

after sustaining a fire for about half an hour, was compelled to retreat.

Whilst the cavalry was taking a circuit round from the rear, and at about two o'clock in the afternoon, the enemy was observed to be advancing a column of sixteen battalions of infantry, with cavalry and artillery, along the chaussée from Rheims. General D'Yorck was directed to oppose him, and General Baron Sacken ordered to General D'Yorck's support.

It was here the battle became most general and decisive. The enemy opened a formidable battery of at least forty or fifty pieces of artillery, and advanced with a confidence from which he must have arrogated to himself every success. He formed a column of attack, and was moving forward with a pas de charge to the village of Althies, when Prince William of Prussia, who was advancing to the village at the same time, met him half way and overthrew him.

He then began his retreat which soon became a flight. Eight pieces of artillery, with horses and every thing belonging to them, were immediately taken, and successively twenty two pieces more.

He was pursued as far as Corbeny, losing baggage, prisoners, &c. by the way, the details of all which have not yet arrived, as the pursuit has continued during the whole of the night, and as it is still going on.

On the right, no particular advantages were gained beyond the expulsion of the enemy from the villages he had gained possession of in the morning. General Count Woronzoff, towards the close of the day, again attacked with the greatest vigour, but he had large masses opposed to him, and the ground presented difficulties against the active co-operation of his cavalry.

The promptitude with which General Count Woronzoff conducted his advance in the morning, and the bravery and determination with which his troops attacked, were the admiration of every one.

The losses on either side it is as yet impossible to ascertain, but I have myself seen some hundred prisoners brought in here already.

*P. S. Ten A. M.*—The prisoners say that Buonaparte is still in front of Laon, and resolved on pursuing his attack this day.

The cannonading and musketry is already violent in the direction of Semilly and Leuilly.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed) H. LOWE, Colonel.

*P. S. Laon, Ten A. M. March 11, 1814.*—The attack continued during the whole of yesterday. The plain, below the city of Laon, is interspersed with villages and small woods, which became the scene of very warm and obstinate contests. A wood near the village of Clacy, on the right of the position, was taken and retaken four or five different times, and remained finally in possession of the allied troops. The infantry of General Winzingerode's corps, under the command of General Count Woronzoff, were the troops engaged there: in the centre and left of the position the enemy maintained himself; and at about half an hour before sunset, he threw forward a body of skirmishers, supported by two battalions of infantry (the rest of his army remaining in reserve), and attacked the village of Semilly close under the walls of the town; but a battalion of Prussians, of General Bulow's corps, threw itself in the road, and, supported by the fire of the troops on each flank, compelled him to retire in disorder and with loss.

This was the last operation attempted during the day.

The fires of his bivouack were apparent along a very extended line at the beginning of the night; but in the morning it was observed he had retired, and the cavalry of the advanced guard are at this moment in pursuit of him towards Chavignon, on the road to Soissons.

Thus, during two days of successive attacks, the enemy has experienced nothing but defeat and discomfiture. The efforts of all his force have been broken against, and recoiled from the bulwark which this fine position has afforded.

The absence of the corps of D'Yorck, Kleist and Sacken, which were in the morning pursuing the remainder of the troops that had advanced from Rheims, and which could not be recalled in time, prevented any active offensive operation being undertaken yesterday. But success had crowned the efforts of these corps in other respects, by the capture of between three and four thousand prisoners, besides a great quantity of ammunition and baggage, and forty-five pieces of cannon have already been brought in.

The intended future operations of this army have not yet been promulgated, but I apprehend they will be altogether of an offensive nature.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed) H. LOWE, Colonel.