

General Jomini

by

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GENERAL JOMINI.

IN that charming suburb of Paris so well known by the name of Passy, there resided a year ago a man oppressed by the weight of ninety years, and by infirmities contracted in many a hard campaign. He participated in the great events of Ulm, Jena, and Eylau; made more than one campaign in Spain; shattered his health in the dreadful passage of the Beresina; witnessed the campaigns of 1813 and 1814; took part in the Russo-Turkish campaigns of 1828 and 1829; and, at least by his advice, aided the Russians during the war of 1855 and 1856.

That man was perhaps the most remarkable and the most distinguished of the few surviving relics of the great soldiers known to fame during the wars of the first Napoleon. He was the General Baron Jomini, long chief of the staff of Marshal Ney; afterward general and aide-de-camp in the service of the Emperor of Russia, a position which he held at the time of his recent demise. His claims to celebrity are based less upon the eminent services he rendered in the field, than upon the fact that he was the ablest of military writers, and the first author in any age who gathered from the campaigns of the greatest generals the true principles of war, and expressed them in clear and intelligible language.

I will here premise that for much of the contents of this article I am indebted to the admirable sketch of the life and works of Jomini, by his friend Colonel Ferdinand Lecomte, an eminent officer of the Swiss Federal service.

Antoine Henri Jomini was born of very respectable parents of Italian origin, on the 6th March, 1779, in the little town of Payerne, in the Canton Vaud, not far from Lake Neufchatel. He enjoyed the advantages of a good early school education—nothing more. His boyish inclinations were decidedly military, but circumstances thwarted his efforts to obtain admission into the military school of Montbelliard, as well as to procure a commission in the Swiss regiment "Watteville," in the French service; he, consequently, devoted himself to the mercantile career. He first attended a commercial school at Aarau, and at the age of sixteen entered the banking-house of Mons. Preiswerk, at Bâle, as a clerk. The year 1796 found him in Paris, a clerk in the banking establishment of Mons. Mosselmann, with a salary of 3,000 francs; that he was faithful and skilful is indicated by the fact that his salary was doubled at the close of the year. He, however, soon went into business as a broker on his own account, forming a partnership with a fellow-countryman by the name of Rochat. In the words of Colonel Lecomte—"This was the period of the great successes of the Republic in Italy. Everyone followed with enthusiasm the first essays of the great Captain, and read the accounts of the astonishing victories of Montenotte, Lodi, Castiglione, Lonato, etc. Less than this was required to bring back our young merchant to his original tastes, and to cause him to participate more seriously than many others in the intoxication of the time. He followed attentively the war bulletins; kept a journal of the military operations, and soon felt the imperious necessity of penetrating all the secrets of the triumphs which filled the world. Excited also by reading the posthumous works of Frederick the Great, he analyzed, studied, compared, and at length reached a satisfactory result; that is to say, he convinced himself that there were in the art of war real principles, more or less easy to reduce to formula."

In 1798 he returned to Switzerland as aide-de-camp of the Swiss Minister of War, and in 1799, was in charge of a bureau in the war office, with the rank of major. While in this position he accomplished a great deal of useful work in re-organizing the Swiss troops, and on more than one occasion displayed that unerring appreciation of the principles of war that has since rendered him so famous. The experience he acquired here in matters of detail was subsequently of infinite service to him. In 1799, still retaining his commission as a major in the Swiss army, he returned to Paris, where he again embarked in those commercial pursuits which he finally abandoned, in 1803, for the military profession.

Early in life, when only twenty years of age, he had mastered the principles of the art of war, and commenced the first of his works—a treatise on “Grand Tactics”—a work, however, which he did not publish in its original form. Jomini stated to the writer of this article that it was during his first residence in Paris, from 1796 to 1798, that his attention was successfully drawn to the search for the true principles of strategy and tactics, by the gross and continual blunders of the early campaigns of the French Revolution; campaigns in which the successes achieved by the French were—until Moreau and Napoleon came upon the stage—generally due to the fact that their antagonists were guilty of still more glaring blunders. He said that it was while studying the accounts of the battle of Leuthen that the great principle which is the foundation of the art of war flashed upon him; and a careful study of Napoleon’s early Italian campaigns proved to him that he had at last mastered the secret. That principle, which now seems so clear and simple, had never been enunciated as a formula, although it had often been carried into practice by the great captains of the world; it was simply this—to bring the greatest mass of troops to bear upon the decisive point of a field of battle or theatre of operations, at the opportune moment. He also said that in his earliest works he did not venture to illustrate his subject by the wars of the French Revolution, so fertile in errors in the beginning—he would have wounded the self-love and interests of too many living men. He therefore took the campaigns of Frederic the Great as his text.

Upon abandoning commercial life Jomini attempted to enter the French service under Murat, and soon after as aide-de-camp of General Von der Weidt, a Swiss officer in the French army; but failed in both cases. A subsequent effort to enter the Russian service met with no better success; in fact the Russian chargé d’affaires, to whom he presented himself with the first volume of his “Treatise on Great Operations,” not only declined to forward his application for admission into the Russian service, but lectured him very severely for his assurance in supposing that so young a man could teach the old Russian generals anything about strategy. At length, however, his most sanguine hopes were gratified, for, in 1805, he met Ney, who read his manuscript with the greatest interest, advanced him the funds necessary for its publication, and proposed that Jomini should accompany him to the Camp of Boulogne as a volunteer aide, promising to procure a regular commission for him later. Jomini very gladly accepted the offer, and joined the Marshal at the camp. While there their relations became confidential, and Jomini so won the Marshal’s esteem that when the Sixth Corps crossed the Rhine, on the march toward Ulm, he was placed in charge of the Marshal’s private office and intrusted with issuing the special daily orders of march, etc. It would be vain to attempt, in such an article as this, even an outline of the campaigns in which the subject of this memoir participated. I shall merely sketch his career in brief, adverting somewhat more in detail to a few well-authenticated facts which will suffice to prove

that his powers of criticism in the field, and during the actual progress of events, were quite equal to the remarkable faculty he so unquestionably possessed, of coolly judging past events in his study.

