

EXCERPTS FROM
**NOTES ON PRUSSIA IN HER GRAND
CATASTROPHE OF 1806**

by

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This is a partial translation of Clausewitz's *Nachrichten über Preussen in seiner grossen Katastrophe; Kriegsgeschichtliche Einzelschriften*, X, Berlin, 1888. It was written c.1823-25, based in part on papers and articles Clausewitz wrote immediately after the campaign. Due to its explosive criticism of the Prussian state, however, it could not be published in Prussia until the 1880s.

COL Lanza concentrated on the sections of Clausewitz's work covering the actual military conduct of the campaign, primarily the last chapter plus a paper entitled "Prince August's Battalion at the Battle of Prenzlau." Most of the rest of the study can be found in "From Observations on Prussia in Her Great Catastrophe," in Carl von Clausewitz, *Historical and Political Writings*, eds./trans. Peter Paret and Daniel Moran (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp.30-30-84. That excerpt covers the first three chapters of Clausewitz's study. Fortunately, while there is some overlap, the two translations are in fact complementary: Paret has unaccountably left out the chapters that cover the actual military events of 1806-7, while the 1922 translator dispensed with much of the social and political background that Paret included.



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CHAPTER IX
EXTRACTS FROM
Notes on Prussia During the Grand
Catastrophe of 1806

BY CLAUSEWITZ

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Field Artillery

THE CAUSES OF THE WAR—THE PREPARATION

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At the commencement of June (1806) M. de Talleyrand declared frankly to Lord Yarmouth that if Fox was employed as a negotiator, Hanover would never be a source of difficulty. The Prussian cabinet then commenced to mistrust the situation with regard to France; it felt a sort of anguish and saw that the honor of the state would again be in danger.

But little time had elapsed since Count Haugwitz had signed the Treaty of Vienna, and the following serious steps had been taken against Prussian interest preceding this last blow, which no one knew whether they were an outrage or a deceit:

1. The organization of the Confederation of the Rhine which followed immediately after the peace of Presbourg, when not a single word had been said about it during the negotiations, and without Austria or even Prussia having knowledge of it;

2. The factions which excited France to interfere in the formation by Prussia of a Confederation of the North of Germany, although it had itself proposed this as an equivalent;

3. Fulda had been offered to the Elector of Hesse if he would enter the Confederation of the Rhine: to the Elector of Hesse who was to be one of the principal members of the Confederation of the North, Fulda which belonged to the brother-in-law of the King, the Prince of Orange, to whom no proper satisfaction had been given for his just aspirations;

4. The Grand Duke of Berg had seized the convents of Verden and Essen, although these had never belonged to Cleves;

5. France itself occupied Wesel, although Prussia had ceded this town only to the Grand Duke of Berg.

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The French had still in south Germany an army of 80,000 to 100,000 men, and another army assembling on the lower Rhine, and the Prussian court well foresaw that the bad feeling of the Emperor of the French would soon fall on them like a clap of thunder. It therefore decided, at the commencement of August to mobilize its army on a war footing and to assemble it in Saxony.

Prussia then was to mobilize again, at the very moment when Russia and England were negotiating at Paris for a separate peace. It was a real stroke of fortune for Prussia that these two powers had been unable to come to an understanding with France. The Emperor of Russia refused his ratification to the treaty which his Ambassador, Oubril, provided with full powers, had concluded at Paris in a hasty manner. There was in this treaty a particularly inappropriate requirement. M. d'Oubril, whose instructions were rather directed towards the idea of having a definite peace, learned during July, just after his arrival at Paris, of the organization of the Confederation of the Rhine, and of the signing on the 12th of July of the Act of Confederation. Instead of being disturbed at this and asking for new instructions from his court, he saw in this act an immediate danger for Austria, and thought to save this state by signing a definite peace with France on condition that the French troops should evacuate Germany as soon as possible. It is hard to understand that M. d'Oubril could believe that such conditions of peace would raise an obstacle, even if only a

diplomatic one, to a war against Austria or Prussia. There could not be a better analogy than that of children, who in order to capture birds try to place salt upon their tails.

The English negotiations at Paris were leading to no issue when the death of the illustrious Fox hastened this result.

Thus in September, or at least later, Prussia could again hope to appear not all alone on the field of battle.

In August, as has already been said, agreements had been come to with Sweden by abandoning Lauenbourg, and with England it was easy to abandon suddenly the hostile attitude in view of the fact that Gray, after the death of Fox, had crossed over to the opposition party in the government, and did not have the same zeal as his predecessor for peace with France. The arrangement for subsidies and assistance from England was not, however, established until later, but a few days before the battle of Auerstaedt.

With Russia there was still a sort of an alliance, and Colonel Krusemark was sent in September to Petersburg to reopen negotiations concerning supporting troops which Russia was to send.

With Saxony an alliance was concluded which added 25,000 men to the Prussian army, and negotiations were started with Hesse as the Elector did not wish to declare himself too soon.

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* * * * * The Prussian army had a strength of about 200,000 men. It could be foreseen that hardly 150,000 of these would appear on the field of battle. With this force victory was not thoroughly assured, and if it was sufficient for this, it was only as against the army which France could bring up at the beginning of the operations. There was no doubt that another army would soon follow this into the theater of operations and it was necessary to foresee considerable losses which would have to be compensated for during the first weeks.

The Prussian army had made but two campaigns in 45 years and these were only partial wars. The principle of promotion by seniority had resulted in filling the high grades with old men. They carried along poorly in times of peace;

but in the field, in a war to the death against young and vigorous leaders, it was foolish to employ such means.

The political relation which Prussia had with the great powers was the result of the preceding politics, and these were not so particularly favorable as to be able to turn matters to its advantage. But the small princes scattered in the middle of Prussia made but one political system with it; they could and should be lead to the same degree in the extraordinary efforts which Prussia then itself made.

Electoral Saxony, the Dukes of Saxony, the two Mecklenburgs, Electoral Hesse, the Princes of Anhalt, Schwarzburg and Lippe, the Duke of Brunswick, etc., could mobilize a force of 60,000 to 70,000 men, while in October 1806, there were only 18,000 Saxons. But in a battle, 10,000 men may decide many things, and 50,000 men still more.

There was little hope of opening the campaign with success and of remaining in Saxony until the arrival of the Russians. The war should therefore have proceeded towards the Vistula and everything been arranged accordingly.

As a result the following extraordinary measures should have formed a part of the preparations for war:

1. The assembling of a considerable sum of money, either through a loan or through war contributions.

2. The raising of 100,000 men during the months of August as soon as the war was decided upon to organize the reserve battalions.

3. The organization of field batteries in numbers corresponding to the number of bronze guns withdrawn from forts and replaced by iron guns.

4. The purchase of 200,000 muskets in Austria and England.

5. The transfer of all military stores from undefended towns into fortresses.

6. The construction of bridgeheads over the Elbe, the Oder, and the Vistula.

7. The retirement of those generals, field officers and captains who were too old; the promotion of some young men to high grades; the assignment to command of forts, of some young men who would have had to determine their fate.

8. Finally, an amicable but powerful action on the little states.

From these eight measures, prescribed by sound reason, if one thought on the dangers of the time, not a single one was taken, because it was the custom to think of nothing else except mobilization.

The Court understood clearly, subject to possible minor errors, the strength of the forces which the Prussian army would regularly have in August 1806, viz:

INFANTRY		<i>Soldiers</i>
1.	58 regiments of infantry, of 2 battalions of 5 companies each, a company containing 172 men not counting officers and musicians, making a total in soldiers.....	99,760
2.	29 battalions of grenadiers, at 4 companies each, of the same strength as above, making a total in grenadiers	19,952
3.	24 battalions of fusiliers, at 4 companies each, same strength as above, making a total in fusiliers.....	16,512
4.	1 regiment of chasseurs, of 3 battalions of 600 men each, giving a total of chasseurs	1,800
5.	5 battalions of guards at 4 companies each	3,440
Total infantry.....		141,464

CAVALRY		<i>Troopers</i>
1.	12 regiments of cuirassiers, at 5 squadrons each, each squadron having 132 troopers, making in all 60 squadrons of cuirassiers	7,920
2.	14 regiments of dragoons, of which 12 regiments had 5 squadrons, and 2 regiments had 10 squadrons each; each squadron having 162 troopers, making a total of 80 squadrons, and of dragoons	10,560
3.	15 squadrons of Uhlans, at 162 troopers.....	2,430
4.	9½ regiments of Hussars, at 10 squadrons of 162 troopers, making a total of 92 squadrons and of Hussars	15,390
Total cavalry, 250 squadrons.....		36,300

ARTILLERY		<i>Men</i>
1.	4 regiments of foot artillery at ---- companies, each company containing ---- men; 10 mounted companies each of ---- men, making a total in artillery.....	8,000
STRENGTH OF FIELD TROOPS:		185,764
58 3d Battalions at 500 men each		29,000
58 companies of convalescents at 50 men each		2,900
Total for garrison troops.....		31,900
TOTAL STRENGTH OF ARMY		217,664

This total can be considered as 200,000 men in round numbers, taking into considerations that naturally all or-

ganizations would not have *their full authorized strength, allowing for a shortage of one-twelfth on an average.**

Of these 200,000 men, one could expect to find at least 150,000 in the theater of operations, by replacing 50,000 men by garrison troops, and allowing for leaving some field troops in certain fortresses. But the results were far from being so favorable.

For reasons difficult to understand, the troops of East Prussia were not at first mobilized, and consequently they were not brought to Saxony. Some people thought that this was accounted for by ideas of economy, and that it being intended to join these troops to the supporting Russian army, it was desirable to economize by not placing them on a war footing before they were needed. To this was also added the idea that it was impracticable to form a reserve army. This idea entirely confused and filled people's heads. While tactical reserves are to be recommended, on the other hand an idea to retain strategical reserves from forces all ready is contrary to good sense. The reason for this is that battles decide the fate of the war, and that the employment

*The above calculation varies in some details, from the correct return of the troops; however, the figures for the total are only slightly modified.

There was in 1806:

- 57 regiments of infantry at 19 companies each;
- 1 regiment of infantry of 2 companies (new organization);
- 29 battalions of grenadiers of 4 companies each;
- 1 battalion of guards of 4 companies;
- 1 regiment of foot chasseurs of 12 companies;
- 24 battalions of fusiliers at 4 companies each;
- 13 regiments of cuirassiers at 5 squadrons each;
- 12 regiments of dragoons at 5 squadrons each;
- 2 regiments of dragoons of 10 squadrons each;
- 1½ Towarcyn regiments at 10 squadrons each;
- 9½ regiments of hussars at 10 squadrons each;
- 4 regiments of foot artillery at 10 companies each;
- 1 regiment of mounted artillery at 10 companies each;
- 1 detachment pontoniers of 2½ companies;
- 1 detachment of mining troops of 4 companies;
- 58 3d battalions at 4 companies each;
- 52 companies of convalescents.

Total strength of the army then was in 1806, according to a report made in 1817 (K.A.—D.9), 239,800 combatants not counting the convalescents. On the other hand the subsistence returns for 1806 account only for 6,683 officers and 200,239 combatants, exclusive of the guard troops, who were not included in this return, and exclusive of the convalescents, but including all men absent on furlough. (*Note of German Editor.*)

of tactical reserves precedes the decision, while the employment of strategical reserves follows the decision. What would anyone say of the coachman who would detach one-half of his horses before an obstacle in order to have them in reserve if the others became exhausted? But this idea of the use of a strategical reserve, which is still constantly appearing at the present time, was certainly very plausible for people at the time we are considering; it is therefore very easy to believe that it was thought that it would be as practicable as economical to leave the troops in East Prussia quietly in their garrisons. These consisted ordinarily of 21,000 field troops. The reason why 10,000 field troops remained in the Duchy of Warsaw was a no better one, although it was more habitual. There was no confidence as to this country and it was not believed desirable to withdraw its garrison completely. As a matter of fact, it would have been worth while to protect Warsaw against a revolutionary movement by mean of a strong garrison, *had there been sufficient forces*, but under the circumstances, with a David going out to fight a Goliath, it was only by assembling all forces against the principal enemy that success could have been expected. If the French were beaten in Franconia, the Poles could not undertake anything; if our own troops were beaten, it would certainly be necessary to call up the troops in rear areas.

Six battalions of field troops also remained in Silesia, as it was believed that the garrison troops were not sufficient to guard the fortresses. As the forts in Silesia were in no way threatened while the fighting was in Saxony, and as it was possible in case of retreat to send from Saxony a detachment to Silesia, these 4,000 men could and should have marched against the enemy. It is therefore necessary to deduct from the 186,000 field troops the following:

	<i>Soldiers</i>
In East Prussia -----	21,424
In Silesia -----	4,300
In South Prussia -----	10,320
Artillery -----	2,000
Total -----	38,044*

*The numbers given by Clausewitz as to the strength of troops left in rear areas are in general too large. The prescribed strength of these troops in war, in round numbers was 33,000 men. (*Note by German Editor.*)

The remainder therefore is 148,000 for the theater of operations.

But a detachment of these troops, consisting of 11,700 men, was in Westphalia, partly on garrison duty at Hameln and Minden, and partly as a small observation detachment under General Le Coq. Therefore there remained in the principal theater of war in Saxony only 136,000 men.

But our army at Thuringia was at the end of September scarcely 110,000 strong. There was thus a deficiency in effective strength of more than 26,000 men, which can be easily explained by considering the system of recruiting and the desertions which followed; the prescribed strengths were rarely obtained, and still less so now that recruiting had been suspended for several years and that the last conscripts had been during spring, and that it had been necessary to leave in rear areas the many sick which the army had at the time of mobilization. The rapid and unaccustomed marches had slightly increased the number of sick; finally in view of the lack of practice in war and its strenuousness, the regiments had a great number of detached men who being on special duties were not present at the battle. Under these conditions the deficiency of 25,000 to 26,000 men, that is to say of one-fifth was not extraordinarily large; the Prussian ministry should have foreseen this condition and should have taken suitable measures in consequence.

Thus of the famous Prussian army of 220,000 men all to be ready for battle, only one-half was actually present and ready* for the most decisive battle which it was possible to undertake.

The political preparation for the war did not show any improvement over the military preparations.

As war was everywhere feared it was found impossible to abandon the last hope for peace. This hesitation at the

*The examination of the Archives as to the actual strength of the Prussian Army placed in march at the commencement of October, show numerous reports differing from one another. For example, Scharnhorst in his "Report to the Court of the Battles of Auerstaedt and Iena," states the total force was 96,840 combatants. But on the other hand Hoepfner states 141,911 men were present. The former statement is certainly too small, the latter too large. The number given by Clausewitz should be very close to the truth. A. Niessel.

last turn of the road, although it would have been for the most impracticable thing in the world, is the form under which feebleness of character is most often and most clearly shown. Nothing is more regrettable than not to show firm determination before an unavoidable danger. In order to ascertain if the danger is truly unavoidable princes should disassociate themselves from courtiers who only speak with their lips, and through good sense inquire from people who have proper intelligence. In August and in September, it was still believed possible to avoid war, that is to say it was hoped to meet Bonaparte on some middle ground, and in consequence it was not desired to become bound up too much in advance with England and Russia. It was not desired to make a decision before the report of General Knobelsdorff had arrived from Paris, from which it clearly appears that this poor diplomat had not been sent with the sole idea of deceiving the French, but that a last hope was expected from his personality. But what sad means! This report did not arrive until September 17th. If this intention had been in mind, a treaty should have been concluded at London during September, but this was not done until November, and then in East Prussia.* Instead of ardently seeking the assistance of England, especially in order to obtain arms and money, the arrival of Lord Morpeth at GHQ at Weimar, was awaited; and this person did not arrive until October 12, that is to say, two days before the battle.

Naturally a treaty cannot be concluded before a battle. However, a declaration of Marquis Lucchesini that negotiations depended on the result of the battle is an astonishing one. In ordinary cases, one could have expected such a declaration from Lord Morpeth. But while English politics and the entire system of government of this country are too strong, too powerful and too great to withdraw before a possible change, on the other hand Prussian politics had become too incoherent to attach itself under misfortunes under a stronger government with a view to re-

*The negotiations with England were renewed during November, but a treaty was not concluded until the end of January, 1807. (See Martens, the Report of the Principle Treaty of Alliances, suppl. IV. 411.)

newed assistance. In a word, no assistance for the campaign of 1806 was obtained from England.

The situation did not seem any better with regard to Russia. Colonel Krusemark, who could have been sent to Petersburg at the end of August, as the reply of the Emperor had then been already received, did not leave until the day after that on which General Knobelsdorff's report arrived, that is on the 18th of September. He was to arrange for what was necessary concerning the march of the supporting army; but the results showed that an immediate demand for rapid assistance was not made, as the Russian army, which was ready on the frontier, although only 50,000 strong, could have been available on the Oder by the middle of November, which would have made a considerable difference. It was certainly not necessary to wait on the good wishes of the Emperor for political difficulties and hesitations. If therefore the Russian army did not cross the frontier until November, the fault certainly lies in the erroneous opinion of the Russian Cabinet, who had left in their garrisons the troops of East and Central Prussia. At the end of October a long convention with the Prussian government concerning the subsistence of the Russian supporting troops was concluded at Grodno, and between all this red tape, all supporting action for the campaign of 1806 was thrust aside.

The selection of the man sent to Petersburg also shows that there was no important mission in sending him, and that the only thought was to arrange for carrying out the arrangements mentioned above. Colonel Krusemark was the aide or more exactly confidential messenger of Marshal Moellendorf, a man of wordly and agreeable manners, but absolutely ignorant, without a single distinguishing natural talent; he had not been up to now employed in any State affair except as a subordinate in two diplomatic missions. His position in the State was not such as to give him importance; it can therefore be easily believed that he was not sent to carry out any extraordinary thing, as it was impossible to count on his personal worth for any such tasks. It has also been said that it was necessary to arrange a plan of operations with the Russians. This subject would be to

him still more strange than any other, and besides it was not the time for this, as the Russian army was 150 miles in rear of the Prussian army.

With Saxony there had been difficulty in arranging for a treaty by which this country would send 18,000 men to the Prussian army, that is, nearly one-half of its own army.*

The treaty was completed so late, that the Saxon troops were the last to come into line and this caused several days' delay. As to the Mecklenburgers, the population of Anhalt and Schwartzburg, the Dukes of Saxony, the Houses of Lippe and the Duke of Brunswick, neutrality had been generously accorded these, as if the addition of their 10,000 or 20,000 men would have been of no use. The Duke of Brunswick alone sent one battalion of chasseurs.

The Elector of Hesse turned towards Prussian politics. He wished to wait for a victory of the Prussian arms in order to immediately declare himself, and in case this victory should not occur, he would be always protected by the sacred rites of neutrality, strong as a rock in a wild sea. This weakness and character was immediately punished by the most lamentable catastrophe; but in fact this was just and proper. It would have been unheard of that such a political course should be crowned with great success. But that the Prussian Cabinet tolerated this conduct of the Hessian Court was also very weak. Our troops crossed Hessian territory in order to march from Westphalia into Thuringia; this in itself was sufficient to prevent any choice of action to the Elector and 15,000 Hessians were not to be disdained.

For these reasons the Prussian army in Thuringia in front of the French, instead of having with it a detachment of 50,000 Allies, only had 18,000 Saxons.

Without these mistakes of the Cabinet and without those which were made in the preparations for the war, by employing only troops on hand and without any extraordinary effort, there could have been opposed to the enemy 200,000 men, whereas there were only assembled 130,000 men. If in spite of the superiority thus obtained, the first

*The North of Saxony troops which took part in the war can be estimated as about 20,000 men. The Saxon army then consisted of 30,548 men in all.—*A. Niessel.*

battles had been lost, they would not have been lost in the sense of being irremediable disasters.

At Paris also the affairs of the Prussian Cabinet were not remarkably carried out; M. de Lucchesini had been recalled because he had finally given the alarm. General Knobelsdorff was sent there, as it was known he would be agreeable to the French. He was very agreeable to them as he was the son-in-law of Count Dedem, Dutch ambassador at Constantinople, and during the time he was stationed at Constantinople, he was strongly impressed by French influences; but he was a diplomat without vigor and without spirit.

In the same spirit were the pretexts which M. de Knobelsdorff sought at Paris, before he was charged with delivering the ultimatum of our Court. During the month of September, he pretended: that the mobilizations made by Prussia were the result of appeals addressed to the King by the people, hostile and envious to France, and which the King would soon circumvent. In this language could be recognized the politics of Count Haugwitz, after the instructions which he gave to Knobelsdorff. Such imprudence should at least have been connected with great ability, if it was not to become dangerous and ridiculous.

On October 1, General de Knobelsdorff was finally forced to use other language and to deliver the Prussian ultimatum to the French ministry. This ultimatum required as a necessary condition for demobilization of Prussia:

(1) That the French troops, without exception should recross the line without delay.

(2) That no obstacles whatever should be presented to the formation of the Confederation of the North.

(3) That Wesel should be separated from the French Empire, and turned over to the Grand Duke of Berg.

(4) That the three monasteries unjustly occupied by the Grand Duke of Berg should be re-occupied by Prussian troops.

A reply was preemptorily required to be at the headquarters of the King by October 8.

Although this ultimatum did not in any way mention the principal questions, and although the French could conform to them, without the basic situation of Prussia being improved in any way, there was nevertheless a lack of tact and of non-attention in sending this ultimatum to Paris,

from which place Bonaparte had left six days before to join his army. If at the last moment it was desired to seek a way for negotiations this could only have been through imperial headquarters. It would have been much less presumptuous to have used such decisive language at Paris to M. de Talleyrand, as it would have been more impolite to say hurtful things to one through his subordinates than to say it to him personally. But the language which had been used was in no way suitable. Without losing anything in its dignity and its decisiveness, Napoleon could have been made to understand, through passive and negative phrases what the King of Prussia wanted. It would then have been possible to remain on the defensive, diplomatically as well as politically, and one would not have invited a double opposition by a dominating tone; on the one hand, with the politics of the Cabinet, without courage during several years and with the language previously used by de Knobelsdorff, while on the other hand with the insufficiency of our military and political forces.

