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THE CAMPAIGN OF
KÖNIGGRÄTZ

Arthur Wagner
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*The Campaign of Königgrätz / A Study of the Austro-Prussian Conflict in the
Light of / the American Civil War:*

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PREFACE

The greater part of the subject-matter of this volume was originally given as a lecture to the officers at the U. S. Infantry and Cavalry School. The kindly reception accorded to the lecture has encouraged me to revise and amplify it, and to publish it in its present form.

As to the narrative portion of the book, no other claim is made than that it is based upon the story of the campaign as given in the Prussian Official History of the Campaign of 1866, Hozier's "Seven Weeks' War," Derrécagaix's "*La Guerre Moderne*," and Adams' "Great Campaigns in Europe." I have not deemed it necessary to cumber the pages with notes of reference, but will here express my indebtedness to the works mentioned, giving precedence to them in the order named. Other works have been consulted, which are enumerated in the bibliographical note at the end of the volume. I have also personally visited the scene of the operations described, and, especially in regard to the topography of the battle field of Königgrätz, I am able to speak from my own observation.

My object has been: 1. To give a brief, but accurate, historical sketch of a great campaign, to which but little attention has been given in this country. 2. To make a comparison of some of the military features of the War of Secession with corresponding features of the European war which occurred one year later.

European critics have generally been loth to acknowledge the military excellence displayed during the War of Secession; and, even when giving full credit for the valor exhibited by our soldiers, have too often regarded our veteran armies as mere “armed mobs.” Chesney, Adams, Trench and Maude have recognized the value of the lessons taught by the American armies, and Lord Wolseley has recently developed an appreciation of such American generalship and soldierly worth as he can see through Confederate spectacles. But European military writers generally, and those of the Continent especially, still fail to recognize in the developments of our war the germ, if not the prototype, of military features which are regarded as new in Europe. The remarks of Colonel Chesney still hold true: “There is a disposition to regard the American generals, and the troops they led, as altogether inferior to regular soldiers. This prejudice was born out of the blunders and want of coherence exhibited by undisciplined volunteers at the outset—faults amply atoned for by the stubborn courage displayed by both sides throughout the rest of the struggle; while, if a man’s claims to be regarded as a veteran are to be measured by the amount of actual fighting he has gone through, the most seasoned soldiers of Europe are but as conscripts compared with the survivors of that conflict. The conditions of war on a grand scale were illustrated to the full as much in the contest in America, as in those more recently waged on the Continent.”

But it is not only among European critics that the military

excellence displayed by our armies has been depreciated. There is a small class among the professional soldiers in our own country, who are wont to bestow all possible admiration upon the military operations in recent European wars, not because they were excellent, but because they were European; and to belittle the operations in our own war, not because they were not excellent, but because they were American. To this small class, whose humility in regard to our national achievements is rarely combined with individual modesty, this book is not addressed. It is to the true American soldier that this little volume is offered, with the hope that the views expressed may meet with his approval and be sanctioned by his judgment.

A. L. W.

THE CAMPAIGN OF KÖNIGGRÄTZ

THE MILITARY STRENGTH OF THE OPPOSING NATIONS

The German war of 1866, generally known as “the Seven Weeks’ War,” presents many features of interest to the student, the statesman and the soldier. It closed a strife of centuries between opposing nations and antagonistic political ideas. It resulted in the formation of the North German Confederation, and thus planted the seeds of a nation, which germinated four years later, during the bloody war with France. It banished Austria from all participation in the affairs of Germany, expelled her from Italy, and deflected her policy thenceforth towards the east and south. It demonstrated that preparation for war is a more potent factor than mere numbers in computing the strength of a nation; and it gave an illustration on a grand scale of the new conditions of war resulting from the use of the telegraph, the railroad and breech-loading firearms.

It is not the intention here to consider any but the military features of the great Germanic contest. Beginning the subject at the period when the quarrel between Austria and Prussia over

the provinces that they had wrested from Denmark, passed from the tortuous paths of diplomacy to the direct road of war, we will consider the relative strength of the combatant nations.

As the advocate of the admission of Schleswig-Holstein as a sovereign state in the Germanic Confederation, Austria gained first the sympathy, and then the active alliance, of Bavaria, Hanover, Saxony, Hesse-Cassel, Württemberg, Baden, Hesse-Darmstadt and Nassau. Prussia aimed at the incorporation of the duchies within her own territory; and, though loudly championing the cause of German unity, her course was so manifestly inspired by designs for her own aggrandizement, that she could count on the support of only a few petty duchies, whose aggregate military strength did not exceed 28,000 men. As an offset to Austria's formidable German allies, Prussia had concluded an offensive and defensive alliance with Italy, whose army, though new and inferior in organization, armament and equipment, to that of her antagonist, might be relied upon to "contain" at least three Austrian army corps in Venetia. The main struggle was certain to be between the two great Germanic nations.

At a first glance Prussia would seem to be almost hopelessly overmatched in her contest with Austria. The latter nation possessed an area more than twice as great as the former, and in contrast with the Prussian population of less than 20,000,000, it could show an aggregate of 35,000,000 people. But a more careful examination discloses the great superiority

of the Prussian kingdom. The population of Prussia was almost exclusively German; that of Austria was a heterogeneous aggregation of Germans, Czechs, Magyars, Poles, Croats and Italians, bound together in a purely artificial nationality. The Austrian national debt amounted to nearly \$1,550,000,000; the annual expenditures so far exceeded the revenue as to cause a yearly deficit of more than \$16,000,000, and the nation was threatened with bankruptcy. On the other hand, the Prussian national debt was only \$210,000,000, the revenue exceeded the expenditures, and the finances were in a healthy condition. But the great superiority of the northern kingdom over its opponent lay in the organization, armament, equipment and *personnel* of its army.

The old adage, "Experience is a severe, but good, schoolmaster," is true of nations as well as individuals. A crushing disaster, bringing with it humiliation, sorrow and disgrace, is often the birth of a stronger, better, life in the apparent victim of misfortune. The greatness of Prussia was not born in the brilliant victories of Rossbach, Leuthen and Zorndorf. It was in the bitter travail of Jena and the treaty of Tilsit that birth was given to the power of the kingdom. Forbidden by Napoleon to maintain an army of more than 42,000 men, the great Prussian war minister, Scharnhorst, determined to create an army while obeying the commands of the conqueror. There was no stipulation in the treaty as to the length of service of the soldiers; and after a few months of careful instruction and

almost incessant drill, they were quietly discharged, and their places were taken by recruits, who were soon replaced in the same manner. Thus the little army became, as it were, a lake of military training, into which flowed a continuous stream of recruits, and from which there came a steady current of efficient soldiers. When the army of Napoleon returned from its disastrous campaign in Russia, there arose, as by magic, a formidable Prussian army, of which nearly 100,000 men were trained warriors.

The success of the Prussian arms in the final struggle with Napoleon was so manifestly due to the measures adopted by Scharnhorst, that his system was made the permanent basis of the national military policy. The "Reorganization of 1859" nearly doubled the standing army, and made some important changes in the length of service required with the colors and in the Landwehr; but the essential features of the Prussian system are the same now as in the days of Leipsic and Waterloo.

