

under their feet and a multitude of our brave soldiers were precipitated into the abyss.

—Four hundred of mine, said Ney.

—A thousand of ours, sadly added Wellington. Is there a way of finding them, of saving some of them?

With an identical movement both generals approached the friar as if to forestall and seize upon the happy answer of the monk, each for his own men—But they drew back terrified. The monk had fallen on his knees on the edge of the precipice and there, horror-stricken, his eyes riveted to the profoundest of the abyss, was praying and moaning.

—It is then all over with them? said an officer.

Ney frowned, turned around and made a sign

Fifty voices shouted :

—Hello-o-o-o.

They had let down four hundred yards of rope. Ten yards more were left. Everyone listened—and after a moment, five or six words reached the surface.

—I—hear—some—thing—now. More—rope.

A few yards more were slipped down and there was another pause. The soldiers held their breath and the whisper was again heard :

—Hear—Men's voices—but—far—a—way. Al—ways—same—cry.

The last foot of the line was gone ; the soldiers tied the end to a post. Then they bent down over the mouth of the pit and listened. The voice rose up again

—Can't—go—far—ther ; hear—shouting—still. They—cry

A gust of wind drowned the voice. The words of the man were mingled with I know not what other voice, which was that of darkness, of the deep, of the void

Ney shouted in a voice of thunder :

—Grenadier, what do they cry? What do you hear?

A hundred voices repeat in unison : "What do you hear?" The formidable clamour plunged into the abyss. It reverberated from side to side, always lower and lower down, until it seemed like the sound of distant thunder. Then there was a silence ; every head was bent down around the monk, as in a sanctuary when the priest elevates the Sacred Host. That which was to ascend from the abyss was the answer of the infinite, of the inexpressible. The man must have heard, for after a long wait, his sepulchral voice, so far away that it had lost all accent, sent up from the abyss these few words :

—I—hear I hear them cry : "Vive l'Empereur."

RAOUL BELANGER, '97.