But the Prussian Cabinet consisted of impossible elements and in such a case two things were always lacking: Unity and proportion in action. It fell heavily from one extreme to the other.

To wait any other reply to this ultimatum than that made by guns, to delay actual war for fourteen days, was truly the result of feebleness resting on last hope, and this was the result of a good quixotic nature.

CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE CAMPAIGN OF 1806

From what has already been stated, it follows that on account of the poor dispositions taken from the military organization of Prussia, that in September, not more than 110,000 men were assembled in the theater of operations in Thuringia. The Saxons were 18,000 strong; with them the army had 128,000 men. But 15,000 men under Duke Eugene of Wurtemberg, were not available at the beginning of the campaign, should it open in the first half of October. Consequently 113,000 men only remained.

The strength of the French had increased to about 130,000 men.* Their strength was not exactly known; but it was believed that a force of 80,000 or 100,000 men might be met, if a prompt advance was made into Franconia.†

Under these circumstances only two plans could promise success. The first was: to remain on the defensive and to retire slowly on the approach of the enemy, without fighting a decisive battle, to in rear of the Elbe, and the Oder, unite with the Russians and with the Prussians who were in back areas, and then offer battle either in Silesia or in Poland with all forces united. If the Saxons did not disappear, and if the Russians joined with 50,000 men, there should have been, allowing for losses in combat and for garrisons left in the forts of the Elbe and the Oder, a force of 150,000 men, while the French could have brought hardly 80,000 men to beyond the Oder. But the Saxons might, under these circumstances, quickly conclude peace and join their 18,000 men to the French. There might also well have been lost 10,000 men through desertion; the proportion then instead of being 150 against 80 might have been 120 against 100.

On account of these last limitations for a favorable result which might be expected by a withdrawal into the heart of a country and because it was not desired to abandon so many provinces in principle, as this was believed to be contrary to the honor of the Prussian name to make such a long retreat without a battle, and because finally this was entirely unusual and no one could be found who had such an idea, this plan was not discussed at all. This was, however, an abstraction due to moral factors and was quite natural.

The second plan was: to advance rapidly into Franconia and with the entire army assembled to fall into the midst of the French cantonments, to defeat their corps separately before they could unite, and thus force them to retreat to beyond the Rhine. It was believed that if this blow should

*The strength of the French troops in the theater of operation, exclusive of the Bavarians, according to most recent calculations was in October around 150,000 men. The strength of the Guard, given by Clausewitz in the next footnote, was only 6,000 men.—A. Niessel.

†As a matter of fact the 30,000 men of the Guard did not leave Paris until September 19th; they arrived at Mayence by forced marches on the 28th.—Clausewitz.

succeed, that a good moral base would have been acquired for an increase of force and of confidence in themselves, and also from a consideration as to the method of supply, although the circumstances as to this were only slightly favorable. It was hoped to acquire after such a blow: all of North Germany, to gain time, to call up the Russians and the troops in East Prussia, arrange for debarkation of the English and for new munitions from the Austrians. These advantages which it was hoped to obtain from such a happy blow were not exaggerated, but the blow itself was not a simple task. The expression "fall upon the cantonments and separately defeat the corps" has like many military expressions a very indefinite meaning, and when the expression is closely examined nothing more appears in it than a figure of rhetoric.

An entire army does not allow itself to be surprised in its billets in the same manner that an isolated battalion might; it is understood by this that an advance should be so rapid that the army has not time to assemble on a point within the area of its cantonments. It must therefore choose a point in rear, and the farther as the extent of its cantonments is the greater. If such a strategical surprise is vigorously exploited, it is possible that one or more corps may be prevented from reaching this point of assembly; but this could never be simultaneously the case for all the corps. If now isolated corps thus attacked may be forced to fight separately, a considerable advantage will be gained. We would be very superior in strength to them and we would thus be able to attack them from several directions at the same time and thus crush them. But corps take good care to present a proper front; they seek to gain the open, and the usual result is:

- (1) that a greater or lesser extent of terrain is gained;
- (2) if the surprise has been well carried out, and if there is a certain amount of disorder within the adversary's lines, some small fractions are strongly pressed, so that the total losses may finally be considerable. If account is taken of the war experience of the French army, it can hardly be believed that there was much chance for such a result from a surprise accompanied by improper conduct of the enemy.

It is from this point of view that the surprise was undertaken, and it was not possible to see any other point of view. It was hoped in case of success, to prevent the French by a rapid penetration within their cantonments, from finding in South Germany a general point of assembly; then they would be forced to make their concentration on the other side of the Rhine with a great number of minor losses. If one of the French marshals was bold enough to fight us with one or two corps, he would have been attacked with a superior force, and to the precedent advantages we would have added a battle won.

But many people will say: Bonaparte is not really a man to whom one can attribute such faults, and who can be surpassed in rapidity of action and indecisions. Bonaparte might have committed serious and even enormous errors; he was besides capable of complete neglect of foresight; experience later well showed this. But in fact this could not then have been known and proved by experience. But we state that in departing from the point of view of the commanding generals at the time, it was an absolute requirement for the conduct of the war, to believe in the possibility of the enemy committing faults and in succeeding in matters in which we were not accustomed. Whoever does not wish to conceive this, does not know thoroughly what is being discussed; he does not understand the question and does not understand himself. He places a pencil on the spring of a watch and wishes it to go by itself. If then it was not possible to state that such a success was impossible for local reasons, the question is only of knowing if the exterior reasons were such as to give it a general appearance of truth.

The King decided on war at the commencement of August. Eight days were spent in issuing instructions, fourteen for mobilization; the army was then mobilized by the end of August. The troops in West Prussia were in fact placed in march during the end of August. As the troops in East and Central Prussia were not called, and as those in West Prussia were to form a reserve corps, it then remained to unite rapidly the troops from Brandenburg, Silesia, Pomerania, Magdeburg, and Westphalia, the garrisons of which were within 60 miles of Erfurt. In three

weeks, that is to say by the middle of September, the army could have been united and made available at the edge of the forest of Thuringia without the French being able to take any other measures than those they did take; as the mobilization and troop movements of the Prussians really commenced on August 9th, and in the first half of September the Prussians commenced to assemble in Saxony.

The position of the French army in the last half of September was:

1. Bernadotte, at Anspach.
2. Davout, at Oettingen.
3. Soult, at Passau.
4. Lannes, at Bischofsheim.*
5. Ney, at Memmingen.
6. Augereau, at Francfort.

This large triangle, formed by these headquarters, Passau, Francfort, Memmingen; had two sides of about 40 miles long and one side about 60 miles long. Besides, the corps themselves had a depth of 15 to 20 miles.

The Prussian army concentrated in rear of the Thuringia forest, was not more than 25 miles from the line Passau; Francfort. It is impossible to deny that such an army did not have a great advantage. If in the first half of September, it had advanced across the forest of Thuringia, on Wurtzbourg and the Rhine, it might have met at most the four corps of Bernadotte, Davout, Lannes and Augereau, possibly 70,000 men. These could have been driven to beyond the Black Forest into the valley of the Rhine or towards the Kehl †area, before the corps at Passau and Memmingen could have united with them. Undoubtedly this was a fine hope, and he who does not attack under such circumstances should never draw a saber from its scabbard.

Thus arose at first the idea of the Prussian offensive. But as always happens with ideas when they have to pass the gauntlet of strange opinions where many people had to discuss them, and especially where there was a lack of decision, this idea gradually waned and finally ceased to have any further resemblance to itself. Before proceeding with the history of the disease of this idea, we must consider the organization of the Prussian high command. The Duke of

*At this period Lefebvre was still in command of the V Corps.

See B-268, page 233.—C. H. L.

†Opposite Strasbourg.

Brunswick was to have the command of all the forces; the King wished to be with him, and to increase by his presence the rapidity and energy of all measures taken.

The King took Marshal Moellendorf with him, because no one knew what duty to assign him to, and the King thought that his advice might be useful. The King also took General Phull, of the General Staff, with him, because he was the senior general staff officer, and because the Duke did not like him, and had selected Colonel Scharnhorst as the chief of staff for GHQ. The King believed that he could also utilize the services of Phull in councils, on account of his very scientific spirit. Finally, the King detailed to his headquarters, General Zastrow, who commanded a brigade, because for a long time he had had particular confidence in him. In addition to these officers newly attached, Colonel Kleist was naturally found with the King as his Adjutant General, that is as the Secretary of State for the War Department. It is unnecessary to mention the two diplomats Haugwitz and Lucchesini, and General Koehritz.

The Duke of Brunswick instead of being frightened by this staff, on the contrary was probably secretly very well contented. He had become very old, and so discouraged that he did not have the heart to come to Berlin; he went only to Halle, because he wished in this manner to make it more evident, that he commanded the army only as a field marshal and that he did not wish to take part in the war as a prince. Thus this timid man held to a straw, and this straw was the principal reason for his interior discontent. Thus the Duke, discouraged we say, secretly rejoiced in the King's staff. The presence of the King was not so much the less agreeable to him, by giving greater weight to his orders, than because he could submit his decision to superior authority, and as he feared that the modesty of the King would prevent him from taking hold of affairs to the extent that the Duke himself wished, he considered the staff of the King almost as a lover's magnet.

The Quartermaster General of the Duke was Colonel Scharnhorst,* and besides this officer there was no one else

*In the German service, the quartermaster general was *ex officio* the chief of staff for the C-in-C.—C.H.L.

close to him. Captain von Muffling, General Staff, completely in agreement with Scharnhorst, had given the most precise idea to the plan of operations, as he knew best the Thuringian hills and especially Thuringia itself. He was therefore called in to a certain extent in different discussions, but on account of his rank he played only a subordinate role. The headquarters of the Duke were not therefore fully represented in November in councils. Besides Scharnhorst was not only junior in rank to Phull and Massenbach, but he also was too new to the army for them to have real confidence in him. All this resulted in diminishing his influence, and his position as the chief of General Staff to Generals with indecisive ideas was far from having the action and influence which he should have had. In addition, he became formerly at variance with the Duke during the later days.

Thus was composed the Board which was to direct the army; besides as we shall soon see, attention must be given to Prince Hohenlohe and to Colonel Massenbach. The King did not really desire war. He had therefore again had propositions and requests made at Paris through Knobelsdorff. The diplomats had calculated on October 8th as the day when the reply should be received, and as the date when the operations were to commence. All might have seen that the ultimatum was useless; it is still clearer that it was irreconcilable with plans for strategical surprise, and in fact, it seems that the French corps on September 25th, at the time when the Duke of Brunswick submitted his plan of operations, were still immobile, but with the decided declaration which the Prussian Cabinet had caused to be made at Paris, their immediate concentration should have been considered as certain. The plan of operations of the Duke should have been not only conceived and submitted on September 25th, but they should have been in addition carried out, and the Prussian army should have been in Franconia. The Duke of Brunswick should have protested against this manner of accomplishing things and he should have insisted on striking a rapid blow. But the Duke feared the war, perhaps more than the King did, and his apprehension caused him to still hope for a friendly issue, where his intel-

ligence should have shown him that there was nothing else in view than a desperate resistance.

If the campaign was not to commence until October 8th, we could not be on the Main before the middle of October and it was necessary to expect to find the enemy nearly concentrated, as within fourteen days it is easy to assemble over a distance of 30 to 40 miles. The idea of offensive was still persisted in as this gave the best chance to fall with the entire force on part of the hostile forces, but this offensive now entered into the class of ordinary offensives.

Before following further the plan of operations, we ought to discuss the organization of the army. Duke Eugene of Wurtemberg with the 16,000 troops of West Prussia, was a reserve called to Saxony later than the other troops, as it was thought possible that this force might be employed in Westphalia. But this was a double error, first because all strategic reserves are poor practice, and secondly, because it was evident that matters would be decided in Saxony, and not in Westphalia; but we should not be too much astonished at this, because this particular method of view was at that time quite general. The Duke of Wurtemberg should therefore be counted out. For the invasion of Franconia there then remained two armies and one corps; the principal army under the direct command of the Duke; the Saxon-Silesian army, under the orders of Prince Hohenlohe; and General Ruchel's corps.

On the recommendation of General Scharnhorst the army was organized into divisions of all arms as follows:

Principal Army	6 divisions.
Saxon-Silesian Army	5 divisions.
Ruchel's corps	3 divisions.
Total.....	<u>14</u> divisions.

This division into two principal armies was without doubt contrary to all principles of good sense. Any new division in command weakened it. If the number of divisions were too many to be under the direct orders of the Duke, they should have been as has since always been done organized into corps of two or three divisions. This would have made five or six corps, which are exactly the best number for ordinary needs and operations. But Prince Hohen-

lohe had already commanded a corps in 1792-3-4; he commenced to be more highly considered in the Prussian army than the Duke was, as he was ten or twelve years younger and more energetic. It was not believed possible to deny him the command of a suitable army, under the supreme authority of the Duke, but an army almost as large as a principal army. The greater the force which the general second in command receives, the more he wishes to be independent, as the energy of the high command loses its strength. Prince Hohenlohe allowed himself to be led in this direction by his turbulent friend, Quartermaster General Massenbach; in a manner not unusual when an imperious master has faults, but which is doubly dangerous in a situation as critical as ours was.

Hohenlohe and Massenbach had in an open manner announced the intention* to proceed up to a certain point independently of the Duke, and to act according to a principle inadmissible for a general, acting in a theater of operations ten or twelve miles distant, but which in one and the same theater of operations was absolutely unheard of. In truth they did not carry out completely this foolish idea, but contented themselves by not responding, instead of complying from the beginning, to obedience, and with rude remarks. During the course of the campaign the Duke himself did not have the courage to speak to Prince Hohenlohe in the firm and clear tones of a commander; he always left more latitude than is suitable for the well-organized conduct of the war. From this point of view, however erroneous it was, there arose a divergence of opinion as to the plan which ought to be followed. These two reasons resulted in Hohenlohe and Massenbach never entering into the thoughts of the Duke and they always followed along in another direction; similar to a badly balanced ship, they were unable to navigate close to one another except with great difficulty.

They never came to open disobedience, but there was perpetual contradiction, their incessant complaints as to lack of information and their ignorance naturally rendered more feeble and more indecisive the command of an army so

**Report of an eye-witness in the Campaign of Prince Hohenlohe in 1806,* by R. de L., Volume 1, page 25.

poorly organized. The King in the end became mistrustful, the Duke from day to day more pusillanimous. As a result concerted action did not occur, but irresolution increased by gigantic strides.

After having spoken of the position of Prince Hohenlohe let us return to the plan of operations. The Duke submitted this to the King on September 25th. He had therefore already made the plan by this date, and must have looked at it from that point of view.

At that time the movements of the French army had not yet commenced, or else they were not known of; but as we have stated above, they might have been foreseen. It was intended to keep the idea of the offensive. It was expected to meet on the upper Main important fractions of the French army, but it was hoped to be superior to them, as the more distant troops would have difficulty in reaching this country at the time the Prussian army entered it (middle of October). The results have shown that in this assumption an error was committed: we would have fought on the upper Main with as many or more troops than we had effective against us on the Saale. However, this is not sufficient to condemn the idea of the offensive, because there is never certitude in war. As to such things, error was at least excusable. But this offensive could not have the results which might have been expected by an offensive made as a surprise fourteen days earlier, the sole advantage was to increase the morale of the army in leading it to believe it was the aggressor; too great a value was then attributed to this sentiment.

The only question was to ascertain by what roads we could march against the enemy. Which of the following methods should be followed:

1. Leave the Thuringia wood on our right and march via Hof, and Gegend towards Bamberg.
2. Leave the wood on our left and take the Francfort road.
3. March through the Thuringia wood straight on Wurtzbourg.
4. Divide the army and march on two or all three of these roads.

The principal factors in the choice of directions should have been:

- (a) Keep united as far as possible in order to be as strong as possible in the battle.

(b) Reach the superior forces and an important part of the hostile forces in order not to strike a blow into a void. We should have expected that, in fact, the enemy would soon be considerably superior to us. We could not therefore think of overcoming him by a turning movement. It was therefore necessary, if we did not meet an important part of his forces at which a decisive blow could be directed, to regard them as turned and consequently very much compromised.

(c) Maintain as far as possible a line of retreat to the rear.

A consideration of (a) should completely destroy the idea of moving with the principal mass in more than one direction. A consideration of (b) should lead to the rejection of the march on Francfort, as in that direction, there was only one hostile corps, that of Augereau, who could have retired towards the center; we would then have been in quite a bad position, because we could not turn to the left if we left the Francfort road, because this would have required crossing the Roehn Mountains by pathways.

There therefore remained as the only choice, marching straight through the Thuringia wood, or advancing through the territory of Bayreuth. If Magdeburg and Wittenberg were considered as the first points of the line of retreat, they would be best covered by marching through the Thuringia wood. Should we desire to retreat with our principal mass towards Dresden, a march towards Hof would be best. Undoubtedly a retreat towards Magdeburg and Wittenberg was the most natural, as this would cover the capital for the longest time, the Elbe could be more easily defended between Magdeburg and Wittenberg than at Dresden, and it was in consequence a better line of support; further, Silesia would be better covered than Brandenburg, thanks to its position in rear of Bohemia and its numerous fortresses. This reason should have decided us to march across the Thuringia wood, but in addition we remained in a central position by taking this direction; we could better quickly oppose an enveloping movement against the right wing than if we advanced via Hof, that is, towards our left wing. Finally, it was not a minor advantage to surprise the enemy by this movement straight across Thuringia wood which would have been somewhat unusual, as we would be crossing the main crest instead of following the valleys to the right and left. These advantages compensated well for the inconvenience of poor roads. These were the ideas which led to the conception of the plan of the Duke.

Ten divisions were to cross Thuringia wood in six columns following roads near to one another and were to reunite at Meinungen and at Hildburghausen and march from there to the attack.

One division was to remain in the territory of Bayreuth to cover the valleys in that direction. Three divisions were to advance on the Francfort road to contain Augereau's corps.

The only objection to this plan is that probably in consideration for General Ruchel, it was not desired to separate the three divisions of his corps, although it would have been better to have at this point but one or two divisions reinforcing the principal army with the balance. As however, these three divisions would never have had a greater strength than Augereau's corps which they would have most probably immobilized, this error was certainly not serious.

The movements were to commence on the 9th. By the 10th or at latest on the 11th, it was desired to be at Hildburghausen and Meinungen.*

It was to be feared that this plan of attack conceived on September 25th, was no longer practicable; this should have been known in advance, but would in no case be considered as a fault as to the conception of the plan. For it was possible, if the enemy came in front of us, to change to the defensive without taking up a disadvantageous position, and it is always possible in war to be troubled in the execution of plans leading to change in them.

The defensive to which we would then wish to pass, should have been foreseen, and with the plan of attack, form the plan of operations properly so-called. This defensive plan consisted in taking a concentrated position near Erfurt or Weimar. If the principal forces came via the Francfort road we would be square in front of them, and it would have been the same if they came across the Thuringia wood. If the French army came across the territory of Bayreuth we would be separated from them by the Saale, and we could, if the enemy continued his movement without bat-

*The movements were originally fixed to commence on October 10th, but on October 2d, this was changed to October 9th.—*W. D. Files, E-1 84.*

tle with us, follow by a flank march and be at Weisenfelds before them. But if the enemy changed direction to the left to cross the Saale and attack us, this would give us a possibility for the best offensive combination. For the valley of the Saale and the character of the steep hills bordering it, and the plain in rear of it permitted rapid movements. We could then hope, if we considered a battle still useful, to fall with superior forces on the hostile columns.

The correctness of this supposition was absolutely proved when the last case considered really occurred. The Prussian army in spite of the indecision and absurdities committed, still found itself in a position to hurl itself near Auerstaedt with 45,000 men on 27,000 men; who with their back against the closed in valley of the Saale, found themselves in the worst position possible in war. It was certainly possible to oppose an adversary physically and morally superior, when in a flank position where the front had been turned and where the natural line of retreat lay towards a flank. But through appropriate precautions we could have avoided these inconveniences, and under the most unfavorable case, we had always in rear of us a vast friendly country, while Bonaparte would have always had to fight with a reversed front and with his line of retreat towards his left wing, with only a narrow band of territory between him and the frontier of Bohemia.*

*Ordinarily the frightful catastrophe in Prussia in 1806 is attributed to this oblique position. This is altogether wrong, and this point of view lacks breadth of vision. It is true that if the Prussian army had had its line of retreat in its rear, the surrender of Hohenlohe at Prenzlau would not have finally occurred. But in the very poor condition of our army, and in saying this I am thinking particularly of the officers of high grade who were too old and lacking in experience, he would not have probably brought back to Prussia more than the skeletons of the different corps. That which caused our dissolution was not that we had been turned from the beginning, but that we did not know how to act in any situation nor under any circumstance. Whoever regards the oblique position in rear of the Saale as the necessary cause of the disaster is ignorant of military history. Frederick the Great often voluntarily chose positions with fronts half reversed, and he succeeded in retiring in many cases without losses, when necessity required it, from positions still more completely turned. It is true that he had a great superiority in morale while here conditions were reversed, but even here, there were a thousand ways to regain the line of retreat sacrificed at the beginning.—*Clausewitz*.

Against this plan of the Duke, which has never seemed to me but a simple, natural, understandable one, Prince Hohenlohe and Colonel Massenbach, arose with great anger; they had already submitted to the King their general ideas *with good intentions but without being called upon*. This fact indicates the spirit and the point of view of these two. The plan which they wished to see followed was to occupy with Hohenlohe's army, which was to be six divisions strong, the defiles of Saalfeld, Saalburg, Hof and Adorf, and to march with the principal armies by the Francfort road on Eisenach and Wach; then continuing the offensive with two principal masses, which like flank bastions would have turned the Thuringia wood, which was itself to be occupied by 10,000 men. At the same time, General Ruchel was to adopt an active defense towards the right flank (probably in Hesse and in Eichsfeld).* These confused ideas of the excited Massenbach have been more or less chosen as a base for the judgments of all writers according as they understood matters better or worse. But it is true that soon afterwards conviction everywhere arose that the main movements and main combinations of war should always be very simple, not because those which are complicated are too difficult, but because they are generally useless detours and attempts not directly aimed at the mission. Further on we shall see fully that this false idea of the General Staff has taken hold after nearly a century of the government and the public. We can also be astounded at the hollow expressions, of all these sparkling metaphors, of these involved phrases, such as "flank bastions," and the "active defensive," when they relate to so important a matter, and where the greatest clearness and the greatest precision should be expressed in all propositions. But let this suffice as to our indignation. The author expresses his own, not in order to preserve it for the sake of posterity, but to prevent any idea that he allowed himself to be taken in by such errors.

