

at the hayonet's point, but then as a fresh attack was impending they were ordered to halt and reform on the edge of the ridge which they did.

Meanwhile the second column of the Imperial Guard, nearer to Hougoumont, had come up and hurled itself against the British line, but only with the same result. The British Guards received it in front with a withering fire, whilst the gallant 52nd, wheeled up on the sole initiative of the veteran colonel Sir John Colborne, fell obliquely on the French flank and charged. For a few minutes there was a desperate hand to hand struggle but then the French fell into confusion and finally fled, pursued by the 52nd 71st and 95th who between them swept the whole attacking columns diagonally across the British front down to the hollow below La Haye Sainte.

NAPOLEON'S FIFTH GREAT BLOW HAD FAILED.

The effect of this brilliant stroke was magical and decisive. The battle was won, and Wellington raising his hat with a noble gesture gave the signal for the whole line to advance, just as the sun was setting. It was nearly half past eight as the whole line of wasted heroes swept forward with exultant cheers, driving the French, now in hopeless confusion, before them into the valley. La Haye Sainte was retaken, and now the British reserve cavalry swept round the flanks and fell fiercely on the retreating French. The defenders of Hougoumont sailed forth, and becoming the assailants in their turn, drove the attackers before them.

All along the line the rout was general and the French fled in utter and complete disorder, throwing away everything in their mad flight. A panic seized their whole army, though Ney made desperate efforts to rally them crying, "Come with me and I will show you how a Marshal of France can die;" and again he said to D'Erlon, "You and I, if we are spared by English grape shot, are sure of our fate. We shall be hanged!"

But all in vain, he was carried away in the tide of fugitives and a few months later met the traitor's doom which he had so clearly foreseen.

Meanwhile the Prussian attack had been fully developed on the French left and rear. Blucher had brought nearly 50,000 men into line and had driven the French out of Planchenoit in spite of Lebau's desperate and gallant defence.

The fighting here, inspired by deadly race hatred, was of the most sanguinary nature and culminated round the churchyard of the little village.

Here the dead lay in heaps, and the severity of fighting may best be judged by the fact that in the short time the Prussians were engaged in the battle they lost nearly 7000 men.

The Prussian success at Planchenoit now brought them right on the French line of retreat and added to terrible panic and confusion. The British line had meanwhile pressed forward up the French slopes, but so exhausted were our gallant troops that they could pursue no further. Wellington therefore gave the signal to halt, and then ordered three British cheers to speed the parting foes.

AT LA BELLE ALLIANCE.

he met Blucher now advancing with his victorious force, and we can imagine the exultant pride with which these two gallant and faithful allies greeted each other after this complete vindication of their solemn compact made two days previously at the Mill of Bussy.

The common enemy was routed by their combined efforts, but he must not be allowed to rally, and after a moment's discussion with Wellington, Blucher agreed to pursue the French with his untouched troops.

Gneisenau was ordered to conduct the pursuit and grimly did he carry out his

charge. All night long the Prussians pressed with relentless swiftness on the heels of the panic stricken French army, terrifying, capturing, and slaying.

At Genappe the road was blocked with fugitives and baggage, and Napoleon himself was very nearly captured here. His carriage was seized the moment he had left it, and whilst he rode off unperceived in the darkness. All his private papers and belongings, however, including immense stores of precious stones, were captured. The draft of a proclamation addressed to "The Belgians and Inhabitants of the Left Bank of the Rhine" announcing to them the Victory of Waterloo, and dated by anticipation from the Imperial Palace of Laeken, Brussels, was found in his captured portfolio. It contains this choice passage amongst others:—

"The ephemeral success of my enemies has detached you, for a moment, from my empire. In exile, on a rock in the midst of the seas, I have heard your complaints. The God of Battles has decided the destiny of your beautiful provinces. Napoleon is amongst you! You are worthy to be Frenchmen.

'Rise, rejoice my invincible phalanxes to exterminate your enemies and mine.

"They fly with rage and despair in their hearts!"

The Prussian pursuit now became a wild rollicking chase and the mere sight of a Prussian soldier was enough to scare the unhappy French. When his infantry were exhausted, Gneisenau mounted his drummers on horses, and with these clattered along the chaussée all night, drumming and driving French before him like so many frightened sheep.

By daylight hardly a man of that magnificent host that Napoleon had reviewed with such pomp and splendor at Waterloo in the morning, remained on the Belgian side of the frontier.

