

flames. The chateau was reduced to ruins.

Only the little chapel survived and it is narrated by the superstitious peasants that the flames stopped suddenly at the feet of the crucifix, which still hangs with blackened feet over the door of the chapel, now, alas, disfigured by the scribbling of the irrepressible tourist!

Wellington realising the vital importance of retaining this post gave orders that it was not to be abandoned as long as there was a single man left to defend it, and nobly was this order responded to.

It is recorded that during the lulls in the battle the wounded horses were seen down in the valley actually grazing the grass that they could reach whilst lying on the ground; and that riderless horses were grazing as quietly as if in a deserted field whilst the shot and shell whistled over them from either side. When a charge of cavalry went past, these unwounded horses would join in and accompany the charge as if fully imbued with the spirit of the fight.

At about 4 p.m. Napoleon prepared to strike his third great blow, this time with cavalry only, and against the British right and centre. He prepared the way by a terrific fire of artillery which swept the British position like hail, and though our infantry, formed in squares, lay behind the crest of the ridge, they suffered enormous losses without being able to fire a shot in reply.

In front of the squares our gallant gunners were plying the advancing enemy with shot and shell to the last moment, and then took shelter under their guns, or in the squares, when the cavalry charged.

A mighty mass of 40 squadrons, steel-clad cuirassiers, lancers, and chasseurs, 5000 in all, had been concentrated opposite the British right, and led by the gallant Ney swept up the slope and at the British squares. These first poured their fire at close range into the advancing horsemen and then remained grimly silent and motionless, surrounded by a bristling hedge of bayonets. The French dashed up in vain, not a single square was broken, and soon the attacking squadrons became a confused and jostling crowd riding round and round the squares and vainly striving to force an entrance.

Then the British cavalry, which had been kept in reserve behind dashed forward between the squares and hurled the French back down the slope. But the latter quickly reformed and once more the mad scene was re-enacted, and again they hurled themselves with desperate courage against the red immovable squares. Once more they were driven back in confusion by our gallant cavalry, and trembling with rage and defeat, commenced to reform in the valley.

The instant they were gone the French artillery recommenced its murderous fire on our motionless squares, with such effect that the cavalry attacks were looked upon as a positive relief when they came.

Ney now determined on a more desperate effort and calling up the whole of the French cavalry of the left wing, till his force numbered 80 squadrons, 12,000 men in all, he once once again, with nearly every horseman in the French army at his back, came rolling forward like a gigantic wave which must sweep away with sheer weight the stricken and decimated squares.

But not a single British soldier moved, and though the charge was delivered with wild fury a third and a fourth time, the French had again to retreat, broken and confused, before the avenging swoop of the allied cavalry.

For two hours, from 4 to 6, this raging combat had been continued and the French cavalry was now much reduced in numbers and completely demoralized whilst the British line was intact though much shaken and weakened by loss.

NAPOLEON'S THIRD GREAT BLOW HAD FAILED.

But now the sorely tried British saw help at hand, for the Prussian advance had begun to be felt on the French right and rear. Bulow with the advanced guard of the Prussians had left Wavre early in the morning, but his column was delayed by a fire in the streets, and afterwards by the terrible state of the narrow country lanes which were almost impassable after the stormy weather. Urged on, however, by Blucher who had ridden to the front, the Prussians strained every nerve to drag forward their guns now axle deep in the mud, and when exhausted by their efforts they cried it was impossible to advance, their gallant old leader, bruised as he was after his accident at Ligny, hovered everywhere, urging encouraging and pleading.

"Lads, you will not let me break my word" was his sturdy appeal, and his adoring troops responded to it nobly.

Blucher promised to be at Waterloo by noon, but it was 4:30 before even his leading corps, 30,000 strong, could come into action between the Lasne and Frischermont. Opposed to Bulow was Loban with 10,000 men, soon reinforced by the young guard and a strong body of artillery, who held Planchenoit and after a severe and bloody struggle drove Bulow back. The pressure on the French right was thus relieved, but Blucher was not disheartened, for his second corps was now in sight with the rest of his army close behind.

Wellington, unmoved, and never dismayed, though he knew his army was terribly shaken, was anxiously looking for Blucher's arrival to relieve the fearful pressure. He kept looking at his watch and he said afterwards, "Both the Prussians and my watch seemed to have stuck fast."