Every Prussian twenty years of age is subject to military duty. The term of service is twelve years, of which three are with the colors, four with the reserve and five in the Landwehr. The number of soldiers in the active army is definitely fixed at a little more than one per cent of the population, and the number of recruits annually required is regulated by the number of men necessary to keep the regular force on its authorized peace footing. A list of the young men available for military service is annually made out, and the selection of recruits is

made by lot. There are but few exceptions; such, for instance, as young men who are the sole support of indigent parents. Students who are preparing for the learned professions are permitted to serve as "one-year volunteers," on condition of passing certain examinations satisfactorily, and furnishing their own clothing and equipments. The name of a man convicted of crime is never placed on the list of available recruits; and however humble the position of a private soldier may be, his uniform is the honorable badge of an honest man. Every young man may be called up for draft three years in succession. Those who are not drawn for service at the end of the third year are passed into the Ersatz reserve, in which are also men whose physical imperfections are not sufficient to exempt them entirely, where they are free from service in time of peace, but from which they may be called in time of war to replace drafts from the reserve. In time of peace the military demands upon the soldiers of the reserve or Landwehr are very light. A soldier participates in at least two field maneuvers, aggregating about sixteen weeks, during his four years of service in the reserve. He is also required to attend muster once every spring and autumn. During his five years in the Landwehr he is generally called out twice for drill, the drill period not exceeding fourteen days.

The active army is the regular army, or permanent establishment. When the decree for the mobilization of the army is promulgated, this force is at once put upon its war footing by drafts from the reserve. The depots are immediately formed,

and one-half of the troops stationed therein are drawn from the reserve; the other half being recruits from the Ersatz reserve. As these two classes become exhausted, the depot battalions are filled from the Landwehr, the youngest classes being taken first; or, if needs be, the entire Landwehr is called out in battalions, regiments, brigades, divisions, or even army corps, and sent into the field. After exhausting the Landwehr, there still remains the Landsturm, which embraces all able-bodied men between the ages of seventeen and forty-nine years who do not belong to the active army, the reserve, or the Landwehr. Though the calling out of the Landsturm would imply the exhaustion of the organized forces of the nation, it would be more than a mere levy *en masse*, as it would bring back into the army many soldiers whose twelve years of service would not have been completely forgotten in the midst of civil vocations.

The machinery for the rapid mobilization of the army is kept in perfect order. Each army corps, except the Guards, is assigned to a particular province. The province is divided into divisional districts, which are again subdivided so that each brigade, regiment and battalion has its own district, from which it draws its recruits both in peace and war. A register is kept of every man available for military duty, and in time of peace every officer knows just what part he is to perform the minute mobilization is decreed, and each soldier knows where he is to report for duty. The secret of the efficiency of the German military system lies in the division of responsibility,

and the thorough decentralization, by which every man, from the monarch to the private soldier, has his own especial part to perform.

In 1866 the active army, on a war footing, comprised nine army corps, and aggregated 335,000 men. Each corps consisted of twenty-four battalions of infantry, sixteen batteries of artillery, twenty-four squadrons of cavalry, one battalion of rifles, one battalion of engineers, an engineer train, and a military train conveying ammunition and subsistence, quartermaster's and hospital supplies. Each infantry battalion numbered 1,000 men. Three battalions formed a regiment, two regiments a brigade, and two brigades a division. Each battery contained six guns. Four batteries were assigned to each infantry division, two batteries of horse artillery were attached to the cavalry division, and four batteries of field and two of horse artillery constituted the reserve artillery of each corps. Each squadron of cavalry numbered about 140 sabres. Four squadrons composed a regiment, two regiments a brigade, two brigades a division. A regiment of cavalry was attached to each infantry division. Each corps numbered about 31,000 combatants, except the Guards, which numbered 36,000—having four additional battalions and eight additional squadrons. During the campaign under consideration, the cavalry of an army corps consisted of only one regiment to each division of infantry; the cavalry division being taken from each corps, and merged into the corps of reserve cavalry.

The depot troops consisted of a battalion for each regiment of infantry, a squadron for each regiment of cavalry, an *abtheilung* [3 or 4 batteries] for the artillery of each corps, and a company for each rifle battalion, engineer battalion and train battalion. The army in the field was constantly kept up to a full war strength by men drawn from the depots. The fortresses were garrisoned by Landwehr; and on troops of the same class devolved the duty of pushing forward to occupy invaded territory, and to relieve the active army from the necessity of leaving detachments to guard its communications.

This is a brief outline of the organization that enabled a nation of less than 20,000,000 people eventually to bring 600,000 soldiers upon the theatre of war, and to place a quarter of a million of them upon the decisive field of Königgrätz.

The Austrian regular army, when placed upon its war footing, numbered about 384,000 men; and by calling out all of the reserve, this force could be raised to a formidable total of 700,000. But in organization and system of recruitment the Austrian army was inferior to its antagonist, notwithstanding its war experience in 1849 and in the struggle with France and Italy ten years later. The superb system by which Prussia was enabled to send forth a steady stream of trained soldiers to replace the losses of battle was wanting in Austria; and the machinery of military administration seemed deranged by the effort required to place the first gigantic armies in the field. The difference between the two military systems is shown in a striking manner

by the fact that the mobilization of the Prussian army of 490,000 men, decreed early in May, was completed in fourteen days, and by the 5th of June 325,000 were massed on the hostile frontiers; while the mobilization of the Austrian army, begun ten weeks earlier than that of Prussia, was far from complete on that date.

Nor was the superiority of the Prussian to the Austrian army, as a collective body, greater than the individual superiority of the Prussian soldier to his antagonist. As a result of the admirable Prussian school system, every Prussian soldier was an educated man. Baron Stoffel, the French military *attaché* at Berlin from 1866 to 1870, says: “‘When,’ said the Prussian officers, ‘our men came in contact with the Austrian prisoners, and on speaking to them found that they hardly knew their right hand from their left, there was not one who did not look upon himself as a god in comparison with such ignorant beings, and this conviction increased our strength tenfold.’”

The Prussian army was the first that ever took the field armed entirely with breech-loading firearms. In the War of Secession a portion of the Federal troops were, towards the end of the struggle, armed with breech-loading rifles; but now the entire Prussian army marched forth with breech-loaders, to battle against an army which still retained the muzzle-loading rifle. Great as was the superiority of the needle gun over the Austrian musket, it would seem but a sorry weapon at the present day. The breech mechanism was clumsy, the cartridge case was made of paper, the accuracy of the rifle did not extend beyond 300 yards,

and its extreme range was scarcely more than twice that distance. Yet this rifle was the best infantry weapon of the time, and it contributed greatly to the success of the Prussians. The Prussian artillery was armed mainly with steel breech-loading rifled guns. These guns were classed as 6-pounders and 4-pounders, though the larger piece fired a shell weighing 15 lbs., and the smaller one used a similar projectile weighing 9 lbs.¹ Shell fire seems to have been exclusively used, and the shells to have been uniformly provided with percussion fuses.

In the Austrian army the artillery was provided with bronze muzzle-loading rifled guns, classified as 8-pdrs. and 4-pdrs. The infantry was armed with the muzzle-loading Lorenz rifle.

