

*Count Tolstoi.*

THE PHYSIOLOGY OF WAR.

**BY THE SAME AUTHOR.**

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UNIFORM WITH THIS SERIES.

**A RUSSIAN PROPRIETOR.  
THE COSSACKS.  
IVAN ILYITCH.  
THE INVADERS.  
MY RELIGION.  
LIFE.  
MY CONFESSION.  
CHILDHOOD, BOYHOOD, YOUTH.**

THE PHYSIOLOGY OF WAR

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NAPOLEON

AND THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN

AND

POWER AND LIBERTY

BY

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*TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY*

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## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

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WHAT has led to the significant and rapid rise into popular esteem of Count Tolstoi? It was felt at once that he had a message to deliver, a message worth hearing, and the world has shown itself ready to hear. The utterance of this message began in his earliest writings, and it has gone on, swelling in volume and power with each succeeding production of his pen. As we look back now in the light of later revelation, we can see the thread of ethical purpose running through all his writings, growing more and more plain with each one of them, and at length woven into a complete pattern in the book which is his most characteristic, because his most outspoken work, the book which reveals most clearly his own mental attitude toward his fellows, and his conception

of man's part in the universe. I allude, of course, to Count Tolstoï's *My Religion*, a work which, perhaps more than any other production of its author, has excited wide speculation and discussion.

The message may be summed up very briefly; it expresses the essential dignity of manhood, and declares the most crying need in the world to-day to be love of man to man.

It is not a new message. It has been preached before—among others, by the Christians who condemn Tolstoï as a fanatic and a dreamer; but Count Tolstoï is the first among moderns to show in a large way how the preaching may be carried into practice. The message may be, as some say it is, socialism or communism in disguise, but every thoughtful person will agree that it is a very harmless sort of communism, that it is, at any rate, better than anarchy, and that its influence upon mankind, for the present at least, cannot result in serious harm. The time may come when, as several pulpit orators have declared, the practice of the Golden Rule will subvert

civilization, but the danger of such a social transformation is not pressing; we may safely leave it to posterity with several other problems concerning which we are perplexing ourselves to-day.

In the book now before us, we have still another polemical work. Taking that most dramatic and terrible manifestation of the war-like spirit, Napoleon's campaign in Russia, as an example, he undertakes to lay bare *The Physiology of War*.

We do not need to read far in the volume before getting at his purpose. He vindicates once more the essential dignity of manhood. He would show that war is something more than a game on the part of sovereigns and diplomatists, that it lies deeper down in the very nature of things, that it is an expression of popular expansion, and that emperors, kings, commanders, generals, and what not, are so many figure-heads, the toys of circumstance, passive instruments in the hands of destiny.

It will be seen at once that Count Tolstor's philosophy of history takes a wide range and



goes deep. It is the modern, the democratic spirit applied to the most terrible of human problems—war. It regards the common soldier as more than the general, and it sets forth with convincing eloquence the contrast between the ostensible leaders in a great struggle, the men who stand at the head and think they are directing the progress of events, and the real actors in those events, the men who do the work and bear the suffering,—the common soldiers.

In the course of this exposition, Count Tolstoj does indeed reveal the very physiology of war. No one knows better than he how a war is conducted, what are the conditions of a battle; but the vital interest of this book is in its portrayal of that mysterious force slowly generated in the heart of Europe during the revolutionary period, breaking out now and then in random explosions, and at length bursting all bounds, like a wave of fire bearing Napoleon on its crest, rushing towards the East, to Moscow, and to destruction,—extinguished as it were in the frost and snow of Russia.

With regard to Napoleon, the hero-worshipper of the Carlylean stamp will find little in this book to please him. The Man of Destiny cuts here a most disreputable figure. His glorious plumes have been stripped from him ere this, but never yet has he come forth from the pitiless hands of criticism so featherless, naked, and contemptible a biped. "This," Count Tolstor seems to say to us, "is your great man. I show you great men." He will have no talk of isolated genius guiding humanity to predetermined ends. Genius is to him not the guider, but the guided, the exponent of fate, the bit of steel that follows the invisible magnet of destiny and indicates upon the dial of history the course of what is and is to be. And then, in the parable of the bee, Count Tolstor sets forth the conclusion of the whole matter, a conclusion old as the Book of Job,—*"Touching the Eternal, we cannot find him out; he is excellent in power."*

M. Michel Delines, whose French interpretation I have followed, is an author of repute,

and I hope that, in keeping as closely as possible in his footsteps, I have not strayed far from the proper path. If this version of *The Physiology of War* shall receive the approval given by Count Tolstoï to the writer's translation of *My Religion*, I shall have reason to be more than content.

HUNTINGTON SMITH.

# NAPOLEON'S RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN.

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## I.

### PLAN OF THE CAMPAIGN OF 1812.

FRENCH authors, in the books which they have devoted to the history of the Russian campaign, are always trying to prove that Napoleon foresaw the danger involved in an extension of his line, that he sought by every means to give battle, and that his generals all advised him to halt at Smolensk. In other words, the historians in question advance all sorts of arguments to demonstrate that Napoleon and his staff understood beforehand the perils of the campaign.

Russian historians, on the contrary, are still more urgent in their attempts to persuade us that at the beginning of the campaign the plan by which Napoleon was to be enticed into the

heart of Russia was already conceived. The plan is attributed to Pfühl, to Toll, to an unknown Frenchman, even to the Emperor Alexander himself. In support of their assertions they cite memoirs, suggestions, letters, in which allusions to such a plan of campaign are found.

But it is clear that all these so-called indications of foreknowledge have been seized upon by Russian and by French historians, simply because they are justified by what actually took place. If the war had taken a different course, these predictions would have been forgotten like many other conjectures that were not verified and yet were equally popular at the time.

Every event involves so many suppositions as to results that there will always be people who will have the right to say, "I told you this would happen," and we forget that among the predictions offered there were also many indicating just the contrary of what comes to pass.

To ascribe to Napoleon knowledge of the danger involved in an advance, and to credit the Russians with a plan for inveigling the enemy into the heart of the country, is to make

prophecies after the event. Historians cannot attribute divination to Napoleon or strategical projects to the Russians without forcing the facts.

The truth is that throughout the whole campaign the Russians never dreamed of drawing the French into the heart of their country ; but directed all their efforts to checking the advance of the enemy, from the moment that the invasion was an accomplished fact.

Napoleon, on the other hand, not only did not doubt the policy of advance, he treated every onward movement as a triumph, and, in contrast to his usual tactics, we find that in this campaign he was not at all eager to give battle.

As for us, from the beginning of the campaign we see our armies cut in two, and we are occupied solely with the effort to bring them into combined action. If we had desired to simulate retreat, to draw the enemy on, there would have been no advantage in reuniting our dissevered troops. At length, Alexander I. comes in person into the field, to inspire the army by his presence to stubborn resistance,

and not to encourage a retreat. Then we form the great camp at Drissa, according to Pfühl's design, and any thought of retreat is out of the question. The tsar reproaches his generals for a single backward step. Alexander does not plan the burning of Smolensk ; he does not desire that the enemy shall approach the walls of the city. When the combination of forces is at length effected, the tsar is angry at thinking that Smolensk has been taken and burned without an effort at defence.

Such are the views of the sovereign. As for the generals in command, they are as indignant as the troops at any suggestion of retreating before the enemy.

Meanwhile, Napoleon, after cutting our armies asunder, marches on into the interior of the country, and allows several opportunities for giving battle to pass by unimproved. By August he is at Smolensk, intent upon a further advance into Russia, although this movement, as we see now, could only be fatal to his hopes.

The facts prove beyond doubt that Napoleon did not foresee the danger of an advance upon Moscow, and that Alexander I. and the Rus-

sian generals never dreamed of trying to draw him into the heart of the country.

Napoleon was led on, not by any plan,—a plan had never been thought of,—but by the intrigues, quarrels, and ambition of men who unconsciously played a part in this terrible war and never foresaw that the result would be the safety of Russia.

.x Everything goes on in the most unexpected way. Our armies are divided at the outset of the campaign. We endeavor to reunite them with the evident object of giving battle and checking the invasion, but our troops, while seeking to effect a juncture, avoid battle with the enemy, recognizing his strength; our lines, therefore, tend to form an acute angle, and the French are drawn as far as Smolensk. The acute angle is not solely due to the fact that the enemy is moving between our two armies; another cause tends to diminish the angle and favor our retreat. At the head of one of our armies is Barclay de Tolly, a German, very unpopular with us. The commander of the other army is Bagration, who has a personal hatred against Barclay de Tolly and endeavors as far



as possible to delay the combination in order that he may not be subjected to Barclay's orders. Bagration succeeds in delaying the movement which is the chief object of all the Russian generals. He explains his action by saying that his troops are in danger and that it is better for him to draw off on the left and toward the south in order to harass the enemy on the flank and in the rear, and finally bring about the union of the armies in the Ukraine. But these excuses are only pretexts. The real cause of his policy of delay is a desire not to subject himself to the hated German, who is, moreover, of a rank inferior to his own.

The Emperor Alexander is with the army to inspire the troops by his presence, but he is surrounded by so many conflicting advisers, so many different plans are submitted to him, that he is unable to come to a decision. His hesitation paralyzes the energy of the army, and it finally beats a retreat.

The plan then is to entrench in the camp at Drissa, when suddenly Paulucci, who aspires to be commander-in-chief, gets such a hold upon the emperor that Pfühl's plan is abandoned.

The task of opposing the enemy is confided to Barclay, but, as he is not able to inspire much confidence, his power is limited.

Here, then, are the isolated armies, and a discordant command. Barclay is unpopular, and his unpopularity, together with the separation of the armies, produces the uncertainty which leads us to evade an encounter with the enemy.

If the union of the armies had been accomplished, and if Barclay had not been designated as commander-in-chief, a battle would have been inevitable. But circumstances served continually to increase the feeling against the Germans, and patriotism was more and more exalted.

Finally the tsar leaves the army, with the excuse that he is needed at Moscow and St. Petersburg to arouse the people and incite a national defence. In fact, the emperor's journey to Moscow triples the strength of the Russian troops.

Now, the truth is that the tsar withdraws from the army in order that he may not interfere with the power of the commander-in-chief.

He hopes that, in his absence, Barclay will take decisive measures. But the generals are more and more confused and helpless. Bennigsen, the grand-duke, and all his train of adjutants-general, remain in the army to spy out the intentions of the commander-in-chief and to favor energetic action. Barclay, under the eyes of these imperial censors, grows still more cautious, abstains from any decided operation, and carefully avoids giving battle.

Barclay's attitude leads the grand-duke to insinuate suspicions of treason and to advise a general attack. Lubomirski, Branitzki, Vlotzki, and other officers, make such an uproar that Barclay, to rid himself of them, sends the Polish adjutants-general to St. Petersburg with pretended messages of importance for the tsar, and enters upon open warfare with Bennigsen and the grand-duke.

At last, against the will of Bagration, the union of the two armies is effected, at Smolensk.

Bagration drives to Barclay's headquarters. The commander-in-chief emerges from the house and salutes his visitor as a superior in

rank. Overcome by this display of magnanimity, Bagration places himself under Barclay's command, while remaining in spirit opposed to the ideas of his chief. In the reports addressed to Arakhtshref at the express order of the tsar, he said:—

“The will of the emperor be done, but I cannot stay with the *ministre* (Barclay). . . . For the love of God, send me where you will, give me only a single regiment to command, but do not leave me here, for I cannot stay. . . . The quarters are full of Germans, and it is not possible for a Russian to breathe here . . . the most idiotic things take place. . . . When I believe that I am serving the tsar and my country, I am really serving Barclay. . . . I confess that this does not suit me.”

The intrigues of Branitzki, of Wintzengèrod, and other superior officers embitter still further the relations of the two chiefs, and united action is more and more impossible.

When the Russians are finally ready to attack the French at Smolensk, the commander-in-chief sends a general to inspect the lines. This general, hating Barclay, instead of obeying orders, goes to one of his friends, a corps commander, remains with him all day, and returns at night to Barclay, to disapprove of

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a plan of battle which he has not even examined.

Amid these quarrels and intrigues, we are trying to meet the French, although ignorant of their whereabouts. The French encounter Neverovski's division, and approach the walls of Smolensk. It is impossible not to give battle at Smolensk. We must maintain our communications. The battle takes place, and thousands of men on both sides are killed.

Contrary to the wishes of the tsar and the people, our generals abandon Smolensk. The inhabitants of Smolensk, betrayed by their governor, set fire to the city, and, with this example to other Russian towns, they take refuge in Moscow, deploring their losses and sowing on every side the seeds of hate against the enemy.

Napoleon advances and we retreat, and the result is that we take exactly the measures necessary to conquer the French.

## II.

## THE TRUTH ABOUT THE BATTLE OF BORODINO.

FOR what reason and in what manner was the battle of Borodino fought? It had no meaning either for the Russians or the French. The immediate result of the battle was for the Russians what they most dreaded, a retreat to Moscow; and for the French what they feared more than anything else, the entire destruction of their army. Now, although this result was the only one possible, and might have been clearly foreseen, Napoleon offered battle, and Koutouzof accepted the challenge.

If he had been a commander governed by reasonable motives, Napoleon would have seen clearly that at twelve hundred miles from his own country he could not engage in a battle involving the possible loss of a fourth of his army without marching to certain destruction. In like manner Koutouzof might have seen

clearly that a battle which exposed him to a loss of a fourth of his army would result at the same time in the loss of Moscow.

This is mathematically as evident as it would be in a game of draughts where, if I have one man less than my adversary, and by exchanging would certainly lose, I ought not to exchange.

When my adversary has sixteen men and I have only fourteen, I am only an eighth weaker than he; but when I shall have exchanged thirteen men, he will be three times stronger than I.

Up to the time of the battle of Borodino the Russian forces were to the French forces in the proportion of five to six; after the battle the proportion was only one to two. That is to say, before the battle the proportion was 100:120, and after the battle, 50:100. And yet Koutouzof, that intelligent and experienced general, accepted battle.

Napoleon, man of genius as he is called, fought this battle, which destroyed a fourth of his army and obliged him to continue his advance.

The objection may perhaps be made that Napoleon expected to end the campaign by the occupation of Moscow, as he had ended another campaign by the occupation of Vienna; but we have sufficient evidence for thinking that such was not his idea. The historians most favorable to Napoleon assert that he wished to end his advance at Smolensk, because of the danger of extending his lines, and because he knew very well that the capture of Moscow would not end the campaign. He had seen at Smolensk how the Russians got their towns ready for him, and when he offered parley he met with no response.

Napoleon, in offering battle at Borodino, and Koutouzof, in accepting battle, acted each entirely contrary to the dictates of common-sense. But now come the historians, and, to justify accomplished facts, they have brought together an ingenious tissue of foresight and genius on the part of the commanders, whereas, in truth, these commanders were the most passive and involuntary instruments of all the involuntary instruments that ever served in the execution of great historical events.



The ancients have left us a number of historical poems, in which the interest is concentrated upon a few heroic figures, and we do not yet readily see that, in our more human times, this manner of regarding history is wholly without reason.

The second question is, How was the battle of Borodino and that of Shevardino, which preceded it, fought? The reply of the historians is not less positive, as every one knows. They all agree in telling us that:—

*“The Russian army, in its so-called retreat from Smolensk, sought the most favorable position for a general battle, and found it at Borodino.*

*“The Russians had beforehand fortified this position on the left of the road, almost in a right angle from Borodino to Oustitsa, the point, in fact, where the battle took place.*

*“To keep watch of the enemy, they established in front a fortified redoubt upon the hills of Shevardino. On the 5th of September, Napoleon attacked the redoubt, and took it by assault; September 7, he attacked the entire Russian army, which was then in position on the fields of Borodino.”*

Such is the story of all the historians, and it is absolutely false, as those who examine the matter may readily see.

The Russians did not look for the most favorable position. On the contrary, they passed, during their retreat, several positions far superior to that of Borodino. They did not pause at any of these positions, for various reasons. Koutouzof would accept only a place that was of his own choosing; the necessity of a general battle had not yet made itself clearly felt; finally, Miloradovitch had not yet arrived with reënforcements;—and there were other reasons, that cannot be enumerated here. From these considerations it appears that the first positions of the Russian army were stronger than the position at Borodino, and that this position was not only unfavorable in itself, but that, by sticking a pin anywhere at hap-hazard into the map of Russia, a better place might have been found.

Moreover, the Russians had not fortified the position on the left of Borodino at a right angle with the road; up to September 6, 1812, they never imagined that the battle would oc-

cur at this point. To prove this, I maintain, in the first place, that on September 6 there was no fortification, for the work of entrenching began on that day, and was not ended till September 7; and, in the second place, I will describe the position of the Shevardino redoubt — for to put this redoubt in front of the position where the battle was fought is simply nonsensical. Why was this redoubt more strongly fortified than all the other defensive points? Why did the Russian army exhaust itself and sacrifice six thousand men in futile efforts to hold this redoubt as late as the night of September 5? A Cossack patrol amply sufficed to keep watch of the enemy.

To demonstrate that the battle was not fought at a point anticipated by the Russian army, and that the redoubt at Shevardino was not an advance post of this position, I have a third proof, still more conclusive than the others. Up to September 6, Barclay de Tolly and Bagration believed that the Shevardino redoubt was on the left flank of their position, and Koutouzof himself, while the impressions of the combat were still fresh in his mind, wrote

a report in which he spoke of the Shevardino redoubt as on the left flank.

It is evident that later on, when there was time for reflection, they got up a story to smooth over the mistakes of the commander-in-chief, who would be nothing less than infallible. They said that the Shevardino redoubt was an advance post, whereas in reality it was only a fortification on the left flank, and they maintained that the battle of Borodino had occurred at a position which they had chosen and fortified beforehand. The truth is that the battle took place where it was least expected to occur and at a point that was not fortified at all.

The real state of things was as follows :—

A position was chosen upon the Kolotsha river, which crosses the highway, not at a right angle, but at an acute angle, and consequently the left flank rested on Shevardino, the right flank was near the village of Novoë, while the centre was at Borodino, at the confluence of the two rivers Kolotsha and Vorna. This position, covered by the Kolotsha river, was held by an army which sought to check the enemy in his march upon Moscow by the road from

Smolensk. Whoever will look over the field of Borodino, putting out of his mind the stories that have been told about the battle, will certainly come to this conclusion.

Napoleon, on September 5, was moving towards Valouëvo; he had not discovered, the historians gravely tell us, a position of the Russians from Oustitsa to Borodino—for the very good reason that they were not there. Neither did he see the advance post of the Russian army, but, pursuing the Russian rear-guard, he hurled himself upon the Shevardino redoubt on the left flank of the Russians and took them by surprise by passing with his troops across the Kolotsha. The Russians, not having succeeded in bringing about a general engagement, drew back their left wing, abandoning the position which they had intended to occupy, and taking another, of which they had not thought, and which was wholly without fortifications.

When Napoleon had crossed from the left bank of the Kolotsha, he transposed the centre of hostilities from right to left with reference to the Russian army, and brought it into the

tract of country between Oustitsa, Semenovskoë, and Borodino. This place, as we have said, had no advantage over any other for the Russians, but here it was that the battle of September 7 was fought.

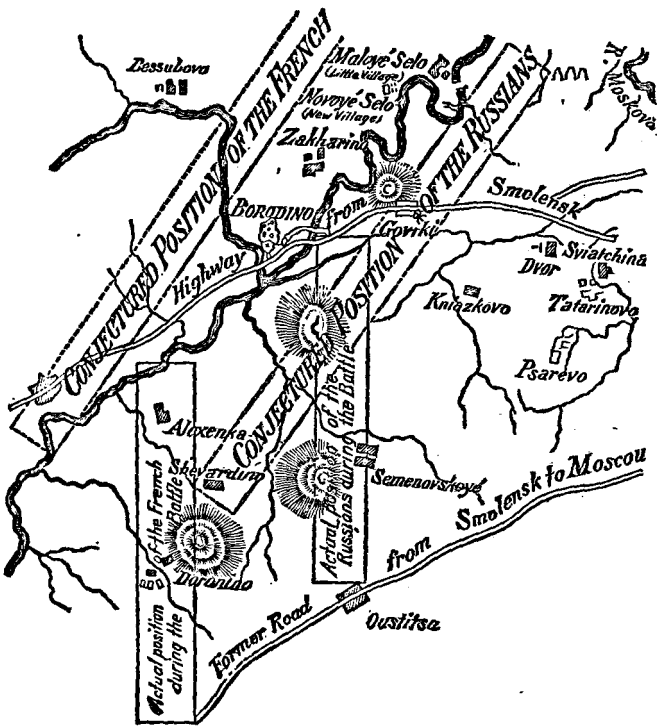
The subjoined rough sketch shows the plan of the supposed battle, and that of the battle which actually took place.

If on the night of September 5 Napoleon had not moved in the direction of the Kolotsha, and, instead of giving the order to attack the redoubt immediately, had reserved his attack until the next morning, no one would have doubted that Shevardino was on the left flank of the Russian position, and the battle would have taken place as the Russians expected. In that case, the Russians would have defended the redoubt still more stubbornly in order to protect their left flank; they would have attacked Napoleon in the centre or on the right; and on September 5 the battle would have occurred in the position they had chosen and fortified. But as the attack upon the left flank of the Russian army took place at night, following the retreat of the rear-guard, and immediately after the battle of

Gridnevo, and as the Russians would not or could not begin a general engagement on September 5,—the first and the most important action in the battle of Borodino was lost on the 5th of September, and this led inevitably to the loss of the battle fought on September 7.

When the French had carried the Shevardino redoubt, the Russians were without protection on the left flank, and were obliged to withdraw their left wing and fortify themselves as chance and urgency demanded.

Thus on September 7 the Russian troops were not only provided with weak and incomplete entrenchments, but the disadvantages of their position were increased by the refusal of their commanders to recognize the facts. They refused to admit that their position on the left flank was lost, and that the battleground had been transferred from right to left. So the Russian army, refusing to modify its extended position reaching from the village of Novoë to Oustitsa, was obliged during the engagement to transfer troops from right to left. Consequently, the Russians confronted the French army, which was directed





upon their left flank, with a force twice inferior to that of the enemy.

Poniatovski's movements against Oustitsa and Ouvarovo, on the right flank of the French, were independent incidents in the progress of the battle.

Thus the battle of Borodino did not take place in conformity with the assertions of historians, who wish to conceal the mistakes of our chiefs, and who in this way detract from the glory which belongs to the Russian army and the Russian people. The battle of Borodino did not occur at a place chosen and fortified beforehand, neither were the Russian forces nearly equal to those of the French. The fact is that by the loss of the Shevardino redoubt the Russians were brought face to face in an unfortified position with an enemy outnumbering them two to one. Under these conditions it was impossible for them to hold their own for ten consecutive hours, impossible even to save the army from complete defeat after a three-hours engagement.

### III.

#### NAPOLEON'S PREPARATIONS FOR THE BATTLE OF BORODINO.

ACCORDING to the historians, Napoleon passed the entire day of September 6 on horseback, inspecting the battle-field, examining the plans offered by his marshals, and dictating orders to his staff.

The Russian lines had been modified, and the capture of the Shevardino redoubt had forced a retreat of the left flank. This position was not fortified, or protected by the river, and before it extended a naked, level plain.

It is evident to any one, whether military or not, that this weak spot is where the French ought to make their attack. To reach this conclusion there was no need of so many combinations and preparations on the part of the emperor and his marshals. That high and extraordinary capacity which

we call genius, and which is so commonly attributed to Napoleon, was on this occasion entirely superfluous. And yet the historians who have described these events, the men who surrounded Napoleon, and Napoleon himself, thought differently.

Napoleon, they tell us, rode over the ground which he had chosen for a battle, examined the country, profoundly absorbed in his reflections, moving his head in sign of approval or disapproval, as if in answer to his own thoughts, and without deigning to reveal to the generals about him the profound ideas that influenced his decisions. To them he gave only definite results in the form of orders. Davoust, otherwise called the Duke of Eckmühl, proposed to turn the right flank of the Russians; Napoleon rejected this proposition without saying why he did so. To the suggestion of General Campan, who was to attack Bagration's outworks, and who offered to lead his division through the woods, Napoleon gave his consent, although Ney, the so-called Duke of Elchingen, observed that the march through the woods would be

dangerous, and would throw the division into disorder.

Napoleon, after examining the country in front of the Shevardino redoubt, remained for some time in meditation; then he ordered the placing of two batteries, for the bombardment of the Russian fortifications on the following day, and he selected positions for the field-artillery.

After giving his orders, he retired to his tent, and drew up in writing the plan of battle.

Here is the plan of which French historians speak with transports of praise, and which the historians of other nations treat with respect :

“ ORDER OF BATTLE.

*“ At the camp, two leagues in the rear of Mozhaïsk.*

*“ September 6, 1812.*

“ At daybreak the two new batteries constructed during the night on the plateau by the Prince of Eckmühl will open fire upon the two batteries of the enemy opposite.

“ At the same moment, General Pernety, commanding the First Corps of Artillery, with thirty cannon from Campan's Division, and all the howitzers of Dessaix' and Friant's Divisions placed in advance, will begin shelling the enemy's battery, which, by this means, will have against it :—

" 24 pieces of guard,

" 30 from Campan's Division, and

" 8 from Friant's and Dessaix' Divisions.

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" Total: 62 cannon.

" General Fouché, commanding the Third Corps of Artillery, will place himself with all the howitzers of the Third and Eighth Corps, which are sixteen in number, around the battery attacking the left redoubt, giving this battery a force of 40 pieces.

" General Sorbier will stand ready, at the word of command, with all the howitzers of the guard, to repair to one or the other redoubt.

" During the cannonade, Prince Poniatovski will move from the village towards the woods, and turn the position of the enemy.

" General Campan will move along the edge of the woods, to carry the first redoubt.

" The battle thus begun, orders will be given according to the disposition of the enemy.

