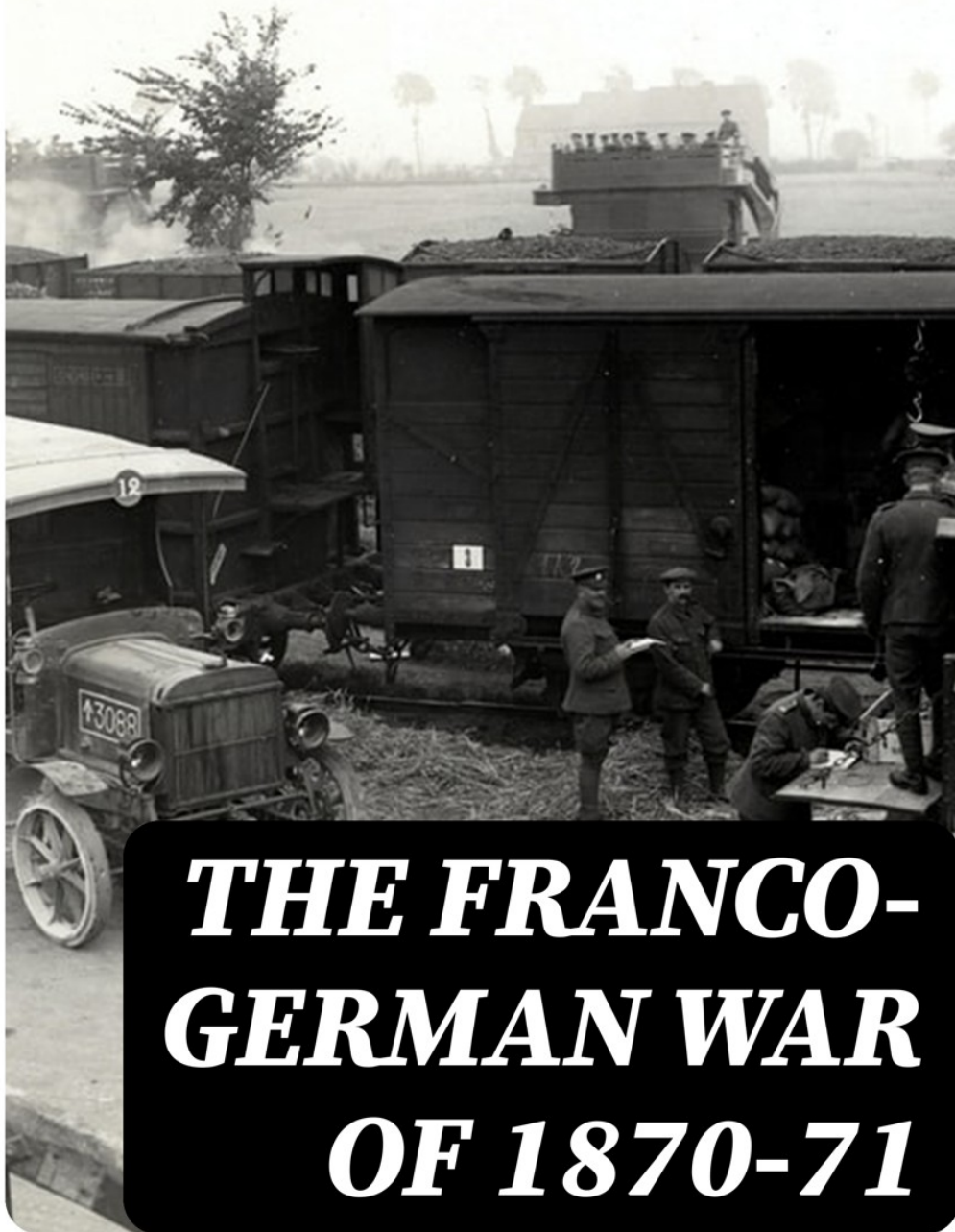


***HELMUTH GRAF
VON MOLTKE***



***THE FRANCO-
GERMAN WAR
OF 1870-71***

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Helmuth Graf von Moltke

The Franco-German War of 1870-71

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PREFACE.