The German allies of Austria could place about 150,000 men in the field; Italy, about 200,000.

¹ These guns were classed, not according to the weight of the projectile, but according to the diameter of the bore. Thus the gun firing a 15-lb. shell was rated as a 6-pdr., because the diameter of its bore was the same as that of a 6-pdr. smooth-bore gun.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL SITUATION

The geographical situation was unfavorable to Prussia. The map of Germany, as it existed before the Austro-Prussian war, shows Rhineland and Westphalia completely separated from the other provinces of Prussia by the hostile territory of Hanover and Hesse-Cassel, which, extending from the north, joined the South German States which were in arms against the northern kingdom. The Austrian province of Bohemia, with the adjacent kingdom of Saxony, formed a salient, pushing forward, as it were, into the Prussian dominions, and furnishing a base from which either Silesia or Lusatia might be invaded. In the language of the Prussian Staff History of the Campaign of 1866: "In one direction stood the Saxon army as a powerful advanced guard only six or seven marches distant from the Prussian capital, which is protected from the south by no considerable vantage ground; in the other Breslau could be more easily reached in five marches, because, trusting to a former federal compact with Austria, Schweidnitz had been given up as a fortress." The forces of Hanover and Hesse-Cassel, numbering 25,000 men, could operate against the communications of the Prussian armies, or withdraw to the south and unite with the Austrians or Bavarians. The South German armies might form a junction in Saxony or Bohemia with the Austro-Saxon army.

THE PLANS OF VON MOLTKE AND VON BENEDEK, AND THE DISPOSITIONS OF THE OPPOSING ARMIES

The Prussian army was commanded by the King. His chief-of-staff was Baron Hellmuth Von Moltke, a soldier of reputation in Prussia, but as yet almost unknown beyond the boundaries of his own country.

The object of Von Moltke was to protect the Prussian rear by defeating the Hanoverian and Hessian troops; to prevent a junction of these troops with their South German allies; to “contain” the latter with as small a force as possible, and to hurl the crushing weight of the Prussian forces upon the Austro-Saxon army.

On the 14th of June the Prussian armies were stationed as follows:

The “Army of the Elbe,” consisting of three divisions, two cavalry brigades and 144 guns, in cantonments round Torgau, under command of General Herwarth Von Bittenfeld;

The “First Army,” consisting of three army corps, a cavalry corps of six brigades, and 300 guns, near Görlitz, under command of Prince Frederick Charles;

The “Second Army,” consisting of four army corps, a cavalry

division of three brigades, and 336 guns, in the vicinity of Neisse, under command of the Crown Prince.

Besides the three main armies, there were other forces stationed as follows:

One division at Altona, in Holstein, under Von Manteuffel;

One division at Minden, under Vogel Von Falckenstein;

One division (made up principally of the Prussian garrisons withdrawn from the Federal fortresses of Mayence, Rastadt and Frankfort) at Wetzlar, under Von Beyer.

The Austrian "Army of the North" was posted as follows:

Ist Corps, at Prague, Teplitz, Theresienstadt and Josephstadt;

IInd Corps, near Bömisch Trübau;

IVth Corps, near Teschen;

VIth Corps, at Olmütz;

IIIrd Corps, at Brünn;

Xth Corps at Brünn;

VIIIth Corps, in the neighborhood of Austerlitz.

To these corps were attached five divisions of cavalry and more than 750 guns.

This army was under command of Field Marshal Von Benedek, an officer of great experience and high reputation.

The Saxon army, 25,000 strong, with fifty-eight guns, was at Dresden, under command of the Crown Prince of Saxony.

The Bavarian army was concentrating on the line of the Main between Amberg and Würzburg. It numbered 52,000 men, and was under command of Prince Charles of Bavaria.

The VIIIth Federal Corps was forming at Frankfort. It consisted of the contingents of Würtemberg, Baden, Hesse-Darmstadt and Nassau, and an Austrian division drawn from the Federal fortresses. It numbered about 42,000 men, and was under the command of Prince Alexander of Hesse.

The Vth, VIIth and IXth Austrian corps, under the Archduke Albrecht, were in Venetia, opposed to an Italian army of four corps.

Von Benedek expected to assume the offensive and invade Prussia. He had announced this intention before the beginning of hostilities, even going so far as to prescribe rules for the behavior of his soldiers while in the enemy's country. It is hard to understand (in the light of subsequent events) the slight esteem in which the Austrians held their opponents before the commencement of hostilities. In a general order issued to his army on June 17, 1866, the Austrian commander says: "We are now faced by inimical forces, composed partly of troops of the line and partly of Landwehr. The first comprises young men not accustomed to privations and fatigue, and who have never yet made an important campaign; the latter is composed of doubtful and dissatisfied elements, which, rather than fight against us, would prefer the downfall of their government. In consequence of a long course of years of peace, the enemy does not possess a single general who has had an opportunity of learning his duties on the field of battle."

Von Benedek's unfavorable opinion of his adversaries was

probably shared by many other prominent European soldiers; for the excellence of the military system of Prussia was, as yet, not appreciated by other nations. Absurd as Von Benedek's order now appears, it seems to have excited no unfavorable comment at the time of its appearance; and, in fact, the expectation of Austrian success was quite general in Europe.

On the 15th of June the Austrian outposts were notified of the intention of the Prussians to begin hostilities, and war was formally declared against Hanover, Hesse-Cassel and Saxony. Within twenty-four hours after the declaration of war, the invasion of each of these minor states was begun.

OPERATIONS AGAINST THE HESSIANS AND HANOVERIANS.²

Von Falckenstein from Minden, and Von Manteuffel from Altona, moved upon Hanover, and Von Beyer invaded Hesse-Cassel from Wetzlar. On the night of the 15th the Hanoverian army, accompanied by the blind monarch, King George, retreated, chiefly by rail, to Göttingen; the retreat being conducted in such haste that even the reserve ammunition and hospital supplies were left behind. On the 17th Von Falckenstein entered the Hanoverian capital; on the 19th Von Manteuffel marched into the city; and by the 22d all Hanover, except Göttingen, was in the possession of the Prussians.

Von Beyer pushed into Hesse-Cassel, the Hessian army retiring before him, by way of Fulda, upon Hanau, where it formed a junction with the Federal forces. On the 19th the Prussians entered Cassel, and an army was thus placed across the path of the retreating Hanoverians.

The Hanoverian army, which had been compelled to wait several days at Göttingen to complete its organization, resumed its march on the 21st, intending to cross a portion of the Prussian territory *via* Heiligenstadt and Langensalza, and thence through Eisenach or Gotha, to form a junction with the Bavarians in

² See [frontispiece map](#).

the neighborhood of Fulda. Von Falckenstein pursued from Hanover, detachments were sent from Magdeburg and Erfurt to Bleicherode and Eisenach, and Von Beyer occupied the line of the Werra between Allendorf and Eisenach. Though the route through Eisenach was thus blocked, energetic measures on the part of the allies might easily have extricated the Hanoverian army from the constricting grasp of the Prussians. Gotha was occupied by a weak force of six battalions, two squadrons and three batteries, while the retreating army numbered 20,500 men. Had the Bavarian army been well prepared and ably led, a junction might have been formed with the Hanoverians, and the Prussian force at Gotha captured. But the Bavarian commander was inefficient, and the over-estimate placed by King George upon the number of his enemies at Gotha was strengthened by the receipt, from the commander of the petty force, of an audacious summons to surrender. Negotiations were entered upon by the Prussian and Hanoverian representatives; but the armistice (begun on the 24th and continued until the 26th) produced no other result than the reinforcement of the force at Gotha; General Von Flies, with five battalions, being detached from Von Falckenstein's army, and sent by rail, *via* Magdeburg and Halle, to Gotha.