" The cannonade on the left will begin at the moment when that on the right is heard. A heavy infantry fire will be begun by Morand's Division, and by the Divisions of the Viceroy, as soon as they see that the attack on the right has commenced.

" The Viceroy will take possession of the village,<sup>1</sup> and debouch by the three bridges to the heights, while Generals Morand and Gérard will deploy under the orders of the Viceroy to seize the enemy's redoubt and form the line of battle.

" All this must be done with order and method, taking care always to exercise the greatest caution."

This order, not very clear in its style, will appear very confusing to any one so far de-

<sup>1</sup> Borodino.

ficient in religious veneration for the genius of Napoleon as to dare to analyze its meaning. It contains four commands, of which not one was executed, because it was impossible to carry them out.

The first command was as follows:—

*“The batteries established at the points chosen by Napoleon, with the cannon of Pernety and Fouché, will place themselves in line, one hundred and two pieces in all, and, opening fire, will devastate the Russian outworks and redoubts.”*

This command could not be followed, because from the place chosen by Napoleon the shots would not have reached the Russian entrenchments, and these one hundred and two cannon would have thundered in vain until the nearest commander had ordered them to the front, contrary to Napoleon's decree.

Here is the second command:—

*“Poniatovski will move from the village towards the woods, and turn the left wing of the Russians.”*

This command could not be executed, because Poniatovski, on moving towards the woods, found Touthkof barring the way, and he could not turn the position of the Russians.

The third command is that

*"General Campan will move along the edge of the woods and carry the first redoubt."*

General Campan's Division did not take the first redoubt, because it was repulsed; on emerging from the woods, it was obliged to close up under the Russian fire, something that Napoleon had not foreseen.

The fourth command is this:—

*"The Viceroy will take possession of the village [Borodino], and will debouch by its three bridges upon the heights, while General: Morand and Gérard [who are not told either where or when they ought to go] will deploy under the orders of the Viceroy to seize the enemy's redoubt and form the line of battle."*

As far as it is possible to understand this (relying more upon the efforts of the Viceroy to carry out the orders he received than upon the vague phraseology in which they were given), it seems that he was told to move from Borodino upon the redoubt at the left, and that Morand's and Gérard's Divisions were at the same time to advance the front.

This command, like all the rest, was not carried out, because it was wholly impracticable.

When he had got beyond Borodino, the Viceroy was forced back upon the Kolotsha, and found it impossible to advance. Morand's and Gérard's Divisions did not take any redoubts, because they were repulsed. The redoubt was carried by the cavalry at the close of the battle, by a possibility that Napoleon had not foreseen. We see, therefore, that not one of the commands in this order was performed.

The order further asserted that during the battle instructions would be given in accordance with the movements of the enemy. From this we might infer that Napoleon, during the battle, made all the suggestions that were necessary. He did nothing of the sort. The facts do not fail to show that he was so far away from the field of action that the progress of the battle was not even known to him.



IV.

HOW FAR NAPOLEON'S WILL INFLUENCED THE  
BATTLE OF BORODINO.

SEVERAL historians assure us that the victory of the French at Borodino was modified by the fact that Napoleon was suffering from the effects of a cold in the head. If it had not been for this cold, his arrangements before and during the battle would have displayed still more genius, Russia would have been conquered, and *the face of the world would have been changed.*

Historians who believe that Russia was formed at the will of one man, Peter the Great; who believe that France changed from a republic to an empire and sent armies to Russia at the will of one man, Napoleon, naturally think that Russia retained some vestige of power after the battle of Borodino because Napoleon had a cold in his head on September 7;—and they are logically consistent in thinking so.

Plainly, if it depended on the will of Napoleon to give or not to give battle at Borodino, to make or not to make such and such dispositions of his forces, it is evident that the cold in his head, which influenced the manifestation of his will, must have been of great service to the Russian cause, and that the valet who, on September 5, 1812, forgot to provide Napoleon with waterproof boots was the real savior of Russia. When we have once started on this line of reasoning, the conclusion is inevitable; as much so as that reached by the ironical Voltaire when he demonstrated that the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew was due to the fact that Charles IX. suffered from indigestion.

But to those who do not believe that Russia was formed at the will of Peter the Great, that the French empire arose at the bidding of a single man, or that the campaign in Russia was undertaken at the sole behest of Napoleon, such reasoning will appear to be not only unreasonable and false, but contrary to the nature of human activity. To them the response to the question, What is the cause of historical events? is something very different. They be-

lieve that the progress of events is inevitable ; that it is a result of the combined volition of all who participate in the events, and that the influence of Napoleons upon the progress of affairs is superficial and fictitious.

It is paradoxical to assert that the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew was the work of Charles IX. because he gave the order to kill, and believed that the killing was done at his command. Not less paradoxical is it to affirm that the battle of Borodino, which cost the lives of eighty thousand men, was the work of Napoleon because he planned the engagement, and gave the order to begin the attack. A sentiment of human dignity, which tells me that each of us, if he be not more of a man than Napoleon the Great, is at least not less than he, directs me to a solution of the problem justified by a multitude of facts.

At the battle of Borodino, Napoleon did not attack anybody or kill anybody. That duty was performed by his soldiers. He did not do any killing himself. The soldiers of the French army, in going to the battle of Borodino to kill Russian soldiers, were obeying,

not Napoleon's orders, but their own impulses. The whole army of French, Italians, Germans, Poles, famished and in rags, worn out by the campaign, felt, at sight of the Russian army barring the road to Moscow, that the wine was uncorked, and they had only to rush in and drink. If at this moment Napoleon had forbidden them to fight the Russians, they would have killed him and given battle ; for to them a battle was necessary. When they heard the proclamations of Napoleon which, in exchange for wounds and death, offered them as a consolation the homage of posterity, and proclaimed as heroes those who should fight through the Muscovite campaign, they cried, "Vive l'Empereur !" — as they cried "Vive l'Empereur !" at sight of the child holding the terrestrial globe at the end of a bilboquet stick ; and they would have responded with the same *vivat* to any nonsense proffered to them. There was nothing better for them to do than to cry "Vive l'Empereur !" and fight in order to reach Moscow, food, repose, and victory. It was not at Napoleon's order that they undertook to kill their fellow-men.

The progress of the battle was not directed by Napoleon, for no part of his plan was carried out; and during the engagement he did not know what was going on before his eyes.

Hence the manner in which these men undertook to kill one another was independent of Napoleon and not influenced by the action of his will, because it was determined by the will of the thousands of men who took part in the combat. *But it seemed to Napoleon as if his will was the main-spring of action.*

Thus we see that the question, "Did or did not Napoleon have a cold in his head?" is of no more importance to the historian than a cold in the head of the last stragglers from the ranks.

The fact that Napoleon was afflicted with a cold in the head on September 7 is still more insignificant because it is easy to prove the falsity of the assertions made by writers that by reason of this cold in the head Napoleon's dispositions and orders concerning the battle were less adroit than those he was accustomed to make.

The plan, which we have already given, is

not at all inferior—it is even superior—to plans that in his preceding campaigns led him to victory. The fictitious combinations prepared for this battle were not in the least inferior to those of previous battles; they were, in fact, of absolutely equivalent value. But the dispositions and the combinations seem less fortunate, because the battle of Borodino was the first battle that Napoleon did not win. The best plan and the most sagacious combinations in the world seem very poor when they do not end in victory, and the veriest tyro in military matters does not hesitate to criticise them. On the other hand, the feeblest plans and combinations appear to be excellent when they are crowned with success, and learned men devote entire volumes to the demonstration of their superiority.

The plan proposed by Weirother for the battle of Austerlitz was a model of its kind, but it was condemned because its very perfection involved a superabundance of details.

Napoleon at the battle of Borodino played his sovereign part as well as in other battles—even better. He did nothing that could stand

in the way of success; he accepted the most reasonable advice; he did not confuse his orders, he did not contradict himself, he was exempt from weakness, he did not abandon the field of battle, — with all his tact and his great experience in war, he assumed with calmness and dignity the part of a fictitious commander.

V.

THE RETREAT TO WILNA.

THE united forces of twenty European nations have entered Russia. The Russian army and the people recoil before the enemy as far as Smolensk, and from Smolensk to Borodino. The French army, with continually increasing velocity, advances upon Moscow, its chosen destination.

As it approaches this point, its progress becomes more rapid, just as the velocity of a falling body increases as it draws near the earth. The French army has behind it thousands of miles of devastated country ; before it, only a few miles off, the goal of all its efforts. Every soldier in Napoleon's army knows that he is nearing the end, and the army moves forward propelled by the force of its own momentum.

In the Russian army, a spirit of fury arises against the enemy, and this spirit becomes more and more inflamed by retreat.



At Borodino the two armies meet.

Neither one nor the other is dispersed, but immediately after the collision the Russian army recoils, as surely as a cannon-ball recoils when struck by another in full flight. At the same time the invading body moves, no less surely, a certain distance forward, although the impelling force has been diminished by the shock.

The Russians retire to a point about fifty miles from Moscow, while the French enter the city and come to a standstill.

During the five weeks that follow, no battle is fought. The French give no signs of life.

Like an animal mortally wounded, licking the blood that issues from its wounds, the French remain for five weeks at Moscow doing nothing. Then suddenly, with no apparent reason, they fly backward, take the road to Kalouga, and, although the field of Malo-Yaroslavetz is theirs, they retreat still more rapidly to Smolensk, without fighting any important battle, and from Smolensk retire to Vilna, from Vilna to the Beresina, and so on, going always further away.

On the night of September 7, Koutouzof and

the Russian army believe that they have won the battle. Koutouzof even makes a report to that effect to the Tsar Alexander I.

Koutouzof had given an order to prepare for another battle to finish with the enemy, not at all with the intention of giving an erroneous impression, but because he knew that the enemy had been beaten. The fact was that both sides were beaten in this battle.

But when, that night and all the next day, news comes in of the terrible losses sustained by the army, which is reduced to one-half of its former strength, it becomes clear that another battle is physically impossible.

How can they undertake another battle without informing themselves of their condition, with the wounded uncared for, the dead uncounted, their instruments of warfare destroyed, their dead generals not replaced, and their men unrefreshed by food and sleep?

Meanwhile, the French army, after the battle, with a centrifugal force seemingly augmented inversely by the square of the distance, has heaped itself upon the Russian ranks.

Koutouzof wanted to renew the attack on the

morrow, and his army was with him in this desire. But it is not enough to desire a thing to do it. Desire alone will not justify an attack ; it must also be possible, and in this case possibility was lacking.

There was no way to prevent first one days march in retreat, then a second, then a third, and when, on September 13, the army was before Moscow, although the troops had regained their courage, circumstances obliged them to retire behind the city. They made this retrograde movement and abandoned Moscow to the enemy.

To those who imagine that generals plan their campaign and battles as we, seated tranquilly in our libraries with a map spread before us, make up combinations and ask ourselves what measures ought to be taken in such and such a war, to such persons I propound this question : Why did not Koutouzof, in beating a retreat, find some position before reaching Fily?— why did he not follow the road to Kalouga, leaving Moscow to take care of itself? Other similar questions suggest themselves.

Now, the fact is that the persons of whom we

have been speaking take no account of the inevitable conditions in which a commander-in-chief must act. His situation is not at all what we imagine it to be when we picture him comfortably seated in his study, planning, with the aid of a map, a campaign against a given number of the enemy, moving in a determined direction and during a definite period of time.

When action begins, the general-in-chief is never surrounded by conditions such as we have at command when we examine the event seated tranquilly at our library tables. The commander-in-chief is always at the centre of a series of events so complex and so hurried that it is not possible for a single instant to comprehend the importance of what is going on. The result is invisible, details are unfolded from hour to hour, and during all the changes of their continuous progress the commander-in-chief is at the centre of a complicated game of perplexities, responsibilities, projects and counsels, subject to all manner of danger and deceit, and obliged to reply to innumerable and contradictory questions.

Military critics assert in the most serious

manner that Koutouzof might have led his troops in the direction of Kalouga before retreating to Fily, and they even say that such a course was suggested to him. They forget that at a decisive moment a commander-in-chief has not only one proposal but a dozen proposals to examine. All plans based upon strategy and tactics are mutually contradictory. Theoretically, it is the office of the commander-in-chief to select some one of the plans that are suggested, but he has not the leisure to compare and decide between them. Events will not wait for him.

Suppose that on September 10 the proposal is made to Koutouzof to take the route to Kalouga, but that at the same moment an adjutant from Miloradovitch comes up at a gallop and asks whether they shall begin an attack upon the French or retreat. This question must be answered at once, and the suggestion turns Koutouzof's attention from the plans of retreating by Kalouga.

But following the adjutant comes the commissary to ask whither the stores are to be transported; then the chief of ambulance wishes to know what is to be done with the

wounded ; and finally arrives a courier from St. Petersburg bearing a message from the tsar declaring the abandonment of Moscow to be impossible.

Meanwhile, a rival of the commander-in-chief — and there is always at least one ready to sap his authority — presents a new plan, directly opposed to that favoring retreat by the road to Kalouga. The commander-in-chief is thoroughly exhausted and must at any cost have rest and sleep. This consideration does not prevent the general who has not been decorated from making a complaint ; the people of the country implore protection ; an officer who has been sent out to reconnoitre returns with the report directly contrary to that of the officer who preceded him, a spy (poor captive) has still another version, the general who has made the reconnaissance a third, — all describe differently the position of the enemy.

Those who do not take into account the inevitable conditions controlling the actions of the commander-in-chief show us, for example, the situation of the army at Fily, and start with the idea that the general commanding had till

September 13 to debate the question whether or not to abandon the defence of Moscow, whereas with the Russian army within five versts of Moscúw this question could not even arise.

At what point, then, was this question solved?

It was solved at Drissa, at Smolensk, still more plainly on September 5 at Shevardino, at Borodino on the 7th, and every day, every hour, and every minute of the retreat from Borodino to Fily.

## VI.

## MOSCOW ABANDONED BY ITS INHABITANTS.

THE abandonment of Moscow and the destruction of that city by fire were as inevitable as was the retreat of the army to the rear of Moscow, after the battle of Borodino, without any other conflict with the enemy.

All Russia could have predicted the course of events, not by the aid of logical reasoning, but by the light of patriotic sentiment, which burns in the heart of every Russian, and inspired all who took part in this historical drama.

What occurred at Moscow had occurred spontaneously after Smolensk in every town and village of the invaded territory, and this without the need of Count Rostoptchin's proclamations. The people waited calmly for the enemy. They were not agitated, they did not revolt, they did not tear anybody in pieces; they simply waited calmly for what was to happen, knowing that at the critical moment



their course of action would be plain. As the enemy approached, the wealthier portion of the population fled, leaving their property; and the poor remained to burn and destroy what was left behind.

A consciousness that things cannot be different from what they really are has always been a trait of Russian character, and it still exists. A consciousness — more, a presentiment — that Moscow would be taken by the enemy was manifest in Muscovite society in 1812.

Those who forsook the ancient capital of Russia from the month of July to the beginning of August proved that they saw what was to follow.

Those who went away, carrying what they could with them and leaving their houses and a great part of their goods, were acting under the influence of that "latent" patriotism which does not manifest itself in phrases, or in the sacrifice of children for the safety of the country, or by any other similar and unnatural actions, but which is generated imperceptibly, simply, organically, and for that reason leads to the most significant results.

On every side the cry went up, "It is cowardly to fly from danger; only cowards will abandon Moscow!"

Rostoptchin declared in his proclamations that the abandonment of Moscow would be a disgrace.

Those who went away were ashamed to hear themselves spoken of as cowards; they were ashamed to go, and yet they went, feeling that at the time there was nothing else to be done.

Why did they take to flight? We cannot believe that they were frightened by Rostoptchin's stories of atrocities committed by Napoleon in the towns conquered by him. The people who gave the signal for flight were rich and cultivated. They knew that Vienna and Berlin had remained intact during the French occupation, and that the inhabitants of those cities passed the time gayly with the adorable Frenchmen, whom, at the period in question, Russians, and especially Russian ladies, greatly loved.

Moscow was abandoned because the Russians did not ask themselves whether they would be comfortable or not under French

domination. They had no doubts whatever about the matter. The greatest of all evils was to remain under an enemy's rule.

Before Borodino they went away, and after that battle they went still more rapidly, deaf to the appeals of Rostoptchin, who begged them to remain and defend the city; deaf to his plea that they should go out to fight the French, led by the shrine of the Holy Mother of Tver; caring nothing for the balloons which were to destroy Napoleon, or for any of the nonsense with which Rostoptchin's proclamations were filled.

Those who took to flight knew that the army would do its duty, and that, if it were not victorious, they, with their daughters and their valets, would not be able to fight Napoleon; and so there was nothing for them to do but to depart, in spite of their regrets at the loss of their property.

They went away without thinking what a grand spectacle it would be, this great and rich capital abandoned by its inhabitants and delivered over to the flames, for a great city built of wood, and deserted, is fatally certain to be

burned. They went away, each by himself, and yet to them is due the great event which will always be the greatest glory of the Russian people.

That great Russian lady who in the month of June fled from Moscow to Saratof, with her troop of *négrillons* and comedians, feeling vaguely that she would not serve Bonaparte, and fearing that she would be arrested on the road by order of Rostoptchin, accomplished simply and in all sincerity the work which was the salvation of Russia.

As for Count Rostoptchin, now he cried shame upon all who deserted Moscow, and then himself ordered the evacuation of the government offices ; now he gave useless arms to a mob of drunkards ; now he displayed the sacred images in the streets, and then forbade the Archbishop Augustin to take away the holy relics ; now he seized all private conveyances ; now he brought on one hundred and thirty-six carts the balloon prepared by Lepic ; now he made known his intention to burn Moscow ; now he declared that he set fire to his residence with his own hands

and at the same time sent a proclamation to the French solemnly reproaching Napoleon for having destroyed the Foundling Asylum ; now he took credit for the burning of Moscow, and then denied it ; now he commanded that all spies should be seized and brought to him ; now he left Madame Oberchalemet, the head of the French society of the town, in peace, and then gave orders for the expulsion of the aged and respectable director of posts, Kloutsharef ; now he convoked the people at the Three Hills to fight the French, and then, to rid himself of these people, he delivered to them the unhappy Veretshagin for slaughter, and escaped himself by one of the rear gates ; now he declared that he should not survive the disasters of Moscow ; now he wrote in albums, to celebrate his conduct, French verses like these : —

“ Je suis né tartare,  
Je voulais être romain ;  
Les français m'appelleront barbare,  
Les russes Georges Dandin.”

This man had no comprehension whatever of what was going on ; he wished only to do

something, to astonish somebody, to perform some act of patriotic heroism, and like a child, playing with that great and fatal event, the abandonment and burning of Moscow, he sought with his feeble hand now to force along, now to restrain, the vast wave of popular action which bore him onward.

## VII.

### THE BURNING OF MOSCOW.

THE burning of Moscow is by the French attributed to the ferocious patriotism of Rostoptchin ; by the Russians, to the savagery of the French. But the fact is, the burning of Moscow cannot be attributed to any one person or any number of persons who could be named.

Moscow burned because the city was in a condition when a city of wood must necessarily burn, even if we do not take into account the one hundred and thirty fire-engines, which were of little service or of no service at all. Moscow, in the absence of its inhabitants, was doomed to the flames ; the conflagration was inevitable, just as a heap of shavings upon which sparks are dropped must sooner or later take fire.

A wooden city which had its fires every day in spite of the police who watched, and the

proprietors who looked after their houses, could not escape destruction when the inhabitants were replaced by troops of soldiers, who smoked their pipes, made piles of senators' chairs for firewood in the senate assembling-place, and there, twice a day, cooked their meals.

Even in times of peace, when troops take up their quarters in villages, the number of fires is immediately multiplied. How much greater must the chances of conflagration be in a deserted city built of wood and occupied by a foreign army!

The ferocious patriotism of Rostoptchin and the savagery of the French had nothing to do with the event. The burning of Moscow was due to the soldiers' pipes, to the fires used in cooking food, to the piles of wood, and to the negligence of hostile troops, when the inhabitants were replaced by foreigners.

Even if there were incendiaries, which is very doubtful, since no one would have cared uselessly to have risked his life, they could not be considered as the cause of the conflagration, which would have taken place without them.

It is in vain for the French to condemn the



ferocious patriotism of Rostoptchin, or for the Russians to blame the malefactor Bonaparte, for placing the heroic torch in the hands of the people. We are forced to acknowledge that such causes had no real existence. Moscow was burned as any town would be burned, when the houses are abandoned by their legitimate occupants, and when strangers enter and take possession of the cuisine.

We may truthfully say that Moscow was burned by its inhabitants; not, however, by those who remained, but by those who went away.

Moscow, when occupied by the enemy, did not remain intact like Berlin, Vienna, and other capitals, because the inhabitants did not sally forth to greet the French with bread and salt and the keys of the city, — they preferred to abandon their houses to the enemy.

## VIII.

### THE FLANK MOVEMENT.

AFTER the battle of Borodino and the occupation and burning of Moscow, the most important episode of this campaign, as all the world agrees, is the movement of the Russian army when it forsook the route to Riazan, and moved by way of Kalouga toward the camp of Taroutino—in a word, the flank movement beyond Krasnaya Pakhra.

Historians ascribe the glory of this movement to different persons, and do not agree upon any one name as the recipient of honor. Foreign historians, even the French, in speaking of this flank movement, pay homage to the genius of the chiefs of the Russian army.

But why do chroniclers of battles, and, in their turn, the historians, believe that this flank movement was the ingenious invention of a single person, who thus saved Russia and over-

threw Napoleon? That is something which I am unable to explain.

To begin with, it is not easy to understand why this movement indicates the quality of genius in him who devised it. To see that the best position for an unoccupied army is the place nearest a base of supply is something that does not require a great intellectual effort. A boy of thirteen would have been able to decide that in 1812 the best position for the Russian army after the retreat from Moscow would be on the road to Kalouga.

It is still more difficult to understand why historians assign the salvation of the Russians and the destruction of the French to the execution of this manœuvre; for, if the movement had been carried out under other conditions, it would have been disastrous to the Russians and beneficial to the French. The situation of the Russian army was improved after this movement, but that is no reason for asserting that the movement was the ameliorating cause.

The movement in question was not only of no advantage to the Russians; under other conditions it would have been fatal.

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What would have happened if Moscow had not been burned? if Napoleon had taken the offensive instead of remaining inactive?

What if the Russian army had followed the advice of Bennigsen and Barclay, and had given battle at Krasnaya Pakhra?

What would have been the result if the French had attacked the Russians when the latter were on the march beyond Pakhra?

What turn would events have taken if Napoleon, after approaching Taroutino, had attacked the Russians with even a tenth part of the energy displayed at Smolensk?

What would have happened if the French had directed their course toward St. Petersburg?

In every case, the flank movement, instead of being the salvation of Russia, would have been a source of disaster.

Still more incomprehensible is the inability of historians to see how impossible it is to attribute the idea of a flank movement to any particular person. No one could plan it beforehand. This manœuvre, like the retreat to Fily, never presented itself to anybody in its

with their plans, and to believe that the course of events had for a long time been known to them.

The celebrated flank movement was very simple. The Russian army, moving back in a line directly opposite to that followed by the invaders, turned aside when the enemy no longer pursued, and naturally took the direction in which lay an abundance of supplies.

If the Russian army had been without a commanding general, it would nevertheless have made the return movement about Moscow, and continued in a direction where there were more provisions and where the country was better suited to its needs.

The change of route which led towards Riazan, Toula, and Kalouga, instead of toward Nishnei, was so natural that the foragers of the Russian army went readily in that direction, and it was the route, moreover, upon which Koutouzof had been ordered from St. Petersburg to conduct his troops.

On arriving at Taroutino, Koutouzof was blamed for having led his army in the di-

rection of Riazan, and he was informed of his position in regard to Kalouga, while at the same time he received a letter from the tsar containing unmerited reproaches.

The Russian army is like a ball rolling in the direction of the impelling force of the campaign, and, after the battle of Borodino, as that force diminishes in power, tending toward a natural position.

The merit of Koutouzof does not lie in flights of strategical genius, but is due to the fact that he is the only general in this campaign who understands the meaning of the events that are going on about him.

He alone understood the inactivity of the French army, he alone persistently declared that the battle of Borodino was a victory for the Russians. He alone used all his power to restrain the Russian army from undertaking more battles, which would have been useless, although in his position as commander-in-chief he ought rather to have been disposed to favor hostile measures.

## IX.

### THE BATTLE OF TAROUTINO.

THE Russian army was directed on the one hand by Koutouzof and his staff, and on the other by the Emperor Alexander I., who was at St. Petersburg.

Before news of the abandonment of Moscow had reached St. Petersburg, the tsar had drawn up a detailed plan of war and sent it to Koutouzof for the latter's guidance. Although the plan was made with the understanding that Moscow was still in the hands of the Russians, it was approved by Koutouzof's staff and accepted as the basis of action.

Koutouzof, however, wrote to St. Petersburg that it was very difficult to carry out a plan made at such a distance from the field.

The only reply was more instructions from St. Petersburg aiming to solve difficulties, and, at the same time, inspectors charged to see

while the campaign went on independently in its own way, without conforming at all to the plans of these gentlemen, but as a result of the real relations of the armies in motion. All these intersecting and conflicting plans represented in the higher spheres of authority the faithfully reflected image of what ought to be accomplished.

On October 14, Alexander I. wrote to Koutouzof the following letter, which was received by the commander-in-chief after the battle of Taroutino :—

“ Prince Mikhail Ilarionovitch !—

“ Since September 14, Moscow has been in the hands of the enemy. Your latest reports are dated October 2, and in all this time you have not only done nothing to deliver the first capital, but since your last reports you have been continually in retreat. Serpoukhov is already occupied by the enemy, and Toulâ, with its celebrated arsenal so necessary to the army, is in danger.

