FRENCH EMPIRE. --SWISS.

DRAGOON (Uniform decreed in February 1812). -- GRENADIER SWISS INFANTRY.
SECOND PART.

NAPOLEON AT DRESDEN.

COMPOSITION OF THE BELLIGERENT ARMIES.

OPENING OF THE CAMPAIGN.

From 10 May to 20 June 1812.

“We notice that before the battle of Actium, he had there one day fourteen kings in the antechamber of Anthony.”

VOLTAIRE.
FIRST CHAPTER.

PLENARY COURT OF DRESDEN.

Aspect of Dresden before the arrival of Napoleon. --Journey of the Emperor and Empress. --Their visit to Châlons-sur-Marne, Metz and Mainz. --Stay in Aschaffenburg and Freyberg. --Arrival of Their Majesties at Dresden. --The Emperor and Empress of Austria. --The Marcolini Palace. --Napoleon's rising. --The kings of Saxony and Württemberg. --The princes of the Confederation. --The King of Prussia. --He offers the Crown Prince, his son, to Napoleon, to accompany him as an aide-de-camp. --The main ministers. --MM. von Hardemberg and Metternich. --Etiquette of the Court of Dresden. --Napoleon at the height of his glory and power. --Nobility of the Bonaparte family; true nobility of Napoleon. --Activity and labors of the Emperor in Dresden. --Rivalries and jealousies. --What do the interviews of the great princes lead to, according to Philippe de Comines.

Our intention is not to describe minutely the apparatus of this court of Dresden, where so many other courts were soon to meet from the most opposite points of Germany; the luxury that the King of Saxony displayed, the parties, the banquets, the concerts, the shows, the hunting parties which disputed the hours there, all this movement finally which made Dresden a radiant stay of splendor and magnificence of which Napoleon fled from the center: however, to give an exact idea of the pomp which must have surrounded him, we believe we should cede the pen for a moment to a historian who will not be accused of having always been the apologist of the great man.*

*M. Capefigure, in his beautiful work entitled: Europe during the Consulate and the Empire of Napoleon, Volume IX, Chapter VI.

"Dresden," he says, "the coquettish city of Germany, looks like a day of celebration; a lively and joyful agitation manifested itself on the banks of the Elbe where students and young girls with ash hair play candidly from Wilsdruff and Friedrichstadt. From the Gate of Dohna to the green meadow of Osterwise, from the suburb of Pirna to the black and white gate of Neustadt, there was an unusual activity in all. The beautiful Marcolini Palace, with its enchanting gardens, its magnificent park, its ponds where swans with dazzling plumage bathe at all times, awaited guests of powerful renown, and among them all, Napoleon, protector of the Confederation of the Rhine. There, around him, was to be grouped a royal cortege: Francis II, who had come to visit his son-in-law, and the Empress his daughter. It was not yet known whether the King of Prussia would leave Breslau to come and greet the Emperor of the French at Dresden; one cared little about it on either side. Napoleon, at the height of his omnipotence, had declared that he did not want to see the King of Prussia: this prince came, however, thinking of the sad destinies of his kingdom; but it was only on the entreaties of the Empress of Austria."
NAPOLEON AT DRESDEN.

The Emperor before leaving on campaign, receives the kings and princes of allied Europe, eagerly coming to offering their tribute and homage.

Napoleon and Marie-Louise had left Saint-Cloud, as we know, on 9 May, at five o'clock in the morning; they arrived the same day at Chalons-sur-Marne, and slept at the hotel of the prefecture, sumptuously decorated to receive them. On the 10th, at Metz, Napoleon visited the fortifications of this almost abandoned place, and immediately set out again for Mainz: Their Majesties were received there by the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess of Hesse-Darmstadt. Napoleon spent the days of the 12th and 13th inspecting this frontier town, set out again on the 14th, and stopped at Aschaffenburg, at the home of the Grand Duke, uncle of the Empress Marie-Louise, where he was already had met the King of Württemberg and the Grand Duke of Baden. On the following days, Their Majesties passed through Brenth and Plauen, and met on the 16th, at Freyberg, the King and Queen of Saxony, eager to meet the illustrious travelers. The same day, at eleven o'clock in the evening, we had arrived in Dresden.

The next day the Emperor found at his rising the reigning prices of Saxe-Weimar, Saxe-Coburg, and Dessau. The Queen of Westphalia and the Grand Duke of Würzburg arrived during the day. On the 17th, the Emperor and Empress of Austria entered Dresden. The last time the two Emperors, Napoleon and Francis, had seen each other, it was near a bivouac fire, in the plains of Moravia, after the battle of Austerlitz.

