prince immediately despatched officers’ patrols towards the Elbe, and about 6 p.m. these, having crossed the Bistritz, discovered the enemy in considerable force, at least three corps, behind the line of low hills which here border that stream. The remainder of the Austrian main body, the whole of which was in fact still on the right bank of the Elbe, was hidden from view behind high ground farther to the eastward.

*The 2nd of July—The* three Austrian corps were exactly the target Prince Frederick Charles desired. He promised him­self with the I. and the Elbe armies an easy victory if he attacked them. Orders in this sense were issued about 7 p.m. They instructed every corps under his command to be in readiness for action towards the Bistritz at 3 a.m. on the 3rd, and in a concluding paragraph announced that the crown prince had been requested to co-operate from the north. A copy of the orders and an explanatory letter were in fact despatched to the II. army, another copy also went direct to the king. Both appear to have been delayed in transmission, for the former only reached the crown prince’s quarters at 2 a.m. He was then asleep and had given orders that he was not to be awakened. His chief of the staff, Blumenthal, was absent at the royal headquarters, and since the bearer of the order had not been warned of the importance of the despatch he carried, no one roused the prince. At 3 a.m. Blumenthal returned and read the letter, and without troubling to disturb his chief he dealt with the matter himself in what is certainly one of the most remarkable documents ever issued in a grave crisis by a responsible staff officer. Briefly he informed Prince Frederick Charles that the orders for the II. army based on the instructions received from the royal headquarters, having been already issued, the co­operation of the I. corps alone might be looked for.

Meanwhile the duplicates had reached Moltke, and he, knowing well the temperament of the “ Red Prince ” and the impossibility of arresting the intended movement, obtained the royal sanction to a letter addressed to the crown prince, in which the latter was ordered to co-operate with his whole command. This vital despatch was sent off in duplicate at midnight and reached von Blumenthal at 4 a.m. In face of this no evasion was possible. Army orders were issued at 5 a.m., but still the urgency of the situation was so little understood that had they been verbally adhered to the force of the II. army could hardly have been brought to bear before 5 p.m., by which time the defeat of the I. army might well have been an accomplished fact. Fortunately, however, the initiative of the Prussian subordinates was sufficient to meet the strain.

*Battle of Koniggrätz (Sadowa).*—Thick mist and driving rain delayed the I. and Elbe armies, but by 5 a.m. the troops had reached their allotted positions. The 7th division now moved forward, taking as point of direction the wood of Maslowed (or Swiep Wald), and supported on the right by the 8th division which was to seize the bridge of Sadowa. The leading troops of the former easily rushed the Austrian outposts covering the wood, but the reserves of the Austrian outposts counter­attacked. The firing drew other troops towards the critical point, and very shortly the wood of Maslowed became the scene of one of the most obstinate conflicts in military history. In about two hours the 12 Prussian battalions and 3 batteries found themselves assailed by upwards of 40 Austrian battalions and 100 guns, and against such swarms of enemies each man felt that retreat from the wood across the open meant annihilation. The Prussians determined to hold on at all costs. The 8th divi­sion, belonging to the same corps, could not see their comrades sacrificed before their eyes, and pushed on through Sadowa to relieve the pressure on the right of the 7th division. Mean­while fresh Austrian batteries appeared against the front of the 8th division, and fresh Prussians in turn had to be engaged to save the 8th. Fortunately the Prussians here derived an un­expected advantage from the shape of the ground, and indeed from the weather. The heavy rain, which had delayed the commencement of the action, had swollen the Bistritz so as to check their advance and thus postpone the decision, whilst the mist and driving rain hid the approaching troops from the

Austrian gunners, whose shells burst almost harmlessly on the sodden ground. Then when once across the stream it was discovered that unlike the normal slopes in the district the hillside in front of them showed a slight convexity under cover of which they were able to re-form in regular order. The advantage of the breech-loader now began to assert itself, for the Austrian skirmishers who covered the front of the guns could only load when standing up, while the Prussians lay down or fired from cover. The defenders were therefore steadily driven up the hill, and then cleared the front to give the guns room to act. But the Austrian gunners were intent on the Prussian batteries farther back, which as the light improved had come into action. The Prussian infantry crept nearer and nearer, till at under 300 yds. range and from cover they were able to open fire on the Austrian gunners under conditions which rendered the case fire of the latter practically useless; but here was the opportunity a great cavalry leader on the Austrian side might have seized to restore the battle, for the ground, the shortness of the distance, and the smoke and excite­ment of the cannonade were all in favour of the charge. Such a charge as prelude to the advance of a great infantry bayonet attack must have swept the exhausted Prussians down the hill like sheep, but the opportunity passed, and the gunners find­ing their position untenable, limbered up, not without severe losses, and retired to a second position in rear. This with- drawal took place about 2 p.m., and the crisis on the Prussian side may be said to have lasted from about 11 a.m. By this time every infantry soldier and gun within call had been thrown into the fight, and the Austrians might well have thrown odds of three to one upon the Prussian centre and have broken it asunder.

*Arrival of the II. Army.—*But suddenly the whole aspect of affairs was changed. The 2nd and 4th Austrian corps found themselves all at once threatened in flank and rear by heavy masses of Prussian infantry, the leading brigades of the crown prince’s army, and they began to withdraw towards the centre of their position in ordered brigade masses, apparently so intent on keeping their men in hand that they seem never to have noticed the approach of the Prussian reserve artillery of the Guard which (under Prince Kraft zu Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen) was straining forward over heavy soil and through standing corn towards their point of direction, a clump of trees close to the tower of the church of Chlum. Not even deigning to notice the retreating columns, apparently too without escort, the batteries pressed forward till they reached the summit of the ridge trending eastward from Chlum towards the Elbe, whence the whole interior of the Austrian position was disclosed to them, and then they opened fire upon the Austrian reserves which lay below them in solid masses of army corps. Occurring about 2.30, and almost simultaneously with the withdrawal of the Austrian guns on their left already alluded to, this may be said to have decided the battle, for although the Saxons still stood firm against the attacks of the Elbe army, and the reserves, both cavalry and infantry, attempted a scries of counterstrokes, the advantage of position and moral was all on the side of the Prussians. The slopes of the position towards the Austrians now took on the usual concave section, and from the crest of the ridge every movement could be seen for miles. The Austrian cavalry, on weak and emaciated horses, could not gallop at speed up the heavy slopes (1/20), and the artillery of both Prussian wings practically broke every attempt of the infantry to form for attack.

*Close of the Battle.—*Still the Austrians made good their retreat. Their artillery driven back off the ridges formed a long line from Stösser to Plotist facing the enemy, and under cover of its fire the infantry at length succeeded in withdrawing, for the Prussian reserve cavalry arrived late on the ground, and the local disconnected efforts of the divisional cavalry were checked by the still intact Austrian squadrons. Whereas at 2.30 absolute destruction seemed the only possible fate of the defeated army, by 6 p.m., thanks to the devoted heroism of the artillery and the initiative of a few junior commanders of cavalry,