desirous of occupying advantageous posts, to prevent the enemy’s penetrating into the country, and attacking it in any poſition it ſhall have taken.

If the choice is left to the general, he ought to be parti­cularly careful, before he comes to a reſolution of giving battle, to examine whether he can gain greater advantage by winning it, than he will ſustain damage by losing it.

It is therefore neither caprice, nor a mistaken courage, or the desire of distinguiſhing himſelf at an improper time, that ſhould determine a general to give battle ; but his ſuperiority over the enemy, both in the number and quality of troops, the enemy’s incapacity, his ill-choſen encamp­ments and negligent marches, the necessity of ſuccouring a place, or the certainty of a reinforcement, by the junction of which the enemy will become ſuperior, or circumstances which may change the original designs of the campaign. This was the reaſon which induced the viſcount Turenne, in 1674, to give the battle of Einſheim, becauſe the prince of Bournonville waited the arrival of the elector of Brandenbourg, who was coming to join him with a considerable re­inforcement ; and if he had not given battle before that junction, the enemy’s army would have had a very great ſuperiority over his. The reaſons given by Montecuculi for avoiding a battle are, “ when the loſs of it will be more prejudicial than the gaining will be advantageous ; when in­ferior to the enemy, or when ſuccour is expected; when the enemy has the advantage of the ground ; when it is percei­ved the army is working its own ruin, either by the fault or division of the commanders, or through the diſagreement of confederates.” It may alſo be added, when the enemy’s army labours under ſome diſeaſe; when it is in want of proviſions and forage ; and that, disheartened by theſe circumstances, his troops deſert from him.

It is on a day of battle that it becomes particularly necessary for a general to be acquainted with his own ground, and alſo that which is occupied by the enemy ; to know in what manner his wings are ſupported, the nature of the places where theſe ſupports are ; whether he can be ſur­rounded, and in what part he can be attacked with the greatest facility.

But however essential theſe branches of knowledge may be, it is not always the ſuperiority of number, or quality of the troops, or advantage of ground, that will ſecure the best dispoſed army from being routed : it is the foreſight of the general in the precautions he has taken before the battle ; it is his genius, his activity, his coolneſs, in the time of ac­tion, and the capacity of the general officers acting under him, that determine the ſucceſs.

Ground, ſeemingly the most advantageous, often preſents obstacles, which do not immediately strike a general, al­though an experienced one, and which may prove fatal in the courſe of a battle ; how, therefore, will a general be able to correct theſe mistakes, if he considers them as only trivial? At the battle of Cerignoli, fought on the 28th of April 1503, the enemy’s front being more extended than at first it was ſuppoſed to be, in order to give a greater extent to that of the French army, it was necessary to continue the lines acroſs vineyards and thickets ; by which means, the neglecting to fill up a ditch cauſed the defeat of the French, and the death of Μ. de Numours their general.

A general ſhould not always purſue his own opinion, it being impossible for one man to see every thing; he ſhould, therefore, cauſe an exact account to be given to him of whatever he cannot have an opportunity of feeing perſonally ; to inform himſelf by ſpies of the enemy’s order of battle, and act in conſequence of that knowledge ; he ſhould posseſs himself of all places capable of containing ambuſcades, which he ought to have had examined ſome days before the battle. Santa Cruz hath given a particular detail of all theſe pre­parations.

It is in theſe moments, which decide the fate of nations, that the genius and prudence of a general ought to be conſpicuous ; he ſhould see, at the same time, what is doing among his own and the enemy’s troops. Beſide the pre­cautions which ought to have preceded the day of battle, thoſe which ought to be taken in the courſe of the action are ſo numerous, that it is impossible for them all to find a place here.

Some depend upon the general’s ability, others upon circumstances, which it is almost as difficult to deſcribe, as to mark out the necessary diſpositions for them.

It depends upon the general’s genius and foresight to make choice of intelligent, active, and prudent aids-de- camp, to assign to each particular body the properest com­mander ; not, for example, to place, at the head of in­fantry, one who has been long accustomed to the ſervice of the cavalry ; or, at the head of cavalry, one who is more used to the infantry, &c. ; to encourage the ſoldiers by the hope of rewards, and by motives which may ſpirit them up, and to threaten thoſe who are ſo unmanly as to tremble at the sight of an enemy, or rash enough to run forwards with­out order.

The general ſhould alſo be capable of forming new ſchemes, in order to render thoſe of the enemy abortive; he ſhould alſo take care, whatever may be the nature of the country, to diſpoſe his army after ſuch a manner, as to render it equally strong in every part, that all the bodies of which it is compoſed may protect and assist one another without confusion; that the intervals necessary for acting be well preſerved, and that the reserve can easily march when­ever it ſhall be ordered: in a word, the troops ſhould be diſpoſed after ſuch a manner, that even before the action they may perceive in what manner they are to act.

It is the work of genius to take advantage of circumstances, and to ſubmit to them ; it is impossible to foresee the precautions dependent on them, as the very circumstances must be themſelves unforeſeen : it is by a general’s addreſs, in knowing how to profit by circumstances, that he ſhows his superiority in the day of battle. Μ. de Montecuculi reduces all the advantages that can be gained over an enemy to four principal heads, which, in reality, are of themſelves reduced to the knowledge of profiting by circumstances ; ſuch are the advantages of number, when the enemy is beaten in his posts, his convoys, and in his forages; when an ambuſcade is ſurrounded, or when a whole army falls upon a ſmall, weak, and ſeparated hody : the second head consists in the knowledge of the commander; the third in the manner of fighting ; and the fourth in the advantage of the ground. A general, who properly considers theſe heads, will diſpoſe of a combined army after ſuch a manner, that it may, at the same time, receive orders without mistake, and execute them without confusion ; a very necessary precaution, and one which Hanno, general of the Cartha­ginians, neglected to take with regard to the strangers allied with them, which occasioned the troubles related by Poly­bius. He ſhould have mixed the ſoldiers belonging to thoſe countries, where bravery is in a manner natural to them, with thoſe belonging to countries where it is more extra­ordinary.

Vigetius points out the precautions necessary to be taken by a general, to avoid having either the wind or the sun in his front. The wind, which raiſed the dust, and blew it into the eyes of the Romans, contributed to the loss of the battle of Cannas ; the sun, on the other hand, dazzles the ſoldiers, and lays open their diſpositions and evolutions to the enemy : in a word, the general ſhould not neglect even