As soon as Prince Hohenlohe and Colonel Massenbach learned of the plan of operation of the Duke, they were beside themselves, and decided to observe a most extreme

*See page 107, "*Report of an eye-witness on the Campaign of Prince Hohenlohe*," C. I. T. Also 44 and following pages.—*Clausewitz*.

formality and the greatest discretion* in strictly preventing at their headquarters any facetious remarks on this matter. When they saw that their plan of operations had not been formally adopted, they desired to lead the Duke by numerous propositions, until he was drawn by force of circumstances towards the right bank of the Saale. A defensive position on the right bank of the Saale was itself more natural, more simple and less dangerous; there was much to be said in its favor. But as we shall see further on, there was also much against it. But the Duke's idea was altogether different. There was therefore the culpable and harmful tendency of Hohenlohe's headquarters to try to force their idea, and to thus increase indecision and disorder in the conduct of the army. The propositions and threatening notes did not stop and the efforts to induce the Duke by force to an offensive on the right bank of the Saale, absorbed the entire activity of Massenbach. On October 4, when the Duke was at Erfurt with his headquarters and the army marched forward to assemble, so much news as to the movements of the enemy arrived that it was possible to doubt whether the plan of attack conceived on September 15th was still practicable. It was certain that we would strike superior hostile forces united on the Main and already in march towards Saxony. It was ascertained that Bonaparte had already arrived at Aschaffenburg, in fact the French army, as was later known, was already at this moment on the line Nurnberg—Bamberg—Schweinfurt—Hamelburg.

Besides, the intimate moral character of the Duke showed up clearly. He formed the secret wish to have the commencement of the war still further postponed and had a secret intention to utilize the presence of the King to withdraw to the subordinate position. Instead then of taking a resolution appropriate to the circumstances, as he would not have done if he had been alone, he utilized the circumstances in which he found the army to convene on October 5th a council where it was to be decided what further movements were to be made.

*See page 57, op. cit.—*Clausewitz*.

On the 4th, General Ruchel not having yet arrived, a provisional meeting took place between the Duke, General Phull, Colonel Massenbach, Colonel Kleist the King's adjutant general, and Captain Muffling of the General Staff. The Duke had already abandoned the idea of the offensive in principle, but he did not express himself further. He stated he was persuaded that the French would take position in rear of the Bannach and the Franconian Saale, and that Bonaparte would assume the defensive in order not to appear to be the aggressor. Massenbach suggested a reconnaissance of the French positions in Franconia, with the secret intention of leading thereby to an offensive movement along the right bank of the Saale.*

The idea that we should cross to the right bank of the Saale had taken entire possession of Massenbach. He spoke about this without cessation and kept at it like a restive horse against a wall. But if there was little clearness in his recommendations, it was quite evident that he himself did not clearly understand his own ideas, which were colored with verbiage, which persuaded no one, but contributed in consequence to increased indecision. The conference took place on October 5th, at which besides his Majesty the King, the following persons were present:

The Duke of Brunswick,
 Field Marshal Moellendorf,
 Prince Hohenlohe,
 General von Ruchel,
 General von Phull,
 General von Koechritz,
 Colonel von Massenbach,
 Colonel von Scharnhorst,
 Colonel von Kleist, adjutant general of the King,
 Marquis Lucchesini,
 Count von Haugwitz.

Colonel Massenbach again brought up his idea of marching the two main armies towards the left to beyond the Saale with a view to attacking the hostile army during its march forward, and thereby prevent our being cut off from the upper Elbe and from Silesia. During this time General Ruchel was to reconnoiter and contain the enemy: where and how was not explained.

*"*Historical remarks on the History of the Fall of Prussia,*" by Colonel Massenbach, Part II, page 59.—*Clausewitz.*

Colonel Scharnhorst, tired of differences of opinion, and noting the dangers which we ran with such a command, rose and said: "What is done in war is less important than doing it with suitable force and liaison; as the difference of opinions between the commanding general of the principal armies and their chiefs of staff is very great, to attempt to reconcile their opinions would be to lose time and besides would be useless. I therefore suggest that the principal army give up its idea. Let us carry out the march towards the left, suggested by the Prince and by Colonel Massenbach, but let us do it immediately and with maximum energy." But Colonel Massenbach had so little persuaded the council that even this did not move them. As it was not desired to adopt this plan, he proposed a grouping on three positions: General Ruchel, near Craula, on the road from Eisenach to Langensalza; the principal army near Erfurt; Prince Hohenlohe on the Eitters hill, near Weimar. He considered this disposition as concentrated. This proposition sufficiently shows that Colonel Massenbach was not sure that the French would actually advance across Franconia. Under this idea, a position near Weimar, that is to say as near as possible to the Saale was the only one that could be advantageous. This plan did not either have the support of all those present. The conference was broken before any conclusion could be reached and was re-assembled on the afternoon at the Duke's headquarters.

Here the resolution was adopted to continue the movements up to the 8th, which was to be a day of general rest, but to cause each of the three armies to make a reconnaissance toward the enemy, and to attempt to locate him while remaining in three positions, General Ruchel near Craula; the principal army near Erfurt; Prince Hohenlohe's army near Hochdorf, not far from Blankenhain. But the King disapproved the reconnaissance and it was then decided to send only one general staff officer (Captain Muffling) towards the Franconian side. The news which this officer was to obtain could have been at GHQ ever since the 3d; consequently the march of the army across the Thuringia wood, if still considered suitable, could have been made on the 9th as already prescribed.

From and after this moment the Duke of Brunswick appeared in a very disadvantageous manner, that is to say, like a man who has not the importance of his position, who through sorrow and care no longer feels himself strong, and who attempts to save himself by seeking issues where there are none.

The idea of obtaining a decision through a Board of twelve persons on what one intelligent person could have decided alone, the hope to be able to avoid war, the idea that the French would take a defensive position in Franconia, and the measures taken to reconnoiter an enemy twelve miles away are proof of complete stupidity; the Duke of Brunswick was not himself absurd on this point and he would not have been had he been alone. But always accustomed to conceal his real opinion, and to submit it to his superior for decision, and surrounded by men who apparently were there to observe his conduct, he felt himself led half by duty and half by politics to withdraw on all points, in order not to increase his responsibility for a bad result, and with an air of considering himself as wiser than those who were called to the council.*

Thus what this seventy year old man had yet retained in clearness and understanding, and in force of decision, was lost in the frictions of a high command organized contrary to the laws of war.

The situation of the Prussian army of October 6th was a much entangled and dangerous one. If it was thought impossible to count on strategical surprise, a clear decision should have been taken to assume the defensive with all the advantages which it could offer. That is, the arrival of the enemy should have been awaited in Saxony, either to attack him, or to allow ourselves to be attacked in a well chosen position; or if we found the enemy too strong, we could withdraw step by step into the interior of the coun-

*Those who do not know of this campaign except through the *Memoirs of Massenbach* will believe that it is precisely the understanding of the Duke and the mistrust of all good counsels which led him to the catastrophe. This is only a partial opinion. If the ideas of Massenbach were not followed, it was not because the Duke alone rejected them but because a majority, or perhaps all of those present, disapproved of them. The King, General Phull and General Ruchel were decidedly opposed to them.—*Clausewitz*.

try, in order to reunite with new forces. To attack the enemy could not promise us success unless there was hope of finding them separated, as an attack in Saxony had no more chance of success than an attack in Franconia and should have been renounced in favor of the latter.

If we wished to be attacked in a good position, it could be understood by this that our forces should be placed on terrain favorable to us, which the enemy must cross to reach us, and to draw from the terrain all the advantages of circumstances to complete the defensive with an attack. Because it was impossible to think of an intrenched camp where the back areas were open, in any case our attitude should not have been a passive one, and it was not necessary to quietly await the enemy in the tactical radius of our position, because we being the weaker had to fear an enveloping attack by the enemy.

Finally, an intention to withdraw to within the interior of the country without a decisive battle was not admissible, except when circumstances showed that the chances of a decisive battle were too unfavorable. An offensive against the enemy, or a retreat to within the interior of the country must depend on circumstances, and it was for this reason that we should have provisionally posted our troops in the middle of the theater of operations. But the intention, by utilizing favorable terrain to place our forces as nearly as practicable on an equality with those of the enemy required that the terrain on which it was desired to fight should be more exactly prescribed.

There is here another alternative to examine. The Saale forms an inclosed valley and this fact connected with other circumstances divides the theater of operations into two completely dissimilar parts. If one is situated on the left bank of the Saale, he is squarely in front of an enemy coming from Eisenach, or straight across the Thuringia wood; in this case his retreat is toward Magdeburg and Wittenberg. On the other hand only a flank position can be opposed to an enemy coming from the direction of Bayreuth.

If one is located on the right bank of the Saale, he is directly opposed to an enemy coming from the territory of Bayreuth, and his retreat is directly on Leipzig or Dresden.

But in this case no flank position can be taken against an enemy coming via Eisenach or the Thuringia wood, as such a position would have its rear against Bohemia.

Besides in this case, on account of the nearness of Bohemia, a retreat is limited to a very narrow base, and if the enemy who is superior to us, finds it practicable to advance to beyond our right flank, or if he simply threatens to turn this flank, we cannot accept battle, as we would run the risk of being thrown back on Bohemia.

It would therefore rest with the enemy to force us back without fighting, as far as the Elbe and as rapidly as he was able to march.

It is not the same on the left bank of the Saale, where we have for a base all of North Germany and where we could in case of need retire in any direction. We say: "in case of need" as we do not overlook the great importance of keeping in liaison with the Oder and Prussia. As we would hardly wish to willingly cross the closed in valley of the Saale at the last moment and in the presence of the enemy, it was necessary to make a decision in time as to which bank of this river to fight on.

While we were still uncertain whether the enemy's principal forces would come via Eisenach, via the Thuringia wood, or via Hof, the position on the left bank of the Saale was the most central and was therefore more appropriate to the three forms of resistance, attack, defense, or withdrawal into the interior of the country. But as soon as we could be sure that the principal force of the enemy was coming via the territory of Bayreuth, this position was no longer useful except as a flank position. We could place ourselves in front of the enemy at the last moment, as it was necessary to fear arrival at the place where we wished to be at the same time as the enemy arrived there, and thereby be surprised while making a flank march, in a very cut up region which was from no point of view favorable to us.*

*During the campaign and after, Clausewitz was of the opinion that an offensive movement from the left bank of the Saale towards the right bank even at the latest possible moment was not without chance of success. (See Schwartz, *Life of General Charles von Clausewitz*, Volume I, page 45 and following, Volume II, page 461 and following.) The main point of view we have here in the "Notes" agrees with that given by Clausewitz in his: "On War, Book VI, Chapter 28.

If it was not desired at any price to expose an army to the danger of any flank position, it was necessary as soon as the offensive was abandoned, that is after October 5th, to march without delay and proceed to the Leipzig, Hof road, where Berlin would have been in our rear and where we could have best withdrawn if matters turned out badly. It is true that this did not present any prospect for any favorable battle, but the position behind the Saale was one flank position from among a few; it promised excellent conditions for a battle, consequently this should have decided us to turn in that direction.

The first condition for a flank position is that the enemy shall be unable to pass it, but shall be forced to attack it. This is a condition which is very difficult to fulfill, but it was here completely fulfilled. Because the French had for their lines of communication a very narrow corridor between the Saale and Bohemia, and for them these communications were so entirely towards the flank in connection with the Saale, that they would have been unable to have advanced without seeking the Prussian army in rear of the Saale.

The second condition for a flank position is that it should promise an advantage in the combat itself, sufficient to compensate for the trouble of occupying the position. Now the valley of the Saale is a deep defile of a mountainous character which the enemy could not cross except by separated columns; there was also on the left bank a continuous and fertile plateau which permitted the most precise movements for our army. While minor detachments could occupy the valley of the Saale itself, where they could make a prolonged resistance out of proportion to their strength, the army from a central position could fall on that part of the enemy which promised the greatest results. The enemy would be fighting with his back to the steep depressions of the Saale, with scarcely enough terrain to deploy in; he would be fighting with the Kingdom of Bohemia at his back and towards his flank a retreat across Voigtland, which he would have to cross in withdrawing.

This was the relation of the position in rear of the Saale to the march of the enemy via the territory of Bayreuth. But, in a general way, the little theater of operations, where

it was, was separated from the enemy, on one side by the Thuringia wood and Eichsfeld, and the other side by the deep defile of the Saale as far as Merseburg. The interior of this region was a fertile plain where it would be impossible to suffer hunger, and which permitted the most rapid and precise movements. As a matter of fact, there has perhaps never been in history such an advantageous position for an army adopting a defense. If we took a central position near Erfurt, we could oppose everything coming via Eisenach and the Thuringia wood, and crush with a superior force one of the divided enemy columns. If the enemy came via the territory of Bayreuth we could go to Weimar and occupy the crossings of the Saale. If the enemy tried to completely pass in front of us, which was scarcely imaginable, we could be covered by the valley of the Saale, and using the main highway of Merseburg, be in front of him and again regain what had at first been abandoned to his advance guard. For this, certain preliminary arrangements would be sufficient, particularly by constructing two ponton bridges at Freiburg and occupying Kosen and Merseburg. This would have been a solution in accordance with the most prudent customs. But we could also, if we had the courage, cross the Saale in rear of the enemy, and attack him towards his flank or from his rear, in such manner that his only line of retreat would have been into Bohemia. The happy circumstances as to lines of retreat justified this bold step: the enemy would have had no line open, and we would have all the crossing of the Saale in our possession. Bonaparte in such a position, would not have hesitated one moment to carry out the most decisive blow imaginable in war. But in view of the material and moral superiority of the enemy and the feebleness of our high command, it would have been impossible to carry this out. Colonel Scharnhorst had proposed this plan should the occasion arise, but in the council the Duke rejected the plan.

Should the enemy not pass in front of us, but turn to the left to attack us, the battle would for us proceed under the advantageous conditions which we will discuss. This last case is what actually happened, and it proves the correctness of our conclusions. On October 14th, the Duke with 45,000 men marched against Davout with 27,000 men. At

the same time, if the Duke had not marched on the 13th towards Auerstaedt, and if the troops at Saalfeld and on the expedition in Franconia had not been there, 80,000 men could on October 14th, have met Napoleon at Jena, while there were actually only 60,000 there; and this would still have left 25,000 men to occupy Kosen, Camburg and Dornburg. These last detachments would not have allowed Murat, Davout and Bernadotte to pass, or at least they would have passed too late to be at Jena.

The resolution to have taken on October 6th, if the offensive was to be given out, was then very simple. It was: leave General Tauenzien near Hof in observation, with orders to withdraw without serious fighting in the direction of Naumburg; occupy the crossing of the Saale from Saalburg to Jena; post Prince Hohenlohe in rear of Jena and the principal army of Ruchel near Erfurt, with outposts in the Thuringia wood and on the Eisenach road.

The measures which were actually taken were not much different from what we have here indicated. We should then have been able on October 14th to fight without disaster and without great inconvenience, if:

1. General Tauenzien had not suffered too much in his retreat, because he had made an unnecessary resistance.*

The march of this General towards Jena had the disadvantage that we no longer knew how far the enemy had advanced on the road to Leipzig, and the enemy found Naumburg and Kosen unoccupied.

2. If Prince Louis had not been crushed, which was the result of his unfortunate timidity.

3. If Hohenlohe's army had not been in a condition of disorder and panic, as it was not assembled; we will speak about this later.

4. If the Duke had not allowed himself to be led to the foolish enterprise in Franconia, directed by the Duke of Weimar.

These four circumstances resulted in the army having 20,000 men less at the battle than they should have had, and in its courage and confidence being much shaken. These circumstances were not the consequence either of the prior plan of attack nor of the position selected. Excepting the position of Taunzien and the expedition into Franconia, these were not the result of false measures of the Duke,

*For the considerable losses which resulted from the retreat from Hof towards Schleitz, General von Tauenzien is less responsible than General von Villa, who started a serious combat in spite of instructions which he had received.—W.D. Files, E III, Vol. I, E 117, Vol. II.

but of his subordinates. But in truth this favorable result from our strategical position supposes an army seeking a battle and generals determined on utilizing a momentary superiority, and sufficiently prudent not to neglect the most essential measures. It was believed possible to obtain this from the Prussian army, the Duke of Brunswick and Prince von Hohenlohe. If it had been possible to foresee the poor conduct which we showed in battle, the irresolution and folly of our generals up to the last moment, the mass of orders disobeyed, the contradictions and disorders which occurred and resulted, we could not have given any better advice than to post ourselves on the direct road from Leipzig in order to march off more easily.

Now let us turn back to the consideration of events.

On the 7th, the Prussian army was still in its billets extending from Creuzburg and Wach as far as the Saale; the Prince of Hohenlohe had even, contrary to orders, allowed the Saxons to be a good march away on the other side of the Saale near Neustadt;* General Tauenzien was still at Hof from where he marched on the evening of the 7th. The reserve under the Duke of Wurtemberg was assembling in Brandenburg. The French army had started its march in three main columns. *The right wing*, consisting of the corps of Soult and Ney, marched via Bayreuth and Hof which they reached on October 8th. *The center*, with which was Bonaparte, and consisting of the corps of Bernadotte and Davout, of the Guard and the reserve cavalry under Murat, advanced via Bamberg and Kronach and reached Saalburg on the 8th. *The left wing*, consisting of the corps of Lannes and Augereau came from Schweinfurt towards Cobourg, where it was on the 8th. On the 8th Bonaparte had his headquarters at Steinwiesen.†

The Prussian army was, as we have already said, organized into fourteen divisions of all arms. The defective

*The Prince had on October 4th, suspended the movements of the Saxons, because he still hoped to induce the Duke of Brunswick to adopt his plan to march in front of the enemy on the right bank of the Saale. It was for this reason that the Saxons on October 7th, were still near Roda. Only some cavalry had been pushed beyond Neustadt, and some hussars to Schimmelpfennig.

†Augereau came via Wurtzburg, Burgebrach, Bamberg; Napoleon's GHQ was at Kronach on the 8th.

organization of dividing the cavalry between the divisions at the rate of 10 to 15 squadrons each, and without having any reserve cavalry, was in force.

General Ruchel's corps consisted of the divisions of:

- Larisch;
- Winning;
- Tschammer.

The principal army had the following divisions:

- Duke of Weimar, advance guard;
 - Prince of Orange;
 - Count Wartensleben;
 - Count Schmettau;
 - Count Kunheim
 - General Arnim
- } Reserve under Count Kalkreuth.

Hohenlohe's army consisted of the following divisions:

- Count Tauenzien, advance guard;
- Prince Louis;
- General Grawert;
- General Zezschwitz (Saxons);
- General Prittwitz.

Some Saxon regiments were assigned to General Tauenzien and to Prince Louis.

We may assume that the divisions of the principal army	
were 9,000 strong -----	54,000
Those of Hohenlohe, 8,000 strong -----	40,000
Those of Ruchel, 6,000 strong -----	18,000
Total -----	<u>112,000</u>

On the 8th we had a day of complete rest; except General Tauenzien who continued his retreat as far as Schleitz.

On the 9th, General Tauenzien was attacked by the French under Bernadotte near Schleitz; he made a poor and unsuitable resistance, suffered many losses, and was repulsed almost in a rout to in rear of the Orta, near Neustadt, where General Zezschwitz received him.*

According to the orders for the 9th, General Tauenzien was to join Prince Hohenlohe; the latter was to hold the Saale near Kahla, Orlamunda and Rudolstadt, and even occupy the Hochdorf position near Blankenhain; the principal army was also to move in that direction; and finally Gen-

*General Tauenzien retired to Mittel-Poelnitz one and one-half miles east of Neustadt, as Clausewitz more exactly explains a little further on.

eral Ruchel was to march on Erfurt. At the same time, in accordance with a recommendation from Captain von Muffling, to follow in the heels of the French from Franconia with some cavalry, a mission of this nature was prescribed for General Rudorf. Unfortunately the Duke of Weimar was also directed to cross the Thuringia wood with the entire advance guard to sustain him. General Ruchel was also directed to send several thousand men toward Hamelburg. By these insignificant enterprises, which might be called out of season, the army was weakened on the field of battle by 12,000 men. On the 9th the positions of the army were as follows:

General Tauenzien was retiring on Mittel-Poelnitz.
 General Zezschwitz near Mittel-Poelnitz.
 General Grawert near Orlamunda.
 Prince Louis near Rudolstadt.
 General Prittwitz near Jena.

The Duke of Weimar was in march to cross the Thuringia wood.

The principal army was leaving its billets to concentrate near Hochdorf. General Ruchel was enroute to Erfurt.*

On this day the right wing of the French advanced against Plauen, the center turned towards Schleitz where General Bernadotte attacked and repulsed General Tauenzien. The left wing advanced as far as Grafenthal. Bonaparte's headquarters was at Ebersdorf near Saalburg.

Early on the 10th, Prince Louis on learning that the enemy was marching in force on Saalfeld, proceeded in that direction with his division, with the hope of a brilliant affair in his favor, as he believed that only one hostile corps was in front of him; he there accepted battle against Marshal Lannes. The Prussians had twelve battalions and eighteen squadrons; he then had a force of about 10,000 men.†

*The principal army assembled from the 9th on near Erfurt. Ruchel only reached this place on October 10th, the day on which the principal army arrived at Hochdorf.—W.D. Files, E.I. 55, Vol. I.

