'Alliance de la Démocratie Socialiste at Geneva—quoted by Jules Favre.

"Throughout his circular, which pretends in part also to be directed against the Empire, Jules Favre repeats against the International but the police inventions of the public prosecutors of the Empire, and which broke down miserably even before the law courts of that Empire.

"It is known that in its two addresses (of July and September last) on the late war,^b the General Council of the International denounced the Prussian plans of conquest against France. Later on, Mr. Reitlinger, Jules Favre's private secretary, applied, though of course in vain, to some members of the General Council for getting up by the Council a demonstration against Bismarck, in favour of the Government of National Defence; they were particularly requested not to mention the Republic. The preparations for a demonstration with regard to the expected arrival of Jules Favre in London were made—certainly with the best of intentions—in spite of the General Council, which, in its address of the 9th of September, had distinctly forewarned the Paris workmen against Jules Favre and his colleagues.

"What would Jules Favre say if, in its turn, the International were to send a circular^c on Jules Favre to all the Cabinets of Europe, drawing their particular attention to the documents published at Paris by the late M. Millière?"

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

John Hales,

"Secretary to the General Council of the International
"Working Men's Association.

"256, High Holborn, W.C., June 12th."

^a The reference is to Marx's "The International Working Men's Association and the International Alliance of Socialist Democracy" (see present edition, Vol. 21, p. 34).—*Ed.*

^b See this volume, pp. 3-8 and 263-70.—*Ed.*

^c J.-B. E. Millière, "Le Faussaire", *Le Vengeur*, No. 6, February 8, 1871.—*Ed.*

In an article on "The International Society and its aims," that pious informer, the London *Spectator* (June 24th), amongst other similar tricks, quotes, even more fully than Jules Favre has done, the above document of the "Alliance" as the work of the International, and that eleven days after the refutation had been published in *The Times*. We do not wonder at this. Frederick the Great used to say that of all Jesuits the worst are the Protestant ones.

Karl Marx

[TO THE EDITOR OF *THE PALL MALL GAZETTE*]

F. GREENWOOD, ESQ.

8 June 1871

My dear Sir,

Would you oblige me by inserting the following few lines in your next publication?

Yours faithfully,

K. Marx

TO THE EDITOR OF *THE PALL MALL GAZETTE*

Sir,

From the Paris correspondence of your yesterday's publication^a I see that while fancying to live at London, I was, in reality, arrested in Holland on the request of Bismarck-Favre. But, maybe, this is but one of the innumerable sensational stories about the *International* which for the last two months the Franco-Prussian police has never tired of fabricating, the Versailles press of publishing, and the rest of the European press of reproducing.

I have the honour, Sir, to be

Yours obediently,

Karl Marx

1, Modena Villas, Maitland Park.
June 8, 1871

First published in *The Pall Mall Gazette*,
No. 1972, June 9, 1871

Reproduced from the newspaper,
verified with the manuscript; the
covering letter is reproduced from
the manuscript

^a "The Interregnum", *The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1970, June 7, 1871.—Ed.

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

[STATEMENT BY THE GENERAL COUNCIL ON JULES FAVRE'S CIRCULAR]²²⁴

TO THE EDITOR OF *THE TIMES*

Sir,—

On June 6, 1871, M. Jules Favre issued a circular to all the European Powers, calling upon them to hunt down the International Working Men's Association.^a A few remarks will suffice to characterize that document.

In the very preamble of our statutes it is stated that the International was founded "September 28, 1864, at a public meeting held at St. Martin's Hall, London."^b For purposes of his own Jules Favre puts back the date of its origin behind 1862.

In order to explain our principles, he professes to quote "their (the International's) sheet of the 25th of March, 1869." And then what does he quote? The sheet of a society which is not the International.^c This sort of manoeuvre he already recurred to when, still a comparatively young lawyer, he had to defend the *National* newspaper, prosecuted for libel by Cabet. Then he pretended to read extracts from Cabet's pamphlets while reading interpolations of his own—a trick exposed while the court was

^a J. Favre, [Circulaire adressée aux agents diplomatiques de la République française], "Versailles, le 6 juin 1871", *Journal officiel* (Versailles), No. 159, June 8, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b See present edition, Vol. 20, p. 15.—*Ed.*

^c *Programme de l'Alliance internationale de la Démocratie Socialiste*, Geneva, 1868.—*Ed.*

sitting, and which but for the indulgence of Cabet, would have been punished by Jules Favre's expulsion from the Paris bar. Of all the documents quoted by him as documents of the International not one belongs to the International. He says, for instance,

"The Alliance declares itself Atheist, says the General Council, constituted in London in July, 1869."

The General Council never issued such a document. On the contrary, it issued a document^a which quashed the original statutes of the "Alliance"—L'Alliance de la Démocratie Socialiste at Geneva—quoted by Jules Favre.

Throughout his circular, which pretends in part also to be directed against the Empire, Jules Favre repeats against the International but the police inventions of the public prosecutors of the Empire, and which broke down miserably even before the law courts of that Empire.

It is known that in its two addresses (of July and September last) on the late war^b the General Council of the International denounced the Prussian plans of conquest against France. Later on Mr. Reitlinger, Jules Favre's private secretary, applied, though of course in vain, to some members of the General Council for getting up by the Council a demonstration against Bismarck, in favour of the Government of National Defence; they were particularly requested not to mention the Republic. The preparations for a demonstration with regard to the expected arrival of Jules Favre in London were made—certainly with the best of intentions—in spite of the General Council, which in its address of the 9th of September had distinctly forewarned the Paris workmen against Jules Favre and his colleagues.

