

THE BATTLE OF SOLFERINO

Austrian Official Dispatch

Verona, 25 June 1859

On the 24^d instant the Imperial Royal army crossed at four places to the right bank of the Mincio. The right wing of the army occupied Pozzolengo, Solferino, and Cavriana. The left wing marched on the 24th instant to Guldizzolo and Castel Goffredo, and repulsed the advancing enemy on all sides. As the Imperial Royal army continued its advance towards the Chiese, the enemy—who had assumed the offensive with his whole force—pushed forward such large bodies of troops that there was a general engagement between the two armies at ten o'clock, or thereabouts in the morning of the 24th instant.

The right wing, which was formed by the second army, under the general of cavalry, Count Schlick, maintained possession of the place which it had originally occupied in the first line of battle until two o'clock in the afternoon, and the first army (the left wing,) under the general of artillery, Count Wimpffen, continually gained ground in the direction of the Chiese. Towards three o'clock the enemy made a vehement attack on Solferino, and after several hours hard fighting obtained possession of the place, which had been heroically defended by the fifth 'corps de armee.' An attack was then made on Cavriana, which place was courageously defended until the evening by the first and seventh 'corps de armee,' but was eventually left in the hands of the enemy.

While the struggle for Solferino and Cavriana was going on, the eighth 'corps de armee,' which was on the outer flank of the right wing, advanced and repulsed the Sardinian troops opposed to it, but this advantage did not enable the Imperial Royal army to recover the positions that had been lost in the centre. The third and ninth corps, which were supported by the eleventh corps, were engaged on the left wing, and the reserve cavalry attached to this wing made several brilliant attacks. Unusually heavy losses, and the fact that the left wing of the first army was unable to make progress on the right flank of the enemy, who directed his main force in the centre against Volta, led to the retreat of the Imperial Royal army. It began late in the evening, during a very violent storm. Yesterday evening Pozzolengo, Mouzambane, Volta and Golto, were still occupied by our troops.

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