



The London Gazette

EXTRAORDINARY.

Published by Authority.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1812.

Foreign Office, December 8, 1812.

DISPATCHES, of which the following are copies, were yesterday received from General Viscount Cathcart, K. T. His Majesty's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary at the Court of Russia, by Viscount Castlereagh, one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State.

My Lord, *St. Petersburg, Nov. 11, 1812.*

IHAVE the honour to acquaint your Lordship, that Buonaparte has escaped from the government of Moscow, and has followed the road to Smolensko by which he came.

Generals Count Platow and Count Orloff Denizoff have been incessantly in his rear, and on both flanks of his line of march; the former attacked a position defended by infantry and cannon, which he carried, taking two colours, twenty-two pieces of artillery, and such prisoners as could be saved. Count Orloff Denizoff has likewise met with resistance which he has every where overpowered, and has taken many trophies and quantities of baggage, ammunition waggons, with prisoners, and some ordnance.

From the quantities of ammunition blown up by the enemy, and from the state of the road, described to be covered with the bodies of dead men and horses, the retreat of the rear divisions of the French is stated to have every character of continued flight.

On the 3d of November General Millaradovitch, with the column under his command, reached the main road near Viasna, where he had a sharp engagement with the rear guard, which is reported by the prisoners to have been composed of the divisions of Beuharnois, of Davoust, and Ney; their divisions in vain attempted to arrest his progress, and, after several brilliant charges by the Russian cavalry, were driven through the town of Viasna at the point of the bayonet, and pursued to Erensina by the light cavalry under General Platow: in this attack the infantry regiment of Pernoff, led by its Colonel, General Tchogloloff, and by Major-General Parkivitch, formed the head of the column, and charged into the town with drums beating and colours flying.

The loss of the enemy in killed and wounded in this affair is stated to be at least six thousand, with two thousand five hundred prisoners, among which are General Peltier, of the artillery, and Colonel Morat, Aid de Camp to Marshal Davoust.

In the course of the pursuit from Viasna, great numbers of the enemy were killed, one standard and three pieces of cannon were taken, and upwards of one thousand men made prisoners.

In the former part of the retreat, Ramusé, Secretary to the Duke of Bassano, was taken, with all the Chancery.

Referring to the relations which have been regularly transmitted for more minute details of the several actions, I will briefly recapitulate the few great movements which have taken place since the arrival of the French at Moscow.

Marshal Kutusoff continued in his position behind the River Pokhra till the 28th October, covering the old road to Kalouga, the Toula and Rezan roads; but having made occasional movements on the same line, according as the enemy's operations appeared to point to either flank.

In the mean while the enemy, by his own 20th bulletin, and by his conduct, seems to have been for some time uncertain of the position of the Russian army. As soon as it was ascertained, a considerable portion of the army under Murat occupied the intermediate country between Moscow and the Pokhra.

It was presumed that the French, having it in their power to bring forward their whole force to either flank of Murat's position, would endeavour to manœuvre so as to induce Marshal Kutusoff to retire behind the Oka, in order to procure a more extensive theatre of ground, with the convenience of moving either on Kalouga or Smolensko; to avoid which, and with a view to preserve a more certain conveyance for provisions and reinforcements from the south, and at the same time to hold the command of the Smolensko road, the Russian army began its march to occupy the position behind the river Nara, changing its front to the right, upon or parallel to the old Kalouga road.

This position, strong in itself, and strengthened by art, was not likely to be attacked in front; but it was of course foreseen, that if it were to be attacked, a previous disposition must be made by the enemy on the new Kalouga road, to turn the left and rear of this position, and the Marshal professed his readiness to meet the enemy upon that ground.

The movement was completed on the 3d of October; on the 4th of October a smart affair of advanced guard took place with most decisive success on the side of the Russians, which was followed on the 5th of October by the flag of truce sent by Buonaparte, with an overture to obtain an armistice.

mission, and to open a negotiation, which was rejected.