At Treffurt, Kreuzberg, Eisenach and Gotha, points on a semi-circle in front of the Hanoverians, and within a day's march of them, were nearly 30,000 Prussians.

On the 27th General Von Flies, advancing through Warza

upon Langensalza, with about 9,000 men, struck the army of King George, which was well posted on the left bank of the Unstrut river. A battle followed, in which the Hanoverians defeated Von Flies, and drove his army several miles towards Warza.

But the Hanoverian victory was a barren one. Von Flies was reinforced at Warza by a strong detachment from Von Goeben's division at Eisenach. Von Goeben and Von Beyer advanced from Eisenach upon Langensalza, and Von Manteuffel, moving *via* Heiligenstadt, Worbis, Dingelstadt, Mühlhausen and Gross Gottern, closed upon the Hanoverians from the north. The army of King George was now surrounded by 40,000 Prussians, united under the command of Von Falckenstein. Further resistance was hopeless, and on the 29th of June the Hanoverians surrendered. The men were dismissed to their homes, the officers were paroled, and King George was banished from his kingdom.

THE INVASION OF SAXONY, AND ITS RESULTS

In the meantime the main armies had not been idle. The invasion of Saxony was begun on the 16th of June by the Army of the Elbe and the First Army. On the night of the 15th of June the Saxon army began its retreat to Bohemia, detachments of pioneers tearing up the railroad track between Rieza and Dresden, and between the latter city and Bautzen. The work of destruction, except the burning of the bridge at Rieza, was hurriedly and imperfectly done, and did not appreciably delay the Prussian advance. The Army of the Elbe advanced from Torgau, *via* Wurzen, Dahlen and Strehla; a division to each road, and a detachment from the right division moving *via* Ostrau and Dobeln to cover the right flank. The First Army advanced from the neighborhood of Görlitz, through Löbau and Bautzen, a strong detachment being sent out on the Zittau road, beyond Ostritz, to observe the passes of Reichenberg and Gabel, for the army was making a flank march, and the Austrians might attack through these passes. A cavalry detachment was pushed out through Bischofswerda to feel the left of the Army of the Elbe.

On the 18th of June the Army of the Elbe occupied Dresden, and pushed its outposts beyond the city as far as Lockwitz and Pillnitz. On the following day the junction of the two armies

was perfected. The 1st Reserve Division was sent from Berlin to reinforce Herwarth Von Bittenfeld, and the combined forces of the Army of the Elbe and the First Army were placed under the command of Prince Frederick Charles. To guard against a possible invasion of Saxony by the Bavarians, measures were at once taken to fortify Dresden, which was occupied by the 2nd Reserve Division from Berlin; Leipsic and Chemnitz were occupied by Landwehr; and the Leipsic-Plauen railway beyond Werdau was destroyed.

On the 17th of June the Emperor of Austria issued a manifesto, in which he formally announced to his subjects the state of war existing between Austria and Prussia. Italy declared war against Austria three days later.

We can now see the immense results following from the thorough military preparation of Prussia. Launching, as it were, a thunderbolt of military force upon her enemies at the first moment of war, less than two weeks sufficed for the complete conquest of Hanover, Hesse-Cassel and Saxony. Indeed, four days had sufficed for the seizure of the last two. The King of Hanover had been dethroned; the Elector of Hesse-Cassel was a prisoner, and the King of Saxony was a fugitive with his army in Bohemia. The military results were even greater than the political consequences. The severed portions of the Prussian kingdom were united. The Hanoverian army had been eliminated from the military problem, and there was no longer any menace to Prussia from the rear. Von Falckenstein was now free to turn his

undivided attention to the Bavarians and the Federal Corps, and the occupation of Saxony prevented all possibility of a junction of the Bavarian and Saxon armies. But the strategical advantages gained in regard to operations in Bohemia were the grandest result of the occupation of Saxony.

We have seen that on the 14th of June the Army of the Elbe was around Torgau, the First Army near Görlitz; and the Second Army in the vicinity of Neisse; being thus separated from each other by from 100 to 125 miles. The Second Army covered Breslau, the Army of the Elbe covered Berlin, and the First Army was in a position to support either of the others. Geographical circumstances thus compelled the separation of the Prussian armies, and only two of them were available for the invasion of Bohemia. The occupation of Saxony changed matters for the better. The distance between the Army of the Elbe and the First Army was reduced to the extent of actual junction, and these combined armies were only about 120 miles from Landshut, where the right of the Second Army now rested, and with which there was communication by means of the hill road of Schreiberschau. The entire force was now available for the invasion of Bohemia; the northern passes of the Bohemian frontier were secured; and if compelled to act upon the defensive, Frederick Charles could find in the mountains of Southern Saxony many advantageous positions for defensive battle.

The Prussian plan of operations required an advance of Frederick Charles' armies from Saxony into Bohemia, and an

invasion of that province by the Second Army, advancing from Silesia; both armies to unite at Gitschin, or in its vicinity. It is clear that in thus advancing from divergent bases, the Prussians gave to their adversary the advantage of operating by interior lines; generally a serious military error, as the general operating by interior lines, holding one of the opponent's armies by a containing force, and falling with superior numbers upon the other, may defeat both in succession. Von Moltke's plan was, however, sound and proper, for the following reasons:

1. The geographical configuration of the Prussian frontier compelled the separation of the Prussian armies, in order that Lusatia and Silesia might both be protected from Austrian invasion; and the only possible concentration that would not yield to the enemy the advantage of the initiative, and permit him to invade Prussia, was a concentration to the front, in the hostile territory.

2. The entire army "could not have advanced in effective order by one set of mountain roads, but would have extended in columns so lengthened that it would have been impossible to form to a front commensurate with its numbers."

3. The re-entering base of the Prussians would enable each of their armies to cover its communications with its base, while one of these armies would surely menace the communications of the Austrians, if Von Benedek should advance against either.

4. The certainty that the Prussian armies could act with celerity, and the probability that the Austrian army was not

yet fully prepared for prompt offensive maneuvers, justified the hope that the concentration might be effected at a point some distance in front of the enemy's line. The distance from Görlitz and Neisse to Gitschin was less than the distance from Olmütz, Brünn and Bömisch Trübau to the same point, and there was an excellent prospect of being able to concentrate before Von Benedek could get his army well in hand to strike the Prussian armies separately.

5. By keeping up telegraphic communication between the two separated armies, their co-operation and simultaneous action could be assured.