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Field-Marshal von Moltke began this history of the War of 1870—1 in the spring of the year 1887, and during his residence at Creisau he worked at it for about three hours every morning. On his return to Berlin in the autumn of that year, the work was not quite finished, but he completed it by January, 1888, at Berlin, placed it in my hands, and never again alluded to the subject.

The origin of the book was as follows. I had several times entreated him, but in vain, to make use of his leisure hours at Creisau in noting down some of his rich store of reminiscences. He always objected, in the same words: "Everything official that I have had occasion to write, or that is worth remembering, is to be seen in the Archives of the Staff Corps. My personal experiences had better be buried with me." He had a dislike to memoirs in general, which he was at no pains to conceal, saying that they only served to gratify the writer's vanity, and often contributed to distort important historical events by the subjective views of an individual, and the intrusion of trivial details. It might easily happen that a particular character which in history stood forth in noble simplicity should be hideously disfigured by the narrative of some personal experiences, and the ideal halo which had surrounded it be destroyed. And highly characteristic of Moltke's magnanimity are the words he once uttered on such an occasion, and which I noted at the time: "Whatever is published in a military history is always dressed for effect: yet it is a duty of piety and patriotism

never to impair the prestige which identifies the glory of our Army with personages of lofty position."

Not long after our arrival at Creisau, early in 1887, I repeated my suggestion. In reply to my request that he would write an account of the Campaign of 1870—1, he said: "You have the official history of the war. That contains everything. I admit," he added, "that it is too full of detail for the general type of readers, and far too technical. An abridgment must be made some day." I asked him whether he would allow me to lay the work on his table, and next morning he began the narrative contained in this volume, and comparing it as he went on with the official history, carried it through to the end.

His purpose was to give a concise account of the war. But, while keeping this in view, he involuntarily—as was unavoidable in his position—regarded the undertaking from his own standpoint as Chief of the General Staff, and marshalled results so as to agree as a whole with the plan of campaign which was known only to the higher military authorities. Thus this work, which was undertaken in all simplicity of purpose, as a popular history, is practically from beginning to end the expression of a private opinion of the war by the Field-Marshal himself.

The Appendix: "On a pretended Council of War in the Wars of William I. of Prussia," was written in 1881. In a book by Fedor von Koppen, "Männer und Thaten, vaterländische Balladen" (*Men and Deeds: Patriotic Songs*), which the poet presented to the Field-Marshal, there is a poem entitled, "A German Council of War at Versailles" (with a historical note appended), describing an incident which never occurred,

and which, under the conditions by which the relations of the Chief of the Staff to his Majesty were regulated, never could have occurred. To preclude any such mistakes for the future, and to settle once and for all the truth as to the much-discussed question of the Council of War, the Field-Marshal wrote this paper, to which he added a description of his personal experience of the battle of Königgrätz. It is this narrative which, shortly after the writer's death, was published in the *Allgemeine Zeitung* of Munich, in the somewhat abridged and altered form in which the Field-Marshal had placed it at the disposal of Professor von Treitscke, the well-known historian.

COUNT HELMUTH VON MOLTKE,
Major and Adjutant to his
Imperial Majesty.

Berlin, June 25th, 1891.

THE FRANCO-GERMAN WAR.

PART I.

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The days are gone by when, for dynastical ends, small armies of professional soldiers went to war to conquer a city, or a province, and then sought winter quarters or made peace. The wars of the present day call whole nations to arms; there is scarcely a family that has not had to bewail lost ones. The entire financial resources of the State are appropriated to military purposes, and the seasons of the year have no influence on the unceasing progress of hostilities. As long as nations exist distinct one from the other there will be quarrels that can only be settled by force of arms; but, in the interests of humanity, it is to be hoped that wars will become the less frequent, as they become the more terrible.