At this period several considerable detachments were made to harass the enemy, which appear to have been conducted with equal skill and success: the most important of these was the one against Verrea, which place was taken by assault on the 14th of October.

On the 16th of October, several regiments of Cossacs having arrived, it was proposed to attack Murat; the attack did not take place till the 18th of October.

The enemy after this affair, of which I had the honour to transmit to your Lordship a report in my dispatch, retreated behind the little river Moza.

Buonaparte was not heard of out of Moscow or its vicinity till after this period.

The only detachment of any importance made by the French in a northern direction, was the one stationed at Demetrioff, which was recalled in great haste, as soon as the evacuation of Moscow was determined on. The Russians occupied the latter city on the 22d of October, with the loss of Lieutenant-General Winzingerode, most treacherously carried off, with his Aid-de-Camp Captain Narishkin, while advanced with a flag of truce to remonstrate against a protracted and unnecessary resistance on the part of the rear-guard.

On the 24th of October, the French army was reconnoitred by an officer of Cossacs belonging to the corps of Moscow, who saw four camps, one on the new Kalouga road near Borofsk, and three on the left bank of the Protva.

In the night of the 24th of October, General Dorofoff was ordered to occupy Mala-Jaroslaff, a post-town on the new Kalouga road, between Borofsk and that place: that General already found it occupied in force by a French detachment; a very obstinate contest immediately took place, in the course of which the troops on both sides were reinforced, and the town was taken and retaken eleven times. The Marshal, in the mean while, put his army in motion by the left, and arrived at Mala-Jaroslaff, establishing his head-quarters two versts to the southward of that town, which was burned, and detaching a considerable corps under General Platow, to Medina, on his left, where he took eleven pieces of cannon, and left the ground covered with dead.

The obstinacy of this contest for Mala-Jaroslaff, with other circumstances, tended to confirm the Field-Marshal's opinion, that the object of the enemy was to force a passage to the Southern Provinces; and although there were also strong grounds to believe that he was prepared to attempt a retreat upon Smolensko, and by Vilna to the Nienzen, yet the Marshal deemed it necessary to direct his principal attention to the roads pointing to the southward; and, with a view to obtain more complete command of them, retired to a position within forty versts of Kalouga, near Goriki.

Finding that the enemy was moving, by Verrea, on Mojaisk, he again advanced upon Medina, and having received intelligence that the French head-quarters were, on the 30th of October, at Goloki, a monastery not far from Borodino, he formed his disposition to attempt to intercept him near Smolensko.

Platow and the Cossacs having been detached for the purpose of harassing and surrounding the enemy, Marshal Kutuzoff reinforced General Millaradovitch's corps to upwards of eighteen thousand men; and directing him to march by his left towards Viasma, the Marshal himself proceeded by Spaskoi and Celinka, in a parallel direction to that allotted to General Millaradovitch; the main road

forming an arch, these parallel lines of march were shorter, but exposed to greater difficulties, the roads being less practicable.

The head of General Millaradovitch's column reached the main road first, near Viasma; the head-quarters of Marshal Kutuzoff were established at the village of Bikoyoi, a little to the southward of Viasma.

In regard to the French army, it appears by the papers of a Commissary General, who was made prisoner, that they victualled one hundred and twenty thousand men, but that their efficient force was reduced to eighty-five thousand, at the period of the evacuation of Moscow, and that Buonaparte had contracted with a company of Jews for a supply of provisions in the line of his retreat. His guards, and some select corps, have been nursed with peculiar care, and kept as much as possible out of action, and these corps appear to have preceded the retreat of the remaining troops.

It is reported that Buonaparte travels in a coach, accompanied by Murat, who has received a contusion in his knee, and Berthier.

It is hardly to be conceived that this rear-guard at least can continue its march without halting, in which case, with the assistance of the light troops, the Russian army will be enabled to overtake them. They have before them the gallant and active Count Wittgenstein, whose character for zeal and enterprize is so well established, and they have also, on the Minsk road, to encounter Admiral Tchichagoff, with the Moldavian army, which it is to be hoped may have time and notice either to unite with Count Wittgenstein to wait for them on the above-mentioned road, or to move to either flank.

