

ed with the task of setting in motion the entire military power of France. Taking into consideration the defective French administration, it was, in reality, a *tour de force* to bring into line, in so brief a period, armies incompletely formed, no previous measure for the purpose having been carried into effect.

EMBARRASMENTS AND MISCALCULATIONS.

No doubt, the objection will be made that some, at least, of the faults heretofore mentioned ought to have been remedied in advance. But the difficulty of conquering inveterate habits and prejudices must not be forgotten. The Chambers, too, persistently refused the aid necessary to accomplish the most important reforms. Who does not remember the objections and protestations to which the bill providing for a new military organization gave rise? The opposition adhered to their vain theories of *levies en masse*, and the bill was everywhere badly received. On the other hand, the Emperor, confident in the armies which had achieved such glorious successes in the Crimea and in Italy, was not indisposed to believe that their irresistible rush (*élan*) would compensate for many deficiencies, and render victory assured. His illusions were not of long duration. The army of Metz, instead of 150,000 men, only mustered 100,000; that of Strasbourg only 40,000 instead of 100,000 while corps of Marshal Canrobert had still one division at Paris and another at Soissons: his artillery, as well as his cavalry was not ready. Further, no army corps was even yet completely furnished with the equipments necessary for taking the field. The Emperor gave precise orders to the effect that the arrival of the missing regiments should be pushed on; but he was obeyed slowly, excuse being made that it was impossible to leave Algiers, Paris and Lyons without garrisons.

COMMENCEMENT OF HOSTILITIES.

Nevertheless, the hope of carrying out the (original) plan of the campaign was not lost. It was thought that the enemy would not be ready before us. His movements were not known, nor in what quarter his forces were being massed; and it was with a view of determining these things that on the 2nd of August, tentative steps were taken at Saarbrück; but on the 4th the attack on the Douay Division at Wissembourg, by imposing forces, and two days after, the glorious and fatal battle of Freischweiler, caused all uncertainty to pass away.

On the same day, the 6th of August, the army corps of General Frossard had a hard struggle with a large body of the enemy, upon the heights of Spichern; and although the result of this engagement may not have been favorable, it may be affirmed that, if the two divisions who were in position to support Gen. Frossard had executed more promptly the orders which they had received from Marshal Bazaine, no should upon that day have carried off the victory.

However this may be, our position was critical. By the held initiative of the German troops, who poured in simultaneously by the Sarre and by the Rhine, we were caught in the very act of formation. The corps of Gen. de Failly had not had time to reinforce that of Marshal McMahon, and found itself cut off from the army of Metz, the corps of Gen. Douay which was slowly mustering at Belfort, found itself far distant from the theatre of military operations, and the army of Marshal Canrobert was not yet completely formed at the camp of Chalons.

Under these circumstances, profoundly depressed at witnessing all his combinations

destroyed, and driven in these few days to think no longer of any but a defensive position, the Emperor resolved immediately to lead back the army to the camp of Chalons, where it might have gathered together the debris of Marshal McMahon's army, Failly's corps and that of Douay. This plan, then communicated to Paris, was at first approved by the council of Ministers, but, two days afterwards, a letter from M. E. Olivier informed the Emperor that, upon mature consideration the Council had decided that it had been too hasty in approving the retreat of the army upon Chalons, since the abandonment of Lorraine could only produce a deplorable effect on the public mind, in consequence of this he advised the Emperor to renounce his project. For the moment, therefore, the Emperor yielded to this counsel.

CONCEALMENT OF THE GERMAN MOVEMENTS.