During all the operations of the Ulm campaign he remained with the Sixth Corps. It is hardly necessary to remind my readers that at the outset of this campaign, an Austrian army, under Mack, was in position at Ulm, awaiting the support of a Russian army under Kutusoff, then some one hundred leagues distant. Napoleon suddenly broke up his encampments on the shores of the English Channel, and, by rapid and well-concealed marches, interposed between Mack and his expected re-enforcements. The mass of the French army was concentrated on the right bank of the Danube, holding the main roads to Vienna and the Tyrol; while to the Sixth Corps, temporarily increased to 30,000 men by the addition of the Divisions Gazan and Baraguay d'Hilliers, was confided the care of the road on the left bank of the Danube, leading from Ulm by Dillingen to Ratisbon; thus completing the isolation of Mack, and rendering his escape impossible.

Murat was placed in command of the right wing of the French army, and very nearly ruined the combinations of the Emperor. Entirely misunderstanding the orders and intentions of Napoleon, Murat ordered Ney to abandon the left bank of the Danube, and to move with his whole force upon the line of the Iller, thus leaving the Dillingen road completely open for Mack's escape. Ney strenuously opposed the determination of Murat, but being obliged to yield to his superior authority, called upon Jomini to draw up the orders for the movement.

Jomini remarked that this movement was in contradiction to the order of the Emperor to watch the left bank.

"All that belongs to ancient history," said Murat. "Write."

"Your highness will pardon me if I do not write," replied Jomini; "there are so many secretaries on the staff of Marshal Ney that there is no necessity for my taking part in a manœuvre which I believe to be in direct opposition to the intentions of the Emperor."

"Ah! Marshal Ney," said Murat, "do you permit your officers to argue in that manner?"

"Pardon me, your highness," replied Jomini, "I am a Swiss officer, serving here as a volunteer. Marshal Ney has been good enough to accept me as a volunteer aide, and sometimes permits me to discuss operations with him under a military point of view. That is what I have just taken the liberty of doing."

Murat persisted in his purpose; Ney called for his secretary, and the orders were issued to march upon the Iller. Ney, highly displeased with the orders and manner of Murat, desired to complain to the Emperor. Jomini induced him first to address to Murat a letter capable of convincing any one endowed with an appreciation of strategy. This letter was written by Jomini, signed by Ney, and forwarded to Murat; by whom it was rudely returned.

Fortunately, so much time had been consumed in these discussions that the movement ordered by Murat was not completely executed. Soon after Ney commenced his march toward the Iller, the sound of artillery was heard in his rear. It was the Division Dupont, which had not yet quitted the left bank, contending alone against the efforts of 30,000 Austrians to open a passage to Ratisbon. Dupont and his troops performed prodigies of valor, and succeeded in arresting their progress until the arrival of re-enforcements from Ney. By the urgent advice of Jomini, Ney promptly abandoned the march upon the Iller, and

at once marched toward the sound of the cannon. He moved immediately, with all the troops he had in hand, toward Elchingen ; leaving Jomini at the village of Kissendorf, to forward the counter orders to the troops still in march for the Iller, and to direct them toward the Danube. Among others he was to conduct to Ney the Division Gazan.

Having dispatched the necessary orders, Jomini lay down to rest in a stable loft, while awaiting the arrival of the troops, when he heard the voice of the Emperor at the bottom of the stairs. Jomini hastened down, half dressed as he was. Napoleon asked where were the Marshal's troops.

"In one or two hours they will be concentrated at the bridges of Elchingen and Leipheim," replied Jomini.

The Emperor then asked where the Marshal was, and was informed that he must then be at the bridge of Leipheim, where there had been fighting for some hours.

"Then what was all that that Murat wrote to me concerning your movement on the Iller?" said Napoleon.

"In truth, Sire," replied Jomini, "Marshal Ney was in movement on the Iller, in obedience to the reiterated orders of Prince Murat, when, upon hearing the sound of cannon in his rear, he thought it his duty to abandon the movement, and to collect all his troops to retake Elchingen at daybreak."

"Are you quite sure of that?"

"So sure, Sire, that I myself wrote the orders, and am now awaiting here the Division Gazan, to conduct it to the Marshal."

Napoleon at once departed, quite satisfied. Having learned the movements ordered by Murat, he had ridden several leagues on horseback, in terrible weather, to satisfy himself of the facts ; and to rectify, if not too late, the errors fortunately already repaired.

It is well known that Ney's glorious combats at Elchingen and in its vicinity won for him the title of Duke of Elchingen, and that their consequence was the surrender of Mack. Had he not turned back toward the sound of the cannon, in direct violation of the orders of Murat, Mack would certainly have escaped. In addition to the proofs given above of Jomini's power of appreciating movements on the ground, and when in course of execution, it need only be added that, in these affairs, he gave the clearest evidences of high personal courage.