6. If the Prussians could reach the Iser and the Elbe without serious check, the contracted theatre of operations would render Von Benedek's interior position one of danger, rather than one of advantage. Von Moltke himself, in commenting upon his strategical combination, says: "If it is advantageous for a general to place his army on an interior line of operation, it is necessary, in order that he may profit by it, to have sufficient space to enable him to move against one of his adversaries at a distance of several days' march, and to have time enough then to return against the other. If this space is very contracted, he will run the risk of having both adversaries on his hands at once. When an army, on the field of battle, is attacked in front and on the flank, it avails nothing that it is on an interior line of operations. That which was a strategical advantage becomes a tactical disadvantage. If the Prussians were allowed to advance to the Iser and to the

Elbe, if the several defiles which it was necessary to pass fell into their power, it is evident that it would be extremely perilous to advance between their two armies. In attacking one, the risk would be incurred of being attacked in rear by the other.” The combination, on the field of battle, of the two armies operating from divergent bases, would admit of just such a front and flank attack as would convert Von Benedek’s strategical advantage into a serious tactical disadvantage. It would be a repetition of Waterloo.

7. A failure to unite before encountering the main force of the enemy, though unfortunate, would not necessarily have been disastrous. According to Jomini, the advantages of an interior position diminish as the armies operating increase in size; for the following reasons:

(a). “Considering the difficulty of finding ground and time necessary to bring a very large force into action on the day of the battle, an army of 130,000 or 140,000 men may easily resist a much larger force.

(b). “If driven from the field, there will be at least 100,000 men to protect and insure an orderly retreat and effect a junction with one of the other armies.

(c). “The central army ... requires such a quantity of provisions, munitions, horses and *materiel* of every kind, that it will possess less mobility and facility in shifting its efforts from one part of the zone to another; to say nothing of the impossibility of obtaining provisions from a region too restricted

to support such numbers.

(d). “The bodies of observation detached from the central mass to hold in check two armies of 135,000 men each must be very strong (from 80,000 to 90,000 each); and, being of such magnitude, if they are drawn into a serious engagement, they will probably suffer reverses, the effect of which might outweigh the advantages gained by the principal army.”

Finally, the increased defensive power given to infantry by the introduction of breech-loading rifles might be counted upon to increase greatly the probability of either of the Prussian armies being able to fight successfully a *purely defensive* battle against the entire army of Von Benedek, armed, as it was, with muzzle-loaders.

In view of these reasons, Von Moltke’s strategy was not only justifiable, but perfect. The Prussian objective was the Austrian army, wherever it might be.

Before the commencement of hostilities Von Benedek had, as we have seen, announced his intention of invading Prussia. Two routes offered themselves to his choice: one by way of Görlitz and Bautzen to Berlin; the other by way of the valley of the Oder into Silesia. The latter route was obstructed by the fortresses of Glatz, Neisse and Kosel; the former would have led to the unobstructed occupation of Saxony, and would have enabled the Bavarian army to concentrate, *via* the passes of the Saale and Wittenberg, with the Austrians and Saxons. But, at a time when minutes were worth millions, Von Benedek was slow; and the

preparation and energy of the Prussians enabled them to take the initiative and throw the Austrians upon the defensive in Bohemia. Von Benedek then decided to concentrate his army in the vicinity of Josephstadt and Königinhof; to hold the strong defiles of the Iser or the Elbe with comparatively weak detachments, and throw his main army upon the Crown Prince or Frederick Charles, as circumstances might decide.

Von Benedek's concentration began on the 18th of June; and on the 25th his army stood as follows:

The Ist Corps, with one brigade of the IIIrd Corps and a cavalry division, on the left bank of the Iser, from Turnau, through Mühengrätz to Jung Buntzlau, where the retreating Saxons formed on the left.

The Xth Corps, with one cavalry division, at Jaromir.

The IVth Corps at Opocno.

The VIth Corps at Solnitz.

The IIIrd Corps on the left of the VIth, at Tynist.

The VIIIth Corps at Wamberg.

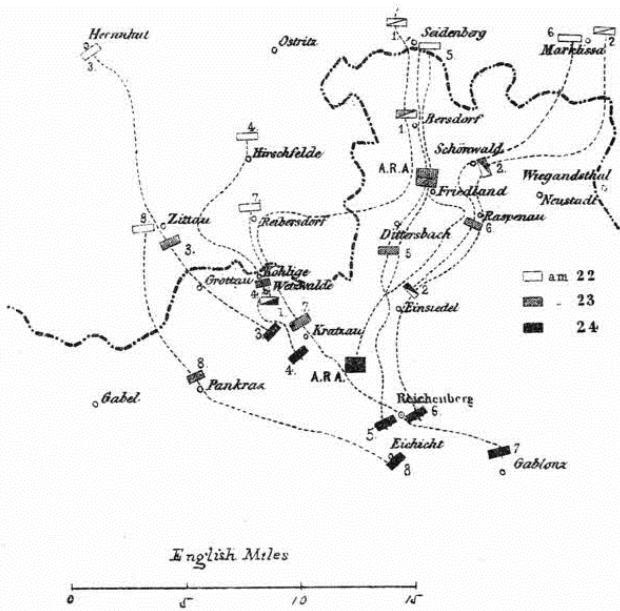
The IId Corps at Geyersberg.

Four cavalry divisions were at Gabel, Leitomischel, Abtsdorf and Policzka, respectively.

The force on the Iser, under Count Clam-Gallas, was thus opposed to the entire army of Frederick Charles; while Von Benedek confronted the Crown Prince with six corps. The Austrian line extended beyond Gitschin, the point at which the Prussian armies were to concentrate.

THE INVASION OF BOHEMIA

It was now certain that Bohemia was to be the theater of war. This province of the Austrian Empire may be described as a huge basin, whose rim is composed of mountains. It is separated from Silesia by the Riesengebirge (Giant Mountains), from Saxony by the Erzgebirge (Iron Mountains), from Moravia by the Moravian Hills, and from Bavaria by the Fichtelgebirge and the Böhmerwald; the Moravian Hills and the Böhmerwald separating it from the valley of the Danube. This great basin is drained by the Elbe river, which, rising in the Riesengebirge, makes a huge loop, flowing first south, then west, and finally north, and receives the waters of the Iser, Adler, Moldau and Eger rivers before it issues forth from the Bohemian frontier into Saxony. This theater is well suited to defensive operations, as the mountain frontiers are penetrated by few passes, and the forests and rivers constitute additional obstacles. On the Silesian frontier the only issues by which an invader can enter Bohemia are the passes of Trautenau, Eypel, Kosteletz, Nachod and Neustadt. These passes could all be easily defended, while on the Saxon frontier the passes of Reichenberg, Gabel and Königstein-Tetschen could be used by retarding forces, which could afterwards find a strong defensive line on the Iser.



N^o. 2.

1st. ARMY ON 22ND., 23RD. & 24TH. JUNE.