What would Jules Favre say if in its turn the International were to send a circular on Jules Favre to all the Cabinets of Europe, drawing their particular attention to the documents published at Paris by the late M. Millière?^c

^a The reference is to the circular letter written by Marx, "The International Working Men's Association and the International Alliance of Socialist Democracy" (see present edition, Vol. 21, p. 34).—*Ed.*

^b See this volume, pp. 3-8, 263-70.—*Ed.*

^c J.-B. E. Millière, "Le Faussaire", *Le Vengeur*, No. 6, February 8, 1871.—*Ed.*

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

John Hales,
Secretary to the General Council
of the International Working Men's Association

256, High Holborn, W.C., June 12, 1871

Published in *The Times*, No. 27088, June 13, 1871 and also in *The Eastern Post*, No. 142, June 17, 1871; *L'Internationale*, No. 127, June 18, 1871; *Der Volksstaat*, No. 50, June 21, 1871 and other press organs of the International

Reproduced from *The Times*

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels
[STATEMENT BY THE GENERAL COUNCIL
TO THE EDITOR OF *THE TIMES*]²²⁵

TO *THE TIMES*

The General Council of this Association has instructed me to state, in reply to your leader of June 19, 1871, on the "International"^a the following facts.

The pretended Paris manifestoes, published by the *Paris-Journal*^b and similar journals, manifestoes which you place on the same line as our Address on the Civil war in France, are mere fabrications of the Versailles police.

You say:

"The 'political notes' published by Professor Beesly,^c and quoted the other day in these columns, are quoted also, with entire approval, in the address of the Council, and we can now understand how justly the Ex-Emperor was entitled to be called the saviour of society."

Now, the Council, in its address, quotes nothing from the "political notes" except the testimony of the writer, who is a known and honourable French *savant*, as to the personal character of the "Internationals" implicated in the last Paris revolution.^d What has this to do with the "Ex-Emperor" and the society saved by him! The "programme" of the Association was not, as you say, "prepared" by Messrs. Tolain and Odger "seven years ago". It was issued by the Provisional Council, chosen at the public meeting held at St. Martin's Hall, Long Acre, on 28 September 1864.^e

^a "The International Working Men's Association has not...", *The Times*, No. 27093, June 19, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b "Le Comité central de l'Internationale", *Paris-Journal*, No. 157, June 17, 1871.—*Ed.*

^c [J. F. E. Robinet,] *Political Notes on the Present Situation of France and Paris*. By a French Positivist (ed. by Edward Spencer Beesly), London [1871].—*Ed.*

^d See this volume, p. 354.—*Ed.*

^e The reference is to Marx's *Inaugural Address of the Working Men's International Association* (present edition, Vol. 20, pp. 5-13).—*Ed.*

M. Tolain has never been a member of that Council, nor was he present at London, when the programme was drawn up.

You say that "Millière" was "one of the most ferocious members of the Commune". Millière has never been a member of the Commune.

"We," you proceed, "should also point out that Assi, lately President of the Association etc."

Assi has never been a member of the "International", and as to the dignity of "President of the Association", it has been abolished as long ago as 1867.²²⁶

Written on June 19 or 20, 1871

Reproduced from the rough manuscript

First published in: Marx and Engels, *Works*, First Russian Edition, Vol. XIII, Part II, 1940

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

[STATEMENT BY THE GENERAL COUNCIL
TO THE EDITOR OF *THE STANDARD*]²²⁷

TO THE EDITOR OF *THE STANDARD*

In your leader on the "*International*" (of the 19 June)^a you say:

"Of the two programmes (that of London and that of Paris) recently issued in favour of the Commune^b that of the Paris branch has the merit of being the more honest and the more outspoken."

Unfortunately, the "Paris" manifesto has been issued not by our Paris Branch, but by the "Versailles Police".

You say:

"The London Internationalists insist no less earnestly than their Paris brethren that 'the old society must perish and ought to perish'. They speak of the burning of the public buildings and the shooting of the hostages as 'a gigantic effort to bring society down'—which, although unsuccessful once, will be persevered in until it succeeds."

Now the General Council of this Association summons you to quote the exact pages and lines of our Address where the words attributed by you to us do occur!

Written on June 19 or 20, 1871

Reproduced from the rough manuscript

First published in: Marx and Engels,
Works, First Russian Edition, Vol. XIII,
Part II, 1940

^a "If there are any in England...", *The Standard*, No. 14627, June 19, 1871.—*Ed*

^b The reference is to the General Council's Address *The Civil War in France*, written by Marx (pp. 307-59), and the Manifesto, supposedly issued by the International, published in the *Paris-Journal*, No. 157, June 17, 1871 under the heading "Le Comité central de l'Internationale".—*Ed*.

Frederick Engels

[STATEMENT BY THE GENERAL COUNCIL ON GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE'S LETTER]²²⁸

TO THE EDITOR OF *THE DAILY NEWS*

Sir,

I am instructed by the General Council of the International Working Men's Association to state, in reply to Mr. Geo. Jacob Holyoake's Letter in Tuesday's *Daily News*.^a

1. As to the insinuation that the address issued by the Council^b "may become a cause of death or deportation at Versailles", the Council thinks that its Paris friends are better judges than Mr. Holyoake.