Upon the surrender of Mack, the Sixth Corps moved into the Tyrol, and remained there during the Austerlitz campaign, in which, of course, the subject of this memoir did not participate. Sent with dispatches from Ney, Jomini reached the Emperor's headquarters the day after the battle of Austerlitz. He took the liberty of adding to the package of dispatches a copy of his recently-published "Treatise on Great Operations," with a letter calling attention to certain chapters. Not long after, the Emperor, when at Schönbrunn, with more leisure than usual, directed Maret to read to him the portions of the work indicated in Jomini's letter. After listening to a few pages, he exclaimed :

"They say the age does not advance ! Why, here is a young major, a Swiss at that, who teaches us what my professors never taught me, and what very few generals understand !"

After hearing a little more, he said, much excited,

"Why did Fouché allow such a work to be published ? It teaches my whole system of war to my enemies. The book must be seized, and its circulation prevented."

After a few moments' reflection, he again said :

"But I attach too much importance to this publication. The old generals who command against me will never read it, and the young men who will read it do not command; nevertheless, such works must not be published hereafter without permission."

He then ordered Jomini's name to be placed on the list of promotions for the campaign, as colonel on the general staff; and he was immediately assigned as senior aide-de-camp to Marshal Ney.

The unfriendly and bitter feeling of Berthier toward Jomini, afterward productive of such serious consequences to the latter, arose at this period, and was induced by the jealousy of the regular members of Ney's staff toward the volunteer aide, whose relations were so confidential with their common chief. It is probable that Jomini's natural independence of character tended to widen the breach.

During the period of repose between the campaign of Austerlitz and the commencement of that of Jena, the general condition of European affairs was often a subject of discussion between Ney and his senior aide—the former believing that war with Prussia was improbable, the latter that it was certain. In order to convince the Marshal, Jomini prepared a memoir "on the probabilities of a war with Prussia, and the operations which will probably occur." In this extraordinary paper he first discussed the political conditions which, in his opinion, rendered war inevitable; and then considered the general question of the positions which might be occupied by the Prussians, and the probable movements of the Emperor.

At the time in question—September, 1806—the masses of the Grand Army were cantoned in Southern Germany, well in advance of the Rhine, the passages of which river were in possession of the French. The Prussians were east of the Ems, and relied upon the assistance of their allies, the Russians, none of whose troops were then west of Poland. The main object of the Prussians, therefore, should evidently have been to occupy such a position as would cover the advance of the Russians by Breslau and Dresden—their most direct line of approach. This position should have been such that it would afford the Prussians some hope of checking the French advance until the Russians arrived; or, failing in that, such that they could fall back by the line of the Russian advance, without danger of the French interposing between them and the Russians. The object of Napoleon would evidently be to attack and destroy the Prussian army, by turning and crushing their left, before the arrival of the Russians. Such were the views expressed by Jomini in the memoir, in which he predicted the movement on Gera and Hof, so soon afterward made by Napoleon with such decisive effect in the brilliant campaign of Jena.

A fortnight after the completion of this memoir, Ney's corps received the order to move toward Nuremberg, and Jomini was instructed to travel post to Mayence, and there await the orders of the Emperor, then in Paris. His arrival in Mayence was simultaneous with that of the Emperor, upon whom he immediately waited. When all had left the audience-chamber except Jomini, the Emperor turned toward him and said:

"Who are you?"

"Sire, I am Colonel Jomini."

"Yes, I remember. You sent me a very important work. I am delighted that the first work which demonstrates the true principles of war belongs to my reign. We were taught nothing like this in our military schools. We are about to fight the Prussians. I have sent for you because you have written the cam-

paings of Frederick the Great, know his army, and have thoroughly studied the theatre of war. You can aid me with valuable information. I think we shall have a harder task than with the Austrians."

"Sire, I do not think so; since the war of 1763, the Prussians have made only the wretched campaigns of 1792-1794; they are not inured to war."

"Yes; but they have the recollections and experienced generals of the times of the great king. However, we shall see."

Jomini then informed the Emperor that he was the senior aide of Ney, and that, before leaving the Marshal, he would be glad to have some one put in his place. The Emperor replied that he would arrange all that at the close of the campaign, and that, in the meantime, he would be attached to his military family.

"In that event, Sire, it is absolutely necessary for me to return to the Sixth Corps for my horses, etc.; for I am alone here, without even a servant. If your Majesty will grant me four days I can rejoin at Bamberg."

At the word Bamberg the Emperor turned pale; and, half astonished, half irritated, cried:

"And who told you that I was going to Bamberg?"

"The map of Germany, Sire."

"How the map? There are a hundred roads on the map besides that by Bamberg."

"Yes, Sire; but it is probable that your Majesty will perform the same manœuvre against the left of the Prussians that you did by Donauwerth against Mack's right, and by the St. Bernard against Melas's right; and that can only be done by Bamberg on Gera."

"Very well," replied the Emperor, "be at Bamberg in four days; but do not say a word about it—not even to Berthier; no one must know that I go to Bamberg."

This scene made such an impression on the Emperor that he related it to Montholon at St. Helena.

Jomini rejoined the Emperor's headquarters, and remained on his staff during the Jena campaign, where he rendered important services, and again gave proof of his coolness and courage in the midst of great dangers.

