

## NAPOLEON AT LODI.

THE STORY OF HIS EARLIEST MASTER STROKE IN WAR.

The Planning Was the Boldest of the Bold, the Execution Prudent and Skillful—Personal Vigilance and Bravery of the "Little Corporal."



SEARCHING for a key to Napoleon's success on the battlefield one need not look beyond his action at the affair of the Bridge of Lodi, about which so much romance and so little history have been written. His famous victory was not an accident, the lucky outcome of a rash, haphazard blow. In the

first place the French had everything against them when their little republican army set out in 1796 to crush the Austrian power in Italy. The odds at arms were two to one in favor of the Austrian allies. Napoleon himself was on trial. He was a new appointee, with no past successes as a general to bolster up his cause. After passing the Alps and entering northern Italy by rare strategy he found himself approaching two strong Austrian armies, separated only by the distance between Mantua and Milan and having the shorter line for marching to a junction.

To meet the French invasion both armies marched toward each other, and the army from Milan had just crossed the Adda river at Lodi when the head of Napoleon's column reached that point. To beat the Milan army before it should be re-enforced was the French problem; to keep Napoleon on the hither side of the Adda the Austrian problem. A stone bridge across the Adda 200 yards in length was the key to both problems. The Austrians didn't destroy it after crossing because they hoped to use it later in retracing their steps to Milan, and in order to prevent Napoleon from crossing it they made ready to fight. A battery of 11 cannon—say some accounts, others 30—was planted on their side to play upon the structure, and to support these were two lines of troops 6,000 strong. On the flanks and in the rear were supports amounting to several thousand.

The walled town of Lodi extended to the river on the side where the French approached, and a gateway in the high inclosure wall along the river bank opened upon the bridge. After driving the Austrian rear guard out of the town Napoleon placed artillery on the heights in rear of the bridge and bombarded the Austrians. The Austrians in turn bombarded Lodi to drive out the French. The head of Napoleon's column consisted of 3,500 grenadiers and 2,000 cavalry, and massing these troops behind the river wall and in the streets near by he awaited the arrival of his main army, the divisions of Massena and Augereau, each 6,000 strong and following him on separate roads.

Meanwhile the young leader made plans to cross the bridge in spite of everything. In order to do that he must first preserve the bridge, for the Austrians might take alarm and destroy it. The fact that it seemed to them so extremely improbable that Napoleon would attempt to cross and their wish to let it stand for future use had kept them from sacrificing it. To add to their reasons for letting it alone Napoleon went to the front and personally trained several guns to fire upon the Austrian entrance to the structure, so that his enemies could not reach it without heavy loss of life.

It is said that when the republican generals with Napoleon saw that their leader was bent upon an attack they opposed it strongly, and that he responded with spirit: "We must cross, let it cost what it may. At most not be said that the tributary Adda stopped those heroes who had forced the Po."

Massena's division reached the scene and was ordered to take rest, and the entire day was passed in getting ready to "make assurance double sure" in an enterprise which if it was rash in conception was not to be so in execution. Inquiry among the inhabitants led to the discovery of a ford across the river some miles above the town, and Napoleon detached Beaumont's cavalry column, with some cannon, to attempt the ford and try to give the Austrians a little fire in the rear. This move he meant to follow up by a vigorous assault across the bridge, and after careful study formed a column and gave orders for the assault. His plans were based upon certain points in the game that his old school antagonists failed to note. In the first place the Austrian artillery was planted along the river heights as if to stay and was patiently firing upon the French position to make it hazardous for assailants to reach the bridge from the streets of Lodi.

This fire, however, was chiefly aimed at the French end of the bridge near the gate, the rest of it being untouched. The French battery, carefully trained by Napoleon, was doing the same for the Austrian end, so that the latter could not station guns or riflemen to sweep the whole course of the bridge. Hence a storming column would not be in danger except at the very entrance to the bridge, a few feet at most, and if a sudden dash were made through that narrow belt of fire the loss would be comparatively light and the worst would be over until the bridge was crossed. But once across the bridge, what then? What of the 6,000 Austrians stationed on the hill-

side to resist the French advance beyond the bridge should they succeed in crossing it? This: Napoleon saw that the Austrian infantry had backed away from his death dealing cannonade along the river brink and that, with the exception of a skirmish line and the few artillerymen who handled the Austrian cannon, his own troops were the nearest to the enemy's stronghold.

If the French charge could carry beyond the fiery Lodi end of the bridge, the storming column could rush across and up the heights and overpower the artillerymen before the Austrian infantry could take alarm and come to the rescue of their batteries. These were simple matters when once thought of, but no one did think, and act as well, except Napoleon.