2. It is a rule with the Council that the names of all its members whether absent or present are appended to its public documents.^c

3. As to the statement that this address

"cannot be an English production, though manifestly revised by some Saxon or Celtic pen",

the Council begs to observe that, as a matter of course, the productions of an international Society cannot have any national character. However, the Council need not have any secrets in this matter. The address, like many previous publications of the Council, was drawn up by the Corresponding Secretary for Germany, Dr. Karl Marx, was adopted unanimously and "revised" by nobody.

^a G. J. Holyoake, "To the Editor of *The Daily News*", *The Daily News*, No. 7844, June 20, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b The reference is to the General Council's Address *The Civil War in France*, written by Marx (pp. 307-59).—*Ed.*

^c In Engels' manuscript this is followed by the sentence "On this occasion, however, an exception was made, and the consent of absent members was formally requested."—*Ed.*

4. In the course of last year Mr. George Jacob Holyoake presented himself as a Candidate for membership of the Council but was not admitted.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

John Hales,
Secretary to the General Council
of the International Working Men's Association

256, High Holborn, W.C.,
London, June 21, 1871

Written on June 20, 1871

Approved at the General Council meeting
of June 20, 1871

Published in *The Daily News*, No. 7847,
June 23, 1871, in *The Eastern Post*,
No. 143, June 24, 1871 (a slightly differ-
ent version) and in *The Pall Mall Gazette*,
No. 1984, June 23, 1871 (as a summary of
the statement)

Reproduced from *The Daily News*,
verified with the manuscript

Frederick Engels

[LETTER FROM THE GENERAL COUNCIL TO THE EDITOR
OF *THE SPECTATOR* (RESP. *EXAMINER*)]²²⁹

TO THE EDITOR
OF *THE SPECTATOR* (RESP. *EXAMINER*)

Sir,

You will much oblige the General Council of the International Working Men's Association by giving publicity to the fact that all the pretended Manifestoes and other publications of the "Internationals" of Paris, with which the English Press is now teeming (and which all of them were first published by the notorious *Paris-Journal*) are without one exception pure fabrications of the Versailles Police.

I am etc.

Written on June 20 or 21, 1871

First published in: Marx and Engels,
Works, First Russian Edition, Vol. XIII,
Part II, 1940

Reproduced from the rough manu-
script

Karl Marx

[TO THE EDITOR OF *THE DAILY NEWS*]²³⁰

Sir,—

A Council consisting of more than thirty members cannot, of course, draw up its own documents. It must entrust that task to some one or other of its members, reserving to itself the right of rejecting or amending. The address on the "Civil War in France," drawn up by myself,^a was unanimously adopted by the General Council of the International, and is therefore the official embodiment of its own views. With regard, however, to the personal charges brought forward against Jules Favre and Co., the case stands otherwise. On this point the great majority of the Council had to rely upon my trustworthiness. This was the very reason why I supported the motion of another member of the Council^b that Mr. John Hales, in his answer to Mr. Holyoake^c should name me as the author of the address. I hold myself alone responsible for those charges, and hereby challenge Jules Favre and Co. to prosecute me for libel. In his letter Mr. Llewellyn Davies says,

"It is melancholy to read the charges of personal baseness so freely flung by Frenchmen at one another."^d

Does this sentence not somewhat smack of that pharisaical self-righteousness with which William Cobbett had so often taunted the British mind? Let me ask Mr. Llewellyn Davies which

^a See this volume, pp. 307-59.—*Ed.*

^b F. Engels.—*Ed.*

^c See this volume, pp. 367-68.—*Ed.*

^d J. L. Davies, "To the Editor of *The Daily News*", *The Daily News*, No. 7849, June 26, 1871.—*Ed.*

was worse, the French *petite presse*, fabricating in the service of the police the most infamous slanders against the Communals, dead, captive, or hidden, or the English press reproducing them to this day, despite its professed contempt for the *petite presse*. I do not consider it a French inferiority that such serious charges for instance as those brought forward against the late Lord Palmerston, during a quarter of a century, by a man like Mr. David Urquhart,²³¹ could have been burked in England but not in France.

Published in *The Eastern Post*, No. 144, July 1, 1871, *The Daily News*, June 27, 1871 (in abbreviated form), and *The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1987, June 27, 1871 (in abbreviated form)

Reproduced from *The Eastern Post*

Frederick Engels

[STATEMENT BY THE GENERAL COUNCIL ON THE LETTERS OF G. J. HOLYOAKE AND B. LUCRAFT]²³²

TO THE EDITOR OF *THE DAILY NEWS*

Sir,—

I am instructed by the General Council of the International Working Men's Association to reply to the letters of Messrs. G. J. Holyoake and B. Lucraft, which appeared in your issue of Monday last.^a I find, on referring to the minutes of the Council, that Mr. Holyoake attended a meeting of the Council, by permission, on the 16th of November, 1869, and during the sitting expressed his desire to become a member of the Council, and to attend the next General Congress of the International, to be held in Paris, September, 1870. After he had retired, Mr. John Weston proposed him as a candidate for membership, but the proposition was received in such a manner that Mr. Weston did not insist, but withdrew it. With regard to Mr. Lucraft's statement that he was not present when the address was voted upon, I may say that Mr. Lucraft was present at a meeting of the Council held on the 23rd of May, 1871, when it was officially announced that the draught of the address on the "Civil War in France"^b would be read and discussed at the next ordinary meeting of the Council, May the 30th. It was therefore left entirely to Mr. Lucraft to decide whether he would be present or absent upon that occasion, and not only did he know that it was the rule of the Council to append the names of all its members, present or absent, to its public documents, but he was one of the most strenuous supporters of that rule, and resisted on several occasions attempts made to