At the present period when the impression so generally prevails that another war between France and Prussia cannot be very long deferred, it may be interesting to contrast the relative situations of the two powers in 1806 and 1869. The brief allusions just made to the campaign of Jena, with the additional facts that the Grand Army was then in all respects far superior to that of the Prussians, and that the Prussian territory had no real frontiers and was destitute of continuity, sufficiently explain the state of affairs in 1806. In 1869, the population of Prussia and its close allies is but 7,500,000 less than that of France, while, if Bavaria, Würtemberg and Hesse Darmstadt be counted, it is only about 500,000 less. The army under the control of Prussia is perhaps quite as strong in point of numbers as that of France, and is organized under a system which has produced admirable results in a recent campaign. Both armies count in their ranks officers and men who have recently served in actual war. The territory of Prussia is now compact, and she possesses, in most directions, well-defined and defensible frontiers. The fortresses of Rastadt, Mayence, Coblenz, and Cologne, to a great extent control the valley of the Rhine, and enable her to operate at will on either bank; while, in addition, the Rhine Provinces afford the immense advantage of a firm position on the west bank, where, under cover of the Fortress of Treves she can safely concentrate a large army in the valley

of the Moselle, or under cover of Mayence, in Rhenish Hesse, for the invasion of France by Lorraine and Champagne. On the other hand France owns not a foot of ground on the east bank of the Rhine; and only from Bâle to Lauterbourg has she the Rhine for a frontier. So long as the neutrality of Switzerland and Belgium is respected, it would seem clear that Prussia has the advantage of position.

But to return to our subject. During the sojourn of Napoleon in Berlin, immediately after the battles of Jena and Auerstadt, while his corps were pursuing the scattered remains of the Prussian army in all directions, the question arose as to the future relations between the two nations. One party urged the course of pursuing their successes against the Prussians, of annihilating the power of that kingdom, of continuing the war against Russia, and of establishing an independent kingdom of Poland. Another party favored a more generous course toward Prussia, and of making such terms with her as would secure her sincere friendship; of annexing a considerable additional part of Poland to Prussia, and thus establishing a powerful barrier against the encroachments of Russia. Jomini, encouraged by the success of his previous writings, conceived the idea of addressing to the Emperor a memoir on the subject—applying to it the principles and mode of reasoning that had hitherto guided Napoleon's course—hoping thus to convince him more readily than in any other manner. He composed the memoir, but before presenting it, consulted General Bertrand, among others, who fully approved of his views, and urged him to lay them before the Emperor without delay. This he did immediately. Jomini's own account of the matter is substantially as follows: "In the beginning of November, 1806, everything indicated at Berlin that the Emperor intended to enter Poland. Some sentences that he addressed to me about Silesia, where he intended to leave Vandamme to conduct some sieges; the order for the army to cross the Wartha; the arrival of Poles in their national costume; everything announced that we were about to seek a new Poltava. Convinced by close study of the Emperor's system of war, and of his character, that success sometimes caused him to overstep the bounds of prudence, I determined to prepare a memoir to demonstrate to him that the re-establishment of Poland, without the concurrence of one of the three powers that had dismembered it, was a dream. I predicted to him that this dream might easily cost him his army, and that in case of unlooked-for success it would oblige France to wage continual wars in order to sustain this edifice destitute of foundations. I represented to him that the mere announcement of this design would unite Russia, Austria and Prussia by indissoluble ties, and that in any other case their rivalries would divide them. While regretting that the weakness of Louis XV. had permitted the first partition, and that the Revolution had rendered it impossible to prevent the second, I observed that this people, destitute of finances, arsenals, and material of war, was, notwithstanding the zeal of some patriots, a body politically dead—as was proved by what had passed under Kosciusko, who could never raise more than 40,000 men, half of whom were armed with pikes. Finally, I maintained that to resuscitate Poland it was necessary to amalgamate her with a more vigorous State. It seemed to me noble and sublime to pardon the nephew of Frederick the Great in his capital, and to punish him for an inconsiderate appeal to arms, by granting him the title of King of Poland, if he were willing to ally himself with us in conquering a portion of that country. Strengthened by the military power of Prussia, its arsenals and fortresses, this power would prove a valuable barrier. I contrasted with the prospective advantages of this union the terrible chances of a winter

campaign in the marshes, without supplies, hospitals, ammunition, or points of support. I represented to his Majesty, Austria watching the opportunity to debouche from Bohemia upon our rear; and recovering at one blow all that she had lost during fifteen years of reverses."

Napoleon did not like his officers to proffer advice; he desired brave and intelligent instruments, not counsellors; so it is easy to understand the reception his aide encountered. When, soon after, Ney's corps entered Berlin, Jomini accompanied the Marshal and his staff to the Palace. The Emperor perceiving him in the group, approached and said—"Ah, you are here, Mr. Diplomatist! I knew you well for a good soldier, but I did not know that you were a bad diplomatist." This destroyed all Jomini's future prospects.

Subsequent events proved but too well the correctness of his views; and in fact only a few days afterward the Emperor directed Talleyrand to open negotiations on a basis similar to that suggested by Jomini; but it was then too late, for the Russians had already entered Prussia. It is not my purpose to follow the movements which preceded the terrible battle of Eylau, or to describe the battle itself, but merely to refer to a certain phase of it in which Jomini appears upon the scene. Toward the close of the day, when the battle was somewhat at a stand-still, the Emperor retired from the cemetery—where he had been posted during the day, and where Jomini had also been as a member of his staff—to the village of Eylau for refreshment, and to arrange affairs for the morrow. The corps of Augereau had been destroyed, and though the French still held their general positions, they had suffered so severely that, unless Ney arrived in season, it would be difficult to withstand new attacks by the Russians.

