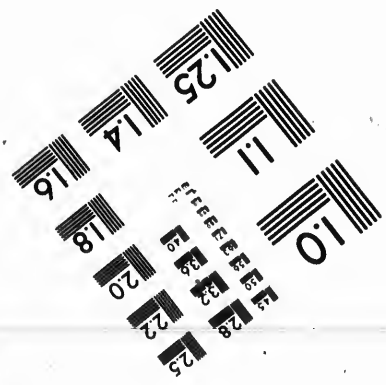
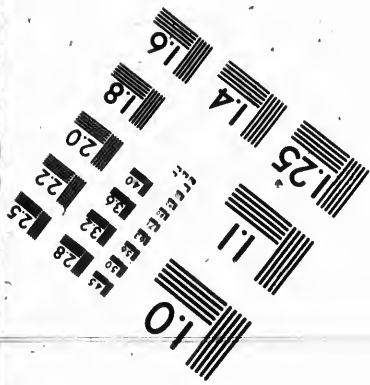
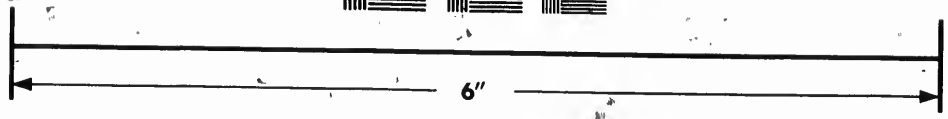
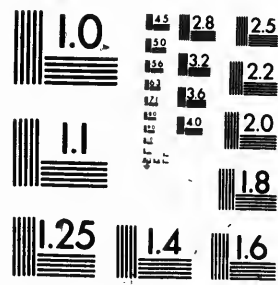


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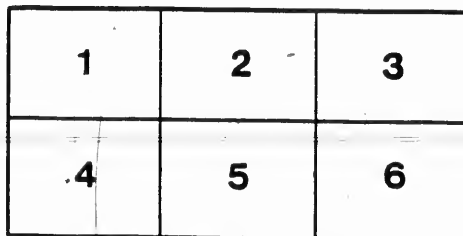
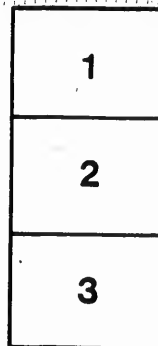
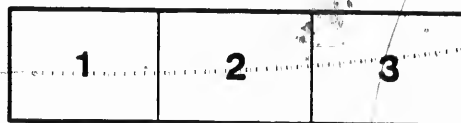
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Cyclorama
of the
Battle of Sedan

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EXPLANATION

—OF THE—

Cyclorama of the Battle of Sedan.

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THE spectator, emerging from the stairway on to the central platform, faces the east, or more correctly speaking, the north-east. Before him is a long valley, about two miles wide, traversed from south-east to north-west, by a narrow river, the Meuse, in French; in German, the Maas. It first comes on the scene from far to the spectator's right; flows thence along in front of Sedan and adjacent villages, until it reaches the mile-high hill, Iges, around which it sweeps to the left; and, forming a bend or "loop," comes back directly south, until, near where a broken railway bridge spans it, it turns to the west and disappears from the canvas.

Far to the right, to the south-east, the spectator can see the village of LaMoncelle, the extreme right of the French front line of battle. Beyond the village, in the far distance, the Fourth Army Corps, the Saxon Crown Prince's reserve, is coming on.

Looking further to the left, the burning village of Bazeilles and the village of Balan next catch the eye. The ferocious character of the long and bloody struggle at these two places, which were taken and retaken several times, is powerfully depicted in the Cyclorama.

Looking further up the canvas, the spectator catches a glimpse, to the right, of the village of Givonne. A white wall separates it from the Park of Balan. Far to the rear is a scant view of the village of Iilly. All along there, clear across the Cyclorama, and even into the dim horizon, are thick woods and forests. The principal one, running across the area from Givonne to the plateau of Floing, is the historic Forest of LaGarenne.

The entire rear line is now held by the Prussians and Saxons, while between them and Sedan, on the open areas and ridges, are seen the French columns, slowly falling back toward the city.

Running his eye to the left, the spectator watches the last charge of the French cavalry, the *chasseurs*, upon the Prussian infantry. The latter, not formed in square, as customary, but in somewhat loose order, in a long parallelogram, have gained a firm footing on the slope of Floing. The *chasseurs*, mounted on white horses, rush down the hill at full speed. At 100 yards, the Prussian "needle guns" slaughter man and horse, this being the third body of cavalry they so destroy. One or two companies break through the wall of fire, and reach the road at the foot of the plateau, determined to cut their way out, but the Prussian reserve, stationed there, kill or capture every man.

Looking east, directly to his front, across the Meuse, the spectator now sees the ancient city of Sedan, the centre of this gigantic struggle, looming up largely and grimly. The eye is attracted by several public edifices, of massive structure, liberal dimensions, and imposing appearance. In the south-east section of the city stands the citadel, with its arsenal and adjacent barracks. Near by, the church, whose two domes are prominent. In other parts of the city are two other large barracks. On the north rises high the military hospital. It stands on an eminence 130 feet above the Meuse. It is well fortified, and, as it commands the entire city, is deemed a stronghold.

We will now examine, with the spectator, what the artist shows us on the western side of the Meuse.