“ By General Wintzengerod's report, I see that a body of the enemy, composed of ten thousand soldiers, is moving towards St. Petersburg; another body of several thousand men is marching upon Dmitrovo; a third is advancing on the road to Vladimir; a fourth, also large, is between Rouza and Mozhaïsk; and Napoleon himself was on October 7 at Moscow. . . .

“ When, as appears from this information, the enemy has scattered his forces in considerable detachments, and Napo-



leon himself remains at Moscow with his Guard, is it possible that the strength of the enemy is still too great to prevent you from taking the offensive? One might assume, with a conviction amounting to certainty, that you would pursue one or the other of these detachments, which are at least by an army corps weaker than the army which you command.

"It seems as if you would have profited by these circumstances to attack with advantage an enemy weaker than yourself, and either exterminate him, or at least oblige him to retire, thereby regaining the greater part of the territory now occupied by the enemy, and at the same time averting the danger which menaces Toula and the other towns of the interior.

"Upon you the responsibility will fall if the enemy succeeds in sending a considerable body of troops to St. Petersburg, and threatening the capital, which is almost destitute of soldiers; for, with the army which has been confided to you, if you act firmly and quickly, you have all the resources necessary to overcome these new evils.

"Remember that you must justify yourself before the country, which feels as an outrage the loss of Moscow!

"I have already proved my good-will towards you. This good-will shall not grow less, but I and Russia have a right to demand from you all the zeal, all the fortitude, and all the success that your mind, your military talents, and the courage of the troops which you command do not fail to assure."

But while this letter, which shows us the state of things as seen from St. Petersburg, was still on its way, Koutouzof could no longer restrain the army which he commanded, and which desired to take the offensive. They gave

battle. On October 14, a Cossack, Shapovalof, while on patrol duty, shot at a rabbit, and, entering the woods in pursuit of the wounded animal, stumbled upon the unguarded left flank of Murat's army.

The Cossack, on his return to camp, laughingly told his comrades how he had fallen into the hands of the French; a cornet, overhearing this, related what he had heard to his commander. The latter sent for the Cossack and questioned him.

The Cossack chiefs wished to profit by this opportunity and seize the enemy's horses; but one of them who was in communication with headquarters told the chief of staff what had occurred.

At this moment, the relations of the staff were in the most strained condition.

Several days before, General Ermolof had sought out Bennigsen and implored him to use all his influence with Koutouzof in favor of assuming the offensive.

"If I did not know you," was Bennigsen's reply, "I should think that you were asking me something with the hope that it would not be

granted; I have only to advise Koutouzof to do a thing to induce him to do exactly the contrary."

The news brought in by the Cossacks being confirmed by a reconnaissance, it became evident that the time was ripe for action.

The strained cord broke. The hour of fate had struck. The die was cast.

In spite of his fictitious power, his spirit, his experience, and his knowledge of men, Koutouzof, — taking into consideration Bennigsen's reports to the tsar, the desire expressed by the majority of his generals, and the supposed wishes of the tsar himself; knowing that he was powerless to restrain longer a movement that was inevitable — gave the order for an attack which he regarded as useless and harmful, and by so doing lent his approval to an accomplished fact.

Bennigsen's memoir addressed to the tsar, and the stories of the Cossacks who blundered on to the left flank of the French army, were only the final indications of a necessity which from day to day had forced the order for attack. The Russians took the offensive on the 17th of October.

The result of the battle was far from what had been hoped, and displeased everybody.

“That’s the way things always go with us, always contrary to what has been expected!” the Russian generals said to each other after the battle; just as they say the same thing to-day to make us understand that there is always some imbecile to thwart their efforts, while, “we would have acted very differently.”

Those who talk in this way do not know what war is or else they voluntarily deceive themselves.

Every battle, whether Taroutino, Borodino, or Austerlitz, goes on in a different way from the suppositions of the participants. This is a condition essential to war.

Innumerable and uncontrollable forces, — for nowhere is man more uncontrollable than in battle, where the question for each is that of life or death, — these uncontrollable forces, which influence the progress of the battle, can never be foreseen and can never be governed by a single guiding power.

When several different forces act at the same time upon any given body, the direction in

which the body moves will not be that of any one of the forces, but will be a middle course, as is demonstrated in mechanics by the diagonal in the parallelogram of forces.

If, in the accounts of historians, and especially in those of French historians, we see that wars and battles are invariably carried out in accordance with plans made in advance, the only conclusion that I can come to in regard to these historians is that their descriptions are not true.

The battle of Taroutino did not justify the ideas of Toll, who wanted to put the troops in action in proper order and in conformity to predetermined dispositions; it did not meet the expectations of Count Orlof, who wanted to make Murat prisoner; it did not attain the end proposed by Bennigsen and others, and destroy the enemy at a single blow, that of officers who went into the fight to win personal distinction, or that of the Cossacks who were eager for booty, — etc.

But if the principal aim of the attack, an aim justified by what took place, was to carry out the wishes of the Russian people, expel the

enemy from Russia, and exterminate his army, — then it is evident that the battle, because of its very incoherence, was just the battle necessary at this part of the campaign.

It is impossible to imagine as the issue of this battle a result more favorable to the final object of the campaign than the result which actually ensued.

With very little effort, and, in spite of a serious lack of system, very small losses, the Russians obtained the most important results achieved during the entire campaign; they passed from the defensive to the offensive, they laid bare the weakness of the French, and they gave to the French army a shock that sufficed to drive it into retreat.

X.

NAPOLEON AT MOSCOW.

NAPOLEON enters Moscow after a brilliant victory; he cannot doubt the success of his arms, for the French remain masters of the field of battle.

The Russians retreat and give up their capital. Moscow, stored with provisions, arms, and riches innumerable, falls into the hands of Napoleon.

The Russian army, twice as weak as that of the enemy, passes an entire month without being able to assume the offensive.

Napoleon's situation is certainly brilliant. And whether he falls upon the remains of the Russian army and exterminates it with his doubly superior forces; or whether he decides to offer terms of peace, and, if his offer is rejected, to move upon St. Petersburg, returning, in case of unsuccess, to Smolensk or Vilna;

or whether he is contented with retaining the excellent position which he already occupies, — to me it seems that the choice of any one of the courses I have suggested does not demand any extraordinary display of genius.

It was only necessary to take the simplest and easiest way; not to allow the army to engage in pillage, to prepare clothing for winter (there was enough in Moscow for the whole army), and to get together the provisions, which, as French historians affirm, were of such great quantity that they would have sufficed to supply the French troops for at least six months.

And yet Napoleon, this genius of geniuses, who had, historians tell us, unlimited control of his army, did nothing of the sort.

He did nothing of the sort; but he used his power in favor of measures which were of all possible measures the most stupid and the most disastrous.

Of all the plans he might have chosen, — to pass the winter at Moscow, to move upon Nishnei-Novgorod, to return from north to south following Koutouzof, — it is impossible, I say, to



imagine any plan more stupid or more disastrous than that actually chosen by Napoleon.

This was the plan : To remain in Moscow till the month of October, allowing his soldiers to pillage the city ; and then to emerge from Moscow, after considering whether or not to leave a garrison behind him, to approach Koutouzof without giving battle, to move to the right as far as Malo-Yaroslavetz, without considering the possibility of making a route of his own ; finally, instead of taking the course followed by Koutouzof, to withdraw toward Mozhaïsk through a devastated country. Once more I declare the impossibility of devising a plan more absurd in itself or more pernicious to the army. The assertion is fully proved by the results.

I defy the ablest master of strategy to invent a plan which would have led the French army to destruction (independently of any action on the part of the Russian army) as infallibly as did that selected by Napoleon.

Yes, the genius of Napoleon was guilty of this blunder. But to say that the emperor led his army to destruction because he wished to

destroy it, or because he was very stupid, would be as false and as unjust as it would be to say that Napoleon led his troops to Moscow because he wished to do so and because he was a man of genius.

In both cases, his personal action, which was of no more consequence than the personal action of any other soldier, only coincided with the laws of the progress of events.

Because the events that followed did not justify Napoleon, historians say that his intellectual powers had grown weaker at Moscow. This assertion is erroneous.

Napoleon at Moscow made use of all his intellectual power and all his knowledge to defend his own interests and those of his army in the best possible way, as he had always done before, and as he did afterwards, in 1813. Bonaparte's action at this period of his life was not less remarkable than it was in Egypt, in Italy, in Austria, and in Prussia.

We do not know sufficiently well the real condition of his genius in Egypt, "where from the summit of the pyramids forty centuries" looked down upon his greatness, for all his

great exploits there were recorded exclusively by French historians.

Neither can we rate at its proper value his action in Austria and in Prussia, for with regard to these two countries we must draw our information from French and German sources; and in a country where army corps surrender without striking a blow, and forts yield without a siege, Napoleon's genius would naturally be exalted as an explanation of a victorious campaign.

But we Russians have no reason for acknowledging the genius of Napoleon. We have no shame to hide. We have paid dearly for the right to consider facts as they are, and this right we will yield to no one!

The conduct of Napoleon at Moscow was as astonishing as it was anywhere else. From the time that he entered the capital, he did not cease to issue order upon order and to make plan upon plan. The absence of the inhabitants and of deputations, even the burning of the city, did not trouble him at all. He forgot nothing, neither the welfare of his army, nor the acts of the enemy, nor the good of the

Russian people, nor the administration of affairs at Paris, nor diplomatic combinations in the event of a possible peace.

In his purely military capacity, Napoleon, as soon as he has entered Moscow, gives strict orders to General Sebastiani to watch the movements of the Russian army; then he sends troops in all directions, and orders Murat to pursue Koutouzof. At the same time, he fortifies the Kremlin, and traces upon the map of Russia a plan for a future campaign.

Napoleon the diplomatist sends for Captain Yakovlef, who had been despoiled of his command, and had been unable to get away from Moscow. To him Napoleon expounds his political views, with the utmost magnanimity, and then writes a letter to the Emperor Alexander, informing his "brother and friend" that Rostoptchin has behaved very badly at Moscow; and he sends Captain Yakovlef to St. Petersburg to deliver this message to his sovereign. Napoleon expresses the same ideas and shows the same magnanimity to Toutolmin; and sends also this aged person to St. Petersburg to enter into negotiations with the tsar.

As the exponent of military law, Napoleon, after the conflagration, gives orders that the incendiaries shall be hunted down and put to death; and then, to punish the malefactor Rostoptchin, orders his houses to be set on fire.

As administrator of public affairs, Napoleon grants a constitution to Moscow, organizes a municipal government, and issues the following proclamation :—

#### INHABITANTS OF MOSCOW !

“Your miseries are great, but His Majesty the Emperor and King desires to put an end to your sufferings.

“Terrible examples have shown you how he punishes disobedience and crime. Severe measures have been taken to put an end to disorder and to restore general security.

“A paternal administration, composed of men chosen from among you, will govern your municipality. The administrative body will care for you, your needs, and your interests.

“The members of this municipal government will be distinguished by a red scarf, which they will wear in form of cross; the mayor will wear beside the scarf a white belt.

“But when not on service, the members of the municipal government will wear simply a red band upon the left arm.

“The municipal police is instituted in conformity to its ancient organization, and thanks to its vigilance the best of order already reigns.

“The government has named two general commissioners, or *policemeisters*, and twenty magistrates, or *tchastni pristavs*,

assigned to different portions of the city. You will recognize them by a white band worn upon the left arm.

"Several churches of different sects are open, and divine service is there celebrated without obstacle.

"Your fellow-citizens are daily returning to their houses, and orders have been given that they shall have the aid and protection due to their misfortune.

"Such are the means by which the government hopes to re-establish order and mitigate your misfortunes. But to attain that end, you must unite your efforts with theirs, you must forget, if possible, the evils that you have endured, you must cherish the hope of a less cruel destiny, you must be convinced that an inevitable and infamous death awaits all those who make any assault upon your lives or your property, and especially you must believe that your welfare will be cherished, for such is the will of the greatest and most just of all monarchs.

"Soldiers and citizens, of whatever nation you may be!—re-establish public confidence, that source of happiness in every state, live as brothers, aid and protect one another, be united to oppose all criminal manifestations, obey the military and municipal authorities, and soon your tears will cease to flow."

With regard to the provisioning of the army, Napoleon gave orders for the troops to forage through the city to procure food; he thought thus to assure both bread and soldiers for the future.

With regard to religion, Napoleon ordered that the popes should be restored to their

churches, and the forms of worship be re-established.

As to trade and the provisioning of the army, he issued the following

#### PROCLAMATION.

"You, peaceable inhabitants of Moscow, tradesmen and workmen whom misfortunes have caused to flee from this city, and you, dispersed farmers, who through unfounded terror remain concealed in the fields,— take notice!

"Peace reigns in the capital, and order is re-established. Your compatriots leave their retreats without fear, knowing that they will be respected.

"Any violence shown to them or prejudicial to their property is immediately punished.

"His Majesty the Emperor and King protects them, and counts none as his enemies among you save those who disobey his orders.

"He desires to put an end to your sufferings, and restore you to your houses and families.

"Respond to his benevolent intentions, and come to us without fear.

"Inhabitants!

"Return with confidence to your dwellings. You will soon find means of subsistence.

"Tradesmen and sons of toil!

"Return to your labors: houses, shops, watchmen await you, and for your labors you will receive the wage which is your due.

"And you, finally, peasants, come out of your forests, where you have been crouching in fear; return boldly to your *isbas*, and be persuaded that you will find protectors in us.

"Great markets have been established in the city, where the peasants may bring all the surplus products of their lands.

"To assure the free sale of these products, the government has taken the following measures :

"1. From this day, peasants, farmers, and other inhabitants of the suburbs of Moscow, may without danger bring their products to Moscow, to the two markets established for the purpose—in Mokhovaia Street and in the Okhotni Riad.

"2. These products will be purchased at prices agreed upon between seller and buyer, but if he who sells thinks the price unjust, he has the right to take away his goods, and no one shall prevent him from doing so.

"3. For this reason, large detachments of soldiers will, on Sundays, Wednesdays, Tuesdays, and Saturdays, be placed in the principal thoroughfares to protect the carts and horses of the peasants.

"4. The same measures will be taken to protect the return of the peasants to their villages.

"5. Measures will be taken to re-establish the ordinary markets with as little delay as possible.

"Inhabitants of the city and villages, and you, tradesmen, workmen, to whatever nation you may belong !

"We urge you to follow the paternal wishes of His Majesty the Emperor and King, and to aid him in the establishment of the general welfare.

"Bring to his feet respect and confidence, and do not hesitate to unite yourselves with us."

To keep up the spirits of the troops and the inhabitants, reviews were constantly held and there was an incessant distribution of decorations. The emperor rode through the streets



on horseback to comfort the inhabitants; and, in spite of his preoccupation with state matters, he visited in person the theatres established by his formal orders.

As for charity, that virtue which doth most become a king, Napoleon displayed it also to the utmost extent that could be expected of him.

By his direction the words *My Mother's House* were inscribed upon buildings devoted to public charity, and by this loving act he united filial sentiment with the grand virtue of a monarch.

He visited the Foundling Asylum, and, allowing his white hands to be kissed by the children saved by his care, he magnanimously conversed with Toutolmin.

Moreover, as we learn from the eloquent narrative of Thiers, Napoleon ordered that the sums due his troops should be paid in counterfeit Russian money manufactured by himself.

“Emphasizing the employment of these means by an act worthy of him and of the French army,” says the author of *The Consu-*

*late and the Empire*, "he gave aid to those who had suffered from the effects of the fires. But provisions being too precious to be given to foreigners, the greater part of whom were enemies, Napoleon preferred to provide money, of which he had a supply ready, and he distributed among them a quantity of paper rubles."

Finally, to maintain the discipline of the army, he issued orders threatening with severe punishment all infractions of the rules of the service, and he intimated that pillaging ought to be stopped.

But, strangely enough, all these arrangements and measures and plans, which were not at all inferior to those usually taken under similar circumstances, moved at random and without meaning, like the hands of a clock no longer connected with the mechanism behind the dial.

The plan for the campaign—the plan of which Thiers says "that the genius of Napoleon never imagined anything more profound, more skilful, or more admirable," and which, disputing the assertions of M. Fain, he proves

to have been devised, not on the 5th of October, but on the 15th of that month — this plan was never carried out, and could not be, for it had no basis whatever in reality.

It was useless to fortify the Kremlin; to accomplish this work it was necessary to destroy the mosque, as Napoleon called the Church of St. Basil. The mines placed under the Kremlin served only the personal desire of the emperor, who wished to see the edifice blown up when he had got outside of the city — in other words, it was like a child beating the floor upon which he had fallen and hurt himself.

During the retreat of the French army, a most unheard-of thing took place. Napoleon was constantly on the lookout for the enemy, whom he knew to be at his heels, although the French army had lost sight of the pursuing Russian army, numbering not less than sixty thousand men. According to Thiers, it was due to the ability of Murat — to his genius, if I mistake not — that the French performed that brilliant feat of arms by which they discovered, like a needle in a haystack, the sixty thousand men of the Russian army.

From the diplomatic point of view, all the declarations of magnanimity and justice made by Napoleon to Yakovlef and to Toutolmin were entirely without effect. Alexander I. did not receive these two ambassadors from Napoleon, and did not reply to the letters which they carried.

After the execution of the supposed incendiaries, the other half of Moscow burned as the first had done.

The establishment of a municipal government did not put an end to pillage, and was of service only to the municipal councillors, who, under the pretext of establishing order, plundered Moscow, and thought only of saving their own property.

As to religion, which he had conciliated so readily in Egypt by visiting a mosque, Napoleon discovered that matters did not go so easily in Moscow. Two or three popes whom the French soldiers unearthed wished to pay homage to the emperor, but, one of them, while conducting divine service, having been struck upon both cheeks by a French soldier, they renounced their project. This is the account

the French commissioner gave of the manner in which he conducted his stewardship. -

“The priest whom I had discovered and commanded to begin again saying mass cleared and closed the church ; that night they went again to force open the doors, smashed the locks, tore the books in pieces, and committed all sorts of disorders.”

As far as the re-establishment of trade was concerned, the proclamation to workmen and laborers and to the peasants did not have any effect. The laborious artisans did not exist ; the peasants seized the commissioners who ventured outside the city with the proclamation, and put them to death.

With regard to amusements, the result did not justify Napoleon's efforts. The theatres that were established in the Kremlin and in the house of Posniakof were soon closed because the actors and actresses had been despoiled of all they possessed.

Even his charities did not bring forth the anticipated fruits. Good and bad assignats were so abundant that neither class was of any value. The French, in return for their booty,

would accept nothing but gold. The assignats that Napoleón distributed among the unfortunates with such unparalleled generosity were worthless, and silver itself was discounted in favor of gold.

But the most striking proof of the inefficiency of all these orders is the result of the measures taken by Napoleon to put an end to pillage and re-establish discipline. Here are some of the reports made by the commanding officers: "Pillage continues in the city. In spite of the order that it shall be stopped, order is not yet re-established, and there is not a merchant in legitimate trade. Sutlers alone venture to sell anything, and they are objects of pillage."

Another report: "A part of my district continues to be pillaged by soldiers of the Third Corps, who, not content with taking from the unhappy refugees the little that they have, are even brutal enough to strike them with their swords, as I myself saw in several instances."

A third report: "There is nothing new; the soldiers still continue theft and pillage."

On the 9th of October: "Theft and pillage continue. There is a band of robbers in our district, who ought to be put down by a strong guard."

On the 11th of October, the governor of Moscow wrote: "The emperor is greatly displeased that, in spite of his strict orders against pillage, detachments of marauders from the Guard are continually entering the Kremlin. In the Old Guard, disorder and pillage were renewed yesterday and to-day more decidedly than ever. The emperor sees with sorrow the chosen soldiers, whose duty it is to defend his own person, and who ought to give an example of obedience, carrying disobedience so far as to despoil cellars and warehouses stocked with stores for the army; others have fallen so low that they refuse to obey the sentinels, and revile and beat them.

"The grand marshal of the palace complains bitterly that, notwithstanding his reiterated command, the soldiers continue to perform the offices of nature in all the courts, and even under the windows of the emperor."

Every day passed by the army at Moscow

hastened its disorganization and its end. It was like a herd fleeing in disorder, and trampling under its feet the food that would have saved it from hunger.

And yet this army would not stir from Moscow.

Only when the convoys were seized by the Russians on the road to Smolensk, and the news of the battle of Taroutino came, panic seized the French troops, and they took to flight with the utmost haste.

The news of the defeat at Taroutino, received unexpectedly by Napoleon during a review, inspired in him, Thiers tells us, the desire to punish the Russians, and he gave the order to begin the retreat, in accordance with the demand of the whole army.

On leaving Moscow, the troops loaded themselves down with all the booty they could get together.

Napoleon also had his own treasure to take with him. Seeing the vehicles obstructing the route of the army, Napoleon, to adopt Thiers' expression, was seized with horror. But, with all his experience of war, he did not order the



superfluous wagons to be destroyed, as he had done when they were approaching Moscow. He cast a glance over the coaches and calashes in which the soldiers were travelling, and said that it was well — that these vehicles would be useful for carrying provisions, the sick, and the wounded.

The situation of the army was like that of a wounded animal feeling death to be near and not knowing how to escape it.

To watch the manœuvres and the purposes of Napoleon and his army, from the time he entered Moscow to the destruction of his forces, is like watching the convulsions and the agonized struggles of a beast wounded to the death. Often the wounded animal, hearing the noise of footsteps, runs directly in front of the always advancing hunter, turns, and hastens its own end.

Napoleon, under the pressure of his army, acted in this way.

The noise of the defeat at Taroutino alarmed the wounded animal. It jumped directly into the line of fire ; ran toward the hunter, turned, fled, and, like all hunted animals, sprang sud-

denly backward by the most dangerous, the most difficult, but the best known road, the road of its former trail.

We imagine Napoleon to have been the director of all these movements, just as the savages imagine the figure-head upon the prow of a vessel to be the power that moves it onward. Napoleon, throughout the whole of this campaign, was like a child seated in a carriage claspng the sidés, and imagining it is he that makes the horses go.

## XI.

## THE RETREAT FROM MOSCOW.

FROM the moment when Koutouzoſ learned that the French had left Moscow, and were beating a retreat, until the very end of the campaign, he used all his power, finesse as well as persuasion, with the sole purpose of preventing his troops from taking the offensive, and of turning them aside from encounters and combats with an enemy who was already doomed.

Doktourof goes to Malo-Yaroslavetz, but Koutouzoſ is in no hurry, and simply gives the order to leave Kalouga, knowing that, in case of necessity, it will be easy to retire behind that town.

Koutouzoſ retires ; but the enemy does not wait for his retreat before beginning its flight in another direction.

Historians describe the clever way in which Napoleon turned upon Taroutino and Malo-Yaroslavetz, and indulge in all sorts of hy-

potheses about what would have happened if Napoleon had been able to enter the rich provinces to the south.

Without taking into consideration the fact that nothing prevented Bonaparte from entering the provinces in question, since the Russians had given him a free field, historians forget that at this time no circumstance or person would have been able to save the French army, for it carried within itself the elements of its own destruction.

Why did the army which had found at Moscow an abundance of provisions, and, instead of keeping them, had scattered them under its feet; the army which at Smolensk, instead of gathering stores, had given itself up to pillage, — why did this army now turn toward Kalouga, where it was sure to encounter a Russian population similar to that of Moscow, and the same dangers from fire?

This army was no longer able to retrieve itself. At Borodino and the pillage of Moscow it gathered the seeds of decomposition.

The men of this so-called "Grand Army" ran, like their leaders, they knew not whither;

and all, from Napoleon to the lowliest soldier, had but one desire, that of escaping from a situation which seemed to them without meaning and without end.

And so, when, at Malo-Yaroslavetz, Napoleon's generals held the semblance of a council, to discuss various projects, the last opinion offered, that of General Mouton, prevailed. This simple and single-minded soldier had discovered the thought of the whole army: they must get away as quickly as possible. No one, not even Napoleon, opened his mouth to protest against a necessity recognized by all.

But, although every one agreed that they must depart, they nevertheless felt the humiliation of flight. Some external impulse was needed to overcome this sentiment. The shock came in the form of what Frenchmen call "the ambush of the emperor." \*

The day after the council, Napoleon, pretending to inspect his troops and examine the field of battle, rode to the outer lines, accom-

\* *Le hourra de l'empereur* — referring to the cries uttered by Cossacks when making a sudden attack upon an unsuspecting enemy. — H. S.

panied by his staff of marshals and by his guard. Some Cossacks, circling about in search of plunder, swept down upon the emperor, and there can be little doubt that he was made prisoner.

That love of booty which was the destruction of the French army, and which on this occasion, as at Taroutino, led the Cossacks to think only of pillage, saved Napoleon. The Cossacks paid no attention to the emperor, but devoted themselves to the spoils, and Napoleon had a chance to escape.

When the French saw that the "children of the Don" had been able to lay hold upon the emperor in the midst of his own army, it became clear to them that there was only one thing to be done — they must beat a retreat, by the shortest and best known road.

Napoleon at forty was large of paunch, and no longer felt his former agility and courage. He submitted to necessity, under the influence of the fright given him by the Cossacks, sided with General Mouton, and, as the historians put it, *gave the order* to begin the retreat along the road to Smolensk.

The fact that Napoleon accepted Mouton's proposition, and that the French troops began to retire, does not prove that the movement was due to Napoleon; it simply proves that the causes which were pushing the army in the direction of Mozhaisk had also their influence upon Napoleon himself.

When a man is on a journey he has always a destination in view. If a man undertakes to travel a distance of six hundred miles, it must be because he looks for something good at the end. He must anticipate a promised land, to have strength enough to pass over so long a distance.

When the French entered Russia, their promised land was Moscow; but when they fled from Moscow, their promised land was the country whence they came. This country was far away, and when a man starts out on a journey of six hundred miles, he is sure to forget the end in view, and he looks for consolations along the way.