The Emperor, who had no reserves at hand, learned just then that the Russian left, already joined by the Prussians, was driving back Davoust, and he determined to hold his position as long as possible; but, if the necessity arose, to fall back toward Oudinot, Lannes and Bernadotte, who were still in rear. He called for Jomini, told him that Austria had already spoken of mediation, that a retreat would almost certainly be followed by her taking part actively against France, and explained his purposes to him; that is, to hold the ground if possible, but, if necessary, to fall back slowly toward the corps still in rear. Having satisfied himself that Jomini understood him, he directed him to remain with Grouchy, who was to command the rear-guard, and give the necessary orders for carrying out these views should the emergency arise; he was, however, not to breathe a word of the Emperor's intentions, either to Grouchy or Berthier, unless the necessity for a retreat occurred. The timely arrival of Ney decided, however, the retreat of the Russians, and thus rendered unnecessary the execution of the eventual orders given to Jomini; but the circumstances prove the confidence with which he was regarded by Napoleon, notwithstanding the unfortunate affair of the Berlin memoir. It may be mentioned that on this occasion the Emperor said to Jomini that, after all, he was not entirely wrong in his memoir. He remained on the Emperor's staff during the campaign of Heilsberg and Friedland, and accompanied him on his return to Paris. While there, Ney, whose chief of staff had lost an arm during the last campaign, applied for Jomini in that position. To his surprise and chagrin the latter received the appointment of assistant chief of staff only, which, under all the circumstances, was a decided slight. He immediately wrote to the Emperor stating that he had entered upon the profession of arms with the hope that he might one day merit the kindness of the great Captain of the age, and that after all that had passed he could not accept the position assigned him, and requested permission to leave the service. The

Emperor informed him that it was an error of Berthier's, whom he had directed to make out Jomini's appointment as chief of the staff of the Sixth Corps. The mistake was rectified the same day, and Jomini immediately departed to join the headquarters of the corps at Glogau. There can be no doubt that the mistake was intentional on the part of Berthier, whose unfriendly feeling toward Jomini was increased by the fact that the Emperor took him to task on this occasion in the presence of several witnesses. In 1808 Napoleon determined to proceed to Spain in person, and, among other troops, ordered the Sixth Corps to accompany him. When *en route* Jomini met Ney at Vittoria, for the first time since he assumed the duties of chief of staff, and was much surprised to meet with a very cool and unfriendly reception. It would appear that his rising reputation had caused great jealousy on the part of those surrounding the Marshal, who had been persuaded that the world at large regarded Jomini as his Mentor. Jomini continued to serve with him in Spain, until sent to the Emperor with dispatches explanatory of Ney's conduct in refusing to obey the orders of Soult. His services in Spain were very important, and on several occasions he proved very clearly how much better he understood the art of war than those around him. Shortly after he was, at Ney's request, relieved from duty as chief of staff of the Sixth Corps, and left without any definite duty. He complained of this to Berthier, who rudely told him that if he were discontented he might resign. Having gone to Switzerland on leave, he sent in his resignation and accepted an offer to enter the Russian service; Russia and France being at that time not only at peace, but close allies. While awaiting the necessary passports, etc., to enable him to depart for Russia, he received a peremptory order to leave for Paris within twenty-four hours. Upon arriving, the Minister of War informed him that he had the alternative of withdrawing his resignation, or being confined in the Castle of Vincennes, stating that if he accepted the former alternative the affair would be arranged to his satisfaction, as the Emperor was fully informed of all that had occurred. Being powerless, he naturally preferred avoiding imprisonment, withdrew his resignation, and two days after was made a general of brigade. During the early part of the Russian campaign of 1812 he was employed as Governor of the Province of Wilna, and afterward of Smolensk; with his usual energy and foresight he collected information in regard to the roads and country which afterward proved of vital importance.

When the Emperor reached Smolensk on the retreat, Jomini communicated to him information which enabled him to reach the Beresina with comparative safety; and was charged with the selection of the points of passage over that river, in connection with Oudinot and General Eblé. His exertions and exposure during this terrible scene brought on an attack of fever which well-nigh proved fatal; but, thanks to the aid of friends, and his own energy and good fortune, he at length reached Stettin, after many narrow escapes from disease, the cold, famine, and the Cossacks. Here he received an order to repair to Paris—an order given to only one other general officer—all others being prohibited from crossing the Rhine. His illness assumed so violent a form that he was confined to his bed for three months, and was unable to profit by the honor thus conferred on him by the Emperor. Napoleon subsequently said that if Jomini had not been ill then he would have made him a Marshal of France.

It is thus clear that Jomini's merits and services had, at length, fully obliterated from the Emperor's mind the ill effects of the unlucky Berlin memoir. When he left his bed it was to rejoin the army in Germany, on the field of Lutzen. He met the Emperor on that field, who called him to him and said: "Jomi-

ni, I send you to Ney's corps, as chief of the staff; he commands three army corps—80,000 men. Go and do good work for me!" He rejoined Ney at Leipsic, and at once entered upon his duties.