Marshal Kutuzoff has sent out, among others, a considerable detachment, which was at Elnee, nearer to Smolensko, under Lieutenant-General Shepetoff on the 1st of November, and which may have the means of interposing delay.

Thus the fruits of the incursions of the French to Moscow, at the expence of the lives of so many brave officers and men, seem to have been limited to the burning and destruction of that city, and to the ruin and desolation of the inhabitants and proprietors near the great road, and in the vicinity of Moscow, while, on the other hand, it will, to the latest period of history, reflect lustre on the spirit and patriotism of the Russian Empire.

The last accounts from Count Wittgenstein are dated the 3d November, at Tchasnik, two stages east of Lepel. After the affair of Polotzk, that General detached a corps to observe Mac Donald, whilst he sent General Steinheil on the road to Vilna, who, after having cut off the Bavarian corps from that of St. Cyr, and entirely dispersed it, with the loss of cannon and colours, joined Count Wittgenstein, who proceeded to attack the remainder of the French under the command of Le Grand; Marshal St. Cyr having retired on account of his wound. This corps was reinforced by Marshal Victor at the head of fifteen thousand men, and, having taken post near Tchasnik, was there defeated on the 31st October by Count Wittgenstein, who considering the enemy's position a good one for himself, has continued to occupy it, detaching a corps to take possession of Witepsk.

Admiral Tchichagoff's last dispatches of the 22d of October, from Breslitow, report the success of a detachment under General Tchaplitz, who, on the 20th of October, took the Polish General Konofkoff with the whole of the 3d regiment of Hulus, of the French guard.

Prince Schwartzenberg had crossed the Bog without giving the Admiral an opportunity of bringing him to action.

Admiral Tchichagoff and Count Wittgenstein had reciprocally sent detachments to ascertain each others position.

Sir Robert Wilson, with his usual activity, has been in every action, and has contrived to see every remarkable occurrence; his last dispatches are dated at Viasma the 4th of November; his accounts tally with the official bulletins, which have been published here.

Lord Tyrconnel has joined Admiral Tchichagoff, by whom he has been received with every possible attention; his letters of the 22d of October, have been received by Sir Robert Wilson at Viasma, and by myself. His Lordship speaks in high terms of the condition of all the corps of that army, which he had until then had the means of seeing.

Having obtained the Emperor's permission for Major-General Dörnberg to serve as a volunteer in the army under General Count Wittgenstein, I have given to that general officer instructions similar to those of Sir Robert Wilson and Lord Tyrconnel, and I expect by the next courier to have the pleasure of learning his safe arrival at the head-quarters of that army.

I have the honour to be, &c.

CATHCART.

November 12.—It having been found impracticable to pass the Neva, the messenger has been detained until this morning. I have now the honour to inclose herewith the report of the capture of Witepsk, by General Count Wittgenstein, who has made prisoners the commanding officer of the enemy's forces there, General Count Pouget, and the governor of the town, Colonel Chavondes. C.

BULLETIN.

St. Petersburg, November 11, 1812.

WITEPSK is taken by Count de Wittgenstein. The General Count Ponget, who commanded the troops, is made prisoner, as well as Colonel Chavondes, the Commandant of the Town.

MY LORD St. Petersburg, Nov. 15, 1812.

I AVAIL myself of the departure of a Spanish courier to acquaint your Lordship, that several officers arrived here in the course of last night, dispatched from the head-quarters of Marshal Kutusoff, at Elnee, on the 9th November.

The Field-Marshal reports, that the flight of the enemy continues with increased precipitation; and that the pursuit, by the several corps of the Russian army, has been constant, vigorous, and successful, a part only of the relation of the affairs which have taken place has, as yet, been published; the remainder is in the press: the following are the most important particulars.