"To-day," he says, "I will go ten leagues, and then I will rest;" and, although this stage

of his journey is not much nearer to his ultimate destination, upon it he concentrates all his hopes and all his desires.

A man's aspirations are always amplified and increased by action.

To the French, returning over the familiar way to Smolensk, the final end in view—to get back each to his own house—was too far away, and all their desires and hopes, which had attained enormous proportions, centred upon Smolensk. They did not expect to find there many provisions or fresh troops; on the contrary, Napoleon and all the generals of the army knew very well that there was nothing to be found at Smolensk, but the limited perspective of this stage of the journey was the only thing that could give the soldiers the power to march and to endure the privations of the moment. Those who knew the truth and those who knew it not alike sighed for Smolensk as their promised land.

Once on the road, the French hurried toward this fictitious destination with a remarkable energy and a still more astonishing velocity. This energy arose not only from the idea of a



common end to which they were attracted, but also from their enormous numbers. This great multitude, as if obedient to the physical law of attraction, drew to itself all isolated atoms. This compact mass of one hundred thousand men moved on in a single body like an individual.

Each one of the men, taken by himself, wished for but one thing — to fall into captivity, and so to be delivered from the horror and sufferings of a forced march. But the influence of the common impulse which bore them toward Smolensk carried each one in the same direction. An entire corps could not surrender to a single battalion, and, although the French profited by every convenient and honorable occasion that offered itself for separation from their fellows and submission to the Russians, such occasions were not always at hand.

The great numbers of the French and the rapidity of their march prevented them from surrendering, and made it not only difficult but impossible for the Russians to arrest a movement in which was concentrated the entire energy of so enormous a mass.

The mechanical disruption of the body could not, beyond a certain limit, hasten the process of decomposition which was already in progress.

It is impossible to melt a snowball in an instant. There is a certain limit of time during which no degree of heat will be able to melt the snow. On the contrary, the greater the heat, the more solidified is the snow which remains.

With the exception of Koutouzof, none of the Russian generals understood what was going on. When they heard of the retreat of the French army on the road to Smolensk, they began to realize the truth of what Koutouzof had foreseen on the night of October 11. All the leading generals of the army wished to distinguish themselves, wished to bar the road of the French, to take them prisoners, to accelerate their flight; all were hot for pursuit.

Koutouzof alone employed all his powers, and those of a commanding general are not very great, to resist this idea of an offensive movement.

He could not say to his staff what we can

say to-day — why fight battles, why lose your own men and rush ferociously out to kill unfortunate wretches who will find death without your aid? why so much effort, when from Moscow to Viasma, without any combat whatever, a third of their army has disappeared?

Koutouzof could not use this language to his generals, but, giving them from his wisdom what he supposed they could understand, he said, "Give the enemy every chance; it is the surest way of destroying him;" but they mocked him, calumniated him, and, boasting and exulting, they hurled themselves upon the expiring animal to rend it and cut it in pieces.

At Viasma, Generals Ermolof, Miloradovitch, Platof, and others, finding themselves near the French, could not restrain themselves from cutting off the retreat of two army corps, and they derided Koutouzof by sending him a sheet of blank paper in lieu of a report.

In spite of Koutouzof's efforts to restrain his army, his troops assailed the French, and endeavored to bar their way. We are told that regiments of infantry, led by bands of music,

advanced to the attack, and killed thousands of men without losing one of their own number.

And yet they could not check the fugitives, they could not exterminate the enemy. The French army drew its ranks more closely together, because of the danger, and advanced with undiminished velocity along this fatal road which led to Smolensk.

## XII.

## THE VICTORIES AND WHAT FOLLOWED.

THE battle of Borodino, followed by the occupation of Moscow, and finally by the retreat of the French army without the intervention of another battle, is one of the most instructive events in history.

Historians agree that the external action of states and peoples, when their interests conflict, is expressed by war. They have many times recorded the fact that after successes or reverses of arms the power of states and peoples has increased or diminished.

It seems strange, on reading the story of a war, to find such a king or such an emperor getting his troops together, attacking the enemy's army, winning a victory, killing three thousand, five thousand, ten thousand men, and for this reason vanquishing a whole state comprising a population of millions of men. It is hard to understand why the defeat of an army

— the loss of a hundredth part of a people's forces — should involve the submission of the entire people. And yet the facts of history, as they are taught to us, confirm the justice of the assertion that the success in arms of any people at war with another is the cause, or at least the true sign, of its own increase in power, and of decreased power on the part of the enemy.

When troops have won a victory, the powers of the victorious people are extended to the detriment of the vanquished. When troops have been beaten, the loss of power on the part of the people is proportionate to the defeat; and when the troops have been entirely conquered, the people are completely vanquished.

This is the lesson that history teaches us, from the most ancient to the most recent times. All of Napoleon's wars confirm its truth.

In proportion as the Austrian troops were beaten, Austria lost her power, while the strength of France increased and acted in new directions. The French victories at Jena and Austerlitz destroyed the independence of Prussia.

But in 1812 the French bore off the victory of Muskova, and even seized Moscow, and yet immediately after these triumphs, without the fighting of any more battles, Russia continued to exist, and this victorious army of six hundred thousand men was exterminated, and with it the France of Napoleon. Try as we may to force the facts to accommodate themselves to the rules of history, no one can say that the battle-field of Borodino was won by the Russians, or that, after the occupation of Moscow, battles were fought that decimated Napoleon's army;—this is not possible.

After the victory of the French at Borodino, there was no general battle, there was not the least engagement of any importance; and yet the French army perished. What does this fact signify?

If such a thing had occurred in the history of China, we should have said that it was not a historical event.

This is the favorite ruse of historians when the facts do not agree with their theories.

If it was a question of a minor war, with inconsiderable forces on either side, we might

have said that the event was an exception to the general rule.

But it took place under the eyes of our fathers; it meant to them the life or death of their country, and this war was the most momentous of all the wars known.

That period in the campaign of 1812 extending from the battle of Borodino to the retreat of the French proves not only that a battle won is not always a source of conquest, but that it may not be even a sign of victory; this event shows us that the force which decides the destiny of peoples does not consist in conquerors, or in armies, or in battles, but in something entirely different.

French historians, describing the condition of the troops before they left Moscow, assure us that everything was in good order in the "Grand Army," excepting the cavalry, the artillery, and the wagon-trains; moreover, forage was lacking for the horses and cattle. There was no remedy for this evil, for the mouzhiks preferred to burn their hay rather than to give it to the French.

The victory won by the French did not lead



to the usual results, because the mouzhiks Karp, Vlass, and others who went to Moscow with wagons after the departure of the French in search of plunder, and who gave no proof of any heroic sentiment, yet refused to carry hay to Moscow; in spite of the money offered to them, they preferred to burn the hay rather than to have it used for the service of the enemy.

Imagine two men engaged in a duel with swords according to the rules of fencing. For a considerable time their swords meet and cross; then all at once one of the duellists, feeling that he has been wounded, and realizing that the affair is not a joke, but that his life depends upon it, throws aside his sword, and, seizing the first stick that comes to hand, begins to administer blows with his cudgel to right and left.

Imagine, still further, that this man, who has had recourse to a method so simple and efficacious, is imbued with traditions of chivalry, and, wishing to conceal the truth, declares that he came out victor according to the rules of

fencing. The confusion that would enter into his story can easily be understood.

The duellist who demands an encounter according to the rules of fencing is the French; his enemy, who throws away his sword and takes up a club, is the Russians; those who try to make the combat agree with the rules are the historians who have described the campaign in Russia.

With the burning of Smolensk the campaign in Russia took a form until then unknown in the art of war. There were only burnings of towns and villages, and battles followed by precipitous retreats.

The retreat after the victory of Borodino, the burning of Moscow, the pursuit of the marauders, the sequestrated provisions, the guerilla warfare, — all these things were contrary to the rules of military tactics.

Napoleon felt this, and, when he had made his entry into Moscow in accordance with the rules of the game, he discovered that the hand of his enemy held a club instead of a sword, and after that he did not cease to complain that the war, as conducted by Koutouzof and

Alexander I., was not conducted according to rule — as if there were any need of rules for killing men.

But in vain the French complain that the Russians do not conform to the rules of war; in vain the superior officers of the Russian army blush at this method of defence with the cudgel, and desire a position where they can fight according to rule, — *quarte*, *tierce*, and a clever thrust, — the mouzhik has raised his club in all its terrible and majestic power, and, caring nothing for good taste and the rules, with a stupid but efficacious simplicity, striking out instinctively, falls upon the enemy and beats him incessantly, until the army of the invaders has perished.

Honor to the people who did not do as the French did in 1813, when they saluted the enemy according to the rules of the game, and, holding out their swords with politeness and grace, gave them up to their magnanimous conqueror. Honor to the people who in days of misfortune did not stop to ask how others had acted in conformity to the rules in similar circumstances, but who simply and quickly

seized the first club at hand, and showered blows upon the enemy with redoubled energy, until the feeling of anger and vengeance that filled their hearts gave place to contempt and pity!

## XIII.

THE SPIRIT OF THE TROOPS AND GUERILLA  
WARFARE.

ONE of the most obvious and advantageous infractions of the so-called rules of war is the action of isolated individuals against the strictly military combinations. This sort of action always occurs in wars of a popular character. Instead of meeting the enemy in a compact body, men disperse, attack separately, retire when they see themselves threatened by any considerable force, to reappear at the first favorable opportunity.

So fought the Guerillas in Spain, the Mountaineers in the Caucasus, and the Russians in 1812.

Warfare of this sort is called irregular or guerilla warfare and by speaking of it in these terms we explain its meaning.

This sort of warfare is not only at variance with the rules of military art; it is in contra-

diction to that infallible law of tactics which demands that the assailant shall concentrate his troops, and be at the moment of combat stronger than his enemy. Guerilla warfare, always successful, as history proves, is entirely opposed to that law.

The contradiction arises from the fact that military science judges the strength of troops by their numbers. Military science says: The more troops, the greater strength; the great battalions are always right.

An assertion like this bases military science upon that theory in mechanics which, considering moving bodies only with reference to their masses, affirms that their forces of momentum will be equal or unequal as their masses are equal or unequal.

Now, momentum (the *quantity* of movement) is the product of the mass multiplied by the velocity.

In war the momentum of troops is the product of the mass multiplied by an unknown quantity,  $x$ .

Military science, discovering, from a great many examples in history, that the masses of

troops do not correspond with the strength of armies, and that small detachments have conquered large ones, recognizes confusedly the existence of an unknown factor, which it tries to find now in geometrical combinations, now in differences of armament, but especially — because that seems to be the simplest way of all — in the genius of the commanders.

These values are given in vain to the factor in question; the results are not in accordance with historical facts.

We must renounce the false idea, invented for the pleasure of heroes, that if the arrangements made by the commanders are carried out in the war, we shall find  $x$ .

$X$  is the spirit of the troops, the more or less intense desire of all the men composing them to fight, independently of the fact whether they are under the command of a man of genius or an imbecile, whether they fight in two or three ranks, whether they are armed with clubs or with guns delivering thirty shots a minute.

Men who are eager to fight always put themselves in the most advantageous position for

the struggle. The spirit of the army is the factor which, multiplied by the mass, gives the product of power.

To determine and express the meaning of that unknown factor, the spirit of the army, is the duty of science.

The problem will be solved only when we stop putting in place of  $x$  the conditions of the moment, such as the dispositions of the commanders, the armament, and so on, and realize that  $x$  in all its integration is the more or less active desire animating the men to confront danger. Only then shall we be able to express known historical facts by means of equations, and so determine the unknown factor.

Ten men, or ten battalions, or ten divisions, fighting with fifteen men, or fifteen battalions, or fifteen divisions, conquer the latter, killing their enemies or taking them prisoners, losing themselves only four men, battalions, or divisions. One side has lost fifteen, the other four. This may be expressed in the following equation:—

$$4x = 15y;$$

whence,

$$x : y :: 15 : 4.$$



This equation does not give the value of the unknown quantity, but it expresses the relations which the two unknown factors bear to one another, and, by putting into the form of similar equations different historical units,—battles, campaigns, periods of war,—we shall obtain a series of numbers from which we may no doubt discover laws.

The rule of tactics commanding troops to act together in an attack and separately in a retreat undoubtedly expresses the truth that the strength of troops depends upon their courage. Better discipline is required to lead men against bullets than to induce them to defend themselves against assailants, and is obtained exclusively by movements in mass.

But this rule, taking no account of the courage of the troops, is always relative and defective, and particularly so in popular wars, when it is always contradictory to the truth, because then the increased or diminished courage of the troops is most freely manifested.

So the French, in 1812, in beating a retreat, should, according to tactics, have defended

themselves separately; but, as a matter of fact, they drew more closely together, for the spirit of the troops had fallen so low that it could only be maintained by the men in mass.

The Russians, on the contrary, ought, according to tactics, to have attacked in mass; but the fact is that they scattered their forces, because the spirit of their troops had reached such a point that isolated men attacked the enemy without waiting for a command, and had no need of encouragement or constraint to induce them to expose themselves to the fatigues and the perils of war.

## XIV.

## THE FLIGHT OF NAPOLEON.

WHEN freezing weather began, on November 8, the French retreat suddenly assumed a more tragic character. Men were frozen on the march, and others, seeking to warm their stiffened limbs at the bivouac fires, were literally roasted to death; and, close by, the emperor and his retinue of kings and dukes rode along in carriages, wrapped in their furs, and bearing the treasures they had stolen. But the truth is that nothing could hasten or restrain the progress of flight or the decomposition of the French army after its egress from Moscow.

Without taking account of the Guard, which throughout the entire campaign gave itself over to pillage, we find that during the movement from the capital to Viasma the seventy-three thousand men of the French army were reduced to thirty-six thousand, and,

of the number lost, only five thousand fell in battle.

This is the first term in a progression which indicates with mathematical precision the terms that are to follow.

The French army was destroyed and melted away in the same proportion from Moscow to Viasma, from Viasma to Smolensk, from Smolensk to Beresina, and from Beresina to Vilna, independently of the varying degree of cold, the pursuit of the enemy on its path, and of all other circumstances.

After Viasma, the French troops drew together in a single mass, and so continued to the end.

Although we know how far from the truth are reports made by generals on the condition of their troops, we read not without interest what Berthier wrote, at this time, to the emperor :—

“I think I ought to acquaint Your Majesty with the condition of the troops in the different army corps that have during the last two or three days come under my inspection. They are nearly disbanded. The number of soldiers following the standards is, at the most, less than a fourth in nearly all the regiments ; the others go by themselves in different directions,

in the hope of finding provisions and to escape from discipline. The majority of them look to Smolensk as the place where they will recruit from their sufferings. During the last few days, we have noticed many soldiers throwing away their muskets and cartridges. In this condition of things, the interests of Your Majesty's service require that, whatever our ultimate plans, the army should be rallied at Smolensk, and the ranks rid of non-combatants, of unmounted men, of useless baggage, and of such artillery stores as are no longer actually needed. Moreover, the soldiers require some days of rest and supplies of adequate food, for they are worn out by fatigue and hunger; many in the last few days have died on the march or in bivouac. As this state of things is constantly growing worse, we begin to fear that, if remedies are not promptly applied, we shall not be able to control the troops in case of battle.—  
*November 9, at thirty versts from Smolensk."*

The French rushed into Smolensk, which was to them like the promised land, fought with one another for food, pillaged their own stores, and when they had plundered everything within their reach, they hurried on.

They all fled, not knowing whither or why; and Napoleon, with all his genius, knew less than others why they did so, for he was the only one who fled without having received from another a command to fly.

During the disordered retreat, he and his underlings retain their former habits. They

write orders and reports, and they shower titles upon one another, — Sire, My Cousin, Prince of Eckmühl, King of Naples, etc. But these orders exist only on paper; no one carries them out, because they are no longer possible. Napoleon and his family may continue to address each other as Majesty, Highness, and Cousin; they feel none the less that they are miserable wretches, who have done an immense amount of harm, and that their expiation has begun. And, pretending to be very solicitous about the army, they think only of their own skins, each making all possible efforts to save his own little person.

The conduct of the Russian and French troops during the retreat of the "Grand Army" from Moscow to the Niemen reminds one of the game of blind-man's-buff. Both players have their eyes bandaged, and one of them is provided with a bell, which he sounds from time to time, to attract the attention of his adversary. At first, the one who is to be caught sounds his bell without fear, but when he feels that the pursuer is pressing him closely, he

seeks to evade his adversary by taking to his heels, and yet, at the moment when he thinks he is safe, he runs directly into the arms of his pursuer.

At the beginning of the campaign, Napoleon's troops, while on the road to Kalouga in the first period of their retrograde movement, give still some signs of life ; but once on the road to Smolensk, they seize the clapper of the bell in their hands, and run with all their speed, and, believing that they are making good their escape from the Russian troops, throw themselves directly in the way of the enemy.

The wild speed of French and Russians was too much for the horses, so that reconnoissance by cavalry, the best method of ascertaining the position of an enemy, became impossible. Moreover, the changes of position in both armies were so numerous and rapid that information always came too late.

News came on a certain day that the enemy's army was the night before at such and such a place, and on the morrow, by the time that anything could be done, they found that

the army had already made a two-days march and had taken another position.

One army fled and the other followed. On leaving Smolensk, the French troops had a number of routes to choose from. It seems as if Napoleon and his generals, having made a four-days halt, might have occupied the time profitably by reconnoitring the enemy, and adopting different tactics. But, instead of this, after the four-days rest, the army moved on in mass, turning neither to the right nor to the left, but without reflection following their former route, the worst that was accessible, that of Krasnoë and Orsha.

Thinking always that the enemy was at their heels and not before them, the French hastened on, spreading out and dispersing their forces, so that some were often twenty-four hours march from the others.

At the head of the whole army ran the emperor; after him came the kings, and then the dukes.

The Russian army, believing that Napoleon would take the only reasonable route and turn to the right toward the Dnieper, themselves



turned to the right, and followed the main road in the direction of Krasnoë.

At this point in the game of blind-man's-buff, the French ran against the Russian advance guard.

Having thus unexpectedly discovered the enemy, they were confused, and paused an instant in astonishment and fright, only to resume their course, abandoning their comrades in the rear. There, for three days, the isolated fragments of the French army ran the gauntlet of the Russian troops ; first came the corps of the viceroy, then that of Davoust, finally that of Ney.

They abandoned their comrades, they abandoned half of their forces in their flight, lying hid by day, and marching by night in a thousand détours and semicircles.

Ney, who came last, because he had stopped to blow up the unoffending walls of Smolensk, rejoined Napoleon at Orsha with one thousand men out of the ten thousand who had been under his command. Abandoning a part of his soldiers and his artillery, he had succeeded in slipping through the woods by night and in crossing the Dnieper.

From Orsha they hastened on toward Vilna, still playing the game of blind-man's-buff with the pursuing enemy.

At Beresina the confusion increased. A great many men were drowned, others gave themselves up; but those who crossed the river still hastened on.

Napoleon, wrapped up in his furs, passed in a sledge, and, abandoning his companions in arms, escaped with all possible haste.

Those of his generals who could do so followed his example; those who could not, surrendered or perished by the way.

During this period of the Russian campaign the leaders of the French army did everything that was possible to destroy their troops. As we follow the movement of this mass of men from the beginning of its march to Kalouga to the flight of Napoleon, we can find no indication of wisdom in the conduct of the army, — and it would seem that historians who make the action of the masses depend upon the will of a single man ought not to try to write the history of this campaign in any such way.

And yet they do. Historians without number have gravely discussed, in mountains of print, the plans and dispositions adopted by Napoleon in this campaign, and find them to be immeasurably profound; they are in ecstasies over the manœuvres executed by the troops, and the genius manifested in the measures adopted by the marshals.

The retreat by Malo-Yaroslavetz, — that useless retreat by a devastated route, chosen by Napoleon when he might have taken another that would have led him into provinces where provisions were abundant, the route for which he neglected the parallel road followed later by the pursuing Koutouzof, — this retreat has found defenders, who vindicate it on the plea of superior tactics; and these same superior tactics ought to explain the retreat from Smolensk to Orsha.

But the historians of Napoleon are not satisfied with vindicating their hero. They vaunt his bravery in putting himself at the head of his troops at Krasnoë, where he intended to give battle. They represent him marching on foot at the head of his army, with a cane in his hand, and saying:—

"Enough of the emperor ; it is time for the general."

In spite of these fantastic stories, we find that he fled instead of fighting, leaving behind him the defenceless fragments of his army.

Sometimes the historians are pleased to exalt the grandeur of soul displayed by the marshals, particularly by Ney, who, in the grandeur of his soul, succeeded in getting through the forest by night, passing the Dnieper, and finally entering Orsha without colors, without artillery, and leaving behind him nine-tenths of his army.

Finally, when the great emperor himself abandons his army, historians represent the act as something grand, a stroke of genius. This miserable flight, which we simple mortals look upon as a most scurvy act, which we teach our children to consider a shameful deed, this vile trick historians find means to justify.

For when their attenuated thread of logic will bear no more stretching, when the actions of their hero are in flagrant contradiction with what humanity calls good and right, the historians take refuge in the idea of greatness.

With them greatness excludes all idea of good and evil. In him who is great, nothing is bad. He who is proclaimed great is acquitted of all the atrocities that he may have committed.

"He is great!" cry the historians; and there is no more good or evil, there is only what is "great" and what is not "great."

What is "great" is good, what is not is bad.

"Greatness" is with them the quality of certain beings set apart, whom they call heroes.

And Napoleon, fleeing to his own fireside, warmly wrapped in his furs, and leaving behind his companions in arms and that multitude of men whom he had led into Russia, feels that he has done something great, and his soul is tranquil.

"There is only one step," he himself said, "from the sublime" (he thinks himself sublime!) "to the ridiculous." And for fifty years the universe has cried after him, "Sublime! Great! Napoleon the Great!" Truly, there is only one step from the sublime to the ridiculous!

They do not see that by taking greatness as the standard of good and evil they thereby

declare the emptiness and littleness of what they call great.

For us there is no greatness where there is not simplicity or goodness or justice.

## XV.

## PURSUING THE FRENCH.

WHERE is the Russian who, reading the story of the last period of the campaign of 1812, has not experienced a profound feeling of vexation, discontent, and perplexity?

Who has not asked himself why we did not destroy or capture all the French, when they were surrounded by our three greater Russian armies; when, dying of hunger, they surrendered in crowds; and when, as history tells us, the proper aim of the Russians was to cut off the retreat of the French, to stop them, and to take them prisoners?

Why, if the proper object of this army, — which at first, less in number, fought the battle of Borodino and then surrounded the French on three sides, — if the true object of this army was to cut off the retreat of the French and take them prisoners, why did it not achieve the end in view?

Were the French so superior to the Russians that the latter, after having surrounded their enemy, considered themselves unequal to the conquest?

If such was the aim of the Russians, how was it that their plans miscarried?

History—or what is called history—replies to these questions by declaring that Russia did not attain the object in question because Koutouzoï, Tormasof, Tchitchagof, and others did not execute such and such a manœuvre.

But why were not these manœuvres executed? If it was the fault of these generals that the end in view was not attained, why were they not court-martialled and put to death?

But even if we were to admit that Koutouzoï and Tchitchagof were the cause of Russian “unsuccess,” we should still find it impossible to understand why our troops, who were in superior force at Krasnoë and Beresina, did not disarm the French troops and seize the marshals, the kings, and the emperor, if such was the object of the Russians. We cannot explain this strange phenomenon—as do the



majority of military Russians — by saying that it was because Koutouzof forbade our troops from taking the offensive. Such reasons we know to be specious, for we have seen that Koutouzof was unable to restrain the troops either at Viasma or at Taroutino.

If the object of the Russians was truly to cut off the retreat of the French army and to take Napoleon and his marshals captives, — since this object was not attained, and since all attempts in that direction were shameful failures, — the French were right in representing the last period of the campaign as a series of victories, and Russian historians are wrong when they claim that we were victorious.

Russian military historians are, in spite of their lyrical outbursts in regard to the courage and patriotism of their countrymen, logically forced to the conclusion that the retreat from Moscow was for Napoleon a series of victories, and for Koutouzof a series of defeats.

But, if I put aside national pride, I discover that this conclusion involves a contradiction, for this series of victories on the part of Napoleon led the French to complete destruction,

and the series of defeats endured by Koutouzof led the Russians to the overthrow of the enemy and the elutriation of their territory.

The source of this contradiction lies in the fact that historians study events in the correspondence of kings and generals, and by means of official narratives and reports, and they have assumed that the object of the last period in the campaign of 1812 was to cut off the retreat of the French and to seize Napoleon and his marshals.

This object did not exist at all, and could not exist, because it would have been foolish, and it would have been impossible of attainment.

The object would have been foolish, in the first place, because Napoleon's defeated army was flying from Russian territory with all possible speed, and thereby fulfilling the wishes of all Russians. Why direct military operations against an enemy who is running away as fast as he can go?

Secondly, it would have been foolish to try to stop men who were employing all their energy in the effort to get away with all possible celerity.

Thirdly, it would have been foolish to sacrifice men in fighting an enemy who was destroying himself by contact with external causes, and that at such a rate that even with an open road the French could carry to the frontiers only the small number that remained to them in the month of December — a hundredth part of all their forces.

Fourthly, it would have been foolish to make prisoners of the emperor, the kings, and the marshals, for their captivity would have been exceedingly embarrassing to the Russians, as De Maistre and other able diplomatists of the time clearly recognized.

It would have been still more foolish to capture whole regiments of Frenchmen, when the Russian army had been depleted one-half by the time it got to Krasnoë, and entire divisions would have been needed to guard the prisoners. How could they have cared for prisoners when the Russian soldiers were not receiving full rations and when the French were dying of cold and hunger?