We now come to the battle of Bautzen, the last field on which Jomini served under the colors of France, and a fitting termination of his career under the orders of the greatest soldier of the world. Full of interest as this memorable battle is, we must content ourselves with the most condensed outline that will serve to show the part played in it by the subject of this article. Lutzen was a victory for Napoleon; but not a decisive one. The great superiority of the Allies in cavalry, and the rawness of most of the Emperor's troops, rendered it impossible for him to pursue with his usual vigor. The reader will perhaps pardon me if I mention a circumstance in reference to Lutzen, related to me not long ago by a gallant old Westphalian baron, a veteran of the wars of the Empire. My friend was sent from the rear with important dispatches to the Emperor, and arrived while the battle of Lutzen was at its height. He told me that for miles before reaching the actual field of battle he passed through crowds of fugitives from the French army—young conscripts, who cried that all was lost; he said that he had no doubt whatever of the complete defeat of the French, until he reached the Imperial headquarters in the front, when, to his intense surprise, he found that the battle was won! This incident, which may be relied upon as strictly accurate, may aid in explaining why Lutzen was not decisive. But, be that as it may, the result was that the Allies abandoned Dresden and the line of the Elbe, and occupied the formidable position of Bautzen, where they intrenched themselves. Bulow covered Berlin with a small force. Napoleon promptly occupied Dresden, repaired the bridge over the Elbe, and moved in pursuit with about 110,000 men. He directed Ney, with some 90,000 additional troops, to the left; either to move on Berlin or to turn the right of the Allies, as events might render advisable. The position of Bautzen is very formidable against a front attack; the left (facing toward Dresden) rests upon the difficult spurs of the mountains which form Saxon Switzerland, and cannot readily be turned by masses of troops; the right rests upon the ponds of Malchwitz; the front offers strong positions for infantry and artillery on the hills of Little Bautzen and Krechwitz. On the other hand it presented several inconveniences to the Allies; although the immediate right of the position was difficult of access, it could easily be turned, a little further to the rear, in the direction of Belgern; and, in that event, it offered but one line of retreat—that by Hochkirch and Reichenbach; because the neutral territory of Bohemia was close to the left flank, and prevented escape in that direction. Ney moved from Leipsic, by Torgau, on Luckau, with orders to make a demonstration on Berlin, and to detach Lauriston's corps to his right toward Bautzen. Arrived at Luckau, Ney determined to direct two corps toward Berlin, and instructed Jomini to issue the necessary orders to that effect. The chief of staff urged that the movement ought to be to the right, toward Belgern, and not to the left toward Berlin.

Ney persisted, basing his action on the Emperor's orders; Jomini replied that orders might safely and successfully be disobeyed, provided one remained faithful to the principles of war; that in this case the eccentric movement on Berlin was opposed to the Emperor's usual system of war; that Bautzen was the decisive point, which would necessarily carry with it the fall of Berlin. All his arguments proving fruitless, Jomini at length drew up the orders in such a form as to require the Marshal's own signature. Ney asked the reason for this unusual form, upon which Jomini said that the movement upon Berlin was in

direct opposition to the principles developed in his works on strategy; that he could not compromise the safety of the army, and his own reputation; that he would prefer resigning his position as chief of staff, and go with a single brigade to Berlin; but, as to signing the order for all the troops of the Marshal to go there—that he could not in conscience do. Ney, appreciating his firmness, also refused to sign the orders; on which Jomini said: "Then we will remain where we are, which is always better than to move to the left, when all the rules of war and the safety of the army demand that we should move to the right." A few hours after this, news received from the advanced guard determined Ney to follow the advice of Jomini, and move to the right in support of Lauriston. Jomini further urged that Belluno's corps and Sebastiani's cavalry should move by Spremberg, and seize the Allies' only line of retreat; this was not done. After the lapse of two days, orders were at last received from the Emperor directing the march already in course of execution; it is more than probable that earlier instructions to the same effect had been intercepted by the enemies' light troops. As Ney approached the field of battle, the Emperor—in order to divert the attention of the Allies from him—attacked the position directly in their front on the 20th of May, and gained possession of the town of Bautzen, and of the heights which covered the front of the intrenched camp. The effect of this was to cause the Allies to neglect their right, and re-enforce the left.

On the morning of the 21st, Ney was, with the mass of his troops, within easy reach of the field of battle; but having sent, the night before, to the Emperor for orders, he waited in vain until seven o'clock for a reply, and then decided to advance. Jomini knew the ground thoroughly, from the study he had bestowed upon Frederick the Great's battle of Hochkirch, fought on the same field; he, therefore, prepared the orders of march for the six divisions present to move upon the steeple of Hochkirch, the highest point of the field; and at eight o'clock the troops moved in accordance with these orders. Had this manœuvre been fully carried out it would have brought the whole of Ney's command (six divisions with four more in support) directly in rear of the Allies, and upon their only possible line of retreat, while the Emperor was attacking in front. The result must necessarily have been the capture of all their guns and trains, and of the mass of their army; in all human probability only a few stragglers could have escaped to tell the tale of the disaster. Unhappily for Napoleon, his instructions to Ney were wanting in precision, and the latter followed too closely his favorite maxim of "marching toward the sound of the artillery," and in spite of the urgent and repeated remonstrances of Jomini, after gaining a position fairly in rear of the whole allied army, paused, and then diverged from the direction upon Hochkirch, and moved square to his right—parallel with the Allies' line of retreat, which he thus left open for their escape. In addition, he made the mistake of undertaking a partial attack, instead of advancing with his whole force, and thus gave the Allies time to check the head of his column, while they completed their arrangements for the retreat. This battle was a turning point in the career of Napoleon. It resulted in a victory for him, but left the allied army intact, with the exception of their heavy losses in killed and wounded, and some prisoners. The mass of their army escaped, with their guns and trains. Had Ney accepted the advice of Jomini, Napoleon's star would have regained its ascendant; the allied army would have been destroyed; Austria would have joined the stronger party; and in all human probability Napoleon would have died on the throne of France, instead of dragging out a weary existence as an exile at Longwood. Never did a soldier display on the

