



were spread out in a long line so as to guard the whole frontier of Belgium, and were consequently so scattered as to be dangerously weak at all points.

The English, drawing their supplies from Ostend and Antwerp, guarded the western half of Belgium; and the Prussians, based on Cologne and Liege, guarded the eastern half; the road from Brussels to Charleroi, through Quatre Bras, practically marking the line between the two armies.

Wellington's force was a motley one indeed, and was described by Lord Hardinge at the time as resembling "a French pack of hounds; poodles, pointers, and turspits, all mixed up together and running about in sad confusion."

Only 35,000 of the troops were British, and many of these were raw recruits and militia. The remainder were made up of Hanoverian and Brunswick troops of indifferent quality, and over 30,000 were Dutch Belgians of very doubtful fidelity, but of undoubted inefficiency and lack of courage.

Of the 106,000 composing this force 12,000 were left in garrisons, and 94,000, of which 14,000 were cavalry, with 196 guns, were available for the field.

And as Wellington himself said, it was "the worst army he had ever commanded." He complained most bitterly at this period of the lack of support he received from the British Government, and with good reason. Jobbery was rampant and his staff was flooded with incapable political nominees. The 50,000 British troops he was promised shrunk to only 35,000 at most, including militia, and at last the cutting request was drawn from him, that "Before they sent him

any more generals, he should like to see some more troops." Later he wrote, "I have got an infamous army, and very inexperienced staff."

His army was divided into two corps, with a reserve of cavalry and a reserve of infantry, and it was arranged as follows:—

- I Corps, under Prince Grange, 30,000, from Ath. to the sea.
- II Corps, Gen. Hill, 30,000, Nivelles, Enghien, Brai-le-Comte.
- Reserve, (Infantry), Wellington, 30,000, Brussels.
- Reserve, (Cavalry), 16,000, Grammont.

It was thus spread out along the whole frontier from the sea to the Prussian right, Wellington being very apprehensive lest Napoleon should fall on his right and so cut him off from his base and England. The Prussians were under the command of Blucher, who, however, left most of the planning of the campaign to Gneisenau, his chief of the staff. Gneisenau was a scientific officer of high repute, whereas Blucher was merely the old hussar, fiery and fierce, but neither learned nor scientific. He was, however, adored by his troops, and on account of his impetuosity was nicknamed by them "Marshal Vorwarts." He had suffered many defeats at the hands of Napoleon in previous years, and had seen his nation humiliated to the dust twice, and consequently he was now burning with fierce eagerness to wipe out all old scores. His army consisted of 116,000 men, of whom 12,000 were cavalry, with 312 guns. They were all Prussians, and not a whit behind Blucher in their burning desire for revenge. They were, however, of uneven quality, nearly one half being hastily raised recruits or militia.

They were arranged as follows, in 4 corps each about 30,000 strong:

- I Corps, Ziethen, Charleroi to Namur.
- II Corps, Pirch, Namur.
- III Corps, Thielemann, along frontier about Ciney.
- IV Corps, Bulow, Liege.

They were thus spread out along the frontier, from Charleroi to Liege, awaiting Napoleon's advance.

It will be at once evident that the front of the allied armies was in both cases parallel to their line of supply and retreat, and this was a strategic weakness, because if either were defeated they would have to choose between separating from the other, or abandoning their line of supply, both most undesirable courses.

Such then was the situation on the 14th of June, and all the pieces were now ranged on the board for the great game.

Let us now follow the opening moves. On this day, the 14th, the French army was posted as follows:—

- Right Wing... 16,000... Phillipeville.
- Centre... 64,000... Beaumont.
- Left... 48,000... Leers & Solre.

In the morning Napoleon issued to them his celebrated "Order of the Day."

ORDER OF THE DAY.

Napoleon, by the grace of God and the Constitutions of the Empire, Emperor of the French, etc., to the Grand Army.

At the Imperial Head Quarters, Avesnes.

June 14, 1815.

Soldiers, this day is the anniversary of Marengo and of Friedland, which twice decided the destiny of Europe.

Then, as after Austerlitz, as after Wagram, we were too generous. We be-