Never in the history of warfare had there been such a total and irreparable disaster to an army. It had really ceased to exist, and its world famed leader was flying like a fugitive criminal before avenging justice.

And here we may leave him, merely noting that dethroned from his position as a popular idol, and pursued by the execrations of the nation he had decimated he abdicated on June 22nd, surrendered on July 14th, and was deported to St. Helena.

Henceforth a lonely exile, he lived only to brood over his mighty past, and alas, to ascribe his disaster as solely owing to the incompetence and treachery of others. He died on May 5th, 1821, in the midst of a storm, and with the words "Tete d'Armee" on his lips. One of his last acts was to leave in his will a legacy of 10,000 francs to the man who had just unsuccessfully attempted to assassinate Wellington. A pitiful end indeed!

But to return to the campaign, the allies pressed on to Paris, which capitulated on July 3rd, and the war was at an end. The losses in the actual battle of Waterloo were enormous, Wellington's army lost 15,000 and the Prussians 7000, whilst the French loss in killed, wounded and prisoners reached nearly 40,000, with 122 guns.

Only one word more of the actual fighting and I have done. Where was Grouchy all this time with his 33,000 men?

We had left him at Sart-A-Walhain, uncertain as to the whereabouts of the Prussians and chafing at the unsatisfactory orders he had received. He finally ascertained that the greater part of the Prussian army had retreated to Wavre. He conceived that his duty was to follow them there and to isolate them from Wellington, so that they could not assist him at Waterloo. This was undoubtedly in accordance with the spirit of the orders he had received from Napoleon himself, and up to 3 p.m. on the day of the great

battle. Napoleon approved of his movements and continued merely to direct him on to Wavre. When, however, Napoleon discovered that it was not merely Bulow's corps, but the whole Prussian army that was advancing against him, he sent a frantic message to Grouchy to move at once to his assistance at Waterloo, but too late. An army has not wings, and by this time Grouchy was at Wavre hotly engaged with the Prussian rear-guard under Thielemann. He heard the heavy firing away to his left at Waterloo but could learn nothing of the result of the battle that night. Napoleon fled with such precipitation that he did not even think of sending word to Grouchy of the disaster until he reached Charleroi at 4 in the morning.

On the morning of the 19th Grouchy successfully resumed his attack on Wavre and about midday had captured that place, when Napoleon's messenger arrived and told him of the extent of the French disaster. He now found himself in a most perilous position with the victorious allied army practically between him and the French frontier. With great skill and celerity, however, he commenced his rapid retreat, and owing to the lack of energy of the Pirch, the Prussian general who was despatched to intercept him, Grouchy succeeded in escaping back to France.

French historians and Napoleon himself have all combined to throw the blame for the disaster of Waterloo upon Grouchy, who they said might have saved the battle if he had come to Napoleon's aid.

Still, as he had been ordered by no less an authority than Napoleon himself to move in the opposite direction, it is difficult to see how this charge can be fixed upon him.

In the light of actual events and impartial criticism Grouchy must be considered a much maligned man, and it is probable that he came out of the affair with more credit than almost any of his colleagues.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I fear I have already taxed your patience to the utmost, and it is out of the question to attempt to enter upon the enormous field of controversy that has arisen out of the conduct of this great campaign. The result justified everything and covered all mistakes on the part of the allies. It is sufficient to know that if Wellington and Blucher showed a somewhat over-cautious and inactive spirit in the first two days of the campaign, they more than redeemed their fault by their magnificent loyalty and skilful strategy on the days that followed. On the day of Waterloo itself, Wellington's sole serious fault was his keeping 18,000 men away at Hal doing nothing, when he needed every man at Waterloo. But he did not know what we can see now. He had the best of reasons for expecting that Napoleon would attempt to outflank him on that line, and probably his chief reason of all was that he wished to secure his line of retreat if he should be defeated. It is now well established that he intended, if forced to retreat, to do so, towards Blucher at Wavre, but his right was too far off and isolated to be able to withdraw in this direction, and they would have to retire separately in the direction of Ostend, in which case the force at Hal would have given them a point of support to rally on and have secured their retreat.

After his first brilliant opening of the campaign, which could not have been surpassed, Napoleon's greater faults were slowness and over confidence or under estimation of his opponents. The latest theory, and one ardently supported by Lord Wolsley in his recent book, is that Napoleon was in such ill health that he was physically unfit to conduct the operations. This however seems to rest on slender evidence, and certainly