He had now, however, to prepare to meet a new danger, for Napoleon had in desperation prepared his fourth grand attack against the British centre this time.

The French I and II corps were united, and headed by Ney advanced straight at La Haye Sainte. The gallant defenders of this little post were now exhausted by their protracted defence, and their ammunition had run out and by a misunderstanding had not been renewed. The French columns advanced and surrounded the farm on all sides. An entrance was effected by the west gate, and most of the defenders were driven into the house whence they could not escape owing to the barred windows, and nearly all were bayoneted inside.

Thus this important post in the very centre of the British line was captured, and at this moment, 6 p.m., Wellington's position was exceedingly critical. The French attack pressed on and fell with fury on the centre of the British line already so severely mauled. Here the most desperate fighting of the day occurred, and for a time the French had actually pierced the British centre, but not a redcoat would give way.

It is said, with what amount of truth I know not, that the Irish howl set up by some of the Irish regiments at this period carried as much dismay into the ranks of the enemy as their bayonets?

The situation was now becoming too warm for the Cumberland Hanoverian Hussars, and when ordered to charge they turned tail and fled straight to Brussels, spreading the report that the battle was lost and throwing the inhabitants into the greatest consternation.

Until nearly 7:30 the fight raged here, but inch by inch with desperate gallantry the attenuated British regiments pushed the French back, till finally a charge of the Foot Guards, aided by the 52nd and 95th, drove the attackers back down the slope and the most dangerous crisis of the day had passed.

NAPOLEON'S FOURTH GREAT BLOW HAD FAILED.

Ney now sent desperate requests to Napoleon for more infantry to renew the attack, but there was none available, for the reserves were all engaged with the Prussians, and Napoleon replied impatiently, "Where can I get them? Does he want me to make them?" He was evidently beginning to realise the seriousness of his position.

But Wellington's position was no less critical. Loss and desertion of the foreign troops had reduced his force to 33,000 effectives. The ground was heaped with dead and dying, his artillery was nearly all disabled, his regiments of cavalry were mere squadrons, his battalions companies, and many of his most trusted leaders were slain. But the troops who remained were heroes, and when their ranks were torn by the never ceasing hail of shot and shell they closed up without hesitation and preserved an unbroken front.

Napoleon had one last chance. The Prussian advance seemed checked for the moment and he determined to play his last card, which was to hurl his celebrated Imperial Guard, who had never failed to bring him victory or to redeem the worst disasters, at the British right centre, and to support this attack by every available bayonet and sabre along the whole line.

Napoleon himself superintended the formation of this 5th and last grand attack, and Ney was ordered to lead it.

Wellington detected the approaching storm and prepared to meet it.

His left was now safe, because Ziethen's Prussians had reached Smohain and were pressing the French in that direction. He therefore drew troops from left to right and was able to strengthen the threatened point.

Napoleon brought forward his Guard and led them himself as far as this point, (see map.) and then with strong exhortations urged them forward. He told them "he desired to sup at Brussels, and that they must hew out a path for him."

On they pressed, headed by the gallant Ney, and the whole French line advanced simultaneously. The attack on the centre, about La Haye Sainte, was renewed with redoubled fury and the Brunswick and Nassau troops began to waver and retreat, until rallied by Wellington himself and supported by British troops.

Here Col. the Hon. Sir Alexander Gordon, one of Wellington's S. A. D. C's., was killed. He was a great uncle to our present Governor General, and on the spot where he fell a monument was erected and still stands.

It was at this time and place also that the 27th regiment was formed up and had 400 officers and men knocked down in square without firing a shot in reply, so murderous was the French fire. Meanwhile further to the left the deep and dark masses of the Imperial Guard were mounting the open in two columns. Ney's horse was shot under him, but he continued to lead the advance on foot bareheaded. As they advanced they saw no British troops, for these were all lying down behind the ridge to be sheltered from the deadly hail of grape which heralded the French attack.

All the French could see was a small group on the summit of the ridge standing out clearly against the darkening sky. It was Wellington and his staff, coolly awaiting the right moment to deliver the counterblow.

As the Imperial Guard topped the ridge, Wellington gave the order "Up Guards and make ready" and the British Guards sprang to their feet only 50 yards from the astonished Frenchmen and poured in a crushing volley.

The French staggered and hesitated and Wellington gave the order to charge.

With a rousing cheer the Guards dashed forward and drove the French back