This profound plan of seizing Napoleon and his army reminds one of the gardener who,

instead of driving away the animal that was ravaging his borders, ran behind the gate to crush it when it passed out. The only thing one can say in his favor is that he was no longer master of himself in his wrath. Not even this excuse can be made for those who devised the plan of seizing Napoleon and his staff, for they were not the ones who had to bear the damage done to the ravaged borders.

The idea of cutting off the retreat of Napoleon and his army was not only foolish—it was impossible.

First, because, as experience shows, the movement of columns of soldiers in battle for a distance of thirty miles can never be made in accordance with a prearranged plan. It was more than improbable, it was impossible, that Generals Tchitchagof, Koutouzof, and Wittgenstein should effect a junction at a certain place at a certain time. Koutouzof understood this, and, when this plan of action was submitted to him, he objected that operations at great distances never gave the anticipated results.

Secondly, to overcome the momentum of Na-

oleon's army in its homeward flight, forces much greater than those possessed by Russia would have been necessary.

Thirdly, we use a foolish military phrase when we speak of "cutting off" an enemy. We may cut off a piece of bread, but not an army.

To cut off an army, to bar its road, is an impossible thing, for there are always chances for détours, and it is favored by night and obscurity, as military strategists may convince themselves if they will study what took place at Krasnoë and Beresina.

It is no more possible to seize a person who will not be seized than it is to seize a swallow unless it comes and lights upon your hand.

Armies can be made prisoners only when they do as the German army did, and surrender according to the rules of strategy and tactics. The French troops did not adopt this plan, for death by cold and hunger awaited them alike in flight and in captivity.

Fourthly, — and this is the most important consideration of all, — never since the world began was a war carried on under more terri-

ble conditions than those which attended the campaign of 1812; and the Russian troops, by concentrating their efforts for the pursuit of the French, could do nothing more unless they incurred the penalty of annihilation.

During the movement of the Russians from Taroutino to Krasnoë, fifty thousand men, equivalent to half the population of an ordinary city, left the ranks—some sick, others disabled.

The Russian army, in this manner, lost half of its men without giving battle.

How have the historians described this period of the campaign, when the soldiers, without boots or great-coats, with insufficient food, and deprived of brandy, passed the nights in the snow, in a temperature fifteen degrees below freezing? The days then were only seven or eight hours long, and in the darkness that intervened discipline was impossible. In this way, men passed whole months between life and death, fighting against cold and hunger, not for a few hours, but incessantly, enduring privations so bitter that half of the army melted away in a single month.

And yet this is the period of the campaign that historians pretend to describe when they tell us how Miloradovitch ought to have made a flank movement in one direction, and Tomasof in another, and Tchitchagof in a third (the snow being knee-deep), and how such and such a general once cut off and destroyed an enemy's army!—and so on, and so on.

The Russians, of whom one-half had perished in the snow, accomplished all that they could or ought to do to attain an end worthy of the Russian people. It is not their fault if other Russians, with idle hands, in comfortably heated apartments, devised plans that could not be carried out.

All the strange contradictions between the historical facts and the account of the event as recorded in history, incomprehensible as they are to-day, arise simply from this: the historians who have told the story have given us, instead of facts, fine sentiments and the fine speeches of different generals.

To them, the most important incidents in this part of the campaign are the speeches of Miloradovitch, the plans of some other general,

and the decoration of another; for the fifty thousand Russian soldiers who were left behind in hospitals, or who perished in the snow, historians feel no interest; the subject is outside of their jurisdiction.

And yet if the historians will only turn their attention to the reports and plans of the generals, they will be able to follow the movements of the hundred thousand soldiers who took an active part in what was going on, and all the questions that have troubled them so much will be solved at once.

The idea of cutting off the retreat of Napoleon and his army had no existence except in the imaginations of a dozen plan-makers. The idea could not be taken seriously, because it was as absurd as it was impracticable.

The Russian people had only one object in view, and that was to rid their soil of the invaders.

The object was attained, firstly, because the French abandoned Russia of their own accord, and it was only necessary that their flight should not be checked; secondly, because of the guerilla warfare, which decimated the



French army ; and, thirdly, because the greater part of the Russian army followed the enemy step by step, ready to resort to force if the French had suspended their flight.

The action of the Russian army was like the crack of a whip behind an animal already under full headway.

An experienced cattle-driver knows that the most efficacious method of hastening the speed of an animal is to threaten it with upraised whip, but not to strike.

XVI.

KOUTOUZOF.

AFTER the encounter at Viasma, which took place because Koutouzof could no longer restrain the impetuosity of his troops, who wished at any price to "sweep away," to "cut off," to "hold back," the French army, the subsequent retreat to Krasnoë, during which time the French had the Russians at their heels, took place without the occurrence of a battle. The progress of the French was so rapid that the Russians could not keep up with them, and lost them from view; their horses in the cavalry and artillery were unequal to the advance, and they were only imperfectly informed in regard to the movements of the enemy. The Russian soldiers, worn out by daily marches of forty versts, could no longer press onward.

To understand what this army endured from fatigue, we have only to remember that the

Russian army, on leaving Taroutino, numbered one hundred thousand men, and that although they lost, aside from a hundred or so taken prisoners, not more than five thousand killed and wounded, they had only fifty thousand men when they got to Krasnoë.

The breathless pursuit of the Russian army was as disastrous on the one hand as was the precipitous retreat of the French army on the other. The only difference in their respective conditions was that the Russian troops marched at will without being exposed to attack; the French troops advanced under a menace of certain destruction, knowing that their sick would fall into the hands of the enemy; while the Russians who could no longer endure the fatigue of the campaign were able to return to their homes.

The principal cause of the diminution of the French army was the rapidity of its flight, as we see by comparing its losses with those of the Russian army launched in pursuit.

Koutouzof restricted his efforts, as he had done at Taroutino and Viasma, to the prevention of any interference with the destructive

progress of the French, although this was contrary to directions from St. Petersburg and the opinion of his own generals. His only desire was to facilitate the course that the enemy had chosen, and to make the march of his own troops as easy as possible.

Moreover, when Koutouzof saw the signs of fatigue manifested by his army, and the losses it had undergone, he found another reason for slackening his pursuit of the enemy and waiting to see what would happen. They did not know what route would be taken by the French, who made greater speed the more closely they were pressed by the Russian soldiers. Only by following at a distance could the Russians avoid the zigzags of the enemy and pursue them by the most direct road.

The intricate manœuvres proposed by the other generals involved an increase in the daily marches, while the only reasonable course to pursue was to reduce the marches as much as possible.

Toward this latter object all the efforts of Koutouzof were directed from Moscow to Vilna; the pursuit was not to him a matter of

accident or caprice, but he maintained it with persistency and perseverance that did not for a moment relax.

These tactics were dictated to Koutouzof not by science and reason, but by his heart. That truly Russian heart knew and felt what every Russian soldier knew and felt, that the French were vanquished, and that, to be rid of them forever, it was only necessary to provide them with an escort to the frontier; and at the same time he felt with his soldiers the grievous weight of a campaign made terrible by the rapidity of the marches and the intensity of the cold.

But the other generals, principally those who were not Russian at all, wanted to distinguish themselves, to astonish the world, to take a king prisoner, or at least a duke; their only idea was to give battle and conquer although a battle would have been odious and absurd.

When they brought their plans for battle to Koutouzof, he looked at his soldiers, famished, without shoes, without great-coats, who had been for a month without fires, reduced

to half their former numbers, and with whom he must pursue the enemy a distance greater than that already traversed, to the frontier,—Koutouzof saw this, and his reply to the generals who wanted to distinguish themselves was simply a shrug of the shoulders.

The desire to display bravery, to direct manœuvres, to harass the enemy, was especially manifested when the Russian troops encountered a detachment of the French army. That was the case at Krasnoë, where the Russian generals, believing themselves confronted by two or three columns of the French army, hurled themselves upon Napoleon and his sixteen thousand men.

In spite of Koutouzof's efforts to avoid this engagement and to save his troops, the Russians for three days kept up an indiscriminate attack on the French stragglers.

Colonel Toll, a German, prepared a plan, in which he says, "*die erste Colonne marschirt*, the first column will march, etc." And, as always happens, everything went on contrary to the plan.

Prince Eugene of Würtemberg saw from a

the reproaches of Rostoptchin, or the question as to who should be named chief of artillery?

Not only in circumstances similar to those that I have mentioned, but on all occasions, this old man, who by experience of life had learned with certainty that the thoughts and words of men are not related to their actions, spoke without meaning, saying whatever came into his head.

But this same man, who made light of speech on such occasions, did not, throughout the whole campaign, utter a word at variance with the object toward which he so resolutely moved.

It is evident that not wilfulness but a painful assurance that he would not be understood led him many times in different circumstances to conceal his thoughts.

After the battle of Borodino, when the misunderstanding between him and his staff began, he alone declared that *Borodino was a victory*, and he repeated it many times orally and in his letters, as well as in his reports, up to the time of his death.

He also was the only one to declare that *the loss of Moscow was not the loss of Russia.*

He it was who, in reply to Lauriston, sent by Napoleon to offer terms of peace, said that he could not make peace, because *the Russian people did not wish it.*

He alone, during the retreat of the French, declared that *all military operations were useless, that the affair would take care of itself in accordance with the wishes of the Russians, that it was only necessary to facilitate the progress of the enemy, that neither the battle of Taroutino nor that of Krasnoë nor that of Viasma was necessary, that they must spare their men if they wished to reach the frontier with any troops, and finally that he would not sacrifice the life of a single Russian soldier even to make ten prisoners.*

And it was he, the man who is represented as a deceitful courtier, who at Vilna said to the tsar, at the risk of disgrace, that *to continue the war beyond the frontier would be useless and dangerous.*

But words alone would not prove sufficiently that he grasped the full progress of events.



All his acts, all his deeds, all his achievements tended to one object, from which he was not for one moment turned aside, and which he sought to obtain by three methods : —

1. Concentrating all his forces in view of an encounter with the French.

2. Vanquishing them.

3. Driving them from Russia while incurring the least possible suffering on the part of the Russian troops and the Russian people.

It was Koutouzof the temporizer, the man whose device was "patience and plenty of time," who gave battle at Borodino, and who made the preparations for that battle with unexampled solemnity.

It was Koutouzof who, before hostilities began at Austerlitz, declared that the battle was lost ; and concerning Borodino, where all the generals acknowledged defeat, protested, up to the time of his death, that the battle had been won by the Russians, although a victory followed by retreat had never before been known to history.

Finally, as we have seen, he was the only one during the retreat who declared that any

more battles were useless, and who opposed the idea of crossing the frontier to begin a new war.

If we no longer confound the wishes of the masses with plans fermenting in the heads of a dozen ambitious upstarts, we shall be able distinctly to see the great event which is now in all its completeness spread before our eyes.

How was it that this old man, alone against many, divined with so much perspicacity the national import of events, and did not once contradict himself throughout the whole campaign?

This power of insight had its source in the sentiment of the Russian people, which was carried by Koutouzof in his heart with undiminished purity and vigor.

And because the Russian people recognized this sentiment in Koutouzof, they chose the old man, disgraced as he was at court, to be the leader in the national war, chose him against the will of the tsar.

This sentiment, and nothing else, elevated Koutouzof to the height of human feeling,

and led him, the general in command, to employ all his efforts, not to kill and exterminate men, but to cherish and save them.

This simple, modest, and therefore truly grand figure was not cast in the ready-made fictitious mould employed by history for the manufacture of European heroes.

To the valet he is not a great man; the valet has his own conception of greatness.

## XVII.

## BERESINA.

THE French troops melted away in a regular mathematical progression.

The passage of the Beresina, concerning which so many volumes have been written, was only one of the intermediate steps in the annihilation of the French army, and not a decisive episode of the campaign.

Much has been written and much will be written about the passage of the Beresina, because all the single misfortunes which the French army had up to that time endured now accumulated into a mass, and fell upon them as the bridges broke beneath their feet, leaving in the memory of those who looked on an ineffaceable impression of tragic disaster.

The Russians have written volumes about the passage of the Beresina, because Pfühl drew up at St. Petersburg (at that distance

from the theatre of war) a plan for drawing Napoleon into a strategical snare on that river. All are persuaded that everything went on conformably to the plan, and they maintain that the passage of the Beresina was the destruction of the French.

Now, the consequences of the passage of the Beresina were less disastrous to the French than was the battle of Krasnoë; they left fewer pieces of artillery and prisoners in the hands of the Russians. Statistics prove this assertion.

The passage of the Beresina served only to prove beyond all doubt the absurdity of the plan for cutting off the retreat of the enemy, and vindicated Koutouzof's idea of simply pursuing the French.

The French hurried on with constantly increasing velocity, concentrating all their energies upon flight. They fled like a wounded animal, and it was impossible to stop them in their course.

The proof of this is what occurred at the bridges, rather than in the arrangements made for the passage.

When the bridges were destroyed, the whole crowd, soldiers without arms, Russian prisoners, women carrying children, all who made up the French train, borne on by the force of inertia, instead of giving themselves up, continued their impetuous course, moving uninterruptedly on, throwing themselves into the boats or falling into the icy waters.

This onward course was reasonable.

The situation of the fugitives and that of the pursuers was equally bad. They press close upon one another in their misfortune, having confidence in their solidarity, and knowing that each has his place with his fellows.

By surrendering to the Russians, their condition, instead of being ameliorated, would have been made worse as far as food and clothing were concerned.

The French did not need exact information to be assured that the Russians did not know what to do with their prisoners, of whom more than half, in spite of their efforts, had died of hunger. The French understood that it could not be otherwise.

The most compassionate generals, those

best disposed toward the French, the French themselves serving in the Russian army, could do nothing for the prisoners, who participated in the misery endured by the Russians.

The Muscovite generals could not take from their famished soldiers the bread and clothes they needed for the benefit of the French prisoners, however inoffensive and even innocent the latter might be.

There were, however, some Russian generals who favored the prisoners, but they were exceptions.

Behind the French was certain death ; before them, hope. They had burned their bridges, and their only safety was in flight ; and upon this flight they concentrated all their energies.

## XVIII.

## NAPOLEON AND ALEXANDER I.

IF we agree with the historians that great men lead humanity toward certain ends, such as the greatness of Russia and France, the European balance of power, the propagation of the ideas of the Revolution, progress in general, or any other object, then it is impossible to explain historical events without having recourse to the intervention of accident or of genius.

If the European wars at the beginning of this century had for their object the greatness of Russia, that end might have been attained without the wars and without the invasion.

If, on the contrary, the object in view was the greatness of France, there was no need of the Revolution or of the Empire.

If the proposed end was the propagation of the ideas of the Revolution, books would have accomplished the work better than soldiers.



If, lastly, the progress of civilization was the object, it is sufficiently evident that there are means for its attainment more efficacious than the destruction of men, and pillage.

Why did events take one course rather than another? History replies:—

“Accident created the situation and genius profited by it.”

But what is “accident,” and what is the meaning of the word “genius”?

“Accident” and “genius” are words which do not represent anything that really exists, and for this reason it is impossible to define them.

They only express a certain way of looking at events.

I am ignorant of the cause of a fact. I believe that I cannot know it, and, accordingly, I do not try to discover it; I say, it is an accident.

I see that a force has produced an action incompatible with the ordinary qualities of men; I cannot penetrate to the cause of this force, and I cry, it is genius.

The sheep shut up every night by the

shepherd in a special enclosure, and given extra food till it becomes twice as fat as the others, must appear to be a genius to the rest of the flock. The fact that the sheep, instead of entering the common fold, has a place by itself and extra fodder, and, once fattened, is delivered to the butcher and killed, doubtless impresses the other sheep as a result of genius combined with a series of extraordinary accidents.

But if the sheep stop thinking that everything that goes on is exclusively related to their own welfare, if they admit that events may follow ends they cannot comprehend, they will perceive a unity of action and a logical conclusion in the fate of the fattened sheep.

Even if they do not know why it was fattened, they will understand that nothing that happened to the sheep came by chance, and they will not be obliged to resort for explanation either to accident or to genius.

Only when we renounce the effort to know the final end of things, and realize that that end is wholly beyond our comprehension, do

we discover in the lives of historical personages a logical succession of facts, obedient to necessity, and then only will be revealed to us the cause of the disproportion between their acts and the capacities of ordinary men, and we shall not be obliged to resort to the words accident and genius.

Thus, if we admit that the object of the movements of European peoples is unknown to us, that we know only certain facts, such as butcheries in France, then in Prussia, in Austria, and in Russia, and that the cause of these events must lie in the movement of the western peoples toward the east, and, inversely, of eastern peoples toward the west, — admitting this, we no longer have need of finding genius or anything exceptional in the character of Napoleon and of Alexander I. ; we shall see in these personages only men like other men, we shall have no need of explaining on the score of accident the little events that made these personages what they were, and it will be evident to us that these little events were necessary.

When we give up our search for final ends,

we understand that, just as it is impossible to find on a plant other flowers and other fruits than those which it produces, so is it impossible to imagine two historical personages who, in the place of Alexander I. and Napoleon, would have been able, from the beginning to the end of their lives, to fulfil exactly and in the smallest details the mission that devolved upon them.

The fundamental fact in European events at the beginning of this century is the warlike movements of peoples in mass, first from west to east, and then from east to west.

This movement begins in the west. That the western peoples may have the power to push their warlike advance as far as Moscow, it was necessary :—

1. That they concentrate in a warlike mass of dimensions sufficient to endure the shock of the warlike mass from the east ;
2. That they renounce all their traditions and all their habitudes ;
3. That they have at their head, to accomplish this bellicose movement, a man who can justify himself and justify them for resorting to

lies, to pillage, and to massacres, to attain their end.

The little primitive nucleus dating from the French Revolution, not being large enough, disperses. Traditions and habitudes are modified, a new and more considerable group is formed little by little, and with it come new traditions and new habitudes. In this environment the man who is to take his place at the head of the movement and bear all the responsibility of the events that follow is prepared for his mission.

This man, without principles, without habitudes, without traditions, without name, who is not even a Frenchman,—by what seems at first glance a combination of strange and fortuitous circumstances,—glides through all the parties that divide France, and, taking part with none, is placed at the head of all.

The stupidity of those about him, the weakness and inanity of his rivals, his own sincerity in falsehood, and his brilliant and presumptuous egotism, combine to push this man to the head of the army.

The excellent quality of his army in Italy, the

disinclination of the enemy to fight, his confidence in himself and his puerile effrontery, give him military glory.

A multitude of so-called happy accidents meet him everywhere.

The French authorities look at him askance, and their disfavor is useful to him.

The attempts he makes to open a new career fail one after the other; Russia refuses his services, the sultan rejects his offers.

During the war in Italy he is many times within a hair's-breadth of destruction, and always escapes by some unforeseen circumstance.

The Russian troops, the only troops who are able to extinguish his glory, because of manifold diplomatic combinations do not set foot in Europe while he is there.

On his return from Italy he finds the French government in a state of dissolution that must infallibly end in ruin. Napoleon himself devises, as an escape from this dangerous situation, the foolish and haphazard scheme of an expedition to Africa.

Again chance serves him marvellously. Malta, reputed to be impregnable, surrenders be-

fore a shot is fired. Napoleon's most adventurous plans are crowned with success.

The enemy's fleet, which a little later would not allow the meanest vessel to pass, does not interfere with the passage of his army.

In Africa, he commits a series of outrages upon the almost unarmed inhabitants, and the men who unite with him in these atrocities, and above all he, their chief, persuade themselves that what they do is great and noble, that they are winning glory, and that their exploits are like those of Cæsar and Alexander of Macedon.

This ideal of *glory* and *greatness*, leading those who follow it to shrink from no crime and to surround all their acts with a halo of the supernatural,—the ideal which is to be the guide of this man and of all those who join his fortunes,—grew to enormous proportions in Africa.

Everything that he undertakes prospers. The pestilence spares him. Massacre of prisoners is not imputed to him as a crime.

His hurried, puerile, erratic departure, dishonorable withal, for he left behind companions in arms who were in distress, is accounted to him

a meritorious act, and again, the second time, the English fleet allows him to escape.

Then dazzled by the crimes he has committed, and the satisfaction they have brought him, he reaches Paris without any definite object in view. The republican government, which a year before still had the power to put an end to him, is so near dissolution that the presence of this man belonging to no party can only end in his own supremacy.

He has no plan, he fears every one; but parties see in him their safety, and solicit his support.

For it is he, he alone, with that ideal of glory and greatness built up in Italy and Egypt, with his wild adoration of self, his audacity in crime, his sincerity in falsehood, who is equal to the events which are about to be unfolded.

He is the man needed to occupy the place that waits for him, and so, independently of his own will, without any determined plan, in spite of hesitations and numerous mistakes, he is drawn into a conspiracy which aims at the possession of power, and this conspiracy is crowned with success.



He is thrust into a sitting of the Directory. Alarmed, he wishes to fly, believing himself lost ; he feigns illness, and utters a few foolish words that might have been his destruction.

But the men, once so haughty and determined, who then compose the government of France, feel that their game is over. They are more disturbed than Napoleon, and they say just the contrary of what they should have said to retain their power and overthrow the usurper.

Accident or rather millions of accidents give him power, and all men, as if by agreement, hasten to confirm him in power.

To accident is due the weakness of character which leads the members of the Directory to bow before Napoleon.

Accident makes the character of Paul I., and leads that sovereign to recognize Napoleon's power.

Accident hatches against Napoleon a plot which, instead of destroying, confirms his power.

Through accident the Prince of Enghien comes into his hands, and is assassinated ; and

this act, more than any other, proves to the multitude his right, since he possesses the might, to rule.

By accident he gives all his strength to an expedition against England; the enterprise, which would have ruined him, is never carried out, but he falls upon Mack and the Austrian army, and conquers without a battle.

Accident and genius give him the victory at Austerlitz, and, always by accident, all the men of all the nations of all Europe (with the exception of England, which had no part in the events then in progress), all men, in spite of their horror at Napoleon's crimes, recognize his power and his self-assumed title, and regard his ideal of glory and greatness as reasonable and noble.

The forces of the west, as if preparing for a future movement, increase and solidify, after being drawn many times toward the east in 1805, 1806, 1807, and 1809.

By 1811, the group of men formed in France unites with the peoples of Central Europe and forms an enormous mass.

As this mass increases, the man at their

head is proportionately strengthened in his position.

During the ten years of preparation for this great movement, the man has dominated all the sovereigns of Europe. Uncrowned sovereigns have no reasonable ideal to oppose to the foolish ideal of greatness and glory invented by Napoleon. One after another they submit to him, and prove their own insignificance.

The King of Prussia sends his queen to the great man to solicit his good offices; the Emperor of Austria thinks it will be a favor if the great man will take the daughter of the emperors to his bed; the pope, guardian of popular holiness, puts religion under the great man's feet.

Napoleon's part is exacted by his environment, which thrusts upon him the responsibility for present and future events, and prepares him for what is to come.

Every act or crime or stroke of luck he essays is received by the world as something heroic.

When the Germans wish to gratify him, they can think of nothing better than celebrations in honor of Jena and Auerstädt.

Greatness is not confined to him ; his ancestors, his brothers, his sons-in-law, his brothers-in-law are also great.

Everything combines to take away his last vestige of reason, and to prepare him for his terrible career.

When he is ready, all the forces are also ready.

The invasion rushes toward the east, and comes to an end at Moscow. The capital is taken. The Russian army is more thoroughly shattered than were those of the enemy from Austerlitz to Wagram.

And now, all of a sudden, in place of the accidents that have borne him through a series of uninterrupted successes to the predestined end, we find in operation an incalculable accumulation of contrary accidents, such as a cold in the head at Borodino, the sparks that set fire to Moscow, and the frosts of Russia ; and in place of genius we discover an incapacity and baseness hitherto unknown to history.

The invasion advances backwards, and accident, instead of favoring its progress, turns against it.

Then we behold an inverse movement, from

east to west, bearing a close resemblance to the preceding movement.

It also is heralded by premonitory activity in 1805, 1807, and 1809. As in the former case, a new group is formed, increases, and becomes a colossal mass. The peoples of central Europe rally to this movement, which is apparently a repetition of the preceding movement, for nothing is wanting to complete the resemblance, neither irresolution midway nor increased velocity as the end draws near.

Paris, the goal of this movement, is reached, and the government of Napoleon and his army is overthrown.

Napoleon himself no longer represents anything. His actions inspire pity and disgust. A new and incomprehensible accident supervenes: the allies hate Napoleon, and regard him as the cause of all their misfortunes.

At this hour, despoiled of his prestige and power, accused of crimes and perfidy, he ought to have been looked upon, as he had been ten years before, or was ten years later, as a bandit, outside of the law; but, by a strange accident, no one considers him in this light.

His part is not yet played to the end. The man who has been declared to be a bandit, outside the law, is sent to an island two days' distance from France, and he is given possession of this island, with a guard, and millions in treasure paid to him. God knows why!

The uprising of peoples begins to abate. The waves fall back, and on the undulations of the sea float a few diplomatists, who imagine that they have brought about the calm.

But the sea rises again. The diplomatists imagine that their dissensions have invoked the storm; they anticipate another war among their sovereigns. The situation is beyond their control.

But the wave, whose approach they feel, does not come from the direction toward which they are looking.

It is a return of the old wave from the original point of departure, Paris, the last uprising from the west; an uprising which, all the diplomatists think, will solve all diplomatic difficulties, and put an end to the warlike movement of the period.

The man who has devastated France returns alone, without soldiers, without a plan. He is at the mercy of the guard, but, by a strange accident, no one touches him. On the contrary, every one runs to him in admiration, and receives with acclamations him whom they had cursed the day before, and whom they will curse again a month later. This man is still needed to play his part in the last act.

The act is ended. The play is over. The actor is told to take off his costume and go his way. He is needed no longer.

For several years more this man plays by himself a pitiable comedy, in solitude at St. Helena. He seeks by lies and intrigues to justify his actions, when justification is no longer necessary.

He shows clearly to the world what a miserable object it was that men took for a force when the invisible hand of Destiny pushed it forward.

