thoſe precautions which may be in appearance uſeleſs, whe­ther before the battle, or at the very time they may be put in execution after the action ; as the rallying the troops, the refreſhing of them, the retreating from before the enemy, or the purſuit of him, ſupposing the battle to be gained. A general ſhould have beforehand formed the plans of the marches and the enterpriſes he would attempt, and be almost certain of the means of executing them ; if, on the contrary, he fails, he ſhould have determined the positions by which the army, fixed in a camp strong by situation, may prevent the enemy from reaping any great advantage from his victory : he ſhould also have provided for the ſecu­rity of the prisoners, the hoſpitals, the plunder of the ſol­diers ; in ſhort, for all that is necessary for preſerving order and diſcipline, and every thing contributing to the ſecurity of the troops : the distress of the enemy, and the glory of the ſovereign, ſhould be provided for without waiting for the event; for at that time confuſion and disorder would prove more fatal than even the battle.

In the treatise written by Santa Cruz, upon the diſpositions before and after a battle, may be ſeen a long detail of the precautions depending upon genius, and of those which are regulated by circumstances.

The general’s post during the action ought to be, ac­cording to Vigetius, on the right wing, between the cavalry and the infantry. Onozander fixes it upon ſome height, and Santa Cruz towards the centre, in the front of the se­cond line. Titus Livius and Polybius have obſerved, that the posts of Scipio and Hannibal were always in thoſe parts which were least expoſed : becauſe, as obſerved by Onozander, a general who runs into danger is a raſh man, fuller of preſumption than courage : neither is daringneſs, adds his commentator after Plato, always a sign of courage ; besides, a man who is really brave, is never daring but when it is abſolutely necessary.

A general ſhould not always ſuppoſe that what particu­larly strikes him is right ; he ſhould reason calmly upon the probability of it, in order to come to a greater degree of certainty with regard to the practicability : he ought alſo, says Vigetius, to be acquainted with the nature of the ene­my, and the characters of his generals, whether they are prudent or raſh, daring or timid ; whether they fight upon principles or at hazard : in effect, a general ought to be ear­lier or later in making an attack in proportion to the raſhneſs of the enemy. If, says Μ. de Montecuculi, any sign of fear or confuſion is perceived among the enemy, which will be known when the ranks are diſordered, when the troops mix together in the intervals, when the colours wave about, and the pikes shake all at the same time, then he ſhould charge and pursue the enemy without giving him time for recollection : ſome dragoons, light cavalry, platoons, ſome looſe troops, ſhould be ſent forward ; who, whilst the army advances in order of battle, will go before to ſeize ſome polls into which the enemy must fall. A general ought alſo, says Vigetius, to sound the ſpirit of his ſoldiers, and obſerve whether they have a firmer countenance than the enemy. It is dangerous to lead an army on to action that is not thoroughly determined to do its duty. “ Bat­tles,” says Vigetius elſewhere, “ are generally won by a ſmall number of men.” The great ray fiery consists in the general’s knowing how to chooſe them, to post them well, conformable to his plan, and the ſervices required of them.

I cannot assign the reaſon (says he) why particular bo­dies fight better against other particular ones, or why thoſe who have beat bodies ſtronger than themlelves, have in their turn been often beaten by those that were weaker : It is undoubtedly owing to want of confidence; becauſe the place of action has been different ; or from other circumstances which cannot be laid hold of, but on the very instant. The situation of the mind is shown in the countenance of the ſoldiers ; it is declared in their discourſe, and by the most trifling of their actions. The general ſhould consult them ; he ought even to go farther—the best countenance is not al­ways a sign of the firmest courage. Cowardice often con­ceals itſelf under the mask of intrepidity ; but ſoon as the action begins, the veil falls off, and the coward ſhows him­ſelf, notwithstanding all his endeavours to the contrary. Neither at this time ſhould a proper degree of fear be thought blameable ; nature must be allowed to ſhrink in that awful and uncertain situation : the coward gives him­ſelf up to his fears ; the bully ſeeks in vain to dissemble them; and the raſh man, who cannot distinguish between danger and ſafety, is ſenſible of both ; the real ſoldier is always modest, and contented with having done his duty. A good general turns every thing, even want of strength, to advantage. Hannibal, at the battle of Cannæ, posted his best troops upon the wings, that the centre, which was compoſed of thoſe on whom he had the least dependence, might be the ſooner broke, in order to give the wings an opportunity of ſurrounding the Romans.

It alſo requires a very strict examination in a general, in order to be thoroughly master of the circumstances on which he ſhould regulate his diſpositions ; and he will alſo find it ſometimes necessary to make ſome change in his original intentions. It is always proper that the corps of reserve ſhould be compoſed of veterans, and even of part of the flower of the army ; for ſhould the army happen to be broke, this reserve alone may probably give a new face to the action : it was this method which Hannibal purſued at the battle of Zama ; where Scipio, after having defeated the troops which preſented themſelves to him, was astonished to find he had a new army to fight with. At the battle of Fontenoy, the houſehold troops placed in referve, with ſome brigades of infantry, determined the ſucceſs of the day. Nevertheleſs, on ſome occasions this diſposition may prove diſadvantageous ; as, for instance, where it would be necessary to preſent a large front to the enemy, or where it is necessary to prevent his getting possession of a pals or a defile ; where a general finds himſelf too inferior, and where there are alſo posts to be defended.

It would be unnecessary to repeat every thing mentioned by Vigetius, relative to the precautions necessary to be taken before a battle ; time, and the difference of weapons, have greatly altered diſpoſitions : fire-arms, which are now made life of instead of darts and slings, and the bayonet instead of the pike, have contracted the intervals which must neceſſarily be left between every ſoldier.

The order and diſposition of troops for action depend entirely upon the general, who knows how to profit by circumstances ; the just execution of them depends upon the capacity of the general officers. The general cannot be everywhere, or see every thing ; he is obliged to rely upon the understanding of thoſe who command under him for the just execution of his orders ; the general officers ſhould know how to vary them, in proportion as circumstances, and the situation of the enemy changes. They ſhould have an exactneſs and quickneſs of eye, both to oppoſe and profit by them ; and, as Μ. de Puyſegur obſerves, the diſposition of the troops being once regulated by that of the enemy, by the situation of the country, and the ge­neral orders that have been delivered, the only part the ge­neral can have in the action lies in thoſe places where he is within reach of giving orders himſelf.

Μ. de Montécuculi with great reaſon obſerves, that there cannot be too many officers in an army on the day of battle,