To the spectator's immediate front is the suburb of Torcy. It is connected with Sedan by a stone bridge, and is fortified and strongly held by the French. Quite a number of houses, arranged on a couple of streets, intervene between the platform and the ramparts of Torcy. This little hamlet is called Petit Torcy. The Bavarian infantry occupy it, supporting Wurtemberg field batteries. Its walls and roofs show the devastating track of shell and round shot. On the sward and in the streets are bloodier evidences, in dead or wounded men and horses. Behind a protecting wall, a priest kneeling by the side of a dying soldier, administers the last rites.

Over to the left of the settlement, some of the guns have, by mistake, fired upon their own infantry, in the houses in their front; and an officer is seen riding at full speed to stop the carnage.

Still further to the left of Petit Torcy, a long, double column of Wurtemberg horse-artillery is seen, rushing madly from the high ground to the rear out into the open plain, there to take position and shell Sedan. This is one of the most life-like, spirited and accurate pictures in the Cyclorama.

In reply to this vehement assault, the French cannon fire thick and fast from the Torcy and Sedan ramparts and the Sedan interior works. Their shells burst all around with fatal effect. Just to the spectator's right, in the open area, is proof thereof in the two mounted German officers, their horses at full speed, and one officer affectionately supporting in his arms his comrade, wounded and falling.

Further to the right, a Jaeger battalion is eagerly rushing forward from the highway into the level plain. Beyond them, along the road crossing the valley from the village of Vadelincourt to Balan, the Bavarian pioneers are cutting down the tall trees, in order to give their artillery on the hillside a clear range.

Between these two bodies is a hollow space, sheltered by a grove of trees, in which a field hospital has just been established. A number of wounded German soldiers are being attended to by the surgeons. Others await their care, or are being brought in on stretchers. All are under fire, but all seem unconscious of it.

Looking down the valley, we admire the artist's delicate and finished touch in depicting the transparent waters from the inundation. The trees, the sky, the clouds, are reflected in them; and the black smoke and red flames also.

At the furthest end of the valley, to the south-east, is seen, somewhat indistinctly, the village of Remilly. Just this side of it is the manufacturing village of Porte Mauzy. Back of them, and all the way coming up the valley, stands out, on the spectator's right, a range of lofty hills, forest crowned, and now gleaming in the sun, now darkened by a cloud overhead. Along their slopes for miles are posted the numerous field batteries of the Fourth Army Corps and the Second Bavarian Corps, throwing shell clear across the valley and river into the French masses on the eastern side. High up on the summit of one of these hills stands the village of Noyers.

Here, close at hand, so close that the signs on the houses can be read, is the village of Vadelincourt, curving out from the foot of the hills into the valley. The railroad from Sedan to Metz runs through it, towards the south-east; and through the broad street moves off, in the same direction, a band of French prisoners. The red caps and pants and blue coats of the French contrast vividly with the helmets and dark blue uniforms of the Germans.

The peaceful village church and quiet cemetery, on the slope just above Vadelincourt, seem out of place amid the masses of soldiery, and the artillery, here and there, bleaching smoke and destruction.

The spectator has moved gradually round the platform by his right. He is now exactly opposite to where he first stood, and is looking westward. His eyes rise above the lines of batteries and supporting troops, to a group of dismounted officers standing in a line high up on the slope of the lofty hill, just below its forest crown. They are over a mile distant, but are easily recognized with the naked eye.

An historical group, indeed! The first man to the spectator's right is Von Moltke. He is pointing out to the King of Prussia, whose tall figure comes next to his, the French cavalry charge in the distance. On the King's right stands General Sheridan, sent by the United States Government to study this grand campaign from German headquarters. Prince Carl, of Prussia, is next to the American general. Then the Grand Duke of Weimar; and then the "Iron Chancellor," Bismarck. Other notables are in the group, but Von Moltke and Bismarck dwarf them all. It is well to state here that the German headquarters are distant from Sedan four miles; and from the forests on the line of the French rear, seven miles. Quite near the platform now, the spectator sees the little village of Frenois, much damaged by artillery projectiles. In one of its small houses is depicted a scene that at once enlists the sympathies. This tenement is being used as a field hospital. The door in the rear into which we look, opens on a small yard, walled in. The surgeons are busy at their terrible yet humane work. In one corner of the yard a female nurse is preparing, over a fire, food for the wounded. One poor fellow near her needs no further care. Death has claimed him. A side gate in the wall is open, and the surgeon's aids are carefully lifting thro' it into an ambulance just outside, those of the wounded who can bear transportation to a regular hospital.

To the right of, and close to the hospital, stands the church of Frenois. The first interchange of cannon balls has cracked and smashed its walls. But the artillerymen on both sides now aim at it no longer. Indeed, even if ordered to fire on it they would refuse. For they see the little flag that flutters from the church steeple. They know what it means and what it protects. That little flag is sacred—it is the Red Cross of Geneva! Another group on the right of the spectator, but much further away from him, next arrests his attention. On a winding road, lined with tall poplars, and leading from the low grounds up a long hill to German headquarters, appears the Crown Prince of Prussia. He is on horseback, and is followed by his staff and escort, also mounted. He is hurrying on, to report the success of his grand turning movement, but he nevertheless stops a minute or so, to say a kind word to a wounded soldier, who rises from the road side to salute his general.

