

This is not all. The Government of the National Defence was extremely anxious to provision Metz, and was justified in counting upon the marshal's assistance. This the marshal failed to give, and he cannot allege in excuse ignorance of the energetic resolutions of the government and of the resources placed within reach of his army. Inaction, says the report, was the characteristic feature of the period of the blockade of Metz between the 1st of September and the beginning of October—inaction arising from two causes—viz., the hesitation produced by the news from Sedan and Paris, and the secret negotiations set on foot with the enemy. The solicitude felt by the marshal for his own interests may be natural enough, but his military obligations were too pressing to excuse him for remaining inactive all through September, and thus allowing the enemy to form his lines of investment at leisure and undisturbed. Whatever might be the form of the French Government, the army should have fought. The marshal knew his resources to be limited, and should have increased and husbanded them. If resolved not to leave Metz, he was bound to organise an active system of defence. Such was the path he might have followed, with honour to himself and advantage for the country.

Instead of this, the marshal, after acquainting his troops, without protest, of the composition of the new Government, lent an ear to the overtures of the enemy, received the agent Regnier, and accepted his proposals to operate in a plan for an imperial restoration. Instead of husbanning his provisions, Marshal Bazaine's only thought was to maintain his army in good condition, ready to start at the first signal to play the political part for which he destined it. His mind throughout was full of intrigue. Ambition was his guide, and blinded him to the snares that were set for him. Once engaged in negotiations with the enemy, Marshal Bazaine, little desirous of placing himself in communication with the new Government, which did not favour his personal views, rejected the numerous opportunities which presented themselves of communicating with the interior of France in respect to the destiny of his army, and preferred relying upon intelligence furnished by the enemy. Time, however, passed away, the provisions were nearly exhausted, the agent claiming to represent the Empress did not reappear, and General Bourbaki remained silent. The Empress did not then approve what had been done in her name, and the enemy, assured of the political attitude of Marshal Bazaine, and informed what quantity of provisions remained, broke off negotiations. Not deterred by this, the marshal endeavoured to renew relations with the enemy, and this time sought to lead his lieutenants and his army into his own policy. Thus, instead of falling with dignity, the marshal lost in useless steps the time he ought to have employed in destroying his war material in order to prevent it falling into the enemy's hands. The report proceeds to examine the measures taken by the marshal for the sortie to obtain provisions made on the 7th of October, and shows that they were wholly at variance with the marshal's assertion that he intended making this sortie the means of effecting the escape of his army from Metz by the plain. Such an assertion is further contradicted by his previous positive declaration that it was impossible for him to make a successful sortie with the object of breaking through the enemy's lines.

Respecting the opinion of General Frossard

given at the council of war held on the 10th of October, cited by Marshal Bazaine in support of his assertion that a prolonged defence of Metz was impossible, the report points to the long defence made by Strasbourg, as a proof with means of defence so far inferior to those of Metz. If Marshal Bazaine had done his duty by taking his army into the interior of France, and if the governor of Metz had done his by gathering in the resources of the surrounding country, Metz could have held out to the date of the armistice, and Lorraine would probably now still be French.

The report shows how the marshal, after the council of war of the 10th of October, endeavoured to shift responsibility from himself by alleging the advice given by the Council of Defence formed by the subordinate officers under his military law and precedent; but, even if it were, the marshal, if he intended to be led by the opinion of his officers, was bound to give them full information on the state of affairs. The marshal, however, left the council in ignorance of his correspondence with Prince Frederick Charles, the overture which M. Regnier made to him as from the Empress, with Herr Von Bismarck's assent, the departure of Gen. Bourbaki, the letter sent to General Stiehle, and the silence since then of the German Government and the Empress—a certain indication of a check to the negotiations which had been opened. Finally, the marshal declared to the council that he had received no communication whatever from the interior, and said nothing respecting the large stock of provisions at Thionville and Longwy. Marshal Bazaine further withheld from the council the opinions of Marshal Leboeuf and General Ladmirault in favour of an immediate sortie. The council, it is true, were in favour of negotiations, but had the marshal informed them of the unsuccessful efforts which he had already made in this direction, the members of the council would have seen that the only hope of salvation was to fight at once, and the gallantry displayed by the army on the 7th October proved that a successful sortie was far from impossible.

