

NOBLEMEN

The noblest men I know on earth.
Are men whose hands are brown with toil,
Who, backed by no ancestral graves,
Hew down the woods and till the soil;
And win thereby a prouder fame
Than following king's or warrior's name.

Working men, whatever their task—
To carve the stone, or beat the hod—
They wear upon their honest brows
The royal stamp and seal of God!
And brighter are the drops of sweat
Than diamonds in a coronet!

God bless the noble working men,
Who rear the cities of the plain,
Who dig the mines and build the ships,
And drive the commerce of the main.
God bless them for their swartly hands
Have wrought the glory of our land!

THE EMPEROR'S APOLOGY.

FULL TEXT OF NAPOLEON'S PAMPHLET.

The troops, weakened by continuous marches, affected by successive checks, fell back without much order towards Sedan, where they arrived, harassed and exhausted, on the night of the 30th and the morning of the 31st. The Emperor, who, on the evening of the 30th, was at Carignan with the corps of General Ducrot, where headquarters was established, received the same evening the news of the movement of retreat, and the advice from Marshal McMahon to take the railway to Sedan. Nothing could have been easier for the Emperor than to go on to Mezieres, and thus to secure his personal safety. The proposition to do so was made to him; but he rejected it, desirous not to separate from the army, and determined to share its fate whatever it might be. On the morning of the 31st the following proclamation was issued to the troops:—

SOLDIERS!—The opening events of the war not having been fortunate, I determined to set aside all personal considerations, and give the command of our armies to the Marshals more particularly indicated by public opinion.

Up to the present time success has not crowned your efforts; nevertheless, I learn that the army of Marshal Bazaine has reformed under the walls of Metz, and that of Marshal McMahon met yesterday only a slight reverse. There is, then, no reason to be discouraged. We have prevented the enemy from penetrating to the capital, and all France is rising to drive back her invaders. Under these serious circumstances—the Empress worthily representing me at Paris—I have preferred the role of soldier to that of Sovereign. No effort shall be spared by me to save our country. It still contains, thank God! men of courage; and if there are cowards, the military law and public contempt will mete out justice to them.

Soldiers, be worthy of your old reputation, God will not abandon our country if all do their duty.

Given at the Imperial Headquarters, at Sedan, Aug. 31, 1870.

NAPOLEON.

This proclamation, which he had barely time to distribute, was the last appeal which the Emperor addressed to his soldiers.

While the French army took up its position around Sedan, the Prussians to the number of 230,000 continued their march upon our track, and arrived nearly the same moment as ourselves in sight of the town. It was too late to avoid the battle which they offered, and which we were now obliged to accept, in the disadvantageous position where we had been driven.

Our four corps d'armée were massed, not

far from city, in the order assigned for the movement of retreat. The Seventh Corps, which formed the rear guard on the march toward Metz, was now at the head, across the departmental road from Mezieres to the west of Sedan, occupying the ground from Floing to Colvaire d'Ily. The First Corps extended from the Petite Moncelle to Givonne and d'Aigny. The Fifth Corps was posted partially in the town, partially on the heights which command on the south-east the gully of Givonne. The Twelfth Corps occupied La Moncelle, La Petite Moncelle, and La Platinerie, near Bazeilles.

The army was thus formed in a semicircle round the town, the two wings leaning on the Meuse. Never was an army placed in such an unfavourable situation. Generally a well-defined plan of operation is followed, assuring a line of retreat, on which are the reserves, the ambulances, &c. Here, on the contrary, our troops risked being surrounded on all sides without any plan of retreat, and if they had the misfortune to attempt to take refuge in the city, they could only precipitate themselves into an inextricable defile, through narrow gates and streets, incumbered with waggons and baggage.

Such was, nevertheless, the consequence of a plan of campaign imposed from Paris, and contrary to the most elementary principles of the art of war.

On the morning of the 31st the corps of Gen. Lebrun had already been engaged and had sustained the struggle with equal energy and courage. But the army of the enemy, relying upon the superiority of numbers had divided its forces into two principal masses, which were to attack separately—the one by the right and the other by the left. His object was to turn the two wings of our army, and, by re-uniting again upon the heights behind Sedan, to entirely surround it. A reserve corps, composed of infantry and a large body of cavalry, drawn up in the plain near Donchery, was so placed as to prevent any communication with Mezieres; and the opposite batteries, upon the left bank of the Meuse, were bristling with a numerous artillery, which flanked the fire of the right bank.