We are next attracted by the picturesque appearance of a body of cavalry, drawn up in a meadow, in line of battle. They stand as if on parade, with lances high in air, from which flutter their little flag. They form a part of the Bavarian light horse—the famous Uhlans.

Further back, on the hill sides are Wurtemberg field batteries, firing vigorously a very long distance across the valley at the French troops and guns on the opposite heights. In this part of the canvas the two steeples rising above a hill in the distance, indicates the village of Danchery, which is situat

ed on the Meuse, on the other side of this hill. In this village Bismarck slept the night after the battle.

In the distant plain, north of Donchery and beyond the Meuse, is seen a large mass of infantry, motionless. They constitute a Wurtemberg division, 20,000 strong, and form the reserve for the two Prussian army corps, the 5th and 11th, that have accomplished the turning movement around the peninsula and hill of Iges, and are now assaulting the French rear at the plateau of Floing. This peninsula and hill hold a prominent place in the Cyclorama, looking north from the platform. On the summit of the hill, a German battery is firing at the French batteries on the heights of Floing.

Coming back now to a point nearer the platform, the spectator's glance is arrested by the sight of a large and handsome edifice, located at the foot of a hill just north of Frenois. It is a French country house; its name is the Chateau de Bellevue.

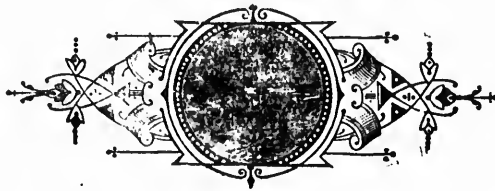
In this Chateau, on the afternoon of September 2nd, the conquering Prussian King and the defeated French Emperor met, by appointment, and held private conference for a quarter of an hour.

From this Chateau, the next morning, the captive Emperor departed for Germany. Then departed and disappeared, also, the second French Empire, and was laid the solid foundation for the new and powerful German Empire.

The artists, Professor Louis Braun and August Lohr had the signal advantage of personally witnessing the great battle. Their minutely careful sketches taken then and afterwards, were submitted to competent authority at Berlin, and their accuracy fully authenticated. It was then the work of two weeks of constant care and labor to transfer these sketches to the circularly arranged canvas now before us.

The result is a historic painting, unsurpassed for its grandeur and harmony of design, its fidelity to nature and to truth, its dramatic power, its absorbing interest. The soul and talent of the true artist are especially seen in the remarkable manner in which every scene in the terrific war tragedy is accurately and powerfully delineated, without obliterating the peaceful beauty with which eternal Nature, in a beneficent spirit, had decorated the romantic landscape even from the days of old.

Genes are: Nations change, but Genius is Immortal.



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The Battle of Sedan

WITH A SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVENTS WHICH LED UP TO IT, AND OF THOSE WHICH IMMEDIATELY SUCCEEDED IT.

HISTORY, it can happily be said, has but seldom been called upon to record a more interesting, yet murderous conflict than was witnessed at the Battle of Sedan. It was this battle which struck the death blow to France's Second Empire and gave rise to the Republic of today; it was this battle, also, which determined the future of the Franco-Prussian War. To give a more comprehensive understanding of the circumstances of this famous struggle, the events which led up to it are given in brief below:

In 1866 the fierce struggle between Austria and Prussia for the supremacy of Germany ended, placing Prussia at her head. As a result of this conflict Prussia received on the whole about eighty-two millions of gulden and considerable addition to her territory. Besides this, the military forces of nearly all Germany were placed under her control. While Austria had been weakened, Prussia was greatly strengthened. It was against this powerful country that France on the 15th of July, 1870, declared the war known in history as the Franco-Prussian.

France had not yet recovered from the fearful shock which the Mexican Expedition had caused her. She feared the pre-eminence of such a power as Prussia and the Emperor, Napoleon III, looked jealously upon her in her recently augmented strength. He was determined to increase his power proportionately, cost what it would. Nor was he content with this vain hope, but he would reduce Prussia. To the execution of this herculean undertaking he applied himself with all his Napoleonic vigor.

His first bold attempt was to acquire the province and strong fortress of Luxemburg from Holland; this created no small excitement in both France and Germany. Von Moltke, the German General, counseled war, but Bismarck with more discretion successfully opposed it. By the arrangements which were finally made by a congress of ambassadors which met in London, the Prussian garrison vacated the fortress and razed it to the ground. Much severe condemnation was heaped upon Bismarck for this action.

Napoleon was not slow in maturing new plans. He soon conceived the idea of reuniting Belgium to France, as in the days of Napoleon I. With Bismarck's aid and by means of promises, he hoped to be successful. But Bismarck, with characteristic diplomacy, procrastinated as much as possible, and with his usual skill, frustrated these plans.

Much opposition was at this time brought to bear against Napoleon. There was an uprising of public sentiment against him, which threatened soon

to break out into open rebellion. Napoleon could no longer rest secure, even with the intimate confidence of such bold men as Gramont, Ollivier and Leboeuf. Indignation and excitement reigned high. How to avoid an uprising of the populace was now a subject for Napoleon to consider. War was his only resort, and he was not slow in finding a pretext for a proclamation. By this means the Emperor had thought to pacify his opponents. He affirmed with truth that he was forced into the war, and so he was.