Generally speaking, it is no longer the ambition of monarchs which endangers peace; but the impulses of a nation, its dissatisfaction with its internal conditions, the strife of parties and the intrigues of their leaders. A declaration of war, so serious in its consequences, is more easily carried by a large assembly, of which no one of the members bears the sole responsibility, than by a single individual, however lofty his position; and a peace-loving sovereign is less rare than a parliament composed of wise men. The great wars of recent times have been declared against the wish and will of the reigning powers. Now-a-days the Bourse possesses so great influence that it is able to have armies called into the field merely to protect its interests. Mexico and Egypt have had European armies of

occupation inflicted upon them simply to satisfy the demands of the *haute finance*. To-day the question is not so much whether a nation is strong enough to make war, as whether its Government is powerful enough to prevent war. For example, united Germany has hitherto used her strength only to maintain European peace; while the weakness of a neighbouring Government continues to involve the gravest risk of war.

It was, indeed, from such a condition of relations that the war of 1870—71 originated. A Napoleon on the throne of France was bound to justify his pretensions by political and military successes. Only temporarily was the French nation contented by the victories of its arms in remote fields of war; the triumphs of the Prussian armies excited jealousy, they were regarded as arrogant, as a challenge; and the French demanded revenge for Sadowa. The liberal spirit of the epoch set itself against the autocratic Government of the Emperor; he was forced to make concessions, his internal authority was weakened, and one day the nation was informed by its representatives that it desired war with Germany.

PREPARATIONS FOR WAR.

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The wars carried on by France beyond seas, essentially on behalf of financial interests, had consumed immense sums and had undermined the discipline of the army. Her army was by no means in thorough preparedness for a great war, but, in the temper of the nation, the Spanish

succession question furnished an opportune pretext on which to go to war. The French Reserves were called out on July 15th, and, as if the opportunity for a rupture was on no account to be let slip, only four days later the French declaration of war was presented at Berlin.

One Division of the French Army was ordered to the Spanish frontier as a corps of observation; only such troops as were absolutely necessary were left in Algiers and in Civita Vecchia; Paris and Lyons were sufficiently garrisoned. The entire remainder of the army: 332 battalions, 220 squadrons, 924 guns, in all about 300,000 men, formed the Army of the Rhine, which, divided into eight Corps, was, at any rate in the first instance, to be under the sole direction of a central head. The Emperor himself was the fitting person to undertake this weighty duty, pending whose arrival Marshal Bazaine was to command the gathering forces.

It is very probable that the French reckoned on the old dissensions of the German races. Not that they dared to look forward to the South Germans as allies, but they hoped to paralyze their offensive by an early victory, perhaps even to win them over to their side. It was true that Prussia by herself was still a mighty antagonist, and that her armed forces were of superior strength; but peradventure this advantage might be counterbalanced by rapidity of action.

The French plan of campaign was indeed based on the delivery of sudden unexpected attacks. The powerful fleet of war-ships and transports was to be utilized to land a considerable force in Northern Prussia, which should there engage a part of the Prussian troops, while the main body of

the German army, it was assumed, would await the first French attack behind the strong defensive line of the Rhine. A French force was to cross the Rhine promptly, at and below Strasburg, thus avoiding the great German fortresses; its function being, at the very outset of the campaign, to cut off the South-German army charged with the defence of the Black Forest, and prevent it from effecting a junction with the North Germans. In the execution of this plan it was imperative that the main body of the French army should be massed in Alsace. Railway accommodation, however, was so inadequate that in the first instance it was only possible to transport 100,000 men to Strasburg; 150,000 had to leave the railway at Metz, and remain there till they could be moved forward. Fifty thousand men in the Châlons camp were intended to serve as supports, and 115 battalions were destined for field service as soon as the National Guard should relieve them in the interior. The various Corps were distributed as follows:—

Imperial Guard,	General Bourbaki—Nancy.
Ist Corps,	Marshal MacMahon— Strasburg.
IInd Corps,	General Frossard—St. Avold.
IIIrd Corps,	Marshal Bazaine—Metz.
IVth Corps,	General Ladmirault— Thionville.
Vth Corps,	General Faily—Bitsch.