On the 5th November General Millaradovitch reached a village forty versts from Viasma, on the road to Smolensko, in pursuit of the enemy. General Platow marched to the right of the road, to endeavour to reach the head of the column, while the main army moved on the left of it, under the Field-Marshal, towards Elnee.

Sir Robert Wilson describes the march on the main road as one which exhibited scenes of destruction without example in modern war, from the number of dead and dying men and carcasses of horses, many of them cut up for food; peasants' houses every where on fire, ammunition carriages

blowing up, and quantities of stock of every description.

It may be observed that the frost is set in, and is stated to have been from 10 to 15 degrees*.

The effect of famine, fatigue, and cold upon a flying army, through a country full of exasperated peasants, may be easily understood.

In the course of this march the Cossacs took two standards from the Huzars of the imperial guard, who are left behind with the army now retreating, and the enemy also abandoned a howitzer.

On the morning of the 7th November, General Millaradovitch entered Dorogobugsh. The enemy attempted some resistance, but was driven from his advantageous position by the Russian chasseurs, with the loss of three hundred men taken prisoners, exclusive of the sick and wounded. In this attack, and on the preceding day, one howitzer and three guns were taken, and upwards of one hundred and forty ammunition waggons. The number killed at this place must have been very great, but I have not yet heard it estimated. Two Russian officers of note were retaken on this occasion. The enemy are described to be in a state of much insubordination, and it was understood that their march is directed upon Smolensko.

On the 9th of November, Marshal Kutusoff had arrived at Elnee, where he received a report from General Platow, of his having overtaken four divisions of the French army, under the command of Beauharnois, upon the road from Dorogobugsh to Doughovtchstchina.

That General states, that the Cossacs charged through this body, dividing it into two parts, with great slaughter and the capture of sixty-two pieces of ordnance, which had been already brought in and counted, and some standards; many plans and papers of consequence, and upwards of 3,000 prisoners, among which, as well as among the killed, are many officers of rank and distinction.

Part of the remains of this corps fell in the direction of Dorogobugsh, and the other part, in the direction of Doughovtchstchina, closely pursued by the Cossacs and light cavalry.

General Sanson, Quarter-Master-General of the whole French army, was taken, with 500 men of different ranks, upon the right flank of General Platow, near Doughovtchstchina.

Major-General Kutusoff, who has been entrusted with the command of the corps lately under the orders of General Wimpfingerode, had, by extraordinary forced marches, reached the main army with his cavalry.

An officer has been intercepted with letters from Beauharnois, which will be published to-morrow, and which will afford indelible proof of the state in which Buonaparte has left this part of his army. These letters are addressed to Berthier.

It does not appear that the march of the French guards, and of the 1st division has been effected without great loss, many of their bodies having been found on the road.

Field-Marshal Kutusoff intended to continue his march upon Krasnoy, two stages beyond Smolensko, leaving that town upon his right hand, and intersecting the communications towards Mohiloff.

I have not heard that it is ascertained where Buonaparte himself was on the 9th of November.

The first bulletin, containing General Platow's report, is herewith inclosed.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed) CATHCART.

* Reanmus.

(Translation.)

Marshal Prince Kutusoff's Report to His Imperial Majesty, dated from the village of Buihovo, near Viasma, November 5, 1812.

I HAVE the honour to announce to your Imperial Majesty, that since my report of the 1st of November, of the movements of General Platoff, near the monastery of Klolotzk; aide-de-camp General Count d'Orloff Denisoff attacked, at different points, near the town of Viasma, the remainder of the enemy's regiments, which had been beaten, and which were still there. They resisted with obstinacy, but were repulsed every where.

In this affair we took one cannon and forty wagons, with their baggage. Camusier, the Secretary of the Duke of Bassano and his chancery, two officers, and three commissaries belonging to Marshal Ney's corps, with 130 soldiers, were made prisoners. On the morning of the 3d of November, General Miloradowitch attacked the enemy near Viasma. The battle lasted till the enemy retired into the town, from whence he was driven out by the bayonet by the 11th and 26th divisions, under the command of Major-Generals Paskwitch and Ichogloloff. The infantry regiment of Bernow being at the head of the column, entered the first into the town with drums beating and colours flying, and made way for the other troops through the corps of the enemy. According to the reports of the prisoners, three of the enemy's corps were engaged, that of the Vice King of Naples, and those of Marshals Davoust and Ney.