The true dispenser of events, having brought the drama to an end, takes away the mask from the principal actor, and reveals his face, saying: "See in whom you have believed! Here

he is. You see now that not he, but I, led you."

But, blinded by their prejudices, men have long remained ignorant of the truth.

We find a yet more distinct and inevitable necessity in the life of Alexander I., who was at the head of the counter-movement, from the east toward the west.

What qualities ought a man to possess if he would supplant others and be placed at the head of this movement?

He must have a sentiment of justice, and he must take a real interest, an interest free from all mischievous designs, in the affairs of Europe.

He must have a loftier moral character than that of any other sovereign of his time. He must be gentle and sympathetic. And he must be the victim of outrageous assaults on the part of Napoleon.

All these distinctive traits are found in Alexander I. and have been produced by innumerable accidents, or so-called accidents, in his past life. Everything contributes to this end — his education, his liberal reforms, the counsellors by whom



he is surrounded; we need not include Austerlitz, Tilsit, and Erfurt.

Throughout the duration of the patriotic war, this personage is inactive, because he is not needed.

But, as soon as the necessity of a European war becomes evident, this personage is found at the critical moment in the place assigned to him; he is to rally the peoples of Europe and lead them to the end.

The end is accomplished. After the final war of 1815, Alexander has at his disposal the greatest resources of power ever accessible to man. What use does he make of this power?

Alexander I., the pacificator of Europe, the man who from his youth had been animated by a sincere desire to render his people happy, and who was the first to grant liberal reforms to his country, might, we are told, because of his unlimited power, have really established the welfare of his people. What do we see?

While Napoleon, in exile, occupied himself with lying and puerile plans to show how much he would do for the good of humanity if only he had the power, Alexander I., who possesses the

power, having fulfilled his mission, and feeling the hand of God upon him, realizes, as it were, at a glance, the nothingness of power, steps aside, gives himself into the hands of despicable men, himself capable only of uttering :—

“ ‘Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.’ I am a man like other men. Let me live like a man, that I may think of my ‘soul and of God.’”

As the sun or as an atom of the imponderable ether forms a sphere complete in itself while still only an atom in the great All inaccessible to man, so each individual has within himself an object of existence and at the same time serves the common object, which is inaccessible to human reason.

A bee, flying from flower to flower, stings a child, and the child is afraid of bees, declaring that their object in this world is to sting people.

The poet admires the bee drinking from the calix of a flower, and assures us that the object of bees is to breathe the perfume of flowers.

The apiarist sees that the bee gathers pollen and the juices of plants to nourish the queen

and the larvæ, and he decides that the object of bees is the continuation of their species.

A botanist, observing that the bee bears the fecundating dust from one flower to the pistils of another, assures us that the object of bees is fertilization.

Another botanist, seeing that the transmigration of plants is favored by the bee, declares that the object of the insect is discovered in that mission.

But the real object of the bee is not included in the first or the second or the third, or in any of the objects that the wisdom of man can discover.

The more he seeks to determine this final object, the more evident it is that the object is inaccessible to man.

All he can do is to observe the correlation existing between the life of the bee and the other phenomena of nature.

Man is surrounded by the same limitations, in searching for the final object of events or historical personages; the final object is wholly beyond his reach.

# POWER & LIBERTY

## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

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THE idea of necessity in history, which was marked out by Count Tolstor in his essay on "Napoleon and the Russian Campaign," is further developed and formally expressed in the following analysis of "Power and Liberty," for the text of which I am again indebted to M. Michel Delines. Most historical students at the present day will agree with Count Tolstor in his assertion that history has occupied itself altogether too much with objective data, and too little with the principles that govern the life of collective humanity. The historical method now in vogue seems to result chiefly from an effort to heap up facts of the most trivial character, and so to render history

an indefinite panorama of all the events that can come within the knowledge of man. The results are not, at least to some of us, either profitable or attractive,—for, in the accumulation of detail, perspective is wholly ignored; the relative importance of events is indistinguishable; there is no central purpose to give the picture the symmetry and meaning we feel that it ought to possess. And so it has come about that the persistent endeavor to reach final causes has reduced the historical field to a mass of unmanageable debris.

In the essay now before us, Count Tolstor suggests another method, which he confidently believes will ally historical science with the other sciences. He maintains that history must give up the study of causes, which are not and never can be known, and busy itself instead with the discovery of the laws that govern the life of humanity; that is, with the laws of the organization, expansion, and transmigration of peoples. This method reduces

the "great man" to a comparatively commonplace level; but then, as we all know, Count Tolstor does not believe in great men of the traditional heroic pattern. He has declared elsewhere, in no indefinite terms, that the true aim of life is love to one's fellows, and greatness of the heroic type is plainly inconsistent with that aim.

The question naturally hinges on the problem of free will, and this problem it seems to me that Count Tolstor has treated in an original and impressive manner. The fact that man feels himself to be free, and yet knows through reason that he is subject to necessity, is made the basis of a bold and trenchant argument. The conclusion is, moreover, thoroughly consistent and thoroughly logical. Man is free in his motives, conditioned in his actions: there is ample room for the moralist to speculate on this point, and, as Count Tolstor shows, it is compatible with all our received opinions regarding conduct — properly viewed,

it strengthens religion and morality, it does not weaken them.

Perhaps we shall not be far wrong if we see, in the essay on "Power and Liberty" a bearing on the present condition of the people to which the author belongs. In a thoughtful review of "Napoleon and the Russian Campaign," it has been suggested that some of the obvious exaggerations of that book have a political significance; the opinion is one that may be commended to readers of this later volume. Surely both books have in them the groundswell of humanity, the aspiration for freedom, and the cry that voices this aspiration is indeed a cry from the depths. Whether we listen sympathetically and try to understand, or whether we turn aside and denounce the plea as idle and vain, will largely depend, I should think, on our sense of justice, and our sense of the essential nobility of manhood; for there are people who know, or may know if they will, the condition of affairs in Russia,



and who yet have the hardihood to ask why, instead of these polemical works, Count Tolstor does not write novels. It is as if the house of a man who had made a reputation as a singer were burning, those he loved in immediate peril, and the crowd that gathered at his call for assistance should fall idly to wondering why he did not entertain them with a song.

HUNTINGTON SMITH.

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# POWER AND LIBERTY.

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## I.

### THE OBJECT OF HISTORY.

THE object of history is to study the life of peoples and of humanity in general. Now to describe the life of humanity, or simply that of a single people, is an undertaking beyond the ability of man. Historians formerly had a very easy way of reconstructing the life of a people. They told about the actions of persons who ruled over a people, and the life of the nation was supposed to be summed up in the lives of these individuals.

To the question, "How is it that heroes were able to make whole peoples conform to their individual wills?"—the historians replied by proclaiming the existence of a di-

vine will which subordinated peoples to the will of a single chosen man. To the question, "What power controlled the individual will of these heroes?"—they responded by declaring that divinity directed the will of the chosen man towards a predestined end.

In this way, all questions were answered by declaring faith in the divine will, and by maintaining that divinity participated directly in human actions.

Theoretically, the new historical school has refuted both theses. It denies the faith of the old historians in the subordination of man to divinity, and the belief that men are led to predestined ends, and it undertakes to examine, not acts of power, but the causes which are productive of power. Nevertheless, after theoretically refuting the ideas of its predecessors, we find the modern historical school following them in practice.

In the place of men clothed with divine power and governed directly by the will of

God, the modern historians give us heroes endowed with supernatural or superhuman talents, and these men of diverse qualities, from monarchs to journalists, are represented as moulding public opinion.

The ancients, — Jews, Greeks, Romans, — regarded the predetermined ordinances of divinity as the motives of all human action. The new historical school discovers such motives in the welfare of different peoples, — French, English, Germans, — and, in the loftiest abstraction, the welfare of the civilized world and of the whole of humanity — the term humanity ordinarily meaning the peoples who occupy our little northwest corner of the continent.

Modern history refutes the old theories without putting any new ideas in their place, and historians who have rejected the hypothesis of the divine right of kings, or the ancient belief in the decrees of the gods, have been obliged by the logic of events to resort to

the same conception of history by asserting that peoples are guided by isolated individuals, and that there is an object toward which humanity is moving.

In the works of all the modern historians, from Gibbon to Buckle, notwithstanding their apparent disagreement and the superficial novelty of their conceptions, we find at bottom the same two old theories from which they have been unable to escape.

In the first place, historians describe the actions of persons who, in their opinion, have guided humanity. One historian finds his heroes only among monarchs, generals, and statesmen; another historian makes his selections from the orators, men of science, reformers, philosophers, and poets.

In the second place, historians believe they know the end toward which humanity is guided; but to one historian that end is the greatness of the Romans, the Spaniards, the French, and to another historian it is liberty and equality, or

civilization in the little corner of the globe we call Europe.

In 1789, a revolution began at Paris ; it grew, spread out, and resulted in a movement of peoples from west to east. Several times this movement towards the east met with a counter movement from east to west. In 1812, it reached its final limit, Moscow, and with remarkable similarity there followed an inverse movement from east to west which, like the former, carried with it the peoples of central Europe. This counter movement returned to the departing point of the preceding wave, Paris, and subsided.

During this period of twenty years, many fields remained fallow, houses were burned, the channels of trade were changed, millions of men were ruined, others were enriched, others emigrated, and millions of Christians who professed to love their neighbors met and killed one another.

What is the meaning of all these occur-

rences? What is the origin of all these facts? What was it that forced these men to burn each other's houses and cut each other's throats? What was the moving power in this series of circumstances?

Such are the very simple and very logical questions that arise in the mind of any one who examines the historical movements of this period in the life of humanity.

For the answer to these questions let us look to history whose mission is to teach humanity to know itself.

If history takes the old point of view, it replies, "God, to reward or to punish his people, gave power to Napoleon and guided his will that he might accomplish the divine purpose."

This reply is, at any rate, clear and conclusive. One may or may not believe in the divine mission of Napoleon, but for him who does so believe, the history of our times is intelligible and harmonious.



But the new historical school cannot resort to this explanation, because it does not believe in the old doctrine that divinity directly controls human action. It simply says, "You would know what this movement was, why it took place, what was the force that controlled it? Well, then, listen to me:—

"Louis XIV. was a very proud and a very presumptuous man; he had such and such a mistress, such and such a minister, and he governed France very badly.

"The successors of Louis XIV. were also incompetent, and they governed France more badly still. They also had such and such favorites and such and such mistresses.

"In these times there arose at Paris a group who proclaimed that all men were free and equal. The result of their teachings was that people in France began to cut one another's throats. These men killed the king and many of the nobility.

"At this moment, a man of genius named

Napoleon came to the surface. He was always successful; that is to say, he killed a great many people, because he was a great genius.

“For this reason he set out to kill the Africans, and he killed so many and showed so much ingenuity and cunning in the killing, that when he came back to France he said that everybody must obey him, and everybody did obey him.

“He made himself emperor, and again set out to kill men; this time in Italy, Austria, and Prussia.

“But in Russia, the Emperor Alexander suddenly resolved to reëstablish order in Europe, and he declared war against Napoleon. All at once, in 1807, they became friends. In 1811 they were again at variance, and killed a great many people. Napoleon led six hundred thousand men into Russia, seized Moscow, and then fled from the city.

“The Emperor Alexander, by the advice of

Stein and others, formed a European league against the disturber of peace.

“Those who had been the allies of Napoleon became his enemies, and the coalition marched against the new forces he had got together. The allies entered Paris, forced the emperor to abdicate, and sent him to the Island of Elba, without depriving him of his title, or failing to show him all possible tokens of deference, although both before and after that time he was regarded as a bandit and an outlaw.

“Then began the reign of Louis XVIII., a prince who, up to that time, had been an object of derision to the French, and also to the allies.

“Napoleon shed tears on taking leave of his old guard, abdicated, and went into exile.

“Now, a number of statesmen and diplomatists talked to one another at Vienna, and thereby greatly increased the welfare of several peoples, and diminished the welfare of others. At this moment, Talleyrand succeeded

in getting possession of a certain arm-chair, and in this way moved back the frontiers of France.

“The diplomatists and sovereigns had differences, and they were about to set their armies at work cutting each other’s throats, when Napoleon came back to France at the head of a battalion.

“The French, who detested Napoleon, submitted, and the discontented allies once more set out to fight with France.

“Napoleon, the genius, was sent like a bandit to St. Helena. There, in exile, separated from his relatives and from his dear France, he died a lingering death, while telling the story of his life for the benefit of posterity.

“Meanwhile, a reaction took place in Europe, and all the sovereigns began once more to oppress their peoples.”

Do not regard this sketch as a parody, or a caricature of the narratives which historians have produced with regard to this epoch. It is, in fact, a mild summary of the contradictory

and baseless assertions to be found in all the books written about the period in question—the *Memoirs*, the *Universal Histories*, the *Histories of Civilization*.

The replies seem strange and even ridiculous to us, because history, as the new school understands it, is like a deaf person who answers questions that no one has asked.

If the object of history is to describe the movements of peoples and of humanity, the first question demanding an answer will be, "What is the force that sets peoples in motion?" If this question is not answered, all that follows is unintelligible.

The new historical school replies that Napoleon was a great genius, that Louis XIV. was very presumptuous, and that such and such a writer had published such and such a work.

These affirmations are perhaps true, and humanity does not dispute them, but they bring us no nearer the solution of the problem in which we are interested.

We might accept this reply as satisfactory if we recognized the direct action of divine power which is self-sufficient and which governs peoples by means of Napoleons, Louis XIV.s, and great writers. But we no longer believe in this manifestation of divine power, and so, before talking to us about Napoleon, Louis XIV., and the great writers, historians must show us the connecting link between these men and the movements of peoples.

If divine power is to be replaced by a new source of action, we must know in what that force consists, for on this particular point the interest of history is concentrated.

The new historical school apparently takes it for granted that this force is known, and that there is no necessity of demonstrating its existence; but he who studies the historical accounts of recent times will not be able to discover in them the new force, and he will doubt whether after all it is wholly clear to the historians themselves.

## II.

### THE CONTRADICTIONS OF HISTORIANS.

WHAT is the force that sets peoples in motion ?

Biographical historians and those who write the history of a single nation ascribe this force to the power which is inherent in heroes and emperors.

According to their stories, events are accomplished solely through the will of a Napoleon, an Alexander, or some other personage whose actions they describe in detail.

Their reply to the question, "What is the force that produces events?" is satisfactory only as long as the facts are collected by a single historian.

When historians of different nationalities and divergent opinions undertake to describe the

same event, their conclusions are worthless, for each of them understands the moving cause in a different and often in a contradictory way.

One assures us that the power of Napoleon is the cause of certain events ; another finds the origin of events in the power of Alexander ; and a third brings forward still another person as the source of action.

Moreover, these historians contradict one another, even when they try to explain the force upon which the power of a given person depends.

Thus Thiers, who is a Bonapartist, declares that the power of Napoleon was due to his virtues and his genius. Lanfrey, who is a republican, affirms, on the contrary, that the power of Napoleon depended on his cunning and his talent for deceiving people.

These historians, by thus denying each other's affirmations, deprive each other of support, and destroy at a single blow their conception of the force which produces events ; and the essential question of history remains unanswered.



Those who undertake to describe the life of all the nations, show in their books of universal history how inadequate is the conception of the biographical historians with regard to the force that produces events. They will not admit that this force comes from the power inherent in heroes and emperors, but maintain that it is the resultant of several forces directed in different ways.

In describing a war or the conquest of a nation, the author of a universal history looks for the cause, not in the power of a single person, but in the combined action of several persons who have taken part in the progress of events.

It is plain enough that the power of historical personages, who are themselves subject to certain conditions, ought not to be regarded as the force that in itself brings events to pass. But we find the authors of universal histories having recourse also to the idea of power, which they regard as a

force in itself, and as the cause and producer of events.

In the narratives of these historians we find a certain personage put forth as the product of his time, and his power as the product of different forces, and then this power is regarded as the exclusive force which produces events.

Gervinus, Schlosser, and others, demonstrate that Napoleon is the product of the Revolution, of the ideas of '89, etc., and then they go on to show that the Russian Campaign and other displeasing events are simply the results of Napoleon's misdirected will, and they further demonstrate that the ideas of '89 were checked in their development by the arbitrary power of Bonaparte.

It seems, then, that the Revolution and the life of this whole period produced the power of Napoleon, and that this power stifled the ideas of the Revolution and suppressed the new germs of life.

A contradiction so strange is not accidental. We find it continually arising. All historical narratives are a tissue of similar contradictions.

The result is that those who have undertaken to write universal history have stopped half way.

In order that component forces may give a certain resultant, the sum of the component forces must be equal to the resultant. Historians always forget this law, and to justify the result they are obliged to add to their inadequate component forces an unexplained force which acts upon and through the different elementary known forces.

A biographical historian, describing the campaign of 1813, or the restoration of the Bourbons, declares boldly that all these events were produced by the will of Alexander.

But Gervinus, from the point of view of the universal historian, disputes this idea of the historico-biographer, and attempts to show that the campaign of 1813 and the restoration

of the Bourbons was produced, not alone by the will of Alexander, but by the influence of Stein, of Metternich, of Madame de Staël, of Talleyrand, of Fichte, of Châteaubriand, and of others.

The historian evidently decomposed the power of Alexander into the different factors, Talleyrand, Châteaubriand, Madame de Staël, etc. But the sum of the factors, that is, the influence of Châteaubriand, plus the influence of Talleyrand, plus the influence of Madame de Staël, is not equal to the result,—to the fact that millions of Frenchmen submitted to the Bourbons.

And so the historian, to explain the fact, is obliged to admit once more the power he denies, and with it make up the resultant of his forces. In other words, he is obliged to recognize an inexplicable force which acts upon his elementary forces.

In this manner reason those who write universal history, and they are thereby at variance

with writers of special histories and finally contradict themselves.

Country people who have no idea of the causes of rain, believe that the clouds come and go in order to give them wet or dry weather.

After the same manner we find universal historians supporting their theories, now by arguing that power is the result of events, now by asserting that power produces events.

Those who have undertaken to relate the history of civilization have pursued the road marked out by the universal historians, but they are not satisfied by looking for the force that produces events in certain writers or certain beautiful women, so they seek for it principally in civilization, that is to say, in the intellectual life of peoples.

These historians are entirely consistent with the theory of universal history from which they start. If we can explain historical events by the fact that certain persons had such and such relations with one another, why may we not

explain the same events by the fact that such and such writers published such and such books?

From the innumerable manifestations that accompany every event of life, these historians select one, intellectual activity, and declare it to be the cause of all events.

Yet in spite of their efforts to maintain this theory, we must grant them important concessions before we admit that there is any relation between the movements of peoples and their intellectual life.

It is quite impossible to demonstrate that the intellectual life governs the actions of historical personages, for the theory is set aside when we find events like the horrible massacres, battles, and executions of the French Revolution following arguments in behalf of equality and fraternity.

But even if we grant as true, all the subtle dissertations with which histories of civilization are filled, even if we admit that peoples are

tions between movements of humanity and commerce, industry, agriculture, and anything else.

The difficult point to understand is why the intellectual life of men should be, as the authors of histories of civilization affirm, the cause or expression of the life of humanity.

We can explain the assertion by means of two facts:—

1. History is written by scholars who naturally think the life of their class the basis of the life of humanity in general, just as merchants, farmers, and soldiers like to imagine that *they* are making history; we do not find this point brought out in historical works, because merchants, farmers, and soldiers, do not write history.

2. The intellectual life, education, civilization, the ideal, are so many indeterminate conceptions under which we are able conveniently to arrange words still more vague, and thus adapt them to all possible theories.

Without passing judgment upon their intrinsic value (for it is possible that histories of civilization and universal histories are of some use) we find them to possess one singular characteristic. After seriously analyzing in detail religious, philosophical, and political doctrines as the causes of events, they never fail when they have a historical fact to relate,—the Russian Campaign, for example,—they never fail to describe this fact as a consequence of power; they declare positively that the Russian Campaign was the product of the will of Napoleon.

In this way, historians of civilization contradict one another without knowing it. They prove that the new force they have imagined does not explain historical events, and that the only way of understanding history is by admitting the theory of power which they have attempted to set aside.



### III.

#### THE IDEA OF POWER.

A LOCOMOTIVE is in motion. What makes it go?

The moozhik replies that it is the devil; another says it moves because the wheels go round; a third assures us that the cause of motion is the smoke which the wind bears away.

The moozhik will not give up his opinion without a struggle. He is convinced that his explanation is the most satisfactory and complete to be found. To undeceive him, you must prove to him that the devil does not exist; or another moozhik must explain to him that it is not the devil, but the German engineer, who makes the locomotive go.

It is apparent from all these contradictions, that neither one nor the other can be right.

He who attributes the movements of the locomotive to the fact that the wheels go round is inconsistent with himself, because from the moment that he begins to analyze the movement of the machine, he ought logically to discover the final cause of the motion of the locomotive in the force of the steam imprisoned in the boiler.

He who accounts for the motion of the locomotive by the smoke that the wind blows away, evidently seizes upon the first manifestation that attracts his attention, and denominates it a cause.

The only way in which we can explain the motion of the locomotive is by getting an idea of a force equivalent to the observed movement.

And so the only way of explaining the movement of peoples is by forming a conception of a force equal to the sum of the movements of peoples.

The different forces assigned to meet this law by different historians are not equal to the

movements of peoples. Some of the historians have recourse to heroes, just as the moozhik finds a use for the devil. Others discover force in diplomatic intrigues, and are like the man who explains the motion of the locomotive by the fact that the wheels go round. Others, still, point to the influence of great writers, and resemble him who attributes the motion of the locomotive to the smoke driven away by the wind.

When any one undertakes to write the history of a remarkable person, whether that person is called Cæsar, or Alexander, or Luther, or Voltaire, —and does not include the history of all the men, without a single exception, who took part in the events under discussion, it is impossible not to attribute to the remarkable person a force which obliges other men to direct their activity towards a common end.

Historians conceive of this force in the unique form of power.

The idea of power is the lever by means of

which historians pry up material for history, as we understand history nowadays. He who breaks the lever, as Buckle did, and is unable to obtain another, is incapable of utilizing historical material.

When we see authors of universal histories and histories of civilization renouncing the idea of power, and yet constantly making use of it, we understand the impossibility of explaining historical events without the assistance of some such conception.

The relation between historical knowledge and the questions that preoccupy humanity at the present time, is much like the relation between bank notes and coin.

Biographical histories and the histories of isolated nations resemble bank notes. They may circulate in trade and be of service, but only as far as actual payment is assured.

If we put aside the question as to how the will of heroes brings about events, we find some histories, like that of Thiers, for instance,

to be interesting, instructive, and even animated with a breath of poetry.

But, just as doubt with regard to the value of bank notes arises from the fact that they are easy to make and may increase so fast that they cannot be exchanged for gold, so doubt concerning the value of historical works like that of Thiers arises from the fact that they are numerous and easily produced, and some one is sure to ask, in the simplicity of his heart, "By what force was Napoleon able to do all these things?" Some one there will be who will ask to have his bank notes of poetry exchanged for the pure gold of truth.

Authors of universal histories and of histories of civilization are like men who save their bank notes by paying their face value in debased coin.

Their money has the ring of the genuine metal, but it is not gold.

Now, while spurious bank notes may deceive the ignorant, no one is deceived by spurious coin.

Gold is of value only as a medium of exchange; universal histories will attain specie payment only when they reply to the essential historical question, "What is power?"

Authors of universal histories contradict one another when they reply to this question, and authors of histories of civilization pass it over entirely and reply to questions that were not asked of them at all.

There is no use in making tokens resemble gold, because they pass current only as a conventional sign, or else circulate among those who do not know gold when they see it.

The works of historians who do not respond to the essential questions of history have merely a conventional value; they are accepted by the universities and are in demand among those who are fond of what they call "solid reading."

## IV

### THE POPULAR WILL.

AFTER thrusting aside the old idea of the submission of the will of a people to the will of a single man chosen by divine will, historical science is unable to take another step without falling into contradictions.

It must choose between two courses. It must either return to the ancient belief that God takes a part in human affairs, or it must clearly determine the meaning of the force which it calls power, and which it says produces historical events.

Faith being destroyed, a return to the ancient belief is impossible at this day ; it is therefore necessary to define the meaning of power.

“Napoleon gave the order for his troops to form and march to the war.”

This idea is so natural, so familiar, that we

do not stop to ask why six hundred thousand men should go out and fight at a word from Napoleon. He had the power and consequently his orders were obeyed.

The reply would be satisfactory if we could believe that power was given to him by God. But as we no longer have this belief, we must find out what that power is that one man exercises over his fellow men.

It does not consist in the physical superiority of the strongest over the weakest ; the ability, like that of Hercules, to inflict death upon another. It does not consist in moral superiority, although certain simple-minded historians seem to think so when they give us heroes, that is, men endowed with extraordinary strength of soul and intellect.

Power cannot depend upon moral superiority for, without speaking of heroes like Napoleon, whose moral qualities are doubted by many, history shows us that neither Louis XI. nor Metternich was endowed with exceptional



moral qualities, and yet they governed millions of men, while all the time they were morally beneath the least of those whose actions they directed.

If the source of power is not in the physical capacity or moral quality of heroes, we must look for it outside of historical personages in their relations with the masses.

This is the way in which jurisprudence conceives of power.

Power, then, is the united will of the masses, avowedly or tacitly transmitted to rulers chosen by the masses.

In the science of law, which is made up of dissertations on the way in which a state or power is organized, this definition seems clear enough, but when we apply it to history we find that some points are yet to be made intelligible.

Jurisprudence looks upon the state and power as the ancients looked upon fire—as something which exists in itself.

According to history, the state and power are only phenomena, as fire is no longer regarded as a physical element but simply as a phenomenon.

This divergence of opinion enables jurisprudence to show in detail how power ought to be organized, and even to determine power which remains inert outside of time.