Vlth Corps, Marshal Canrobert—Châlons.

Vllth Corps, General Félix Douay—Belfort.

Thus while there were but two Corps in Alsace, there were five on the Moselle; and, so early as the day of the declaration of war, one of the latter, the IInd Corps, had been pushed forward close to the German frontier, about St. Avold and Forbach. General Frossard, its commander, was, however, under strict injunctions to commit himself to no serious undertaking.

The regiments had been hurried away from their peace stations before the arrival of their complement of men, and without waiting for their equipments. Meanwhile the called-out reservists accumulated in the dépôts, overflowed the railway stations and choked the traffic. Their transmission to their destinations was at a standstill, for it was often unknown at the dépôts where the regiments to which the reservists were to be sent were for the time encamped. When at length they joined they were destitute of the most necessary articles of equipment. The Corps and Divisions lacked trains, hospitals and nearly the whole of the *personnel* of their administration. No magazines had been established in advance, and the troops were to depend on the stores in the fortresses. These were in a neglected state, for in the assured expectation that the armies would be almost immediately launched into the enemy's country they had received little attention. It was of a piece with this that the French Staff-officers had been provided with maps of Germany, but not of their own country. The Ministry of War in Paris was overwhelmed with claims, protestations, and

expostulations, till finally it was left to the troops to help themselves as best they could. "*On se débrouillera*," was the hope of the authorities.

When the Emperor arrived at Metz eight days after the declaration of war, the forces were not yet up to their strength, and even the precise whereabouts of whole bodies of troops was for the time unknown. He ordered the advance of the army, but his Marshals protested that its internal plight was so unsatisfactory as to make this impossible for the time. The general conviction was gradually impressing itself on the French, that instead of continuing to aim at invasion of the enemy's country, their exertions would have to be confined to the defence of their own territory. A strong German army was reported to be assembling between Mayence and Coblenz; and instead of reinforcements being sent forward from Metz to Strasburg, much heavier ones would have to be ordered from the Rhine to the Saar. The determination to invade South Germany was already abandoned; the fleet sailed, but without carrying a force to be landed on the north German coast.

Germany had been surprised by the declaration of war, but she was not unprepared. That was a possibility which had been foreseen.

After the withdrawal of Austria from the German connection, Prussia had taken upon itself the sole leadership, and had gradually formed closer relations with the South-German States. The idea of national unification had been revived, and found an echo in the patriotic sentiments of the entire people.

The mobilization machinery of the North-German army had been elaborated from year to year, in accord with the changing conditions, by the combined exertions of the War Ministry and the General Staff. Every branch of the administration throughout the country had been kept informed of all it needed to know in this relation. The Berlin authorities had also come to a confidential understanding with the Chiefs of the General Staffs of the South-German States on all important points. The principle was established that Prussian assistance was not to be reckoned on for the defence of any particular point, such as the Black Forest; and that South Germany would be best protected by an offensive movement into Alsace from the middle Rhine, to be effectively supported by a large army massed there. That the Governments of Bavaria, Würtemberg, Baden and Hesse, to all appearance uncovering their own territories, were ready to place their contingents under the command of King William, proved their entire confidence in the Prussian leadership.

This understanding enabled the preparations which it entailed to be proceeded with. The train and march tables were worked out for each body of troops, with the most minute directions as to the respective starting-points, the day and hour of departure, the duration of the journey, the refreshment stations, and points of detrainment. In the locality of concentration cantonments were assigned to each Corps and Division, and magazines were established with due regard to the most convenient sites; and thus, when the stroke of war inevitably impended, there was required only the Royal signature to start the whole mighty

movement in its smooth, swift course. Nothing needed to be changed in the directions originally given; it sufficed to follow the plans previously thought out and prepared.