The effective force of the army of Metz was brought up to 140,000 by the arrival of Marshal Canrobert with two divisions and the reserve, and it received orders for its concentration around Metz, in the hope that it might be able to fall upon one of the Prussian armies before they had effected their junction. Unfortunately, as if in this campaign all the elements of success for us were to be wanting, not only was the concentration of the army retarded by the combat at Spichern and by the bad weather but its action was paralyzed by the absolute ignorance in which we always remained concerning the position and strength of the hostile armies. So well did the Prussians conceal their movements behind the formidable shelter of cavalry which they deployed before them in all directions, that notwithstanding the most persevering enquiries, it was never really known where the mass of their troops was, nor, in consequence where our chief efforts should be directed. On the 14th of August, as also on the 16th no one imagined that the whole Prussian army had to be dealt with; no one doubted at Gravelotte that Verdun could easily be reached on the morrow. At Paris they were no better informed than we. These melancholy openings of the campaign must naturally enough have affected public opinion in a painful manner. The Emperor felt that he was held responsible for the wretched condition of the army, while that army was charging Marshal Lebœuf with the delays and with the insufficiency of the organization. He decided, therefore, to give the command to Marshal Bazaine, whose ability was recognized on all sides, and suppress the functions of the post of Major General. While these events were taking place several Generals implored the Emperor to leave the army, pointing out that it might happen that communication with Paris would be cut off, and that then, locked up in Metz and separated from the rest of France, the head of the State would be incapacitated for conducting the affairs of the country, or of giving them proper direction, and that revolutionary agitators might arise from this situation. These considerations had an indisputable weight, which did not escape the Emperor, who, however, did not wish to leave the army until it had re-crossed the Moselle on to the left bank. This movement of which Marshal Bazaine fully appreciated the importance, the Emperor hurried on as much as possible, but the bad weather and the incumbrance of baggage, delayed its prompt execution. Arrived at Gravelotte, the Emperor, not foreseeing a general battle, and only looking for partial engagements which might retard the march of the army, decided to precede it to Chalons. He

left on the morning of the 16th of August, and passed by Conllins and Etan without meeting a single enemy on his route. But the uninterrupted succession of disasters had produced in Paris a strong impression, and the Ministers, uneasy at this state of affairs, had thought that up to a certain point they could free themselves from the constitutional authority belonging to the Emperor only, since he had simply given to the Empress Regent restricted powers. They, therefore, convoked the Chambers, without even a reference to the Emperor; and from the time of their assembly it was, as it always is in public calamities, the Opposition which saw its influence increase, and which paralyzed the patriotism of the majority and the progress of the Government. From this period Ministers appeared afraid to pronounce the name of the Emperor, and he who had quitted the army, and had only relinquished the command to resume the reins of Government, soon discovered that it would be impossible for him, to play out the part which belonged to him.

(To be continued.)

COLD WINTERS.—"Look out for a cold winter," is the sage remark [of some real and many would-be philosophers. There is a very general feeling that there is a sort of system of compensation in nature, and that if we have a hot summer we shall consequently have a cold winter. The wise men of the earth have been investigating this subject of the fluctuations of the temperature of our planet. Professor Smyth, Astronomer Royal of Scotland, finds reason to believe, from his investigations, that in addition to the ordinary annual cycle of temperature, there are two other cycles, one being about two years and the other over eleven years. To the effect of these cycles, which correspond to certain changes in the spots on the sun, our so-called variation of climate are referred. From a series of observations made from 1837 to the present time, Professor Smyth shows that a hot time has occurred about every eleven years followed at intervals of about two years, by a very cold period. Arguing from these data, he believes that the temperature of a season may be foretold a year in advance, and that there is a probability of the winter of 1871-72 will be exceedingly severe. Time will show. If so, we may comfort ourselves, while braving bitter cold and blocking snow, with the thought that *ice is forming for the following summer*—a consideration which should enable us to endure the blast of old Boreas with patience.

Information from Spain intimates a formidable opposition to the election of the Duke of Aosta.

A resolution in favour of giving a million dollars to aid in constructing the Canada Central Railway has been adopted by a large meeting of the residents of the Centre Ward Montreal.

The approaching marriage of the Princess Louisa is officially noticed in the following terms:—"At the Court of Balmoral, the 20th day of October, 1870, present the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty in Council. Her Majesty in Council was this day pleased to declare her consent to a contract of matrimony between Her Royal Highness the Princess Louise, Caroline Alberta, and John George Edward Henry Douglas Sutherland Campbell (commonly called the Marquis of Lorne), which consent Her Majesty has also caused to be signified under the Great Seal.