But when history asks jurisprudence to explain facts which prove that power is modified in time, jurisprudence is unable to make any reply.

If power is the united will of the masses transmitted to a single person, was Poogatshef, the renegade Cossack, a representative of the will of the masses? and, if not, why did Napoleon I. recognize him as such?

Why was Napoleon III., when arrested at Boulogne, regarded as a criminal, and why, later on, were those who arrested him denounced as guilty?

After a palace revolution, where only two

or three men are engaged, is the will of the masses represented by the new emperor?

In international affairs is the will of the masses carried out by the conqueror?

Was the will of the Confederation of the Rhine incarnated in Napoleon in 1808?

When the Russian troops went with the French troops in 1809, to fight against the Austrians, did Napoleon represent the will of the Russian people?

These questions may be answered in three ways :—

1. We may hold that the will of the masses is transmitted unconditionally to their chosen ruler or rulers, and that any assault upon the power thus established is an attack upon power in itself.

2. We may admit that the will of the masses is transmitted to the ruler or rulers under known and determined conditions, and that all successful attacks upon the power thus established are due to failure on the part of

the rulers to observe the conditions under which they received their power.

3. We may regard the will of the masses as transmitted irregularly to rulers, under unknown and indeterminate conditions, so that variations in power arise from the fact that rulers fulfil the unknown conditions of power more or less successfully.

In these three ways historians explain the relations existing between the masses and those who govern.

Certain historians (the same biographical historians of whom I spoke a little way back) who are so simple that they do not understand the meaning of power, seem to think that the united will of the masses is transmitted to historical personages without any conditions whatever; and so when these historians describe the power of a given personage they regard it as the only true power, and they look upon all opposing forces, not as power, but as violence, an assault upon power.

This theory may be applied to primitive and peaceable periods of history, but it cannot explain the stormy times in the life of peoples when several powers are in conflict.

A legitimist historian undertakes to prove that the Convention, the Directory, and the Bonapartist government were violations of power; while the republican and the Bonapartist historians try to prove, one, that the Convention, the other, that the Empire, was the only legitimate power, and that all other manifestations were violations of power.

It is plain that such explanations of power mutually invalidate one another; they are good only for children, and for very childish children at that.

Other authors, recognizing the falsity of this conception of history, say that power is based on the conditional transmission of the will of the masses to the rulers, and that these historical personages receive power only on the condition that they carry out the will of the people.

But what are the conditions? Historians do not tell us, and, when they try to explain, they straightway fall into contradictions.

Every historian establishes his own conditions according to his conception of the object of the life of peoples.

One finds this object to be the greatness, liberty, wealth, and culture of the French people; another applies the same conditions to the Germans; a third, to the Russians.

But if we assert that the conditions are the same for all nations, we are obliged to admit that historical facts are nearly always at variance with the theory.

If power is transmitted to rulers on the condition that peoples are assured possession of wealth, liberty, and culture, how is it that Louis XIV. and Ivan the Terrible came peaceably to the end of their reigns, while Louis XVI. and Charles I. were condemned by their peoples and perished on the scaffold?

Historians reply that the bad government of

Louis XIV. had its effect in the reign of Louis XVI. But why was not Louis XIV. obliged to bear the penalty of his own misdeeds? How was it that the penalty fell only upon Louis XVI.? How much time is needed for the execution of such a penalty?

To these questions we get no reply, because no one can answer them.

There is another phenomenon which historians cannot explain. For several centuries the united will of the masses remained in the keeping of kings and their successors; then, suddenly, in the course of fifty years, it was transmitted to a Convention, from the Convention to the Directory, from the Directory to a person named Napoleon, then to Alexander I., then to Louis XVIII., then back to Napoleon, then to Charles X., then to Louis Philippe, then to a republican government, then to Napoleon III.

To explain this incessant transmission of the will of the masses from one personage to an-

other, especially in international relations, historians are forced to the conclusion that in the course of events the will of the masses is not regularly exerted, and that in many cases the results are due largely to the weakness of diplomatists, monarchs, and party leaders.

Thus historical events, such as civil wars, revolutions, conquests, are represented by historians, not as free transmissions of will, but as will perverted by this or that personage; that is, as a violation of power.

We can see that historical events do not agree with the theory.

These historians are like a botanist who observes that certain plants germinate with two cotyledons, lays this down as a law, and declares that the palm, the mushroom, and the oak, not being dicotyledonous, are exceptions to the rule.

Historians who declare that the will of the masses is transmitted to historical personages under unknown conditions, affirm that these



persons possess power because they carry out the will of the masses so transmitted.

If the force that moves the masses is not inherent in historical personages, but is in the people, what part is to be assigned to these personages by history?

Historians declare that they express the will of the masses, and that their action represents the action of the masses.

We may ask if they express the will of the masses throughout the whole extent of their careers, or only on certain special occasions.

If, as certain historians seem to think, the entire lives of historical personages express the will of the masses, the biographers of Napoleon and Catherine, who describe all the scandals of their courts, reflect also upon the morals of the people.

Is not that a most nonsensical conclusion?

But if the will of peoples is expressed only by certain phases in the careers of historical personages, as the so-called philosophical historians

think, must we not first of all determine what the life of the people is, that we may recognize the special occasions when the career of the hero expresses the will of the masses?

Confronted by these difficulties, historians invent a most vague and intangible abstraction to cover a great number of historical events, and they declare that the object of the life of humanity is to be found in this abstraction.

In the foreground they place liberty, fraternity, culture, progress, civilization. Then they study the lives of the men who have left behind them records of action — kings, ministers, generals, writers, reformers, judges, courtiers — and determine how much these personages have contributed to the realization of the idea evolved by the historians as the supreme object of the life of humanity, or in what manner they have distinguished themselves by fighting against it.

But so far they have not been able to prove that the object of the life of humanity is liberty,

equality, culture, and civilization, or that the relations between the masses and historical personages are based upon the chimerical hypothesis that the united will of the masses is always transmitted to chosen men.

The activity of the life of millions of men who march forth to war, burn their houses, abandon their fields, and cut each other's throats, cannot be expressed by a description of the deeds and words of a dozen persons who never burned their houses, or tilled the soil, or killed their fellows.

History at every step demonstrates the insufficiency of this hypothesis.

Can the revolutions of the peoples of the west at the close of the last century and their movement towards the east be explained by the lives of Louis XIV. and Louis XVI. and their mistresses and ministers, even if we throw in the lives of Napoleon, of Jean Jacques Rousseau, of Voltaire, of Diderot, of Beaumarchais, and of many others ?

Can the movement of peoples during the Crusades be explained by the lives of Godfrey of Bouillon, St. Louis, and their knights and ladies?

Can we to this day understand the origin of the movement of peoples which with no apparent reason threw a horde of vagabonds towards the east with Peter the Hermit at their head?

Is it not still more inexplicable to find this movement checked at the very moment when a sacred object, the deliverance of Jerusalem, was suggested?

Popes, kings, and chevaliers besought their peoples in vain to go forth and conquer the holy land; the peoples were deaf because the unknown cause that had pushed them towards the east had disappeared.

The life of Godfrey of Bouillon and the minnesingers cannot express the life of the peoples. Each has his special history, and the life and aspirations of the peoples remain unknown.

Much less shall we find the life of the peoples in the biographies of writers and reformers.

The history of civilization reveals certain conditions of existence, and gives us the thoughts of this writer or that reformer. It tells us that Luther had a fiery disposition and that Rousseau was suspicious by nature, but it does not explain why after the Reformation people cut each other's throats or why the French during the great Revolution hurried one another to the guillotine.

When we put together the two conceptions of history invented by contemporary historians, we obtain biographies of monarchs and writers, never the history of the life of the peoples.

## V.

### AN UNTENABLE THEORY.

THE life of peoples cannot be summarized in the lives of a few individuals, for the bond uniting such persons to peoples never has been discovered. The theory which pretends to find a bond of union in the will of the masses transmitted to chosen historical personages, is not confirmed by the facts.

At first glance, to be sure, the theory seems to be irrefutable, because the act of voluntary transmission cannot be verified.

Whatever the event may be, and whoever may be the personage at the head of affairs, we can always use the hypothesis of transmitted will, and say that the person in question is in his place for the reason that in him is incarnated the will of the masses.

When we apply this theory to historical questions we are like a man watching a herd of cattle, and attributing their change of direction, not to the varying quality of the feed, or the whip of the drover, but to the movements of the animals at the head of the herd.

“The herd,” we hear him say, “go in that direction because the leader chooses to have them go there, and the united will of all the other animals is concentrated upon their guide.”

This agrees with the theory of that class of historians who believe in the unlimited transmission of the popular will.

“If the animals moving at the head of the herd change their direction, it is because the will of all the animals is transmitted from one to another till a leader is found to conduct them whither they would go.”

This is the way events are explained by a second class of historians, who hold that the

united will of the masses is transmitted to rulers under certain conditions which these historians profess to understand.

“If the animals at the head of the herd change their course, and if their course constantly varies, it is because all the animals transmit their will to the leaders, that they may attain certain specified ends. For this reason we must study the movements of the remarkable animals under whose influence the herd is led from side to side.”

In this way argue a third class of historians, who believe that historical personages, from monarchs to journalists, are the exponents of a historical epoch.

We see, therefore, that the theory about the will of the masses being transmitted to historical personages is merely a periphrase.

What is the cause of historical events?  
Power.

What is power? Power is the united will of the masses transmitted to a given personage.



Under what condition is the will of the masses transmitted to a given person? On the condition that the person in question expresses the will of the masses.

That is to say, power is power. Power is a word, the meaning of which we are entirely unable to understand.

## VI.

### THE CONDITIONS OF POWER.

IF abstract reasoning could be made to comprehend all human experience, humanity would examine the idea of power as science formulates it, and conclude that it is only an abstraction, and that in reality it does not exist at all.

Man, however, studies events in the light of experience, and in forming his conclusions is governed by reason, and experience teaches him that power is no vain abstraction, but a real thing.

Whenever a historical event comes to pass, one or several men are at the top, and seem to be the prime agents of transformation.

Napoleon III. gives his orders, and the French start for Mexico.

The King of Prussia and Bismarck make known their wishes, and the German troops enter Bohemia.

At the command of Alexander I., the French submit to the Bourbons.

Experience shows us that in whatever way an event may come to pass it is always related in some way to certain persons who give the necessary commands.

Historians who follow the traditional method and believe in the direct participation of the divinity in human affairs, find the cause of an event in the expressed will of the person who has the power, but this conclusion is not confirmed either by reason or by experience.

Reason shows us that the expressed will of a historical personage — his words — forms but a part of the general activity that leads up to such and such an event, say a war or a revolution.

And so, if we do not recognize the existence of a supernatural or miraculous force, we can-

not possibly think that the words of any person will result in the movement of millions of men.

If we do admit that words can be the cause of an event, history teaches us that on many occasions the will of historical personages has been expressed without any effect whatever, their orders disobeyed, and events brought to pass in direct opposition to their wishes.

Unless we believe that divinity has a part in human affairs, we cannot regard power as the cause of historical events.

Power, as experience teaches us, is simply the relation that exists between the expressed will of a historical personage and the accomplishment of that will by others.

To understand the conditions under which this relation exists, we must first of all recognize the idea of will with reference to man, and not with reference to divinity.

If God gives commands expressive of his will, as the ancients believed, the expression of

his will is not subject to time or any determining cause, but is wholly independent of the event.

When, however, we speak of human commands as the expression of the will of men who are subject to the limitations of time and are dependent upon one another, we must understand the two conditions under which all historical events are produced, that we may know the relation existing between decrees and the events that follow. These conditions are :

1. Continuity in time between the historical movement and the person who gives the command.

2. An alliance between the historical personage who gives the command, and the men who carry it out.

## VII.

### RELATION OF COMMANDS TO EVENTS.

SINCE man acts in time and has himself a part in events, only the expression of the divine will, which is independent of time, can be related to a series of events extending over a period of years or centuries ; and only divinity, which is superior to all influences, can determine by will alone the character and the direction of the movement of humanity.

If we recognize the first condition, that an event must be accomplished in time, we see how impossible it is that a command should be executed, unless it is preceded by another command to facilitate its accomplishment.

A command is never a spontaneous utterance and it never can be related to a series of events. Every command is the result of

some other command, and is related to the event only at the moment when it is fulfilled.

When, for instance, we say that Napoleon gave the order for his troops to go to war, we sum up in a single command a series of consecutive commands, all dependent upon one another.

Napoleon did not command the Russian Campaign to take place; it was beyond his ability to do so.

On a certain day he ordered such and such messages to be sent to Vienna, Berlin, and St. Petersburg; the next day he despatched orders to the fleet, the army, the commissariat; and so on. His commands resulted in millions of orders which corresponded to the series of events that led the French army into Russia.

Throughout his whole reign, Napoleon was constantly planning an expedition against England, but, although he bestowed more attention upon it than upon any other enter-

prise, his plan never was carried out. Moreover, he resolutely entered upon the Russian Campaign after having many times declared that he would prefer Russia as an ally.

His commands with regard to England had no relation whatever to events; with regard to Russia, commands and events were in harmony.

If a man would have his orders carried out, he must give orders that can be accomplished.

To distinguish between what can be accomplished and what cannot be accomplished is impossible, not only in an event of importance, like the Russian Campaign, but under any circumstances, for all historical action is accomplished in the face of many difficulties.

For every order that is carried out, a great many orders are not accomplished at all.

Only the orders that can be accomplished form a consecutive series corresponding to the series of events.

Our error in taking the order that precedes



an event for the cause of that event, arises from the fact that, when an event occurs, out of thousands of orders given only those corresponding to events are accomplished, and we forget those that are not accomplished and are incapable of accomplishment.

Another and the principal source of error is, that in historical narratives we find a whole series of ideas, and facts innumerable (as, for example, those which corresponded to the movement of the French armies into Russia), summed up in a single event which gives the result produced by a series of actions.

We generalize, and take a series of orders as the sole expression of the will of one man.

We say, "Napoleon wanted the Russian Campaign, and he brought it to pass."

Now the fact is, we cannot find, in the recorded life of Napoleon, the expression of any such desire.

We find simply a series of conflicting and indeterminate orders or expressions of will.

Out of an innumerable series of orders, some were accomplished and the result was the Russian Campaign. These orders were accomplished, not because they differed from those that were not accomplished, but because they corresponded to the events that led the French army into Russia.

So the fresco painter spreads his colors at haphazard upon his stencil, and without special effort produces the predetermined design.

When we analyze the relation between orders and events in time, we find that the given command is never the cause of the historical fact, but that the two have a certain connection.

To know what this connection is, we must remember another condition upon which all human orders are dependent. The person who gives the command must himself take part in the event.

The relation that subsists between the man who gives the orders and the men who receive

the orders, is what we mean when we speak of power.

That they may exert a common action, men unite into groups, and in these groups, in spite of the diversity of aims, the relations between the component parts are always identical.

When men are united into groups, the majority take a direct part in the common action, and so form another group, while the minority have little or no direct connection with affairs.

Of all the groups formed by men for purposes of common action, the most important and the best organized is the army.

Every army is composed of soldiers, who form the majority, then of corporals, then various minor officers, then colonels, then generals, etc., — the number of each class diminishing as we ascend the military hierarchy, till we find supreme power concentrated in a single man.

The organization of an army may be likened to a cone. The base, where the diameter is largest, is composed of soldiers; the successive

sections are officers of superior rank ; and at the summit of the cone sits the commander-in-chief.

The soldiers, who are by far the most numerous and who form the lowermost portion of the cone, take a direct part in events ; they kill, they burn, they pillage, and all the time they receive orders from their superiors and never give any orders themselves.

The subalterns are less numerous and they participate less actively in what is going on, but they give orders.

The officer of a higher rank does still less, but he gives more frequent orders.

The general gives orders to the troops and tells them where to go ; he never fires a shot himself.

The commander-in-chief takes no part in action, but issues general orders for the movement of masses of troops.

The same relations exist between men who are united for any common action, whether

the end in view be industry, or commerce, or any other enterprise.

When we examine an organized group and follow the different grades from the base to the apex of the cone, we find it to be a law that the more actively men participate in affairs the fewer orders they are able to give, and that the more orders they give the less are their numbers, until we come to a single man who takes no part whatever in events, and who has nothing to do but to give orders.

The relations between the men who give the orders and the men who receive them, is the essence of the idea which we call power.

In examining the conditions of time under which events take place, we have found that an order is accomplished only when it is related to a corresponding series of events.

On looking into the relations that subsist between the men who command and those who

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receive orders, we have seen that, in accordance with their respective situations, those who give the most orders take the least part in the event, and that their action is limited exclusively to giving orders.

## VIII.

### RELATION OF COMMANDS TO POWER.

WHEN an event is in progress every one has an opinion and a desire with regard to its consummation, and as the event is the result of the combined action of millions of men it is natural that one of the opinions or desires should be realized. Then the opinion or desire thus realized appears to us like a command which preceded the event.

Several men join their forces to carry a stick of timber. They ask each other where it is to be placed, and each one of them has his idea of the proper destination. When the task is accomplished, they find that they have followed the advice of one of their number. He is the one who gave the command.

Such, in its most primitive form, is the relation of command and power.

The workman who toils uninterruptedly with his own hands has no time to think about what he is doing, or to foresee the result of combined action. It is impossible for him to give orders.

He who gives the orders is more occupied with talk than with action, and therefore evidently works less with his hands.

The larger the association formed for labor in common, the more important becomes the class of men who give orders and do not work.

A man working alone believes himself to be governed by a series of associated ideas which have directed his former labors, which facilitate the work of the moment, and which will be useful to him in future enterprises.

Men who unite in large numbers to work together at a common task, leave to those who take no part in action the responsibility of inventing and combining the results of their common action, and of justifying the action after it is completed.



At the close of the last century for causes, some of which are known, and some of which are not known, the French set to work to cut each other's throats.

People try to justify the event by declaring that it is essential to the welfare of France and the triumph of the ideas of liberty and equality.

The French stop killing one another, and people justify their course by saying that power must be consolidated to resist invasion.

The French rush from west to east and kill a good many of their fellow-men, and the cause of this event is the glory of France and the humiliation of England.

History proves these explanations of the facts to be nonsensical, shows that they are mutually contradictory, and refuses to uphold the theory that men must be killed to establish the rights of man, or that Russians must be slaughtered for the humiliation of England.

But these explanations are necessary at the

moment they are made; that is, immediately after the events to which they apply.

They relieve the men who have brought about the events from all moral responsibility.

The imaginary object bears the same relation to the event that a cowcatcher does to a locomotive; it clears the road of moral responsibility.

If we did not have these explanations, we could not possibly understand how millions of men could commit collective crimes, such as massacres and wars.

Can we, in the complex forms of the political and social life of modern Europe, find any event that has not been advised, predicted, or commanded by kings, ministers, parliaments, and newspapers?

Is there any collective event, whatever, that we cannot justify by speaking of national unity, the European balance of power, or civilization?

And as any event, whatever, indubitably cor-

responds with the expressed wish of some one, and so receives its justification, it seems to us to be the result of the will of a single personage, or of a few chosen men.

A ship in motion, whatever may be its course, always has a current of water to overcome. Any one looking over the side would think the water and not the ship was in motion.

But when the observer has carefully watched the apparent movement of the water and discovered that it corresponds exactly with the motion of the ship, he sees that he has fallen into error by not in the first place taking into account the progress made by the vessel.

We make the same discovery when we examine the action of historical personages and bear in mind their relation to the masses.

While a vessel is moving in a given direction it has always before it the same current of water; when it changes its course, the course of the current changes; whichever way it goes, it has always a current against it to overcome.

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Whatever the event, we find that it has always been predicted and ordained.

In whatever direction the ship moves, the water boils up at the prow, and, to an observer at a distance, seems itself to move and at the same time to guide the movement of the vessel.

## IX.

### THE ULTIMATE LIMIT OF THOUGHT.

HISTORIANS who take the expressed will of historical personages as orders corresponding to events, believe that the events depend upon the orders.

But when we analyze the events themselves and their relations to the masses, we find that historical personages as well as the masses are dependent on events.

Innumerable orders may be given, and yet the event will not take place if the causes that render it possible do not exist. On the other hand, out of the many orders given by historical personages, there will always be some which in time and purport will coincide with events and be considered as causes.

When we have reached this conclusion we

can give a positive reply to the two essential questions of history :

1. What is power ?
2. What is the force that puts peoples in motion ?

Power is a relation established between a certain person and other men, by virtue of which this person's part in action is inversely proportioned to the number of orders he can give before the event, and the number of reasons he can find after the event to justify the common activity.

Peoples are not put in motion by power, or by the ideas of writers, or by a combination of the causes in which historians believe, but by the action of *all* the men who take part in the event and who group themselves in such a way that those who are concerned most directly in events have the least responsibility.

In the moral relation, power is regarded as the cause of the event ; in the physical relation, those who obey power are regarded as the

cause of the event ;— but, as moral activity is not possible without physical activity, the cause of the event is not wholly in power or in the men who submit to power,— it is in the union of both. That is to say, the idea of causality is not applicable to the phenomenon under consideration.

In the last analysis we come to a full circle, to infinity, to that ultimate limit of human thought which hedges in every theme to which we give serious attention.

Electricity produces heat ; heat produces electricity. Atoms attract ; atoms repel. When we speak of the phenomena of heat, of electricity, of atomic relations, we cannot explain why these phenomena take place. We can only say that such is the nature of these phenomena in accordance with physical law.

The same conclusion applies to historical events. Why did such and such a war take place ? What was the cause of such and such a revolution ? We do not know. We can only

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say that, to bring about the event in question, men grouped themselves in a certain way and all took part in action ; such, we say, is the nature of men, and such the law that governs them.



## X.

### THE PROBLEM OF FREE WILL.

IF history were concerned with physical phenomena, we might formulate anew the simple and evident law established in the preceding chapter, and our task would be at an end.

The historical law has to do with man.

An atom of matter cannot tell us that it is unconscious of the necessity of attracting or repelling other atoms, and that our law is not true.

But when we apply the law to man, the object of history, he is ready with a definite reply.

"I am free," he says, "and for that reason I am not subject to any law."

The problem of free will meets us at every step in history. It attracts the consideration

of all serious historians. All the contradictions, all the obscure points in history, are occasioned by the difficulty of solving a question that has often turned history aside from the path it ought to pursue.

If every man were free, that is to say, if each could act according to his own desires, history would be simply a succession of accidents with no common bond.

If among millions of human beings, in a period of a thousand years, we could find a single man who was capable of acting purely in conformity with his own desires, the free action of this man in opposition to the general law would be enough to annul the possibility of historical laws for all humanity.

But if there be a historical law governing the actions of men, free will cannot exist, for the will of men would be necessarily subject to this law.

Here we have the problem of free will; it occupied the attention of the great thinkers of

the past, and its meaning and importance were recognized from the earliest times.

The problem may be summed up in this way:—

If we regard man as an object of study, whether from the theological, or historical, or ethical, or philosophical point of view, we find that he, like everything else that exists, is subject to the law of necessity. But if we regard mankind subjectively, as something of which we have consciousness, we believe him to be free.

This perception of being is the source of consciousness of self, which is entirely independent of reason.

By reason, man analyzes himself, but he knows himself only through self-consciousness.

Without consciousness of self, observation and reason would be impossible.

To understand, observe, and reason, man must first of all be conscious of his own existence.

Man is conscious of his existence only when he feels that he has the power of desire, when he knows his own will.

Will, which is the essence of his life, man must conceive of as free, because he cannot conceive of it in any other way.

But when man selects himself as an object of study, and observes the necessity of taking food or examines the phenomena of cerebral activity, he finds that his will is governed by an invariable law, and this law he must recognize as a limitation of his will.

Now what is not free must be limited. The will of man seems to him to be limited because he cannot conceive of it as free.

You tell me that I am not free, and my only reply is to raise my arm and let it fall.

Every one will see that this illogical reply is an irrefutable proof of my liberty. It is the expression of a consciousness of self not subject to reason.

If consciousness of freedom were not a

source of consciousness of a self isolated and independent of reason, it would submit to reason and experience; but in reality this submission does not exist, and cannot even be conceived as existing.

Experience and reason prove to every human being that as far as he is an object of observation he is subject to laws, and man accepts these laws. He never struggles against the law of gravitation or the law of impenetrability, when he has once recognized their existence.

But experience and reason also teach man that the complete freedom of self he imagines is impossible, that each one of his acts depends upon his organization, his temperament, and other influences; and yet man will not agree to these deductions.

When experience and reason have proved to man that a stone always falls to the earth, he regards the law as infallible, and always expects it to be accomplished.

But when he is taught in the same way that

his will is subject to laws, he does not believe it and cannot believe it.

Experience and reason may prove to man, time and time again, that under the same conditions and with the same temperament, he always will act in the same way, but when for the thousandth time he begins to act under the specified conditions with temperament unchanged, he is just as sure as he was in the first place, that he has the power to act in accordance with his own will.

Every man, whether he be a philosopher or a savage, may know by experience and reason that there cannot possibly be two different actions under precisely the same conditions, and yet if he did not believe in the absurd possibility (which is the essence of free will) he would believe life itself to be impossible.

Although it seems to be impossible, he feels sure that it is true, for if he cannot have free will he cannot understand life, and he cannot live a single instant.

All the aspirations of men, all their reasons for living, tend in reality to augment their freedom of action.

Riches and poverty, fame and obscurity, power and subjection, strength and weakness, health and disease, knowledge and ignorance, toil and pleasure, feasting and hunger, virtue and vice, are only so many varying degrees of liberty.

We cannot possibly imagine a living man deprived of his free will.

If, when examined in the light of reason, the idea of free will appears to be a contradiction and an absurdity, a possibility of accomplishing two different acts under the same conditions or of performing an action without a cause, we simply must conclude that the

consciousness of free will does not come under the dominion of reason at all.

regards the conscious of a subject it to be, and supreme will, subject

But when he is science nor reason, acknowl-

edged by all thinkers and known to all men, necessary even to their existence, we must look at the question in another way.