It was at this period that negotiations for the acceptance of the Spanish crown by Prince Hohenzollern were being effected. This afforded the Emperor a pretext for the execution of his plans. He reasoned that by this means the balance of power, always a most important consideration, would be destroyed in Europe. The interest and even the future existence of France, he strongly maintained, would thus be endangered.

The King, William of Prussia, was consulted by Count Benedetti, who had been sent by the Duke de Gramont, a warm friend of the Emperor. King William heard the envoy, and though sufficiently conscious of his own power to be indifferent to the ascendancy of the Prince, nevertheless graciously consented to the renunciation of his candidature to the throne.

A second demand was now made to the King, and this perhaps a very unreasonable one. After all his concessions, he was now haughtily asked to promise that the Prince of Hohenzollern should never, under any circumstances, be a candidate for the Spanish throne.

Much quibbling has been indulged in as to whether the bearer of this demand was received courteously, or, as some writers express it, "was shown the door." To be sure such an act would be an insult. France it would seem, regarded it in this light, and on the 15th July accepted the challenge which she claimed Prussia had offered.

This was done, it must be said, not without much opposition from the leaders of the Liberal party. "We protest," cried Jules Favre, "that streams of blood will flow, and Europe be covered with ruins, for a mere question of susceptibility, a mere question of etiquette," and when he said this he was by no means alone in his opinion. But through the intrigues of the war party, this sentiment was squelched and war was declared.

South Germany was terror stricken. Should Napoleon march forward, immediately on this declaration, as Prussia had done in 1866, Baden, the Palatinate, Wurtemberg and Bavaria would be at his mercy. In their terror they joined the North Confederation, Prussia.

In this Napoleon was much disappointed, as he had hoped that they would ally themselves to him, or would at least assist him by their neutrality. He looked for other alliances. He now sought them in Vienna and Italy.

It was while engaged in these secret and important negotiations, that Bismarck exposed to all Europe the proposals and promises of the Emperor in respect to the acquisition of Belgium. Napoleon saw his mistake; he had been treating with the wrong man.

This exposure threw Napoleon in such a dreadful state of confusion that he knew neither where nor how to begin his operations. The army, the navy, the money, all of which had been pictured to him by his followers in such glowing colors as ready, and at his command, were not forthcoming; they were more visionary than real. The money had been appropriated for different purposes and the army was but half the size it had been represented. Once again disappointed, it required two long weeks before he could complete his preparations.

In the meanwhile Prussia had not been idle. She had sent powerful forces to the aid of the South, so as to be able to meet Napoleon there. The war had begun, though no actual engagement had as yet taken place.

On the 20th of July, the Prince Imperial together with Prince Napoleon entered Metz; they received a loyal welcome. Confidence ruled over all; indeed; it was greatly through an excess of it that many of the succeeding misfortunes befell the French. It was a large and powerful army, that Grande Armée as it was called, assembled at Metz, 241,000 men strong, well armed and well equipped. The headquarters of the army were also at this place. The different corps d'armées with their commanders were as follows: The first corps d'armée was under the command of Marshal MacMahon, and consisted of 33,000 men, with powerful artillery. The second corps was under the command of General Frossard and consisted of 30,000 men. The third corps was under the command of Marshal Bazaine and consisted of 32,000 men. The fourth corps was under the command of General Ladmirault and consisted of 29,000 men. The fifth, under General de Failly, had 26,000 men; the sixth, under Marshal Canrobert, 28,000 men; and the seventh, under General Feltz, Douay, had 33,600 men. The corps of the Garde Impériale, 30,000 men, was commanded by General Bourbaki.

The troops soon began to move, and on the 2nd of August the 2nd corps d'armée, commanded by General Frossard, advanced to the heights of Spicheren, near Saarbrück. After skillful maneuvering by the French and a bold resistance by the Germans, the French came off the victors. The Emperor and his son saw this engagement, defying death and exposing themselves to most extraordinary dangers, stationed, as they were at a distance certainly not more than 300 yards from the Prussian needle-guns. They escaped unharmed, as by a miracle. The French would have entered the town of Saarbrück but rumors of its having been undermined caused them to pause.

In this engagement the French lost two officers and fifteen men killed, besides sixty others hors-de-combat. The Prussians lost 300 killed and wounded and fifty prisoners. The engagement was an important one to the French, testing their own bravery and the strength of their opponents. In this battle the Prussians outnumbered the French by about three thousand.

In the evening the Emperor returned to Metz, and was greeted with an enthusiastic ovation from the inhabitants. Unbounded hopes and extravagant expectations prevailed. Germany on the contrary was much depressed by the news of this battle, though this merely incited her to greater efforts. Her army had been distributed along the French frontier in three grand armies. The first, known as the Army of the North, was under the command of Gen. Steinmetz; the second, known as the Army of the Centre, was under the command of Prince Frederick Charles of Prussia, and the third, known as the Army of the South, was under the command of the Crown Prince of Prussia. Gen. Von Moltke, the great strategist, was the real commander-in-chief, though the king reserved the title for himself. Together these three armies mustered about 510,000 well drilled, strong and active soldiers. They were so placed as to be easily coalesced. South Germany was especially pleased with the arrangement and distribution of these armies and officers.