The loss of the enemy in killed and wounded is six thousand men, and we have taken two thousand five hundred prisoners; amongst whom is General Pattien, of the artillery, and the Chief of Marshal Davoust's Etat Major, and Colonel Morat. Our loss in killed and wounded does not exceed five hundred men. After the taking of Viasma, our advanced guard marched through that town, and took a position upon the Smolensko road, while our light infantry, under the orders of General Platoff, pursued the enemy as far as Ercinna.

One colour and three pieces of cannon have fallen into our hands; and without reckoning the great number of killed, with which the roads are covered, we have taken one thousand prisoners, besides the killed and wounded.

(Translation.)

Intercepted Letters from the Viceroy of Italy, to the Prince of Neuchatel.

Lasclie, Nov. 7, 1812.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Highness that I marched out this morning at four o'clock, but the difficulties of the ground and the slipperiness of the roads, obstructed the movement of my army to such a degree, that it has not been possible for its vanguard to reach this place till six o'clock this evening, and that the rear has been prevented from taking up a nearer position than two leagues behind us.

From two to four o'clock the enemy has been hovering on my right; he attacked almost at the same time with artillery, Cossacs and dragoons, the van, the centre and the rear. In the van he dis-

covered an opening of which he profited to penetrate, and carry off two battalion guns, which were drawing up a very steep acclivity. The 9th regiment of infantry hastened to the spot, but the field pieces were already taken.

Upon the rear, the enemy fired with four pieces of ordnance, and General Ornaus thinks (without being positive) that he saw some infantry. On each of the two other points there were two field-pieces.

Your Highness will easily conceive, that being encumbered with my heavy baggage, which has been restored to me, as well as with a numerous artillery, whereof upwards of four hundred horses have died to-day, my position is sufficiently critical. I shall, however, continue my march, and set out very early, in order to reach Cogni. From thence I mean to send out reconnoitring parties, and according to the information they may bring me, I shall either take the road of Douboutchina or Bruzo.

I cannot refrain from informing your Highness that, after employing every means in my power, I find it unfortunately impossible to transport my artillery any further, and that your Highness, in this respect, must expect very great sacrifices. A number of pieces have been rendered useless, and buried by me to-day.

I am, &c.

*Before passing the Vop,
November 5, 1812.*

I ENCLOSE your Highness a letter which I wrote yesterday, but which could not come to hand, as the officer who was the bearer of it was taken into a wrong road by his guide.

Your Highness will be surprised to find, that I am only arrived at the Vop; yet I set out this morning at five o'clock from Zasel; but the road is so intersected by ravines, that it required extraordinary efforts to arrive here. I am sorry to find myself reduced to the disagreeable necessity of owing to you the sacrifices which we have made in order to hasten our march. The last three days journey have cost the army two-thirds of its artillery. Yesterday four hundred horses perished, and to-day perhaps twice as many, not including the great number of horses which I had caused to be added both for military and private carriages. Sometimes all the horses that were drawing a carriage perished at once; several carriages were even furnished three times with fresh sets.

The army has not been harassed in its progress to-day. Only a few Cossacs have appeared without artillery, for which I cannot account. If I may believe the report of a voltigeur, who was sent out marauding, a column of infantry, artillery, and cavalry is taking the same direction with us, namely towards Douboutchina. To-night I intend sending a strong reconnoissance to Douboutchina, and hope to arrive there to-morrow, if the enemy does not prevent it by serious opposition; for I must frankly own to your Highness, the sufferings during the last three days have so much dispirited the soldiers, that I think them little able at present to make an effort. Many men have died with hunger or cold; others, being driven to desperation, suffer themselves to be taken by the enemy.

I am, &c.