

him to stand to the east of Metz, and when the Germans advanced he was to threaten their flank. It was very sound as far as it went; but about this time Napoleon had completely lost his head. He was being eternally bothered from Paris by the press, causing him to issue contradictory orders; and finally he ordered Bazaine to retreat to Verdun, and to try and combine with MacMahon. On August 14th, Bazaine was retreating through Metz, closely followed by the first and second German armies. He passed through Metz very slowly, his baggage waggons having difficulty in getting through the narrow streets, which caused him to delay, with the result that, when the greater portion of his forces had got across the Moselle, the rear portion was attacked by the advance guard of the first German army, the seventh corps. Upon this Bazaine halted, and sent the first and second French corps back through Metz to resist the German attack, and the battle of Borny, or Colombey, as it is sometimes called, occurred. It was practically a drawn battle, but so far as the tactical fighting was concerned, it might be considered a French victory. This had the effect of inspiring the French and infusing a certain amount of *morale* into them. Strategically, it was one of the worst blunders ever committed, because the delay Bazaine made in Metz allowed the German armies to approach him.

While this battle was going on, the rest of the first and second German armies were advancing in the direction of Pont-a-Mousson. They crossed the Meuse there, and wheeled up to the north. They left behind one corps to watch the east of Metz. Bazaine, who was now cut off, was naturally obliged to face them, which he did, and on the 16th August occurred the battle of Rezonville, between the first and second German armies and Bazaine's forces. It was an extremely severe battle. The French were superior in numbers, and attacked the Germans as they arrived on the ground. They outflanked the Germans' right, and were very nearly dividing them, until the celebrated cavalry charge at Mays-la-Tour took place, in which an entire troop of German cavalry sacrificed themselves, in order to delay the French until assistance came up. Practically, the battle was a drawn one tactically, and yet strategically, it was a victory for the Germans, because it effectually stopped Bazaine's retreat further than Verdun. After the battle Bazaine pivoted his army round on the left, and formed up facing to Verdun, his back to Metz. The Germans continued to wheel their armies and came round and faced him, thus effectually cutting him off from Verdun. His extreme right was at Roncourt, his left at Gravelotte, an extremely natural position. But, with the extraordinary forces the Germans had all along, the French were outnumbered two to one, and after one of the most bloody battles of modern times—Gravelotte—Bazaine's forces were driven back into Metz. The French lost the battle largely from the fact that their reserve did not support their left, and their right was practically cut off. Of the ten corps which formed the two German armies, seven were told off to invest Metz. There was practically a circle being formed round it—and the three remaining corps were formed into a separate army, called the fourth, under the Crown Prince of Saxony. It was ordered to advance on Verdun; so that we now have the third and fourth German armies advancing in echelon. Strasbourg and a number of the small places around were invested, and Metz was practically so. That was the situation on the 18th August. The formal invest-

ment of Metz had not taken place yet; but the German troops were closing around it.

We will now leave Metz for a while. MacMahon had been organizing his troops all this time and trying to get his 140,000 men into fairly efficient condition. Von Moltke, knowing of this concentration at Chalons, expected the course of events would be that MacMahon would take a position at Troyes, and so be able to threaten the German flank when the army advanced towards Paris. This would give him the whole of the south of France at his back, and the Germans would not be able to pass by him. But supposing that he did not stand at Troyes, Moltke thought he would stand at Rheims. Moltke was not prepared for the apparently suicidal course that MacMahon took. But it was not his fault. He was largely forced to take the line he did by pressure from Paris. He was ordered to relieve Bazaine at Metz, and pursuant to that order he started to march towards that city. It was now that he commenced to make a mistake himself. He had two lines of advance, one of which was possible, the other impossible; and he chose the impossible. He advanced along the northern line by way of Rheims, Rethel and Vouziers. He had received dispatches from Bazaine to say that about the 26th or 27th of August he would make a great sortie from Metz, and would try and combine with MacMahon in the neighborhood of Montmedy. Therefore, MacMahon decided to march north. By doing so he exposed his right flank to the German army. As soon as the Germans saw what he was up to, they executed what is known as "the great strategic wheel," one of the most remarkable examples of manœuvring which has been known in the history of the world. In two days they altered their line of march to one exactly at right angles to their previous direction. This looks very simple on paper. But think what it meant! It meant an entire change of direction and an entire change of the whole supply system. Nothing but the most marvelously perfect organization could have enabled it to be done. The third and fourth German armies were turned up north to strike MacMahon in the flank. Their idea was that the fourth army should advance up along the line of the River Meuse, and stop MacMahon. Meanwhile, the third army was to come up and fall on his flank in the rear, and together they were to drive him up against the frontier. MacMahon advanced in this northerly direction, and when he got to Beaumont, on the 28th August, he was attacked by the fourth army, and his forces were driven down the Meuse in the direction of Sedan. The third army came up on his flank in the rear, and on the 31st August he was driven into Sedan. These two armies closed in, the fourth on the east and the third on the other three sides, shutting him in completely. Sedan lies in a sort of hollow. The French were in the hollow, and the Germans were around. The battle of Sedan ensued the next day. The French were caught in a trap and were utterly unable to resist the artillery, and 185,000 men, as well as the Emperor Napoleon, surrendered.