The aggregated mobile forces were formed into three separate Armies, on the basis of an elaborate tabular statement drawn up by the Chief of the Prussian General Staff.

The 1st Army, under the command of General von Steinmetz, consisted of, in the first instance, only the VIIth and VIIIth Corps, with one Division of cavalry; 60,000 men all told. It was ordered to assemble at Wittlich and form the right wing.

The IInd Army, under the command of Prince Frederick Charles, consisted of the IIIrd, IVth, Xth, and Guard Corps, with two Divisions of cavalry. Assembling in the vicinity of Homburg and Neunkirchen, it was to form the centre, with a strength of 134,000 men.

The IIIrd Army, under the command of the Crown Prince of Prussia, consisted of the Vth and XIth Prussian, and the 1st and IInd Bavarian Corps, the Würtemberg and Baden Field Divisions, with one Division of cavalry. Its approximate strength was 130,000 men; it was to constitute the left wing, and to concentrate about Landau and Rastatt.

The IXth Corps, consisting of the 18th and the Hesse Divisions, was along with the XIIth Royal Saxon Corps to form a reserve of 60,000 men in front of Mayence, for the reinforcement of the IInd Army to a strength of 194,000 men.

The three Armies numbered together 384,000 men.

There still remained the 1st, 11nd, and 16th Corps, numbering 100,000 men; but they were not at first included, as railway transport for them was not available for three weeks to come. The 17th Division and certain bodies of Landwehr troops were detailed to defend the coasts.

It is apparent that numerically the German armies were considerably superior to the French. Inclusive of the garrisons and reserves about one million of men and over 200,000 horses were on the ration list.

On the night of July 16th the Royal order for mobilization was issued, and when his Majesty arrived in Mayence fourteen days later, he found 300,000 men assembled on the Rhine and beyond.

The plan of campaign submitted by the Chief of the General Staff, and accepted by the King, proves that officer to have had his eye fixed, from the first, upon the capture of the enemy's capital, the possession of which is of more importance in France than in other countries. On the way thither the hostile forces were to be driven as persistently as possible back from the fertile southern provinces into the more confined background to the north. But beyond everything the plan of campaign was based on the resolve to attack the enemy at once, wherever found, and keep the German forces always so compact that this could be done with the advantage of superior numbers. The specific dispositions for the accomplishment of those objects were left to be adopted on the spot; the advance to the frontier was alone pre-arranged in every detail.

It is a delusion to imagine that a plan of campaign can be laid down far ahead and fulfilled with exactitude. The first

collision with the enemy creates a new situation in accordance with its result. Some things intended will have become impracticable; others, which originally seemed impossible, become feasible. All that the leader of an army can do is to form a correct estimate of the circumstances, to decide for the best for the moment, and carry out his purpose unflinchingly.

The advance of the French troops to the frontier, while as yet imperfectly mobilized, which was an extremely hazardous measure in itself, was evidently with the intent of utilizing the temporary advantage of having a superior force at immediate disposition by taking at unawares the German armies in the act of developing their advance-movements. But, notwithstanding, the German commanders did not deviate from their purpose of promptly effecting this first advance in front of the Rhine. The railway transport of the Corps of the IInd and IIIrd Armies, however, ended at the Rhine; thence the troops marched on foot into the cantonments prepared on the left bank of the river. They moved in echelon, advancing only so many at a time as would make room for the body in rear, in the first instance to the line Bingen-Dürkheim-Landau. The farther advance towards the frontier was not to be undertaken until the Divisions and Corps were all assembled, and provided with the necessary trains; and then they were to march forward in a state of readiness to confront the enemy at any moment.

The massing of the Ist Army appeared to be less threatened, because its route was protected by neutral territory, and was covered by the garrisons of Trèves,

Saarlouis and Saarbrücken, the German outposts on the Saar.