Two railway lines lay in the theater of war, and were of great importance to the contending armies. One line ran from Vienna, *via* Kosel, Breslau and Görlitz, to Dresden. The other connected the Austrian capital with Prague, *via* Olmütz (or Brünn) and Bömisch Trübau. The two lines were joined by a railway from Dresden to Prague, and by one which, running from Löbau to Turnau, branched from the latter point to Prague and

Pardubitz. These railways connected with others leading to all the important cities of Prussia. The two Prussian armies could cover their railway communications while advancing; but the Prague-Olmütz line, which was of vital importance to the Austrian army, ran parallel to, and dangerously near, the Silesian frontier, and was not covered by the Austrian front during the operations in Bohemia.

The Prussian advance began on the 20th of June. The Army of the Elbe marched from the vicinity of Dresden, *via* Stolpen, Neustadt, Schluckenau and Rumburg, to Gabel. As the greater part of this march had to be made by one road, it required six days, though the distance was only 65 miles. The First Army had concentrated at Zittau, Herrnhut, Hirschfelde, Seidenberg and Marklissa. From these points it began its march on the 22d of June, each division marching by a separate road; and on the 25th it was closely concentrated around Reichenberg. The entire Prussian front was now reduced to about 100 miles, and Herwarth Von Bittenfeld was only twelve miles from Frederick Charles.

It would have been dangerous in the extreme for the Crown Prince to begin his march while Von Benedek held six corps in hand to hurl upon him. The passage of the Second Army through the defiles depended on surprise; and in the face of a superior and concentrated army, it would have been a desperate undertaking. It was necessary, therefore, to distract the plans of the enemy by false maneuvers, and to wait for Frederick Charles to menace

the Austrian left, on the Iser, before beginning the forward movement with the Second Army. With these objects in view, the VIth Corps was ordered to push forward towards Olmütz, and Frederick Charles received the following instructions from Von Moltke: “Since the difficult task of debouching from the mountains falls upon the Second, weaker, Army, so, as soon as the junction with Herwarth’s corps is effected, the First Army must, by its rapid advance, shorten the crisis.” The VIth Corps moved from Neisse into the Austrian dominions as far as Freiwaldau, where its advanced-guard had a successful skirmish with a party of Austrian cavalry. This corps was supposed by the Austrians to be the advanced-guard of the Crown Prince’s army marching upon Olmütz; and the demonstration had the effect of holding a large force of Austrians between Hohenmauth and Bömisch Trübau, where it could not be used to oppose the real advance of the Second Army.

The Crown Prince’s army was to move as follows:

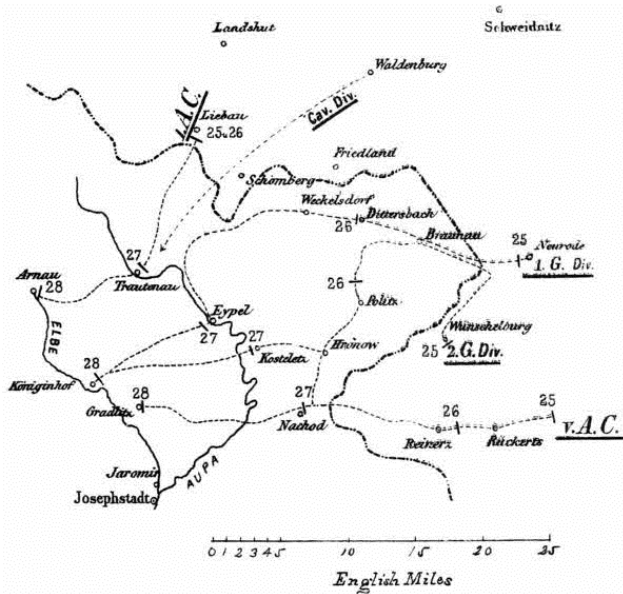
The Ist Corps³ *via* Liebau and Trautenau, to Arnau;

The Guards, *via* Neurode, Braunau, Eypel, to Königinhof;

The Vth Corps, *via* Glatz, Reinerz, Nachod, to Gradlitz;

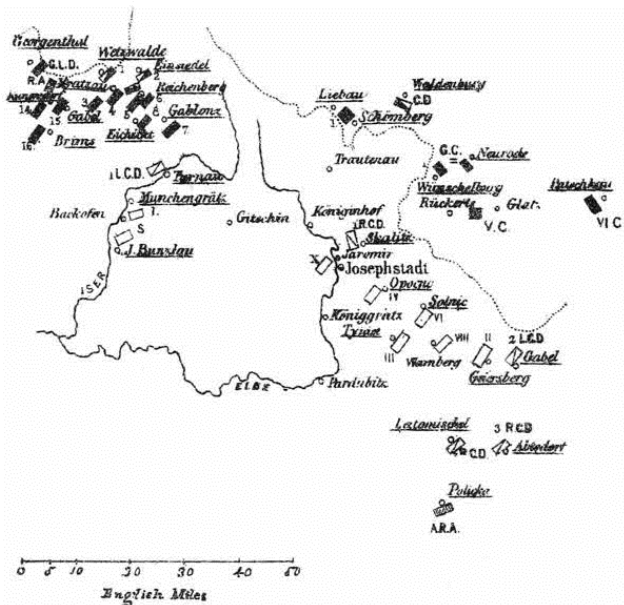
The cavalry, from Waldenburg, *via* Trautenau, to Königinhof.

³ It may be of assistance to the reader, in the following pages, to note that the divisions in the Prussian army are numbered consecutively throughout the several army corps. Thus, the Ist Corps consists of the 1st and 2d Divisions; the IId Corps, of the 3d and 4th Divisions; the VIth Corps, of the 11th and 12th Divisions, and so on.



N^o. 1.

PROPOSED ADVANCE OF 2ND. ARMY FROM 25TH. TO
28TH. JUNE.



N^o. 3.

POSITION OF BOTH ARMIES ON THE EVENING OF THE 25TH. JUNE.

The VIth Corps, having made the diversion to Freiwaldau, was withdrawn to Glatz and Patschkau, from which points it was to follow the Vth. A corps of observation, consisting of two regiments of infantry, one of cavalry, and a light battery, was detached at Ratibor to make demonstrations against Austrian Silesia. In case this detachment should encounter a large force of

the enemy, it was to fall back upon the fortress of Kosel. During the campaign an unimportant war of detachments was carried on in this region, generally to the advantage of the Prussians.

JUNE 26TH

On the 26th of June the Army of the Elbe marched upon Niemes and Oschitz. The advanced-guard encountered an Austrian outpost near Hühnerwasser, and drove it back after a sharp skirmish. The main body of the Army of the Elbe bivouacked at Hühnerwasser, with outposts towards Weisswasser, Münchengrätz and Gablonz. In the evening there was another brisk outpost fight in the direction of Münchengrätz, in which the Austrians were again worsted.

In the First Army the advance on this day was begun by General Von Horn, whose division had held the outposts the night before. At Liebenau Von Horn struck the Austrians, whose force consisted of a small body of infantry, four regiments of cavalry and two batteries of horse artillery. Driven out of the village, and from the field where they next made a stand, the Austrians retreated across the Iser, *via* Turnau, to Podol. The First Army now occupied a position extending through Reichenberg, Gablonz, Liebenau and Turnau; Von Horn's division extending down the Iser from Turnau, with outposts near Podol. Free communication—in fact a junction—was now established with the Army of the Elbe, one division of which occupied Bömisch Aicha.