On the 4th of August the advance guard of Marshal MacMahon's corps was attacked at Weissemburg. The French displayed magnificent heroism—the Zouaves and Turcos being particularly commendable for the valor which they displayed. History cannot be too lavish in her praises of their heroic deeds. Nor can it be said that the Prussians were less obstinate in their defence. The French hoped for victory, and in this they would not have been disappointed had not the Crown Prince furnished the Prussians with timely and invaluable assistance. As it was they were entrapped between two furious fires, and it was only through invincible daring and courage that they succeeded in retiring to Col du Pignonier, adjoining the road to Bitsche. They lost General Abel Douay and nearly 2000 soldiers who were either killed or put hors-de-combat.

Cyclorama of the Battle of Sedan.

The Crown Prince did not rest here, but continued to push onward with his army—an army of 120,000 men, and engaged in a fierce but very one-sided battle with MacMahon's army of 33,000 men. The French made a bold struggle considering the disproportionateness of their number, but they were soon put to rout. This battle was fought on the 6th of August at and near Worth, whence it took its name. The French loss was irreparable, amounting to 13,000 killed besides the loss of thirty pieces of artillery, six mitrailleuses and two eagles. The losses of the Prussians were also great, though not nearly so formidable.

Misfortunes were now rapidly succeeding one another. We no sooner hear of MacMahon's defeat than General Frossard is repulsed from Saarbruck. In this latter struggle the French again displayed much intrepidity. But three such defeats in two days were more than they could endure with equanimity. However much confidence and fortitude pervaded their minds at the beginning of the war, they now had too little. Their courage suddenly left them, and without courage and presence of mind it is needless to say mankind is not fit for warfare. The Emperor, from whom such a thing was least expected, succumbed with the rest.

It is not difficult to imagine the consternation and excitement which followed. Napoleon dared not return to Paris, unsuccessful as he had been. Once again he contemplated that coup d'état which he had meditated at the opening of the war—the deportation of his opponents to Africa and Cayenne, and among them many respected and peace-loving inhabitants were numbered. To banish thousands of such good and honest citizens would be a terrible and fatal stroke. Even the Empress Eugenie felt this and feared to execute such a policy. Napoleon now ardently desired to conclude peace with Prussia, and at this juncture would doubtless have acceded to any terms. Meanwhile the Prussians were following up their victories and soon more successful conflicts before the fortress of Metz were added to their triumphs. These victories however were by no means achieved with ease.

On the 14th of August the French army made a bold resistance to the fearful onslaughts of the enemy. The 16th still saw no end to this bloody struggle. The losses on both sides were enormous. The French enacted prodigies of valor, and to the Germans, too, a high tribute must be paid for the wonderful tactics and discipline with which they fought. This battle, one of the fiercest of the age, is known as the battle of Mars-la-Tour. Both armies occupied the next day in transporting their wounded, burying their dead and in procuring ammunition. It was the plan and the hope of the Prussians to cut off Bazaine, the French General, from retreating, and to force him back to Metz. On the 18th they engaged the French in another battle—that of Gravelotte. This conflict lasted all day and was even more murderous and fierce than that of the 16th. The French were outnumbered and after strenuous efforts to resist the thundering charges of the enemy, were defeated. Night came on and cast a veil over one of the saddest and most heart-rendering scenes of the whole war; so numerous were the dead and wounded that they were thickly piled on one another. The battle of Gravelotte had been fought and won. Prussia's hope was realized. Marshal Bazaine's army had been forced back to Metz.

The history of the following ten or twelve days can be briefly told. There were no important pitched battles, only a few and comparatively insignificant skirmishes. Both armies were preparing for the murderous scenes which were so soon to follow. MacMahon and his army dared not go to the assistance of Bazaine who was still shut up at Metz, so that a meeting of these two armies became an impossibility. They therefore quietly encamped at Châlons, and just as quietly left for and entered Rheims. They next marched to Rethel where they remained but a short time.

From this point MacMahon directed his army upon Montmédy. This was on the 25th of August. On the day following Bazaine made a short but fierce attempt to break out of Metz. In this he was unsuccessful and was repulsed. On all sides he was surrounded by large and powerful Prussian armies, inflexible as a circle of Steel. To break through such dense ranks would be a veritable miracle.

MacMahon's army had been seriously crippled by the defeats which it had suffered and was very dispirited. On the 27th of August he reached LeChêne Populeux. Here for the first time he realized the perils which surrounded him. The unexpected and close proximity of the two German armies alarmed him. He had already sounded ordered a retreat when he received positive instructions from Paris to relieve Metz! MacMahon very reluctantly, and rightly so, obeyed this order. It was a vain undertaking, inviting destruction rather than averting it. He attempted to reach Montmédy by way of Stenay, but soon learned that the Prussians were quartered at the latter place, and so resolved to pass the Meuse at Mouzon. On the 30th of August only a part of his army had passed when they were attacked on both sides of the river. The French were defeated and suffered the severe loss of 7,000 men taken prisoners, 20 guns, and considerable camp baggage. The Emperor himself was present and with much difficulty escaped to Sedan.

These events, interesting and important as they are, must now give way to the glowing brilliancy of the scenes of the morrow; they are as a mere prelude to the grand and decisive engagement to which they led—

THE BATTLE OF SEDAN.