The Ist Army, 50,000 strong, was concentrated at Wadern, in the first days of August. The IInd Army, which meanwhile had been increased to a strength of 194,000 men, had pushed forward its cantonments to Alsenz-Günnsstadt, at the farther base of the Haardt Mountains, a position which had been thoroughly inspected by an officer of the General Staff, and where the troops might confidently await an attack. The 5th and 6th cavalry Divisions were reconnoitring the country in front. The IIIrd Army was still assembling on both banks of the Rhine.

The French so far had made no serious attempt at Saarbrücken; Lieutenant-Colonel Pestel, with one battalion and three squadrons, was able successfully to withstand their petty attacks. It had meanwhile been observed that the hostile forces were moving farther to the right, towards Forbach and Bitsch. This seemed to indicate that the two French Corps known to be about Belfort and Strasburg, might purpose crossing the Rhine and marching through the Black Forest. It seemed therefore all the more important that the IIIrd Army should be set in motion as early as possible, for one thing to protect the right bank of the Upper Rhine by an advance on the left; for another, to cover the left flank of the IInd Army during its advance.

A telegraphic order to that effect was despatched on the evening of July 30th, but the Head-quarters of the IIIrd Army wished to wait for the arrival of the VIth Corps and of the trains. Whereupon, regardless of this delay, the IInd Army

was put in march towards the Saar, where the French were beginning to be active.

The time had gone by when they might have taken advantage of their over-hasty mobilization; the inefficient condition of the troops had paralyzed every attempt at activity. France had been long waiting for the news of a victory, and something had to be done to appease public impatience. So, in order to do something, it was resolved (as is usual in such circumstances) to undertake a reconnoissance in force, and, it may be added, with the usual result.

On August 2nd three entire Army Corps were set in motion against three battalions, four squadrons, and one battery in Saarbrücken. The Emperor himself and the Prince Imperial shared in the enterprise. The IIIrd Corps advanced on Völklingen, the Vth through Saargemünd, the IInd on Saarbrücken.

Saarbrücken was evacuated after a gallant defence and repeated counter-strokes, but the French did not press across the Saar; convinced, possibly, that they had wasted their strength in a stroke in the air, and had nowhere gained any insight into the dispositions of the enemy.

The French military chiefs now hesitated for a long while between conflicting resolutions. Orders were given and recalled on the strength of mere rumours. The left wing was reinforced because 40,000 Prussians were supposed to have marched through Trèves, the Guard received contradictory orders, and the bare apparition of a small German force about Lörrach in the Black Forest occasioned the order that the VIIth Corps must remain in Alsace. Thus the French

forces were straggled over the wide area between the Nied and the Upper Rhine, while the Germans were advancing in compact masses towards the Saar.

This scattered state of their forces finally induced the French leaders to divide them into two separate Armies. Marshal MacMahon took command, but only provisionally, of the Ist, VIIth, and Vth Corps, of which the latter had therefore to draw in to him from Bitsch. The other Corps remained under Marshal Bazaine, with the exception of the Imperial Guard, the command of which the Emperor reserved to himself.

It had now become a pressing necessity to protect the left wing of the advancing IInd German Army against the French forces in Alsace, and the IIIrd Army was therefore ordered to cross the frontier on August 4th, without waiting any longer for its trains. The Ist Army, forming the right wing, was in complete readiness near Wadern and Losheim, three or four days' march nearer to the Saar than the IInd Army in the centre. It received the order to concentrate in the neighbourhood of Tholey and there halt for the present. For one thing, this army, the weakest of the three, could not be exposed single-handed to an encounter with the enemy's main force; and for another, it was available to serve as an offensive flank in case the IInd Army should meet the enemy on emerging from the forest zone of the Palatinate.

In the execution of this order, the Ist Army had so extended its cantonments southward that they trenched on the line of march of the IInd Army, and it had to evacuate the quarters about Ottweiler in favour of the latter. This involved a difficulty, as all the villages to the north were full,

and as room had also to be found for the 1st Corps, now advancing by Birkenfeld. General von Steinmetz therefore decided to march his whole army in the direction of Saarlouis and Saarbrücken. The IInd Army, on August 4th, stood assembled ready for action, and received orders to deploy on the farther side of the forest zone of Kaiserslautern.