As theology puts the problem, man was created by an omnipotent, omniscient, and infinitely good Being, and the question is, What was the sin that gave rise to the consciousness of free will?

According to jurisprudence, the actions of men are subject to general laws discoverable by statistics, and the question is, What is man's responsibility to society because of his consciousness of free will?

According to ethics, man is dependent upon his natural temperament and the influences with which he is surrounded, and the question is, What is the faculty developed by consciousness of free will, which enables man to distinguish between good and evil?

According to history, man, relatively to the life of humanity, seems to be subject to laws that govern the historical life, but outside of



this relation he seems to be a free being, and the question is, Must the historical life of peoples, of humanity, be considered as the product of the free or of the involuntary acts of men?

But nowadays man is sure of everything, thanks to the vulgarization of science by that great instrument of ignorance, the diffusion of literature, and the question has been taken into a field where it cannot be considered at all.

Nowadays, most of the men who call themselves advanced (that is to say, a mob of ignoramuses) accept the views of the naturalists who look at the question only in one way, and whose conclusions are taken as the complete solution of the problem.

“There is no soul,” they assure us, “there is no free will, because the life of man is expressed by muscular movements, and these muscular movements are produced by nervous action; there is no soul, there is no free will, because we are descended from apes.”

This is spoken, written, and printed by men who call themselves advanced, and who do not even dream that for thousands of years all religions and all thinkers have not only recognized, but have never attempted to deny the law of necessity which our contemporaries take so much trouble to prove, with the aid of physiological facts and comparative zoölogy.

They do not see that as regards this question, natural science is only a means of clearing up one side of the problem.

The fact, that from the experimental point of view, reason and will are only secretions of the brain, and that man, conformably to a general and inevitable law, has been developed from inferior organisms in an indeterminate period of time, is a fact simply serving to throw one more ray of light upon the truth which has been recognized for thousands of years by all religions and all philosophies, that man is subject to the law of necessity.

This fact, however, does not advance the solution of the problem by a single step. The problem has another side, depending on the consciousness of liberty.

Whether man descended from the ape in an indeterminate period of time, or whether he was made from a handful of clay, in a determined period of time, it amounts to the same thing in the end; for, in the first place, we have  $x = \text{time}$ , in the second place,  $x = \text{descent}$ .

But the question as to how man's consciousness of liberty can be reconciled with the law of necessity to which man is subject, is a question that cannot be solved by physiology or by comparative zoölogy, for we cannot observe the neuro-muscular activity of the frog, the rabbit, or the ape, while we can observe consciousness united with this activity in man.

The naturalists and their disciples, who think they have solved the question, may be likened to a group of masons commissioned to rough-

cast the outer walls of a church, and who, in their zeal, take advantage of the absence of the overseer to put a coat of plaster over the windows, the sacred images, the inner walls, and the loose stonework, and then are delighted, from their artisan point of view, that they have succeeded in giving the whole edifice so neat and uniform an appearance.

## XI.

### RELATION OF LIBERTY TO NECESSITY.

IN solving the question of free will and necessity, history has a great advantage over other sciences that have attacked the problem, because history does not attempt to discover the essence of human will; it simply follows the manifestations of will in the past, and under known conditions.

As far as the solution of this problem is concerned, history is an experimental science, and the other sciences are abstract sciences.

The object of history is not the will of man, but the idea we form with regard to that will.

History does not, like theology, or ethics, or philosophy, attempt to solve the unsolvable mystery of the reconciliation of free will with the law of necessity. History studies the life

of man, in whom the reconciliation has already taken place.

Every historical event and every human action may be examined by itself, and no contradictions will be noticed, and at the same time each event may be regarded as being in part the result of a free action, and in part as being subject to the law of necessity.

In solving the problem of the reconciliation of free will with the law of necessity, and in understanding what these two ideas really mean, the philosophy of history is able to pursue a path directly opposite to that followed by the other sciences.

Instead of trying to determine the ideas of free will and necessity by subjecting the phenomena of life to ready-made definitions, history looks for the determination of those ideas in the historical phenomena that come within its jurisdiction, and which are always dependent on the laws of free will and necessity.

Whatever idea we may form of the act of one

man, or of many men, we never can conceive of it otherwise than as being in part the product of free will, and in part as being the product of the law of necessity.

When we speak of the transmigration of peoples, the barbarian invasion, of events in the reign of Napoleon III., or simply of any act performed by any man at any moment — as, for instance, choosing one route rather than another for a promenade — we discover no contradiction; the proportion of liberty and necessity involved in these actions is easily recognized.

Our idea of the greater or less part played by liberty in any given act often varies according to the point of view from which we examine the phenomenon, but every human act is invariably seen to be a reconciliation between liberty and necessity.

In every act we find a certain amount of liberty and a certain amount of necessity.

The greater the amount of liberty, the less the amount of necessity, and inversely.

The proportion of liberty and necessity diminishes or increases according to the point of view from which the act is examined, but the two are always inversely related.

A drowning man who clutches another and drags him down to death, a starving mother who steals food that her child may have nourishment, a soldier in the ranks, trained to respect discipline, who kills an unarmed man at the order of a superior, — are all less guilty, that is less free and more subject to the law of necessity, the more clearly we understand the conditions under which they acted; they are more guilty, that is more free, the more firmly we believe that the man who dragged the other down was not drowning, that the mother was not starving, and that the soldier was not in the ranks.

So a man who, after committing a murder, has for twenty years led a peaceful life in the midst of society, will seem to one who judges of the crime after this lapse of time to have



been much more under the control of necessity than the same man would seem to be to one who learned of the crime immediately after it took place.

The act of an insane person, of a drunkard, of a fanatic, seems to be less free and more obedient to necessity to one who knows the conditions, and more free, less obedient to necessity, to one ignorant of the facts.

In every case, the idea of liberty increases or diminishes according to the point of view from which the act is examined. The greater appears to be the necessity, the less will be the liberty, and vice versa.

Religion, human reason, the science of law, and history, comprehend all the relations that exist between necessity and liberty.

## XII.

### SPACE, TIME, AND CAUSALITY.

EVERY case, without exception, in which our idea of liberty increases or diminishes, may be reduced to three terms :

1. The relation of the man who performed the act to the external world.
2. The relation of the man to time.
3. The relation of the man to the causes that made the act possible.

The first relation, that of the man to the external world, is the more or less definite idea we form of the position the man occupies in regard to what exists simultaneously with him.

Because of this relation, we understand clearly that a drowning man is less free, is more subject to the law of necessity, than is his comrade who remains safely on the shore ;

because of this relation we see that men who live in the midst of a complex society, or who have a family, or who are engaged in any enterprise, are less free and more subject to the law of necessity than an isolated man living in solitude.

If we take a man away from his relations to his surroundings we find that all his acts are free.

But if we observe the most insignificant relations between him and the objects that surround him, if we see him speak to any one, or take a book, or work at any task, if we remember that the air envelops his body and that the sun shines upon him — we shall find that every one of these conditions has a certain influence upon his life, and governs certain phases of his activity.

Our idea of his liberty will be diminished, and our idea of his subjection to necessity will be increased in proportion as we discern these influences.

The second relation, that of man-to the external world in time, is dependent upon the more or less definite idea we form with regard to man's position in time.

Because of this relation, the fall of the first man — which was the origin of the human race — was evidently less free than a similar action would be in our own day.

Because of this relation, the lives and the actions of men who existed centuries before our era, cannot seem to us to be as free as the lives and actions of our contemporaries, whose careers are not yet fully known to us.

The idea we form with regard to liberty or necessity under this relation will depend upon the greater or smaller lapse of time between the accomplishment of the act, and the moment when we pronounce judgment.

If I analyze an act which I have just committed, being still surrounded by the same conditions, it seems to me that the act is free.

But if I judge of an action performed by me

a month ago, and I am now in other conditions, it will seem to me that, if I had abstained from the action, many agreeable, useful, and even necessary things would not have taken place.

The further back I go in memory, and the longer the time that has elapsed between an action and my judgment of it, the more doubtful I am with regard to my liberty.

History discovers the same rule when it examines the free will of man in the life of humanity.

An historical act which has just been accomplished seems to us to be the undoubted result of the action of all the men who have taken part in it, but if the event is in the past we see at the same time its inevitable consequences.

The further back we go in history the less the event seems to have been free.

The war between Prussia and Austria seems to us to have been caused by the intrigues of Bismarck.

The wars of Napoleon I. have long seemed

to be the result of heroic will, although we begin now to have a little doubt on that point.

But in the Crusades we have an event which holds a prominent place in the history of modern Europe, an event without which this period of history would never be intelligible; and yet to contemporary chroniclers the Crusades were brought about by the will of certain personages.

When we examine the transmigration of peoples, we do not find any one now asserting that the will of Attila was the means of regenerating an old and dying world.

The further back we go in history, the more doubtful the liberty of men seems to us to be, and the more fully are we persuaded that the law of necessity alone is true.

The third relation is that of cause and effect, the relation exacted by reason in all phenomena, and which demands that every event, every human act, shall have its distinct place

as the result of what went before and the source of what is to follow.

Because of this relation, our personal acts and those of other men seem to us, on the one hand, to be less free and more necessary the better we know the physiological, psychological, and historical laws to which man is subject, and the more fully we have grasped the physiological, psychological, and historical causes of those acts; and, on the other hand, the acts seem to be more free and less necessary in proportion to the simplicity of the action, and the complexity of the mind and character of the man or men whom we judge.

The more ignorant we are of the cause of any act, whether it be a crime or a display of heroism, the more confident we are that the act was free.

If it is a crime, we demand the extreme penalty; if it is a display of heroism, our admiration is unbounded. If the act is peculiar, we assume that it is the indication of an unusual and original personality.

But if, of the thousands of causes which have produced an act, we know even one, we are ready to grant something to the law of fatality. If the act is a crime, we ask that punishment be mitigated; if a display of heroism, we find it not so very meritorious; if the act is peculiar, we deny that it is entirely original.

The fact that a criminal has been brought up amid evil surroundings makes him, in our eyes, less guilty.

An act of self-devotion performed by a father or a mother, or inspired by hope of recompense, is easier to understand than a disinterested sacrifice, and, because of the motive, it seems to us less worthy of sympathy, inasmuch as it is not free.

The actions of the founder of a sect, of the head of a party, of an inventor, astonish us less the more clearly we understand how their activity has been developed.

If we are able to take into consideration a



long series of experiences, if our observations are directed in a way to discover the relation of cause and effect in human actions, the latter will seem to be less free than would have been the case if we had not been able to trace so surely each effect to its cause.

The more simple and the more numerous the acts under consideration, the more firmly do they seem to be bound to the law of necessity.

The bad action of a man whose father has led an irregular life, the evil conduct of a woman who has fallen in with corrupt associates, the return of a drunkard to his vice,—all these acts seem to us less free the better we know the causes that engendered them.

Finally, if the person of whose action we judge is at the lowest stage of intellectual development, a child, a maniac, an idiot, and if we know the motives of action and the lack of complexity in the character and mind of the one by whom the action is performed, we shall, under these circumstances, find so much sub-

jection to necessity and so little liberty that we can, when the conditions are specified, foretell what that person's conduct will be.

Upon these three relations alone are based the codes which provide for the plea of mental irresponsibility and the consideration of extenuating circumstances.

The irresponsibility is greater or less in proportion as we know more or less clearly the conditions under which the accused acted, in proportion to the longer or shorter lapse of time between the crime and the judgment passed upon it, and in proportion to the fulness of our knowledge regarding the causes by which the act was produced.

### XIII.

#### THE CONDITIONS OF ACTION.

We may now sum up the views already advanced.

Our idea of liberty and necessity diminishes or increases in proportion to our knowledge of the relation of the event to the external world, according to whether the epoch when the event took place is more or less distant in the past, and according to the dependence of the event upon the causes that produced it.

When we examine the actions of a man who is seen to have been attached to the world about him by very intimate ties, whose deeds took place in a far distant period of time, and were produced by causes with which we are familiar, we invariably conclude that his acts were controlled by an imperious law of necessity,

and that, consequently, they had no freedom whatever.

If, on the contrary, we consider the acts of a man who is as independent as he can be of external conditions, whose action has occurred within a recent period, and whose deeds are to us wholly unintelligible, we conclude that necessity had very little to do with the matter, and that there must have been a large degree of liberty.

But neither in the first nor in the second case, — whatever the point of view we occupy, whatever idea we may have of the man's relation to the external world, whether the causes of action are clear or unintelligible, whether the event occurred at a near or a remote period, — in neither case can we conceive of an act as absolutely predestined or as absolutely free.

1. We cannot possibly imagine man entirely removed from external influences; we cannot conceive of man possessing liberty in space.

Because of the nature of the human body

and of all its surroundings, the actions of man are inexorably conditioned.

I lift my hand and let it fall. The action seems to me to be free. But when I ask if I could have lifted my hand in any direction, I see that my gesture was made in the direction of least resistance from surrounding obstacles and from the organization of my own body.

If among all possible directions I chose one, it was because that particular direction offered the least resistance to my purpose.

If an act of mine is to be free, it must not encounter any obstacle.

To imagine a free man, I must imagine him in space, and I cannot reconcile the idea of human liberty with the idea of space.

2. In whatever way we examine an act that has just taken place, we cannot conceive of liberty in time. If I examine an act accomplished a second ago, I must recognize the fact that it was not free, since it was limited by the

space and time in which and during which it occurred.

I ask myself, "Can I raise my hand?" and I raise my hand.

Then I ask myself, "Could I have raised my hand in the moment that just went by?"

To convince myself that I could, I do not raise my hand in the moment that follows.

But I did not raise my hand at the moment when I asked myself if I were free to raise it. That moment no longer exists, and never will exist again; I was powerless to retain it. Moreover, the hand I would have raised then was not the same hand I raise now, and the air in which the movement would have taken place was not the same as the air by which my hand is now surrounded.

The moment in which I made the first movement is irretrievable, during that moment I could make but one movement, and whatever

that movement was it could not have been anything else.

The fact that I did not raise my hand the moment after, does not prove at all that I could not raise it the moment before.

As I could perform but one particular movement in the given space of time, it had to be that movement and no other.

If I am to regard myself as free, I must imagine myself to be in the present, in the past, and in the future, that is to say, independent of time — which is impossible.

3. Whatever difficulty we may have in getting at the causes of an act, we never can admit that the act was absolutely free; that is, without any cause.

We may not be able to discover the cause which led our will or the will of another man to such and such an act, but reason obliges us to assume that without a cause the event would not have taken place.

I raise my hand that I may perform an act

independent of any cause, but the very wish to accomplish an act without a cause is itself the cause of the act.

If we could imagine man independent of all external influences, if we considered only a momentary act, and regarded it as an act without a cause, if we reduced necessity to zero, — even then we should not obtain absolute liberty for man; for a being who was insensible to external influences, a being who existed outside of time, and who was not dependent on any cause, would simply not be human.

By the same course of reasoning we cannot imagine a man's actions to be entirely devoid of freedom, and wholly subject to necessity.

1. Our knowledge of the conditions under which man exists in space may go to the furthest possible limit and yet not be complete, for the number of conditions is infinite, as space is infinite.



Since we cannot know *all* the conditions, *all* the influences that act upon man, we cannot admit absolute necessity, we are obliged to recognize a certain degree of liberty.

2. We may select an event that took place at a very remote epoch from the moment when we form our judgment, and yet the intervening period will be limited, while time is infinite. Hence in this relation there cannot be absolute necessity.

3. We may know the succession of causes that have preceded an act, but we never can know every link in the chain ; it is infinite, and here again we cannot attain to the idea of absolute necessity.

But even if we reduce liberty to zero, if we could possibly find a case where liberty was wholly wanting, as for example, in a dying person, an idiot, or a foetus, we should at the same time destroy our conception of manhood, for man without liberty is not man.

Thus the idea that man's acts are subject

exclusively to the law of necessity without the least degree of liberty, is as untenable as the other idea, that the acts of man are absolutely free.

## XIV.

### THE ESSENCE OF LIFE.

WE have seen that in order to conceive of man's acts as subject exclusively to the law of necessity, we must have knowledge of an infinite number of conditions in space, of an infinite period of time, and of an infinite series of causes.

If we would have man absolutely free and independent of the law of necessity we must have him isolated from space, time, and causality.

If, in the first case, necessity without liberty were possible, we should be obliged to define the law of necessity by necessity itself; that is to say, we should have a form without content.

In the second place, we should have liberty outside of space, time, and causality, which would be a content without form.

We thus reach the two fundamental principles upon which man forms his conception of the world; we have attained to the impenetrable essence of life, and to the laws which determine that essence of life.

From reason we learn the three following propositions:—

1. Space, and all the forms that matter gives to space are infinite, and cannot be conceived of otherwise.

2. Time is an infinite, unresting progress, and cannot be conceived in any other way.

3. The chain of cause and effect has no beginning, and it never can have an end.

From consciousness, man derives these three conclusions:—

1. I alone exist; all that exists is in me; I contain space.

2. I measure time by the immutable present moment in which I live, and I am therefore outside of time.

3. I am independent of causality, for I feel

that I am the cause of all the manifestations of my life.

Reason expresses the law of necessity.

Consciousness declares the essence of free will.

Liberty without limit is the essence of life in the consciousness of man.

Necessity without content is the reason of man in three forms.

Liberty is the observed: necessity is the observer.

Liberty is the content : necessity is the form.

When we separate the two sources of knowledge which are related to one another as form and content, we conceive the idea of liberty and the idea of necessity, which mutually exclude one another and are incomprehensible.

But if we put these two ideas side by side, we obtain a very definite conception of the life of man.

The relation which exists between liberty and necessity, that is to say, the relation

which unites consciousness to the laws of reason, comprises all we know of the life of man.

The relation which exists between natural forces and the law of necessity, that is to say, the relation which exists between the essence of life and the laws of reason, comprises all we know of the physical world.

The forces of nature are outside of us and are inconceivable—we call them gravitation, inertia, electricity, animal strength, etc.; but we *can* conceive of the force of human life, and we call it liberty.

The essence of the law of gravitation escapes us, but we know its effects; it is intelligible only when we recognize the law of necessity (our notions about weight were very crude before Newton's law was formulated). In the same way the force of liberty is incomprehensible in itself, but we know that it exists; we understand it only when we recognize the law of necessity to which it is sub-

ject, and we may apply it in the first place to the fact that every man is destined to die in accordance with the most complex economical and historical laws.

To know, is to bring the essence of life in subjection to the laws of reason.

Man distinguishes his liberty from other forces by his consciousness, but in the light of reason, liberty is classed with other forces.

The forces of gravitation, electricity, chemical affinity, are distinguished from one another only by means of qualities determined by reason.

So the force of liberty in man is distinguished from other natural forces only by the definition which reason gives.

Liberty separated from necessity, that is, brought under the laws of a determining reason, cannot be distinguished from gravitation, or heat, or vegetable growth,—to reason, liberty is simply a momentary and indefinite sensation of life.

Now, as the indeterminate essence of the force that moves the heavenly bodies is the subject of astronomy, as the essences of the forces of heat, electricity, chemical affinity, and nutrition are the subjects of physics, chemistry, botany, and zoölogy, so the essence of the force of liberty is the subject of history.

But while science studies only the manifestations of the unknown essence of life, metaphysics is concerned only with the essence of life. History, therefore, has for its object the manifestations of liberty in man, while liberty itself is a subject for metaphysical speculation.

In those sciences which are devoted to the study of living things, we classify all that is known under the law of necessity; what we are unable to understand goes by the name of vital force.

Vital force is what remains obscure in our knowledge of the essence of life.



So in history, what we know we call necessity ; what we do not know, we conceal under the name of liberty!

To history, liberty is what we do not know about the life of humanity.

## XV.

### THE SEARCH FOR CAUSES.

HISTORY studies the manifestations of human liberty in their relations with the external world, with time, and with causality, that is to say, it seeks to determine liberty in accordance with the laws of reason, and so history deserves the name of science only in so far as it determines liberty by means of these laws.

It is just as impossible for history to regard human liberty as a force exercising an influence upon events in the life of men (that is, as a force not subject to law), as it is for astronomy to recognize liberty of movement in the heavenly bodies.

If we admit absolute liberty, we destroy the possibility of law and of science.

If a single heavenly body were endowed with freedom of movement, the laws of Kepler and

Newton would be vain, and we could not form any idea with regard to the movements of the heavenly bodies.

If a single human action were free, there would be no historical laws, and we could not form any accurate idea of historical events.

History is concerned only with lines of movement or will; these lines, on the one hand, disappear in the infinite; on the other hand, they appear as consciousness of liberty in the present, they are situated in space, time, and causality, and they are under the dominion of reason.

The larger the field of movement, the clearer do the laws of movement become.

The object of history is to grasp and define the laws of human movement.

If historical science looks at the object of its investigations from its actual point of view and seeks the causes of events in the free will of men, it cannot possibly formulate laws, for, if we once admit the existence of a force not sub-

ject to law, there can be no law, and human liberty cannot be limited.

Only when we reduce will to an infinitesimal, do we believe causes to be inaccessible, and only then does history give up the search for causes, and, instead, endeavor to determine laws.

Other sciences have sought for these laws by following new and constantly developing methods, while historical science goes on with its destructive differentiation of causes.

The mathematics, the most exact of all sciences, having reached the infinitely small, abandons the process of differentiation and makes use of a new process, that of infinitesimal integration.

Thus the mathematics gives up the search for causes, and seeks for laws which are the qualities of unknown infinitesimals.

In one way or another, the other sciences have adopted the same method.

When Newton formulated the law of gravita-

tion, he did not say that the sun and the earth attracted one another ; he said that all bodies, from the largest to the smallest, possessed the property of mutual attraction.

Newton put aside the question of the cause of the movement of bodies, and simply announced a quality peculiar to all bodies, from the infinitely great to the infinitely small.

The natural sciences put aside the question of causation and seek only for laws.

Will history follow the method adopted by all the other sciences ?

If history is to be in reality a science of the movements of peoples and of humanity, and not a description of episodes in the lives of a few men, it must put aside the idea of causation, and occupy itself with the laws common to all the closely united infinitesimal elements of liberty.

## XVI.

### CONCLUSION.

WHEN Copernicus discovered the simple fact that the sun did not move around the earth, but that the earth moved around the sun, he reversed the entire cosmography of the ancients.

It was possible, by rejecting the Copernican idea, to retain the old theory of the movements of the heavenly bodies, but, without rejecting it, study of celestial phenomena from the Ptolemaic point of view was out of the question.

And yet for a long time after Copernicus announced his discovery, men continued their adherence to the Ptolemaic cosmography.

Now that it has been declared and proved that the numbers of births and deaths are sub-

ject to mathematical laws, that the government of a country depends upon certain economical, political, and geographical conditions, now that certain relations between populations and the countries they inhabit are found to result in the transmigration of peoples,—now that these facts are demonstrated, the fundamental principles of the old historical science are destroyed.

We may reject these new laws, and hold to the time-worn idea with regard to the object of history, but unless we do reject them we cannot continue to consider historical events as the results of the free will of man.

For if governments have been established or movements incited because of certain geographical, ethnographical, or economical conditions, the will of the men who have heretofore been regarded as the founders of governments and leaders of movements, can no longer be considered as the cause of historical events.

And yet ancient history is still studied in

conjunction with statistics, geography, political economy, comparative philology, and geology, all of which propound laws in absolute contradiction with historical principles.

In natural philosophy, the struggle between the old and the new theory was long and obstinate.

Theology was the guardian of the old idea, and it accused the new school of shattering the bulwarks of revelation. But when science triumphed, theology utilized the new foundation, and was as well off as before.

History is to-day going through with the same struggle; once more, theology makes all possible effort to hold on to the old idea, and once more it accuses the innovators of upsetting revelation.

As in the former instance, the struggle excites the passions of both parties, and obscures the truth.

One party is afraid that the work of centuries will be destroyed, and the other party



desires, in the ardor of battle, to sweep away everything.

The men who have fought against the truths of natural philosophy believed that if they acknowledged these truths, faith in God, in the creation, in Joshua's miracle, would be utterly overthrown.

The defenders of the laws of Copernicus and Newton, — Voltaire, for example — were persuaded that the laws of astronomy, aided by the law of gravitation, would put an end to religion.

So, to-day, people assert that if we acknowledge the law of necessity, our ideas about the soul, about good and evil, and with them all the political and religious institutions depending on these ideas, will be annihilated.

Like Voltaire, the defenders of the law of necessity make use of this law as a weapon against religion ; but the truth is, that the law of necessity in history, like the Copernican law in astronomy, will strengthen rather than

destroy the foundations upon which our political and religious institutions rest.

In history to-day, as formerly in astronomy, the point of difference is simply a denial or an affirmation of an absolute unity for the measurement of observed phenomena.

To astronomy this unity was the immobility of the earth ; to history, it is the independence or liberty of man.

Just as astronomy found it difficult to renounce its belief in the immobility of the earth and the motions of the stars, so history finds it difficult to renounce the idea of personal independence, and to acknowledge that man is subject to the laws of space, time, and causality.

The conclusion reached by astronomy was, —

“It is true that we are not sensible of the motion of the earth, but if we believe in its immobility we arrive at an absurdity, while if we acknowledge the existence of a motion we cannot discern, we are able to formulate laws.”

The new historical school makes this declaration, —

“It is true that we do not realize our dependence, but if we believe in liberty we convict ourselves of an absurdity, while if we acknowledge our dependence upon the external world of time and cause, we are able to establish laws.”

In the first instance, it was necessary to renounce the idea of immobility in space, which was apparent, and to acknowledge the existence of a motion that was imperceptible.

In the second instance, we must give up the idea of a liberty of which we seem to be conscious, and substitute for it a dependence that we do not feel.

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