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scorched earth policy of the retreating peasants the advancing armies found nothing worth having. The weather was appalling and sickness spread.

The Swiss fought bravely wherever they were used. They took part in several battles, notably on the Duena near Polozk in August 1812. Napoleon advanced on Moscow and occupied the town. But his hope that Alexander would be ready to sign a peace treaty collapsed. The Governor of Moscow set fire to the city, which infuriated the Russian people, who believed the invaders to have done it. Napoleon had to make new plans.

The second big battle at Polozk took place from 16th to 20th October. It was at Smolensk early in November when Napoleon said in the 28th bulletin of "La Grande Armée" that "La division Suisse s'est fait remarquer par son sang-froid et sa bravoure". He awarded them 34 crosses of the Legion of Honour. Well-known Swiss names like Blattmann, Zingg, Ragettli, v. Castella, v. Graffenried, d'Affry, Bleuler, Inthurm and others figured in the dispatches and on the lists of promotion.

Napoleon's army had to retreat from the Duena after the battle of Polozk. The reduced Swiss regiments were exposed to great suffering. The cold was severe, marching in bad footwear was an ordeal. Their condition, as one of their commanders reported, was "deplorable". Yet they went on bravely. Napoleon's predicament was considerable. But as his physical condition remained excellent in spite of great privation on the vast marches he was able once more to let "his brilliance and genius shine and also the virtue of his army".

The problem which he mastered at that moment was the crosing of the river Beresina, which was held by the enemy. On the evening of 25th November the Emperor and his staff arrived at Borysow. By cleverly pretending that the crossing would take place elsewhere, Napoleon managed to concentrate his army near Studianka, during the night of 25th/26th November. Unfortunately for him the sudden thaw and consequent rising of the river made all previous pontoon construction work useless and everything had to be started again. The army had to wait, tense and cold, all night. The bridge-building troops worked in the icy water until exhausted and drowned. By one o'clock the next morning the first bridge was ready and the crossing began. By the 27th most of the French artillery had crossed. Then followed 40,000 to 60,000 unarmed men. Chaos broke out and in the scuffle the bridges were damaged several times. Therefore Napoleon decided to accept battle which the Russians were seeking.

The Swiss were left to cover the bridges at Studianka. It is known that all four regiments were there. Food was scarce — even a piece of candle made a welcome snack. It snowed heavily. The Swiss realised that it was an honour for them to cover the key point in the French position, the wooded road Brill-Stachow. They solemnly swore not to leave their positions, even if wounded. They promised to fight like their forefathers had done. It was then that Lieutenant Thomas Legler started the famous hymn.

Very soon afterwards the battle began, and some of the most able officers fell in the first hours. Ammunition ran out and Legler, the composer of the song, ordered bayonet charge. This energetic attack was successful; it frightened the Russians. They retreated. But they got help and advanced again. Munitions had been brought for Napoleon's men, but not sufficient, and the bayonet was put to use again. A French general managed to attack on the flank, and the Russians were hemmed in, had to surrender, and nearly 2,000 prisoners were taken. This gave a short breathing space to the men on that sector. Soon the Swiss sharpshooters were engaged again, this time by an equal enemy. The snow became covered in red — the red of the blood and the Swiss tunics. Heroically they fought seven more bayonet charges. The position was held into the night. With the Swiss were some Polish and French troops and admiration for their courage and tenacity was mutual. After the battle, 300 men were left, one-third of them wounded. The Swiss had lost 1,200 men. The Emperor, who was with his guardsmen at Brill, was so impressed by the report that he awarded the four Swiss regiments sixty-two crosses of the Legion of Honour on the spot. They were told that they had saved the army, for if they had not fought so bravely the Russians would have overwhelmed the French and the guards would have been unable to throw back the victors.

But the Swiss were a sad little remainder of their once so proud ranks. What gave them the strength to fight? It was the love of their country. They knew that they were upholding the good name of Switzerland. The Swiss soldier did not fight for the Emperor of France, but for the honour and glory of his own country. And many of us will find courage from the words of the "Beresina song", one of the finest hymns bequeathed to us:

"Our life is like the journey of a wanderer in the night; Each one carries a burden which weighs him down.

But night and darkness disappear unexpectantly and the badly tried finds relief from his sufferings.

Therefore let us go on; let us not retreat; for beyond those hills far away some happiness yet awaits us.

Courage, courage, dear fellows; give up the troubling worries: to-morrow the sun will rise again on the benevolent sky."

Mariann.

THOUGHTS OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND

Two voices are there; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains; each a mighty Voice:
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty!
There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee
Thou fought'st against him; but hast vainly striven;
Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven.
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.
Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft:
Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left;
For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be
That Mountain floods should thunder as before,
And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful Voice be heard by thee!

William Wordsworth.