The two sorties from Metz on the 31st August and 1st September failed and Metz itself capitulated on October 27th.

The whole of the French field army had been either wiped out or captured, and with the capture of the Emperor himself at Sedan, naturally the Empire came to an end. The field armies being dispersed, France was practically prostrate at the feet of Germany.

The Germans had six forces investing

Metz. The remaining 240,000 men marched on Paris, and on September 17th Paris was invested.

As I have to discuss shortly the strategic lessons of the campaign, I am unable to carry the course of hostilities further; but, as you know, they lasted until February 28th, when Paris capitulated and the treaty of Frankfurt, in which the terms of peace were settled, was signed on May 10th, 1871, with the most disastrous results to France. By it they lost the whole of Alsace and the whole of Lorraine, including the great fortresses of Strasbourg and Metz, and had to pay an indemnity of a thousand million dollars. They lost 385,000 men and 11,800 officers, besides 100,000 men who were driven to Switzerland and lay down their arms there. They lost over 1,600 field guns, 3,500 garrison guns, 600,000 rifles, and about one-third of France was in the occupation of Germany. Such a big prostration has never been seen in the world's history.

Let us turn to some of the strategical lessons that we may learn from this campaign; let us look at some of the most obvious errors made, and see how they might have been remedied. The first great fundamental error was the total unpreparedness of France for war. She provoked the conflict. The next error was when the French saw that they could not assume the offensive, they should have adopted a reasonable compromise, and taken up a strong line and awaited an attack, instead of which they headed to Alsace and Lorraine, when it became evident that they could not hold out without being destroyed.

To take the errors of individuals. Here was MacMahon at Woerth and Wiessenburg. At the first place he exposed one division of his forces to the attack of the entire third German army, with consequent annihilation, and when fighting at Woerth—of course, it was not his fault—he did not get support, as had been supposed he would, from the fifth corps. That was a case of want of mutual support between portions of the French army. When he retreated he did so with very extraordinary precipitation. Supposing that he had retreated for an almost unusually long distance, he could have taken up a position along the line of the Moselle, and extended his left to act with Bazaine, and together they could have formed a line along the Moselle ready to oppose the Germans, who would have found it difficult to turn them out. But instead of retreating towards Bazaine, he retreated away from him. Again, when at Woerth he tried to cover two separate objects—Bitsch and Strasbourg—with the result that he covered neither. He was trying to do too much altogether. When he got back to Chalons and organized his army, it might have been supposed that he would make some good use of it. Napoleon III. was nominally in supreme command; but he did nothing with his army. His great uncle, with an army like that would have cleared out the whole German forces. With 80,000 men he stood against the whole of Europe. But Napoleon III. was a perfect parody compared with his great uncle, and this big force, which had ample time to organize, was completely wasted. He handed it to MacMahon, who was not to blame for not taking up a sound strategical position at Troyes, and opposing the Germans. He was forced to advance towards Metz; but he did it in a suicidal manner. He had only two routes. By taking the northern one he took too small an area, and had no room to get out of the Germans' way, if he were attacked. At Sedan he was only four miles from the frontier, and when driven out he could do nothing but either lay down arms or