^a G. J. Holyoake, "To the Editor of *The Daily News*", *The Daily News*, No. 7849, June 26, 1871; B. Lucraft, "To the Editor of *The Daily News*", same issue.—*Ed.*

^b See this volume, pp. 307-59.—*Ed.*

dispense with it—on May 23, amongst others—and he then voluntarily informed the Council that “his entire sympathy was with the Commune of Paris.” On Tuesday evening, June 20, at a meeting of the Council, Mr. Lucraft was forced to admit that he had not even then read the address itself, but that all his impressions about it were derived from the statements of the press. With respect to Mr. Odger's repudiation, all I can say is that he was waited upon personally and informed that the Council was about to issue an address, and was asked if he objected to his name appearing in connection with it, and he said “No.” The public can draw its own conclusions. I may add that the resignations of Messrs. Lucraft and Odger have been accepted by the Council unanimously.^a

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

John Hales,

Secretary to the General Council
of the International Working Men's Association

256, High Holborn, W.C.

Written about June 27, 1871

Reproduced from *The Daily News*

Approved at the General Council meeting
of June 27, 1871

Published in *The Daily News*, No. 7852,
June 29, 1871 and in *The Eastern Post*,
No. 144, July 1, 1871

^a At the meeting of June 27, 1871.—*Ed.*

Karl Marx

[LETTER TO MAX FRIEDLÄNDER,
THE EDITOR OF THE *NEUE FREIE PRESSE*]

Dear Friend,

Would you be so kind as to publish the following statement in your newspaper and to send me a copy of the issue in question.

Yours very sincerely,

Karl Marx

TO THE EDITORIAL BOARD OF THE *NEUE FREIE PRESSE*

Under the heading "A Socialist Soirée", signed W.,^a the Vienna *Presse* carries a feature article in which I have the honour to figure. W. met me, so he says, at a soirée at *Herzen's* house. He even recalled the speeches that I made there.

A firm opponent of *Herzen*, I have always refused to meet him, and have therefore *never* seen the man in my life.

I doubt whether the imaginative W. has ever been to London. As a matter of fact, there are no "*marble steps*" there, except in the palaces, though W. even found some in *Herzen's* "COTTAGE"!

I hereby challenge the imaginative W., whom the laurels of the *Paris-Journal* and similar police newspapers^b will not allow to sleep, to name himself.

Karl Marx

London, June 30, 1871

Published in the newspapers *Neue Freie Presse*, No. 2462, July 4, 1871, *Börse des Lebens, Feuilleton und Localblatt der Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*, No. 30, July 23, 1871

Printed according to the *Neue Freie Presse*, verified with the rough manuscript; the covering letter is printed according to the manuscript

Published in English for the first time

^a W., "Eine socialistische Soirée", *Die Presse*, No. 173, June 24, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b See this volume, pp. 364, 366.—*Ed.*

Frederick Engels

[THE ADDRESS *THE CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE* AND THE ENGLISH PRESS]

London, 30 June. No publication in the history of London has caused such a stir as the Address of the General Council of the International.^a In the beginning, the main papers tried to kill it with silence, a favourite method of theirs; but a few days were enough to prove to them that it would not work this time. The *Telegraph*, *Standard*, *Spectator*, *Pall Mall Gazette* and *Times* had to bring themselves, one by one, to mention this "remarkable document" in their leaders.^b Then letters from third parties started to appear in the papers, drawing attention to this and that in particular. Then more leaders, and at the weekend the weeklies returned to it once again. The entire press has had to confess unanimously that the International is a great power in Europe to be reckoned with, which cannot be eliminated by refusing to talk about it. They all had to acknowledge the stylistic mastery with which the Address is written—a language as powerful as William Cobbett's, according to *The Spectator*. It was only to be expected that this bourgeois press would attack, almost to a man, such an energetic assertion of the proletarian point of view, such a decisive justification of the Paris Commune. Likewise, that the Stieberiades²³³ fabricated by the Parisian police papers and the

^a See this volume, pp. 307-59.—*Ed.*

^b "It is with a feeling of...", *The Daily Telegraph*, No. 4994, June 16, 1871; "If there are any in England...", *The Standard*, No. 14627, June 19, 1871; "The English Communists on Paris", *The Spectator*, No. 2242, June 17, 1871; "The International Working Men's Association", *The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1979, June 17, 1871; "This remarkable document ought to remove all doubts ... as to the political import of the late events in Paris"; "The International Working Men's Association has not...", *The Times*, No. 27093, June 19, 1871.—*Ed.*

documents of quite a different society (Bakunin's Alliance of Socialist Democracy)^a laid at the door of the International by Jules Favre^b would be attributed to it, despite the public disavowals of the General Council.^c In the meantime, however, the commotion finally became too much even for the philistine. *The Daily News* began to soothe, and *The Examiner*, the only paper to behave really decently, resolutely stood up for the International in a detailed article.^d Two English members of the General Council, *Odger*, who has long been on much too friendly terms with the bourgeoisie, and *Lucraft*, who seems to have grown much more concerned about the opinion of "respectable" people since he was elected on to the London School Board, were swayed by the fuss in the papers to tender their resignations, which were unanimously accepted. They have already been replaced by two other English workers^e and will soon mark what it means to betray the proletariat at the critical moment.