†The Prince had at Saalfeld 10 battalions, 1 company chasseurs, 10 squadrons, and 2½ batteries. One battalion, 1 company chasseurs, 8 squadrons and half a battery had been sent towards Blankenburg and Possneck.

He could have foreseen that he would have to fight a French corps of 15,000 to 20,000 men, and possibly even 25,000 men. The terrain was extremely unfavorable: it was a small enlargement in the valley of the Saale, on the other side of the town, closed in by the wooded edge of the Thuringia wood, where the enemy already held the heights. All these circumstances counted nothing to the Prince. The opinion that with Prussian tactics, and with the courage and resolution which he felt in his breast, he could defeat an enemy as strong again as himself, led him forward beyond all considerations. He later felt the crushing weight of the facts. The Prussian tactics proved to be entirely insufficient; the courage of the troops was quickly shattered. Only that of the Prince was grand and dignified in his resolution. Thus he did not abandon the field of battle.*

The division of the Prince retired in a state of complete dissolution on Rudolstadt where General Grawert came to meet it.† The losses might reach 4000 to 5000 men.

The two divisions of Hohenlohe's army had now been checked. But it could not be said that the precise orders of the Prince were responsible for this. On the one hand, the independent spirit in which he thought and spoke continued to react on his subordinates who conducted themselves as pleased them best, when they should have acted as

*The attempt of the Prince to oppose the enemy by an obstinate resistance at the defile of Saalfeld appears to be justified. The Prince understood his mission in admitting that he had to make it possible for the entire army to cross to the right bank of the Saale; and this opinion was the natural consequence of all the orders which he had received. In this sense, the battle was accepted not with an offensive intent but with a defensive one.—W. D. Files, E.I. 84—*Report of Captain von Valentini*.

†In accordance with the orders which Prince Hohenlohe had sent him, General Grawert was in readiness on the morning of October 10th near Orlamunda prepared to cross to the right bank of the Saale. Some contrary orders having reached him from GHQ, he then marched toward Vorwerk-Spahl, 1½ miles NW of Oramunda. He there received the Prince's order to advance to Rudolstadt to support the defeated advance guard, but so late that he did not believe it possible to accomplish this. He therefore contented himself with sending Major von Massow with a patrol to Rudolstadt, which found the town already occupied by the enemy.—W.D. Files E.I.—67, 84, 91; E.III, 17, Vol. II.

a single staff.* On the other hand, General Tauenzien and Prince Louis were so obsessed with the idea that the entire army would cross the Saale, that he gave too high a value to the terrain on the right bank, and to clear crossings. Another unfortunate fact was that the Prince left General Zezschwitz too long near Neustadt, especially as he had not assembled his army in a camp and occupied the crossings of the Saale with small detachments as had been the intention of the Duke of Brunswick. Now the troops who were on the other side of the Saale hastened by forced marches towards Roda and Jena, where they only arrived on the 11th, in great disorder.

This disorder, the losses of Tauenzien's division, the dispersion of Prince Louis's division, led to such confusion in Hohenlohe's army during the 10th and 11th, that on the 11th, near Jena, there arose, on the cry that the enemy was in the town, a shameful panic, whence it was difficult to re-establish calm and order. On the 10th the Prince had sent Colonel Massenbach to the King's headquarters, with new suggestions, and this constant and erroneous method of conduct was a cause in Hohenlohe's army of neglecting necessary matters.

At times when there occurred, as happened in this case, hasty and complicated movements, and where a crowd of tactical dispositions were necessary, the chief of the general staff was not too strong. We cannot consider the unfortunate condition in the army of Silesia on the 10th and 11th, except as due to the incapacity of Colonel Massenbach, and at the false advice which he gave to Prince Hohenlohe. It is easy to understand that all this was a bad preparation for a decisive battle.

The positions of the army on the 10th were:

Principal army, near Hochdorf, but not yet completely assembled.
General Ruchel near Gotha.

*General Tauenzien had about the same idea as Prince Louis. He wrote to Prince Hohenlohe during the battle "that he hoped to obtain a complete victory."—*Clausewitz*.

Let us note while on this subject that Tauenzien did not write that he hoped to obtain a complete victory, but that he had repulsed the French and hoped to successfully rejoin the army of the Prince on the next day.—W. D. Files, E.I. 79.

See M 2572, page 290; and CN 10977, page 295, for French accounts of the battle at Schleitz.—C. H. L.

In Prince Hohenlohe's army, General Grawert was near Orlamunda, and marched from there towards Rudolstadt; General Pritt-witz was near Jena; Generals Zezschwitz and Tauenzien were in march from Mittel-Poellnitz to Roda.

The French left wing under Lannes attacked Prince Louis in Saalfeld on the 10th. Augereau was one-half march in rear of Lannes. The center advanced as far as Auma and Gera. The right wing was marching from the Plauen road to the Schleitz road. Bonaparte was at Schleitz.

On the 11th, a part of the French center advanced by a long march towards Leipzig and Naumburg, and thus became the right wing, since the former right wing would be in rear of it by one march to the flank on the Schleitz road, and thus became the center. On this day the positions were:

Murat, between Zeitz and Leipzig;
Bernadotte at Zeitz;
Davout in the vicinity of Naumburg;
Sout and the Guard at Gera;
Ney at Neustadt;
Lannes at Jena;
Augereau at Kahla.*

The positions on the evening of October 11th, were:

Sout at Weyda.
Ney at Schleitz.
Murat at Gera.
Davout Mittel-Poellnitz.
Bernadotte at Gera.
Lannes at Neustadt-sur-l'Orla.
Augereau at Saalfeld, head on the Neustadt road.
Napoleo at Auma.

As the enemy, at Saalfeld had not advanced further along the left bank of the Saale, it followed that either he was marching completely across our front, or that he had selected his point of attack and consequently a place of crossing the Saale further on.† It was therefore decided to

*Augereau only reached Neustadt, 2 miles N. of Cobourg with the head of his force on October 10th. He was therefore a good day's march in rear of Lannes. The center reached Triptis. Of the right of the column, only Ney reached the Schleitz road in rear of the center, while Sout remained on the Plauen road with his headquarters in that vicinity.—C. See map opposite page 306.

†According to his own statement (Correspondence of Napoleon, No. CN 10950 and following) the Emperor remained on the right bank of the Saale, as he expected to find there the principal force of the enemy.—C.

CN 10950 is a private letter from Napoleon to Josephine, not reproduced in this volume. But compare CN 10980, page 300; and CN 10982, page 309.—C. H. L.

have the principal army march on the 11th to Weimar, and to post Prince Hohenlohe between Weimar and Jena (Generals Zezschwitz and Tauenzien reached Jena on this day), to recall in haste the Duke of Weimar,* and to direct him also to Weimar as well as General Ruchel. On the 12th the positions of our armies were as follows:

Principal Army, near Weimar;
General Ruchel, between Erfurt and Weimar;
Prince Hohenlohe, near Kapellendorf and Jena;
Duke of Weimar, marching on Illmenau.

It was learned on this day that the enemy had sent some troops to Naumburg and had occupied that place.

The situation of the army was in general such as had been expected under the case for taking necessary measures for the defensive and its position was neither bad nor unfavorable; it would be even difficult to imagine a better position. However, affairs had become worse by the losses which had occurred, by the departure of the Duke of Weimar from the principal army, and of General Winning of Ruchel's corps; the troops also lacked confidence and their courage was reduced.

Thanks to the clamors of Hohenlohe's party and to the checks already received, the opinion that the army was being led up to a disaster commenced to spread and to establish itself. The news as to the occupation of Naumburg, where we had a depot, increased the distrust and the disorder. Wherever the stupid imagination of ignorant officers and uneducated soldiers had resulted in creating fabulous stories, the charge of treason was discussed. This was the sign of a burning fever, which existed in our army at this time, and the morale of the entire force was thereby reduced, although each one individually remained available and in vigorous condition. But the army was 20,000 men less strong than it might have been, it lacked confidence in its leaders and was half defeated by a preconceived idea of the enemy.

*The order for the Duke of Weimar to withdraw via Oberdorf or Illmenau was issued on the morning of the 10th, and was received the same day. After hearing the news of the battle at Saalfeld, the order was amended in the evening, and the Duke was directed to make his retreat via Gotha on Weimar.

It was already difficult, from the beginning to promise ourselves hope for victory over the French army; under the present circumstances, this hope could be regarded as only a very feeble one. It was now therefore necessary either to still follow this feeble ray and to attempt to acquire a superiority by a very concentrated and decided employment of our troops; or else to march away by our left, if it was desired to interpose before the enemy and to join with the Duke of Wurtemberg with a view to acting according to circumstances.

It was impossible to foresee if the enemy would march in front of us or would simply turn our left and afterwards attack us. It was therefore necessary to decide to accept battle and at the same time, in case the enemy did not cross the Saale to attack us, but continued his march in front of us, to decide to follow him up and attack him from his rear. The Duke believed that the enemy would continue his march in front of us. Colonel Scharnhorst thought he would attack. The Duke believed it too hazardous to allow the enemy to continue on and to follow him up from his rear; Colonel Scharnhorst considered this as a necessary measure, it must be taken if we did not decide to march away at once. General Phull wrote a memorandum in which he said that we should move towards our depots. General Kalkreuth predicted that we would lose all of Saxony. Both of these two, as well as Hohenlohe and Massenbach, were of the opinion that the enemy would march on Leipzig or that he would send a detachment there.*

We can hardly believe that the old and unsuitable plans of operations could yet be discussed at a time when even sentiment should have led directly to the mission. It was not necessary to know whether we were further or nearer to the depots, nor whether we might lose one or two of them, nor whether we did or did not cover Saxony but where and how we might accept and win a battle, whether that place was here, or after being reinforced by the Prince of Wurtemberg behind the Elbe, or after being reinforced by the Russians in rear of the Oder. It was as clear as day that Bona-

*See Volume II, Clausewitz, by Schwartz, "*Remarks on the Journey to Marienbad in July, 1825*," page 276.

parte would not be satisfied to capture a few depots and a strip of territory by maneuvering, but that he would seek a decisive victory wherever he could find us, and that it was therefore necessary to prepare for this battle. There was only the following alternatives:

1st. If it was decided to risk a battle here, it was only necessary to keep all the forces ready to concentrate and to properly select the moment to fall upon the separated detachments of the enemy. For such a mission, the position of the principal army near Weimar, and that of Hohenlohe between Weimar and Jena was entirely appropriate. It was necessary to detail one division to hold the defile of Jena for as long a time as possible, and to send another division towards Kosen as soon as the enemy's march on Naumburg was known of, while the crossings of Dornburg and Camburg should have been held by minor detachments. We would then have been in condition to fight in front of the Saale, to determine whither the principal force of the enemy was marching, and to march towards that point which would have been the most decisive one; or if we desired to be prudent, towards that force intended to turn our left flank and which would consequently have been the most dangerous one. In the latter case, an important part of the army should have marched to meet the principal mass of the enemy and hold him on the Saale, as far as possible without a decisive combat.

2nd. If it was believed impossible to utilize this simple situation for a battle, and considering the proposition of forces, also very advantageous, it was necessary to march without delay towards the Unstrutt in order to reach Leipzig before the enemy.

If now we consider the resolutions which should have been provisionally taken, and of the dispositions of the enemy, as they were later ascertained, the combat of the 13th on the Saale, near Jena, should have taken place as it actually occurred with General Tauenzien, except that this General did not have his division in order and committed the fault of evacuating Jena too soon and retiring too far towards the Dornberg. General Tauenzien sought, with a true Prussian instinct, to reach the plain and thought it

impossible to do anything better than to abandon to the French the difficult slopes of the valley of the Saale, and to retire to the open terrain of the plateau as far as necessary, with a view to again attacking the enemy in echelon as most suitable,* as it had been one hundred thousand times taught, recommended and preached that in war the offensive was always preferable and gave the most advantages, and that this form of battle was particularly suitable to Prussian troops. Besides an attack by echelon was very nearly the height of Prussian tactics, the means by which Frederick the Second had beaten the Austrians at Leuthen; it was necessary to employ a similar maneuver in the most dangerous moments. Such a moment had arrived. Therefore, General Tauenzien abandoned the Saale and withdrew on the evening of the 13th with a view to advancing in echelon on the 14th, in a thick fog, after having, as was customary in the good old times, allowed the enemy space to establish his line of battle.

In face of this erroneous conduct on the 13th, which arose from drill ground routine, and lack of common sense, the division posted at Jena should have defended this extremely difficult terrain foot by foot; here was the place, properly speaking, for passively defending the steep slopes and ravines. Such obstacles defended by 8000 men cannot be taken by frontal attacks; the French would have been forced to turn General Tauenzien. But for such a movement time was required, and under the circumstances, in view of the nearness of Hohenlohe's army, nothing was easier than to remain on the 13th, master of the crest of the valley of the Saale, and to absolutely ascertain that Bonapare was facing them with the main part of his forces. This infor-

*In place of Prince Louis who had been killed, General Tauenzien had been charged on October 11th, with the command of the Advance Guard, and on October 12th, he occupied Jena and the crossing of the Saale beyond and in front of that town. On the morning of October 13th, he saw himself forced, on news that Dornburg had been evacuated before the enemy, to also abandon Jena. The enemy followed him closely and thus reached the Landgrafenberg. According to the report of Major von Marwitz, Prince Hohenlohe might have understood the importance of this place; but when he was inclined to drive back the enemy from Landgrafenberg with some reinforcements which the Duke himself led, Colonel Massenbach brought him formal orders from GHQ forbidding an attack.—W. D. Files, E.I. 72, 84. E. III—117.

mation would have been ascertained with certitude by the battle itself; but it did not take place, because General Tauenzien withdrew without fighting. There was, therefore, a very unfortunate and dangerous lack of information, which still existed with Prince Hohenlohe on the morning of the 14th. As the distance from Weimar to Jena is only two miles the principal army could have been at daybreak of the 14th near Jena, that is, ten divisions making about 80,000 men in all could have been assembled there, and offered battle to the enemy in a situation where he would have had the steep slopes of the Saale valley in rear of him. Bonaparte would not have acted, under these conditions, otherwise than he did act, as he could not have known, when he passed through Jena, that the Duke was in march. But Bonaparte did not have more than 60,000 men altogether near Jena; 50,000 men had been detached under Davout, Bernadotte and Murat and 20,000 men had not yet arrived.* It would have been the same if we had decided to offer battle on the Saale against the enemy's principal force; and these circumstances could not have been other than favorably influenced.

If it was desired to offer battle on the Saale, not against the principal force of the enemy, but against that part of this army which was turning us, that is coming from Naumburg, we could, as actually occurred, march during the night and attack this part of the enemy at daybreak. In this case, it would have been necessary to detail an important fraction of an army, 3 or 4 divisions, as a sort of rear guard, to hold the main force of the French in the valley of the Saale, until the enemy, by capturing some points less strongly occupied, had turned the Jena position, but however, before he was in condition to *force the troops there to a battle on the plain*. With the remaining troops, that is, 8 or 9 divisions, we could have fallen on Marshal Davout. Before the principal force of the enemy could have been in

*Napoleon had near Jena, during the morning more than 78,000 men. To these should be added the 2nd and 3rd Divisions of Soult's corps which arrived on the field of battle about noon. Murat took part personally in the battle, but he only had about one-half of his cavalry present. The cavalry of the Guard, and Grouchy's 2d Dragoon Division were unable to arrive for the battle. They arrived on the evening of the 14th only as far as in line with Kronach.

The detached troops (Davout, Bernadotte and half of the reserve cavalry) amounted to 56,000 men in all.

condition to chase our rear guard from the valley of the Saale, and drive it as far as the field of battle, 3 miles away, evening would have arrived and our fight against Davout would have been decided. If we had been able to completely defeat this Marshal, we would, with our entire army have turned the enemy's main force. If the success against this Marshal, was less decisive, we could still retreat towards the Unstrutt. If it was desired to absolutely avoid a battle on the Saale, the army should have been put in march from the 12th, towards Freyburg and cross the Unstrutt at that place without hesitation on the 13th, while 3 or 4 divisions, left at Jena as a rear guard should have followed on the 13th, Kosen remaining constantly occupied during this time by one or two divisions. In this manner, the mixed up lines of the skeins of strategy which had become mixed on the 12th, would have been separated. Excepting the unfortunate battles of Schleitz and Saalfeld, and the detachment of 12,000 men to Franconia, the Prussian army would once again have been strategically in a position as advantageous as possible for its moral and physical strength.*

The Duke considered that Bonaparte would really march across his front rather than attack him. Perhaps this was only a preconceived idea, because it can be well understood that few would blame him under the circumstances for marching by his left to place himself in front of the enemy. But by such a march, the battle on the Saale would become impossible, while this was exactly what the Duke desired. He might have openly shown an intention of avoiding a battle at this time in order to offer a battle later; but everybody was so obsessed with the idea of a decisive battle that the Duke did not think it possible to abandon this idea without some new, impelling motive. Whatever his reasons may have been, on the 12th the Duke resolved to

*All the writers of the time, especially Massenbach and R. von L., who follow this campaign, have spoken of the deplorable situation of the Prussian army, and completely without foundation. It is a mere dream, to turn to the right and to the left, by changing in arbitrary directions, with no fixed point of departure and consequently with arbitrary results. It is really difficult to see why one wishes to discuss things he does not understand, to believe that he can determine in talking casually without a plan a subject which he cannot even consider. The army of writers who have followed have naturally still less understood what the original writers did not understand. In this manner there has arisen a veritable comedy of words, full of eloquence, but absolutely without sense.—*Clausewitz.*

march away by his left on the 13th. Schmettau's division which formed the left wing, was to start several hours earlier as advance guard; the four other divisions were to follow. General Ruchel was to go to the Weimar position; Prince Hohenlohe was to remain at Jena to cover the march. The first march was to be to the vicinity of Auerstaedt, the second to or near Freyburg on the Unstrutt. This resolution of the Duke is not to be absolutely disapproved of; it would have enabled him to place himself in front of the enemy and at the same time, during the first march, which was made not on the 12th but on the 13th, afford a possibility to attack with superior force the enemy who might have crossed the Saale near Kosen.

But in carrying out this plan, several serious errors took place:

1. Why should General Ruchel go to Weimar? Why not have him follow immediately in rear of Prince Hohenlohe, or in the vicinity of Apolda, in order to unite the two armies, if it was not desired as we should have thought was best, to have him march with the principal army? If he had been there, in spite of the best wish, we would hardly have been able to lose the battle of Auerstaedt.

If he had been with Hohenlohe, or near Apolda, this would not have changed events, but it would have been much more natural than to have him remain at Weimar. Apparently the Duke wished to put a brake on Prince Hohenlohe, to prevent him from engaging in a serious battle.

2. Schmettau's division should have occupied Kosen on the evening of the 13th. It had a four mile march to do this.

If it was not desired to engage with the enemy, it was much the more necessary to close this opening. If it was desired to allow the enemy to pass, this could always be done; Schmettau's division would then have served to determine his force and his intentions. It would also have been possible, by having this division withdraw in its natural direction, that is, parallel to the river in front of the enemy seeking to cross, and occupy a line of battle better traced than that which was taken on the morning of the 14th under the influence of the enemy's position. We will see later on what influence this had.

3. To Prince Hohenlohe, it was not only necessary to precisely direct him as was done, not to attack or to cross the Saale, which would have been veritable nonsense, but in addition to exactly indicate his destination.

His mission was to prevent the crossing of the enemy via Jena and Dornburg for as long a time as possible, and in consequence to vigorously fight for the crest of the valley of the Saale. But as soon as it would be impossible to hold this longer, and the enemy had obtained another crossing, or Jena itself, it was necessary to start the retreat, and avoid all serious fighting on the plain. Prince Hohenlohe should neither have lost nor offered a battle, for it was ridiculous to engage with 40,000 men in a battle against the principal forces of the French who might have had 80,000 men.

It was in no way difficult to avoid a decision on the plain, a battle may always be avoided when there is space to break away, except when the force consists only of a handful of men who might be stopped by cavalry alone. But as an army, even without fighting does not march more than three miles* in one day, it was not probable that Prince Hohenlohe would have been forced back in a single day more than three miles. There was not, under the actual circumstances, any difficulty in offering to a certain extent an obstinate resistance, while at the same time avoiding a defeat. In ordinary terrain, this task would have been difficult, and perhaps impossible against a superior enemy. But it is altogether different when there is in front of the position a deep valley which the enemy must cross on bridges. A position like that of the valley of the Saale is not readily found. It would require hours of time to drive out hostile well posted infantry and artillery, and this could only be done by obtaining fire superiority for a long time, and by small turning movements against each detachment, etc. In this way the French would have required several hours in order to reach the

*German miles are of the following length:

Geographical -----	7420 yards, ab't 4½	English mi.
Prussian -----	7532 yards ab't 4½	English mi.
Brunswick and Hanover --	7419 yards ab't 4½	English mi.
Saxony -----	9062 yards ab't 5½	English mi.

crest, and there would always have been time to withdraw, as the enemy would need time to deploy on leaving a defile; a movement which cannot be done in a few minutes.

There is no doubt that in this manner, Prince Hohenlohe could have gained more time than he could gain by the battle which he fought. If the Duke did not give orders to this effect with clearness and precision it was certainly an error; but the real orders of the Duke are not known. As the prattling writers of the other party have always been against the Duke, and consequently have had no interest in examining the truth on this point, we cannot allow them to condemn absolutely the Duke. The idea of the Duke for Hohenlohe's army was undoubtedly of this general nature. Whatever it may have been, without other indication, Prince Hohenlohe should, if he merited the name of General, so have judged the situation, and he should have acted in this spirit. What he did is below all criticism, and was one of the principal causes of the catastrophe. We will speak of that in connection with the battle of Jena.*

4. The principal error of the Duke was that he failed to consider dispositions necessary for a retreat. When circumstances required him to form a front towards his flank his line of retreat was no longer straight to his rear; it was more or less to one side. If only one or two neighboring routes exist, battle cannot be accepted under such circumstances. But if there is a large base to retreat to, and if in case of need it is possible to withdraw in one of several directions, battle may be accepted with the front half reversed; this was our case on the Saale. Our retreat should actually have been made towards Wittenberg and Magdeburg, or towards Leipzig and Halle, but we could in case of a check have retired on the Elbe, beyond Magdeburg, or at the worst to Westphalia. But to be separated from the true base is always very disagreeable; it is therefore very important, when a battle is accepted, to think of a position which would suffice with relation to our base for a natural situation.