An attempt made by a company of Prussian riflemen to seize the bridges at Podol, about dusk in the evening, brought on a

sharp fight. The forces on each side were reinforced until parts of two Prussian and two Austrian brigades were engaged. A stubborn infantry battle was carried on by moonlight until 1 o'clock in the morning, when the Austrians retreated towards Münchengrätz. By this victory the Prussians secured the passage of the Iser at Podol; the shortest line to Gitschin was opened to them; the communications of Count Clam-Gallas with the main army were threatened; and a plan which he had formed to *riposte* upon the Prussians at Turnau was thwarted.

We will now turn to the Second Army. On this day the Ist Corps concentrated at Liebau and Schomberg, ready to cross the frontier. The Vth Corps was at Reinerz, about twenty miles from the Ist. The Guard Corps, which had just crossed the frontier, in front of Neurode, midway between the two corps, was in a position to support either. The VIth Corps was at Landeck and Glatz, part of its cavalry being sent forward to cover the left of the Vth Corps and maintain communication between the two. After passing the mountains, the entire army, pivoted on Nachod and Skalitz, was to wheel to the left, seize the Josephstadt-Turnau railway, and form a junction along that line with the armies of Frederick Charles. On the evening of the 26th, the advanced-guard of the Vth Corps occupied Nachod. The distance between the Crown Prince and Frederick Charles had now been reduced to about fifty miles, while the distance between the extreme corps of the Austrian army was about the same. Von Benedek's strategical advantages were already beginning to disappear.

The Prussian demonstrations towards Olmütz had caused the Austrian IId Corps to be retained dangerously far to the right; Count Clam-Gallas was struggling against superior numbers on the Iser, and Von Benedek had only four corps with which he could immediately oppose the four corps of the Crown Prince.



N^o. 4.

POSITION OF BOTH ARMIES ON THE EVENING OF THE 26TH. JUNE.

The Austrian commander ordered the following movements for the next day:

The Xth Corps, from Josephstadt and Schurz, upon Trautenau;

The VIth Corps, from Opocno to Skalitz;

The IVth Corps, from Lanzow to Jaromir;

The VIIIth Corps, from Tynist to beyond Jaromir, to support the VIth;

The IIIrd Corps, from Königgrätz to Miletin;

The IIrd Corps, from Senftenberg to Solnitz;

The Reserve Cavalry, from Hohenmauth and Wildenschwerdt to Hohenbrück;

The Light Cavalry to accompany the IIrd Corps.

JUNE 27TH

On the 27th of June the Crown Prince pushed forward the Ist Corps against Trautenau, and the main body of the Vth Corps upon Nachod. One division of the Guard supported each corps.

The Ist Corps, under Von Bonin, marched in two columns from Liebau and Schomberg, and was to concentrate at Parschnitz, about two miles east of Trautenau, where it was to rest two hours before moving upon the latter place.

Contrary to expectation, the left column arrived first at Parschnitz, the right (with the advanced-guard) being delayed by bad roads. Trautenau was as yet unoccupied by the Austrians; but instead of seizing the town and the heights which overlooked it, on the farther bank of the Aupa river, Von Clausewitz (commanding the left column) obeyed the strict letter of his orders, and waited at Parschnitz two hours, from 8 to 10 A. M., until the advanced guard of the right column arrived.

While Von Clausewitz was thus idly waiting, Mondl's brigade of the Xth Austrian Corps arrived, and took up a strong position in the town and on the heights which commanded it. A stubborn fight took place before the Austrians could be dislodged; and Mondl fell back in good order upon the main body of the Xth Corps, which was hurrying towards Trautenau. Believing himself in complete possession of the field, Von Bonin, at 1 o'clock, declined the assistance of the 1st Division of Guards, which had

hurried up to Parschnitz, and the division, after a halt of two hours, marched off to the left, towards Eypel. About half past 3 o'clock the entire Xth Corps, under Von Gablentz, arrived on the field, and made a vigorous attack upon the Prussians. Von Bonin's left wing was turned; and, after fighting six hours, the Prussians were driven from the field, and retreated to the positions from which they had begun their march in the morning.

The Prussian defeat was due to two causes:

1. The delay of Von Clausewitz at Parschnitz, when common sense should have prompted him to exceed his orders, and seize the unoccupied town and heights of Trautenau. For two hours these positions were completely undefended by the Austrians, and could have been occupied by Von Clausewitz without firing a shot.⁴

⁴ Derrécagaix and the Prussian Official History both condemn Von Clausewitz's delay. Adams, however, finds an excuse for it. He says: "The first question that arises is, should Clausewitz have occupied Trautenau? Mondl was up, in all probability, and he would have been deeply engaged before Grossmann [commanding the right column] came up, against orders. He could not have been acquainted with the situation, for Bonin himself was not, and it is difficult, therefore, to attach blame to him. The cause of Grossmann's delay is said to have been the hilly character of the road. Mondl, on the other hand, reaching Hohenbrück about 7:30, seems to have halted there to form. The Austrian official account states that he had occupied the heights since 9:15, and before this he had reached Hohenbrück at 7:45. When he had formed—that is to say, waited to mass his brigade before deploying—the position must have been taken up by him between 8:30 and 9:15. Had Clausewitz advanced, it would have taken three-quarters of an hour to debouch in force south of Trautenau, so that he would have had to continue his march without halting to cross the Aupa, and push forward from Trautenau, contrary to orders, in order to engage Mondl on the very strong ground he by that time had fully occupied." "Probably the latter was informed . . . that no immediate

2. The fatuity of Von Bonin in declining the assistance of the Guards. Von Bonin knew that Mondl had not been routed, that he had fallen back “slowly and fighting,” and he did not know what other force might be in his immediate front. He had no reason to expect that he would be allowed to pass through the defile without the most stubborn opposition. He knew that he had been opposed by a single brigade, and the plucky resistance of that small force should have made him suspicious that it had stronger forces at its back. His orders were to push on to Arnau, some twelve miles from Trautenau, and to carry out these orders it was necessary to sweep aside the opposition in his front. His declension of assistance when the firing had scarcely ceased, and

danger was impending, or he would not have waited leisurely to form. The first duty of the advance, on coming into collision with the enemy, is to occupy rapidly such localities as may prove of use in the impending action.” Nevertheless, the fact remains that the heights were unoccupied when Von Clausewitz arrived at Parschnitz; and it was *his* duty, as well as that of Mondl, on coming into collision with the enemy, to occupy rapidly such localities as might have proved of use in the impending action. As to engaging Mondl “on the very strong ground he by that time had fully occupied,” it is sufficient to state that he had only a brigade, while Von Clausewitz had a division. A subordinate commander assumes a grave responsibility when he violates or exceeds his orders; but it is hardly to be expected that an able division commander will fetter himself by observing the strict letter of an order, when he knows, and his superior does not know, that the condition of affairs in his front is such as to offer an opportunity for a successful and valuable stroke, even though that stroke be not contemplated in the orders of his chief. Von Alvensleben understood matters better when he marched without orders to assist Von Fransecky at Königgrätz. If a division commander were never expected to act upon his own responsibility when a movement is urged by his own common sense, it is evident that the position of general of division could be filled by a man of very limited abilities.