The mission of General Boyer is the next incident with which the report deals, and the published portion of the marshal's instructions to General Boyer, dated Bon St. Martin, October 10th are cited verbatim. The report characterizes them as follows:—"Thus, while the people, sacrificing all private or party interest in presence of a common danger, flew to arms all over France to aid the Government of the National Defence, the commander in chief of a French army proposed to guarantee the pledges which the enemy might demand after its victories. Marshal Bazaine was to re-establish order and contribute to the accession of a regular and legal power. It was not enough for us to have foreign war, our unhappy country was to be further condemned to the horrors of civil war, and the army of Metz was to unite its efforts with the enemy's to overthrow the Government which was struggling for the national independence. Certainly, the fate of the Metz army was deplorable, but in view of the dangers to which the projects of its commander exposed its patriotism, we ought to thank God for having spared it a still more frightful destiny."

The report states that General Boyer, although he had an opportunity of escaping the surveillance of the German officers who accompanied him, requested information from any Frenchman upon the real state of France at that time or the efforts being

made to resist the Germans, but contented himself with repeating to the persons he met the information furnished to him by the German officers. A fresh council of war was held at Metz on General Boyer's return. The report condemns Marshal Bazaine for not having at this council, in view of the approaching capitulation, proposed the destruction of the war material. The marshal sheltered himself by alleging the opinion of General Soleille as strongly opposed to the measure, and the opinion of General Coffinier that the work of destruction would require a considerable time. The marshal said, however, that he would certainly have approved the destruction had any officer taken the initiative. Generals Soleille and Coffinier in their dispositions have, however, denied the accuracy of Marshal Bazaine's allegations as to their advice in this matter, and repudiated the responsibility which he sought to cast upon them. The report proceeds, in fact, to show that secret negotiations for capitulation existed between Marshal Bazaine and the enemy even prior to the 10th of October, and that the Germans had made it an essential condition, accepted by the marshal, that they should have all the war material delivered to them. The report then mentions various despatches exchanged between Marshal Bazaine and General Boyer, many of which were destroyed with great care by General Boyer before his departure for England, and which the report concludes must therefore have been of a very compromising character. In addition to this correspondence by letter, Marshal Bazaine frequently received personal visits from German officers. When questioned on this subject the marshal stated that the visits in question simply related to military service matters and not to any private relations. In the events which succeeded the failure of General Boyer's mission to Versailles, the report censures the haste to capitulate manifested by Marshal Bazaine, and the absence of any proof of anxiety on his part to prolong resistance, although the circumstances were such as made the gain of one day even a matter of vital import. At this time the army of the Loire began its operations, and opened the march towards Paris which was only arrested by the arrival of the troops of Prince Frederick Charles from Metz. It was the moment, also, when negotiations were being conducted by M. Thiers on behalf of the Government of the National Defence. It is known that these negotiations, when just approaching success, fell through in consequence of the riot caused at Paris by the news of the capitulation of Metz.

Entering upon the subject of the capitulation, the report treats one of the most important points in the indictments against the marshal—that relative to the flags surrendered to the Germans. The report first asks what passed between Marshal Bazaine and General Soleille on the morning of the 27th October, a point which the preliminary examination has not been able to elucidate. The report gives the text of the two orders of the day drawn up by General Soleille, and, as that officer states, at Marshal Bazaine's dictation, Marshal Bazaine affirmed that he had no recollection of having dictated these orders. No trace of them exists on the staff registers, but the report considers it impossible that they should not have emanated from the marshal. The first of these orders was addressed to the artillery commanders, the second to Colonel de Girels for communication to the various army corps. Both were dated October 27, and both requested that all the flags, standards, &c., should be sent to the arsenal. The order to the artillery