It would have been easy for the Duke to have done this at Auerstaedt. It was sufficient while the divisions of

*The Duke's order to the Prince spoken of above and given on the evening of October 13th, is found in WD Files, and a copy in Hoepfner's "*The War of 1806-1807*," I. page 353.

Schmettau and Wartensleben fought with the enemy, to continue the march in rear of them with the remaining three divisions and to take position with them with their backs against Freyburg.* But this did not concern only the Duke's army, and it was more difficult to direct Prince Hohenlohe in this direction. He could not withdraw from Jena towards Freyburg as this would have led him to Auerstaedt, and consequently if the battle of Auerstaedt was not a victory, he would have run into the enemy. It was therefore natural in case we should be beaten, which was really supposable, for the left wing to select a central line of retreat, crossing the Unstrutt, not at Freyburg but at Nebra, Rossleben and Artern, and to direct Prince Hohenlohe, towards Buttstedt. The principal army in case it was forced to retreat could have received the Prince at Buttstedt, as his reserve had not gone further than Buttstedt.

But it appears that no clear resolution had been taken before the battle concerning a retreat, which was a serious and double error for an oblique position and before a brave and superior adversary. The principal army fought near Auerstaedt as if it was necessary to retreat on Weimar, and in fact, it wished to go there on the evening of the 14th with the intention of joining Prince Hohenlohe. But the road from Weimar to Erfurt led rather towards the enemy than towards our base. From this circumstance, there resulted, as we shall soon see, the great and astonishing series of victories by the French.

Let us return here to consider events.

The three roads by which Bonaparte had advanced into Saxony between Bohemia and the Thuringia wood, had been taken because he supposed he would find the Prussian army in position on the right bank of the Saale. When he saw that this hypothesis was not correct, he turned to the left, sent his center on in advance towards Zeitz and Naumburg and decided to cross the Saale between Jena and Naumburg to give battle to the Prussians on the other bank. Perhaps he thought them committed to a defensive position along

*See the orders for October 14th, 1806, in the second part of "*Monographs of Military History*," page 95.—*German Editor*.

the Saale. The left wing and the center of the French army consequently made no movement on the 12th, and only Davout continued his march on Naumburg where he arrived in the evening.

The positions of the corps are not given in the French Bulletins, but it was probably the same as on the 11th, because they were all more than one march away from the Saale, which they reached only on the 13th. The 12th was probably employed in concentrating the corps and other interior preparations. On the 13th positions were as follows:

Davout and the reserve cavalry under Murat near Naumbourg.
Bernadotte at Dornburg.
Soulth between Dornburg and Roda.
Ney at Roda.
Lannes at Jena, from which he drove out General Tauenzien; and where he took position on the Landgrafenberg.
The Guard was also at Jena in rear of Lannes.
Augereau at Kahla.

No information can be found as to the reason why Soulth and Ney did not march on the same day towards the Saale. It almost appears as if Bonaparte feared that some force might still fall on his right flank and crush Davout.

On the 14th, Soulth and Augereau and the Guard concentrated at Jena; Davout passed through Kosen; Murat with the cavalry returned from Naumburg towards Jena, but did not arrive until after the battle. Ney and Soulth were not put in march until the evening; they marched all night and as a result arrived a little late on the battlefield. Ney only had 3000 men present at the battle; the remainder had not arrived. No one explains where they were; but it is probable that they were already in the theater of operations. On the other hand the cavalry of the Guard was still absent; according to French Bulletins, they were 36 leagues to the rear. Bernadotte was to pass Dornburg on the 13th, but he was already at Naumburg on the 13th, and he took no part on the 14th, which according to the Bulletin was due to his being misled into false movements. As a result Bonaparte only had 60,000 men near him; Davout had only 28,000 men opposite the Duke. 40,000 men had not arrived, as certain divisions of Ney's corps were either away from the field of battle due to false movements, as

was all of Bernadotte's corps and the greater part of the reserve cavalry of Murat.*

We will now proceed to consider the battles of Jena and Auerstaedt.

We have already discussed what Prince Hohenlohe should have done with his army near Jena. If he had made his dispositions from our point of view, he would have completely abandoned his position between Kapellendorf and Jena on the 13th. He, however, acted in an entirely different way. His force was still 33,000 strong, he could have placed 10,000 men and 60 guns near Jena, and occupied Dornburg with 3,000 men and 20 guns, he would have had 20,000 men and 70 guns in reserve, and General Ruchel had another 15,000 men to support the whole.†

If the General who commanded at Jena, and it was desirable that this should have been the Prince himself, had destroyed the bridges at Jena, occupied the town with several thousand men, and posted the remainder on the Landgrafenberg taking full advantage of the terrain, it would have been almost impossible to penetrate at this point with-

*During the morning of October 13th, Napoleon had not yet sufficient information either as to the position or as to the intentions of his adversary. But later, more precise information came in and consequently the 13th of October, which had been designated as a day of rest, saw tiresome marches for the French troops, but thanks to which the concentration towards the left on the Saale was carried out.

Ney and Soult with their divisions were at Jena at noon on the 14th. Bernadotte, marched on the morning of the 14th from Naumbourg to Dornburg and reached Apolda on the morning of the 14th. He has not given satisfactory reasons why he did not appear on the battlefield either at Jena or at Auerstaedt.

As a result of the marches on the 12th and 13th (certain organizations also marched during the night of the 13th-14th) the positions of the troops were:

	12th	13th
IIIrd Corps,	Davout -----Naumburg	Naumburg
Ist Corps,	Bernadotte -----Meineweh	Naumburg
	Murat -----Zeitz	Naumburg
IV Corps,	Soult -----Gera	Jena, Kloster, Lausnitz
	Guard -----Gera	Jena
Vith Corps.	Ney -----Auma	Stadt Roda
Vth Corps,	Lannes -----Winzerla	Jena
VIth Corps,	Augereau -----Kahla	Jena
	Napoleon -----Gera	Jena

†The Prince himself estimated forces on this day as 28,000 men and those of Ruchel's as 12,000. W. D. E.III, 117, Volume II.

out a great loss of men and time. The enemy would not have gained his objective before noon of the 14th, as it would have taken the 13th to construct a bridge. Similar measures should have been taken near Dornburg. If the enemy as a result of Jena being too strongly held, had directed his main effort against Dornburg, the Prince should have sent one-half of his reserve there, which would have been all the easier as such a movement would have been along the line of his retreat.

With such dispositions, we state that the Prince should have been on the 13th in a position to be exactly informed as to the intentions of the enemy, and to resist one-half of the day of the 14th, and then retire without great losses on the principal army. On the contrary the Prince held to his reversed position, with more of his rear than his front turned towards the enemy; his left division did not defend the Saale at all, except as an ordinary outpost line capable of ascertaining more correctly the movements of the enemy. Thus on the 14th, he understood nothing of the intentions of his adversary; the bridges of the Saale were not interrupted, the edge of the valley was abandoned to the enemy without a shot, together with sufficient space for him to establish himself on the plateau. The Prince might have supposed that he was likely to meet Bonaparte with 100,000 French, he knew the condition of his own troops and that General Ruchel was not under his orders, and in spite of all this, disobeying the orders of the Duke, he took it upon himself to accept a decisive battle at this point.

Now what was the nature of the battle itself? General Tauenzien during the night of the 13-14th, withdrew into the plan with a view to again attacking the enemy by echelons in the morning during a most dense fog. He was naturally beaten and half dispersed. Then General Grawert arrived; he changed fronts and also advanced in echelon against the enemy and was beaten. Now Ruchel came, advanced in echelons and was beaten. During this time the Saxons remained in their useless flank position on the Floh Berg acting as if nothing was happening; they were surrounded and taken prisoners.* In this manner the separ-

*The Saxons remained at Schnecke, with the mission of holding this point as long as possible to cover the right flank.

ate fractions of 6,000, 10,000 and 15,000 men each sought an individual battle against a mass of 60,000 men, without it being possible to find in these movements the slightest sign of connection.

Successive employment of the troops in battle had been only recently taught, particularly under Bonaparte; this method is so strong that almost always it gives victory against a mixed up employment of troops. But here evidently an entirely different thing was done. In the first place this method is more suitable for the defense than for the attack, as it is not a matter of inserting the troops little by little into the battle, but to hold and exhaust the enemy for a long time with a few men in order to retain the remainder in reserve, and thus have the best position at the end. This is the easier where, as in the defense, assistance can be obtained from the terrain and intrenchments. But if such successive employment of troops occurs during an attack, this attack must have such characteristics. By a slow and continued advance forward, by a battle with a fire fight of several hours, by attack with small bodies of cavalry, the enemy will be led to prematurely deploy his forces, and thus enable a decision to be obtained with fresh masses and at a moment when the enemy no longer expects it. The essential point is that this final maneuver must be in liaison with the first, that is, it is necessary not to allow the troops which are employed in the initial attack to be beaten, crushed and chased off the battlefield before the second act is started. But nothing was less appropriate to the successive employment of troops than the Prussian tactics of this period, where the advance was made with the entire mass, and where it was believed that the mission could be accomplished with some fire by battalions, followed up with the bayonet, and where consequently in a single blow and in a few minutes everything was thrown into the abyss of the battle. When the second attack commenced, hardly anything was left of the first. Using these tactics, if Prince Hohenlohe absolutely wished to deliver battle, he had only one plan: assemble the four divisions in the usual order of battle, and fall with these on the enemy, with the mission of throwing them back into the valley of the Saale.

I do not believe that the Prince would have gained the battle, but it can be believed that this would give a possibility of gaining.

Prince Hohenlohe did not lose only the battle. He was, in what was almost an unheard of case, so crushed on the field of battle that of the 48,000 men, including Ruchel's corps, which were defeated there, not more than 10,000 could be assembled afterwards.* Prince Hohenlohe would have had better reason to retreat towards Apolda, and from there towards Buttstedt, in order to unite more easily with the principal army. But he went towards Weimar, from where part of the defeated army fled towards Erfurt, while the remainder went in the direction of Frankenhau- sen, Sondershausen and Nordhausen. If the Prince had kept this line of retreat, the remnants of his force would have met the defeated army of the Duke, and the dispersion would not have been so great.

During the whole course of these military events, the only thing you can praise the Prince for is his courage and his good intentions.

THE BATTLE OF AUERSTAEDT

Schmettau's division which had bivouacked a little less than a mile from the bridge of Kosen, on the morning of the 14th, encountered the head of the enemy's column. The Duke then decided to march forward with this division, to have the remaining divisions follow, and to overthrow the enemy who must be between him and the defile of Kosen, and if this enemy was in strength, to undertake the necessary battle. There was one hundred chances to one that only one or two hostile corps would be met; we would therefore be superior to them and must not lose this advantage. The decision to fight was then entirely proper.

Schmettau's division advanced in great haste into the fog and suffered cruelly from canister fire at short range

*The dispersion of Prince Hohenlohe's army did not occur until during the retreat. On the field of battle itself, it was disorganized by the great losses, but it was not, as stated above, "completely crushed."

which forced it to retire slightly. This took place between the villages of Taugwitz and Hassenhausen. It was ascertained that the enemy was more than 30,000 strong, of which 8,000 were near Hassenhausen and the remainder were in march coming from Kosen. A halt was then made until Wartensleben's division arrived, and his march was pushed through aides. General Blucher who in the absence of the Duke of Weimar's division, was to form a new advance guard, then received from the King 25 squadrons of cavalry attached to the divisions; he disposed of these on the left of Schmettau's division and turned the right wing of the enemy's first line, on the flank and on the rear of which he soon found himself. Blucher with 25 attack squadrons of Prussian cavalry in rear of the French!—not a single Prussian could doubt as to success. But the attacks were everywhere repulsed and this cavalry disappeared to a good distance from the field of battle.*

The result was entirely natural. In rear of the front hostile line were reserves in good order, a sufficient reason for repulsing the best cavalry and a better one against cavalry which had not yet smelled powder.

But here again, it was the fault of our pre-judgments and the tactics of our drill ground. The first regarded the Prussian saber carried by a Blucher as invincible; the second taught no other rule than to form, then to advance. The result was that this cavalry did not re-appear, and that the weak enemy cavalry, nine squadrons, was in a position to overthrow the left wing of Schmettau's division which had already suffered a great deal, and thus carry out an important blow. At first the Duke of Brunswick did not wish to advance with Schmettau and Wartensleben's divisions, but wished to wait for the arrival of Orange's division and of the reserves. Field Marshal Moellendorf spoke to the King with the words which Frederick the

*Scharnhorst (WD File, posthumous works, 41) says that General Blucher had 20 squadrons under his orders. From the WD records, it is impossible to positively identify more than 11 squadrons as having taken part in the attack. The attack was made in a dense fog; Blucher, on the strength of communications made to him by the Duke of Brunswick, at first believed that he only had hostile cavalry to meet; and during the charge he was fired upon by his own artillery. These are circumstances which must be considered in judging of events.—*Note by German Editor.*

Great had used at the battle of Prague to Schwerin: "Fresh fish are good fish." The attack then commenced with two divisions without even waiting for the artillery of Wartensleben's division which had been unable to follow along fast enough. The advance was in one line, volleys were fired by battalions and the result was that at first they advanced and repulsed the troops which the enemy had brought into the fight. But we suffered beyond all proportion from the fire of the skirmishers and from the French artillery, and after we had advanced against the thick masses and the reinforcements brought up by the enemy, we were stopped.

Two Prussian divisions now fought against the two French divisions of Gudin and Friant. The Prussian divisions had been led without a real plan of battle. They deployed nearly perpendicular to the road they had been following, and immediately marched forward. On their left flank they found the village of Hassenhausen from which the enemy offered a vigorous resistance. On the other hand the right Prussian wing had greater success, and a change occurred by which the Prussians had more of their backs to the Ilm, when they should have had them towards Eckartsberga.

Schmettau's division had suffered most because it had commenced to fight earlier and had attacked the villages. It was much exhausted when the hostile cavalry appeared. These attacked its left wing and repulsed the whole division in such manner that it formed a crook with General Wartensleben's division.* At this moment before Orange's division had arrived, the Duke received a mortal wound.

As the march of Wartensleben's division had been much accelerated there was a corresponding increase in time before the arrival of Orange's division. When the latter did

*Clausewitz here apparently follows Muffling's report (Ch de W. *Plan of Operations of the Saxon Army in 1806*) on the Battle of Auerstaedt, which contains many errors as to events which occurred on the left Prussian wing. The line of battle of Schmettau's, up to the last moment, did not form a crook with Wartensleben, but an obtuse salient angle. From the beginning of the battle, Schmettau's division was charged by the hostile cavalry, however, it did not change its position. Only on the extreme left, Malschitzki's cavalry was posted by Scharnhorst refused to the flank, with regard to the division, when the first enveloping columns of the enemy were seen.—W. D. Files, E III, 3, 166.

arrive, the two preceding divisions were already much exhausted and shaken. In any case, Orange's division should have been employed exclusively to reinforce the left in order to again acquire a position corresponding to the line of retreat, but this idea does not seem to have occurred to any one during the entire battle. They contented themselves by sending one brigade of this division to the left, which according to the order of battle belonged to the right wing; this brigade was unable to re-establish matters.*

Marshal Davout had then called up his third division, Morand, and had employed it to still more turn the already refused Prussian wing; he caused it to take the direction from Taugwitz via Spielberg and even directed a part on Lisdorf.† Davout had orders to come up on the flank of the Prussian army to separate them still more from their line of retreat. He maneuvered with this mission. He believed he could avoid the danger to which he was exposed, by assistance to be given him by Bernadotte's and Soult's corps, who were between him and the principal army, and who should by their march forward have fallen on the rear of the principal army.

But these corps did not arrive, because Soult was called to Jena and Bernadotte made false movements. On the other hand, the Prussian reserve under Kalkreuth was only one-quarter of a mile from the field of battle. Marshal Davout's situation was consequently extremely dangerous. Up to now, three Prussian divisions had fought against three French divisions; the two sides had nearly equal forces, around 27,000 men, and there was, therefore, an equilibrium of power. But the French, more accustomed to

*On arrival of the King, the Prince of Orange personally received orders to reinforce the left wing of the line of battle with his entire division. There was thus a return to the intention expressed in the march order to have the troops which followed Schmertau's division on the left (see *Monographs of Military History*, Vol. II, page 95). But under the circumstances, Wartensleben's division commenced to bend, and the order was again changed, and only Prince Henry's brigade was sent to the left, while Lutzow's brigade was intended to reinforce the right wing.—W.D. Files, E III—3.

†Here again, Clausewitz must have followed the incorrect report of Muffling. Morand's division was actually engaged against the right Prussian wing, while the columns which turned against the left Prussian wing, belonged to Friant's division and had taken this direction from the beginning of the battle.

war, confident in the advantage of their tactics, had little by little gained the upper hand. They had fewer losses than their adversaries and pushed the latter into a disadvantageous oblique position. This result was altogether simple and natural. If at this moment (it must have been about 10 A.M.)* the reserve under Kalkreuth had received orders to throw itself against the right wing of the French, which Marshal Davout had caused to converge towards Lisdorf in front of Eckartsberga, a miracle would have been necessary to prevent Marshal Davout from being overthrown and crushed with the greater part of his army corps before he again reached the Kosen bridge.

But Bernadotte did not fall on the rear of the Prussians, and neither did Kalkreuth fall on the rear of the French. He left his bivouac near Rannstedt so late that when he arrived at Auerstaedt, the three divisions were already in such disorder that the King, who had himself assumed command, did not believe it possible to re-establish the battle with the reserve.† If the King had known the situation of his adversary as we now know it, he would not have hesitated for a minute to use his reserves against him, and it would have been a miracle if he had not won a brilliant victory. But it was estimated that the troops which had fought against our three divisions were much superior in strength, because we had seen our troops crushed while the enemy always had reserves. We did not understand sufficiently the effects of the new tactics which greatly economizes force during the battle, and no account was taken of the difference of result in the two methods of fighting. Everywhere everyone in war has believed the enemy to be stronger than he was, and still more so when all our designs everywhere fail by a better employment of the enemy's forces. But, besides, it was not known what was following Marshal Davout across the bridge of Kosen; and the three Prussian divisions which had been fought were almost crushed. If an attack had been made with the reserve, and this failed to succeed, the reserve would fall into the same condition

*The moment spoken of here, should have been fixed as noon. At this time the reserve was already deployed in rear of Gernstedt.

†See *Monographs of Military History*, Volume II, page 12.

and a complete disaster would result in a lost battle. It was therefore decided not to attempt this useless task but to withdraw with a weakened army towards Prince Hohenlohe, who was believed to be intact, with a view to undertaking either a new battle with all forces united, or else to continue to retreat. This was the point of view taken and at first sight it appears very proper, but considering correct principles, we arrive at the following considerations :

In war there is always uncertainty as to the mutual situation of the two parties. We must therefore become accustomed to always act according to general appearances, and it is an error to wait for the moment when all ignorance has disappeared, and where it becomes possible to proceed without hypotheses. He who considers lightly the requirement to act according to general appearances, will not know what he wants, and will not understand what he is doing. It is therefore difficult to examine the decision taken at Auerstaedt, by placing ourselves in the situation at the time, and of inquiring what would be the result of reasoning, if we admit as a premise the more reasonable assumptions, and if we follow this up by strict logic.

The first assumption which was made, was that other corps were following Marshal Davout via Kosen; this was altogether arbitrary. The terrain between Hassenhausen and the Saale was as flat as a table and was not very much covered and nothing could be seen of corps who might be following; there was therefore no reason to believe in their existence from any observations. In addition, it could be quite clearly seen that Kosen was at the extreme right of the enemy, for he had appeared at Saalfeld on the 10th in great force. Now it was difficult to admit that the principal mass of the French would be found exactly at the head of their march order. It was more natural to suppose that strong forces would come from Camburg and Dornburg. If these should arrive near Auerstaedt in time, it would be impossible to win; but the entire effort of the battle should have had as a mission to wait and defeat one of the columns crossing the Saale before the others could arrive, and naturally these other columns had not yet arrived. It was therefore necessary not to hold back through fear of its

being impossible to carry out what had been regarded as possible in the directing idea, that is, that we would strike an enemy considerably weaker.

. We will not besides conceal the fact that it was possible to see the reserve crushed without a penetration. But such dangers arise in all battles, and we must not consider every possibility, but only probabilities. The latter promised a brilliant victory over one hostile corps; if this would not be sufficient to decide the war, it was at least a compensation to the evils which must be expected, and particularly it was what was desired and very nearly what could have been obtained from the situation. The battle of Auerstaedt was not continued and consequently was not won: this is an excellent example of the results of indecision in war. As there was no absolute certainty of success, it was believed more prudent, and providing more for the future, not to continue, while prudence and foresight urged exactly the opposite, that is, not to allow the single advantage on which we could count in this war to escape.

The error which was committed in breaking off the battle, was entirely the result of indecision. But there was also here a false reasoning.