field of battle more thorough knowledge of the art of war than did Jomini at Bautzen; and never were the results of a departure from those principles more momentous and more terrible than on that day. Were all the rest of his long career obliterated, his action then and there was enough to stamp him as a great soldier, and suffices to give him a lofty niche in the temple of fame. Ney was loud and earnest in his praise, and with his own hand placed his name at the head of the list for promotion to the rank of General of Division, and wrote directly to the Emperor, expressing his sense of the great services he had rendered. This was the brightest, most glorious and proudest moment of his life; he felt the value of the services he had performed, was thoroughly grateful for the Marshal's appreciation, and naturally believed that he had at last overcome all the obstacles in his path to fame and fortune. But, alas, there was never a more striking instance of the vanity of human expectations. He was on the eve of the saddest and most unfortunate period of his life. He was about to experience the severest blow that a proud spirit can receive from a mean and malignant enemy; and was on the point of committing a hasty action which exposed him to much obloquy, and did much to embitter the remainder of his life. Immediately after Bautzen, he, with Ney's approval, sent back to Dresden an incapable staff officer, who had been assigned to duty with him; there was also some delay in forwarding the fortnightly return of the strength of the command, caused by the absence of necessary returns from Sonham's division of provisional regiments. Berthier eagerly availed himself of these two petty circumstances; he placed Jomini in arrest, and published him in General Orders as incapable of performing the duties of his position. This unmerited disgrace drove the sensitive Jomini to the verge of madness. He awaited, however, the arrival of the order giving the promotions for the campaign, hoping that this would repair the wrong done him. When it at length arrived, the names of Jomini and his aide-de-camp were the only ones erased—and that by the hand of Berthier. The "return" which served as a pretext for his disgrace reached Berthier the very day of the departure of the courier bearing the order of censure to Jomini! All this was more than Jomini could endure. He was not a Frenchman, but a foreigner; he had served France and the Emperor faithfully and zealously for thirteen years, and received only disgrace instead of reward. An armistice then existed between France and the Allies, and Jomini availed himself of it to communicate with Alexander of Russia, to inquire whether he was still disposed to accept his services, as he had been three years earlier. The reply was prompt, kind and affirmative.

Jomini left the French army and repaired to the headquarters of the Emperor of Russia. Whatever of wrong there was in this action received its own punishment; for he found that the race of Berthiers was not confined to France, and there is but little doubt that his subsequent happiness would have been more effectually secured had he submitted to the glaring injustice done him, and trusted to time and Napoleon for reparation. One thing must be most positively and distinctly stated in his defence, and that is, that he never, in any manner, communicated to the Allies any information in his possession in regard to the French armies, and that his last act before leaving Ney's headquarters was to issue, on his own authority and against the wishes of Ney, an order changing the position of the cavalry, and which secured Ney's command against a somewhat treacherous surprise meditated by Blücher. There was no taint of treachery or meanness in his conduct. It was, in all respects, loyal to his former master.

At the battle of Dresden, and during the operations which culminated in the

decisive battle of Leipsic, Jomini rendered very important services to the Allies, although he was never able to overcome entirely the jealousy and stupidity which prevailed at Schwartzenberg's headquarters.

He saved the Allies from many disasters; but was by no means always able to induce them to adopt the most judicious course. He always evinced, however, the same unerring appreciation of the application of the principles of war that he did in his previous campaigns. We will not enter upon any detailed account of this portion of his career; but it is believed that enough has been stated to establish the fact that he was a great soldier in the field, as well as in the closet. He took no part in the campaigns conducted on the soil of France; for the magnanimous Alexander fully appreciated his reluctance to serve against the Emperor in France, and readily granted his request to be permitted to retire to Switzerland when the Allies crossed the Rhine. He was, however, in Paris, in 1814 and 1815, with Alexander; and, on the latter occasion, nearly lost his commission in the Russian service in consequence of the earnestness with which he interceded for the life of his old commander, Ney, so cruelly and unjustly murdered by the sovereign of the nation whose glory he had raised so high.

Although Jomini remained in the Russian service from 1813 until his recent death, he rarely resided in Russia, but spent most of his time in France, with an occasional sojourn in Brussels. He was present at the Congress of Vienna, and bore an active part in the campaigns of 1828 and 1829; but never afterward, we believe, took the field in person. The remainder of his life was devoted to the labors of the pen.

His writings were voluminous, and, as a general rule, of the highest importance; no one familiar with them will deny that they evince wonderful political acumen, as well as military ability. His "Political and Military Life of Napoleon" is, perhaps, the most interesting of his works to the general reader; while the "Abstract of the Art of War," and the "Treatise upon Great Military Operations" are the most instructive and satisfactory to the purely military student. The earliest published work of Jomini was the "Treatise upon Great Military Operations." It consists of a relation of all the campaigns of Frederick the Great, in sufficient detail to bring clearly to the light the faults committed and the skilful movements executed; all related so naturally and so clearly that the deductions of the author seem to spring from the mind of the reader, who is fully prepared to acquiesce in the correctness of the maxims enunciated, sometimes in the current of the narrative, sometimes at the close of a chapter, again in separate chapters. The final chapter is devoted to a *resumé* of the general principles of the art of war. Nothing can be more clear, satisfactory, and instructive than this admirable work, and it cannot be too strongly recommended to those desirous of acquainting themselves with the principles of the art of war. His next important work was the "History of the Wars of the French Revolution," on a very similar plan to that of his first work. Next, and last of his great historical works, was the "Political and Military Life of Napoleon." This was published anonymously, and purported to be related by Napoleon himself, in the Elysian Fields, before a tribunal composed of Cæsar, Frederick, etc. No abler or better account of the achievements of this wonderful man has ever been written; nor has any writer more nobly and fairly defended his reputation and career. In fact, Jomini was, so to speak, the complement of Napoleon; he was, as a military writer, what Napoleon was as a leader of men. The last of his important works was of a more didactic character; it was the "Abstract of the Art of War." In this, Jomini collects and arranges the maxims of

war and politics scattered through his other works, and has formed a lasting book of reference and study for the statesman and the general; it is a noble monument to the genius of the author. No allusion has been made to his numerous minor works, because those already so briefly described will sufficiently explain the general nature of his writings. It is understood that he has left voluminous memoirs, which cannot fail to be among the most interesting works given to the world in this century.