ON THE 30th of August, 1870, the French army on their march to the relief of Marshall Bazaine at Metz, commanded by Marshall MacMahon, but closely followed by the Germans, had arrived in the neighborhood of Sedan. Pressed from all sides MacMahon here stationed his troops in good defensive positions, and awaited the attack which was to follow. Sedan is situated on the east bank of the river Meuse, a distance of 160 miles north-east of Paris. It is a fortress of some importance, planted on an uneven site, surrounded by meadows, gardens, fields and ditches, the last named forming part of the system of fortifications. The castle or citadel stands on an eminence to the south-east of the town. Near the castle are large barracks. The military hospital, built on the north side at a height of 130 feet above the Meuse, commands the town at all points, and being elaborately fortified is considered the most important part of the stronghold. It is the birthplace of the great Marshall Turenne, one of the most remarkable of French generals, whose ghost might well be supposed to have trembled with excitement and indignation at the terrible defeat which befell the hosts of France with a Marshall and an Emperor at their head in this very town. Until the catastrophe of Sept. 1870, Sedan was noted for its cloth and woolen manufactures, but since then it has acquired a lasting military name in history. This remote nook of France, situated in an angle between projections of Belgian territory, was destined to see one of the most crushing disasters that ever befell a mighty nation. The melancholy old town, wound about by streams and hills that mocked her with the semblance of defence, yet unable to avert the coming doom, will seem to the eyes of future travellers to partake of the sadness of that tragedy to which it afforded a background and a stage.

The plan conceived by the Germans on the 31st of August, and carried out by them on the following day, was to envelope the whole French army, to hem it in upon Sedan, and so to cut it off from every possibility of retreat. They had at their command about 240,000 men, and from 600 to 700 cannon, thus greatly outnumbering the French, whose force probably did not exceed

110,000 men, with 440 guns. To ensure the success of these movements the whole of August 31st had been devoted by General von Moltke to placing the various corps in the necessary positions, partly along the river Chiers, and beyond Rémilly in the direction of the Meuse, with supports in other positions, where they would be required to aid in the great turning movement that was to be the leading feature of the following day.

When the French, on the morning of Sept. 1st found themselves attacked by the Germans, they must have seen how desperate their position was. Partly by their own mismanagement and partly by the admirable plans of the enemy they found themselves caught in a trap—driven into a corner of the country with no possible retreat open to them. Under cover of a dense fog the Saxons had crossed the Chiers, the bridges of which stream by extraordinary oversight the French had neglected to break down, so that their advance met with no obstacle, and marched upon Givonne. The Bavarians advanced upon Bazeilles and prepared to attack this village. This action did not fully commence until 6 o'clock a.m., and at 9 o'clock a furious artillery fight at close range was going forward along the whole line. The position at Givonne was considered by MacMahon too strong to be turned, and unfortunately he had here stationed his weakest troops. On the first onslaught of the Prussians these gave way and the left wing was turned. By 11 o'clock the French centre also began to recede, though the contest was still prolonged with desperate tenacity, the weaker side fiercely and bravely disputing every hill, slope and point of vantage. The villages of Bazeilles and Balan were the two great scenes of carnage, for the French well knew the importance of these places, and clung to them as long as it was possible. In spite of the murderous cross fire from the Bavarian supporting batteries (headed by the Emperor himself, who is said to have again exposed his life with great recklessness), they at one time retook the villages and drove back the enemy. It was at this stage of the battle that it seemed as though the French might yet win the day. Their right wing was in the meantime also hotly engaged. The German Crown Prince after having crossed the Meuse on pontoons, had planted his batteries on the crest of a hill which overlooks the village of Floing and the surrounding country.

Although attacked in the rear the French confronted the enemy with all their available strength, and poured a deadly and determined musketry fire with terrific effect upon the Prussians. General Sheridan, who was an eye witness, remarked that he had never before heard so well sustained and long continued a small arm fire. By 12 o'clock the Prussian battery on the slope near La Villette had silenced two batteries of French guns near the village of Floing, and soon after the French infantry were compelled to retire from that position to a hill between Floing and Sedan. At 1 o'clock another French column appeared in full retreat to the right of Sedan, on the road leading from Bazeilles to the wood of La Garenne; a third column was observed coming up through the same wood, designed for the support of the troops defending the ravine of Bazeilles. Now the French batteries on the edge of this wood and above it opened a most terrific fire on the Prussian columns of the fifth corps advancing with a view of gaining possession of the hill north of La Garenne. The Germans gained the position, but being too weak to hold it were again driven down the hill. At the bottom they were strongly reinforced. It was at this time that the historical charge of the French Cuirassiers was made. Although the ground was broken and unfavorable for cavalry, they dashed forward to charge the scattered ranks that were again straggling up the slope. But to their mishap they had before them the élite of the Prussian army, steady and well disciplined soldiers. On they came, and nothing seemed able to withstand their tremendous assault. The Prussians did not form square nor send a shot until the gallant horsemen had come within about 100 yards,

when they opened a fearful fire upon them, reloading and firing as fast as possible; men and horses were killed and wounded by hundreds; the others turned and fled. The French infantry then advanced, but, like the cavalry, were also driven behind the ridge on the road to Sedan. Subsequently another regiment of cavalry dashed forward to make a renewed attempt to dislodge the enemy, but this also failed. Although by some extraordinary effort the Prussians had succeeded in getting a couple of 4-pounders up the steep, and were using them with telling effect, the French cavalry charged again and again, each time with increased spirit and resolution, even to the extent of recklessness; but not being supported by their infantry, who seemed paralyzed by the fearful shock, they were unable to shake the Prussians. Giving up the position for lost they fell back; but the French cavalry finding themselves pursued, and loth to give up even the unequal contest, turned and once more charged desperately. Nothing could now have changed the failure into success. The French had lost the hill; the Prussians had gained it, and were now receiving reinforcements which made their acquisition still more secure. All hope of retreat was now cut off to the French army.