The second assumption which was made, was that Prince Hohenlohe would be intact. This assumption was also against all probability, for even if the Prince did not fight a battle, it was not probable that he could retire without being pressed and without a serious rear guard action. Here commences the false reasoning. What did they wish to do with Prince Hohenlohe? To fight a battle after joining? Then it would have been better not to have become separated from him. As long as the enemy had to cross the Saale in order to get at us, there was the hope of being able to fall with our assembled forces on his separated forces; if we fought away from this side of the Saale, the concentration of our forces could no longer assure us any advantage, as we would have probably encountered the hostile forces also concentrated. Finally, if it was desired to unite with Hohenlohe, in order to continue the retreat and go towards the Russians, it was also unimportant whether the two divisions of Kalkreuth were intact, or were weak-

ened by a battle. The reasoning at Auerstaedt belongs to the class of superficial conversations which occur so frequently in war between those who are near to the Commanding General and are questioned by him at a critical moment. Ordinarily, men are always frightened at the danger of taking an important resolution, and are therefore very much inclined to withdraw behind a superficial reasoning because they do not take into consideration their lack of courage. He who at such times has not by distinguished natural courage maintained a level head, should have at least strong logic, understand exactly what he wants, see clearly what is occurring, and keep straight at his mission. Both of these qualities are much more to be expected in a commanding general than in his staff, or at least from those who have not from the beginning had absolute confidence, it is for this reason why advice and conversations at moments when great decisions are required are always very undesirable.

We now come to a third point. The retreat which it was desired to continue in concert with Hohenlohe's army, should at first in principle have been obtained by a victory at Auerstaedt. The entire plan of defense in rear of the Saale was based on the following idea: if the enemy wished to turn our army by the left, and reach our natural line of retreat with the head of his column, we would strike this head, and if we did not succeed, we would select another line of retreat, as near as possible to the true one. Now, not only had we struck the head of the hostile forces near Auerstaedt, but we had also so disarranged our front that in withdrawing straight to the rear, we returned from whence we came, and where the enemy would now be, that is, at Weimar.

To carry out a retreat together with Prince Hohenlohe, which would again place the army in a better situation, it was necessary to be possible to occupy a position in the vicinity of Eckhartsberga until the Prince had reached Auerstaedt, and then together march towards the Unstrutt. To do this, it was necessary to defeat the enemy at Auerstaedt; without such a victory, there would always be a bad retreat, a retreat where it would be necessary to hasten and to make

detours in face of the enemy. From this point of view, it was another serious error to discontinue the battle of Auerstaedt so early.

The Prussians were at that battle 45,000 men strong, against 27,000 French, who had in their rear, a difficult closed valley with only one bridge. The Prussians were defeated because they did not understand the new method of conducting battle and because they lacked resolution. We can well say that from the moment when it was known we could not win here, an admissible result of the war was impossible. Evidently it was the fault of tactics, and not of strategy that the campaign took such a bad turn.

We now come to the general retreat. Before considering the details we wish to point out the principal facts of this retreat, that is, essential events.

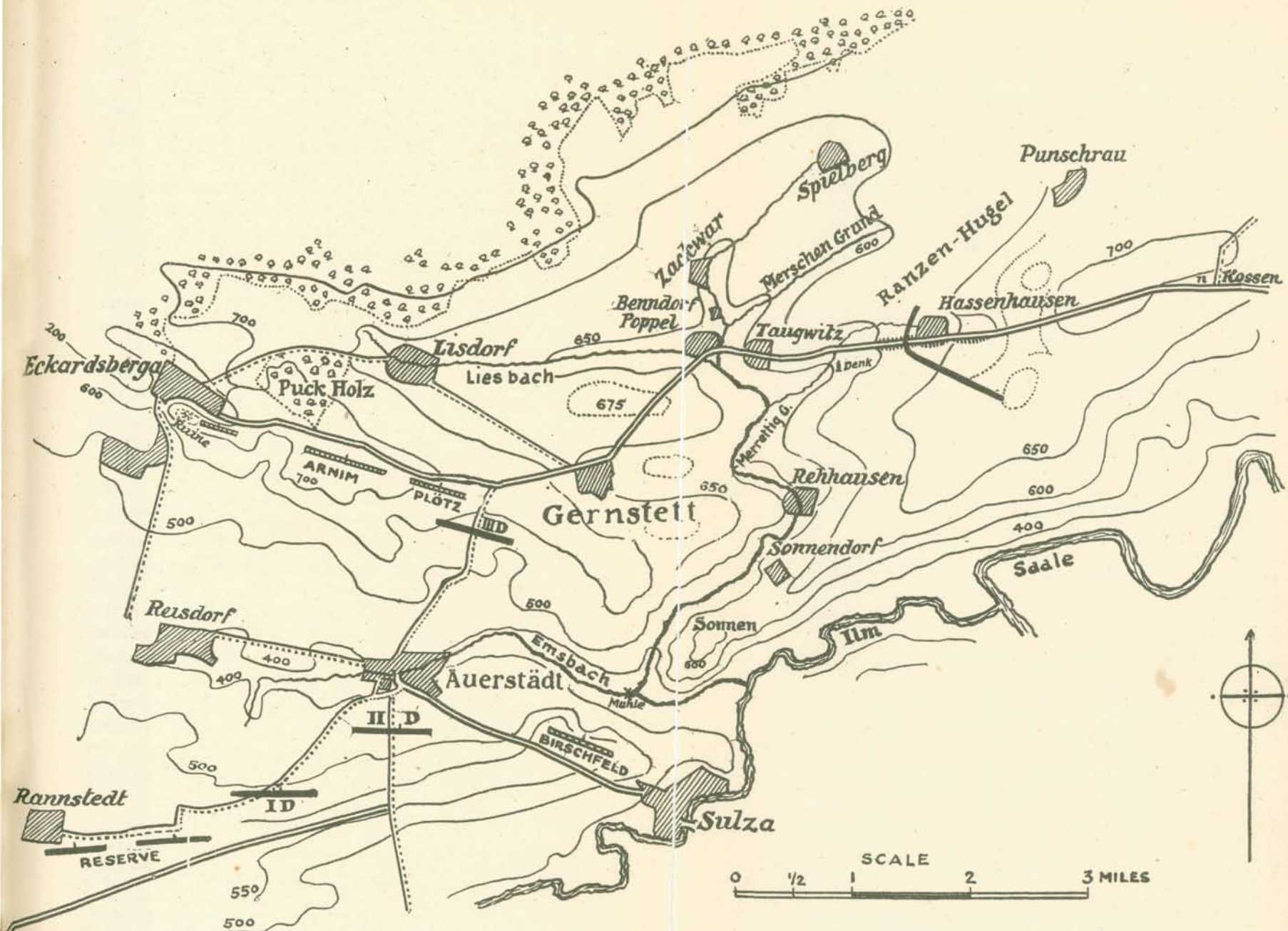
14 October—Hohenlohe's army and General Ruchel's corps were in such a state of dissolution, that it was impossible to say where they were. A part had gone towards Erfurt, another to Buttstedt; another had gone towards the Unstrutt, between the other two parts. Prince Hohenlohe himself arrived in the night with a cavalry detachment at the Vippach Chateau, which he however soon left.

The situation of the principal army was not much better. About 35,000 men left during the evening in good order from the vicinity of Auerstaedt via Buttstedt, for Weimar.* But when news of the loss of the battle by Prince Hohenlohe was received, the march was changed and directed towards Buttstedt via the Sommerda road. All the troops did not receive the new order, and consequently part went to Buttstedt, and part towards Buttstedt.

Among the former, some left immediately, and under the direction of Field Marshal von Moellendorf and the Prince of Orange, took the road to Erfurt; they no longer knew the place of assembly of the army and they became invested in Erfurt. His Majesty, the King, and General Count von Kalkreuth, were ordered to Sommerda where the Duke's army was to be assembled.

*See "*Monographs of Military History*," Volume II, page 16.

BATTLE OF AUERSTÄDT 14TH OCTOBER, 1806.



On the 14th, the French did not follow very much beyond the fields of battle. Particularly Davout remained at Auerstaedt and Eckartsberga, and the main body near Weimar, where was the Headquarters of the Emperor.*

15 October—Prince Hohenlohe went to Sondershausen where he commenced to assemble some remnants of his army, while other parts were moving on Frankenhausen.

His Majesty, the King, remained at Sommerda until evening, and then went towards Sondershausen to there assemble the troops who were entirely dispersed as the result of the night march, and to place them in billets in rear of the Unstrutt. Although Sommerda was not much more than four miles from Auerstaedt, many battalions did not arrive there until after night; all the troops which were assembled at this point might amount to about 14,000 men.

In the French army, Murat and Soult turned towards Erfurt; Ney leaving Weimar, followed the defeated army in the direction of Frankenhausen. Lannes and Augereau turned to the right, towards Naumburg. Bernadotte and Davout did the same.†

16 October—Prince Hohenlohe reached Nordhausen where he continued to assemble the remnants of his army which by now might amount to 8,000 or 10,000 men. The command of the army, less Kalkreuth's two divisions, was confided to Prince Hohenlohe at Sondershausen by his Majesty, who thereupon left the army. General Kalkreuth left Sommerda to proceed via Weissensee and Greussen to Sondershausen. He found already at Weissensee several regiments of hostile cavalry under General Klein who belonged to Prince Murat's corps. This General was very pleased to learn that negotiations had already been started, and that consequently an armistice had been concluded. He could not have stopped Kalkreuth's column, and the latter might have greatly endangered him. He therefore allowed General

*The Chasseur brigade of Marshal Davout arrived as far as Buttstedt.

†On October 15, Murat and Ney appeared in front of Erfurt. Soult went towards Buttstedt, and only patrols from his corps reached Erfurt. On the other hand Augereau marched towards this city. Bernadotte turned from Apolda towards the north and reached Bibra; his patrols came as far as Querfurt. Only Lannes and Davout were on the Naumburg road or in that city.

Kalkreuth to proceed peacefully from Weissensee towards Greussen. Scarcely had he arrived at this place, when Marshal Soult arrived, coming from Erfurt via Tennstedt, with Lasalle's cavalry division leading. General Kalkreuth wished to pass the night quietly near Greussen. But Marshal Soult did not wish to know anything about the armistice; the march was therefore continued on to Sondershausen where they arrived in the morning.*

In the French army Murat was still in front of Erfurt where Marshal Moellendorf surrendered on the morning of the 16th with about 14,000 men.† Murat left there for Langensalza. Soult was near Greussen, Ney in rear of Soult, Lannes and Augereau were at Naumburg; Davout at Weissenfels. Bernadotte had taken the direct road to Magdeburg; he was at Querfurt. Napoleon and the Guard were at Weimar.‡

17 October—Prince Hohenlohe waited near Nordhausen for General Kalkreuth. The latter general left Sondershausen without stopping for rest; he reached Nordhausen during the afternoon. The two armies left during the evening and crossed the Harz, marching as follows: Hohenlohe via Stolberg and Guntersberg, towards Quedlimburg; General Kalkreuth via Ilfeld and Stiege, towards Blankenburg. The heavy artillery under an escort of a battalion of 600 troopers, under General Blucher, made a detour via Osterode, Seesen and Brunswick, around the extreme west of the Harz, and later across the Elbe near Sandau.

In the French army, Murat also made a detour around the extreme west of the Harz. On this day he was between Langensalza and Sondershausen. Soult and Ney arrived at Sondershausen, which they reached towards evening. Lannes and Augereau went towards Merseburg. Bonaparte

*Soult did not come from Erfurt but from Butteltstedt and he marched via Sommerda. Lasalle's hussar brigade belonged to the reserve cavalry. Coming from Walschleben, it reached this day Tennstedt.

†The formal conclusion of the capitulation took place during the night 15-16th. Prince Orange replaced Marshal Von Moellendorf, who was sick. About 10,000 men, not 14,000, surrendered.—W. D. Files, E III, 64.

‡Ney, coming from Erfurt, followed Prince Murat on October 16th; he reached Grafen-Tonna, in the evening. Augereau was at Weimar on October 16th.

with the Guard to Naumburg. Bernadotte turned against the Duke of Wurtemberg, who stayed at Halle and was defeated. Davout remained at Weissenfels.*

In this manner, it followed that the direct road from Auerstaedt to Magdeburg was not taken by any of our corps, nor by a hostile corps.

18 October—Hohenlohe's army was near Quedlimburg. That of Kalkreuth assembled near Blankenburg and reorganized from the disorder into which it had fallen during the night march. The Duke of Wurtemberg had withdrawn during the 17th from Halle to Dessau and was consequently marching from Dessau to Magdeburg.

In the French army, the cavalry under Murat was in the vicinity of Bleicherode. Soult and Ney crossed the Harz. Lannes and Augereau arrived at Halle, Bonaparte at Merseburg, Davout at Leipzig. Bernadotte had again abandoned the Dessau road and turned towards Magdeburg, he arrived nearly as far as Commern.

October 19—Hohenlohe marched via Egel, just opposite Magdeburg; Kalkreuth to near Oschersleben; the Duke of Wurtemberg to near Magdeburg; Murat, Soult and Ney reached the vicinity of Halberstadt; Bernadotte, Bernburg; Lannes and Augereau, Radegast; Bonaparte, Halle.†

October 20—Prince Hohenlohe was near Magdeburg. Kalkreuth went beyond Magdeburg as far as Jerichow and crossed the Elbe by ferry. The remainder of the Prussian army, about 45,000 men strong, were to be assembled this day near Magdeburg. Prince Hohenlohe assumed command. General Kalkreuth left for Prussia.‡

The French, under Murat, Soult, Ney and Bernadotte, advanced as far as the vicinity of Egel and Aslesben, some

*Ney reached Nordhausen only on the morning of October 18th, by means of a night march. Lannes on the evening of the 17th was near Naumburg, on the Leipzig road.

†Let us remark that Murat's cavalry was on the 18th spread between Sondershausen and Steige. Lannes marched towards Merseburg on the 19th, Bernadotte reached Alsleben and Ney Benneckenstein. Augereau followed Lannes. He arrived just beyond Halle.

‡See "*Monographs of Military History*," Volume II, page 24.

even as far as under the guns of Magdeburg. Lannes and Augereau at Dessau and Davout at Wittenberg.*

In this part of the retreat, the Prussian army had made a detour of 8 miles, in order to march to Magdeburg, 18 miles away, while the direct road was, we may say, entirely free. It made, on the 16th and 18th, a continuous march of 14 miles from Sommerda to Blankenburg, crossed the Harz in the night by a miserable crossroad, which completely disorganized it, so thoroughly that it required three days to cover the following 8 miles. General Blucher arrived several days later, on the 24th, without having fought, by the road which we have indicated, near Saudau, where he crossed the Elbe; the Duke of Weimar recalled with his division too late from Franconia, arrived on October 15th in front of Erfurt where he wished to attempt to rescue the garrison; he did not succeed in this, and marched via Langensalza, Mulhausen, Heiligenstadt, Duderstedt, Osterode, Seesen Wolfenbittel, Koenigslutter, Gardelegen and Sandau, where he luckily crossed the Elbe almost in sight of Soult. The French were divided into two principal masses. Their left wing, Murat, Soult and Ney, followed the defeated army toward Magdeburg, making the detour which they took without pressing them too strongly; the right wing sought to cut off the main Prussian army by occupying Dessau and Wittenberg.

Bernadotte, in the middle between these two masses, had desired to take the direct road, but had been turned away by the Duke of Wurtemberg. The Guard had followed the right wing.

Prince Hohenlohe near Magdeburg reorganized the remnants of his army. He left on the 21st with about 24,000 men. He should not have left more than 12,000 men at Magdeburg but the disorder and the haste did not allow of exact supervision, and events showed that about 20,000 men remained there.†

The Prince did not believe it possible to reach Berlin in advance of the enemy. He therefore decided to proceed to

*On October 20th, Ney arrived as far as Halberstadt. Bernadotte as far as Bernburg.

†The total effective strength at the capitulation amounted to 24,118 men.—W.D. Files, E III, 163, Volume VII.

wards Stettin, making the detour via Rathenow and Ruppín. For this purpose he divided his force into two columns. One consisted of infantry with one brigade of cavalry; the other of cavalry. The infantry was to march to Stettin, via Rathenow, Friesach, Ruppín, Gransee, Templin, Prenzlau; the cavalry column via Havelberg, Kyritz, Wittstok, Wesenberg, Woldegk, and Pasewalk.

The third column, consisting of 35 squadrons of light cavalry and a few light infantry, under General Schimmelpfennig, was to cover this long flank march on a road nearer to the enemy, via Ziesar, Plaue, Fehrbellin and Zehdenik.*

On the French side, Ney, and at the beginning Soult also remained in front of Magdeburg. Lannes, Augereau and Davout, continued on towards Berlin, from where Lannes alone kept on. Murat and Bernadotte converged towards Dessau as they were unable to cross Dessau near Magdeburg. From Dessau, Murat marched via Plaue, towards Fehrbellin, where he joined Lannes; Bernadotte marched via Rathenow and Wusterhausen. There is no exact information as to their position during these days.†

21 October—Prince Hohenlohe marched towards Burg, with the infantry column.

The cavalry column assembled on the Elbe; Schimmelpfennig near Ziesar.‡

22 October—Infantry column at Genthin; cavalry column at Jerichow; Schimmelpfennig at Plaue.

23 October—Infantry column at Rathenow; cavalry at Sandau; Schimmelpfennig opposite Ranen.

As the bridge near Fehrbellin had been destroyed, General Schimmelpfennig was directed for the morrow to proceed towards Friesach, and this was the reason for the infantry column making a new detour towards Rhinow.§ An

*See "*Monographs of Military History*," Volume II, page 26.

†Murat marched from Dessau via Potsdam via Oranienbourg, and reconnoitered towards Fehrbellin on October 25; Bernadotte took the road from Oranienbourg via Boernicke.

‡Schimmelpfennig's column did not unite until October 22. On October 21, Schimmelpfennig's hussar regiment was at Gladau, and at Dretzel between Ziesar and Genthin, while the other regiments assigned to this general were in rear.

§See "*Monographs of Military History*," Volume II, page 26.

infantry brigade under Colonel Hagen had been attached to the cavalry.

24 October—The infantry column was near Neustadt. The cavalry column was near Kyritz.

General Schimmelpfennig was near Protzen.

General Blucher on this day crossed the Elbe at Sandau.

Natzmer's division formed from the Wurtemberg corps, remained near Rhinow as a rear guard, and was then placed under the orders of General Blucher, who was to remain with it at a short march in the rear of the army.

25 October—Infantry column at Ruppın.

Cavalry column at Wittstock.

General Blucher at Neustadt.

Schimmelpfennig at Zehdenick.

On this day Spandau surrendered.

26 October—Infantry column at Furstenberg.

Cavalry column at Wesenberg.

General Blucher at Alt and Ruppın.

General Schimmelpfennig was struck at Zehdenick on this day by the head of Murat's forces; he was completely dispersed and his detachment in great part taken prisoner. Only two squadrons of his regiment, under the Prince of Pless, reached the Oder. Marshal Lannes was in rear of Murat's cavalry, but he did not reach Zehdenick until the evening.

Prince Hohenlohe made a new detour by marching from Gransee not on Templin but on Furstenberg, in order to close in on his cavalry column; this movement deprived the troops of the rations prepared at Templin.*

27 October—Prince Hohenlohe had marched from Lychen on Boitzenburg. But as a hostile cavalry patrol had arrived there a half hour earlier, he again abandoned the expected rations, made a new detour via Krewitz and Schoernermark, where he did not arrive until nearly morning.

The cavalry column was to join the infantry near Prenzlau. In consequence, near the infantry column were the following troops:

*See "*Monographs of Military History*," Volume II, page 27.

Beeren's brigade, with 5 squadrons of gendarmes and 5 squadrons of Beeren's regiment;
 Leib regiment of Schwerin's brigade;
 Wobeser's brigade, consisting of 5 squadrons of the Prittwitz regiment, 5 from the Kraft, 5 from the Quitzow, and 5 from the Wobeser regiments—Total, 35 squadrons.

Fifteen squadrons under General Bila were to follow, but never joined the infantry column. The gendarme regiment was to join General Bila, and the latter was to replace General Schimmelpfennig to cover the right flank of the infantry column. The gendarme regiment then marched from Lychen on the right of the lake near Boitzenburg towards Prenzlau. Near Wichmansdorf, it was stopped by a superior cavalry force, and forced to surrender. Only Major Furgas escaped with one squadron which later reached Anklam.

The positions of the Prussian troops, on the 27th, or more correctly on the 28th before daybreak, were as follows:

Infantry column near Schoenermark;
 35 squadrons of cavalry near Schoenermark; the remaining regiments of cavalry column (45 squadrons) near Furstenberg;
 General Bila with 15 squadrons between Lychen and Schoenermark;*
 General Blucher at Lycken and Furstenberg.

28 October—Prince Hohenlohe left Shoenermark at daybreak and left for Prenzlau, which he reached at about the same time as the enemy's cavalry.

Murat came with his leading cavalry from Templin via Hassleben. Lannes followed him. Bernadotte was further to the rear and following General Blucher via Ruppín and Lychen. Soult on this day crossed the Elbe, † near

*On leaving Schoenermark, only the following regiments were there, Leib cuirassiers, Prittwitz, Kraft and Wobeser regiments, 20 squadrons in all. Quitzow's regiment did not reach the infantry until shortly before Prenzlau. Near Furstenberg were 25 squadrons from the Leib carbiniers, and from the Heising, Holtzendorf, Bunting and Count Henckel regiments, and in addition from the remnants of the Katte and Balliodz regiments.

General Bila left Jacobshagen on the morning of the 28th for Schoenermark. He had five squadrons from his own regiment and 10 from Gettkandt.—W.D. Files, EIII, 13, Vol. VII; 117, Vol. II; 189, Vol. III, IV.

†Bernadotte left Oranienburg via Gransee, and reached Furstenberg on the evening of October 28th, and then alone continued the pursuit of Blucher. Soult crossed the Elbe near Tangermunde.

Sandau. The other French corps in part marched on Frankfurt and Custrin and in part on Berlin and beyond.

Prittwitz's dragoon regiment deployed against the leading hostile cavalry, and was repulsed; as the result the King's regiment was thrown back into disorder into Prenzlau. Prince August's battalion and Quitzow's regiment were cut up. The battalion was captured several hours after noon, on the Pasewalk road, after a long resistance. Prittzw's regiment fled toward General Bila.

Prince Hohenlohe considered his troops too exhausted to continue his march; he surrendered to General Murat with about 10,000 men who still remained with him.