Napoleon occupied the large apartments of the palace. His rising took place, as usual, at nine o'clock. It was there that you should have seen with what submission a crowd of princes, confounded among the courtiers, awaited the moment to appear! Napoleon was the king of
kings; all eyes were on him. The crowd rushed to the gates of the palace at the slightest movement of the Emperor; they hurried on his steps and contemplated him with that air of admiration and astonishment: this ensemble presented the vastest picture and the most dazzling monument that could be erected to the power of a single man.

The King of Prussia was, in fact, the last of the sovereigns who came to Dresden. He was accompanied by his son, Crown Prince William; something sad and serious painted on their faces. The King wore mourning for a beloved wife; a long black crepe hung from his hat, from which he had retained the form of that of Frederick the Great. Importuned at first by the presence of this sovereign, Napoleon soon resigned himself to it, especially when the latter had verbally reiterated to him the assurance of an inviolable attachment to the system which united them. A melancholy interest was attached to the King of Prussia; they shook hands with him secretly, for he had suffered much for German nationality; they surrounded the Crown Prince, a handsome young man of firm appearance, who was later to learn the art of war in great battles. The Empress of Austria, especially, showed him the liveliest interest, often speaking to him of Queen Louise, his mother; and, at this memory, the son wept; for in German imaginations a woman symbolizes at the same time both family ideas and political ideas.

The King of Prussia offered his son to Napoleon to accompany him as aide-de-camp, and even introduced him to his aides-de-camp, asking them for their friendship for this young and new comrade-in-arms.*

*Baron Fain, Manuscript of 1812, Volume 1, 1st Part, Chapter X.

The principal ministers, the counselors, the intimate confidants of the monarchs crowded behind all these princes, and among the number were distinguished MM. von Metternich and Hardemberg. The attitude of these statesmen before Napoleon was one of admiration for his genius; their language with those around him was that of devotion to his person.

"How happy you are," they said to the officers of the Emperor's civil and military household, "to dedicate your existence to such a great man! How enviable is such a fate! Certainly, it is not to you that the future will never fail!"*

*General Gourgaud, page 84.

Often Napoleon was obliged to testify that he wanted more attention to be paid to the Emperor of Austria, his father-in-law. This sovereign, like the King of Prussia, had not brought with him what is called his household. They ate with Napoleon; it was he who set the tone and fixed the etiquette. He was always careful to have the Emperor of Austria pass before him, and the latter was delighted by this mark of deference. Napoleon's luxury and his munificence must have made him seem like an Asian monarch. At Dresden, as at Tilsit, he gorged all who approached him with diamonds. He had not a single French soldier around him, he had no other guard than the Saxon bodyguards.

"I was there," he said in Saint Helena, "in such a good family, with such good people, that I was safe."*
It was in Dresden and during a ceremonial dinner where all the kings and all the princes of the confederation were present, that the Emperor of Austria informed Napoleon that the Bonaparte family had once been sovereign in Treviso:

"I am sure of it," added the monarch, "since I had all the titles represented to me, and," he added, turning to his daughter, seated at the right of the King of Saxony, "if I attach importance to it, is that it must give great pleasure to the Empress Marie-Louise."

At these words Napoleon smiled, bowing his head slightly; then, raising her immediately:

"Sire," he replied, "if this is so, I am very glad for your Majesty; for, as for me, I believed that my nobility dated only from Marengo."

We abbreviate all etiquette ceremonies; they are the same in all courts: great dinners, great circles, great illuminations, eternal concerts, a few carriage rides, long stops in vast salons, each one always serious and constantly on the alert, or occupied in defending his attributions and his pretensions: this is more or less what the pleasures of the court, so envied and after which everyone sighs, reduce to.

As for Napoleon, always indefatigable, he knew how to pass from entertainment to business with the same facility. His stay in the capital of Saxony was not only for the purpose of holding this plenary court of kings, where his pride, fully satisfied, welcomed sovereigns and monarchs as vassals: it was from the Marcolini palace, under the broad shade of its kiosks and the noise of the murmuring waterfalls, that Napoleon regulated the movement so complicated of this great mass of men who were soon to rush into the deserts of ancient Scythia.

However, if it is rare that the prolongation of the stay of one court near another adds to the mutual affections, with all the more reason when several courts are gathered on the same point. Let us consult Philippe de Comines on this subject: he learns what the interviews of powerful princes lead to, saying that the first moments spent, comparisons, jealousies, animosities are established, and that one separates less good friends than we were before. Now, the interview at Dresden sufficiently proved that Philippe de Comines was right.