

# BATTLE OF SOLFERINO

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Yesterday was marked by one of those battles which if they do not terminate the war, permit at least an anticipation of its solution. The Emperor of Austria commanded in person; and he can now see what a nation he has made his enemy.

The Austrians in retiring previously before us, projected a return to assume the offensive. The apparently decided retreat behind the Mincio was done with the view of inspiring us with a false confidence and by leaving us a vat field for the rapidity of our movements to expose our columns, separated from each other by the order of march, to a sudden attack, which would weaken them by isolating them. But happily the Emperor did not forget that exalted prudence which governs even his courage; the further the allies advanced the more our columns strengthened each other by closing their ranks.

During the whole day they fought in advancing slowly, but advancing always in good order, the corps joining up towards each other. The first corps, after taking possession of Solferino, seized all the positions, the one after the other, in the Pozzello—night alone stopping their career. The Guard seized San Cassiano and Cavriana without losing time. This last village was carried with great spirit under the eyes of the Emperor, who himself directed the fire of the artillery.

As to the 4<sup>th</sup> corps (Gen. Neil) it advanced step by step, always gaining ground. There was a time, about four in the afternoon, when, to cover their retreat, the Austrians made a desperate effort to place themselves between the fourth and the second corps. A fierce struggle occurred; the infantry and artillery took part, and the cavalry, by several charges, decided the success of this great day. This was the last act of the battle; the Austrians began their retreat along the whole line. This retreat was favored by a dreadful storm, which lasted more than an hour, the thunder, the hail, the wind, in line, a hurricane, produced such an effect that nothing could be distinguished on the field of battle.

When the weather improved the enemy had disappeared, and the direction they took was perceived when their columns had attained some distance. The Emperor of Austria, who had lodged at Cavriana, in the very place where afterwards the Emperor Napoleon established his head quarters, quitted the field of battle at four o'clock, and retired towards Golto. From the heights of Cavriana could be seen the great column of dust which marked the progress of his escort.

The Emperor Napoleon was in some degree superior to himself; he was seen everywhere, always directing the battle. Every one around trembled at the dangers which unceasingly threatened him; he alone seemed to be ignorant of them. The protection with which God shielded him was extended to his staff; only one Cent Garde near his Majesty was wounded. Several horses of the staff and the escort were killed or wounded.

The Emperor had taken command of the whole army. His Majesty caused the infantry and artillery of the Guard to advance, and place themselves between the first and second corps, and to carry San Cassiano. Then, in order to reinforce the right of Gen. McMahon (second corps), a little exposed in consequence of the distance of the troops of Gen. Neil, his Majesty sent all the cavalry of the Guard, and two divisions of the cavalry of the first and third corps to fill up the void between the second and fourth corps.

Marshal Canrobert had been charged to watch the movements of the Austrians expected on the side of Mantua.