But this was not all. Nothing was to miscarry, if possible to foresee it. The attack was delayed until Augereau's division got near enough on the march to support it if need be. Then the final preparations were made. A solid storming column of 4,000 grenadiers was massed near the head of the bridge with a battalion of 300 foot carbiniers, or light infantry, in front. The ranks were the exact width of the bridge and were so arranged that at the word "Forward!" the leading sections could wheel from the cover of the rampart wall, cross the shot ridden space around the gateway at a single spring, and then make the run along the causeway to the Austrian side quite free from danger. Napoleon went among the troops and spoke familiar and encouraging words. It was the striking contrast between his slight figure and the massive grenadiers who stood in the front ranks that suggested the nickname of "Little Corporal." He looked like a boy in such company.

It was late in the afternoon, 6 or 7 o'clock, when the sound of Beaumont's guns at the distant ford resounded through the valley, and the Austrians at once showed signs of uneasiness. Napoleon quickly ordered the charge. Drums beat the signal "Forward!" The foremost assailants issued from behind the ramparts, wheeled under a terrible hail of grape and canister and attempted to pass the gateway to the bridge. The front ranks went down like a row of grain stalks before the reaper, the column staggered and reeled backward, and the valiant grenadiers were appalled by the task before them. But this emergency had also been provided for. The moment the charge sounded a force of sharpshooters that had crept



PLACED HIMSELF AT THEIR HEAD.

along the river walls and down the bridge piers and otherwise made their way unseen to the water below emerged from their cover and by swimming and wading reached the rocks and islands in the stream and opened fire upon the Austrian gunners. Seeing this, the grenadiers took courage and rallied for another attempt. To crown all, Napoleon placed himself at their head, and his aids and generals—Cervoni, Dallemagne, Berthier, Massena and Lannes—rushed to his side.

Forward again; this time over the heaps of dead bodies that choked the passage, and a quick run, counted by seconds only, carried the column over the 200 yards of clear space, scarcely a shot from the Austrians taking effect except at the point where the platoons wheeled to take the first leap.

The suddenness of the blow and the miracle of the passage of the bridge at all by the French took the heart out of the Austrian artillerymen, and they abandoned their guns almost instantly.

As Napoleon had calculated, the Austrian infantry lying behind the batteries was too far away to go to their aid, and so, without halting at the enemy's front line, his charging grenadiers rushed up the hill to attack the second. This too, gave way, and within a few minutes after the first ranks of the French landed on the Austrian bank of the river the entire army of the allies was running to the rear.

Individuals turned now and then and fought on their own hook to prevent capture, and in this way some of the bravest of Napoleon's followers won honors at Lodi. When the general asked for the names of the heroes of the day to gazette for bravery, the roll of the entire first battalion of carbiniers who headed the attack was handed in. Perhaps two-thirds of them were dead, for they had received the full force of the shower of grape hurled at the daring column the moment the Austrian artillerymen saw what was coming. Sergeant Leon of that battalion was the first across the bridge, and he had led the attack on the batteries. One of the grenadiers named Laforge had killed five Austrians at the guns.

The French loss given by Napoleon was 200, which doubtless represented the killed only. Brief and easy as the struggle was to the French, it cost the Austrians dear. Their killed and wounded amounted to 1,200, their prisoners 1,000. To this the Austrians add a loss of 235 horses, 14 cannon and 30 wagons, the French claiming 600 horses and 20 cannon.

The result of the battle was the capture of Milan by the French and the control of all Lombardy. Napoleon had failed to defeat the junction of the Austrian armies, but as he beat them in battle afterward Lodi became known as the turning point in his brilliant Italian campaign.

GEORGE L. KILMER.

### An Abrupt Proposal.

The reported fashion of the famous Mr. Abernethy's courtship and marriage is very characteristic. It is told that while attending a lady for several weeks he observed these admirable qualifications in her daughter which he truly esteemed to render the married state happy. Accordingly on a Saturday, taking leave of his patient, he addressed her to the following purport:

"You are now so well that I need not see you after Monday next, when I shall come and pay you a farewell visit. But in the meantime I wish you and your daughter to seriously consider the proposal I am about to make. It is abrupt and unceremonious, I am aware, but the excessive occupation of my time by my professional duties affords me no leisure to accomplish what I desire by the more ordinary course of attention and solicitation. My annual receipts amount to £—, and I can settle £— on my wife. My character is generally known to the public, so that you may readily ascertain what it is. I have seen in your daughter a tender and affectionate child, an assiduous and careful nurse and a gentle and ladylike member of a family. Such a person must be all that a husband could covet, and I offer my hand and fortune for her acceptance. On Monday when I call I shall expect your determination, for I really have not time for the routine of courtship."

In this manner the lady was wooed and won, and it may be added the union was felicitous in every respect.