CONTEMPLATED RETREAT INTO BELGIUM.

Under these circumstances, it appeared to us that only one last resource remained by which the army could be saved; and that was to take up a line of retreat upon the neutral territory of Belgium. It was too late to attempt to break through, either on the east toward Carignan, or to the west toward Mezieres, for in both directions the army would have found itself exposed to a cross fire in the presence of superior forces. But to escape from an investment and to effect a safe retreat, it was necessary to occupy in force the heights of Ily and Givonne to abandon the town of Sedan to its own resources, to face about and retire by the roads leading into Belgium.

By crowning with a numerous artillery the heights which have been mentioned, it was to be hoped the enemy would have been held in check, and the retreat efficaciously covered. Unfortunately, however, the two Generals who succeeded McMahon, after he was wounded, in the command of the army, each proposed a different plan, and, as a consequence, the plateau of Ily, which was the most important position, was but feebly occupied.

THE BATTLE OF SEDAN.

Before 5 o'clock on the morning of Sept. 1, the attack commenced toward the east at Bazeilles, extending to Moncelle and Givonne; and to the west, upon the heights

of Floing. At 5 o'clock Marshal McMahon proceeded to the advanced post near Bazeilles, and sent to inform the Emperor, who mounted his horse and hastened to the field of battle. On his way he met the Marshal, who was being carried back to Sedan, wounded by the splinter of a shell. This unfortunate event at the commencement of the action was an evil omen; the army had unbounded confidence in the bravery and skill of the Duke of Magenta. He had resigned his command to General Ducrot, who was fully informed of his plans. General Wimpffen, however, being the senior officer and producing a letter of authorization from the Minister of War, demanded and obtained the supreme command. This substitution was productive of grievous consequences, for it is fraught with danger to change arrangements previously made while a battle is being fought.

For nearly two hours the troops maintained with vigour an unequal fight. But about this time the Crown Prince of Prussia, coming from the west, effected a junction, upon the plateau of Ily, with the Crown Prince of Saxony's men, who were marching from the east, and the French army found itself entirely encompassed. From that time the battle might be considered lost and our army prisoners, for, cut off from Mezieres, whence it drew its supplies and ammunition it could only retire behind the fortifications of Sedan, where it would become a central point exposed to the fire of 500 cannon placed round its circumference. Moreover, neither the efforts of the different commanders of the different *corps d'armée* and the officers generally—neither the heroism of our artillery nor the brilliant charges of our cavalry—nothing, in fact, could arrest the retreat of our troops.

THE EMPEROR'S PART IN THE BATTLE.

The Emperor was from early morning in front of the village of Balan, where, as has been said, the Twelfth Corps, commanded by Gen. Lebrun, was heavily engaged by the enemy, and well maintained its position; thence he ascended the slopes of Moncelle, crowned with batteries of artillery, from whence there was a comprehensive view of the battle field. He then rode along by the bottom of Givonne, meeting a great number of wounded, and among them the brave Colonel of the 5th line Regiment, stretched upon a litter. Seeing who was passing he raised himself and cried repeatedly, "Vive l'Empereur!"—a touching testimony of the attachment which the army bore for its Sovereign. Re-ascending the heights, the Emperor was rejoined for a moment by General Wimpffen. At all these points the earth was ploughed up by a prodigious quantity of shells, falling from the right and left and crossing in their fire. After having remained exposed to this hail of projectiles for five hours, the Emperor returned to Sedan in order to consult, if possible, with McMahon, he then intended to return to the field of battle, but this he was not permitted to do. The streets, the squares, the gates, were blocked up with all the impedimenta that an army in precipitous retreat collects in its train; vehicles of every description—rubbish of all sorts heaped up pell-mell. On the heights at the gates of the town, however, the remainder of the army was still fighting; but the corps, not being able to unite, could offer no longer any combined defence. About 3:30 o'clock, General Wimpffen sent an officer to propose to the Emperor that he should place himself in the middle of a column of men, who would endeavour to cut their way through the enemy in the direction of Carignan. The Em-