An English parson, Llewellyn Davies, lamented in *The Daily News* about the abuse directed at Jules Favre and consorts in the Address and expressed the desire that the truth or falsehood of these charges be ascertained, as far as I am concerned, by the French Government bringing an action against the General Council.^f On the very next day, *Karl Marx declared in the same paper that as the author of the Address he considered himself personally responsible for the charges*^g; however, the French Embassy does not seem to have any orders to proceed with a libel suit against him. Finally *The Pall Mall Gazette* then declared that this was quite unnecessary, the private character of a statesman was always sacred, and only his public actions could be attacked.^h Of course, if the private characters of the *English* statesmen were brought before the public, the Last Day of the oligarchic and *bourgeois* world would be nigh.

^a *Programme de l'Alliance internationale de la Démocratie Socialiste*, Geneva, 1868.—*Ed.*

^b J. Favre, "Versailles, le 6 juin 1871", *Journal officiel* (Versailles), No. 159, June 8, 1871.—*Ed.*

^c See this volume, pp. 361-62.—*Ed.*

^d "The International Association", *The Examiner*, No. 3308, June 24, 1871.—*Ed.*

^e J. Roach and A. Taylor.—*Ed.*

^f J. L. Davies, "To the Editor of *The Daily News*", *The Daily News*, No. 7849, June 26, 1871.—*Ed.*

^g See this volume, p. 370.—*Ed.*

^h "England from the Point of View of the Commune", *The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1989, June 29, 1871.—*Ed.*

An article from the *Vienna Wanderer* by and about the scoundrel *Netschajeff* has been doing the rounds of the German press, glorifying his deeds and those of *Serebrennikoff* and *Elpidin*. If this should occur again, we shall come back to this fine threesome for a closer look. For the present, suffice it to say that *Elpidin* is a notorious *Russian spy*.

Written on June 30, 1871

First published in *Der Volksstaat*, No. 54,
July 5, 1871

Printed according to the news-
paper

Published in English for the first
time

Karl Marx

[LETTER TO FREDERICK GREENWOOD, THE EDITOR
OF *THE PALL MALL GAZETTE*]²³⁴

Haverstock-hill, N.W. June 30, 1871

Sir,

I have declared in *The Daily News*—and you have reprinted in *The Pall Mall*—that I hold myself alone responsible for the charges brought forward against “Jules Favre and Co.”^a

In your yesterday’s publication you declare these charges to be “*libels*.”^b I declare you to be a *libeller*. It is no fault of mine that you are as *ignorant* as *arrogant*. If we lived on the Continent, I should call you to account in another way.—

Obediently,

Karl Marx

Published in *The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1992, July 3, 1871, *The Eastern Post*, No. 145, July 8, 1871 and *Neue Freie Presse*, No. 2465, July 7, 1871 (translated from *The Pall Mall Gazette*)

Reproduced from *The Pall Mall Gazette*, verified with the manuscript

^a See this volume, p. 370.—*Ed.*

^b “England from the Point of View of the Commune”, *The Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1989, June 29, 1871.—*Ed.*

Karl Marx

MR. WASHBURNE,
THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR, IN PARIS²³⁵

TO THE NEW YORK CENTRAL COMMITTEE
FOR THE UNITED STATES' SECTIONS
OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION

Citizens,—

The General Council of the Association consider it their duty to communicate publicly to you evidence on the conduct, during the French Civil War, of Mr. Washburne, the American Ambassador.

I

The following statement is made by Mr. Robert Reid, a Scotchman who has lived for seventeen years in Paris, and acted during the Civil War as a correspondent for the London *Daily Telegraph* and *The New York Herald*. Let us remark, in passing, that *The Daily Telegraph*, in the interests of the Versailles Government, falsified even the short telegraphic despatches transmitted to it by Mr. Reid.

Mr. Reid, now in England, is ready to confirm his statement by affidavit.

“The sounding of the general alarm, mingled with the roar of the cannon, continued all night. To sleep was impossible. Where, I thought, are the representatives of Europe and America? Can it be possible that in the midst of this effusion of innocent blood they should make no effort at conciliation? I could bear the thought no longer; and knowing that Mr. Washburne was in town, I resolved at once to go and see him. This was, I think, on the 17th of April; the exact date may, however, be ascertained from my letter to Lord Lyons, to whom I wrote on the same day. Crossing the Champs Elysées, on my way to Mr. Washburne's residence, I met numerous ambulance-waggons filled with the wounded and dying.

Shells were bursting around the Arc de Triomphe, and many innocent people were added to the long list of M. Thiers's victims.

"Arriving at No. 95, Rue de Chaillot, I inquired at the Concierge's for the United States' Ambassador, and was directed to the second floor. The particular flight or flat you dwell in is, in Paris, an almost unerring indication of your wealth and position,—a sort of social barometer. We find here a marquis on the first front floor, and an humble mechanic on the fifth back floor,—the stairs that divide them represent the social gulf between them. As I climbed up the stairs, meeting no stout flunkeys in red breeches and silk stockings, I thought, 'Ah! the Americans lay their money out to the best advantage,—we throw ours away.'

"Entering the secretary's room, I inquired for Mr. Washburne.—Do you wish to see him personally?—I do.—My name having been sent in, I was ushered into his presence. He was lounging in an easy-chair, reading a newspaper. I expected he would rise; but he remained sitting with the paper still before him, an act of gross rudeness in a country where the people are generally so polite.