**How Li "Worked" Two Machines.**  
With a seeming innocence that would have done justice to Ah Sin, the Heathen Chinese, Li Hung Chang appeared to display the greatest interest in the sewing machines at an exhibition in Edinburgh he visited when in Great Britain several years ago.

His excellency's first question was how long it would take for the sewing machine at which he had sat down to do a certain distance—seemingly confusing the mechanical stitchee with a lady's safety at the next stand.

Without waiting for any reply to his query or further ceremony Li started sewing a little seam. Nor did he do it badly, a fact which made him seem delighted as a child. For some time the viceroi continued his hemming and, though got away at length by his attendants, immediately sat down at the next machine and insisted on working it.

"What is the price?" asked Li at length.

"Your excellency shall have it as a gift," was the reply of the exhibitors. "Then I don't want it in that case," observed the simple and bland Li, "because I require two, one for myself and the other for the empress." And he had them.

**What the Barber Said.**  
"To shave a man at home," said a barber, "I charge a quarter, but to shave a dead man half a dollar is the price. About a tenth of my private customers are women."

"I shave at their houses six or seven women every day. I don't know why it is some women have beards. It is very distressing to them, and they shave close and often. It is their only remedy. The electric needle is no good for them, you see, because their beards are so thick that it would take a lifetime for the operator to go over their faces and pluck each hair out separately, as must be done in the electrical depilating system."

"Beards only grow on old women. They are one of the feminine disfigurements of age. It is the same trouble, suppose, as that which affects old men. Old men, you know, have the growths of hair in their nostrils, ears that must be cut out weekly, and their eyebrows if not regularly trimmed would grow to two or three inches."—Philadelphia Record.

**She Was "Founded."**  
Netta was a little girl who lived in a foundling asylum, a place where homeless children without relatives are cared for.

A visitor who often came to the foundling had taken a great fancy to Netta. It was the birthday of Muriel, the lady's little girl, and permission was asked for Netta to take tea with Muriel.

As it was Muriel's birthday Netta wished to be very nice to her. At the same time Netta felt she had an advantage over Muriel, for it was not every one who lived in a foundling hospital.

"You were born, Muriel?" she asked. Muriel nodded and smiled. Up went Netta's head a little higher. "It is so common to be born," she said. "I was founded!"—Exchange.

**A Village of Lunatics.**  
Laos, in Cochinchina, is, according to Dr. Lefevre, a village of out and out fools or lunatics. A common form of mania with them is to believe they have a buffalo in the stomach. Hopeless cases of this delusion, or "pipop," as they are called, are thrown into the water and if they save themselves are accounted free from the possession.

**The Ladies' Gallery.**  
It is not perhaps generally known that an order for the withdrawal of strangers from the English house of commons does not extend to the ladies' gallery, which is not supposed to be within the house. Ladies can therefore only be informed of the subject of debate and left to withdraw or not at their own discretion.

**Chance For Him at Home.**  
Pslugger (the eminent pugilist, in a high state of indignation)—He offers me \$5,000 if I'll lay down in the 221 room! I'll show 'im, by George, I'm a gentleman!

Mrs. Pslugger—What's the matter with trying to show me you're a gentleman?—Chicago Tribune.

# A Good Sarsaparilla

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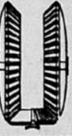
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## State Encampment G. A. R. State

Dubuque Iowa, June 4-6. Dubuque is planning to entertain the old soldiers royally; the Illinois Central is planning to give them the usual good treatment and service enroute, and the old soldiers themselves are planning to attend in force, and have a royal good time.

All of these plans will be successfully carried out, and the Annual Encampment, Department of Iowa, Grand Army of the Republic, at Dubuque this year, will be a record breaker in every way.

The Illinois Central will sell excursion tickets to Dubuque at a rate of one fare for the round trip from all points in Iowa where the one way fare to Dubuque is \$2.00 or more. From points where the fare is less than \$2.00 the rate will be one and one-third, with a maximum of \$2.00. Tickets on sale June 3, 4 and 5, and for trains reaching Dubuque before noon of the 6th; limited to June 8 for return.

J. F. MERRY, Asst. Gen. Pass. Agent, Dubuque, Iowa.

## Low Rates to California and Back This Summer.

An illustrated book, which will be of much interest to all who are expecting to take advantage of the low rates to California this summer, at the time of the Epworth League Convention, to be held in San Francisco in July, has just been issued by the Chicago & North-Western Railway. Much valuable information is given relating to the state, variable routes, etc. The rate via this line will be only \$50.00 for the round trip from Chicago, with corresponding low rates from other points. Copy of this book may be had free upon application to W. B. Kniskern, 22 Fifth Avenue, Chicago, Ill.

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