The contest in the village of Bazailles had been carried on in a ferocious and murderous spirit by the Bavarians; there had been a desperate conflict in the streets, in which many of the inhabitants took part, firing even from the houses upon the advancing enemy. For this reason, and also because the townspeople had acted with unrelenting cruelty to some wounded soldiers, the Bavarians, when they at length were victorious, set the place on fire, and, it is said, burned a great number of the inhabitants alive. In the ravine the Bavarian regiments suffered terribly from the mitrailleuses, yet they continued to make way, and managed to get inside the fortifications of Sedan shortly after 5 o'clock. At 4 o'clock the ridge above Bazailles was carried, and Sedan was swept on all sides by the German cannon. The French opposed battery after battery to the advancing armies, and frantically directed charge after charge against their ranks, but they were steadily borne back until, losing all order and restraint, they were driven into Sedan under a scathing fire of artillery. The Germans had completed their circle of investment; and although the French fought with their accustomed valor, they were outnumbered and outgeneralled on all sides, and were now held with an iron grip, and placed beyond all hope of escape. Marshall MacMahon, after being wounded early in the day by a piece of shell, had given orders to Gen. Ducrot immediately to mass the troops, retreat on Mézières, and occupy the heights which overlook Sedan. But unfortunately these orders were countermanded by Gen. de Wimpffen, just arrived from Algeria, who produced papers from the Government, in Paris that in case of MacMahon being disabled, he, Wimpffen should take command. In so doing he reversed the orders of MacMahon, and commanded the troops to advance and fight the enemy in their present positions. The battle was witnessed from a hill above Donchéry by the King of Prussia, Gen. Von Moltke, Bismark, Gen. Sheridan and Forsyth of the U. S. army, and a numerous staff. It was not then known at German headquarters that the Emperor Napoleon was shut up with his army in Sedan!

At one time in the afternoon the white flag was raised on the walls of Sedan, and a German Colonel dashed forward at great risk to his life to receive whatever proposition the enemy might have to make; but it almost as quickly again disappeared, reports of French successes toward Illy having come in, and thus the gallant Colonel and his Adjutant found themselves amidst a rain of bullets, out of which, however, they, as by a miracle, escaped.

When all seemed lost Gen. de Wimpffen succeeded in rallying a few thousand men, and with these attacked the Germans in the suburb, capturing 200 Prussians who had barricaded themselves in a church, but he was finally driven back to Sedan.

It was now about 20 minutes to 5 in the afternoon, and no intention on the part of the enemy appearing, orders were given that the town should be bombarded. Sedan was soon burning in several places and at the same time the numerous villages scattered over the field of battle were wrapped in flames. The King, considering that a sufficient effect had been produced, directed the firing to cease, and sent Lieut. Col. von Brussart with a flag of truce to demand the capitulation of the army and fortress. On being admitted into the town he was unexpectedly introduced into the presence of the Emperor himself, who referred him to Gen. de Wimpffen. It was shortly after 7 o'clock when Col. Brussart returned to the German headquarters, and through him the Germans first learned with certainty of the presence of the Emperor in Sedan.

Immediately after Brussart, Adj. Gen. Reille came to deliver a letter from Napoleon to the victorious King. This letter memorable, considered with reference to the issue to which it led, commenced with these words: "Not being able to die at the head of my army, I lay my sword at the feet of your Majesty," etc. All the rest was left to the victor, who wrote a brief reply, in which he deplored the manner of his meeting with the Emperor, and begged that a plenipotentiary might be sent, with whom the capitulation could be concluded.

Meanwhile the state of things within Sedan was terrible beyond description. Watch-fires were lighted in every direction, and the heavens reflected a bright crimson glow beneath which the threatened fortress lay black and still. Discipline there was none. The men of different regiments were all crowded together indiscriminately, infantry, cavalry and artillery. Dead horses lay everywhere, and others, both wounded and not wounded, were wandering at will through the streets. Rain fell in torrents; the men huddled themselves singly and in groups under arches and on doorsteps; the mud was black with gunpowder, and the pavements were littered with fragments of shells, broken swords, rifles, pistols, lances cuirasses and metraileuses. The standards were either burnt or buried to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy.

To these horrors of the scene a deficiency of provisions was now added, and the half famished soldiers were obliged to cut up dead horses as their only means of obtaining food. Many of the houses were burnt or otherwise destroyed, and a large number of the civilians together with the soldiery were killed.

On the morning of the 2nd of Sept. the situation was a hopeless one, and it must have appeared still more obvious to the French than on the previous night that further resistance would be fruitless, as dense masses of German troops were seen on the heights above the Meuse. The hilltops bristled with batteries in position, and the plains were covered as far as the eye could reach with regiment upon regiment.