when the aid of the Guards would have enabled him to clinch his success, was inexcusable. Like Beauregard at Shiloh, Von Bonin seems to have labored under the delusion that a victory could be sufficiently complete while the enemy's army still remained in his front.⁵

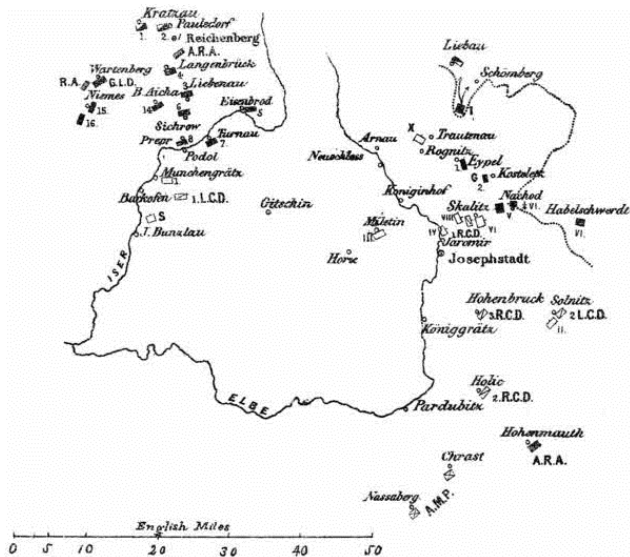
The Austrians had certainly gained a brilliant victory. With a force of 33,600 men, they had defeated 35,000 Prussians, armed, too, with breech-loaders, while the victors had only muzzle-loading rifles. The loss of the Prussians was 56 officers and 1,282 men, while the Austrians lost 196 officers and more than 5,000 men. This disparity of loss illustrates the difference in the power of the old and the new rifles; it also speaks volumes for the pluck of the Austrian soldiers.

But the Austrian victory was doomed to be as fruitless as it was costly; for Prussian skill and valor on other fields obliterated all that was gained by Von Gablentz in the bloody combat of Trautenau.

The march of the Vth Corps, under Von Steinmetz, lay through the defile of Nachod, five miles in length, in which the entire corps was obliged to march in a single column. The advanced-guard, which had seized Nachod the night before, pushed forward rapidly, beyond the outlet of the defile, to the

⁵ "While this was going on a staff-officer ... of General Beauregard's headquarters ... came up to General Bragg and said, 'The General directs that the pursuit be stopped; the victory is sufficiently complete; it is needless to expose our men to the fire of the gun-boats.' General Bragg said, 'My God! was a victory ever sufficiently complete?'"—*Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, Vol. I., p. 605.*

junction of the roads leading to Skalitz and Neustadt, where it received orders to halt, and thus cover the issue of the main body through the defile. While the advanced-guard was making preparations for bivouacking, its commander, General Von Loewenfeldt, received news of the approach of the Austrian VIth Corps, which, as we have seen, had been ordered upon Nachod. Hastily forming for action, the Prussian advanced guard received the attack of a brigade, which was reinforced until nearly the whole Austrian corps was engaged. It was a desperate struggle of six and one-half battalions, five squadrons and twelve guns, against twenty-one battalions, eighty guns and a greatly superior force of cavalry. For three hours the advanced-guard sustained the unequal conflict, with no other reinforcement than Wnuck's cavalry brigade. The Prussian force, in one line 3,000 paces long, without reserves, was sorely pressed, until the main body began to issue from the defile and deploy upon the field. The entire Austrian corps was now engaged. Finally, after a successful charge of Wnuck's cavalry brigade upon the Austrian cuirassiers, and the repulse of a heavy infantry attack, Von Steinmetz assumed the offensive, and the Austrians, defeated with great loss, retreated to Skalitz. In the latter part of this action the Prussians were under the immediate command of the Crown Prince. The Prussian loss was 1,122, killed and wounded; the Austrians lost 7,510, of which number about 2,500 were prisoners.



N^o. 5.

POSITION OF BOTH ARMIES ON THE EVENING OF THE 27TH. JUNE.

The 1st Division of the Guards halted this night at Eypel; the 2d Division at Kosteletz.

This day, which had seen two bloody actions fought by the Second Army, was one of inaction on the part of the armies of Frederick Charles. The day was consumed in constructing bridges across the Iser, at Turnau and Podol, and in concentrating the main body of the army on the plateau of Sichern, preparatory

to an attack upon the Austrian position at Münchengrätz.

JUNE 28TH

The First Army and the Army of the Elbe made a combined attack upon Count Clam-Gallas at Münchengrätz, the Austrians being assailed in front and on both flanks. The Austrian commander had begun his retreat before the Prussian attack commenced; and after a brief resistance, he fell back upon Gitschin, with a loss of about 2,000 men, killed, wounded and prisoners. The Prussian loss was only 341. The armies of Frederick Charles were now completely united. One division was pushed forward to Rowensko, and the remaining eight, numbering, with the cavalry, upwards of 100,000 men, were concentrated upon an area of about twenty square miles. Some distress began to be felt because of the short supply of food and the difficulty of getting water; for only part of the provision trains had come up, and the Austrian inhabitants, when they abandoned their homes, had filled up the wells. Two roads led east from the Prussian position; one *via* Podkost, and the other *via* Fürstenbrück, but both united at Sobotka. The Austrian rear guard was driven from Podkost during the night, and both roads were open for the Prussian advance on the following morning.

Frederick Charles has been severely (and it would seem justly) criticised for his inaction on the 27th of June. His explicit instructions from Von Moltke should have been enough to cause him to hasten forward, and so threaten the Austrian

left as to relieve the pressure on the Crown Prince. And there was another reason for prompt action. As already mentioned, the victory of Podol had opened to Frederick Charles the shortest line to Gitschin, from which place he was now distant only fifteen miles, while Clam-Gallas, at Münchengrätz, was twenty miles away from the same point. The town of Gitschin, like Ivrea in 1800, or Sombref and Quatre-Bras in 1815, had accidentally become a strategic point of the first importance by reason of the relative positions of the opposing armies and the direction of the roads necessary for the concentration of each. All the roads leading from the Iser, from Turnau to Jung Bunzlau, center at Gitschin, whence other roads branch out to Neu Bidsow, Königgrätz, Josephstadt, Königinhof, and other important points. The possession of Gitschin by either army would seriously delay, and perhaps eventually prevent, the concentration of the other. A prompt movement to Gitschin by Frederick Charles would have cut off Clam-Gallas, who could then have effected a junction with Von Benedek only by a circuitous march of such length as to make it probable that his two corps would have been eliminated altogether from the problem solved on the field of Königgrätz. As the Austro-Saxons at Münchengrätz, covering the roads to Prague, could have protected their communications with that city, while menacing the communications of the Prussians with their base, it was, doubtless, necessary to dislodge them from that position; but Frederick Charles might have promptly pushed to Gitschin a

force sufficient to seize and hold the place, and still have kept in hand enough troops to defeat Clam-Gallas so heavily as to drive him back in complete rout; for Frederick Charles' force numbered, at this time, nearly 140,000 men, while Clam-Gallas had not more than 60,000.

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