"I told Mr. Washburne that we were betraying the cause of humanity, if we did not endeavour to bring about a conciliation. Whether we succeeded or not, it was at all events our duty to try; and the moment seemed the more favourable, as the Prussians were just then pressing Versailles for a definitive settlement. The united influence of America and England would turn the balance in favour of peace.

"Mr. Washburne said, '*The men in Paris are rebels. Let them lay down their arms.*' I replied that the National Guards had a legal right to their arms; but that was not the question. When humanity is outraged, the civilized world has a right to interfere, and I ask you to co-operate with Lord Lyons to that effect.—Mr. Washburne: 'These men at Versailles will listen to nothing.'—'If they refuse, the moral responsibility will rest with them.'—Mr. Washburne: 'I don't see that. I can't do anything in the matter. You had better see Lord Lyons.'

"So ended our interview. I left Mr. Washburne sadly disappointed. I found a man rude and haughty, with none of those feelings of fraternity you might expect to find in the representative of a democratic republic. On two occasions I had had the honour of an interview with Lord Cowley, when he was our representative in France. His frank, courteous manner formed a striking contrast to the cold, pretentious, and would-be-aristocratic style of the American Ambassador.

"I also urged upon Lord Lyons that, in the defence of humanity, England was bound to make an earnest effort at reconciliation, feeling convinced that the British Government could not look coldly on such atrocities as the massacres of the Clamart station and Moulin Saquet, not to speak of the horrors of Neuilly, without incurring the malediction of every lover of humanity. Lord Lyons answered me verbally through Mr. Edward Malet, his secretary, that he had forwarded my letter to the Government, and would willingly forward any other communication I might have to make on that subject. At one moment matters were most favourable for reconciliation, and had our Government thrown their weight in the balance, the world would have been spared the carnage of Paris. At all events, it is not the fault of Lord Lyons if the British Government failed in their duty.

"But, to return to Mr. Washburne. On Wednesday forenoon, the 24th of May, I was passing along the Boulevard des Capucines, when I heard my name called, and, turning round, saw Dr. Hossart standing beside Mr. Washburne, who was in an open carriage amidst a great number of Americans. After the usual salutations, I entered into a conversation with Dr. Hossart. Presently the conversation became general on the horrid scenes around; when Mr. Washburne, addressing me with the air of a man who knows the truth of what he is saying,—'*All who belong to the Commune, and those that sympathize with them, will be shot.*' Alas! I knew that they

were killing old and young for the crime of *sympathy*, but I did not expect to hear it semi-officially from Mr. Washburne; yet, while he was *repeating* this sanguinary phrase, there was still time for him to save the Archbishop."²³⁶

II

"On the 24th of May, Mr. Washburne's secretary^a came to offer to the Commune, then assembled at the Mairie of the 11th Arrondissement, on the part of the Prussians, an intervention between the Versailles and the Federals on the following terms:—

"Suspension of hostilities.

"Re-election of the Commune on the one side, and of the National Assembly on the other.

"The Versailles troops to leave Paris, and to take up their quarters in and around the fortifications.

"The National Guard to continue to guard Paris.

"No punishment to be inflicted upon the men serving or having served in the Federal Army.'

"The Commune, in an extraordinary sitting, accepted the propositions, with the proviso that two months should be given to France in order to prepare for the general elections of a Constituent Assembly.

"A second interview with the Secretary of the American Embassy took place. At its morning sitting of the 25th May, the Commune resolved to send five citizens—amongst them Vermorel, Delescluze, and Arnold—as plenipotentiaries to Vincennes, where, according to the information given by Mr. Washburne's secretary, a Prussian delegate would then be found. That deputation was, however, prevented from passing by the National Guards on duty at the gate of Vincennes. Consequent upon another and final interview with the same American Secretary, Citizen Arnold, to whom he had delivered a safe conduct, on the 26th May, went to St. Denis, where he was—*not* admitted by the Prussians.

"The result of this American intervention (which produced a belief in the renewed neutrality of, and the intended intercession between the belligerents, by the Prussians) was, at the most critical juncture, to paralyze the defence for two days. Despite the precautions taken to keep the negotiations secret, they became soon known to the National Guards, who then, full of confidence in Prussian neutrality, fled to the Prussian lines, there to surrender as prisoners. It is known how this confidence was abused by the Prussians, shooting by their sentries part of the fugitives, and handing over to the Versailles Government those who had surrendered.

"During the whole course of the civil war, Mr. Washburne, through his secretary, never tired of informing the Commune of his ardent sympathies, which only his diplomatic position prevented him from publicly manifesting, and of his decided reprobation of the Versailles Government."

This statement, No. II., is made by a member of the Paris Commune,^b who, like Mr. Reid, will, in case of need, confirm it by affidavit.

^a J. A. McKean.—*Ed.*

^b Au. Serraillier.—*Ed.*

To fully appreciate Mr. Washburne's conduct, the statements of Mr. Robert Reid and that of the member of the Paris Commune must be read as a whole, as part and counterpart of the same scheme. While Mr. Washburne declares to Mr. Reid that the Communals are "rebels" who deserve their fate, he declares to the Commune his sympathies with its cause and his contempt of the Versailles Government. *On the same 24th of May*, while, in presence of Dr. Hossart and many Americans, informing Mr. Reid that not only the Communals but even their mere sympathizers were irrevocably doomed to death, he informed, through his secretary, the Commune that not only its members were to be saved, but every man in the Federal army.

We now request you, dear Citizens, to lay these facts before the Working Class of the United States, and to call upon them to decide whether Mr. Washburne is a proper representative of the American Republic.