The terms of the Germans were unconditional surrender, and if the capitulation was not signed by noon of the 2nd the town to be bombarded. Nothing but purposeless slaughter could have resulted from a determination to abide such an attack, and the Emperor wisely resolved to see the conquerer, and endeavor to obtain a moderation of the terms which had been set down. Accompanied by a few of his staff, he started from Sedan at 5 o'clock in the morning, and proceeded in a carriage to Donchéry, where he had an interview with Bismark, in a small wayside house, occupied by a handloom weaver. Later in the day Napoleon met the King of Prussia at Château Bellevue. The result of these interviews was a modification of the original terms of surrender. The articles, five in number, as signed by Gen. Von Moltke for the Germans, and Gen. de Wimpffen for the French, provided that the French troops, finding themselves actually surrounded by superior forces, should give themselves up as prisoners of war; that, however, in consequence of the extraordinary brave defence offered by the army, all the generals and officers, and other superior

employees having the rank of officers, who would pledge their word of honor in writing, not to bear arms against Germany, and not to act in any manner against her interests until the close of the existing war, should be allowed to retain their arms and personal effects; that all war materials, flags, etc., should be delivered at Sedan to a military commission; that the town and fortified works should be given up at the latest on the evening of the 2nd of September, and that those officers who do not accept the articles previously set forth, should be marched out together with the disarmed troops, to be handed over to German commissaries by their officers, the surgeons to remain behind to attend the wounded.

Many of the officers refused to promise not to fight again against the enemy, and preferred going into captivity.

In a subsequent address to his troops Gen. de Wimpffen acknowledged that he had obtained conditions which relieved the army, as far as possible, from the humiliating formalities which ordinarily the usages of war exact under such circumstances.

In this memorable and bloody battle the French sustained a loss unparalleled in the history of her country, a loss of about eighty thousand prisoners, and over four hundred field pieces, including seventy mitrailleuses, one hundred and fifty siege guns, ten thousand horses, and warlike materials of all kinds. In a single month every French soldier that was not securely shut up with Bazaine, at Metz, was a captive in the hands of the Prussians, and among them was the fallen monarch of the French Nation—the Emperor!

The crowning victory of the war was now won; the Second Empire was at an end; the Government of National Defense was proclaimed, and with this proclamation the Emperor of France, Napoleon III., passes from the pages of history.

The remaining events of the war can be briefly chronicled. When the news of the Battle of Sedan reached Paris the Empress and the Emperor's party fled from France. Both France and Germany now wished for peace, but they were unable to come to satisfactory terms. Germany persisted in her demand for Strasburg and Metz, but France would not yield. The armies of the Crown Prince of Prussia and of Saxony had, immediately after the battle of Sedan, left for Paris. They arrived before the giant city without meeting any noteworthy resistance.

The war now assumed a new phase. It was no longer a war of conquest by Napoleon III., but a war between the French Republic and Germany. Skirmishing and small battles still continued, and on the 23rd of September Toul was captured by the Germans. On the 27th they occupied Orleans, and on the same day also the garrison and fortress of Strasburg surrendered, 17,000 men laying down their arms.

In the meanwhile Bazaine, who was still shut up at Metz, made several unsuccessful attempts to break away, and on the 7th of October made a grand sortie, in which, after fighting valiantly and stubbornly for five hours he was repulsed with a loss of about 2,500 men. The Germans were not wrong in their calculations that his provisions would give out before the end of the month, for on the 27th his army and the fortress of Metz capitulated—173,000 prisoners, including three marshals and sixty-six generals, surrendered, and 3,000 cannon were taken. "Never," says an historian, "since the world was, had such a host surrendered itself without a last trial of the fortune of war." The Germans hoped that Paris would now succumb to a like attack, and would share a similar fate.

France was awakening to a realization of her situation. New and increased dangers were again threatening her. Through the indefatigable exertions of Gambetta, new armies were quickly raised. On the 9th of November they gained a well-earned victory over the German general, Van der Tann, at Coulmiers and Baccon, and reoccupied Orleans. These successes raised

Cyclorama of the Battle of Sedan.

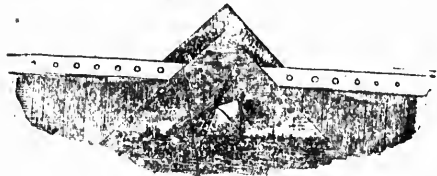
exaggerated hopes. Gambetta already saw Paris relieved. Numerous armies were organizing at Bordeaux, Toulouse and Nevers.

Though the French soon met with several insignificant repulses, no very important event took place until the 27th of November, when their army of the North, under command of General Aurelles was defeated and compelled to surrender.

On the 30th followed a bold sortie from Paris, by Generals Trucho and Ducrot with 90,000 men against the Wurtemberg and Saxon positions, south-east of Paris, but a few days later the Wurtemburgers and Saxons regained the positions which they had then lost.

The French next engaged in several hotly contested battles with varying success, but none of them so important and severe as the siege and bombardment of Paris shortly after. This highly interesting struggle, the last which France could make, can unfortunately find no place for a description in so short a sketch, and doubtless it is too well known to require it.

A three weeks' armistice was signed by the two nations on the evening of the 28th of January, 1871, but the theatre of war in Alsace was not included until the 16th of February. With this the war between Germany and France ended—the war so remarkable for its remarkable battles; so noted for the rapidity and violence with which they were contested.



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