Blucher arrived at Boitzenburg late on the 28th and here learned of Prince Hohenlohe's surrender. Blucher remained at Boitzenburg.*

General Bila learned near Prenzlau from Prittzw's regiment that he was cut off. He therefore made a false march via Strasburg and Uetkermunde towards Falkenwalde, 3 leagues from Stettin, in order to reach Stettin by this detour, as he thought it no longer possible to proceed via Lockenitz. He arrived there at noon on the 29th, sent some one ahead to Stettin and was informed that the enemy was at the gates, and that he could no longer pass by. In consequence, he withdrew towards Anklam, where he joined on the 30th his brother, General Bila, senior, with the 1st Battalion of Grevenitz's regiment which had escorted the royal chests which had been luckily sent to Usedom. There was no longer time to do much for the troops, and General Bila, senior, concluded on the 31st a capitulation with Becker's French cavalry brigade.

The cavalry column with Hagen's infantry brigade marched on the 28th towards Pasewalk, which it reached on the morning of the 29th and there surrendered to a brigade of French cavalry, as the defile to Lockenitz was already occupied.†

*Blucher received the news only on the morning of October 29th. His advance guard had already started from Boitzenburg for Prenzlau. He therefore immediately changed his direction of march towards Strelitz.—W. D. Files, E III 5.

†Hagen's brigade reached Pasewalk after noon on October 28th, at a time when the defile of Lockenitz was not yet in the hands of the enemy.—W.D. Files, E III, 189, Volume IV.

General Blucher seeing that he could no longer reach Stettin went on the 29th towards Strelitz with the intention of joining the Duke of Weimar. The latter had on orders written by the King turned over the command of his corps to General Winning, who had marched via Kyritz and Wittstock towards Mirow, where he arrived on the 30th and received information as to the surrender at Prenzlau. He then decided to take the Rostock road in order to embark on ships if possible. Near Waren, he joined General Blucher who assumed command of the two corps, which were about 20,000 men strong and had 100 guns with them. General Blucher decided to draw the enemy as far away from the Oder as possible, in order to offer battle to one hostile corps. He hoped in this way to give the King time to reach the Oder with the Russian and Prussian troops. He therefore abandoned the march on Rostock, and took the road via Alt-Schwerin and Lewitz-Bruch between Neu-Schwerin and Neustadt. But the French Marshals Murat, Bernadotte and Soult* the first on the right, the second on the center and the third on the left, were so close on his heels that he could not maintain his march on the Elbe, as he would not have had the time to cross it; he could on the other hand not halt to give his troops a moment's rest or to reorganize. With numerous rear guard actions, he went via Raggendorf towards Lubeck, where he arrived November 5th with the hope of there finding an opportunity for an advantageous battle in view of his position in rear of the Trave and thanks to the neutrality of Denmark.

The unexpected loss of the gate of the city of Lubeck, and in consequence of the town, with a large part of the troops that were in there, caused his hopes to vanish. During the night, his troops were again surprised in rear of Lubeck. He was thus forced on November 7th, to lay down his arms with 9000 men.

*March Table November 1st to 5th:

<i>November</i>	<i>Soult</i>	<i>Bernadotte</i>	<i>Murat</i>
1	Waren	Alt-Schwerin	Demmin
2	Plau	Lubz	Malchin
3	Crivitz	Rabensteinfeld	Gustrow
4	G-Welzin	Lankow	Schwerin
5	Ratzeburg	Schoenberg	Ratzeburg

Let us consider the general circumstances of this retreat.

The King and his staff had so little understood the necessity of winning at Auerstaedt in order to protect their retreat, that they no longer thought of selecting the road nearest to the natural lines of retreat; but they wished, of their own accord, to march on Weimar to unite there with Prince Hohenlohe. Only news that hostile cavalry, were already on the main Weimar highway caused them to march towards Buttstedt, that is towards the Harz.

Even with the defective front which we had at the battle of Auerstaedt, even when at the end of the battle, we were in rear of the Auerstaedt creek, that is, with our backs towards Weimar, it was still possible to march directly via Eckhartsberga toward Nebra or Rossleben, on the Unstrut; they would have been there on the 15th, with a position in a deep valley in which to reorganize the troops. In fact we had been constantly turned during the battle by our left; a flank march after a lost battle is an unusual thing, but we must not lose sight of the general circumstances. It was not with the hostile center that we were fighting, which might have led us to suppose that other corps were being sent around our flank to turn us; it was the extreme edge of the turning movement which we had in front of us, this was known with the greatest probability. The turning movement which Davout carried out with several battalions was a sort of child-like movement. If we had marched squarely away with the 35,000 men which we had in rear of Auerstaedt, this small force could not have stopped our march. It is impossible to consider the situation of the Prussian army at Auerstaedt as so desperate, that if we had acted in the same manner as the Russians had near Custrin, we could have charged two or three times from the front, and at the end reoccupied our true line of retreat in spite of the victor and marched off to the left flank. How much more difficult was the similar task of Frederick the Great after the battle of Hochkirch, where his first retreat toward Klein-Bautzen, on the morning of the battle, was a flank tactical march in sight of the enemy, between two hostile corps, the right and left Austrian wings, and where in consequence the retreat from Klein-Bautzen to Goerlitz was a strategi-

cal flank march to regain the strategical line of retreat which he had thus so completely lost!

But even conceiving that we had at first complied with the natural sentiment by retreating directly and proceeding as far as Buttstedt, we should however have arrived near Buttstedt 35,000 strong, and not as actually occurred with 10,000 men. From Buttstedt it was still possible to march toward Rossleben. If on the 15th we had been near Rossleben we could easily have been on the 16th near Halle, which is only $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Rossleben. Even on the 17th we would not have arrived at Halle too late, as only Bernadotte's corps advanced against the Duke of Wurtemberg and it would not have dared to attack under these circumstances.* From Halle, on the 18th the road to Wittenberg and Dessau would have been open, but on the 15th we did not march towards Rossleben:

(1) Because the army was completely dispersed since the night of the 14th-15th. One part had gone to Buttstedt and had even wandered towards Erfurt; it was therefore necessary to make its assembly practicable by choosing a nearer point. Like the loss of the battle of Auerstaedt; this dispersion was the result of inexperience in war and to the improper tactical conduct of our army. No precise orders, no decisions, uninstructed division staffs, very old men as Generals, regimental and battalion commanders, such were the causes which in one night march resulted in only 10,000 men remaining in ranks out of 35,000 men.

(2) We did not march towards Rossleben as we had constantly the idea of uniting with Hohenlohe, and because we hoped to arrive there earlier by taking the Sondershausen road. But it was not a question of joining Hohenlohe. All our interests lay in gaining and covering the nearest places for crossing the Elbe. Prince Hohenlohe was always assured of reaching Magdeburg and there crossing the Elbe. The two forces had nothing more to do together.

Of the nearest points of crossing the Elbe, Dessau and Wittenberg, nobody thought of. An important object is recognized so seldom, that the Duke of Wurtemberg who re-

*The distance from Buttstedt to Halle is about 165 kilometers. Clausewitz probably considers too slightly the difficulties of a march on Halle.

mained near Halle, and should preferably have been detailed for the covering force, had to be notified by the Governor of Magdeburg, and received his instructions through him.

From Sommerda, from where Colonel Kleist wrote to the above effect to the Governor of Magdeburg, to Halle, is only 10 miles; via Magdeburg it is 27 miles. There is nothing astonishing in the fact that the Duke did not receive instructions. Also a bad interior arrangement led us wrongly to the Sommerda road. On October 15th, General Kalkreuth had about 15,000 men there. Let us consider now the point of view at this time. General Kalkreuth could have on the morning of the 16th marched on Frankenhäusen, and have reached without difficulty on the 17th or 18th the direct Magdeburg road and arrived at this town one day sooner. But several regiments of hostile cavalry were at Weissensee. Although General Kalkreuth had a superior force of cavalry, and although these regiments in the situation in which they were, ran a greater risk of being captured than of taking us prisoners, General Kalkreuth preferred to offer them a sort of armistice and to continue on to Sondershausen.

From Sommerda to Blankenburg is 14 miles, of which five miles are through the Harz. General Kalkreuth covered this distance between the morning of the 16th and the morning of the 18th, that is, in 48 hours; 5 miles were covered in the Harz over most abominable roads and during a dark night. We can imagine the condition in which the troops arrived near Blankenburg, besides Prince Hohenlohe had waited half a day; without having so waited he could have also reached the Elbe on the 19th. All this was the result of the small cavalry detachment which had been met near Weissensee, and which should have been overthrown.

But the march across the Harz itself via Steige, instead of going via Hasselfeld, was with the intent of better deceiving the enemy. It was in fact feared that on the main road we might be attacked from both flanks, even if only by hostile patrols which were seen everywhere.* The contin-

*The main road from Hasselfeld still passed in 1806 via Steige, but was in such condition that it might well have been taken as a crossroad. Clausewitz probably used a more modern map, on which the new road is shown from Nordhausen to Hasselfeld.—*German Editor.*

uous fire of our stragglers was the cause of this terror inspiring idea. For this reason we abandoned the greater part of our artillery in the Harz from which we marched in a disorder which could not be surpassed.

The following are the losses which had occurred up to this time: Prince Hohenlohe left Magdeburg with about 24,000 men; 21,000 men surrendered in this fortress; General Blucher left with about 20,000 men. This makes 65,000 men, If we estimate the strength of the army, less the Saxons, but including the garrisons of Erfurt and Magdeburg, as 115,000 men, the losses were 50,000 men. Of the 45,000 men which Hohenlohe had near Magdeburg, about 25,000 men belonged to the principal army, 8,000 men to Hohenlohe's army, 8,000 men to the reserve army, and the remainder to the Magdeburg garrison.

The principal army had at Auerstaedt 45,000 men; it had therefore lost 20,000 men. Immediately after the battle, it might have been 35,000 men strong. Its losses during the retreat in stragglers, deserters, etc., was 10,000 men.

Prince Hohenlohe and General Ruchel had about 30,000 Prussian troops on the battlefield; at Magdeburg they had 8,000 men of this army. The losses then were 22,000 men, of which 8,000 men surrendered at Erfurt. This leaves a balance of 14,000 men, of which probably half were deserters and stragglers.

With an orderly and regular retreat, the surrender of Erfurt should not have taken place. The loss of 18,000 men in stragglers and deserters, could have been reduced to 10,000 men. We could then have had at Magdeburg 20,000 men more, and our losses would not have exceeded 30,000 men. Besides, we may consider the fact that as a result of the disorderly retreat, we left 11,000 men in rear more than was necessary for the garrison of Magdeburg. Prince Hohenlohe should then have been able to leave with 55,000 men instead of 24,000 men and Blucher to follow him with 20,000 men. But due to the bad conduct of the retreat, and the lack of experience in war, the army was led to Magdeburg instead of to Dessau and Wittenberg and caused it to leave 30,000 men less strong.

But another serious error which was committed west of the Elbe, was the conduct of the Duke Eugene of Wurtemberg. Without having any real intention of fighting a battle, he took away 4,000 or 5,000 men; this was another fault of our method of war. These troops taken off to one side were along the natural line of retreat of our army. To stay there, covering as best as was possible the bridges of Dessau and Wittenberg, should a good occasion arise, was their sole mission. Instead of doing this, they completely neglected Wittenberg, abandoned Dessau, and voluntarily left the direct road for another, with the sole idea of undertaking a concentration which had no object whatever. Did they receive this order via Magdeburg? This is not certainly known. After having thus neglected on the left bank of the Elbe everything which was natural, they finally found themselves on the 20th near Magdeburg, it is true in a critical position. It became doubtful whether they could reach the Oder, in any case all could not do this, except by the greatest efforts.

Let us again place ourselves on the point of view of Prince Hohenlohe, let us inquire the measures which he ought to have taken on the 20th.

Magdeburg is 18 miles from Berlin; Wittenberg 14 miles from Berlin, that is, Magdeburg is 4 miles further. Berlin lies on the shortest road to Stettin, the last point of crossing of the Oder, whether coming from Wittenberg or from Magdeburg. If we reached Berlin before the enemy the problem was solved.

The road which Prince Hohenlohe with the infantry column chose, via Rathenow and Ruppin, only makes a very small detour; the road taken by the cavalry column makes a detour of 4 miles. The latter might overtake the infantry, but it was not the less serious fault to take these roads, as in any case, *the direct road was left completely open to the enemy*. Although it was impossible to longer offer any considerable resistance west of the Oder, it would have been much different if the enemy had in front of him an important force which he would have been required to drive back each day, instead of making a simple road march. Here and always in similar cases the first rule is certainly to be as

soon as possible in front of the enemy. It could be assumed with the greatest probability that the enemy could not have yet crossed the Elbe on the 20th. It would then have been possible by leaving the Elbe at the same time, to make up 4 miles on the 21st by forced marches.* In any case, it was as easy if we arrived too late, to support the left on leaving Brandenburg or Potsdam as from Magdeburg. Brandenburg and Potsdam, two important stream crossings, were besides very suitable for safe billets at night. Prince Hohenlohe should then, after we had decided to leave Magdeburg on the 20th, having decided that he would cover the 18 miles to Berlin in 3 days, and arrive there on the 23d. In this retreat, infantry had to cover 14 miles in 48 hours, in two separate marches from Sommerda and Blankenburg and from Ruppın to Prenzlau, without having rations prepared. It would have been much preferable to make a similar march via Brandenburg and Potsdam where rations could have been ready and where he would not have been followed by any enemy, and where we could have marched with considerable order.

For such a mission the following dispositions should have been taken. On the 21st, the cavalry which was at Magdeburg should have marched to Ziesar, grazed the animals for some hours, and then continued the march to Gottzow where it should have arrived in the evening. All the infantry should have marched to Ziesar, rested there for several hours and then continued the march to Brandenburg. Brandenburg should have been reached about the morning of the 22d. The cavalry, which had already passed to beyond Magdeburg, should have marched via Genthin and Plaue on Brandenburg, where it should have arrived on the morning of the 22d.

If at Brandenburg information was received that the enemy had not yet been seen at Potsdam, the march on this point should have been resumed at noon on the 22d; the cavalry should have preceded the movement, should have reached Potsdam during the night and should have occupied

*Davout crossed the Elbe at Wittenberg on the morning of October 20th. He had crossed the river with his entire corps by 3:00 P.M. On October 24th, he reached Schoenberg near Berlin.

the crossings of the Havel with the horse artillery. The infantry could have reached Potsdam on the morning of the 23d and have left in the evening for Berlin.

The leading French corps, those of Lannes and Davout, did not reach Potsdam until the 24th, and Berlin not until the 25th. That is 36 hours later than we could have arrived there; from Berlin we could have retired on Neustadt—Eberswalde, and from there have crossed the Oder near Schwedt, which could have been on October 29th or 30th.

Under these circumstances, it was doubtful whether Weimar's corps would be able to reach Stettin. But this would always be more possible than by its own march drawing the enemy in the direction of Stettin.

As far as the Elbe, the Duke had nowhere attracted the attention of the French. There only its appearance scared Soult's corps which invested Magdeburg on the side of Neu-haldensleben. But Soult was no longer able to prevent the Duke from crossing the river at Sandau; he found himself there in his rear with regard to Stettin. If the Duke had marched as rapidly as possible he might have covered the 30 miles to Stettin in six days, that is by October 31st; perhaps the enemy would not have been there on that day. In any case, the safety of this corps was no longer the mission of Prince Hohenlohe, because he could scarcely save himself.

On the other hand, the march of General Blucher with the heavy artillery and the small detachment escorting it (for General Natzmer's division, consisting of the remnants of Wurtemberg's corps was to remain near Prince Hohenlohe) was not in doubt. This General on the 24th was near Rhinow, and he arrived on the 28th near Boitzenburg, from where he could reach Loeckenitz on the 29th, that is to say on the day at the earliest on which Prince Hohenlohe could have crossed the Oder at Schwedt.

Even by the road which the Prince took, he reached Prenzlau before the enemy. He should have also had the foresight to have some cavalry on the Loeckenitz road, but this resulted from the fact that the Prince did not have any cavalry at hand. It cannot then be really said that he was cut off. He arrived at the same time as the enemy, but without time

to deploy, and his troops after 48 hours, marching over fourteen miles arrived in the most lamentable state of hunger and fatigue. Finally, even holding to the road which the Duke chose, three faults can be found. First, the absurd separation of the cavalry from the infantry, as it should have been foreseen that hostile cavalry and not the hostile infantry would be the force to cut him off. Secondly, the march was not as rapid as necessary during the first five days, as from October 21st to 25th, they only covered 17 miles; it was consequently necessary to accelerate beyond measure the rate of march during the last period which was the decisive one. Thirdly, several useless detours were made, one going via Rhinow instead of Friesach, then via Furstenberg and again via Schönemark instead of Boitzenburg.

He should have required all his cavalry to march on the road prescribed for General Schimmelpfennig. This cavalry was 10,000 strong; Murat would have found it near Zehdenick and probably would not have dispersed it, as he himself had only 4,000 to 5,000 troopers, so that the infantry could have proceeded without danger to Templin.

The surrender of Prenzlau was not excusable, in view of the fact that we were in rear of the defile and had not yet been effectively turned. In truth, the idea of proceeding with these troops four miles to Lockenitz in sight of the hostile cavalry had an unusual appearance, but I know from experience that in executing such a movement, it really is less difficult than it seems. The troops were extremely fatigued, but danger gives an impulse to morale greater than can be imagined. Prince August's battalion, which formed the rear guard and was more fatigued than any of the others, and which I would not have believed could have marched a quarter of a mile further, after it had been cut off and surrounded by the cavalry reorganized and formed in order. It formed in a square, and for three hours continued the march along the left bank of the Uecker, notwithstanding the constant charges from Beaumont's dragoon division; it had already reached the suburbs of Brandelow, when deep ditches full of water threw it into such disorder that not more than 150 men remained, who were taken in a confused

mass.* I am sure that if instead of a single battalion, there had been twenty, one alongside the other with the artillery in the intervals, they could have covered the four miles which separated us from Lockenitz without being broken by the hostile cavalry.

It was Colonel Massenbach who was principally responsible for causing the Prince to decide to surrender. In his own *Memoirs*, we can see in what condition of lack of strength he was in. Sent as an envoy by the Prince, he thought he would find Marshal Lannes on our side of the defile, while he was in fact on the enemy's side.

What Colonel Massenbach says in his *Memoirs* against General Blucher, is one of those tearful complaints of which his *Memoirs* and all of his writings are full, and without precise statements of facts, or clear indications of times and places; and it is this which has caught the public attention and some writers.

On the morning of the 26th, Prince Hohenlohe left the vicinity of Ruppin. Up to the morning of the 28th, when he reached Prenzlau, via Gransee, Fursternberg, Lycken, Krewitz and Schonermark, he marched fourteen miles, during which time the troops had no billets, no regular bivouacs and received neither bread nor forage. On the 25th, General Blucher was about 3 miles in rear of Hohenlohe; he should have made a straight march of 17 miles if he wished to arrive at Prenzlau at the same time as Prince Hohenlohe. We can judge by this all the circumstances, and we know what should be thought as to the two or three hours lost by the Prince in waiting for General Blucher near Gransee and Schonermark.

The *Memoirs* of Colonel Massenbach on the remainder of the campaign of 1806 have the same character of insufficient, superficial and almost childish talk. Nowhere are there sufficient facts; nowhere any clear idea; nowhere any definite object. Everywhere there is a mixture of poor sensibility and of ideas confused between themselves. Such

*The description of the glorious combat made by Prince August with his battalion, given hereafter, has been placed in the appendix on account of its length. This description * * * * * with some slight differences in style, has been literally reprinted from Schwartz's "*Life of Clausewitz*." See Chapter X, page 604.

a man was above all not made for practical life, and still less for war; and Colonel Massenbach showed this, and also during the following years. At Weissensee where the question of passing General Klein's corps arose, and where the attitude of Field Marshal Kalkreuth showed this intention so slightly that Prince August who was in the column, fearing a capitulation, called up the old Blucher from the rear guard, Colonel Massenbach made pathetic speeches on the duty of obedience, so that it was difficult to avoid hitting him on the head. He seeks in vain for an excuse to march the night of the 27th-28th, via Krewitz to Schonermark, instead of taking the Boitzenburg road, by stating that this march should have been towards Nechlin. At this time no mention had been made of Nechlin, and there was no bridge whatever near Nechlin.

In the same way the complaints of General Bila and Schimmelpfennig are useless. The former was on an entirely different road; it was then at first necessary to have him come and the same was true with General Blucher; it is not easy to draw in an organization which marches continuously. It is true that General Schimmelpfennig at Zehdenick did not acquire any particular glory; he allowed himself to be so completely dispersed that out of 35 squadrons he only saved two. But he had hardly 2,000 troopers to oppose to the enemy's 4,000; it could hardly be required of him to cover the march on Prenzlau. It would seem that Colonel Massenbach would not be justified unless out of the 10,000 troopers which we still had, 8,000 had been on the road which General Schimmelpfennig took. But this is enough on Colonel Massenbach.

In addition to the numerous errors committed during the retreat by the leaders of the Prussian army, one circumstance greatly contributed by its deplorable results and led the leaders to commit errors; this was the constant habit of camping the troops. The Prussian army had at that time a complete camp outfit, tents, large cooking utensils and bread wagons. This made an immense baggage train which had to be separated from the troops at times of danger. But its presence on the road during this rapid retreat, caused a hundred halts without it being able to obtain the slightest use from them. The troops were then without

cooking utensils. They were also without overcoats, and the bedding with which they were to protect themselves from cold nights in the tents was naturally with the tents. In addition the troops were without means for individual cooking. All this was considered by the Prussian Generals as a primary reason for putting the troops in billets each day even at the most dangerous times, and these quarters were not concentrated, as it was necessary that the soldiers be subsisted by their hosts. The inconveniences which resulted from this are easy to realize:

1. The marches were greatly shortened. If the army advanced but three miles, this amounted for the soldier on an average to four or five miles. If then it is desired to advance four or five miles with the army, the soldier can no longer leave the main road, but nevertheless this rate of march is quite customary in modern wars and indispensable in difficult situations such as ours was.