The General Council
of the International Working Men's Association:—

M. J. Boon, Fred. Bradnick, G. H. Buttery, Caihill, William Hales, Kolb, F. Lessner, George Milner, Thos. Mottershead, Chas. Murray, P. MacDonnell, Pfänder, John Roach, Rühl, Sadler, Cowell Stepney, Alfred Taylor, W. Townshend.

Corresponding Secretaries:—

Eugène Dupont, for France; *Karl Marx*, for Germany and Holland; *F. Engels*, for Belgium and Spain; *H. Jung*, for Switzerland; *P. Giovacchini*, for Italy; *Zévy Maurice*, for Hungary; *Anton Zabicki*, for Poland; *James Cohen*, for Denmark; *J. G. Eccarius*, for the United States.

Hermann Jung, Chairman. *George Harris*, Financial Sec.
John Weston, Treasurer. *John Hales*, General Secretary.

Office—256, High Holborn, London, W.C.,
July 11th, 1871

Written between July 7 and 11, 1871

Reproduced from the leaflet

Adopted unanimously at the General
Council meeting of July 11, 1871

Published as a leaflet about July 13, 1871
and in a number of press organs of the
International in July-September 1871

Karl Marx

TO THE EDITOR OF *THE MORNING ADVERTISER*

Sir,

In one of your leading articles of to-day^a you quote a string of phrases, such as, "London, Liverpool, and Manchester in revolt against odious capital," etc., with the authorship of which you are kind enough to credit me.

Permit me to state that the whole of the quotations^b upon which you base your article are forgeries from beginning to end. You have probably been misled by some of the fabrications which the Paris police are in the habit of issuing almost daily in my name, in order to procure evidence against the captive "Internationals" at Versailles.

I am, Sir, yours, etc.,

Karl Marx

1, Modena-villas, Maitland Park, Haverstock-hill, N.W.,
July 11, 1871

Published in *The Morning Advertiser*,
No. 24997, July 13, 1871

Reproduced from the newspaper

^a "London, Liverpool, and Manchester in revolt...", *The Morning Advertiser*, No. 24995, July 11, 1871.—*Ed*

^b Cited from "Une lettre de Karl Marx", *Paris-Journal*, No. 175, July 5, 1871; "L'Internationale", *La Gazette de France*, July 11, 1871, and other sources.—*Ed*

Karl Marx
TO THE EDITOR OF *THE STANDARD*

Sir,

In this morning's *Standard*^a your Paris correspondent translates from the *Gazette de France*^b a letter dated Berlin, April 28, 1871, and purporting to be signed by me. I beg to state that this letter is from beginning to end a forgery, quite as much as all the previous pretended letters of mine lately published in the *Paris-Journal* and other French police papers.^c If the *Gazette de France* professes to have taken the letter from German papers, this must be a falsehood too. A German paper would never have dated that fabrication from Berlin.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Karl Marx

London, July 13

Published in *The Standard*, No. 14651,
July 17, 1871

Reproduced from the newspaper

^a "France", *The Standard*, No. 14648, July 13, 1871.—*Ed*

^b "L'Internationale", *La Gazette de France*, July 11, 1871.—*Ed*

^c See this volume, pp. 364, 366.—*Ed*.

Frederick Engels

[MAZZINI'S STATEMENT AGAINST THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION]²³⁷

In his Address to the Italian workers Mazzini says:

“This Association, founded in London some years ago and with which I refused to collaborate from the start.... A nucleus of individuals which takes it upon itself directly to govern a broad multitude of men of different nations, tendencies, political conditions, economic interests and methods of action will always end up by not functioning, or it will have to function tyrannically. For this reason, I withdrew and, shortly afterwards, the Italian workers' section withdrew, etc.”^a

Now for the facts. After the foundation meeting of the International Working Men's Association of 28 September 1864, when the Provisional Council elected by that Assembly met, Major L. Wolff presented a manifesto and draft Rules written by Mazzini himself.²³⁸ Not only did this draft not find it difficult *directly to govern a multitude*, etc. and not only did it not say that this *nucleus of individuals ... will always end up by not functioning, or it will have to function tyrannically*, but, on the contrary, the Rules were inspired by a centralised conspiracy which gave *tyrannical* powers to the central body. The manifesto was in Mazzini's usual style: bourgeois democracy offering the workers *political rights* so that the *social privileges* of the middle and upper classes could be preserved.

This manifesto and the draft Rules were naturally rejected. The Italians continued their membership until certain questions were raised anew by a number of French bourgeois in an effort to manipulate the International. When the latter failed, first Wolff

^a G. Mazzini, “Agli operai italiani”, *La Roma del popolo*, No. 20, July 13, 1871.—Ed.

and then the others withdrew.²³⁹ And so the International did away with Mazzini. Subsequently, the provisional Central Council, replying to an article by Vésinier,^a stated in the *Journal de Liège* that Mazzini had never been a member of the International Association and that his proposals, manifestoes, and rules had been rejected.²⁴⁰ Mazzini has also made frenzied attacks on the Paris Commune in the English press.^b This is just what he always did when the proletariat rose up. He did the same after the insurrection of June 1848, denouncing the insurgent proletarians in such offensive terms that Louis Blanc himself wrote a pamphlet against him.^c And Louis Blanc repeated on several occasions at that time that the June insurrection was the work of Bonapartist agents!