We cannot better sum up the nature of Jomini's literary efforts than by repeating that he was the first who deduced from history the principles of war, before his time concealed in the brains of the few great generals who have appeared from time to time. He enunciated them in distinct formula, and thus formed a code of maxims for the guidance of generals and the instruction of students. He has indicated the path, but the "royal road" remains yet unopened; for the difficulty of the application of these principles still remains. Were his works universally studied by military men, one of their legitimate results would doubtless be to decrease the number of very bad generals, and to increase the number of moderately good ones; but the great captains must ever be, in the future as in the past, very rare. Mortals endowed with the peculiar combination of intellectual and moral gifts found in such characters as Napoleon, Frederick, Cæsar, and Hannibal, will appear only at long intervals in the history of the world. Such works as Jomini's will greatly facilitate the labors of such men, but cannot create them.

General Jomini, as the writer saw him about a year ago, was somewhat below the middle height, a little bent, his hair white, his eyes bright and piercing under shaggy eyebrows, his voice clear, his face much like that of an old worn-out eagle. He had, for a long time, been confined to his room, and suffered much pain; he spoke, without dread or affectation, of his approaching end, and manifested the greatest interest in the present, while his memory was perfectly distinct as to the past. His conversation as to the men and events of the era of the great Napoleon was replete with interest; two anecdotes which he related were new to me, and perhaps worthy of record here. He said that upon a certain occasion, while conversing with the Emperor, the latter asked, "What do you think of Massena?" "Sire," replied Jomini, "I can best express my opinion by relating under what circumstances I first saw him. In 1799, when a Major in the Swiss service, I was sent to consult with Massena (then in command in Switzerland) in regard to some military affairs. I was told that he was on the front line, but as that extended from Bâle, through Zurich, the Grisons and the Valais, to Geneva, it was difficult to find him; at last I met with him on the Limmat in front of Zurich, where he had Molitor's division of four regiments watching the Archduke Charles, who was with some 40,000 men in Zurich. I then paused," said Jomini to me, "when the Emperor at once slapped me on the shoulder, as was his frequent habit when conversing with officers, and exclaimed, 'That is Massena exactly! When other men lose their senses he begins to gain his!'" To understand the point of this it must be remembered that very shortly after Jomini's interview with Massena, the latter, after having long remained inactive in his very exposed position in front of the vastly superior forces of the Archduke, becoming aware of the danger to which Suwarrow's movement over the St. Gothard exposed him, took advantage of the Archduke's departure with a portion of his troops toward the lower Rhine; suddenly gathered his troops; forced the passage of the Limmat; won the battle of Zurich, and entered upon those brilliant manœuvres which rendered abortive Suwar-

row's painful and dangerous march. Jomini said that Massena was a man who required great dangers and emergencies to arouse him to the full extent of his powers; that under ordinary circumstances he was by no means a brilliant character. The defences of Genoa and Essling show what endurance and heroism were in the man; his passage of the Limmat, the campaign against Suwarrow, and his superb flank march across the field of Wagram, attest the brilliancy of his powers when occasion called them forth. The other anecdote which I shall attempt to relate, referred more particularly to the Emperor himself, and illustrates some of the peculiar qualities of his great mind more fully than any circumstance I remember. During the battle of Essling the victorious progress of the French was arrested by the destruction of the bridge over the main Danube, while a large portion of their army still remained on the Vienna bank. It was clear that nothing could be done but to hold the positions of Essling, Aspern, etc., until nightfall, in order to secure a retreat into the island of Lobau. While the Archduke Charles was making his most desperate attacks upon Massena in Essling, Napoleon was sitting on the ground dictating orders to several aides-de-camp, when Massena's senior aide approached, and reported that the Marshal had directed him to say that if he was expected to hold Essling he must have re-enforcements, otherwise it would be impossible. The Emperor quietly looked up at the aide, and pointing to the ground immediately in front, where Lannes lost his life, and where the enemy was at the moment attacking in great force, and with much vigor, said, "I should be very glad to have Massena's troops there. Tell him that I have no re-enforcements to give him; he must hold the village at any cost, with what means he has; he must do the best he can in his own way; and tell him that it is *his* business and not mine. Say to him not to trouble me again about it." He then quietly resumed his dictation.

These orders were the detailed orders of march for that wonderful concentration of troops from Illyria, Dalmatia, Northern Italy, Naples, Spain, France, the Tyrol, Belgium, etc., etc., which was carried into effect the day before the battle of Wagram. Jomini mentioned this as a most striking instance of Napoleon's marvellous control over his mind; the moment he saw that the day was lost he sat down where he happened to be—under fire—and at once began the arrangement of the combinations that led to Wagram. The Emperor was indeed fortunate in possessing such lieutenants as Massena, to whom he could confidently intrust the defence of a vital point with insufficient means, telling him that it was not *his* business to attend to it.

Jomini conversed frankly about the modern changes and improvements in fire-arms, railways, telegraphs, etc. He freely acknowledged their advantages, and the changes they would bring about in war, but insisted that they could not modify its principles. "Woe to the general," said he, "who trusts in the modern inventions, and neglects the principles of strategy; those principles will remain unchanged through all the improvements of the future, and can never be inconsistent with them; future history will show that under no circumstances can those principles be violated with impunity."

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