COMBAT OF WEISSENBURG.

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(August 4th.)

On this day the Corps of the Illrd Army, consisting of 128 battalions, 102 squadrons, and 80 batteries, which had been assembled in bivouac behind the Klingsbach, crossed the French frontier, marching on a broad front to reach the Lauter between Weissenburg and Lauterburg. This stream affords an exceptionally strong defensive position, but on August 4th only one weak Division and a cavalry brigade of the 1st French Corps covered this point, the main body of that Corps being still on the march towards the Palatinate.

Early in the morning the Bavarians forming the right wing encountered a lively resistance before the walls of Weissenburg, which were too strong to be stormed. But very soon after the two Prussian Corps crossed the Lauter lower down. General von Bose led forward the XIth Corps (which he commanded) with intent to turn the French right flank on the Geisberg, while General von Kirchbach, with the Vth Corps (which he commanded) advanced against the enemy's front. Thirty field-guns were meanwhile massed against the railway station of Weissenburg. It and subsequently the town were taken, after a bloody struggle.

So early as ten o'clock General Douay had ordered a retreat, which was seriously threatened by the movement against the Geisburg; and the château of that name, a very defensible building, was most obstinately defended to enable the French to retire. The Grenadiers of the King's Regiment No. 7 in vain assailed it by storm, suffering heavy loss; nor did its defenders surrender until, with the greatest difficulty, artillery had been dragged up on to the height.

The French Division, which had been attacked by three German Corps, effected a retreat after an obstinate struggle, though in great disorder, having suffered much loss. Its gallant Commander had been killed. The Germans had to bewail a proportionately considerable loss; their casualties were 91 officers and 1460 men. General von Kirchbach had been wounded while fighting in the foremost rank.

The 4th Division of cavalry had met with much delay in the course of a nineteen miles' march by the crossing of the columns of infantry. It did not reach the scene of combat, and all touch of the enemy, now retiring to the westward, was lost.

Uncertain as to the direction whence fresh hostile forces might be approaching, the IIIrd Army advanced on the 5th of August by diverging roads in the direction of Hagenau and Reichshofen; yet not so far apart but that it should be possible for the Corps to reconcentrate in one short march. The Crown Prince intended to allow his troops a rest on the following day, so as to have them fresh for a renewed attack as soon as the situation was made clear.

But already, that same evening, the Bavarians on the right flank and the Vth Corps in the front had a sharp encounter with the enemy, who showed behind the Sauer in considerable strength. It was to be assumed that Marshal MacMahon had brought up the VIIth Corps from Strasburg, but it remained a question whether he intended to join Marshal Bazaine by way of Bitsch, or whether, having secured his line of retreat thither, he meant to accept battle at Wörth. Yet again there was the possibility that he might

himself initiate the offensive. The Crown Prince, to make sure in any case of a preponderance of force, determined to concentrate his army in the neighbourhood of Sulz on August 6th. The IInd Bavarian Corps received separate instructions to watch the road from Bitsch with one Division; the other Division was to strike the hostile attack in flank on the western bank of the Sauer, in the event of artillery fire about Wörth being heard.

Marshal MacMahon was endeavouring with all his might to concentrate his three Corps, and he really had the intention to make an immediate attack on his invading foe. A Division of the VIIth Corps, which had but just been sent to Mülhausen to strengthen the defence of Alsace, was at once recalled to Hagenau, and early on the 6th formed the right wing of the strong position which the Ist Corps had taken up behind the Sauer, and in front of Fröschwiller, Elsasshausen, and Eberbach. On the left, Lespart's Division of the Vth Corps was expected from Bitsch, of which the other Divisions were only now on march from Saargemünd by way of Rohrbach. Meanwhile Ducrot's Division formed a refused flank on the French left.

Neither the German nor the French leaders expected the collision before the following day, but when, as in this case, the adversaries are in so close proximity, the conflict may break out at any moment, even against the wish of the higher commanders.