2. To this was joined the imminent danger, that during the night, evening and morning the troops were never assembled. Had the French known our methods they could have dispersed us during the first days.

3. Some errors of all kinds are inevitable. All sudden modifications of the march and of dispositions, occasions them. The troops are not all informed, they no longer take the best roads, they are cut off and captured. This frequently happened during our retreat.

4. We were rarely ready to fight; consequently we allowed ourselves to turn away from our march direction or have our plans disarranged, by the smallest regiment of hostile cavalry.

5. The losses through desertion are much larger and this must in such circumstances be given great consideration, even when the army is not composed from the local inhabitants.

If our generals had avoided acting in this manner, the troops could have been assembled in camps, as we will show. The lack of overcoats could have been made up by large bonfires; besides, the season was not far advanced and the weather was very favorable. If kitchen utensils had been on hand, the subsistence of the troops would not have been

too difficult; everywhere some cattle could be found; in general a rich country was crossed, and a column of 10,000 to 15,000 men as ours were, is still one of the smallest elements of armies. But without pots nothing can be done with meat. What would have been principally required was bread and brandy; this would have presented great difficulties under the conditions which we now have, but our lack of skill in such matters was a real obstacle.*

Some resolute young men at the head of the army would have obtained some counsel from their good sense; but some old men, shriveled in spirit during a long peace, with some ideas bound up with red tape, could find no solution. If then the Prussian army was completely dispersed before it reached the Oder, if it could not reach the Oder with even 10,000 men, allowing for the capitulations of Prenzlau, Pasewalk and Anklam which had taken place, the fault was the lack of consideration for judicious measures for the retreat, the lack of coordination, and to an exaggerated fear of meeting on the main road the head of some hostile column. On the evening of the 14th, all these misfortunes were not unavoidable.

The enemy had not actually gone beyond our principal army, it had not stolen any march on it; the heads of its column and our own were at the same place, near Eckhartsberga and Buttstedt; they were then the same distance

*The spirit of the troops was however, not changed by this. While we had been without rations on the 14th and the 15th, after the battle of Auerstaedt, and while our troops had arrived near Greussen on the 16th, dying with hunger, Prince August sent a detachment towards a neighboring village to obtain rations. The peasants were astonished when the soldiers arrived for this purpose. When rations were taken by force they raised cries of distress. Old Major Rabel, who commanded the battalion of grenadiers of the Guard, and who was in the Prince's brigade, sent for me; he was very indignant at these proceedings, and begged me to immediately represent to the Prince that such pillage was unusual within the Prussian army, and contrary to its spirit, that the Prince was a young man who did not yet understand such matters. The preceding evening when the troops arrived near Sommerda in considerable disorder and very tired, General Kalkreuth appeared to try, by a long general order, to wish to reestablish order. Among other things, he said: "Some bread should be issued to the troops, and if there is no bread, suitable commutation will be given to them." It was not necessary then to think about the bread wagons and still less as to money. Prince August very properly said that the above amounted to saying: "Issue to the soldiers funds which you do not have, in order that they may purchase bread when there is none to purchase."—*Clausewitz*.

from Berlin and Stettin. The enemy had gained little during the battle, but as this was with their most advanced troops, this was not very important. But let us suppose that it was considered impracticable to reach Wittenberg and it was desired to proceed via Magdeburg; from Buttsedt to Berlin via Magdeburg was only 36 miles, and via Wittenberg only 33. The enemy covered these 33 miles in 11 days; it would not then have been difficult to make the 36 in ten days.

This is nothing except saying that purely geometrical considerations indicated that it was not impossible to reach Berlin before the enemy. If then it was believed no longer practicable to march via Halle, it was necessary to direct the Duke to march on Wittenberg, send a detachment to Dessau, break the two bridges and defend the Elbe for as long a time as possible, which would necessarily have delayed the enemy several days.

There is no doubt that an army physically and morally feeble from the beginning should after a complete defeat be conducted with ability, courage, and special intelligence where it is not to receive considerable support in the vicinity. The retreat of the Prussian army was rendered slightly more difficult by reason of its reverse position. This can not be denied. If the Prussian army had been directly in front of the enemy, quite close to Leipzig, it would have covered the shortest road to Berlin and towards the lower Oder, it might have been strongly pressed, but it could not have been cut off. No one can deny the disadvantage of its oblique position. But it voluntarily exposed itself to this disadvantage in order to fight under the best conditions. Being the weaker it was up to a certain point necessary for it to discount the future in order to be stronger at the present moment. Where could it have obtained the possibility of a lucky battle, had it been unwilling to run any risks; with nothing, nothing is done.

When Bonaparte, in October, 1813, found himself forced to assemble his forces at the same point against the enemy who was everywhere advancing, and when he could see that he would be able to oppose his adversary with a strength less than half of his, he selected for his

battlefield the vicinity of Leipzig, where the Plesse, the Partha, and the Elster unite and divide the terrain into well defined sectors. He did not place himself in rear of these streams in order to strengthen his front; this advantage did not appear sufficient to him. He posted his troops in front of these obstacles, exposing his retreat to the greatest dangers, in order to have during the battle itself the advantage of having the enemy's army separated by stream lines, in order that he could fight for a long time in one of the sectors of the battlefield without being endangered by what was going on in the others. On the 16th Blucher was victorious near Moeckern, in rear of Leipzig on the Partha, while Bonaparte was about to fight the principal allied army, near Leipzig. It was not until the 18th when the entire terrain was on fire that the victory of Blucher began to make its effects felt.

We will not decide whether Bonaparte did best in acting in this manner, but we can note that a similar idea can be conceived by a great captain; and consequently must not be considered as silliness. If Bonaparte at Leipzig was not as completely crushed as we were in 1806, it was due to the fact that his troops were better.

It is the same here as in mechanics. What is gained at one point must temporarily be economized in another. The question is not to know whether we could have made a better retreat by placing ourselves squarely in front of the enemy, in order to immediately deduce therefrom that a serious error was committed in not doing this. But the question is to know whether from this position we could not actually have moved more towards the Oder, and whether in consequence the sacrifice which we made to obtain a momentary advantage, was not too great a one? We believe that we have shown that this was not the case.

The torrent of victory led the French army not only to the Oder but as far as the Vistula, where the strength of this victory was to a certain extent exhausted; there was a cessation of maneuvers, and the first new resistance commenced. It is from this point that the campaign of 1807 commences. And without the rapid fall of all the fortresses located in the theater of operations, this would

hardly have occurred. The first halt would have been made on the Oder and the Russian army with our troops from Prussia would probably have advanced as far as the Oder.

The series of capitulations of fortresses is as follows :

October 15th, Erfurt fell into the hands of Murat and Soult.
October 25th, Spandau fell into the hands of Lannes.
October 29th, Stettin fell into the hands of Lasalle.
November 1st, Custrin fell into the hands of Davout.
November 8th, Magdeburg fell into the hands of Ney.
November 19th, Czenstochau was captured by a Polish detachment and some French cavalry.
November 20th, Hameln surrendered to Savary with a detachment of the VIII Corps.
November 25th, Fort Plassenberg, near Culmbach, surrendered to one of Prince Jerome's detachments.
December 2d, Glogau fell into the hands of Vandamme.
January 5th, Breslau fell into the hands of Vandamme.

In the French army, Davout and Augereau marched via Frankfurt and Posen towards the Vistula; Lannes followed towards Stettin.

Murat, Bernadotte, Soult and Ney returned from this pursuit to Berlin in the middle of November. They marched also towards the Vistula. Augereau, Davout and Lannes with Murat entered Warsaw on November 28th.

The Wurtemberg brigade, and the Bavarian troops, under Jerome Bonaparte, formed a corps which had closely followed the principal army from Franconia. It went via Dresden to Silesia, where this corps captured Glogau and Breslau.

The VIII Corps, under Marshal Mortier, went from Francfort to the territory of Hesse-Cassel, where it disarmed that army. From there it went via Hanover to Hamburg, and then towards Swedish Pomerania.

If Erfurt, Magdeburg, Spandau, Custrin and Stettin had not fallen without regular sieges, the enemy would have been under the necessity of investing them, and this would have required from four to five or six corps of his principal army. He would not then have had sufficient force remaining to advance without them towards the Vistula. On all of these places, except Erfurt, we would have been able to count on a two months' resistance counting from the first moment of investment; this would have brought us to the month of January.

The reason for these rapid surrenders are evidently found in three facts:

1. These places lacked for their defense many things which the bad direction of our military affairs had prevented from being attended to in advance.

2. The Governors and commanding officers were decrepit, old individuals.

3. Defeats, and the universal discouragement, had destroyed every idea of resistance.

When forts which are not provided with everything are to be defended, they require resolute far-sighted leaders, who will not be contented with doing the same thing every day, but will act wisely and intelligently. In order that fortresses may resist bravely after a catastrophe such as that of our army in 1806, vigorous action is required from the high command, fear and hope must be excited, and enthusiasm aroused. But this was not our kind, the contrary even occurred in several instances. We must not therefore be astonished at the result, when with several governors their natural feebleness extended to a real shameful behavior, such as was the case at Custrin, Stettin and Spandau.

CHAPTER X

EXTRACTS FROM NOTES ON THE CAMPAIGN OF 1806

Prince August's Battalion at the Battle of Prenzlau

BY VON CLAUSEWITZ

TRANSLATED BY
COLONEL CONRAD H. LANZA,
Field Artillery

PRINCE AUGUST'S BATTALION AT PRENZLAU

Prince August's grenadier battalion, several hundred men strong had been organized at Magdeburg from the remnants of the Rheinbaben grenadier battalion, and on October 26th, it left Neu-Ruppin, 600 strong. By a continuous march to Schonermark, on October 28th, during which the troops had been led from one assembly place to another, and had not received the least sign of any rations, the battalion had been reduced to 240 men. The balance had been left in rear, exhausted with hunger and fatigue. We formed the rear guard in the march towards Prenzlau. When at break of day we wished to pass through the village of Gustow, half a mile from Prenzlau, we were informed from the front that the rear guard should close up; at the same time, several hundred wagons which during the night had gotten into the interval between us and the main body without our having noted it, suddenly left the road, so that there was a

large empty space in front of us. We continued to march towards Prenzlau as rapidly as possible. General Hersfeld, our division commander, sent Count Stolberg of the King's regiment once again to the rear, to hasten our march. Prince August directed me to proceed forward towards Prenzlau with Count Stolberg, to see how things were. When we had arrived at several thousand paces from Prenzlau we saw alongside of the road three or four hostile cavalry regiments who seemed to be about to throw themselves on the King's regiment, which was just reaching the gates of Prenzlau. Count Stolberg said to me: "We have no time to lose, come with me. The others are all cut off." I replied that our duty here separated us, that he could regain his regiment in time by galloping, but that I would wait for Prince August at this place. I waited a moment longer, watching a fight which a company of the Dohna Grenadier Battalion and the Prittwitz Dragoon regiment were having with the hostile cavalry. The regiment was repulsed by the enemy across the road on which we were, and then into Prenzlau. I saw the disorder which took place at the entrance of Prenzlau where cavalry, infantry, friends and enemies were mixed up. I returned to the Prince who arrived on the ground with his battalion and I reported to him as to what I had seen. We discussed what there was to be done and we decided that the best thing to do was to march away towards the left, it being believed that we could not count much upon our men, and particularly because we had not learned by experience that a battalion of infantry can hold its own in the midst of hostile cavalry; we hoped that thanks to everybody being busy around Prenzlau we would not soon be noticed. We now noticed for the first time that in rear of us was a cavalry regiment, the Quitzow cuirassiers. While we were still on the road, we received some artillery fire from hostile batteries who had taken position on our right flank, on the other side of a small stream coming from Boitzenburg. The few rounds fired dispersed the Quitzow regiment like a handful of chaff thrown on the ground. We turned the head of the column to the left, crossed a small stream and a vegetable garden. As soon as we were across, we formed a square and continued the march in this manner following down the Uecker, having this stream a thousand

paces to our flank, and moving in the general direction of Ellingen. Prince August strongly reproached Colonel Cospoth, commanding the Quitzow regiment on the conduct of his regiment. But the latter himself was very indignant and took all possible pains to reassemble his command by use of bugle calls. He succeeded in again uniting about one hundred troopers, one squadron, and we soon lost sight of the remainder. They assembled some distance away, and joined General Bila, who with 15 squadrons was still in rear. Prince August sought to require Colonel Cospoth to remain near him, which he promised to do, but naturally he did nothing of the kind.

The battalion continued its march for half an hour, when we saw appear on our left, behind a line of very flat heights, three or four squadrons of cavalry, marching in the same direction as we were. At first we supposed that these were troops of the Quitzow regiment, who had fled in that direction, but noticing immediately afterwards that a still larger number were following in rear of us, we soon recognized them as the enemy, and that it was necessary to defend ourselves. The battalion had only 7 officers, and as we have already said, 240 men. The Prince exhorted them to make an honorable resistance, to be calm, not to lose their heads and particularly not to fire before receiving orders to do so. Some minutes later, the hostile cavalry advanced. The battalion executed "halt—ready," and the men were then cautioned: "Do not fire." I thought for a moment to myself of the battle of Minden where the French cavalry charged two Hanover battalions; and when these failed to fire at the usual distance, they came gradually from a gallop to a trot and finally from a trot to a walk. Exactly the same thing happened here. The French dragoons advanced at a gallop, and we could see with what anxiety they awaited the moment when they would receive our fire; when at a range of 100 paces they had received no fire, they more and more drew in on their horses, and finally were approaching us only at a slow trot. Fire was ordered at 30 paces; many fell, the rest lay down in rear of their horses' necks, wheeled about and fled. Now all our men were well in hand. They seemed thoroughly astonished at the great success of the maneuver which they had often practiced on the drill ground

and which they had usually considered as a sort of play. Even when a hostile dragoon, who had been dismounted immediately in front of the battalion, and disengaging himself from his dead horse ran away as fast as possible, the contrast between this anxious flight and the savage appearance of this dragoon with helmet and horse hair plume, made such an impression on the men that everybody laughed. We continued then on our march, not much time elapsed before a second charge was repulsed in the same manner. When we took up the march again, we found ourselves barred by several squadrons and the rest followed us so closely that we were never sure but that they were not going to charge. We stopped again, sent out some of the skirmishers which we still had, and fired several musket shots at these squadrons. Results were immediate; they gave way in all directions, the road became free, and we were able to continue the march. After this, at intervals there were five attacks; during this time, we observed 14 hostile squadrons consisting in part of Beaumont's division, as we afterwards ascertained, but they were without artillery.

After having continued our retreat in this manner for about half an hour, we ascertained from a messenger, captured in a village (Schoenwerder) that we would find no crossing over the Uecker until we reached Pasewalk, and that the banks of this stream were not practicable on account of marshes and ditches. We saw that we would have to fight over a distance of four miles; it was necessary to consider lack of ammunition and the possibility of exhausting the strength and morale of the troops. The Prince therefore decided to march with his battalion preferably through the marshes of the Uecker, satisfied that it would be generally possible for the infantry to obtain an advantage in such terrain, however bad it might appear. The hostile cavalry could not reach us there, and the only question was to reach Pasewalk at the cost of great physical efforts. Consequently, in spite of the advice of the peasant, we changed our direction of march, and we were glad we did so, when we advanced without interference about one league, although with great difficulty, while the hostile cavalry, which followed along the high ground on our flank, could only look at us, a part of them dismounted, and they appeared to have

abandoned us. But the terrain became more and more difficult; frequently we met large ditches full of water and so deep that the water came up under the arms. About 100 of our men fell out in this bad ground, lacking strength to proceed through the marsh. We had had to leave all our saddle horses behind; only the Prince had been able to keep a fine English horse of remarkable strength. This was the horse on which his brother, Prince Louis, had been killed at Saalfeld, and the blood stains from this brave Prince were still visible on the saddle. But during the violent exertions which this animal made to get out of the marsh, he escaped and jumped into the Uecker, where it swam alongside of us. We sought in vain to rescue it with the use of long halberts which some of our noncommissioned officers still carried. This was the more cruel as the Prince with the pride of his race, had decided in case of misfortune to fight saber in hand. The hostile artillery now arrived and for some time fired shells at us, as the marsh was too wide for shrapnel fire; the fire did not have any serious effect. We would have continued to advance in this manner individually, and we would probably have thus saved ourselves, if after crossing a large ditch full of water which we had the greatest difficulty in getting over, the ground had not become more solid. This allowed the hostile cavalry to approach us in considerable numbers, although only at a walk. When we arrived on this solid ground, the men were called upon to reform the square, and I wish to particularly mention Captain Schwerin. This officer like a service watch, had been noted in time of peace for regulated activity, very methodical and generally considered pedantic; I say that I wish to think of this man because, a rare thing, he maintained the same calm, methodical manner under most extreme danger. He could not console himself, because the square was not reformed. But the men had used their muskets to assist themselves in crossing the ditches; the greater number had been in the water up to their arms, their cartridge boxes had become wet as well as the ammunition within them. They foresaw the impossibility of defending themselves; they threw down their arms and voluntarily permitted the hostile cavalry to take them. The Prince had nothing else to do, and he accepted the fate of his men. At first, his sword, his star of

the Black Eagle, and his watch were taken from the Prince. But Major General Beaumont soon arrived and these articles were returned to him. On the request of the Prince, orders were given to look for his horse which was soon brought up.

The number of prisoners which the enemy took here might have amounted to a hundred. The others were still in the swamp, and when they saw what had happened to us, a part turned around and returned towards Prenzlau. We had only had a few wounded, among which one officer, caused by the hostile dragoons firing with their carbines after their charges, while following our retreat. We were unable to determine the effect of the artillery fire, and particularly as to the last rounds, which were shrapnel fire. The enemy acknowledge the loss of about 80 killed and wounded. When one knows that cavalry under such circumstances has but slight losses, this number does not appear unreasonable.

During the fight, the Prince had sent one of Schimmelpfennig's hussars who happened to be near us, and also my orderly, along the Uecker, in hopes that they might meet some detachment which might rescue us. Neither of these returned. We were surprised not to see our troops leave Prenzlau on the other side of the Uecker. We therefore supposed that they had so departed very rapidly while we were having our violent fight. The Prince learned with astonishment and with the greatest chagrin that Prince Hohenlohe had surrendered.

We found ourselves between the villages of Bandelow and Nechlin, at a full mile and a half from Prenzlau, to which we were led back, because the Grand Duke of Berg had to decide what to do with the Prince; we arrived there at 4:00 P.M. While we were leaving the ground where we had been captured, we saw French cavalry making useless efforts to capture some men who had remained in the swamp, who repulsed them with musket shots. General Beaumont then suggested to the Prince to order these men not to fire any more, as they were included in the capture of their chief. The Prince made this noble reply: "These men are more lucky than I am. They are no longer under my orders, and I can only rejoice that they defend themselves like brave

soldiers." A part of these men did in fact have the good fortune of crossing the Uecker at a narrow place on a plank which a swimmer obtained from the other side, and they thus escaped towards Stettin.

At Prenzlau the Prince was conducted to the Grand Duke of Berg who was in an embroidered marshal's uniform, and who was making up a report to the Emperor on a sheet of open paper with very large oblique letters and a miserable hand writing. He said some flattering things to the Prince, and gave him to understand that he would leave that night for Berlin under guard of a high officer.

During this journey they arrived in the morning at Oranienburg where the postmistress, who did not know the Prince, asked whether it were true that all the Guards had been captured. The Prince only replied with a sad look: "Ah! Good God," she said, "let us hope that they have been captured and everything is over!"

I mention this matter as it illustrates the spirit and the ideas of the people. We arrived at Berlin about noon, where in the midst of the most contrary sentiments, we were the object of the people's curiosity. We were soon taken to the chateau where we found the Imperial Headquarters assembled in the King's chambers. The Prince was immediately brought before the Emperor; as to me, I was allowed to remain with my much worn uniform in the midst of the brilliant uniforms of the Emperor's aides, who seemed slightly to dislike me. The Emperor sent back the Prince after about 5 minutes, and after having told him that he could remain at Berlin with his parents. However, two months later, he was sent to Nancy by orders of General Clarke, Governor of Berlin.

I acquired the conviction during this little cavalry fight, that infantry is very strong against cavalry. The square which we formed, was according to the old method, a 3-rank square. The men were so weak physically and morally by the lost battle, by a constant retreat of 14 days, by frightful marches, and lack of rations; the French cavalry were so excited by continuous successes; and the odds of 240 infantry to 1500 cavalry were so unfavorable, that the situation in which this infantry found itself, can certainly be considered

as very bad. The calmness maintained by its chief and his officers, and their continuous caution not to fire, and consequently retaining the fire until late, caused the success.

I am persuaded that it is not in the nature of a cavalryman to wish to have himself killed in such cases by a musket shot. It is usually believed that the hostile cavalry, at the moment when they actually turned about could have charged without danger. But this is a false idea. Infantry fire under any form used (with us we have thought of battalion volleys, that fronts attacked should fire at the same time, and that in serious cases, this is the only possible manner), does not strike down the cavalry so suddenly, but that they by continuing to advance do not always receive many shots at very short range, in the last case as is said, *à bout pourtant*,* and it is these shots at point blank ranges which everybody fears. In other cases, in which we have formed infantry squares, we could certainly count upon the fact that the infantry was no longer in order, and had already commenced to weaken before the brave cavalry had had the time to turn around, or that it had fired too soon at between 200 and 100 paces, and that at the moment where the cavalry was very close to the square none or little fire came from it. If horse artillery prepares a charge the effect will be almost always decisive against troops with slight military spirit, but in fact it amounts to little against French troops as the author knows from experience. I therefore say: Consideration being given to the effects of artillery, the best and most effective formations for attacking infantry, will always be to charge in echelon in several lines, in such manner that the first charge will be immediately followed by a second. This cannot be done unless the squadrons are divided into platoons and this is so much disliked by captains that this method of attack is not general.

*French in text.