Mazzini calls Marx a man of *corrosive ... intellect, of domineering temper*, etc., perhaps because Marx knew very well how to corrode away the cabal plotted against the International by Mazzini, *dominating* the old conspirator's poorly disguised lust for authority so effectively that he has been rendered permanently harmless to the Association. This being the case, the International should be delighted to number among its members an *intellect* and a *temper* which, by *corroding* and *domineering* in this way, have kept it going for seven years, one working more than any other man to bring it to its present exalted position.

As for the split in the Association, which has, according to Mazzini, already begun in England, the fact is that two English members of the Council,^d who had been getting on too close terms with the bourgeoisie, found the "Address on the Civil War" too extreme and withdrew. In their place four new English members and one Irishman^e have joined the General Council, which has been more strengthened by this than before.

Rather than being in a state of dissolution, now for the first time the International is being publicly recognised by the whole English press as a great power in Europe, and never has a little pamphlet published in London made such a big impression as the Address of the General Council on the civil war in France, which is now about to be published in its third edition.

^a P. Vésinier, "L'Association Internationale des Travailleurs", *L'Echo de Verviers*, No. 293, December 16, 1865; No. 294, December 18, 1865.—*Ed.*

^b G. Mazzini, "The Commune in Paris", *The Contemporary Review*, Vol. 17, June 1871.—*Ed.*

^c L. Blanc, *Des socialistes français à M. Mazzini*, Brussels, 1852.—*Ed.*

^d G. Odger and B. Lucraft.—*Ed.*

^e A. Taylor, J. Roach, Ch. Mills, G. Lochner and J. P. McDonnell.—*Ed.*

The Italian workers ought to take note of the fact that the great conspirator and agitator, Mazzini, has no other advice for them than: *Educate yourselves, teach yourselves as best you can* (as if this can be done without money!) ... *strive to create more consumer co-operative societies* (not only producer ones!)—*And trust in the future!!!*

Written on July 28, 1871

Published in the magazine *Il Libero Pensiero*, No. 9, August 31, 1871 and in the newspapers *La Favilla*, No. 209, September 7, 1871, *Il Motto d'Ordine*, November 20, 1871, in *Gazzettino Rosa*, No. 255, September 13, 1871 (in part) and in a number of other Italian newspapers

Printed according to the magazine
Il Libero Pensiero

Translated from the Italian

Published in English for the first
time

Karl Marx
[COVERING LETTER TO THE EDITOR
OF *THE TIMES*]²⁴¹

TO THE EDITOR OF *THE TIMES*

7 August 1871
4, Maitland Park, Haverstock Hill, N.W.

Sir—

The note of the *Journal officiel*^a in contradiction to *The Times* article on the postponement of the Versailles trials^b being much commented upon by the Continental Press, the enclosed may perhaps prove of interest for your readers.^c The letter quoted is from a barrister engaged in the defence of some of the prisoners.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Karl Marx

First published in: Marx and Engels,
Works, First Russian Edition, Vol. XIII,
Part II, 1940

Reproduced from the rough manu-
script

^a "Dans son numéro du 29 juillet...", *Journal officiel* (Versailles), No. 215, August 3, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b "Paris is once more busy...", *The Times*, No. 27128, July 29, 1871.—*Ed.*

^c See this volume, pp. 389-90.—*Ed.*

Frederick Engels
TO THE EDITOR OF *THE TIMES*²⁴²

Sir,—

The remarks of *The Times* on the repeated postponement of the trial of the Communist prisoners at Versailles^a have undoubtedly hit the nail on the head and have expressed the feeling of the French public. The angry note of the *Journal officiel*^b in reply to these remarks is but one of the many proofs of the fact. In consequence of the article in *The Times*, many reclamations have been addressed to the Paris press, reclamations which, under these circumstances, had no chance of being published. I have before me the letter of a Frenchman whose official position enables him to know the facts he is writing about, and whose testimony as to the motives of this unaccountable delay ought to have some value. Here are some extracts from this letter:

“Nobody as yet knows when the 3rd Court-martial will open its sittings. The cause of this appears to be that Captain Grimal, *Commissaire de la République* (public accuser), has been superseded by another and more reliable man; it has been found out at the last moment, on perusal of his general report which was to be read in court, that he was perhaps a little bit of a republican, that he had served under Faidherbe etc in the Army of the North etc—Well; all at once another officer presents himself at his office saying: here is my commission, I am your successor; the poor captain was so surprised that he went nearly mad....

“M. Thiers has the pretention to do everything by himself, this mania goes so far that not only has he called together, contrary to all rules of fairness, all the *juges d'instruction*^c in his cabinet, but he pretends even to regulate the composition of the

^a “Paris is once more busy...”, *The Times*, No. 27128, July 29, 1871.—*Ed.*

^b “Dans son numéro du 29 juillet...”, *Journal officiel* (Versailles), No. 215, August 3, 1871.—*Ed.*

^c Public prosecutors.—*Ed.*

public to be admitted into the Court; he himself, through M. B. St. Hilaire, distributes the tickets of admission....

“In the mean time the prisoners at Satory die like flies—pitiless death works faster than the justice of these little statesmen.... There is in the Versailles Cellular prison a big fellow who does not speak a word of French, he is supposed to be an Irishman. How he got into this trouble is still a mystery.—Amongst the prisoners there is a very honest man called..., he has been in his cell for two months and has not yet been examined. It is infamous.”

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Justitia

London 7th August 1871

First published in: Marx and Engels,
Works, First Russian Edition, Vol. XIII,
Part II, 1940

Reproduced from the rough manu-
script