BATTLE OF WÖRTH.

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(August 6th.)

After a good deal of skirmishing between the respective outposts during the night, the Commander of the 20th German Brigade[1] thought it expedient to seize a passage over the Sauer, which flowed just in his front and constituted a serious obstacle. The bridge leading to Wörth had been destroyed, but the sharpshooters waded through the river, and at seven o'clock pressed into the town, which the French had left unoccupied.

Soon enough they realized that before them was a numerous enemy in a strong position.

The broad meadows of the Sauer all lie within effective range of the commanding slopes on the right bank; and the long-ranging chassépôt fire could not but tell heavily. On the French side of the river the terrain was dotted with vineyards and hop-gardens, which afforded great advantages for defensive purposes.

The combat which had begun at Wörth was broken off after lasting half an hour, but the artillery of both sides had taken part in it, and the sound of cannon-fire had been the signal prescribed to Hartmann's IInd Bavarian Corps, acting on which it now advanced from Langensulzbach, and was soon engaged in a brisk fight with the left flank of the French. The latter on their side had advanced on their right to the attack of Gunstett, where they came in contact with the advancing XIth Prussian Corps.

The din of battle, rolling from the north and south alike, was heard by the Vth Corps in its position opposite to Wörth; and it seemed imperative that it should engage with vigour the enemy's centre in order to hinder him from throwing

himself with all his strength on one or other of the German flanks.

The artillery was brought up, and by ten o'clock 108 guns were in action on the eastern slope of the Sauer valley.

Some infantry detachments waded breast-high through the river, but this dashing attempt, undertaken in inadequate strength, miscarried, and it was only by strenuous efforts that a foothold was maintained on the other side.

The Crown Prince sent orders that nothing was to be undertaken that would bring on a battle on that day. But by this time the Vth Corps was so seriously engaged that the fight could not be broken off without obvious disadvantage. General von Kirchbach therefore determined to continue the contest on his own responsibility.

The frontal attack was an undertaking of great difficulty, and could scarcely succeed unless with the co-operation of another on the flank. But at this juncture the Bavarians, who, in position as they were on the right, could have afforded this co-operation, obeyed the breaking off command, which had also reached them in the course of the fighting, and withdrew to Langensulzbach. There was, however, the XIth Corps in position on the left, eager to strike in. It seized the Albrechts-häuser farm, and pressed forward into the Niederwald.

In front of Wörth the battle hung, consisting of a succession of attacks renewed again and again on either side; each assailant in turn getting worsted, in consequence of the nature of the country. By degrees, however, the collective battalions, and finally the artillery of the Vth

Corps, were brought over to the west bank of the Sauer; while the XIth Corps had already won there a firm point of support for further advance.

Just then, near Morsbronn, notwithstanding the evident unfavourable nature of the ground, two Cuirassier and one Lancer regiments of Michel's brigade hurled themselves with reckless daring on a body of German infantry taken in the act of wheeling to the right. But the 32nd Regiment, far from seeking cover, received in open order the charging mass of over 1000 horse with a steady fire which did great execution. The Cuirassiers especially suffered immense loss. Only a few horsemen broke through the firing line and gained the open ground; many were taken prisoners in the village, the remainder rode in wild gallop as far as Walburg. There they encountered the Prussian 13th Hussars, suffered further loss, and disappeared from the field.

It is true that the infantry of the French right wing succeeded in driving back the foremost detachments of the Germans about Albrechts-häuser farm, but the further advance of the former was shattered by the fire of newly-unmasked artillery.

When finally the last battalions had crossed the Sauer, the XIth Corps made its way through the Niederwald, fighting its way step by step. The northern edge of the forest was reached by 2.30, and there a junction was formed with the left flank of the Vth Corps. The burning village of Elsasshausen was carried by storm, and the little copse south of Fröschwiller was also won after a gallant defence.

Thus crowded together in a limited space, the French army was in a situation of imminent danger. Its left flank, it